

**Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.
Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on March 6, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
R. Harriman-Stites, Vice Chair	J. Evans-Davila
D. Cruson, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	D. Rosenthal, Ex-Officio
J. Vouros	R. Mills, Legal Counsel
A. Clure	3 Staff
D. Delia	1 Press
	24 Public

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education go into Executive Session to discuss 1) an attorney-client privileged communication regarding steps for addressing a personnel matter AND 2) an attorney-client privileged communication regarding confidentiality, AND invite in Richard Mills, Board Attorney, Lorrie Rodrigue and Ron Bienkowski for portions of the executive session. Mrs. Leidlein seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – Executive Session

Executive session ended at 7:33 pm

Item 2 – Celebration of Excellence

Dr. Rodrigue stated that the Board of Education was delighted to recognize and celebrate Newtown High School's Dance Team who won the 2017-18 State Championship in Jazz on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at Hamden High. She said that this is the 4th State title in Jazz in 5 years for the NHS Dance Team. She congratulated the team members and their coach, Cheryl Stenz on their outstanding achievements.

Mr. Memoli, NHS Athletic Director, then showed a short video of the Dance Team's performance that won them the title. He said that the Dance Team practices 2 – 3 hours a day starting in August and congratulated all of them, and their coach, again on their hard work, dedication and amazing State championship performance.

Mrs. Ku read the names of the team members and Dr. Rodrigue and Mr. Memoli handed out their Certificates of Excellence. The members are: Arline Almeter, Julia Barnum, Grace Bianco, Cailin Blessey, Olivia Cavalerro, Francesca D'Aprile, Elisandra Daigle, Payten Krikorian, Katherine Lurie, Kylee Raiano, Danika Rasmussen, Caroline Reichmann, Jillian Reilly, Ashley Russo, Annalise Saracini, Ava Schwartz, Tagan Smith, Rachel Swenson and Kaitlyn Tripodi. Mrs. Ku told them that the Board is "so proud of you" and thanked them for representing Newtown so well. She also thanked their coach, Cheryl Stenz, for her outstanding work in leading this exceptional team.

Item 3 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 4 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of February 20, 2018, the donations to Newtown High School, the resignations for retirement of Mary Ellen Nasinka and Sara Washicko, and the correspondence report. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mr. Delia commented on the tremendous impact that Sara Washiko had on his children. He stated that she is the kind of teacher we need and want for Newtown Public Schools, and that she'll be very missed.

Mr. Clure wanted to publicly thank for the Newtown High School donations for softball and a camera for the Blue and Gold Stadium. He feels that it's tremendous to have this kind of support from the community and stressed again that the Board so appreciates their wonderful generosity.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 5 – Public Participation

Item 6 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku reported that the budget passed through the Board of Finance last week with minor adjustments. She said that next it will be going to the Legislative Council and that should be on Wednesday, March 7, 2018. However, with the impending snow storm, it will probably be held next Wednesday, March 14, 2018. Mrs. Ku handed out information on Raised Bill No. 364 from the State of Connecticut General Assembly regarding "An Act Concerning Special Education Funding". She stated that this is a proposal to reduce the threshold for reimbursements to districts from four and one-half times to two times the average per pupil educational costs. She encouraged everyone to write to the legislature about this and said that there is a public hearing on Friday, March 9, 2018 if anyone is able to attend.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Rodrigue shared that this afternoon she had a conference with all Superintendents in the area, in consultation with a meteorologist, to discuss the impending snow storm and stated that Newtown Public Schools will be closed tomorrow. It remains to be seen what will happen on Thursday. A meeting was held with Newfield Construction, Michelle Hiscavich, Dan Rosenthal and Bob Mitchell, and the current punch list for the auditorium was reviewed. The beautiful new Newtown High School auditorium is ready to go! It will be open to the public on Thursday, March 22, 2018 for the high school musical production of Les Miserables and invitations will be going out soon for the April 2, 2018 dedication. For the Wednesday, March 14, 2018 event (or walkout as it's being called nationally), students from Newtown Middle School and Newtown High School will be given the opportunity to voice their thoughts on school safety. She and NHS and NMS administrators have worked closely with student leaders to create a time for respectful student expression. For kindergarten through grade 6, there will be no change in their schedules. Dr. Rodrigue said that she has sent a letter to NMS and NHS parents and staff to let them know about what will be happening that day, and NMS and NHS Principals will be following up in the next day or two with their own letter. She also said that NMS and NHS will not welcome visitors or the media for this event. Dr. Rodrigue reported that the Assistant Superintendent is working on the next Generation Accountability Report for our District and that Dr. Lois Lanning is to again be in district on Monday and Tuesday, March 12 & 13, 2018 to facilitate a workshop on Concept Based Curriculum Instruction.

Mr. Delia congratulated Dr. Rodrigue on being chosen as Newtown's Superintendent of Schools, as he was not able to attend that meeting, and wished her all the best.

Mr. Delia then said that he has a question about the "walkout". In reviewing our policy, he is wondering if the event is tied to our curriculum (as per our policy)?

Dr. Rodrigue stated that this is why it's not being done at the K-6 level because there really isn't a tie-in. They are younger and don't have the same depth of understanding of current events. At the middle

school and high school level it is tied in with Civics and the topic of safety because that does apply to them. She stated that it is not only newsworthy but also, when we talk about being able to take a position or stance and support it, it is directly related to what they're learning in their Social Studies classes. Dr. Rodrigue said that she and her administrators have worked closely with our student leaders so that it is related and thematically connected to something that is relevant to them. Also that at the middle school and the high school the schedule has been rearranged so that it is definitely a student choice to participate or not. Dr. Rodrigue stated that she believes it is very important for us to allow our students at the secondary level that voice and that choice.

Mr. Delia said that he has also heard concerns from parents whose children don't want to participate and he wants to make sure that steps are put in place so that their voices are heard as well.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that she put in her letter, and she believes it was fairly emphatic and will be repeated by the Principals, about students having choices. It is a ½ day schedule to begin with, and we're talking about 17 minutes, so a parent can certainly choose to not have their child participate

Committee Report:

Curriculum & Instruction Committee – Mr. Vouros reported that the committee met with the K, 1 & 2 Math Specialists who reported on the work that they've done, and continue to do, to coordinate the current math curriculum with the concept-based one. He asked Mrs. Evans-Davila to comment on this as well.

Mrs. Evans-Davila stated that the two very competent K-4 Math Specialists are Chrissie Pierce at Head O'Meadow and Jill Bracksieck at Middle Gate. She said that they explained to the committee the most specific concepts that they chose and the most relevant. They also let the committee know that during the summer they plan to advance the work to grades two and three so they are on a great track. Mrs. Evans-Davila said that they also spoke about the Stepping Stones resource that they use and some of the digital components of it. They were very well-versed and she stated that she looks forward to the next Board of Education meeting where the math specialists will speak to the curriculum and answer any questions Board members may have.

Mr. Vouros added that the math specialists worked in tandem with Ms. Fonovic at Reed and that the committee is thrilled about their involvement in the transition from 4th to 5th.

Policy Committee – Mrs. Harriman-Stites reported that the Policy Committee continues to work their way through the 5000 series and that their last meeting was on February 21, 2018. She stated that the committee has been discussing policies such as "Graduation Ceremonies", "Assignment of Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes", and a "Service Dog policy". Also Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that she so appreciates the staff who come to the Policy Committee meetings - staff such as David Roach, Sherry Earle, Kate Magness, Jean Evans Davila and Carmella Amodeo to name just a few. There have been a rotating cast of staff members who come to the policy meetings and who really help to bring to light issues with policies, best practices and helping to ensure that going forward our policies are in alignment with our practice and procedures.

Student Representative Reports:

Talia Hankin: First would like to congratulate Dr. Rodrigue on her being chosen as our new Superintendent. She then stated that she is very proud of her fellow Newtown High School students. As a result of the shooting in the school in Florida that resulted in the loss of many lives, Junior Newtown Action Alliance organized a vigil on February 23rd in Blue and Gold Stadium. The vigil included student speakers, government speakers, performances, the reading of names, and the lighting of candles. Students and teachers also signed banners and sent letters of support. On March 14, 2018, there will be a school walkout for any students who would like to partake in coordination with

other students across the nation. Some students will also travel as a group to the “March for our Lives” in Washington DC. Would like to give a huge thank you to the administration of NHS, Dr. Rodrigue and any other individuals who helped to make these activities possible for the students.

Rory Edwards: Would like to echo Talia’s congratulations to Dr. Rodrigue as our new Superintendent. The end of the year is approaching and this means AP testing is coming up. Students in AP classes have been preparing all year for their test at the end of the course and continue to do so. Sign-ups have opened to take the test and hopefully college credit can be earned. Generally scores of 4 or 5 will give college credit, although this can vary by college.

Talia: The Guidance Dept. will be holding a College Advice Panel on March 22nd. Senior students who have gone through the college application process can volunteer their time to come speak to the juniors about their experience and share any advice they may have. This is extremely helpful for students who are about to start this process.

Rory: The Career Center at NHS has scheduled its annual Career Day for Thursday, April 5 and this year things are being run differently. There will be a more informal interview style so that students can engage and be engaged. Students will learn what it took for the person to get their job, their obstacles and successes and why they love doing what they do. With the new format, coordinators hope to make it easier for students to connect with the person rather than just learning about the career itself.

Talia: Junior Prom will be held on Friday, March 16th at the Amber Room in Danbury. This is one of the students’ favorite events at the high school. The school also sponsors an “I Promise Program” each year where they encourage students to promise not to drink on the night of prom.

Rory: The winter sport season at NHS continues to wrap up as we head into March. The NHS Girls basketball team ended with a well fought loss against Trumbull and had a stellar season. Our gymnasts just competed in a State open and we had three Track and Field competitions. Our Cheerleaders placed third at the LL Championships in New Haven on Sunday and the Swim Team placed 4th in SWC’s at Masuk. We are also very proud of our Dance Team, who was here tonight, because they won the State championship in Jazz last Saturday in Hamden. The Athletic Department has also started two separate Councils recently: 1) The Captain’s Council, which aims to work on leadership skills and 2) the Class Act Council, that aims to promote sportsmanship in our NHS athletes.

Mrs. Ku asked Rory Edwards about the Class Act Council and who exactly it was for? He answered that it was for all student athletes at Newtown High School, across all sports and all seasons

Item 7 – Old Business

Item 8 – New Business

Discussion and Possible Action on Policy 5112 – Ages of Attendance.

Mrs. Ku said that normally there are two reads for a policy but because this change is so small, just adding two words to a sentence, that she hopes a decision could be made in one read.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve the revision to Policy 5112 – Ages of Attendance – as presented. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites stated that it is a two word change and it is for legal and consistency sake. The change needs to be made as soon as possible. The statement is “Children who have not attained the

age of five (adding) on or before the first day of January will not be admitted to kindergarten..." Our current policy was missing the underlined words "on or".

Mr. Clure asked if it's just the difference of one day?

Mrs. Evans Davila answered that that was correct but pointed out that it is, however, a big day for the child that is born on January 1st. When she called the State about this, because we noticed that our Kindergarten Registration Ad said December 31st, they said that this is a very common mistake. Therefore we changed our Kindergarten Registration Ads to be correct with State law and we now need to correct our Policy 5112.

Mrs. McEvoy, Reporting Secretary, will underline changes in policies in the future, as well as put them in a different color.

Mr. Vouros asked what happens if a child is born in January after the 1st, say the 2nd or the 3rd?

Mrs. Evans-Davila stated that the way the law is written is that if your child turns 5 after the date, it is up to the Board of Education to decide whether the child should be allowed to attend kindergarten. Also if they do meet that legal age, the parent can also opt to keep their child out of kindergarten.

Mrs. Ku stated that, from personal experience, in the past the schools were very open to discussion about this as her son was on this line, and she was very appreciative of this.

Motion passes unanimously.

Minutes of February 27, 2018:

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of February 27, 2018. Mr. Cruson seconded. Vote: 6 ayes, 1 abstained (Mr. Delia)

Item 9 – Public Participation

Item 10 – Adjournment

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

February 22, 2018

TO: Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue

FROM: David Roach

Please accept the donation of \$3,095 from Lindell Hertberg to purchase a windscreen for the Newtown High School softball field. Lindell has donated many items in the past and has been a tremendous supporter of the NHS softball program.

Thank you.



*Lindell Hertberg
61 Main Street
Newtown, CT 06470*

2/26/2018

✓

February 22, 2018

TO: Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue

FROM: David Roach

Please accept a donation from the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference for a pixelot camera to be installed at Newtown High School's Blue and Gold Stadium. This camera will allow Newtown High School to livestream all events on blue and gold stadium. The cost of this camera is \$4,750

Thank you.

CAS
30 Realty Drive
Cheshire, CT



2/22/18

FEB 21 2018

February 21, 2018

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue
Superintendent, Newtown Public Schools
3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470

Dear Dr. Rodrigue,

Please accept this letter as confirmation of my retirement from Newtown Public Schools, effective May 1, 2018. My last day of work will be April 30, 2018.

Regards,


Mary Ellen Nasinka

MAR 01 2018

108 Jacqueline Drive
Southbury, CT 06488
February 22, 2018

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue
Interim Superintendent of Schools
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470

Dear Dr. Rodrigue:

I have been working in Newtown my entire teaching career. I was hired to teach Special Education by Bob Chiappetta and Dr. John Reed in March of 1982. I decided after six years in Special Education to take a second grade position at Head O' Meadow School under the leadership of Edgar Rodrigues. Throughout my 36 years in Newtown Public Schools I have been privileged to work with great building principals and many dedicated and talented colleagues.

Now, it is time to join my husband, Al, who retired from the Newtown Public Schools eight years ago. In accordance with Article 12 of the 2016-2020 Contract between the Newtown Board of Education and the Newtown Federation of Teachers, I am writing to inform you that I will be retiring at the end of this school year, 2017-2018. I wanted to inform you now so you can plan for the upcoming school year regarding staffing needs.

It has been a joy dedicating all of my years teaching children of the community in which I was raised and educated. Following the path of my parents, James and Barbara Hinckley, both educators, has been wonderful. My father was Newtown High School Principal and Superintendent of Schools here for part of his career. My mother began teaching at Sandy Hook and was part of the staff that opened Head O' Meadow in 1977. It was a pleasure to have joined her at Head O' Meadow in 1985 until she retired in 1991.

Thank you for your consideration in forwarding my request to the Newtown Board of Education for approval.

Sincerely,


Sara Washicko

Second Grade Teacher
Head O' Meadow School

Correspondence Report
2/19/2018 – 3/4/2018

Date	Name	Topic
2/19/18	Robin Chaber Allen	Parkland Vigil
2/22/18	Tommy Murray	Parkland Vigil – Speaker
2/22/18	Kristen Bulkley	Plans for Walkout
2/22/18	Po Murray	Parkland Vigil
2/22/18	Cathy Breen Austermann	Middle School Walkout
2/23/18	Po Murray	Parkland Vigil
2/23/18	Cathy Breen Austermann	Middle School Walkout
2/23/18	Phil and Ann Sandercox	NMS Walkout Plans
2/23/18	Scott Miraldi, Toni Miraldi	NHS Chinese Teacher
2/24/18	Janet Ziperstein	NMS Walkout
2/25/18	Lynn Edwards	NMS Walkout
2/26/18	Mackenzie Sullivan	Middle School Walkout
2/26/18	Amy DeLoughy	NMS Walkout
2/27/18	Lynn Edwards	NMS Walkout
2/27/18	Abby Hill	Service Dog Policy
3/1/18	Kristen Bulkley	March 14 th Walkout
3/1/18	Lynn Edwards	NMS Walkout
3/2/18	Po Murray	Shell Casing @ High School
3/2/18	Cathy Austermann	Walkout on Social Media
3/4/18	Abby Hill	Service Dog for Teacher

Students

Ages of Attendance

In accordance with Connecticut General Statute 10-186, the Board of Education shall provide education for all persons five years of age and older, having attained age five on or before the first day of January of any school year, and under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or vocational school, except as provided in Connecticut General Statutes 10-233c and 10-233d. Children who have not attained the age of five on or before the first day of January will not be admitted to kindergarten unless the student meets the requirements of Policy 5111. Additionally, according to Connecticut General Statute 10-76d (b2), special education will be provided for children who have attained the age of three and who have been identified as being in need of special education, and whose educational potential will be irreparably diminished without special education.

Parents and those who have the control of children five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age, are obligated by Connecticut law to require their children to attend public day school or its equivalent in the district in which such child resides, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. The parent or person having control of a child sixteen or seventeen years of age must consent to such child's withdrawal from school. For the school year commencing July 1, 2011 and each school year thereafter, the parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school. The parent or person shall exercise this option by personally appearing at the school district office to sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator of the school that this district has provided the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities options available in the school system and in the community.

The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age. The parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age.

The parent or person shall exercise such option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system.

A child who has attained the age of seventeen and who has voluntarily terminated enrollment with parental consent in the district's schools and subsequently seeks readmission may be denied readmission for up to ninety school days from the date of such termination, unless such child seeks readmission to the District not later than ten (10) schooldays after such termination in which case the Board shall provide school accommodations to such child not later than three school days after such child seeks readmission.

A child who has attained the age of nineteen or older may be placed in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program if he/she cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one.

Students

Ages of Attendance (continued)

(cf. 5111 - Admission/Placement)

(cf. 6146 - Graduation Requirements)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15 Towns to maintain schools

10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year-olds

10-76a - 10-76g re special education

10-184 Duties of parents (re mandatory schooling for children ages five to sixteen, inclusive) as amended by PA-98-243, PA 00-157 and PA 09-6 (September Special Session)

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearings.

Appeals to State Board. Establishment of hearing board

10-233a - 10-233f Inclusive; re: suspend, expel, removal of students

10-233c Suspension of students

10-233d Expulsion of pupils

State Board of Education Regulations

10-76a-1 General definitions (c) (d) (q) (t)



General Assembly

February Session, 2018

Raised Bill No. 364

LCO No. 1058

*01058 _____ ED *

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:

(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 10-76g of the 2018 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

(b) Any local or regional board of education which provides special education pursuant to the provisions of sections 10-76a to 10-76g, inclusive, for any exceptional child described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a, under its jurisdiction, excluding (1) children placed by a state agency for whom a board of education receives payment pursuant to the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (e) of section 10-76d, and (2) children who require special education, who reside on state-owned or leased property, and who are not the educational responsibility of the unified school districts established pursuant to sections 17a-37 and 18-99a, shall be financially responsible for the reasonable costs of special education instruction, as defined in the regulations of the State Board of Education, in an amount equal to (A) for any fiscal year commencing prior to July 1, 2005, five times the average per pupil educational costs of such board of education for the prior fiscal year, determined in accordance with the provisions of subsection (a) of section 10-76f, [and] (B) for the fiscal [year commencing July 1, 2005, and each fiscal year thereafter] years ending June 30, 2006, to June 30, 2018, inclusive, four and one-half times such average per pupil educational costs of such board of education, and (C) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, and each fiscal year thereafter, two times such average per pupil educational costs of such board of education. The State Board of Education shall, within available appropriations, pay on a current basis any costs in excess of the local or regional board's basic contribution paid by such board in accordance with the provisions of this

subsection. Any amounts paid by the State Board of Education on a current basis pursuant to this subsection shall not be reimbursable in the subsequent year. Application for such grant shall be made by filing with the Department of Education, in such manner as prescribed by the commissioner, annually on or before December first a statement of the cost of providing special education pursuant to this subsection, provided a board of education may submit, not later than March first, claims for additional children or costs not included in the December filing. Payment by the state for such excess costs shall be made to the local or regional board of education as follows: Seventy-five per cent of the cost in February and the balance in May. The amount due each town pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall be paid to the treasurer of each town entitled to such aid, provided the treasurer shall treat such grant, or a portion of the grant, which relates to special education expenditures incurred in excess of such town's board of education budgeted estimate of such expenditures, as a reduction in expenditures by crediting such expenditure account, rather than town revenue. Such expenditure account shall be so credited no later than thirty days after receipt by the treasurer of necessary documentation from the board of education indicating the amount of such special education expenditures incurred in excess of such town's board of education budgeted estimate of such expenditures.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2018	10-76g(b)

Statement of Purpose:

To lower the excess cost threshold from four and one-half times to two times the average per pupil educational costs of a board of education.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]