Board of Education
November 28, 2023

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, November 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting was streamed from the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Ms. Callan Carson, Mr. Carey, Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Hernandez-Williams, Mr. Reilly, Ms. Walters, Mr. Weiner, Vice Chairperson Laccavole; and Chairperson Granato. Also present were: WPS Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; WPS Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum & Instruction, Sally Dastoli; WPS Business Manager, Matthew Kozaka; WPS Director of Security & Residency, Michael Baribault; WPS Director of Special Education, John Karzar; WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin; WHS Principal, Siobhan O'Connor; SDMS Principal, Tara Yusko; WHS Assistant Principal, Stephanie Jacques; SDMS Assistant Principal, Scott Voisine; [WHS Leadership Team Presenters: Michael Bowles (PE/Art/Music DL); Cindy Bryan (Counseling DL); Julie Freel (Special Education DL); Dan Jensen (Mathematics DL); Matt Mangino (World Language DL); Stephanie McKenna (English DL); Kim Niemiec (Social Studies DL); Chris Palazzo (Business/Tech/FACS DL); Kimberly Troy (Science DL).] [SDMS Leadership Team Presenters: Carrie Anzidei (Crimson Team); Kyleen Casasanta (Turquoise Team); Kristen Fortuna (Magenta Team); Emily Guerrera (UA); Lisa Mandeville (Orange) and Kelli Russo (Indigo Team).]; WHS Co-Student Representative, Mary Dunn. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairperson, Mr. Laccavole led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

WHS Principal, Siobhan O'Connor recognized and congratulated a group of WHS students for their academic achievements. Present at this meeting were Thomas B. Clark, Samuel B. Corwin,

Tess L. Parker, Payton E. Roth, and Oliver Geiss are named commended students in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program for their exceptional academic promise as demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT NMSQT test they took in 2022. These WHS students are among the 34,000 students Nationwide who met the national commended student selection index score of 207. This means that they scored in the top first percentile from the 4 million students taking this test. Additionally, Principal O'Connor noted the following students, who were unable to attend tonight's meeting, as honorable mentions in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program: Gabriel Frazzini Kendrick, Camille McWilliams, Carolina Parker, Solani Polar, and Noah Torrance. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. November 14, 2023 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of November 14, 2023, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Angela Egan, 100 Clearfield Road, an educator in the East Hartford School District, commented on the importance of Board members to Andrei actively seek knowledge about State legislation, scientific research, teacher and community concerns about curriculum, resources, staff support, assessments, and professional development pertaining to reading programs across the district schools. She also commented on reading expectations and phonics.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett invited the public to the upcoming ad hoc Building Committee meeting taking place this Thursday, November 30th at 6:00 p.m. in the LL Conference Room at the Stillman Building. Representation from each elementary school across the district, the Board of Education, as well as Town Council leadership will be present to embark upon the next steps for the long-range building planning, as the elementary school buildings are tired and in need of work.

Mr. Emmett noted the district received data from the CCHD this week which indicates that illness levels are on the rise. WPS attendance remains at 96.2% (down about 6/10ths of a percent

from October, and Mr. Emmett reminded WHS freshman students to continue paying close attention to their school attendance record and to come to school every day unless they are sick.

WPS continues to try very hard to make sure connections are being made with students and families (for example, in ways such as home visits, making sure that specialists in the buildings are being met with). Social workers at both the SDMS and WHS have been added to help address student needs, including school attendance.

Mr. Emmett noted that this morning at Webb Elementary School, a new piece of preschool playground equipment was dedicated in honor of WPS long-time Pre-K Paraeducator, Bill Potter. Mr. Potter has been an educator for sixty-five (65) years.

Mr. Emmett commented favorably of the CT State Department of Education's Teacher of the Year ceremony held at The Bushnell Theatre on November 15th and noted it was a privilege to be able to escort Wethersfield's Teacher of the Year, Emily Caravella across the stage as she received her award

Mr. Emmett reminded everyone of the minimum school day (early dismissal day) schedule next Wednesday, December 6th for Professional Development Day. Friday, December 22nd is also a minimum school day, as the district will begin the annual December recess.

Mr. Emmett reminded BOE members that December features only one regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting due to the December break. Multiple presentations are planned for the December 12th meeting, including the presentation of the elementary level School Improvement Plans, WHS fall sports wrap up, and a Keane Foundation program update. Student leaders, who were to present a few months ago, have been rescheduled to present at the upcoming meeting.

Mr. Emmett noted that (this evening's) meeting agenda had a large amount of curriculum for consideration by the BOE members. The curriculum before the Board had been vetted through the Student Programs and Services Committee, and all the experts who helped write the proposed curriculum were present to answer questions. The updated Strategic Plan for WPS was also on the agenda for Board consideration. Mr. Emmett also noted the presentation on the agenda from SDMS and WHS Administration and teacher leaders regarding the School Improvement Plans for SDMS and WHS.

6. Action Items

A. Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for UCONN ECE English 1007: Seminar in Academic Writing & Multimodal Composition (WHS)

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for UCONN ECE English 1007: Seminar in Academic Writing & Multimodal Composition (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Laccavole and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for English 11 Honors (WHS)

Mr. Carey MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for English 11 Honors (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan Carson and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for International Studies (WHS)

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for International Studies (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole and Mrs. Di Roberts commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for English 9 (WHS)

Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for English 9 (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Creative Writing (WHS)

Ms. Hernandez-Williams MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Creative Writing (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Chemistry Honors (WHS)

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Chemistry Honors (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Manufacturing Engineering (WHS)
Ms. Callan Carson MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Manufacturing Engineering (WHS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Callan Carson, and Mrs. Granato commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Physical Education/PE A (SDMS)
Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Physical Education/PE A (SDMS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts and Ms. Callan Carson commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Physical Education/PE B (SDMS)
Mr. Weiner MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Physical Education/PE B (SDMS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Weiner commented.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Grade 8 Science (SDMS)
Mr. Carey MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Grade 8 Science (SDMS). The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Family & Consumer Science A (SDMS)
Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Family & Consumer Science A (SDMS). The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Recommended Motion: Approval of Curriculum for Family & Consumer Science B (SDMS)
Mr. Reilly MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the curriculum for Family & Consumer Science B (SDMS). The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Reilly commented.

B. Recommended Motion: Approval of the Wethersfield Public Schools' Strategic Plan 2023 – 2029

WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin made a presentation pertaining to the Wethersfield Public Schools' Strategic Plan 2023-2029.

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the Wethersfield Public Schools' Strategic Plan 2023-2029. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Carey and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato, Ms. Hernandez-Williams, Ms. Callan Carson, and Mrs. Di Roberts commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Announcements/Information

Chairperson Granato 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 and note changes to committee meetings. She advised Board members to verify their attendance at Committee Meetings with the Committee's Chairpersons, the Administrative Chairperson, Mr. Emmett, and Executive Secretary-Dio Markopoulos. The use of email by Board members for communicating meeting attendance and ensuring a quorum for committee meetings was encouraged.

b. Secondary School Improvement Plans Presentation (SIP) – WHS & SDMS

WHS Leadership Team members Principal, Siobhan O'Connor; Assistant Principal, Tyler Webb; and Cindy Bryan (Counseling DL) presented on the strategies being worked on in the focus area of Empathy at WHS.

WHS Leadership Team members, Matt Mangino (World Language DL); Principal, Siobhan O'Connor; and Kimberly Troy (Science DL) presented on the strategies being worked on in the focus area of Equity at WHS.

WHS Leadership Team members, Stephanie McKenna (English DL); Kim Niemiec (Social Studies DL); Chris Palazzo (Business/Tech/FACS DL); Michael Bowles (PE/Art/Music DL); WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin; Julie Freel (Special Education DL); Dan Jensen (Mathematics DL); and Assistant Principal, Stephanie Jacques; presented on the strategies being worked on in the focus area of Achievement at WHS.

[Note: WHS AD/Assistant Principal, Mike Maltese is also a member of the WHS Leadership Team.]

SDMS Assistant Principal, Scott Voisine; Kyleen Casasanta (Turquoise Team); and Kelli Russo (Indigo Team) commented on methods being worked on at SDMS as part of the School Improvement Plan's focus area of Empathy.

SDMS Leadership Team members, Kristen Fortuna (Magenta Team); Carrie Anzidei (Crimson Team) presented on the strategies being worked on in the focus area of Equity at SDMS.

SDMS Leadership Team members, Emily Guerrera (UA); Lisa Mandeville (Orange Team) and WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin; presented on the strategies being worked on in the focus area of Achievement at SDMS.

SDMS Principal, Tara Yusko commented favorably on all the great work being done to help with student growth at SDMS.

[Note: Meghan Dausey (Green Team) is also a member of the SDMS Leadership Team.]

Board Comments: Mrs. Granato, Ms. Walters, and Ms. Callan Carson commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Student Programs & Services Committee (10.18.23 @ 6:00 p.m.): Mrs. Granato and Mrs. Di Roberts agreed that most of what has been discussed this evening regarding student programs and services had been discussed during the Committee meeting. Mrs. Di Roberts noted that there was a report given about the Wellness Center at SDMS. Also discussed was an alternate high school programming (ACAP) that occurs during the last period of the school day until approximately 5:45 p.m. This programming is geared toward students needing access to earning GED credits/high school diploma.

Board of Education Special Session Meeting – Retreat Workshop (10.30.23): Mrs. Granato indicated that the draft Strategic Plan 23-29 was discussed, and feedback was collected at the meeting.

Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative (WECC) (11.13.23): Mrs. Di Roberts referred to the minutes from the meeting, and it was noted 1) events for fall incoming kindergarteners begin in early May; 2) kindergarten registration opens February 1st, and registering early was encouraged. However, the law which has changed the kindergarten eligibility age effective date to September 1st was an important matter of discussion. Sally Dastoli explained at the meeting that despite the eligibility change, the law allows districts to make an exception if the benchmarks (school administered assessments) for entering kindergarten are successful. Parents would have to make a written request to the school principal and have the student meet benchmark-assessments. This would be a confidential process. It was noted that kindergarten student screenings are held during school hours and ideally in clusters beginning February 1st and through May 31st. Additionally, it was recommended 1) not to sign up for kindergarten until screening(s) are completed, and, 2) not to surrender a child's preschool spot. There were discussions about equity, additional preschool expense with the eligibility age, resources for preschool skill development (Sparkler App, Hello kindergarten online program), and helping kids with boredom. Refer to the following website for additional information regarding preschool classes/programs and other resources for children (ages birth to five): https://wps.wethersfield.me/district/early-childhood-in-wethersfield

CREC Council (11.15.23): Mrs. Granato reported a quorum was not met for the meeting. She noted that CREC Superintendent, Tim Sullivan is retiring and that there was some discussion about filling that position. Additional information regarding CREC finances and meetings can be found at the CREC website: https://crec.org/about/index.php

Finance & Operations Committee (11.28.23): Mr. Laccavole reported the district is currently .15% over budget, which is slightly higher than last month. The overage includes unbudgeted substitutes, bus routes for outplacements, as well as insurance premium double-digit increases. The committee and district will continue to watch those budget line items.

b. Meetings Scheduled

WPS Elementary Ad Hoc Building Sub Committee Meeting (11.30.23 @ 6:00 p.m.) – It was noted by Mrs. Granato this Committee has been established and that the public is invited to attend this meeting.

9. Public Comment

Angela Egan, 100 Clearfield Road, an educator in the East Hartford School District, continued her commentary (from the Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting) on the Readers and Writers Workshop program in the elementary schools, its effect on reading, and requested the program to be changed. She explained concerns with the pilot program being utilized in the elementary schools, her views of the pilot program at the State level, tier 1 concerns, and the demands placed on elementary school teachers She also commented on independent reading expectations and phonics. She asked parents to be aware in the significance of their role as stakeholders in education.

10. Board Comment

Mrs. Di Roberts commented favorably of the WHS Drama club performance "Bloody Murder," and the WHS Alumni Art Show, both of which she attended.

Mr. Reilly commented favorably of the Career Advisory Board meeting he recently attended and noted there was a discussion about how to promote students into thinking about and integrated with careers beyond finishing their education. The group discussed how internships have impacted students. Mock interviews are going to be held on December 20, 2023, the Career Fair will occur at WHS Gym on April 23, 2024 with at least 70 companies attending, and there is a Breakfast event on May 23, 2024 with industry leaders. Discussion continued about increasing participation at the events.

Mrs. Granato commented favorably of her anticipation in working with this new BOE and of the Keane on Kids Coalition meeting she recently attended. Caroline Fazzina will be presenting at the next BOE meeting about the Keane on Kids After School Enrichment Program that is occurring in the schools. Mrs. Granato noted that former BOE member, Amanda Drew, has joined the Board of Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF). Mrs. Granato spoke favorably of WEF grant funding for: 1) an author's visit at WHS, 2) Charles R. Smith Jr. as WHS assembly speaker and visitor in photography and writing workshops at WHS, and 3) the One Book Project in the elementary schools (with help from Marissa Case). Mrs. Granato noted WEF is planning a sponsor drive in

December and that donations could be made in a teacher's name for money to be used to enrich/enhance curriculum.

WHS Student Co-Representative, Mary Dunn noted WHS Girls Swim and Dive team placed second at the State finals, WHS Field Hockey made it to the semi-finals, and WHS Varsity Football also had its last game against Newington last Tuesday. WHS students are looking forward to the winter sports seasons with tryouts beginning this week. In early November, the Future Educators Club had a great experience visiting Emerson-Williams School to read and deliver literacy lessons to elementary students. WHS DECA finished a successful Thanksgiving food drive collection, and WHS Art Department is running the "Empty Bowls Project" after school this week to support food- related, charitable organizations around the world. Ms. Dunn mentioned that last weekend, the community enjoyed the WHS Drama Club's production of "Bloody Murder," and that community could now look forward to the club's spring production of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

11. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Carey MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary