

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 6:30 PM Eastern

Beman Middle School
1 Wilderman's Way
Middletown, CT 06457

<https://www.youtube.com/@MiddletownStream>

Liz Crooks: Present
Sheila Daniels: Present
Rakim Grant: Present (7:14)
Callie Grippo: Present
Debra Guss: Present
Adam Hayn: Present
Deborah Kleckowski: Present
Susan Owens: Present (6:43)
Harold Panciera: Present
Present: 9.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

II. Salute to the Flag

Student Representative Dania Rabah let the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda. This motion, made by Debra Guss and seconded by Adam Hayn, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Susan Owens: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

IV. District Highlights

IV.A. 2025 Connecticut Association of Schools Outstanding Arts Award

Ms. Lavourna introduced Mr. Matthews, Ms. Heslin and student Demar Holley. Mr. Matthews shared that Demar Holley and De’Nario Scott were recognized as part of the Elementary Arts Banquet at the Aqua Turf. Mr. Matthews spoke of the importance of the Arts in students' lives. Ms. Heslin shared the artwork that was recognized. Demar spoke about how art is important to him.

IV.B. Middletown Public Schools Administrators Engage in Professional Learning

Ms. Lavourna introduced Mr. Peter Fragola, Principal Snow School and Ms. Maghan Heslin, Acting Principal of Bielefield School. Ms. Heslin spoke of the professional development that she has received, including walkthroughs. Mr. Fragola discussed the MTSS and Response to Intervention. He explained the Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) and the success stories they have generated.

IV.C. Proclamation for Black History Month

Ms. Dania Rabah read the Black History Month Proclamation for Middletown Public Schools.

IV.D. Upcoming District Events

There were no upcoming District events.

V. Public Session

Chair Daniels explained the rules of Public Session. There were no comments.

VI. Communications

VI.A. Report of Student Representative

Ms. Rabah shared that bathroom monitors have been hired, and they are very helpful to the students, making bathrooms more accessible. The students from the Human Rights and Genocide early college experience class went to UCONN for a summitt. Students learned about human rights and violations. Administrators and staff have been monitoring hallways and classrooms for cell phone usage. She reported student engagement and conversations have improved. Fighting has decreased. Gifts provided a presentation for Black History Month. Students enjoyed the student-led assembly.

VII. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Harold Panciera, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

VII.A. Minutes of January 14, 2025

VII.B. Minutes of January 29, 2025

VII.C. MHS FFA Agricultural Mechanics and Engineering Career Development Event

VII.D. MHS DECA to NYC South Street Seaport

VII.E. MHS VEX Robotics World Championship

VII.F. MHS Photography Club Proposal

VII.G. MHS Latinx Heritage Club Proposal

VII.H. Policy #4118.51 Social Media - Second Reading

VII.I. Policy #5145 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Second Reading

VII.J. Policy #5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention - Second Reading

VII.K. Policy # 4152.6 Family Medical Leave - Second Reading

VII.L. Grants Status Report

VII.M. Budget Committee

VII.N. Curriculum Committee

VII.O. Facilities Committee

VII.P. Policy Committee

VIII. Department Reports

VIII.A. Financial Report

VIII.A.1. Action on Line Item Transfer Report

Ms. Forbes shared that the transfers include staff professional development and paper. She reviewed lines with deficits and explained the reasons for the deficits.

A motion to approve the Line Item Transfer was made. This motion, made by Debra Guss and seconded by Liz Crooks, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

VIII.B. Facilities Department

Mr. Gaylord shared that the maintenance crew have done a great job with the recent snowfalls. Fire inspections and mandatory training are taking place. Ms. Guss asked about the bleacher repairs at Beman and Mr. Gaylord explained why that happened and the solution for the future.

VIII.C. Personnel Report

Mr. Snyder shared updates on the vacancies. More teachers have been hired and are in the process of hiring. Beman principal interviews have started. Mr. Snyder also discussed the vacancies in Special Education. Mr. Panciera asked about the psychologists and MSEL coordinator. Chair Daniels asked about the openings for paraprofessionals and if the district vacancies were the same as in other districts. Mr. Snyder explained the shortages that are statewide. Ms. Kleckowski asked about paraprofessional qualifications, recruitment and exit interviews.

VIII.D. Transportation Report

Mr. Gaylord thanked Mark Langton and Erin Stevenson for their daily hard work. He discussed the safety meetings that are held monthly. Ms. Grippo asked about elementary conduct reports. Mr. Gaylord explained the supports that are in place.

IX. Superintendent's Report

IX.A. Yondr Updates

Dr. Vazquez Matos thanked Dania for her remarks about the Yondr pouches. He shared that he visited MHS today and there are significantly fewer phones and headphones. Beman has near to zero phones visible during the school day.

IX.B. ML Bilingual Program

Dr. Vazquez Matos introduced Ms. Fitzpatrick and the MLL Program. The district currently has 295 ML learners. She reviewed the staff and the Bilingual Education Needs. The law defines bilingual education as instruction in both English and a student's native language with

a continuously increasing use of English and the goal of reaching English proficiency. Courses are designed to meet students where they are on their additional language acquisition journey as newcomers, beginners, intermediate or academic student support. There is MPSA Professional Learning at the building, department and district levels.

Ms. Brewster discussed after-school programs. Ms. Deotte discussed the cooking and wellness classes with Ms. Krapf as well as grant-funded 21C programs at elementary schools. Ms. Fitzpatrick shared many events and opportunities that the ML staff has provided.

IX.C. District Updates

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared more information regarding the hall monitors and the success they have brought in a short time. The Macdonough Project has a building committee that was put together by the city. Meetings are being held and improvements to Keigwin are being discussed. He discussed current Legislative Updates including the proposed budget by the Governor. He spoke about the changes that could greatly impact the free and reduced lunch program.

Ms. Elba Llantín-Cruz is the new Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. Ms. Llantín-Cruz thanked Dr. Vazquez Matos and the Board of Education Members for their support.

X. Action Items

X.A. Policy # 1001 Non-Discrimination - First and Final Reading

A motion to approve Policy # 1001 Non-Discrimination - First and Final Reading was made. This motion, made by Liz Crooks and seconded by Callie Grippo, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 9, Nay: 0,

X.B. Policy #3110 Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers - First Reading

A motion to approve Policy #3110 Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers - First Reading was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Debra Guss, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Absent: 0

X.C. Policy # 5131.81 Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety - First Reading

A motion to approve Policy # 5131.81 Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Adam Hayn, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Absent: 0

X.D. Policy # 4118.111 Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel) - First and Final Reading

A motion to approve Policy # 4118.111 Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel) - First and Final Reading was made.

This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Debra Guss, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Nay, Liz Crooks: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 1, Absent: 0

Sheila Daniels: Nay

X.E. Policy #5145.5 Policy Regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)

A motion to approve Policy #5145.5 Policy Regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students) was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Adam Hayn, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Nay, Liz Crooks: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 1, Absent: 0

Sheila Daniels: Nay

XI. Future Agenda Items

Ms. Kleckowski stated that the Policy Committee will meet on February 25 due to the school vacation.

XII. Proposed Executive Session

A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of confidential attorney client privileged written communication (correspondence received from FIRE and related policy considerations) - Proposed for Executive Session and invite Dr. Vazquez Matos, Anne Littlefield of Shipman and Goodwin was made. This motion, made by Sheila Daniels and seconded by Debra Guss, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Absent: 0

XII.A. Discussion of confidential attorney client privileged written communication (correspondence received from FIRE and related policy considerations) - Proposed for Executive Session

XIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Liz Crooks, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Yea, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Callie Grippo: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Absent: 0