Approved 02.11.2025
by B.O.E.

Board of Education
January 28, 2025

The regular session meeting was live streamed on COX channel 16 or Frontier channel 6101 and may also be viewed on: YouTube® Channel, "Wethersfield Government Access TV" at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuf-C0gYVVxmD5iIfFTnsQ

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was streamed from Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Ms. Callan Carson, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Reilly, Ms. Walters, Mr. Weiner, Vice Chair Laccavole, and Chairperson Granato. **Also present were**: WPS Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; WPS Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum & Instruction, Sally Dastoli; WPS Director of Security & Residency, Michael Baribault; Webb School Principal, Ken Craig; Webb School Student Presenters: Luke Vitaliano, Sienna Vitaliano, Ariana Lumpkin, Veronica Parlante, Jenna Parlante, Isla Cattanach, Nora Worden, Colin Freitas, and Thiago Acuna; David Kuethman (Presenter regarding Blue Path Service Dogs); and WHS Student Representative, Anxhelika Deda. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Webb School Principal, Ken Craig led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

Webb School Principal, Ken Craig; and Webb School Student Presenters: Luke Vitaliano (coordinated a fundraiser to benefit St. Jude Children's Hospital), Sienna Vitaliano (created Tiger Club to benefit the World WildLife Fund), Ariana Lumpkin (started a fundraiser for the Red Cross Foundation to benefit hurricane victims), Veronica Parlante and Jenna Parlante (started a fundraiser for the CT Humane Society), Isla Cattanach (started a committee called the Teacher Appreciation Club), Nora Worden (started a committee called the Clean Up Crew), Colin Freitas and Thiago Acuna (started a playground beautification project) made a presentation "Webb Elementary School Student Showcase" which highlighted their student initiated projects.

Principal Craig noted tonight's presenters are representatives of many students at Webb School who are involved in student-initiated projects at the school.

Board Comments: Ms. Walters, Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Di Roberts, and Mrs. Granato commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. January 14, 2025 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mrs. Di Roberts made a correction to Page 8, Paragraph 1, Line 4.
Change "Glass and Berry" to "Glastonbury"

Ms. Callan Carson made a correction to Page 2, Paragraph 10, Line 1.
Change "Melena brtz" to "Milena Brodowicz"

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of January 14, 2025, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Sarah Gantley of 16 The Cartway thanked BOE Chair, Mrs. Granato and Webb School Principal, Ken Craig for responding to her concerns regarding protocols of the district concerning Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent accessibility in schools and on school property. She noted her questions, concerns and asked for protocol information. She commented that she wants to her more from Mr. Emmett and district officials regarding her concerns.

Michael Lipka of 51 Orchard Hill Drive commented favorably of the process and the information being presented in terms of forming the building project detail possibilities for the elementary schools. He suggested there be a rollout plan presented to the public that details timeframes during any potential new construction as well as any renovation phases for families to plan accordingly. He also suggested the creation of an organization for a "Yes Vote" be created at the appropriate time with BOE and Town Councilor members as change champions. In order not to lose sight of what is to be accomplished, he encouraged everyone to think strategically and with long-term vision for the town.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett noted his appreciation of public comment and commented on the process with ICE and exactly where WPS is with the matter. He commented on legal obligations to both ICE and with students under FERPA. WPS and Wethersfield Town Council have worked on the matter.

Notification protocols are established with Mr. Emmett and WPS Director of Security & Residency, Michael Baribault when dealing with ICE agents. The building principal and/or secretary would immediately notify Mr. Emmett and Mr. Baribault. Judicial/Administrative warrant would have to be produced by the agent, and the legal firm of Shipman and Goodwin (attorney for WPS) would be contacted for further information. Additionally, there is a policy in place for a non-public school. Mr. Emmett noted WPS will continue its obligation to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all of our students. Additional information is forthcoming, as a PDF form from the State of Connecticut arrived this afternoon, but it has to be translated before releasing it to the Wethersfield community. Mr. Emmett also noted that information will be communicated should an event occur.

Mr. Emmett explained his understanding that the lunch program and title grants are currently funded through July. Mr. Emmett is hopeful that the government's decision to pause federal grants will be lifted and that there is clarification going forward as to exactly what funds/grants are being frozen. More information is expected.

WPS Nurse Supervisor, Elda Marcelynas sent out a communication today via *ParentSquare* noting RSV and COVID cases are declining, but Influenza A cases are very prevalent. There has been communication with Mr. Emmett and Custodial Maintenance Supervisor, Mr. Salazar, noting the importance for maintenance staff to wipe down high touch areas, including water fountains and door knobs in the schools. Those who are sick were reminded to stay home in order to avoid the spread of illness.

Mr. Emmett noted the variety of recommended motions around curriculum that the Board was to consider during tonight's meeting and gave a huge shout out to all of WPS teaching staff for the large amount of work they completed in support of the curriculum matters. He also noted the motion the Board will consider for the future placement of a therapy dog at Webb Elementary School (the motion included a presentation with a question-and-answer session for that motion).

6. <u>Action Items</u>

a. <u>Recommended Motion</u>: Approval of the Future Placement of a Therapy Dog through Blue Path Service Dogs at Webb Elementary School

Mrs. Granato MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education Approve a commitment with Blue Path Service Dogs for the future placement of a facility therapy dog at Webb Elementary School. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner.

Discussion: There was a presentation from Webb School Principal, Ken Craig; and David Kuethman regarding Blue Path Service Dogs followed by a question-and-answer session with the presenters, Mr. Emmett, Board Members: Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Weiner, Ms. Callan Carson, Ms. Walters, and Mrs. Granato.

Mr. Laccavole MOVED to **Table Action Item 6.a. Recommended Motion:** Approval of the Future Placement of a Therapy Dog through Blue Path Service Dogs at Webb Elementary School. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED 6-1 IN FAVOR OF as follows: Aye: M. Callan Carson, J. Di Roberts, J. Reilly, J. Weiner, M. Laccavole, B. Granato; Nay: L. Walters.

b. Recommended Motions: (Note: 29 Recommended Motions in Agenda Item 6. b.)

1. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Water Safety

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Water Safety. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan Carson and VOTED unanimously. Discussion: Mrs. Dastoli commented. Board Comments: Ms. Callan Carson commented.

2. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Fitness Foundations

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Fitness Foundations. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

3. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Racket Sports

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Racket Sports. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner VOTED unanimously.

4. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Team Sports

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Team Sports. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

5. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Lifelong Activity and Fitness

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Lifelong Activity and Fitness. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole and Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

6. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Foundations of Well-Being

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Foundations of Well-Being. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

7. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Life Skills for a Health Future

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Life Skills for a Health Future. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

8. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Balanced Living

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Balanced Living. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously.

9. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Health for Life

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Health for Life. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Laccavole and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

10. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Integrated Arts

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Integrated Arts. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

11. Approval of WHS Course Modification: From Costume and Design to Fashion Design II

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: From Costume and Design to Fashion Design II. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

12. Approval of WHS Course Modification: From CCSU ECE EDT 120: A Design and Technology Experience to CCSU CE EDT 102: Design and Production of Effective Instructional Materials

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: From CCSU ECE EDT 120: A Design and Technology Experience to CCSU CE EDT 102: Design and Production of Effective Instructional Materials. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

13. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: CCSU CE TH 110: Introduction to Theatre

Mr. Weiner MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: CCSU CE TH 110: Introduction to Theatre. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Laccavole and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

14. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: CCSU CE FIN 210: Personal Finance

Mr. Weiner MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: CCSU CE FIN 210: Personal Finance. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts and Ms. Callan Carson commented.

15. Approval of WHS Course Modification: From AP Literature and Composition to UConn ECE ENG 1007: Seminar and Studio in Academic Writing and Multimodal Composition: Literature

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: From AP Literature and Composition to UConn ECE ENG 1007: Seminar and

Studio in Academic Writing and Multimodal Composition: Literature. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

16. Approval of WHS Course Modification: From Introduction to Computer Science to Video Game Development

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: From Introduction to Computer Science to Video Game Development. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts and Ms. Callan Carson commented.

17. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: AP United State Government and Politics

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: AP United State Government and Politics. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Laccavole and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

18. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Sports in American History and Culture

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Sports in American History and Culture. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato and Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

19. Approval of WHS Course Deletion: US History – Level H

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Deletion: US History – Level H. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

20. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Advanced Mathematical Decision-Making

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Advanced Mathematical Decision-Making. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

21. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: Spanish for Native Speakers

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: Spanish for Native Speakers. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

22. Approval of WHS Course Proposal: UConn ECE MUSI 1003: Popular Music and Diversity in American Society

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Proposal: UConn ECE MUSI 1003: Popular Music and Diversity in American Society. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

23. Approval of WHS Course Modification: From Honors Band to Symphonic Band

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: From Honors Band to Symphonic Band. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

24. Approval of WHS Course Modification: Nutrition & Food Technology III

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Course Modification: Nutrition & Food Technology III. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

25. Approval of WHS Curriculum: Nutrition & Food Technology I

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Curriculum: Nutrition & Food Technology I. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

26. Approval of WHS Curriculum: 3-D Design

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Curriculum: 3-D Design. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

27. Approval of WHS Curriculum: Digital Imaging

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the WHS Curriculum: Digital Imaging. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

28. Approval of SDMS Curriculum: Science 7

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the SDMS Curriculum: Science 7. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

29. Approval of SDMS Curriculum: Social Studies 7

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the SDMS Curriculum: Social Studies 7. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts and Mrs. Granato commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Announcements/Information

There were no announcements/information matters.

b. Presentation Regarding Wethersfield Public Schools Elementary Building Update

Advisory School Building Committee Chair, Russ Morin provided an update regarding the project proposal for the WPS elementary school buildings. He noted meetings with all stakeholders have taken place. The plan for having four (4) K-4 schools and one (1) school (Webb School) as a school for Grades 5 and 6 has been closely looked at. There are three (3) locations in town where swing space can be located. [Swing space is a building that would house students as their current school building is being renovated and/or rebuilt. The three (3) Parcels of land that are available for swing space are: Standish Park/Stillman area in Old Wethersfield, Kycia Farm, and Highcrest School property.] There is a meeting on Monday, February 3rd at 6:00 p.m. at Stillman with project consultant firm, TSKP, who will recommend locations, next steps, and a two (2) referendum process. This Committee will come up with recommendations that will be brought to the Board of Education and Town Council. Transparency and communication are open and critical to this process. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato, Ms. Callan Carson, and Ms. Walters commented.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

CREC Council (01.15.25 @ 11:30 a.m.): Mrs. Granato reported Executive Director, Greg Florio spoke of CREC's budget process, which is developed based on projected revenue, and is currently being drafted by CREC divisions/programs over the next several months. An audit committee will review budgets and recommend them for approval to the full board. Legislative priorities for this season are focused on magnet school funding, as the student-centered funding formula was partially implemented last legislative session but needs clarifying action in this current session. There was a discussion of the history of the mandated magnet school funding which highlighted the state's lack of support, over the past decade, for its share of the cost. CREC will continue to fight during this legislative session for balance in that formula.

Student Programs & Services Committee (01.21.25 @ 6:00 p.m.): Mrs. Di Roberts reported that the courses approved by the Board this evening that were vetted by this committee reflected many hours of ongoing efforts from teachers to engage and challenge students in rigor, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving.

Finance & Operations Committee (01.28.25 @ 6:00 p.m.): Mr. Laccavole reported the Board is currently $105,000.00 under budget due to potential savings from the result of lower cost new hires replacing teacher resignations and retirements. There is some overspending on substitute teachers and retroactive payments related to the new Secretary/Paraeducator/Tutor contracts recently ratified. The Committee began discussions pertaining to the Board budget for the next school year. The first of three workshops for the budget will be held in the Stillman Building on Saturday, February 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Board of Education Special Session Meeting – Budget Workshop (02.01.25 @ 9:00 a.m.), Human Resources & Personnel (02.03.25 @ 6:00 p.m.), Student Programs & Services Committee (02.04.25 @ 6:00 p.m.)

9. Public Comment

Sarah Gantley of 16 The Cartway commented unfavorably of the Board's decision to table the vote pertaining to the service dog for Webb Elementary School. She asked the Board to communicate the exact cost needed, as the Webb PTO can respond to that funding need.

10. Board Comment

Mrs. Di Roberts commented favorably of the PTO meeting she recently attended at Charles Wright School. The school will hold "Read Aloud Day" and "Global Play Day" on the same day. It was noted that if there are no snow days, the above event would fall on the 100th day of school (which is also celebrated). The Weekend Backpack Program continues its expansion, with Trinity Church offering additional space for storing items. Fresh and frozen foods can now be accepted due to the availability of mini-refrigerators (and a freezer that was donated by Charles Wright School Principal, Glenn Horter). Boy Scout Pack 246 held a food drive last month for the program. A $3,000.00 grant from the Greater Together-Harford Foundation for Giving was also received for the backpack program. PTO members are looking at the possibility of pursuing a grant from *Foodshare* for equipment for the program.

Ms. Callan Carson thanked everyone who worked really hard to bring forward the new courses/curriculum items approved this evening. She encouraged students to take the AP and college credit courses being offered at WHS. She commented on World Play Day (February 5th) and looks forward to hearing about what the schools are doing on that day. She commented and explained her rationale as to why additional information is needed before a decision can be made about the district allowing a therapy dog at Webb School.

Mr. Laccavole noted his appreciation for the multiple public speakers this evening and indicated that the Board hears them, values their input, and respects their opinions.

Ms. Walters commented on Webb School PTO having a capital planning budget and noted that she looks forward to having that information shared with the Board as the therapy dog matter is discussed.

Mr. Emmett shared that a judge has blocked the freeze recently made on federal grants and that this issue will continue to be monitored by WPS.

Mrs. Granato commented on the Keane coalition (Keane Foundation, WPD, WPS, Wethersfield Library, Wethersfield Social Services) meeting recently held. There was a review of the Keane After School Program, the Hands-On-Learning Science Program, and the ENCORE Program. The After School Winter Program has 9,931 enrollments. The five (5) elementary schools began rehearsals for musicals (*Shrek, Frozen, Adams Family, Willie Wonka,* and *SpongeBob*) that will be performed in the elementary schools. A new club focusing on screen-free activities for

children has been started as the result of the community's inspiration from reading the book, Anxious Generation. The ENCORE program (work on social, emotional, physical, and academics) at SDMS has 26 students. Wethersfield Public Library Director, Brooke Barry, commented on the story walk in Wintergreen Woods as well as library renovations. Book news is available on the library's website. Mrs. Granato noted the Mayor's Charity Ball is Friday, February 14th at the Keeney Center. Proceeds will go toward Wethersfield Food Bank and to the American Veteran's Traveling Tribute Wall that will be in Wethersfield beginning on September 11th. The Wethersfield Kid Mayor and Wethersfield Kid Chair essay contest has begun, with Mayor Lesser and Chair Granato speaking at assemblies for grades 5 and 6. Fifth and sixth graders will soon have the information for the contest. The contest writing ends February 28th. Mrs. Granato thanked Kristen Underhill and Sally Dastoli for their help with flyers and contest set up. Focus group and community surveys have been completed in the superintendent search process. Those who participated were thanked. Applications for superintendent are due February 12th. The consultant firm, CES, will put together our candidates' profile from all the input that has been given. Then interviews will follow in March. The Board will provide updates on the process.

WHS Student Representative, Anxhelika Deda noted that midterms exams were completed last week. She and her project partners from DECA Club completed their digital wellness and safety community awareness project that included a social media detox day the Friday prior to midterm exams. DECA members will soon submit their projects for the State competition. Cap and gown measurements were taken today for the senior class members. Next week is 8th Grade Night at WHS. WHS clubs and sports are also planning ahead for their activities. The National English Honor Society is starting up a tutoring center focused specifically on help with writing and essays. The Spanish Honor Society Spanish is beginning the signup process for its "Culture Night" on February 26th. The Wethersfield Historical Society is having a straw-hat decorating event on Saturday. Decorated hats will be worn by performers in the upcoming musical "Hello Dolly" at WHS.

11. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business discussed.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Weiner MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary