

Board of Education
January 10, 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-C0gYVVxmD5ilfFTnsQ>

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, January 10, 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: Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Laccavole, 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; WPS 7-12 Instructional Supervisor of Secondary Curriculum, Dr. Christina Zlatin; WPS K-6 Instructional Supervisor, Dawn Campbell; Charles Wright School Principal, Glenn Horter; Math Interventionists Melissa Johnston (Highcrest School), Marissa Morello (SDMS), Deirdre Mahoney-Petraluolo (Charles Wright School), Michael Macaluso (Emerson-Williams School), and Amy Carlson (Webb School). Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The WPS Math Interventionist Team led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

Mr. Emmett noted that WPS was recently awarded an innovation grant from the CSDE in the amount of \$204,472 and Mrs. Dastoli indicated the funds will be used for after school programming at SDMS during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years for purposes of increased student engagement. Mrs. Dastoli thanked grant writers and partners who worked with her to secure the funding: Kim Bobin (Wethersfield BOE, Town of Wethersfield, and WECC); Erica Texeira (Wethersfield Social & Youth Services), Judy Keane and Caroline Fazzina (*The Keane Foundation*), and Chief Medina and Officer Manuel Silva (Wethersfield Police Department). A Steering Committee of partners will meet to provide oversight. Board

Comments: Mr. Carey, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Reilly commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. December 13, 2022 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mr. Cascio made a correction made to Page 5, Paragraph 5, Line 1.

He indicated that the first sentence of his comment is to be deleted and replaced with the following language: “Mr. Casio expressed positive thoughts to Ms. Todden regarding her daughter.”

Mrs. Granato MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of December 13, 2022, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously, with Mrs. Drew abstaining.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett noted the number of covid cases has increased on the backside of the holiday break. However, the number of flu and RSV cases in the district trended downward according to the CCHD. The covid test kits distributed from WPS will soon expire, and WPS School Nurse Supervisor, Elda Marcelynas sent out a communication indicating how test kits can be obtained from the CDC. The transmission level of covid cases has reached the high-level status in Hartford County, and health officials recommend mask wearing in public areas of high transmission. This recommendation is not a mandate in Wethersfield. However, masks are available from school nurses.

Mr. Emmett was glad to report that the DARE program has returned to WPS, and he attended the DARE graduation ceremony for Webb School’s Grade 5 with Officer Abby. Mr. Emmett will be attending the DARE graduation ceremony at Highcrest School tomorrow. The remaining three (3) elementary schools will have their remaining instruction this spring and the graduation ceremonies prior to the end of the school year. The annual Superintendent’s Award Ceremony is scheduled this Thursday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium. Parents, students

and staff members who go above and beyond to make the schools great places to be will be honored.

Mr. Emmett noted that next year's BOE budget is in the process of being developed. Members of the Finance and Operations Committee will be working this month to finalize workshop dates that will be held during the month of February.

Mr. Emmett will share everything going on in WPS with the community at the annual State of the Town breakfast meeting that will take place on January 18, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. in the Keeney Center Ballroom. Tickets cost \$25.00.

Mr. Emmett noted the Administration and WPS equity teams got together today and worked in groups to discuss parent engagement and to ensure equitable outcomes for students.

Mr. Emmett also noted there is a Social Justice Coalition meeting next Thursday, January 19, 2023, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at WHS or via *zoom*. The Steering Committee will meet tomorrow morning to plan for that meeting.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Policy Updates

Mrs. Granato MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the policy updates (Series 2000: Administration, Series 4000: Personnel, Series 5000: Students, Series 6000: Instruction, Series 9000: Board Bylaws) prepared by Shipman & Goodwin LLC. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Drew and VOTED unanimously. Comments: Mr. Emmett commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Math Interventionist Presentation/Update

A presentation was made by Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; WPS Instructional Supervisor of Secondary Curriculum, Dr. Christina Zlatin; WPS K-6 Instructional Supervisor, Dawn Campbell; Math Interventionists: Melissa Johnston (Highcrest School), Marissa Morello (SDMS), and Deirdre Mahoney-Petraluolo (Charles Wright School). Michael Macaluso (Emerson-Williams School), and Amy Carlson (Webb School) were also present to support their Math Interventionist team. It was noted that

Jennifer Kumnick (WHS) and Anne Molloy (Hanmer School), who were not present for tonight's presentation, are also Math Interventionists. Board Comments: Mr. Carey, Mrs. Granato, and Mr. Reilly commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

b. Long-Range Building Plan/Update

Mr. Emmett noted there was a Facilities and Maintenance Committee meeting held last week and referred to the meeting held in December at Highcrest School wherein many parents from across the district were in attendance. Great insight and feedback were gained regarding the elementary school buildings and looking at moving forward following the referendum's failure, and moving forward, we've had representation from each school. Knowing how to publicize and what direction to take a plan (prioritizing schools) is critical when moving forward. The response from the Charles Wright School community is that there is a desire to keep that school on line. The district has gone through three (3) phases of work with the Collier's group. There is a meeting with Chuck Warrington and Pat Gallagher on Thursday, and there is a need to expand the committee to include representation from parents and town councilors. The two percent reserve could be used if architect services are required moving forward. Additionally, an RFP may have to be made as the district moves forward with the process and to confirm with any requirements for bids. Mr. Emmett noted the existing school buildings have been fortified with safety and security measures (i.e., window film, camera system, exterior doors, hallway area modifications) including the hiring of a Director of Security and a School Resource Officer. Traffic flow and building structure design are issues when looking at a long-range plan for the schools. Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Granato, and Mr. Reilly commented. Mr. Emmett also 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 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, 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

CREC Council: The meeting was canceled.

Facilities & Maintenance Committee: Mr. Cascio indicated that Mr. Emmett provided details of said meeting during the Communications portion of tonight's meeting (refer to Item 5. Communications on page 2 of this document). A contractor completed an audit of the lighting and energy (HVAC) systems in the schools, and REL will provide a report in February.

Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative—WECC: Mrs. Granato noted the meeting was held yesterday at the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center with Director, Pamela Molochko, who spoke of the animals residing at the center and the many indoor and outdoor activities the center offers to the public that are related to nature. Check the center's Facebook page for the parent-and-preschool kids' programs that are being held at the center throughout the year.

WECC Coordinator, Jim Welch spoke of the UConn PEP program beginning its new session on January 26th with and that recruiting information and applications are available on the WEC website. It was reported at the meeting that many childcare providers received supplies delivered by Jim Welch and Kim Bobin in the month of December. Also in December, WECC leaders attended the Governor's Breakfast and the CT Children's Collective Parent Cabinet parent ambassador meeting. WECC leaders also worked at 1) *Santa's Breakfast*, 2) Wethersfield Social Services' toy distribution, 3) *Friday's Café* at Children and Family Aid in Danbury, 4) *Holidays on Main*, and 5) the CT Office of Early Childhood. WECC received \$5,000 from the fund for Greater Hartford to be used to support and grow Wethersfield's parent ambassador initiative.

Together, WECC's Coordinator, Jim Welch and Early Childhood Coordinator for WPS/Town of Wethersfield, Kim Bobin are planning the transition to kindergarten program and setting the playground playdate schedule (both programs occurring this summer) to prepare preschoolers for the next school year. There was a discussion at the meeting about ways to support the evolution of a Family Resource Center and preschool for all the children in Wethersfield. More information regarding WECC's accomplishments and activities can be found at the WECC website.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Student Programs & Services Committee, CREC Council, and Finance & Operations Committee

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comment

Doug Sudell of 323 Main Street commented favorably of the Facilities & Maintenance Committee meeting he recently attended. He looks forward to attending the parent group meeting at Charles Wright School on January 25th and is in favor of new and improved school buildings. He expressed the necessity of having messages/meeting dates speaking to the future of the elementary school buildings more broadly conveyed to the public.

Kate Kyle of 16 Wright Road commented favorably of Charles Wright School's importance to the town and of keeping Charles Wright school on line. She is glad the Board and Mr. Emmett continue the pursuit of a plan for the elementary schools and appreciated Mr. Cascio noting at a recent meeting the challenges the district is facing with maintaining the school buildings. She is looking forward to the January 25th meeting.

11. Board Comments

Mrs. Di Roberts commented favorably of the WSPC meeting she attended on January 5th wherein Mrs. Dastoli and K-6 Instructional Supervisor, Dawn Campbell discussed how reading is taught in the elementary grades. The presentation will be made at a PTO meeting in each of the elementary schools.

Mr. Cascio asked for some clarification and noted 1) Mr. Emmett's Thursday meeting with Collier's and SLAM Collaborative representatives, 2) BOE's regular meeting on January 24th, and 3) the parent group meeting at Charles Wright School on January 25th. He inquired whether a Facilities & Maintenance Committee meeting should be held prior the next Board meeting and/or what Board members should focus on at this time.

Mr. Emmett noted the upcoming Thursday meeting with Collier's will determine what is needed in terms of whether or not cost estimates are needed and whether going out to bid is required. He noted that the parents will set the agenda for the January 25th meeting (at Charles Wright School

and with a tour of same). Mr. Emmett noted he will provide information regarding Thursday's meeting to Board members in their Friday packet and that any details of next steps proposed at the Thursday meeting would be provided/explained to the Board members in said packet.

Mrs. Drew commented favorably of moving forward with a long-range plan for the elementary schools.

Mr. Carey commented that the discussion of the Long-Range Building Plan for the elementary schools occurred during Item 7. Reports/Discussion Items – Item b. Long-Range Building Plan/Update and that further discussion could not occur among Board members at this point in the meeting.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 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