

**MINUTES OF THE HYBRID REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 17, 2023**

**South Assembly Room Beecher Road School**

**Via WebEx** <https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=mc22ebbdd162cd4b5385d69d628b2360>

**Meeting Number: 2496 665 0554**

**Meeting Password: 2EPghgAJX34**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Piascyk, Chair, called the meeting to order (7:04 PM).

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (in-person); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (remote/in-person 7:13 PM); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (in-person); Mr. Jeff Hughes (in-person); Mr. Steven Lawrence (in-person); Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair (in-person); and Ms. Erin Williamson (in-person).

**STAFF:** Vonda Tencza, Superintendent; Analisa Sherman, Principal; James Sapia, Assistant Principal; Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services / Operations; Carrie Borcharding, Special Services Director and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**GUESTS:** Ruchi Jain, PTO.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**PTO Report** – The full PTO report is available in [BoardBook](#).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Ms. Hopkins

**UNANIMOUS**

**REPORTS**

**Chairman's Report** – Chair Piascyk apprised the Board on establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee and the scheduling of a Board Retreat.

**Ad Hoc Committee** – Based on discussions in the Building Committee meetings as well as discussions with town leadership, other Board members, and in accordance with Board Policy 9133, Chair Piascyk recommended creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to study BRS space needs inclusive of timeline, charge and membership.

**MOTION #2 – ESTABLISH AD HOC COMMITTEE**

Move that we establish an Enrollment, Instructional Needs and Space Planning Ad Hoc Committee comprised of the Superintendent, WBOE Chair, 2 BOE members, BRS Principal, Director of Business Services / Operations, 1 BOS member, 1 BOF member, 2 WEA members (1 primary, 1 intermediate) and the Facilities Director, and a community member with a committee charge that the committee will review and address the physical, administrative, and instructional implications of increasing enrollment and student needs on the current physical space of Beecher Road School and a report given to the full Board at their September 18, 2023 meeting.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Mr. Lawrence

**UNANIMOUS**

**Board Retreat** – Chair Piascyk informed that Board that a retreat was being planned for the end of March with CABE Consultants, Drs. Mary Broderick and Jack Reynolds, serving as the facilitators. The topics for the retreat will include – high performing governance team; reviewing board member roles and responsibilities, board processes, and establishing

board goals. While Drs. Broderick and Reynolds prefer these session to be in-person, a hybrid model will be considered as well. There will be two 3-hour sessions from 6:00 – 9:00 PM in the selected dates.

Ms. Del Prete arrived for in-person (7:13 PM).

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Tencza highlighted attendance at the reading curriculum waiver process webinar, the BOWA state legislative breakfast and participation at the SCASA meeting. Across the state, the majority of school districts are proceeding with the reading curriculum waiver process, which requires completion of extensive paperwork and submission to the CSDE by the end of February. While it appears this legislation will not change, the process for communication, acceptance and/or rejection remains unknown at this point in time nor is it known if it will be necessary to purchase additional resources. Administration continues to fine-tune the 2023/24 budget presentation which will be given to the joint Boards of Selectmen and Finance on January 26.

Strategic Plan Update – Superintendent Tencza noted that during the 2021/22 school year, the district began the process of developing a new Strategic Plan under the guidance of consultant Judy Wilson with identification of three goals (1) an academic framework for contemporary learners; (2) building diverse alliances; and (3) building healthy alliances. Action teams were developed and each subcommittee has met 2-3 times to develop actions steps, conduct research and gather data in a common template. The template document identifies who will do the work, the availability timeline of the resources required and development of communication plans with evidence of success and success criteria part of the subcommittee accountability component. As a result of the recent change in leadership, there will be a regrouping in the near future to focus on efforts to date, refresh intentions, answer any process questions and determine the next steps. It is anticipated that the goals identified will be fully supported and that the collaborative work achieved thus far will continue.

Pre-Algebra Update – Superintendent Tencza reviewed the revised criteria, which will be communicated to parents and students in the coming months. This revised criteria was established for Beecher Road School students to take Pre-Algebra in Grade 6 and is aligned to the math placement criteria at the Amity Middle School. Beecher Road School students, who take Pre-Algebra in Grade 6, may be eligible to enroll in Algebra in Grade 7 if all of the math placement criteria established by Amity is successfully met. It is important to understand that Grade 6 students who take Pre-Algebra do not take Grade 6 math. The course is Pre-Algebra and not a blend of Grade 6 math standards and Pre-Algebra, thus, the criteria for placement is very high. The revised process provides clear communication of outcomes and expectations for Grade 5 parents and students and provides for a more fair and accurate opportunity for all students and there is an accelerated math opportunity for Grade 6 students as well.

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted the winter concerts, several writing celebrations and the peaceful bus initiative organized by Mr. Sapia.

Chair Piascyk apprised Board members of the 37 student increase in enrollment since December 2020 and urged Board members to review the monthly enrollment report in BoardBook.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion update. Board members were asked to submit their questions to either Chair Piascyk or Superintendent Tencza.

Town Building Committee – Mr. Hughes indicated this committee did not meet due to the holiday break. Meetings are bi-weekly on Thursday's at 8:30 AM. The exterior ground walking is scheduled for February 1 at 3:45 PM with members of the Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education.

Facilities Committee – Mr. Hughes reviewed the January 5 meeting and the replacement of HVAC filters throughout the building. Thanks was extended to Vito for his continued creativity to find ways to save Board dollars.

CABE Liaison Report – Dr. Madonick noted the Region 7 CABE Legislative Breakfast would be held on February 7 at the West Haven Board of Education at City Hall and the upcoming February 9 webinar on Board Communication.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Open Choice – Superintendent Tencza provided an overview on the Open Choice program whose primary focus is to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. She apprised the Board that based on current allocations, there would be two vacancies for the 2023/24 school year as two Grade 6 students would be departing the district and statute requires that

local boards of education indicate available Open Choice seats annually. The Area Cooperative Education Resource Center (ACES) is responsible for coordinating the available seats in local school districts and conducts an annual lottery to fill the open seats. Currently, 18 slots are allotted for participation and state reimbursement for transportation is approximately \$4,000 for each participating student. Discussion ensued on whether reimbursement had been received from New Haven as in the past full reimbursement for one-to-one student paraeducators and behavioral services has not occurred. While other districts receive full reimbursement this has not been the case with New Haven.

It was noted that a small group of Board members met with ACES last year to discuss process, reimbursement and that commitments made by the Open Choice people have not been fulfilled. If we are going to continue participation in this program, at what point does it stop if district resources are not being fully reimbursed as agreed to. It is not fair to the taxpayers of Woodbridge that New Haven is being fiscally irresponsible and these costs are being incurred year after year. Woodbridge has taken significant efforts in performing their due diligence to no avail. An opportunity exists for the Board to take a firm stance in not accepting any new students until the situation is rectified. It was suggested that contact be made with the Mayor of New Haven as well as the district requesting full reimbursement and to document that they are not meeting their obligations under this program and to reassess after that has been done. Also, this discussion and possible vote is occurring without two Board members being present. It was noted that ample time is provided to review the agenda and action items prior to attending the meeting. Each member had sufficient opportunity to convey any reservations and/or converse with administration or attend remotely. The Board has a quorum present and it is not unreasonable to expect that a decision will be made.

**MOTION #3 – OPEN CHOICE**

Move that we continue our participation in the Open Choice program, allocating 16 slots with no vacancies and that a letter be written clearly explaining the reasoning behind the motion.

Mr. Hughes

Second by Ms. Hopkins

**IN FAVOR:** Ms. Del Prete, Ms. Hopkins, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Lawrence, Dr. Madonick and Ms. Piascyk

**AGAINST:** Ms. Williamson

***MOTION PASSES 6-1***

Chair Piascyk announced the February meeting dates: Curriculum Committee on February 2 at 4:00 PM; Policy Committee on February 7 at 4:30 PM; Finance Committee on February 14 at 4:30 PM; and the regular Board meeting on Monday, February 27 at 7:00 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** (8:35 PM)

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Madonick

**UNANIMOUS**

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board