

Board of Education
December 13, 2022

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, December 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. and was streamed from the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Healy, Mr. Laccavole, Dr. Regan-Lefebvre, Mr. Reilly, and Chairperson Carey. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; Business Manager, Matthew Kozaka; WPS Director of Security & Residency (WPS Liaison--COVID-19 Response Team), Michael Baribault; Wethersfield Public Schools Director of Special Education, John Karzar; The Keane Foundation’s “Keane on Kids” After School Enrichment Program Director, Caroline Fazzina; and WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina.

Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

“Keane on Kids” After School Enrichment Program Director, Caroline Fazzina led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations

Mr. Emmett noted a performance by WHS Choraliers was planned this evening. However, part of the soprano section has members who have covid, and therefore, the performance was cancelled. He encouraged the public to view online the taping of their recent performance and noted the group was featured on WTNH-Channel 8 last week and WFSB-Channel 3 this week. He gave a shout out to three (3) WHS graduates and former WHS Choraliers who stepped in to perform on WFSB-Channel 3

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. November 22, 2022 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of November 22, 2022, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Carey abstaining.

4. Public Comment

Julie Todden, 339 Brimfield Road read her prepared statement (and submitted same) to the Board noting her child's experiences as a victim of racism and stated that those who are racist should be held accountable for racist conduct.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett commented on the 2021-2022 Next Generation Accountability indices which were released last Thursday from the State Department of Education (see CT Dept. of Education website). The scale is from 1 to 5 in subject areas. Two (2) of our district schools (WHS and Webb School) improved from category 3 to category 2. SDMS, Charles Wright School, and Highcrest School each held steady at category 3. Hanmer School has again been named as a school of distinction. More information about the results will be presented at the Board of Education meeting on January 24 2023

Mr. Emmett noted the number of covid cases has increased with fifteen (15) cases reported at WHS over the past two (2) days. The cases are not the result of a specific activity/sport. The information has been reported to the CCHD and State Department of Public Health. The custodial staff will continue to pay extra attention with cleaning the high touch/high traffic areas in the school buildings. If district staff and families are traveling during the break, covid testing before and after the trips, as well as mask wearing, is encouraged. Covid test kits continue to be available from the district's school nurses. WPS School Nurse Supervisor, Elda Marcelynas alerted WPS staff and families (through *ParentSquare*) of the presence of flu and RSV cases in the district.

Mr. Emmett indicated the WHS Winter Sports season has begun and noted the basketball, hockey, and Boys' Swim & Dive are practicing and having games.

Mr. Emmett mentioned there was a meeting held at Highcrest School with as many as 45 parents from across the district in attendance which resulted with insight and feedback to the referendum (plan for the elementary schools) and next steps. The taking of the work on this subject and creating a broader committee with Town Council liaisons, as well as representation from the elementary schools, was discussed. The next meeting will be publicized once the date is set.

Mr. Emmett has spoken with Charles Warrington from Colliers International (who developed Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the plan), and Mr. Warrington will attend a Facilities and Maintenance subcommittee meeting to talk about next steps for the elementary school buildings.

Mr. Emmett noted there is a Social Justice Coalition meeting next Thursday, December 22, 2022, 5:30 p.m. at WHS. He also noted the Administration and WPS equity teams got together today for a ninety-minute session with CERC at the Community Center to learn about bias during holidays.

Mr. Emmett reminded everyone that tonight's meeting is the last meeting for 2022 and wished everyone a happy holiday season.

6. Action Items

There were no items.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Keane on Kids After School Program Update

Keane on Kids After School Enrichment Program Director, Caroline Fazzina provided an update on the 1) after-school programs, and 2) hands-on science enrichment classes *The Keane Foundation* has supported to enrich the science curriculum in the schools. She mentioned the foundation is working on securing a \$300,000 State Department of Education grant (ARPA funds) and will inform Mr. Emmett and the Board as to how the grant allocation will be utilized once the funds are available. Board Comments: Mr. Carey, Mrs. Granato, and Dr. Regan-Lefebvre commented.

b. First Read of Policy Updates

Mr. Emmett noted the Committee forwarded a series of policy updates (required by statutes) prepared by Shipman & Goodwin as a First Reading to the Board this evening. Final action by the Board regarding the policy updates will be taken at the Board's next regular meeting in

January 2023. Mr. Carey informed Board members that they are to email Mr. Emmett with any questions regarding the policy updates. Additional updates to policies (based on statues) will continue to be made through the end of this school year. He thanked the Policy & Planning Committee for their hard work.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

There were no meetings.

b. Meetings Scheduled

CREC Council – 12.21.22 meeting has been cancelled

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comment

Julie Todden, 339 Brimfield Road continued her reading of her prepared statement (and submitted same) to the Board noting her child's experiences as a victim of racism and stated that those who are racist should be held accountable for racist conduct.

11. Board Comments

Mr. Carey commented favorably of the meeting regarding the referendum that was recently held at Highcrest School with parents from across the district and thanked Sarah Smith for putting that meeting together. He noted that going forward, a monthly meeting (on a rotational basis among the elementary schools) will be held regarding the elementary school buildings and that the next meeting will be held at Charles Wright School. He noted that tomorrow night (December 14th) at 8:00 p.m. is the opening night for WHS Hockey Team's season, and first responders will be honored. There will be raffles at the event, and proceeds from the gate will benefit first responders.

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre commented on the statements made by Ms. Todden during the public comment portions of tonight's meeting, thanked Ms. Todden for speaking, and commented on Board member responsibilities. She also commented favorably of the meetings and projects of Hanmer School's PTO.

Mrs. Granato commented on the statements made by Ms. Todden during the public comment portions of tonight's meeting and noted that the matter will be investigated. She noted the *Wethersfield Education Foundation* (WEF) and the Career Advisory Board are looking for parent citizen volunteers and board members. She wished happy holidays to everyone.

Mrs. Di Roberts concurs with the comments made by Dr. Regan-Lefebvre and Mrs. Granato regarding the comments made by Ms. Todden during the public comment portions of tonight's meeting. She mentioned Gov. Malloy announced "Career Connect" and noted the possibility of the Career Advisory Board using this resource to help create pathways to careers for students.

Mrs. Di Roberts inquired and Mr. Emmett noted that attempts are being made for a Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting next week with Chuck Warrington (Colliers International) and Mike Zuba (SLAM Collaborative).

Mr. Cascio Mr. Casio expressed positive wishes to Ms. Todden regarding her daughter. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Mr. Reilly commented favorably of the Career Advisory Board meeting he recently attended and that Mark Danaher continues the focus of expanding programs for WHS students.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John F. Cascio, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary