Approved 11.08.2022
by B.O.E.

Board of Education
October 25, 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, October 25, 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. Drew, Mrs. Granato, 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; WHS Principal, Siobhan O'Connor; Wethersfield Public Schools Director of Special Education, John Karzar; Wethersfield Instructional Supervisor SPED PK-6, Elizabeth Freitas; Town of Wethersfield/Wethersfield Public Schools Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin; Occupational Therapist (Charles Wright School, Emerson-Williams School, and Hanmer School), Barbara Cordone; Speech and Language Pathologist - Emerson-Williams School, Melissa Florio; and WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Cascio led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations

WHS Principal, Siobhan O'Connor recognized a group of WHS students for their academic achievements. Grace D. Bradley, Bailey H. Cox, Thomas Croce, and Abigail Albright are named commended students in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program, as they scored among the top fifty thousand (50,00) on the PSAT exam they took last year. Abigail Montes received the National Hispanic Recognition Award from *The College Board* for having a 3.5 GPA or higher, a high score on the PSAT, and/or scoring 3 or higher on two (2) Advanced Placement exams.

Board Comments: Mrs. Granato, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Carey commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. October 11, 2022 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mrs. Drew MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of October 11, 2022, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously, Mr. Cascio abstaining.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett indicated a total of four (4) covid cases with students have been reported to the district from last Friday through today (WHS – 3, E-W – 1). The district continues to monitor and reports to DPH as required. He encouraged families to ask for test kits from the school nurses and noted there are fifty-five (55) cases of kits at WHS.

Mr. Emmett noted that the Wethersfield Police Department continues with training exercises at SDMS **after the school day** this week. Mr. Emmett explained that this training is akin to WPD training that occurred in August at WHS with the CREST team. CREST is a regional response force that includes officers from WPD, and the training involves using real-world environments. He thanked the team for their efforts.

Mr. Emmett indicated that lockdown drills are being done at the schools with assistance from WPS Director of Security & Residency, Michael Baribault and law enforcement. The State of CT has provided the district guidance pertaining to swatting incidents (no such incidents have occurred in district), and Mr. Baribault and law enforcement have also given input regarding the issue.

Mr. Emmett mentioned that the Board will be considering this evening elementary and secondary school music curriculum updates. He noted that he recently had the opportunity to sit in on a math lesson (pilot math program) of Ms. Sullivan's Grade 6 math class at Charles Wright School and enjoyed hearing feedback from her and her students.

Mr. Emmett gave a shout out to WHS Football Team members who recently visited their elementary schools to read to students and reconnect with their elementary school teachers for the 2nd Annual "Wethersfield Football Tackles Literacy." He thanked Coach McKinnon and Wethersfield Football Boosters for their assistance in making the event happen.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of New WHS Curriculum: High School Concert Band

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the proposed high school concert band curriculum at WHS. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously. Discussion: Mr. Emmett and Dr. Regan-Lefebvre commented. Board Comments: Mrs. Drew and Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of New WHS Curriculum: High School Orchestra

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the proposed high school orchestra curriculum at WHS. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Cascio and VOTED unanimously.

c. Recommended Motion: Approval of New SDMS Curriculum: Middle School Band

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the course outline and curriculum proposed for band at SDMS. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously.

d. Recommended Motion: Approval of New SDMS Curriculum: Middle School Strings

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the course outline and curriculum for strings at SDMS. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Drew and VOTED unanimously.

e. Recommended Motion: Approval of New Music Curriculum: Elementary Band

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the course outline and curriculum proposed for elementary band. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Cascio and VOTED unanimously.

f. Recommended Motion: Approval of New Music Curriculum: Elementary Strings

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the course outline and curriculum proposed for elementary strings. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Drew and VOTED unanimously.

g. <u>Recommended Motion</u>: <u>Approval of New Music Curriculum: Elementary General Music</u>

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve adoption of the course outline and curriculum proposed for elementary general music. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Annual Class Size Report Presentation

Mr. Emmett provided a report regarding class size in the elementary and secondary schools, including Wethersfield Transition Academy. <u>Board Comments</u>: Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Drew, Dr. Regan-Lefebvre, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Carey commented. Ms. O'Connor also commented.

b. CITES Presentation

Wethersfield Instructional Supervisor SPED PK-6, Elizabeth Freitas; Occupational Therapist (Charles Wright School, Emerson-Williams School, and Hanmer School), Barbara Cordone; Speech and Language Pathologist - Emerson-Williams School, Melissa Florio; and Town of Wethersfield/Wethersfield Public Schools Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin made a presentation regarding the Center on Inclusive Technology & Education Systems (CITES). The CITES grant allows our district to participate as 1 of 7 districts in the country by using evidence-based practices and providing feedback on what works to build an inclusive technology ecosystem that will help all children learn. The panel spoke about the importance of partnerships for the process of creating CITES framework and commented about building curriculum to work for all students, teaching the curriculum, and engaging families with the education process by communication (i.e., *ParentSquare* App). <u>Board Comments</u>: Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Drew, Mr. Reilly, Mrs. Granato, Dr. Regan-Lefebvre, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Carey commented.

c. Announcements/Information

Chairperson Carey reviewed the items in Board Members' packets and reminded Committee Chairpersons/Board members to review their calendars with scheduled dates and times pertaining to upcoming meetings, including the Board Retreat. He advised Board members to verify their attendance at Committee Meetings with the Committee's Chairpersons, the Administrative

Chairperson, and Mr. Emmett. He encouraged email use by Board members for communicating meeting attendance and ensuring a quorum for committee meetings.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Facilities & Maintenance Committee: Mr. Cascio reported the well-attended meeting included: Mr. Emmett, BOE Chairman, Mr. Carey; Vice Chairman, Mr. Cascio; and Board members Mrs. Granato, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Laccavole, and Mr. Cascio. Mr. Emmett reported the HVAC systems in the schools are being tested. Mr. Cascio noted the HVAC grant opportunity brought to the table by Mr. Emmett and Mr. Kozaka was discussed, and it was learned that the size and scope of school buildings are some of the determining factors for grant eligibility [a qualified school has to be one that has not had any renovations in less than twenty (20) years]. The portable unit at Charles Wright School is not yet completed, and the plumbing matter at the Stillman Building is not yet fixed. Other matters discussed included: 1) the cleaning of vents at the Stillman building; 2) School playgrounds and accessibility needs to access school playgrounds; and 3) Snow removal and treatment of school grounds during the winter months. The Committee concurred that there should be ongoing and open dialogue with the Town to better discuss the maintenance of school buildings. Mr. Emmett has reached out to the Town Manager for purposes of scheduling a meeting to get everyone up to speed with the interior spaces in the school buildings. The next Facilities & Maintenance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 16th.

CREC Council: Mrs. Granato noted CT State Department of Education - Regional School Choice Office - Director, Robin Cecere provided an update on the *Sheff vs. O'Neill* settlement, Phase 5 (the present ten-year term for CREC magnet schools). The objective for this phase is noted in her *PowerPoint* presentation that can be found on the CREC website: https://www.crec.org

CREC Executive Director, Greg Florio introduced Cara Hart, Program Manager of the CREC Cooperative Purchasing Program who spoke to the various products and services available on CREC's Marketplace. The products and services are available to CREC's thirty-five (35) surrounding town members. CREC Council Chairperson, Lydia Tedone gave an update on the CREC Foundation and their fundraising successes. There was a financial update, and Council

members shared what alternate sources of energy are being discussed or implemented to reduce energy costs.
Information about CREC and CREC meetings (Minutes) can be found on the CREC website: https://www.crec.org

Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative (WECC): Mrs. Granato noted many Town leaders and citizens attended the Annual Meeting on October 18th held at the Keeney Center and commented favorably of the meeting. Wethersfield Parent Ambassador, Jamain Naidoo gave the welcome message. WECC Coordinator, Jim Welch; and Town of Wethersfield/Wethersfield Public Schools Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin spoke of WECC's accomplishments, birth rates in Wethersfield, preschool attendance, test scores, WECC social media presence, funding, and the valuable parent leaders of WECC. There was a presentation made by Family Resource and Development Center, LLC's Clinical Director and Social Worker, Lauren Cardone; Wethersfield Parent Ambassador, Maria Vasquez; Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet member, Ivoni Montes; and Mr. Lovey Brown about social and emotional support for our children. WECC also celebrated its ten (10) years of working for Wethersfield's youngest citizens.

Student Programs & Services Committee: Dr. Regan-Lefebvre reported there was a discussion pertaining to the new curriculum proposed by the music department that was voted on by the Board this evening and that there was a full demonstration of the *ParentSquare* App, including its translation features. The Committee also heard feedback provided by parents regarding the App.

Finance & Operations Committee: Mrs. Drew noted it was reported that district is currently $96K under budget. She indicated there were discussions pertaining to the lunch program and transportation issues (including the gradual rollout of an App parents can use to track their child's bus location).

b. Meetings Scheduled

Student Programs & Services Committee, CREC Council, Policy & Planning Committee

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comment

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

11. Board Comments

Mr. Cascio commented favorably of the Webb PTO Meeting he attended on October 19th and noted he looks forward to the next meeting. He noted the group is very engaged and that many events continue to be scheduled such as poinsettia plant sale, CT Wolf Pack game, and cookie/pie sales.

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre expressed Happy Diwali wishes. [Diwali, which began yesterday (Monday, October 25th), is a Hindu festival that can last up to 5 days.] She noted clocks will be turned back soon (daylight saving's time ending) and urged everyone to pay extra attention to their surroundings and how they operate vehicles in consideration of pedestrians and cyclists.

Mrs. Granato thanked Judy Keane (President of the Keane Foundation) for bringing the annual Cove Side Carnival to Wethersfield again this year. Keane Foundation fundraising has made it possible for the After School Programs in the district, and the Keane Foundation's work is much appreciated.

Mrs. Drew thanked Mr. Carey for his efforts in assigning Board Members to the district schools.

Mr. Reilly noted his attendance at the Career Advisory Board (CAB) meeting held yesterday evening. Mr. Danaher has reached out to 108 companies with the hope that approximately 70-75 companies would commit to participating in the WHS Career Fair, which is scheduled for April 25th in 2023. There are three (3) upcoming Lunch and Learn sessions, and mock interview sessions are planned for January. Discussions from last month continued about ideas for increasing membership (such as student involvement, higher education representatives, local/district/state officials, rotating members every few years). The idea of forming subcommittees and how CAB can move forward with that process was also discussed.

WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina commented favorably of the 1) Wethersfield Football Team's initiative "Tackle Literacy" that occurred in the elementary schools wherein WHS football players visited the elementary schools they attended, read to students, and reconnected with teachers; and 2) Wellness Center created by the School Counseling Office at WHS and the Intervention Team. He noted there is an upcoming Professional Development Day for the WHS staff to learn about/review/discuss curriculum changes and scaffolded support strategies. He also noted there were visits to WHS from CT State Representative- Amy Morrin Bello (addressing Spanish International Society students), U.S. House Representative (CT-1st District)-John B. Larson (addressing WHS Young Democrats); and Republican candidate for U.S. House Representative (CT-1st District), Dr. Larry Lazor (addressing WHS Young Republicans). He noted the dates for WHS Drama Club's upcoming production, "*Our Town*" that will be performed in the WHS Auditorium on November 10th, 11th, and 12th at 7:30 p.m., as well as a 3:00 p.m. performance on November 13th.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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John F. Cascio, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary