

Board of Education Minutes
May 12, 2021

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM meeting platform meeting ID 863 4113 0768. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Mrs. Mastroianni, Dr. Potemri, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. St. Germain, Mrs. Reyes, and Mr. Cillino. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Potemri, the Board voted unanimously to move Item 4, Presentations, ahead of Public Comment.

3. Presentations – a. Student Successes – Mrs. St. Germain said we have had a lot of positive student recognition this year and she elaborated. Lukas Jones and Molly Butremovic received the CAS (Connecticut Association of Schools) Scholar Athlete awards and gave information on the award. The CAS Scholar Leader award was presented to Zane Brewer and Abby Butremovic and Mrs. St. Germain gave information on the award. The CAS Performing/Visual Arts award was presented to Breanna Lawton for visual arts and to Liam Warren for performing arts. She gave information on the award. Mrs. St. Germain said the CABC (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Student Leadership awards were presented to Samantha Abate and Robert Lorimer. Mrs. St. Germain read information from CABC regarding the award and read the nomination letter for Miss Abate. Mrs. Reyes read the nomination letter for Mr. Lorimer. Mrs. Wagner congratulated the students.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – Mrs. Wagner gave some ground rules for public comment. Alyssa Kumpf, of 6 Cedar Drive, parent, wanted to speak on item 10, policy review. She spoke of an incident at school relating to her nephew. She was concerned with the way the incident was handled. She elaborated and had further comment. She was disappointed with the way it was handled. Laura Mooney, 4 Cedar Drive, parent, also spoke of the incident that happened at school relating to her nephew. She elaborated and had further comment. She was disappointed with the way it was handled. Mrs. Wagner said we have policies to review and that will be done at a special meeting on Saturday, June 5th. She explained. Policies to be reviewed will be related to these issues brought up this evening. The meeting will be from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Dr. Potemri wondered why this was being brought right to the Board instead of going through the proper restorative practices. Mrs. Wagner had comment. She said it sounded like the administration has handled it. She explained Mrs. St. Germain is working on putting together a diversity council with CIAC and the ECC and explained. Dr. Potemri had further comment. This is a climate and culture issue that the administrators have spoken about. She had further comment. Board members had further comment and there was discussion. Deondre Bransford, parent, had comment on restorative practice. He had further comment on previous incidents involving his son. He had further

comment. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. Dr. Potemri explained part of the process of restorative practice is meant to promote a positive climate change and elaborated. Mrs. Wagner said there is a new policy that came out from CAFE and asked the Board to read through it. The other policies will be pulled so they can be reviewed. Ms. Welborn explained we rely on CAFE to review our policies and suggest new policies. She explained the process and said we are certainly in a place where we are comfortable that our policies are well-written. Mrs. Wagner had further comment on the policy process. She had further comment. Mr. Karpinski echoed Dr. Potemri's comments about getting the parties together and to make it a learning experience for the students.

5. Administrators' Reports – Mr. Cillino proposed a slight change to kindergarten for the beginning of school. They want to ease the children and parents into it. He reviewed kindergarten orientation on August 24th. Kindergarten screening will take place on August 25th and 26th and he explained. On August 27th, they are proposing a kindergarten social hour and he explained how it would work. Mr. Cillino said it would make it easier for the students to begin to learn. The students would be in small groups. Mrs. Wagner commented and thought it was a good plan. Board members had comment. Mrs. St. Germain spoke of some important end-of-year events. Kim Haggerty, our intern, has been working all year with the administrators and put together a student wellness day for the entire school. She wanted to let parents, Pre-K to 12 that the PTO is sponsoring a movie entitled, Angst, and she explained. Mrs. St Germain had further comment. Mrs. St. Germain said they take their jobs very seriously and wanted to make sure that their silence about this incident doesn't mean they don't care and she explained. Mrs. Reyes said privacy of all their students is primary and had further comment.

6. Administrative – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the April 7, 2021, meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the April 28, 2021, Special Meeting.

b. Correspondence – None.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero said it has been a difficult time to hire people. He said we have been looking for a tech for quite a while and he elaborated. Greg Cormier will start with Mr. Pont on May 17th and he elaborated. The music position has been filled; Olivia Black has been hired and he gave her background information. Mr. Nero had further comment. Questions were asked and answered. There was further comment. There was discussion on hiring procedures. Mr. Nero had further comment. Board members had further comment.

7. Reports – a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero asked that we pull the policy on conduct and athletics; there is no nexus between what a student does having consequences to being an athlete. He has talked about this numerous times. He elaborated. Mr. Nero and Mrs. Martin have been attending webinars on the latest grant and he elaborated. The ARC 3 Grant is for education and for stimulus as well and he elaborated. He said the athletic

fields are the best they have looked in several years. The COVID information keeps changing and we are trying to be as consistent as we can. He sent information out regarding clinics regarding students ages 12 and up. He had further comment. Mr. Nero said we have been working on getting cyber insurance and he elaborated. Ms. Welborn had comment on the athletic policy and said we do have one in place. Mr. Nero would like something more specific. He had further comment. Ms. Welborn and Mr. Nero had further comment. That policy will be reviewed June 5th as well.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said she had nothing specific to report. She has been hearing from other districts on numerous topics including year-end procedures and vaccines. She said we are keeping an eye on the budget process right now. The town meeting was this past Monday and the referendum is this coming Monday.

c. Committee Chairperson – Nothing to report.

d. LEARN Board of Directors' Liaison – Nothing to report.

8. Old Business – a. School Re-Opening Plan – Mrs. Wagner said there continues to be movement on that. Mr. Nero said not a lot has changed. He said they told us for graduation to make sure everyone is spread out and wearing masks. He said he trusts in Mrs. St. Germain and Mrs. Reyes that they have a plan in place. He suggested not looking at the reopening plan until August because things keep changing. Mr. Nero said the state is backing off on virtual learning and commented. Mrs. Wagner had comment.

b. 2021-2022 Proposed Education Budget – Mrs. Wagner said it is going to referendum on the 17th. There was a lot of positive feedback at the town meeting. Depending on the outcome, we may have to have a special meeting. Questions were asked that Mrs. Martin answered.

9. Facilities and Finance – The financial reports will be sent out to the Board. Mr. Karpinski said they reviewed the solar and they will be looking at that further.

10. Policy Review – There was discussion. Ms. Welborn made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Karpinski to approve revisions to policy 4212.42 (Drug and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers). Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Martin had comment. The motion was withdrawn. This will be reviewed on June 5th.

Ms. Welborn made a motion that was seconded by Dr. Potemri to accept the revisions to policies 6159 (Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program) and 6171 (Special Education). There was discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

The policy packets should be sent out by May 21st. A watermark will be placed on the circular letter in policy 6171.

11. Calendar – Referendum is May 17th, May 26th is a regular meeting, the facilities and finance committee will meet at 6:15 ahead of the meeting and the workshop is on June 5th. Depending on the referendum outcome, we may need a special meeting.

12. Public Comment – Amy Hargreaves, parent and mother of one of the students involved in the incident, spoke on the issue. She felt a policy was needed to address issues based on race and had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had comment.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Potemri, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education