

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

**Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

**Via WebEx**

<https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=m2dc67c658c0f33d9fe4eb5e6ce8bf35b>

**Meeting Number: 2497 908 9875**

**Meeting Password: kyPxgruX953**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Piascyk, Chair called the meeting to order (7:02 PM).

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Del Prete (7:22 PM), Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

**STAFF:** Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; Richard Huot, Interim Director of Business Services / Operations; Cheryl Kiesel, Special Services Director; Analisa Sherman, Principal; James Sapia, Assistant Principal; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**GUESTS:** Sheila McCreven, BOS Liaison; Joi Prud'homme, PTO; Kim Franklin, WEA.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Board received a letter dated January 12, 2022 from the WEA leadership pertaining to Covid challenges, mitigation strategies, and state mandates.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** –

Ms. Franklin read the January 12 letter from the WEA leadership pertaining to Covid challenges, mitigation strategies, and state mandates.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Dr. Dahya

Second by Ms. Madonick

**UNANIMOUS**

**REPORTS**

**Superintendent's Report** – Superintendent Budd outlined the inclement weather procedures.

**Safe Return Plan** – Presently, there are 157 confirmed cases in the BRS community (131 additional since the December meeting). The district continues to perform contact tracing and protocols have been modified to accommodate the increased numbers. Only students in isolation or quarantine have the option of attending remotely. Optional in-school screening testing is in its 11<sup>th</sup> week with approximately 120 students participating. N95 masks have been delivered to staff and test kits are available to those identified as close contacts for both student and staff. We will continue to assess and revise mitigation strategies as necessary. It was questioned whether contact tracing was necessary and that perhaps at this point in time the onus should be placed on the parents to confirm receipt of information.

Ms. Del Prete arrived (7:22 PM).

**Ad Hoc Student Culture and Community Committee Final Report** – Originally this committee was established in January of 2020 to focus on the staff and program resources necessary to address the changing and significant student behavioral needs at BRS. The Committee paused due to the pandemic and the transition of Superintendents. On September 20, 2021 the Board established a successor Ad Hoc Student Culture & Community Committee “to assess and evaluate student culture and community at Beecher Road School, including the identification of any resources necessary to address short-term and long-term goals to foster a supportive, respectful, and physically and emotionally safe learning environment,” with a report to the full BOE in January 2022.

The work of the committee focused on six (6) main themes: (1) Building Positive Student Culture through Professional Learning; (2) Building Positive Student Culture through Student Activities; (3) Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs; (4) Collecting Data Related to Student Disciplinary Referrals; (5) Collecting Data Related to Complaints of Student Bullying and/or Harassment (linked to revised BOE Policy 5131.911); and (6) Safe School Climate Committee at BRS. A new process for collecting data related to student disciplinary referrals was implemented in November of 2021. It was suggested that the changes in process be communicated to parents and the web site and handbook be updated accordingly.

Mid-Year Progress Update on School Goals – Superintendent Budd, Principal Analisa Sherman and Special Services Director Cheryl Kiesel provided an update. In September 2021, 6 District & 6 BRS goals were presented to the BOE.

District Goals are:

- The WSD will engage in a comprehensive strategic planning process to review and update mission, guiding principles, and goals to guide the district from 2022-2027.
- The WSD will begin a process of assessing climate related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and implementing policy and programs to address any unmet needs.
- The WSD will continue to implement enhanced protocols and procedures related to human resources.
- The WSD will update and revise its capital plan with transparency and feedback from Town leaders and community constituents.
- The WSD will review and update protocols and procedures for assessing the academic, social, and emotional achievement and growth of students with identified special needs, including enhanced communication of assessment results with families.
- The Board of Education of the WSD will effectively engage in professional development necessary for its effective functioning to achieve Board of Education roles and responsibilities.

School Goals:

- ❖ BRS will assess and address effectively the social and emotional needs of all students, including those returning from fully remote learning.
- ❖ BRS will expand and develop best practices for teaching and learning literacy.
- ❖ BRS will expand and develop best practices for culturally responsive teaching and learning, including in the social studies.
- ❖ BRS will expand best practices for using technology to enhance teaching and learning and to strengthen student engagement.
- ❖ BRS will expand professional sharing of best instructional practices, and data-based decision-making, linked to improved student outcomes.
- ❖ BRS will expand and develop best practices for effective engagement of, and communication with, families.

Updates were provided for each goal as well as specifics for continued work. It was noted that professional development initiatives should be enhanced instead of being optional. It is anticipated that the consultant contracted to coordinate and develop the strategic plan will provide additional information at the February meeting.

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted several creative art projects and that Grade 5 Band is up and running.

PTO Report – Ms. Prud'homme highlighted the successful Thanksgiving Food Drive which helped 17 BRS families in need as well as the Woodbridge Resident Assistance Fund, the purchase of virtual cameras for various grade levels, a digital subscription to the *Scholastic News* and the funding of seven (7) teacher grant proposals across all grade levels. Also noted were several future activities including virtual author visits, book swap week, Quassy Night, and the Grade 6 Graduation.

Board of Selectmen Update – Ms. McCreven reminded the Board that the BOS / BOF, while strongly supportive of education, have the responsibility to balance needs of other Town departments as well. Together they are all partners. Both Boards are looking forward to the receiving the formal budget presentation on January 25.

Facilities Committee – The next meeting of this committee is February 15 at 7:30 AM.

Finance Committee – Dr. Dahya reviewed the January 11 meeting which included review of the monthly financials and possible revisions to the 2022/23 budget in the area of medical benefits/expenses. The current deficit has been reduced to \$44,329, with the exception of special education which is an additional \$40,000. It is anticipated the increase in medical will be in the range of 20% for the coming year. Preliminary comparative quotes suggest savings of \$550,000+ could be achieved in substantially equivalent coverage through another carrier, or through the current carrier matching the quote. It was noted that the figures were not bonded and therefore ballpark estimates. There was general consensus to continue to explore efficiencies in the budget with a focus on non-instructional areas.

**MOTION #2 – PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE 2022/23 OPERATING BUDGET**

Move that we encourage the continued efforts of the Superintendent and the Interim Director of Business Services & Operations to pursue reductions to non-instructional benefits and operations costs, with a report on such efforts to the Finance Committee and the Board of Education at their regular meetings in February 2022.

Dr. Dahya  
Second by Mr. Hughes  
**UNANIMOUS**

It was pointed out that benefits for all town employees are designated in a separate line item in the town budget. The Board of Education is the only town department that must include its “fringe benefits” in its operating budget. If that were to be removed, similar to other town departments, the overall budget increase would be a single-digit increase.

CABE Liaison – Dr. Madonick invited Board members to attend the District 7 Legislative Breakfast in Branford on January 28.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations – Equity, Inclusion, Diversity

It is hoped that the presentation will include full survey results as it is important they understand what the community is saying. It was also suggested the presentation outline procedures and their effectiveness in addressing issues. Everyone was reminded of upcoming meetings – the February regular meeting will be February 28. Committee meetings - Facilities February 15 at 7:30 AM; Finance February 23 at 4:30 PM and Policy February 23 at 7:00 PM.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Open Choice – Superintendent Budd apprised the Board that there would be four vacancies in the fall as a result of current 6<sup>th</sup> grade slots. The district receives approximately \$4,000 for each student participating, which is applied towards transportation costs. The recommendation is to continue with 18 slots.

**MOTION #3 – OPEN CHOICE SLOTS**

Move that we adopt the Superintendent's recommendation to authorize a continued enrollment of 18 Open Choice students in the Woodbridge School District, replacing the 4 students who will graduate Grade 6 with 4 new students in Kindergarten.

Dr. Dahya  
Second by Ms. Williamson  
**IN FAVOR:** Dr. Dahya; Dr. Madonick, Ms. Piascyk, Dr. Ross; Dr. Strambler; and Ms. Williamson  
**AGAINST:** Ms. Del Prete, Ms. Hopkins, Mr. Hughes  
**MOTION PASSES 6-3-0**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

The Board entered Executive Session (9:51 PM).

**MOTION #4 – EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Move that we enter Executive Session to discuss pending claims and litigation, as well as to discuss negotiations with respect to collective bargaining, and invite the Superintendent to join the Board.

Dr. Madonick  
Second by Dr. Dahya  
**UNANIMOUS**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

**STAFF:** Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent.

The Board discussed pending claims and litigation, as well as negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

**MOTION #5 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

Move that we return to Public Session (10:32 PM).

Ms. Del Prete  
Second by Dr. Dahya  
**UNANIMOUS**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

**STAFF:** Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**MOTION #6 – SPECIAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST**

Move that we authorize the Superintendent to request from the Town of Woodbridge an appropriation equaling the payment the Town General Fund is expected to receive from the New Haven Board of Education for student-specific costs, to be applied against the Woodbridge School District's current expenses for special education 1-1 teachers' assistants, said request to be made as soon as possible subsequent to the Town's receipt of such payment.

Dr. Madonick  
Ms. Williamson  
**UNANIMOUS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:34 AM)**

Dr. Ross  
Second by Dr. Madonick  
**UNANIMOUS**

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board