

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Kristina Gilton, Katharine Leenders, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Rosemarie Weber, and Chase Alexander (Student Representative).

Absent Board Members: Katie O'Neill (Student Representative)

Rosemarie Weber called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Rosemarie Weber, Board Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting in-person as well as on-line with a special welcome to Principal Mike Dunn and Principal Heather Tanis, the new Middle School Principal. Ms. Weber extended congratulations to her and wished her well on the school year.

I.B. Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Burke welcomed everyone in attendance as well as on Zoom and extended a special welcome to Ms. Heather Tanis, Principal of Granby Memorial Middle School, and Mr. Michael Dunn, Principal who were in attendance to present their Continuous Improvement Plans to the Board.
- A summary of all of the Communication Focus Groups is posted on a special page on the website. There are also comments gathered on the surveys and data. Next steps in the process are to develop a District Communications Plan which will be presented to the Board next month for their approval.
- The first Learning Walk of the year was held on Monday and comprised of district faculty and administrators. Ms. Burke will let the Board know of the next one so they can join in.
- Work has begun on the first edition of the *Vision* for this school year which will be out the end of November/beginning of December. It was learned through the community surveys that many community members enjoy reading the *Vision* to get information regarding the schools.
- First round interviews for the Middle School Assistant Principal position will be held this week.
- PSATs for 8th graders will be held on Wednesday, October 25th.
- The first PTO Meeting of the year is on Thursday, October 26th at 6:30 p.m. at the Granby Public Library.
- The Character Day Parade is Tuesday, October 31st at Kelly Lane.
- The FY25 budget process is well underway and meetings with administrators begin on November 1st.
- The next regularly scheduled Board of Education Meeting will be held on November 1st and due to a conflict with this meeting space, the meeting will be held in the Board Room at Central Services. Please note there will not be a Zoom option for this meeting; however, GCTV will record the meeting.

I.C. Student Representative Reports

- Chase Alexander reported the Homecoming Dance was last Saturday, October 14th.
- The World Language Honor Societies held their first meetings this past week.
- The NHS Induction Ceremony is next Thursday, October 26th, at 7:00 p.m.
- PSATs were held last Wednesday. Other than the slight technical difficulties with the College Board, it was a success.
- A blood drive is on Tuesday, October 24th – volunteers are encouraged to sign up.
- Spirit week is well underway with homecoming games will be held this weekend.
- The College Fair was held today and students in all grades got the opportunity to talk to representatives of many schools and ask them questions.
- Sports report: Football is 4-1 and Stafford/East Windsor/Somers co-op comes to Granby for the homecoming game this Friday night, October 20th at 7 p.m.; boys' soccer is 10-3 and will host East Hampton this Saturday, October 21st, at 7 p.m. for the homecoming game; girls' soccer is 10-2 following a 5-1 win at East Granby yesterday and hosts Newington tonight for Senior Night; cross country is competing in the NCCC Conference Meet in Bolton this afternoon; volleyball is 11-4 and is playing Rockville tonight at 6:30 p.m.; and, field hockey is 6-3-2 defeating Simsbury in their most recent game and returning to action this Friday, October 21st, against Pomperaug.

I.D. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the September 2023 statement of accounts and stated there is an unfavorable forecast of \$248K for FY24 which is \$31K better than the previous month. Regular education is projected to be overbudget \$27K and special education is overbudget \$221K. Anna stated while the forecast has improved, it would be prudent to remember that the district is three months into the fiscal year and only one month into the school year so these forecasts will fluctuate. Student placement and expenses for both special education tuition and transportation are difficult to forecast. Revenue to the town is slightly unfavorable \$179K due to the percentage expected for the special education Excess Cost Grant. A higher amount was budgeted but the state has since changed that number. The forecast for the Quality & Diversity (Q&D) Fund continues to be positive. There is a strong opening balance due to a strong closing balance this year due to additional revenue from the Open Choice Program. The district is slightly over in expenses due to higher than anticipated enrollment in the magnet and voag schools. Revenue is slightly lower in the Q&D Fund due to the tuition from Open Choice with lower numbers than anticipated in Kindergarten which comes with additional funding. Donna Nolan stated the statement of accounts was reviewed in the Finance Subcommittee Meeting this evening. She also stated the overbudgeted forecast amount is offset by the cost sharing which comes from the state later in the year. Rosemarie Weber inquired if the state indicated what the change was in the Excess Cost Grant as to why it went from 88.2% to 76.3%. Anna stated the percentage is based on a ranking released by the State. However, the State did not budget enough to cover these percentages. Therefore, each town in certain rankings received a lower percentage. It was tricky. Anna stated that we will budget on the 76.3% number which she is more comfortable with anyway.

II. Public Comment

Kathy Kudish, Granby - Kathy stated she is the sister of high school teacher Karen Kudish and would like to see higher salaries for Granby teachers. She has two sophomores in Granby high school and is watching the exodus of great teachers with 9 teachers leaving at the high school this year. Salaries need to be competitive for this area and she would like the Board to consider cuts to the budget to allow for increase teacher salaries.

Julie Haefner, 286 Simsbury Road – Ms. Haefner informed the Board that she reviewed the Hartford area teacher salary scales for the Hartford area and was very surprised to learn that the only district that pays teachers lower than Granby is Hartford. She also shared that she found the Granby core values on the website noting specifically the core value of a high return on investment stating that quality educators are a high return on investment. Julie stated she plans to write to the Board of Finance Chair and encouraged others to do so requesting educators to receive competitive salaries.

Mike Kramarenko, Granby – Mr. Kramarenko shared his disappointment in the school rankings posted on the website that there was only one section above average and many others below average. He stated COVID is blamed and not an excuse as Granby was in session virtually. He also stated that handbooks should be updated with regard to cell phone usage for students. He also stated bullying issues are happening in front of teachers but are being resolved quickly. Mr. Kramarenko also stated that bus drivers are being asked why they are late to the elementary schools but fear attending a meeting to speak up as to the reasons they are late (traffic in town, traffic getting into the school parking lots, etc.). Additionally, Mr. Kramarenko inquired what will happen for the students who want to opt out of sex education and what is the plan for those students.

Susan Regan, Hungary Road, Granby – This is for statement only, by me Susan Regan, Hungary Rd., Granby. I respectfully will keep it to 3 minutes but I am requesting that my entire text commentary be included in the BOE minutes when published. I can provide a copy to whomever you advise to do so. I understand that no discourse will occur. Ms. Weber, I had sent you an email on Oct. 4th @ 9:59 am requesting that the subject of "parents' bill of rights" be added to that night's agenda or if it could not be done, to add it to the next BOE meeting of Oct. 18th (tonight). Since I had not heard from you that afternoon and I asked the questions again at public session on 10/4, you replied "no" and I asked "no to what?" You replied that you had not been able to read your emails that day and so you were declining any discussion going forward on the subject and that you would reply via email to me very shortly for which I got an email the next day Oct. 5th @ 12:05 pm where you replied as follows with cc's to Cheri Burke, Pauline Greer, Linda Powell, Mark Fiorentino, Jennifer Parsons, Colleen Bava, Mike Dunn, and Heather Tanis.

Rosemarie Weber Thursday, Oct 5, 12:05 pm
cc'd: Cheri, Pauline, Linda, Mark, Jennifer, Bava, Dunn, Tanis
Good afternoon, Susan.

Thank you for your email below and for mentioning this at public comment yesterday evening. It is not always possible for me to respond immediately during the work day; but your concerns are important to us, so I do my best to respond as quickly as is practical. With regard to your request that our Board of Education take up the matter of the Parents' Bill of Rights that you referenced below, I must respectfully decline. As you note below, this is a matter that was taken up by Governor DeSantis and the Florida legislature. Similarly, this is a matter that would be taken up by the Connecticut legislature and is not something that is appropriate for individual Boards of Education to consider as it has other statutory implications.

Regards, Rosemarie Weber

Then, I look forward to the day and would assume that since you and the Granby BOE adhere to the current state statutes in these matters, that when the "parents' bill of rights" law is passed by the legislature and the Governor signs it, that you would as strictly abide and adhere by that law. Thank you.

Beth Carroll, Quail Lane, North Granby – Ms. Carroll stated she gives her public comment as a constructive citizen with no children but as a concerned citizen. She participated in the communication focus groups and was happy to hear Ms. Burke say she is coming up with a communications plan. She would like to see timeframes and activities to help address some of things that were stated in the meetings. She would also like to see an update given in a more public arena. Ms. Carroll shared that she has viewed the curriculums online and appreciated being able to read them; however, has a lot of detailed questions about the curriculums and hopes that more depth in the curriculums will be made going forward. In particular, with regard to writing, the word "grammar" was not included in the curriculums for Grades 1-5 and should go along with writing and reading. She was also very surprised to see that American History does not show up until Grade 5. Lastly, Ms. Carroll requested that the public is not just told repeatedly that the special education program's budget is blown out of the water. If this is a situation that is state-wide issue then it should be addressed as such and needs to be respectfully detailed to public citizens.

Ali Zafar, Granby – Mr. Zafar stated he also advocates for teachers earning competitive salaries. Mr. Zafar extended accolades on a recent email sent by Mike Dunn/Cheri Burke providing resources for people with regard to some recent events. He stated there needs to be a balance for diversity and inclusion and books being read in the school system that raise awareness of other cultures and people and their walks of life. He fears that some books might be pushing ideology on impressionable young children.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Monica Logan that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 7:41p.m.

IV. Old Business

There was no Old Business to report.

V. New Business

V.A. Approval of Completion of Phase I School Building Project

On October 11, 2023, the Granby School Projects Building Committee accepted the Phase 1 building project at Granby Memorial High School as complete. The Board considered approving the completion of Phase 1 of the project. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Kristina Gilton that the Granby Board of Education accepts the State School Construction Project, #22DASY056052A0522, at Granby Memorial High School as complete. Donna Nolan authorized Anna to pay the last invoice on this project and the district can now go to the state to seek reimbursement. This motion passed unanimously at 7:42 p.m.

V.B. Secondary Continuous Improvement Plans

Ms. Heather Tanis, Middle School Principal, and Mr. Michael Dunn, High School Principal, presented their respective 2023-2024 Continuous Improvement Plans to the Board. Ms. Tanis reviewed *Board Goal #1, Student Achievement*, for students to achieve levels of proficiency or higher on the state assessment by monitoring growth and performance over time and providing high-quality, effective instruction. Ms. Tanis reviewed the STAR and SBAC data for current middle school students in Grades 6-8 and stated there are new pieces of data which include STAR data for fall and spring Math and ELA. The 2024 goal for Math is for 70% of students to reach goal and for 80% of students to reach goal in ELA. The instructional strategy for Math is

building thinking classrooms used in all math classrooms in conjunction with the Illustrative Math program and resources. Additionally, vertical spaces are being used to perform math work in classrooms. The Math Coach meets with Math Teachers weekly and ensures students receive targeted instruction. Boost groups were formed for 7th grade students particularly struggling with math. In addition, Ms. Tanis stated iXL is another diagnostic tool used. Ms. Weber inquired if teachers have access to the iXL data and Ms. Tanis stated they do. Kristina Gilton inquired about the numbers hovering in the 30th percentile if there is any correlation with a struggle in day-to-day work or test anxiety. Ms. Tanis stated she is seeing it all and is looking at the data where students are understanding the material in class but not on the assessment. Ms. Tanis moved on to ELA and stated she is excited the ELA Department is partnered with Teachers College. A Staff Developer will work with teachers for 5 more sessions. The ELA Coach also works with teachers. Ms. Tanis reviewed action steps stating the work will continue with professional development; reviewing student data regularly; coaches working with teachers; building thinking classrooms will continue to be highlighted; celebrate student achievement with students; embedding all of these practices in all areas.

With regard to *Board Goal #2, Community Engagement*, Ms. Tanis informed the Board about the GMMS Gazette which contains information about events for parents. PAWsitive recognition tickets were introduced this year where teachers and staff give tickets to students who are engaged, accountable, respectful and safe. Names get announced to the school during announcements. Ms. Tanis stated the GMMS Facebook page is active and throughout the year various photos of students and classrooms will be posted as well as an added tool in Powerschool that will provide morning announcements. She stated two (2) in-person PAC meetings were held and many parents are interested in working with teachers and for teachers. She also shared that grade level assemblies will be held this year for a combination of sharing information but also having fun in a large group.

Ms. Burke shared with the Board that broad data is deeply understood at the building level and principals have turnkeyed their respective information on to their staff members which is another level of foundational data. She stated the freshest data has been collected and it is no small feat to take large scale data and drill down and tonight is the second go at presenting data for instruction. She stated her charge as Superintendent is now what do we do; what additional data do we have; and what will we be doing with that data.

Mr. Michael Dunn stated he is pleased about the alignment of the goals in his plan and presented *Board Goal #1 -Student Learning and Achievement* for the high school stating that 85% of students earned a 3 or higher on AP tests and 92% of students take at least one college level course. Steps taken to achieve this goal are revising/implementing department benchmark measures to support student growth on grade level PSAT standards and skills; providing additional SAT practice and intervention opportunities for students; training teachers to use PSAT and benchmark data; continuing to develop Multi-Tiered Systems of Support; implementing a process for teacher teams to audit/revise curriculum in core areas; and, developing opportunities across disciplines for students to practice and use feedback. With regard to the student achievement data presented, current 10th grade students showed an increase in Math from 52% of students at goal in Grade 8 to 68% on the most recent PSAT and the goal is 75% for 2023 which is higher than the district goal of 70%. Goals this year for the current 11th grade class are in Math due to showing a decline from their 9th grade year when they were in 10th grade. There are also targeted groups for individual students. Ms. Weber inquired if there was a reason for the dip in Math in Grades 8 and 9 and Mr. Dunn stated Algebra was an area noted and more practice needs to be done on math questions as this is not done as much in Grades 8 and 9. He stated the same approach used in building thinking classrooms - groupings where teachers can intentionally place students around certain problems. He shared that math teachers share PSAT questions and discuss how they would tackle the problem then take that problem into the classroom to be solved by the students. With regard to evidence-based reading and writing, he shared a Words in Context program which enables students to practice on those types of problems. He also shared that ELA teachers developed an annotation rubric for close reading analysis annotation to help articulate with this means with regard to notes that help make students' thinking visible.

For *Board Goal #2 - Community Engagement* to improve frequency and effectiveness of communication that captures and celebrates our school community through online resources and platforms is obtained by engaging departments in providing regular communication through a variety of platforms; improving opportunities for communication and feedback; developing ways to celebrate students; continue to develop Career & Technology Education partnerships; and use quarterly PACs to focus on college/career path, student wellness and family engagement. Mr. Dunn shared the vehicles used for community engagement, such as, newsletters, the website, and the new broadcast studio.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

VI.A.1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication

This subcommittee has not met. Approved minutes are in the packet.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Donna Nolan reported this subcommittee met this evening and had a presentation by Brian Maltese, Athletic Director, and Mike Dunn on the repairs made to the baseball/softball fields to the irrigation system. A new sprinkler company will maintain the system. It will take time for the grass to grow but there should be improvement. Spoke to Dale/Shannon for the needs to maintain the grounds and they shared a need for an additional half-time maintenance person to help with the grounds. Last issue discussed was a lack of storage and they requested a consideration of a small cap expenditure for a storage shed. Two new shot clocks were installed at the high school and two scoreboards will be installed at the middle school. New physical fitness equipment was purchased from small cap. The high school track has ongoing needs. The track dipped and was repaired; however, other dips have been noticed in the track. Spoke about getting together a committee with the BOE, Building Committee and the Facilities Department for walkthrough of the schools and facilities to see the issues first-hand. Rosemarie Weber suggested using the Boardwalk facilities walkthrough during the Board Retreat for that purpose.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE"

Kristina Gilton reported that CREC Council met today focused on highlights and overviews of CREC student services and programs. CREC transportation is dealing with all the issues other school districts are dealing with. There were no specific legislative updates to share.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Whitney Sanzo reported that the GEF met on Monday evening and discussed the date for the GranBee which is April 19th. There will also be a potential concert in February and a grant was just awarded to the Granby Grunt Robotics Team. Whitney stated there is a lot of great collaboration happening.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Rosemarie Weber stated the calendar of events is as presented and inquired if a Board member can attend the PTO meeting on October 26th or the SEPTO Meeting in November to let her know.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VI.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

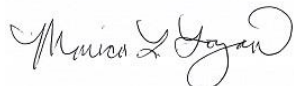
VII. Executive Session

The Board entered into an Executive Session to have a collective bargaining discussion. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Whitney Sanzo that the Granby Board of Education enter into an Executive Session to have a collective bargaining discussion. This motion passed unanimously at 8:48 p.m. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling to adjourn the Executive Session. This motion passed unanimously at 9:14 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monica Logan
Board Secretary