

Board of Education  
March 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, March 28, 2023 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: 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; WPS Director of Special Education, John Karzar; WPS ELL District Coordinator (K-6), Andrew Long; WPS ELL District Coordinator (7-12), Patricia Berloe; WPS EL Teachers: Lisa Ball (Emerson-Williams), Heather Fichera (Hanmer), Jane Scully (Charles Wright), Christina Cherra (Charles Wright), Toni Emmanuel (Highcrest), and Jim Minor (SDMS); Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF) President, Shannon McNiece; Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF) Vice President, Caroline Fazzina; and WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina. Members of the public were also present.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Town of Wethersfield/WPS Family Liaison and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations**

Mr. Emmett acknowledged and congratulated three (3) teachers from WPS who learned this afternoon that they have each been awarded a “Fund for Teachers” grant for travel over the summer. Highcrest School teachers, Sarah Meyers (Grade 1) and Leeann Silver (Reading Consultant), will be traveling to Iceland; and Highcrest School teacher, Ryan Boothroyd (Grade

6) will be traveling to Egypt. Mr. Emmett noted the teachers will provide information at the next board meeting about what they will be doing on their trips.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

#### **a. February 14, 2023 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting**

Mrs. Drew MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of February 14, 2023, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

#### **b. March 13, 2023 Board of Education Special Session Meeting**

Mrs. Drew MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Special Session Meeting of March 13, 2023, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously, with Dr. Regan-Lefebvre abstaining.

### **4. Public Comments**

Kim Bobin of 83 Longvue Drive commented on the growing multilingual population in Wethersfield and the need for the district to view multilingual education as an ongoing staffing priority in the district due to the growing multilingual population. She noted her support of the work done by WPS EL educators, as well as WPS administrators and staff, in this regard.

### **5. Communications**

Mr. Emmett commented favorably of the STEAM Night event recently held at Hanmer School. He encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming the WPS Combined Choral, Band and Orchestra Performances on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Emmett attended the Career Advisory Board meeting last evening and noted the group is preparing for the April 25, 2023 WHS Career Fair. Currently, there are seventy-two (72) outside groups participating in this event.

Mr. Emmett commented favorably of the UConn PEP group meeting he recently attended and reminded everyone that this group is the 7<sup>th</sup> group of people that will be graduating (May 25<sup>th</sup>) from this program. He also commented favorably of the Pi  $\pi$  Day event at Webb School that he attended and participated in. He added that students at the Pi  $\pi$  Day event were very enthusiastic

about math and the *Prodigy* App. Mr. Emmett indicated that as soon as *Prodigy* addresses student data matters, the district will allow access to that App.

Mr. Emmett expressed to the public that yesterday's school shooting reminds us of how diligent we need to be in terms of making sure we do everything possible to keep our students and staff members in a healthy and safe learning environment. Mr. Emmett noted he and WPS Director of Security & Residency, Michael Baribault have been in constant communication. Mr. Baribault was in the district schools today going over safety matters with staff in lieu of attending today's weekly meeting of the Administrative Team.

## **6. Action Items**

### **a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Class of 2023 Graduation Date**

Mrs. Drew MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education set the graduation date for the Class of 2023 as Friday, June 9, 2023. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

### **b. Recommended Motion: Approval of Healthy Food Certification Statement for 2023-2024**

Mrs. Drew MOVED that, the Wethersfield Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeteria, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. and

FURTHER MOVED that, the Wethersfield Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1. The sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2. The sale is at the location of the event; and 3. The food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves

more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsal, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Dr. Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre commented.

## **7. Reports/Discussion Items**

### **a. 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 and note changes to committee meetings. He 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. Use of email by Board members for communicating meeting attendance and ensuring a quorum for committee meetings was encouraged.

### **b. EL Program Presentation**

Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli commented on the WPS District Priorities of Empathy, Achievement, and Equity, the WPS Vision of a Graduate, and the ongoing needs for the EL program for the district’s multilingual students. The EL educators made a presentation about their individual experiences as educators in their respective schools. WPS ELL District Coordinator (K-6), Andrew Long; WPS ELL District Coordinator (7-12), Patricia Berloe; WPS EL Teachers: Lisa Ball (Emerson-Williams), Heather Fichera (Hanmer), Jane Scully (Charles Wright), Christina Cherra (Charles Wright), Toni Emmanuel (Highcrest), and Jim Minor (SDMS). Board Comments: Dr. Regan-Lefebvre, Mrs. Granato, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Drew, and Mr. Reilly commented.

### **c. Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF) Presentation**

Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF) President, Shannon McNeice; with the support of WEF Vice President, Caroline Fazzina; made a presentation which noted the work of the

foundation and the positive impact the work has had on the WPS community. WEF founding member, Sue Fennelly, was acknowledged for her contributions to the organization for over five (5) years. The list of the WEF Board of Directors and Board Members is as follows:

**Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF), Board of Directors 2022-2023:**

**President:** Shannon McNeice, **Vice President:** Caroline Fazzina, **Treasurer:** Brenda Lopez

**Secretary:** Vacant; **Board Members:** Laura Bloomquist, Cynthia Greenblatt, Sylvia Lopes, Martin Malicki, Lynn Sweet Dobrow, and Bobbie Granato- Ex-Officio

**Board Comments:** Mrs. Granato and Mr. Carey commented.

## **8. Board of Education**

### **a. Meetings Held**

**CREC Council (02.15.23):** Mrs. Granato reported that Lisa Hammersley from the CT School Finance Project gave a presentation about the importance of supporting HB 5003 (student-centered funding bill) for the future full funding of CREC and for monies for CT towns when the covid federal dollar allocations end in 2025. This bill is now out of Committee. Tom Mooney, Chief Counsel - Shipman & Goodwin, reported contract negotiations for CREC teachers and CREC certified administrators have been positive. Later in the meeting, the Council voted to approve both contracts. The last item on the agenda was for Council members to ask questions of other members. Mrs. Granato noted she asked for 1) information from member towns on classroom behaviors post covid, and 2) information regarding the success of the SEL curriculum from other member towns. CREC website: <http://www.crec.org>

**Budget Workshops – Day 1 (02.25.23); Day 2 (03.01.23); and Day 4 (03.08.23):**

Principals and Administrative staff were invited to discuss any issues, wants, or needs of the schools for budget consideration. The discussions resulted in the Board increasing the budget presented as to include special education, wellness center, and social worker resources.

**Note: Day 3 (03.04.23)** workshop meeting was cancelled:

**Board of Education Special Meeting:** The meeting pertained to a confidential student matter.

**Memorial Day Parade Committee:** There was no report.

**Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative (WECC) (03.13.23):** Mrs. Granato reported the meeting was held online. Wethersfield/WPS Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim

Bobin and WECC Program Coordinator, Jim Welch, continue their work to create awareness of the importance of preschool and to get families to sign their children up for preschool. Check the website for additional information regarding preschool classes/programs.

<https://wps.wethersfield.me/district/early-childhood-in-wethersfield>

It was noted the statistic for kindergarteners with no preschool experience is increasing, and this is concerning for children who are not building the non-cognitive skills (social/emotional intelligence, grit, respect for others). Discussions also included other statistics from lack of preschool education and some adverse effects on the lives of those children who do not have that experience.

Student Programs & Services Committee: There was no report.

Board of Education Special Meeting: The meeting pertained to a confidential student matter.

Finance & Operations Committee: Mrs. Drew reported the district is currently on budget. However, the line item for substitutes is approximately \$300,000. The district has received two (2) bids for the facilities assessment, and those will be opened at a later date.

#### **b. Meetings Scheduled**

Memorial Day Parade Committee (03.08.23 @ 7:00 p.m.), Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative (WECC) (03.13.23 @ 4:30 p.m.), Town-Wide Budget Meeting (04.17.23 @ 7:00pm), Student Programs & Services Committee (04.18.23) @ 6:00 p.m.), CREC Council 04.19.23 @ 11:30 a.m.), and Finance & Operations Committee (04.25.23 @ 6:00 p.m.)

#### **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**

Mrs. Granato commented favorably of the Wethersfield Education Foundation (WEF) and noted there will be a presentation from the WEF President this evening. She gave a shout out to WHS Teacher and Drama Club Advisor, Jeff Roets and to the students who performed/contributed to the

WHS Drama Club's production of *The Little Mermaid*. The Keane on Kids Coalition met in early March online. After School Program Director, Caroline Fazzina spoke of the enrollment numbers in the programs. Many of the programs are at maximum enrollment capacity. A cartooning program has been introduced, and two schools will have spring productions (*Matilda*, *Willy Wonka*). Science enrichment pertaining to "motion" has been rolled out in Grade 2 at Hanmer, and Mrs. Granato was recently invited to sit in on the experience. The Keane Foundation continues it wait on the State grant applied for. Refer to the Keane Foundation website for more information on Keane for Kids: <https://keanefoundation.org/>.

Mrs. Drew commented favorably of the WHS Drama Club's production of *The Little Mermaid*. She congratulated and commented favorably of the Safe Graduation Party Committee's recent fundraiser held Saturday evening wherein \$6,000.00 was raised. She asked everyone to be on the lookout for additional fundraisers from the Committee because \$60,000.00 in total is needed for the WHS Class of 2023 Safe Graduation Party. She thanked the WHS Class of 2023 parents for all the hard work they are doing to make the Safe Graduation Party happen.

WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina commented favorably of the WHS Drama Club's production of *The Little Mermaid* and noted there will be WPS Combined Choral, Band and Orchestra Performances on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> as follows.

**Festival Choral Concert - April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**

(Featuring Elementary Festival Chorus, SDMS Chorale, and WHS Choraleers).

**Festival Band Concert - April 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.**

(Featuring Elementary Festival Band & the WHS Band) is

**Festival Orchestra Performance - April 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**

(Featuring Elementary Festival Orchestra, SDMS Chamber, and WHS Orchestra)

Dr. Regan-Lefebvre mentioned there will be pancake breakfast and school campus cleanup at Hanmer School on Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that is organized by Hanmer PTO and Wethersfield Dads Club. There will be a raffle (tickets are \$1 each) with great prizes. She indicated it has been a pleasure for her to be a Board member liaison to Hanmer PTO.

Mr. Reilly commented favorably of the Career Advisory Board meetings he recently attended. Internship opportunities (including opportunities for summer internships with Wethersfield Social Services), mock interviews, and the April 25<sup>th</sup> Career Fair at WHS were discussed. He commented on the SEPTO meeting he recently attended and noted the group has not met since prior to the COVID epidemic. He also mentioned there is a Google share site in the works for the SEPTO group. Mr. Reilly noted that on Junior Achievement (JA) Day, he was invited to speak at Elizabeth Green School in Newington and that he spoke to first graders about family and money.

Mr. Carey acknowledged and congratulated WHS sports teams (Girls Dance, Girls Basketball, Girls Hockey, Boys Basketball, Boys Hockey) and the WHS Drama Club (production of *The Little Mermaid*) for their accomplishments and success this season.

Mrs. Granato MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Drew and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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John F. Cascio, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary