

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Jan 04, 2018 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Monday, November 13, 2017 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Rick Daniels, Kate Sandmann, Leigh Rankin, Jane Cavanaugh, Mario Gioco, Jennifer Clark, Trisha Brookhart (non-voting until sworn in), Lori Ann Clymas (arrived 7:10 p.m.), as well as Senior Student Representatives Max Klin and Sydney Suedmeier.

Also in attendance: Administrators:

Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,  
Assistant Superintendent, Kristina Martineau  
Business Manager Kim Allen;  
Valley Regional Principal Mike Barile;  
John Winthrop Principal William Duffy

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Superintendent Levy called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Superintendent Levy opened the floor for nominations for the position of Board Chair.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Jennifer Clark to the position of Board Chair for a one year term.

Chair Clark opened the floor for nominations for the offices of Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Jane Cavanaugh to the position of Board Vice-Chairman for a one year term.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Leigh Rankin to the position of Board Secretary for a one year term.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Mario Gioco to the position of Board Treasurer for a one year term.

Chair Clark discussed Committee appointments. She noted that as Chair and Vice Chair respectively, she and Jane Cavanaugh will continue to be two of the three Region 4 representatives on the Supervision District Committee. She requested more time to consider who of the Region 4 members from Chester would be appointed as the third Supervision District representative.

Chair Clark also asked each Board member to e-mail her their preferences for the rest of the Committee assignments so that she can make those appointments as soon as possible.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda was considered for approval. Rick Daniels asked that the minutes be revised to correctly reflect that Mike Barile was unable to be in attendance, as there was conflicting information presented in the minutes. Principal Barile confirmed that he was not able to be in attendance at the September 07, 2017 meeting.

Jane Cavanaugh requested a second revision to the minutes - she asked that her request for the Board to receive periodic updates on the therapeutic program be added to the Sept. 07, 2017 minutes.

A discussion took place on the financial information provided and the usefulness of it.

It was determined that it would be best to split the Consent Agenda into two different motions to cover the two separate items for vote this evening.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to split the Consent Agenda into two different motions for consideration.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 07, 2017 with the revisions requested by Mr. Daniels and Ms. Cavanaugh as listed above.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (6 Yes; 1 No - Rick Daniels = Motion Passed) to approve the submittal of the accounts payable report

## **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

10 citizens were present - no comments were made

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **Region 4 Student Representatives Report**

JWMS Middle School students Jake Burdick and Abby Amara updated the Board on many of the activities at JWMS including: soccer and cross country for boys and girls; upcoming basketball tryouts, fall girls intramural volleyball; the conclusion of the 1st quarter; and the upcoming 7th grade field trip on Dec 11th. They also reported that the whole school worked on posters for Veterans Day and student leaders were able to raise \$680 for the Smilow Cancer Hospital with a flamingo fundraiser. The JW Walkathon raised \$2078 for the Shoreline Soup Kitchen and the October dance was very well attended. Auditions for this year's musical, James and the Giant Peach, will be held soon with the cast to be announced on Nov. 21st. The Lego robotics team recently competed in Bash at the Beach, and in December students will be traveling to North Haven to try out for the CMEA festival.

Senior Student Representative Sydney Suedmeier reported that the addition of the flex block to the high school's schedule this year has been a great addition and she feels that the student body is using the time to its greatest capacity. She also mentioned that classroom work has been moving more toward a problem posing/solving method and focusing on real world applications versus just listening to lectured information. She said it's been great and it's a much more interactive and effective way to learn. She shared that she has now completed her Capstone project and had a really great experience working with a law firm in New Haven. She also noted that the Guidance department has been very helpful in the college application process.

Senior Student Representative Max Klin reported that all fall sports have now concluded except for the football team who is still playing. He also reported on cross country, field hockey, casting for Cinderella, and the chorus and band groups preparing for their winter concerts. He shared that he is currently working on Western Civ I class right now with Mr. Perreault, and he is really enjoying the structure of the class which is using more of a college approach by requiring independent research and paper-writing with guidance from Mr. Perreault. He also mentioned that students are receiving lots of help from the counselors in the college application process.

Board member Lori Ann Clymas asked to take a moment to thank Bobbi Nidz and all of the students who helped with the recent First Selectmen debate in Chester.

### **Principal Updates**

Barbara Nidzgorski and three Valley Regional students shared that Valley had recently earned a Charter Membership for the National Speech and Debate Association at Valley, which is the highest status that is bestowed to a team. Ms. Nidzgorski shared the latest results and overall highest student scores to date. She also noted that she really wanted to thank all of the elementary and middle school teachers for preparing the students so well by the time they get to the high school - where she then gets to mentor them in this challenging and successful endeavor.

Principal Barile reviewed the profile of the 2016-17 graduating class and shared CAPT data. He noted that two students have placed in the National Merit Scholarship this year for their academic achievement and promise. Isabelle McDonald is a commended student and Kevin Baldwin is still continuing as a semi-finalist at this point. He also reported that two students, Kevin Baldwin and Madelyn Evans, have been chosen for the MSSA (Middlesex Shoreline Superintendents Association) Superintendent's award - for their dedication to their peers, their community, and for being all around role models academically, civically, and socially.

Mr. Barile reported on SAT scores, AP results, and upcoming changes in the move from the old style CAPT testing to NGSS style questions. He noted that they have been adjusting the curriculum and next year all students will take biology as freshman and be able to take Biology, Chemistry and Physics prior to taking the NGSS test in the spring of their junior year.

He also reported that all students 9-12 this year now have Chromebooks and it has been very helpful for both teachers and students. It has allowed for better differentiation, more efficiency, better research, and facilitated better problem solving.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) presentation scheduled for this evening was table until January.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, Bill Duffy shared standardized test results for the middle school including SBAC and CMT scores. He talked about focus areas for improvement and implementing a workshop model for reading and writing to individualize instruction and increase engagement. They are looking to increase rigor and provide more ongoing reflection time for students to develop as readers and writers. The JW literacy coach has been helping students and teachers.

He reported that they continue the use of SBAC interim assessments; actively incorporating them into practice lessons and not just having kids take practice tests. This allows the students to gain familiarity with the testing format and the use of a computer interface before the SBAC testing day in May. They are also moving to NGSS as well. There was a brief question and discussion period.

Additionally, Mr. Duffy shared that the 8th grade chorus was asked to perform on Oct. 17th as part of an immigration/naturalization ceremony at the CT River museum for 50 new citizens. He said it really was an incredible event and educational as well. He heard many accolades regarding student behavior and attentiveness, and they are hoping to participate again in future ceremonies.

Mr. Duffy also mentioned that on November 28th JWMS will be hosting the Courage to Speak Foundation regarding drug abuse prevention awareness, specifically with regards to the current Opioid crisis. They will be holding a school-wide assembly for an hour during the day, and then that evening a presentation for parents and the whole community will be held. The High School will be hosting a presentation on November 29th, also regarding the Opioid crisis. It will include a DEA agent, local law enforcement, and the relative of someone local whose life has been significantly affected by this crisis.

Dr. Levy spoke a bit about the recently formed Social and Emotional Wellness Committee including staff, community educators, Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau, and local law enforcement. She noted that this is part of an effort to reach out to educate our families, schools and communities at large. She mentioned that in addition to this important issue there will also be upcoming presentations on anxiety disorders sometime in January or February, and on resilience in March or April. There was a brief discussion regarding these issues.

## **REPORTS**

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Kim Allen reviewed the financial status report, including anticipated deficits and surpluses. There was a brief question/discussion period. Some general questions were raised for consideration in upcoming budget discussions.

At this point in the agenda, Chair Clark asked the Board to pause to introduce and welcome the new BOE members who were attending their first Region 4 BOE meeting this evening. Board members and administration introduced themselves.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Levy updated the Board on the following District activities:

The pending policy #5131.21 Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students was briefly discussed. It had a first reading at the last Joint BOE meeting and there will be a second reading and possible vote at the December Joint BOE meeting. Dr Levy spoke briefly about the administrative regulations regarding this issue and the required yearly training for staff. She said that is was not something taken lightly and verbal de-escalation is what staff is trained to pursue first and foremost. Mr. Daniels asked that the Board be informed and kept apprised, for general knowledge purposes, of the administrative regulations and training. Dr. Levy said that she would share it with all Board members.

There was a brief review of the three major Joint BOE Committees; Finance, Policy and Curriculum for new members.

Joint BOE Ad Hoc Cafeteria Committee member Jane Cavanaugh updated the Board on the Cafeteria Committee's most recent meetings. She said the Committee has been visiting different schools for breakfast and lunches and to tour their cafeteria facilities. She said it has been very informative and particularly with regards to the physical space limitations and federal government requirements. One of these requirements includes the fact that one of our cafeterias has to undergo an audit every year, because we have four individual boards, as opposed to a single-board school where they would only have an audit once every four years. There is lots of duplication of effort due to that, and that also translates into higher costs as well. She did note that the new schedule at the high school with a longer lunch period, and the availability of pre-made, ready-to-grab meals, etc... has really helped in making progress there. The Committee will give a full report in the spring. There was a brief discussion about the lunch price increases this year.

Dr. Levy discussed the district-wide work on critical thinking and creative problem solving across all areas. There will be BOE workshops on Nov. 29th and 30th from 5-8 pm in Central Office with Jonathan Costa to discuss aligning the strategic goals - from the Superintendent, to the Administration, to the Boards of Education, to the Schools - while being communicated out to the students and community at large.

Dr. Levy discussed the recently passed State budget. She noted that all of the unfunded mandates continue and the latest new one is now in regards to TEAM, the new teacher induction program that is required by the state. In the past, the state has paid \$500 per new teacher as a stipend for the current teachers who serve as one-to-one mentors. This stipend is contractual, but with this new budget, the state will no longer contribute this amount. There are also increases in the costs of magnet schools which will have financial implications for any of our districts who have students who are attending magnet schools and thus must pay their tuition. She also discussed upcoming changes to teacher retirement funds.

**Supervision District Committee Update** - Jennifer Clark reported that they had a transportation update at the last meeting.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Martineau gave a general update on activities within the districts including the following: the K-12 Professional Development and Evaluation committee (PDEC) has worked hard over the last 2 months to align things to Critical and Creative Problem Solving and to develop rubrics for K-6 and 7-12. The K-12 curriculum groups will continue meeting throughout the year for their different content areas. Ms. Martineau shared that the teachers are very excited to apply critical thinking and problem solving to the curriculum. She also said it is nice to see teachers continue to take leadership roles within the district on curriculum.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

4 citizens were present - no comments were made.

Dr. Levy asked the Board to Vote on adding an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss a student matter to the agenda.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to add an Executive Session to discuss a student discipline matter to the agenda.

The Board moved into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at approx. 9:15 p.m.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Next Joint BOE meeting is Dec. 07, 2017
- Next Region 4 BOE meeting is ~~Jan. 04~~, Jan. 16, 2018
- BOE and Community input for 2018-19 budget (on-going)
- Presentation of Major Budget Drivers for 2018-19 (TBD)
- BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at approx. 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Leigh Rankin, Secretary  
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk