

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

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on June 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Reed Intermediate School Library, 3 Trades Lane.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
R. Harriman-Stites, Vice Chair	J. Evans Davila
D. Cruson, Secretary(absent)	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	8 Staff
J. Vouros	11 Public
A. Clure	1 Press
D. Delia	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education go into executive session for a security update and invited Dr. Rodrigue, Mr. Bienkowski and Mr. Pompano. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – Executive Session

Executive session ended at 7:29 p.m.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3 – Celebration of Excellence

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about this special evening recognizing honored staff members. Linda Biscoe is the 2018 Paraeducator of the Year from Hawley School. Linda exemplifies dignity and professionalism and her greatest strength is her dedication to students. She will also be honored at the State level this fall.

Bonnie Hart is the 2018 Teacher of the Year. Bonnie is a math teacher at Newtown Middle School and strives to provide her students with the tools needed to be successful. She is a champion of students and is held in high regard by her students, colleagues, and parents. In our press release I stated that “Bonnie Hart is an extraordinary teacher that represents the teaching faculty with distinction. I am pleased that she will represent Newtown in the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program.”

Item 4 – Consent Agenda

Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the correspondence report. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 5 – Public Participation

Item 6 - Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku spoke about changing the July 17 meeting to another date because a number of Board members could not attend. She wants to continue their work with CAFE and Nick Caruso regarding setting goals for the Board and what we want to do moving forward. She is looking to early September for that meeting.

The high school graduation and middle school moving up ceremonies were well attended by Board members. She gave a special thanks to Dave Roach for hosting a wonderful ceremony and for filling in so well as Interim Principal.

Superintendent’s Report: Dr. Rodrigue thanked Nathalie de Brantes who coordinated the high school graduation rehearsals and ceremony which was completed in 90 minutes. The graduates

are invited back June 22 to visit their previous elementary school in the morning and will return to the high school to get their diplomas and have lunch together. The middle school moving up ceremony was a wonderful tribute to those students. She thanked Mr. Einhorn and his staff. Dr. Rodrigue mentioned that she attended the walk-through of an emergency preparedness drill this morning. She wished Board members, staff leaders and families a well deserved summer break.

Mr. Clure recognized Dr. Rodrigue's mention in Fairfield Magazine as the new Superintendent. Mr. Delia said it was a thrill to be part of the ceremonies and was proud of the students. Mrs. Ku thanked Dr. Rodrigue for getting us through a very challenging school year with transportation and weather challenges.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Vouros spoke about the Curriculum and Instruction Committee's work on the Spanish 1 program going into the high school. The department came up with a program called Duolingo to help these students. Unfortunately, we cannot use that program because of the licensing and parent signoffs so we are looking for a program that will work for them. We are also looking at the NICE program to make it more of an experience here rather than just going to a country. He mentioned that it was difficult to get parental support to help run the NICE program.

Mrs. Evans Davila said Spanish 1A would be expanded to a full year. The company offering the program was not responsive to legislation regarding student privacy. Legal advised us that parents could not sign a waiver to allow that program. She is looking for another solution.

Mr. Vouros said we need to be mindful of looking at the middle school also. There are students who go into reading if they don't qualify for world language. If they had success with a language in 7th grade they opted out of 8th grade and the question is what they will do in 9th grade. We have to look at what we will do when elementary students in Spanish get to 7th grade.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if we were also looking at students entering high school for French.

Mrs. Evans Davila said that was not the plan at this time. We are looking at the course with a high enrollment.

Dr. Rodrigue said we have to look at where we are funneling students when they get to the high school. Spanish usually has a higher enrollment than French.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee is reviewing the 5000 series. They had their last meeting with Jane McEvoy and were grateful to have had her help in organizing them.

Mr. Delia said he and Mrs. Harriman-Stites attended the Unified Theater production which was a wonderful experience to see the teamwork involved and the happiness was contagious.

Financial Report:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the financial report for the month ending May 31, 2018. Mrs. Leidlein seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski presented his report. The second installment of the excess cost grant has been received based on the rate of 72.73% which amounted to \$312,236, which was less than expected.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – Old Business

2018-2019 Budget Adjustments:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 budget adjustments. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said these are final adjustments before operations begin July 1.

Mr. Clure felt there was a substantial difference in the cost for electricity for the high school. Mr. Bienkowski said we don't have the ability to isolate sections of the high school. \$26,000 is a big adjustment but it could be related to weather or the number of school days. It's a small percentage of the total.

Motion passes unanimously.

2018-2019 Calendar:

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about the revised calendar for next year which she had shared with the administrative team. We wanted to ensure much better clarity around student days and the length of the school year. She provided a list of our cancellations over the past five years and the list of school days for towns in our DRG. Some districts requested a waiver from the State but they were not being granted. The definition of a waiver means you make it up come August. The information in the side note regarding the number of State mandated school days and adding cancellation days to the end of the school year was discussed with parents at PTA meetings. The change will be moving to 182 days for students. The teachers have 187 days by contract. We have two less staff development days with early releases so we added one full day in April. We feel it's better to have delayed openings than early releases. The full staff development day in April will provide us a day to use as a school day if we have nine or more cancellations by March 15. Every group we spoke to was confused about the language of built in days which are just days that are added. This provides more clarity. We are keeping the April break which is important.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites appreciation the DRG information on the number of school days and was in full support of this calendar.

Mrs. Leidlein understood the sentiment behind a delayed opening over early dismissal. She asked if any thought was given to May 24 as an early dismissal on a long weekend.

Dr. Rodrigue wanted to have the delays which are better for teachers.

Mr. Clure would rather see a full day in October instead of April 5 even though it's a safeguard if we have many school cancellations.

Dr. Rodrigue said we had it in October but we have a delayed opening and a full day for staff development in November and thought it might be better to have the full month of instruction in October.

Mr. Clure suggested April 12 instead of April 5.

Dr. Rodrigue felt we would have attendance issues on the day before a break.

Mr. Delia noted an inaccurate total number of days in February which should be 18. He also supports a full February break.

Dr. Rodrigue said that adds more days. This was a conversation years ago as not a time when most people go away. Most felt April was better.

Mr. Delia said with the additional day he would like it taken in October and feels students need a break that month.

Mrs. Leidlein said that as a teacher she feels not having broken weeks is more productive and students build up stamina. It's beneficial to the students and teachers.

Mr. Vouros agreed with Mrs. Leidlein in having consistency in October.

Mr. Clure clarified that no days will be taken from the April break as it used to be listed that it was a possibility.

Dr. Rodrigue said we will not take from the April break and she doesn't want parents to think we might. We would have to problem solve if we get to that point. People will have to understand some of the unexpected.

Mr. Clure said we are so focused to get out earlier in June but we start earlier than many districts. It's hot in August and September also. The first three weeks of school are disruptive. We could also start in the middle of the week instead of Monday.

Mrs. Ku said this calendar has been out so we aren't looking at making big changes now.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites agreed to look at August but not extend the summer for this year.

Mr. Delia asked about setting the graduation date to have on the calendar.

Dr. Rodrigue met with other Superintendents and many set graduation for Saturday or Sunday so theirs would be fixed. If we have less snow days it would be difficult because we have to set final exams and it may not benefit us.

Mr. Delia stated he would like the day added to the February break and give us a cushion if we have early weather events. He won't support the calendar if it's not corrected.

A number of the Board felt it best to change May 24 to an early dismissal.

Mr. Vouros felt it should be whatever works better for the principals.

Dr. Rodrigue felt it wouldn't make a difference in May. There will be a meeting before July and clarified that we will not take days from the April break, we will look at the May 24 staff development day, and correct the figures.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to table the motion. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. The discussion will be postponed to the next meeting.

Action on Policies:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve policies

- 6146 Requirements for Graduation
- 6163.32 Live Animals in the Classroom
- 6172.3 Home Schooling
- 6172.4 Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students
- 6172.6 Virtual/Online Courses

Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – New Business

Action on CIP:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the CIP as presented. Mr. Delia seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Bienkowski said the Town spoke about moving to a 10-year plan.

Mrs. Leidlein said the CIP committee voted to bring this to the Board. The second five years is a placeholder where we will move projects based on the needs at that the time.

Mr. Delia praised Mr. Faiella as he discovered an energy incentive program saving the Town half a million dollars and wanted this noted for the record.

Mrs. Leidlein thanked Mr. Bienkowski for his work on better utilizing our buildings.

Motion passes unanimously.

First Read of Policies 5142 Student Safety, 6114.3 Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices and 6114.7 School Security and Safety:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said these policies speak to our strategy about student safety and also school safety and security around instruction. It was important to bring all three together.

Mr. Clure asked that regarding a bomb threat and explosive devices as verbal and non-verbal threats would it also cover social media.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said it covers everything other than a phone call.

Mr. Delia asked how the data would be collected and analyzed.

Dr. Rodrigue stated this was first utilized in Panorama SEL data. There are many types of data to be collected.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the policy is more broad and there was a regulation she would look into.

Minutes of June 5 2018:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of June 5, 2018. Vote: 4 ayes, 2 abstained (Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Clure) Motion passes.

Item 9 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved to adjourn. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 10 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

DRG B
Student and Faculty Attendance Days

	<u>Student Days</u>	<u>Faculty Days</u>
Avon	180	186
Brookfield	182	187
Cheshire	180	186
Fairfield	182	187
Farmington	180	183.5
Glastonbury	180	184
Granby	180	186
Greenwich	180	187
Guilford	180	185
Madison	180	188
Monroe	181	187
New Fairfield	180	186
Newtown	183	187
Orange	181	186
Simsbury	180	185
South Windsor	182	186
Trumbull	181	186
West Hartford	182	185
Woodbridge	181	187
Region 5	181	185
Region 15	180	187

2017-2018 Cancellations - 15

Oct. 30	rain/roads closed
Jan. 4	snow
Jan. 5	snow
Jan. 17	snow
Feb. 7	snow
Mar. 2	rain/snow
Mar. 7	snow
Mar. 8	snow
Mar. 9	snow
Mar. 13	snow
Apr. 2	snow
May 16	tornado
May 17	tornado
May 18	tornado
May 21	tornado
Jan. 2	HOM only – frozen pipes

2016-2017 Cancellations - 5

Jan. 24	snow
Feb. 9	snow
Mar. 10	snow
Mar. 14	snow
Mar. 15	snow

2015-2016 Cancellations - 2

Feb. 5 snow
Feb. 25 thunderstorm – power failures and road issues

2014-2015 Cancellations - 6

Nov. 26 snow
Jan. 9 snow
Jan. 27 blizzard
Feb. 2 snow
Feb. 9 snow
Mar. 5 snow

2013-2014 Cancellations - 7

Dec. 10 snow
Dec. 17 snow
Jan. 3 snow
Feb. 3 snow
Feb. 5 snow
Feb. 13 snow
Feb. 15 snow

2012-2013 Cancellations - 10

Oct. 29	hurricane	Jan. 16	snow
Oct. 30	hurricane	Jan. 31	trees down
Oct. 31	hurricane	Feb. 8	blizzard
Nov. 1	hurricane	Feb. 11	blizzard
Nov. 2	hurricane	Mar. 8	snow

Town of Newtown
Board of Finance - Capital Improvement Plan Calendar
CIP 2019-20 through 2023-24

August 23, 2018	Board of Education presents 2018-19 / 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
September 10, 2018	Board of Selectmen presents 2018-19 / 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
Sept thru Nov, 2018	Board of Finance Reviews 2018-19 / 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan
November 12, 2018	Board of Finance completes recommended Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
November 14, 2018	Board of Finance recommended CIP presented to The Legislative Council for its review and approval (due by November 30).
January 2019	Legislative Council approves the Capital Improvement Plan (within 60 days from receipt of BOF)