

MINUTES OF THE HYBRID REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, December 19, 2022

South Assembly Room Beecher Road School

Via WebEx <https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=mcc30ef1611b739a68183ec6983ab8c6a>

Meeting Number: 2492 818 3684

Meeting Password: J5kG9ydfxe8

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Piascyk, Chair, called the meeting to order (7:03 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (In-person); Dr. Jay Dayha (In-person); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (Remote); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (In-person); Mr. Jeff Hughes (In-person); Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair (In-person); Dr. Michael Strambler (Remote); Mr. Steven Lawrence (In-person); and Ms. Erin Williamson (Remote).

STAFF: Christine Syriac, Interim Superintendent; Vonda Tencza, Superintendent; Analisa Sherman, Principal; James Sapia, Assistant Principal; Carrie Borchering, Special Services Director; Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services / Operations; 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](#). Dr. Jain extended a sincere thank you to Interim Superintendent Syriac as this was her last meeting and wished the Board and staff a very happy holiday season.

Chairman's Report

A warm welcome was extended to Vonda Tencza who officially became the new Superintendent on Monday, December 12th.

The Board acknowledged Interim Superintendent Syriac who has worked tirelessly to move the district forward always striving to uphold the school's mission and vision, always supporting and encouraging the faculty and staff, always guiding the Board of Education, and most importantly, always putting the students first. Ms. Syriac stepped up to serve the BRS community as a solid and sturdy bridge during difficult times of transition and fulfilled that task with proficiency, grace, humility, confidence, perseverance, and with an uncompromising moral compass. The Board and the entire school community offered sincere thanks and heartfelt appreciation to Interim Superintendent Syriac.

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Tencza expressed her appreciation for the warm welcome she has received. She acknowledged the new school visitor scanning program, and thanked Interim Superintendent Syriac for her support and guidance in creating a seamless transition of leadership.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Ms. Hopkins

UNANIMOUS

REPORTS

2023/24 Superintendent's Recommended Budget – Interim Superintendent Syriac presented the 2023/24 budget proposal which outlines current and future needs. The budget builds on the upcoming years and supports the mission and vision of the school as well as the Strategic Plan Goals. It was noted that the budget proposal did not include the \$167,500 excess costs appropriation from the town related to special education.

The guiding principles of the budget are:

- Provide a high-quality educational program that serves all students while advancing the District's goals over time.
- Identify and prioritize opportunities to improve operational efficiencies. Reallocation of funds.
- Develop a budget that respects the taxpayer.

Key drivers include:

- ❖ Salary and Benefit Contractual Increases
- ❖ Preparation for Increasing Enrollment and Increasing Student Needs
- ❖ Special Education
- ❖ Increasing Energy Costs
- ❖ Reallocation of Resources to Increase Efficiencies
 - ◇ Reduction of five para educator positions to offset cost of additional staff
 - * Work force depleted, positions challenging to fill, high turnover
 - * Mandated professional learning
 - * Focus on high level training to improve job satisfaction
 - ◇ Addition of 1.0 FTE Assistant Principal Position, 50% special education/50% general education
 - Assist with PPT process
 - * Provides time for the Director of Special Services to be in classrooms and evaluate programs
 - * Provides time for the Director of Special Services to develop professional learning for staff
 - Assist with evaluation of certified staff
 - * Provides Building Principal with time to engage in curriculum development and implementation work with Superintendent and specialists
 - * Reduces evaluation load to increase meaningful support to certified and non-certified staff
 - ◇ The part-time social worker (0.7 FTE) and school psychologist (0.6 FTE) positions return to 0.5 FTE.
 - ◇ Increase the current multi-lingual teacher from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE.

This budget represents an overall increase of 3.94% (\$17,067,090) and contains an additional 1.5 certified positions at a net cost of \$37,475 based on the reallocation of resources to increase efficiencies and maintains current staffing and programs. It increases curriculum writing funding to support the CSDE reading mandate. Identifies the potential to restore the STEAM teacher position eliminated last year to the 2024/25 budget, supports the mission, vision, and strategic plan goals and objectives for all students and includes technology equipment replacements in transitioning from iPads to ChromeBooks. Offsets include reduction of interns / increase in building substitutes, consistent allocation for grade level supplies, and two BCBA positions through the reduction of unfilled TA positions. It was also noted that ARP and ESSER funding will end at the end of the current school year so reallocation of resources is important.

It also allows for an in-depth analysis of the Special Education program to occur. In order to be able to make structural changes to the program, the new Special Education Director needs to be able to get out into the classrooms, observe programs as well as the delivery of services. Time is needed to determine if there is an over identification of students and/or over servicing of students, and it is through that process that there could be a reallocation of paraeducator support in other areas in future budgets.

It was noted that the Board would not be taking action on the 2023/24 budget this evening as a special meeting will be held on January 4. Concern was expressed for the lack of input from the WBOE Finance Committee on the development of the budget. It was noted this budget outlines a clear vision, provides a roadmap that makes sense and it is clear this has not been a piece meal process. All Board members have the opportunity to participate and speak about the budget and it has been a collaborative and transparent process by the full Board.

2023/24 School Calendar – Interim Superintendent Syriac presented the 2023/24 calendar developed in collaboration with the BOWA Districts.

MOTION #2 – 2023/24 CALENDAR

Move approval of the 2023/24 Calendar as presented.

Dr. Madonick
Second by Ms. Hopkins
UNANIMOUS

TAG Update – Carrie – eligibility criteria – recommended changes to assessments.

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted the successful Winter Book Fair, the 5th and 6th grade winter concerts, participation of grade 6 students in CEMA, and various grade level projects – writing workshop in Kindergarten, 3rd grade mystery unit, Grade 1 math projects on strong angles and kindness rocks.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations – PreAlgebra and the Strategic Plan update.

Town Building Committee – Mr. Hughes indicated this committee is meeting every other week. On November 28 members of the Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education attended an internal walk-through of BRS and have agreed to conduct a similar walk on the outside grounds in January. Also noted was the continued discussion of the pool, which was not included in the original charge to this committee, and therefore, not a topic of discussion for the committee.

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 will appoint an Ad Hoc Committee at the regular January meeting to study BRS space needs inclusive of timeline, charge and membership. Board members were asked to provide any input to either her or Superintendent Tencza.

Finance Committee – Dr. Dahya reviewed the December 12 meeting which included review of the monthly financial reports. A suggestion was made to lobby the state on the availability and use of special education funding.

Policy Committee – Dr. Madonick presented the policies currently under 30-day for adoption.

MOTION #3 – POLICY 1313 - GIFTS TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Move that we adopt 1313 - Gifts to School Personnel as submitted.

Dr. Madonick
Second by Ms. Hopkins
UNANIMOUS

MOTION #4 – POLICY 2400 - EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Move that we adopt Policy 2400 - Evaluation of the Superintendent as revised.

Dr. Madonick
Second by Mr. Lawrence
UNANIMOUS

MOTION #5 – POLICY 3280 - GIFTS, GRANTS, BEQUESTS AND MEMORIALS

Move that we adopt Policy 3280 - Gifts, Grants, Bequests and Memorials as revised.

Dr. Madonick
Second by Mr. Lawrence
UNANIMOUS

CABE Liaison Report – Dr. Madonick noted that CABE had added several recent webinars to their free library.

NEW BUSINESS

As required, when a change in superintendent leadership occurs, the incoming superintendent is authorized to hire all staff in accordance with Connecticut General Statute 10-151(b).

MOTION #6 – AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE

Move that we authorize Vonda Tencza, Superintendent to hire staff for the Woodbridge School District in accordance with Connecticut General Statute 10-151(b) effective December 12, 2022.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Dr. Dahya
UNANIMOUS

Authorized Signatures

As required when changes in leadership occur, authorized signers for the district are required to be designated.

MOTION #7 – AUTHORIZED SIGNERS

Move that we approve Vonda Tencza as an authorized signature and representative for the Woodbridge School District, effective December 12, 2022.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Dr. Madonick
UNANIMOUS

MOTION #8 – ED-099 SIGNATURE CHANGE

Move that we accept the Permanent Single Agreement for the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Child Nutrition Programs and authorize the Board of Education Secretary, Sarah Beth Del Prete, to certify the action of the Woodbridge Board of Education that authorizes Vonda Tencza, Superintendent of Schools and Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services and Operations as signers of the CSDE reimbursement claims submitted on behalf of the Woodbridge School District.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Dr. Madonick
UNANIMOUS

Chair Piascyk announced the January meeting dates: Facilities Committee on January 5 at 7:30 AM; Finance Committee on January 10 at 4:30 PM; the regular Board meeting on Tuesday, January 17 at 7:00 PM and the Special Meeting on January 4 at 5:00 PM for adoption of the 2023/24 Operating Budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

The Board entered Executive Session to receive an update on safety and security.

MOTION #9 – EXECUTIVE SESSION (9:25 PM)

Move that we enter Executive Session to receive an update on security and invite the Superintendent and Interim Superintendent to join the Board.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Mr. Hughes
UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (In-person); Dr. Jay Dayha (In-person); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (Remote); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (In-person); Mr. Jeff Hughes (In-person); Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair (In-person); Dr. Michael Strambler (Remote); Mr. Steven Lawrence (In-person); and Ms. Erin Williamson (Remote).

STAFF: Christine Syriac, Interim Superintendent; Vonda Tencza, Superintendent.

MOTION #10 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (10:12 PM).

Ms. Hopkins
Second by Dr. Madonick
UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (In-person); Dr. Jay Dayha (In-person); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (7:12 In-person); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (In-person); Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair (In-person); Dr. Michael Strambler (In-person); Mr. Steven Lawrence (In-person); and Ms. Erin Williamson (Remote).

STAFF: Christine Syriac, Interim Superintendent; Vonda Tencza, Superintendent; Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

Chair Piascyk called the Public Session back to order (10:13 PM).

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:14 PM)

Dr. Dahya

Second by Dr. Madonick

UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board