

**Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.**

Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held on October 18, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 3 Primrose Street.

D. Zukowski, Chair	C. Melillo
J. Vouros, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Ramsey, Secretary	T. Vadas
D. Cruson	3 Staff
J. Kuzma	3 Public
J. Larkin	
A. Plante	
K. Kunzweiler	
D. Godino	

Ms. Zukowski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Ms. Zukowski reported that she attended the Newtown Grasso festival this past Saturday and it continued to amaze her with well-honed performances from ten participating band and color guards. She thanked Aaron Ovsiew and all those who helped the students yet again create and deliver such a wonderful performance. She also mentioned that the 2022 Veteran's Day Celebration at Newtown high School is scheduled for November 11<sup>th</sup>. The assembly will begin at 12:35 pm. The flyer will be attached in the minutes for reference. She concluded by stating that the Board will have a Board Professional Development regarding community relationships and cross-board interactions on Saturday.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Melillo updated the Board on Transportation. He reported that All-Star Transportation has added one newly licensed driver with two in training and they anticipate three more drivers to start their training next week. He is hopeful that they will be fully staffed with three back up drivers by December. He also reported that Smart Funds, which are the funds that pay for the free lunches, will be ending in the first week of December. In the CFF meeting, they discussed leveraging some of the surplus in the dining account to extend the free and reduced lunch program through the holiday season. He noted that he attended National Arts Honor Society Induction Ceremony last Tuesday. The guest speaker was an artist from Danbury, Luana Barcelos. He updated the Board on the Hawley construction. They are currently on budget and on time. There is a supply chain issue with the electrical gear switch and transformer and may delay the completion time into early summer.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Vouros reported on the Curriculum & Instruction meeting. Mrs. Uberti updated the committee with the new reading requirements sent by the Connecticut State Department of

Education. She will be working with K-4 Language Arts Coordinators to review next steps they must take to both meet the needs of the students to be in compliance with the requirements.

Mr. Ramsey reported on the Communications meeting. The committee reviewed the analytics to see how many people viewed and read the newsletter which is very helpful for the committee to see. The October / November issue will feature Newtown's maintenance and custodial departments. He also noted that Newtown's website will be updated with the help of Mr. Cruson.

Mr. Cruson reported on the Policy meeting. They reviewed the bullying policy and a policy about possession of firearms and deadly weapons. The committee has been working on the bullying policy across multiple meetings. The committee continues to work through the 4000 series with the help of the HR Director, Suzanne D'Eramo.

Mrs. Plante reported on the DEI meeting. They discussed how the process is going for the new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Coordinator position. Mr. Melillo reported that they have multiple applicants and they will move forward with the assessment process.

Ms. Zukowski reported on the CFF meeting because Mrs. Larkin was not in attendance. The committee reviewed the financial report and heard from Mr. Melillo about the Hawley HVAC project. There is a new grant that the CT Legislature has put forward that helps districts improve their HVAC systems. It is possible that some of the Hawley work may be covered by this grant.

Mrs. Larkin reported that Sandy Hook School participated in National Dot Day. The school is starting a One School One Read next week with clues around the school to guess which book they are reading. She also reported that "Buddy Classrooms" are starting again this year. They are also focusing on Hispanic Heritage Month using read alouds and making daily announcement to focus on students highlighting their amazing diverse heritages. Lastly, the school is preparing for Election Day and Veteran's Day.

Ms. Zukowski reported that Middle Gate PTA will be hosting its Trunk or Treat fundraiser on Friday. Next week, students will to get a cast their votes for the Pumpkin Decorating Contest. The winning pumpkins will have places of honor in the school.

Mr. Vouros reported that he will be visiting Newtown High School the next day at 9 am.

Mr. Cruson reminded everyone that the Scarecrows and Pumpkins are on display at the Middle School. Don't forget to bring your non-perishables for the food pantry.

Mr. Ramsey attended the CABE workshop in Hartford which was titled "Legal Issues". It is good for Board members to stay ahead of legal laws.

#### Student Representative Reports:

Ms. Kunzwieler reported that the fall routine is in full swing for students. Several clubs have begun and on October 9, Leo's club assisted in a trail cleanup at Orchard Hill. On October 11, students celebrated Italian Day. Last week many students were honored at induction ceremonies for the Tri-Music, Art, and English Honors Societies.

Mr. Godino reported that on school-wide testing day, seniors were gathered together for a group photo in the NHS stadium. Senior Nights for sports have taken place over the last couple of weeks. NHS students showed great prowess in standardized testing, with students being

recognized by the National African American recognition Program and the National Hispanic Recognition Program as well as qualifying as semifinalists for the National merit Scholarship. The band and color guard provided a wonderful performance at the annual Grasso Festival on October 15.

Financial Report:

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report.

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved that the Board of Education approve the financial report for the month ending September 30, 2022. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 5 – Presentations

Athletics Department Update:

Newtown's Athletic Director, Matt Memoli, presented some updates and accomplishments in the Athletic Department. Mr. Memoli thanked his administrative assistant, Dr. Longobucco, Mr. Melillo, the Administration and the Board of Education for their support.

Mrs. Larkin asked if the Positive Coaches Alliance professional development was required for his coaches.

Mr. Memoli answered that it was mandatory and very well received. It is in early stages but the feedback has been great.

Mr. Vouros complimented Mr. Memoli on his success with the athletic program.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the Newtown Prevention Council and mental training could be available to the broader high school student and if he has reached out to our Director of Health and Wellness Coordinator, Anne Dalton about coordinating a broader inclusion.

Mr. Memoli answered that Ms. Dalton brought the idea to him and there will be more conversations about broadening the audience.

Mr. Ramsey echoed Mr. Vouros compliments and thanked Mr. Memoli for his hard work. He is impressed with the number of participants and asked if anyone gets cut from the sports.

Mr. Memoli said some of the programs do have cuts. Volleyball, Boys Soccer do have cuts because the size of the teams. All of the other fall sports are inclusion sports.

Mr. Ramsey was also impressed with the idea for the Capstone project.

Learning Walks:

Director of Teaching and Learning, Kara DiBartolo, presented 'the how', 'the why', and 'the what' of the learning walks process.

Mr. Ramsey is impressed with the learning walks. He asked how much involvement they have related to art classrooms.

Mrs. DiBartolo said they have been to gym class, library/media class and even an auto shop class. It is important to get an overall picture of the school and students.

Ms. Larkin asked how she determines which students to poll for input on the class. How do they know this student is the best representative of the entire class?

Mrs. DiBartolo said that there are multiple staff members in the room and they make a point to go to different students in the class to make sure they are getting an accurate picture of how the students are doing. There is a healthy balance.

Mrs. Larkin asked if there were any areas where there was room for improvement.

Mrs. DiBartolo said that as they collect more data they would be able to see a clearer picture of room for improvement.

Ms. Kuzma asked if there was consistency or inconsistency between elementary schools. She asked if they are comparing the schools.

Mrs. DiBartolo noted that they are not comparing the schools. They are looking for the overall theme across the district.

Mr. Vouros commented that he witnessed the transfer of the Bridges program and sees that it is working. He thanked the Board for allowing the learning walks to happen. Having the administrators in the classroom is invaluable.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mrs. Uberti if she remembers an area of strength pre-Covid.

Mrs. Uberti said they did not analyze the data they collected because it ended so abruptly.

Mrs. DiBartolo believes the learning walks are the best professional developments.

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Update:

Mrs. Uberti presented Newtown's Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), formally known as SRBI. The District will continue to be in compliance with the requirements of SRBI but will adopt the more accurate descriptor name of Multi-tiered System of Support.

Ms. Kuzma asked that Ms. Uberti talk about the process of communication to the parents.

Mrs. Uberti said that ideally, the first communication should come from the classroom teacher.

There should be a consistent communication throughout the whole process. Parents can participate on the team but she has not seen it happen a lot in Newtown. It can be helpful for the parents to participate for the student.

Mrs. Larkin asked if Newtown changed the name from SRBI to MTSS.

Mrs. Uberti said that Newtown is changing the name but it will still be in compliance with requirements of SRBI. Changing the name is to improve in terms of the process. It is important to have the same guidelines amongst all of the schools.

Mr. Vouros asked Mrs. Uberti to clarify the difference between MTSS and Special Education.

Mrs. Uberti said that this is a general education intervention that is aimed at a pro-active anticipatory type of support. It is not a pathway to special education. However, in most cases, students who are referred for an evaluation have already exhausted all of these tiers.

Mr. Melillo reminded the Board that every classroom is in the MTSS program. Tier 1 is regular classroom instruction.

Mrs. Uberti is looking forward to clarifying this process to the teachers this year.

Ms. Zukowski asked what happens if the classroom environment is an impediment to a hypersensory type of child.

Mrs. Uberti said sometimes that happens so there is a discussion about providing sensory support and assessments that can be done to help the child and keep them in the classroom.

#### Item 6 – Old Business

#### Item 7 – New Business

Mr. Cruson explained that Policies 1700 Possession of Firearms on School Property, 4118.234 & 5141.231 Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs, and 5131.911 Bullying are all existing policies that have been edited or rewritten due to law changes.

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of October 5, 2022. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Mrs. Plante seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Donald Ramsey  
Secretary

Correspondence Report  
10/05/2022 – 10/17/2022

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>
10/05/2022	Ramsey, Donald	Correspondence Report for BOE Meeting 10/05/2022
10/05/2022	June, Kathy	Oct. 1, 2022 enrollment report
10/07/2022	Zukowski, Deborra	Need for a special meeting
10/09/2022	Melillo, Cristopher	10/9 Superintendent's Update
10/11/2022	Zukowski, Deborra	Re: Quick questions re: prezo
10/12/2022	Melillo, Christopher	Fwd: Wesleyan University's Cardinal K-12 Scholarship
10/14/2022	June, Kathy	October 17 BOE Hearing
10/14/2022	Melillo, Christopher	NMS in Safe School Mode
10/14/2022	June, Kathy	BOE Mailing – October 18 2022
10/14/2022	June, Kathy	Vaccination Clinic
10/16/2022	Melillo, Christopher	10/16 Superintendent's Sunday Update
10/17/2022	Zukowski, Deborra	Tonight's Special Meeting
10/17/2022	June, Kathy	BOE Presentations



Sport	# of Teams/Levels	# of Participants
Unified Soccer	1	24
Cheerleading	2	19
Dance	1	26
Boys Soccer	3	49
Field Hockey	3	34
Girls Soccer	3	32
Girls Cross Country	1	29
Boys Cross Country	1	41
Volleyball	3	40
Swimming/Diving	1	29
Golf	1	9
Football	3	88

## Statistics

Fall 2022: We have 430 student-athletes, 38 coaches, 12 sports and 23 teams!



## Current Standings

Currently, many of our Nighthawk fall athletic teams are at the top of the conference.

Boys Soccer: 8-1 record and ranked #1 in the SWC

Swim & Dive: 4-1 record #2 in SWC

Girls Soccer: 7-1-3 record #3 in SWC

Volleyball: 7-0 Tied for #1 in SWC





Field Hockey: 5-1-2 Tied for #2 in SWC

Girls XC: 10-3 on the season SWC Championships tomorrow.

Boys XC: 9-1 on the season SWC Championships tomorrow.

Boys Golf: SWC Championship yesterday, Newtown finished #6 in SWC.

Football: 4-1 Record at the mid point of the season.



## Initiatives



- Positive Coaching Alliance: Professional Development for coaches, resources for student-athletes and parents.
- Seminars from guest presenters including:
  - Newtown Prevention Council
  - Registered Dietician to speak with female athletes
  - Mental Training in Athletics

- Fall Sports Captains Council: Meet Once every two weeks in the lecture hall 7:15-8:00 AM. I teach a class in leadership, where we develop leadership qualities in our team captains.
- Freshman "Futures" Academy: Same as captains council but with any freshman student interested in learning and developing leadership traits early in their high school careers.
- Athletic Department Technology Club
- 3 Sport Athlete & Coaches Appreciation Celebration



## Awards-2021

2021 Winners of the Fred Balsamo Sportsmanship Award-Awarded to 4 schools statewide for outstanding athletic departments.

Michaels Cup Winner 2021-Awarded to 15 schools statewide who are leaders in sportsmanship and community service initiatives.

## Community Service

Fall 2022 Sports Teams have participated in the following:

Team fundraising nights: Susan G Komen, March of Dimes, American Cancer Society/Making Strides Against Breast Cancer and Play 4 The Cure. (Field Hockey, Girls Soccer, Volleyball, Football)

Cheerleaders volunteered at: CH Booth Library, Ukrainian Festival at Castle Hill Farm, Night out in Newtown

Work with F.U.N (Families United in Newtown) where we host games to raise money and allow students with special needs an opportunity to play at halftime of our games.

Many fall student-athletes coach youth teams in Newtown for their respective sport.



## Unified Sports

Newtown Unified Soccer has been practicing two days a week and recently participated in their first tournament of the season Bunnell High School in Stratford's Annual Unified Soccer Tournament.

We will be hosting our annual SWC Unified Soccer Tournament at the Newtown Youth Academy on Wednesday October 26th 3:00pm





## N.H.S Coaches



To the people who make it happen everyday and spend countless hours mentoring, guiding and teaching our student-athletes!



## NHS Athletic Trainers

Doug Michlovitz and John Juniet



## Newtown Middle School Athletics

Girls and Boys Cross Country:

Over 75 student-athletes are participating in the program this season.

2 meets so far this season.

First meet (Boys came in first while the girls came in second in a race of 5 schools)

Second meet was only two schools and the girls were close by 4 points and the boys did well against a very strong Rochambeau Middle School team.

Largest participation we have had since program began.



## Unified Soccer

Largest turnout we have had with 20 student-athletes participating. A contest was already held last week against Whisconier Middle School in Brookfield. The next match will be a CIAC sanctioned middle school soccer tournament held at Brookfield High School on October, 25.

The students are having a blast making social connections while playing the sport of soccer. This program is giving so many opportunities for our athletes and partners to engage in extracurricular activities



# Learning Walks

Board of Education

October 18, 2022

Kara DiBartolo

Director of Teaching and Learning



# The Why: Collective Efficacy

**Collective Efficacy defined:** Collective belief of the staff of the school/faculty in their ability to positively affect students. (Hattie, 2015)

And in schools, when educators believe in their combined ability to influence student outcomes, there are significantly higher levels of academic achievement (Bandura, 1993).

***Collective Efficacy is the #1 influence on student achievement***

1.57 effect size on student achievement

# Look Back to Learn How to Look Forward

## The Timeline

2019-2020

- Administration began engaging in Learning Walks across the district with a lens of CBCI occurring in the classrooms
- The data collected was qualitative in nature and focused on both teacher and student actions.
- A picture began to emerge of strengths and areas of growth across the district.
- Leading into March 2020, close to 200 learning walks had been completed

2020-2022

- Due to the impacts of Covid, it was difficult to reinstitute the Learning Walks as we would not be able to see the instruction we wanted to see

2022-2023

- Because of a normal school year, we are now able to implement our Learning Walks with fidelity and consistency.



# What is Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction? (CBCI)

- CBCI aligns teaching with how people learn.
- CBCI uses facts and skills to develop a deeper understanding of the essential concepts and principles of a discipline.
- CBCI moves lower level thinking to the higher, conceptual level.
- CBCI develops the ability to move beyond the facts.

# Learning Walks -Method

Regularly scheduled classroom visits in each of the schools each month – CO admin, lead teacher, principal, AP

- Visits last 10-15 minutes
- Focused on both teacher and student actions
- Focused on a concept-based instructional framework
- Seven specific instructional “look-fors” – recorded on a Google Form
- Goal is to visit approximately 5 classrooms for each time visiting a school
- Debrief and calibration discussion conclude each session

# Learning Walks - Data Collection and Analysis

- Year end goal is approximately 300 visits - Current count is 42 classroom visits
- Overall picture of instruction at each school and the district overall
- Calibrate around instructional practices
- Identify areas of strength in instruction
- Identify areas where there opportunities for improvement
  - Resource allocation
  - Professional development
  - Curriculum alignment and gaps
  - Assessment and instructional practices
  - Digital technology integration

# CBCI - Observable Evidence Collection Form

## Our Protocol

# Our Noticings

- Pure Joy!
- Positive classroom learning environments.
- Students who are engaged, and excited about learning
- Extremely dedicated and conscientious teachers and staff.
- Committed team of administrators with a mindset of continuous growth and improvement.

# Next Steps

- Continue with our district Learning Walks
- Engage our Language Arts Consultants, Math Specialists, Coordinators, and Department Heads in the Learning Walks
- Begin to have classroom teachers join the Learning Walks

## **Ultimate Goal:**

- Building level administrators leading their own Learning Walks with their building based team

Questions?

# Newtown Public Schools

## MTSS Process Review


Board of Education  
October 18, 2022  
Anne Uberti  
Assistant Superintendent  
Curriculum & Instruction



# What is SRBI?

SRBI, which stands for scientifically, research-based interventions, has been mandated by the Connecticut State Department of Education since 2008.

Key elements of SRBI are as follows:

- Strong core curriculum that includes the use of effective teaching strategies
  - Differentiation for all learners
  - Common assessments
  - Early intervention
  - Educational decision-making based on data
- 

# Shifting from SRBI to MTSS

SRBI, which stands for scientifically, research-based interventions, has been mandated by the Connecticut State Department of Education since 2008.

The District will still be in compliance with the requirements of SRBI but will adopt the more accurate descriptor name of Multi-tiered Systems of Support or MTSS.




# What is MTSS?

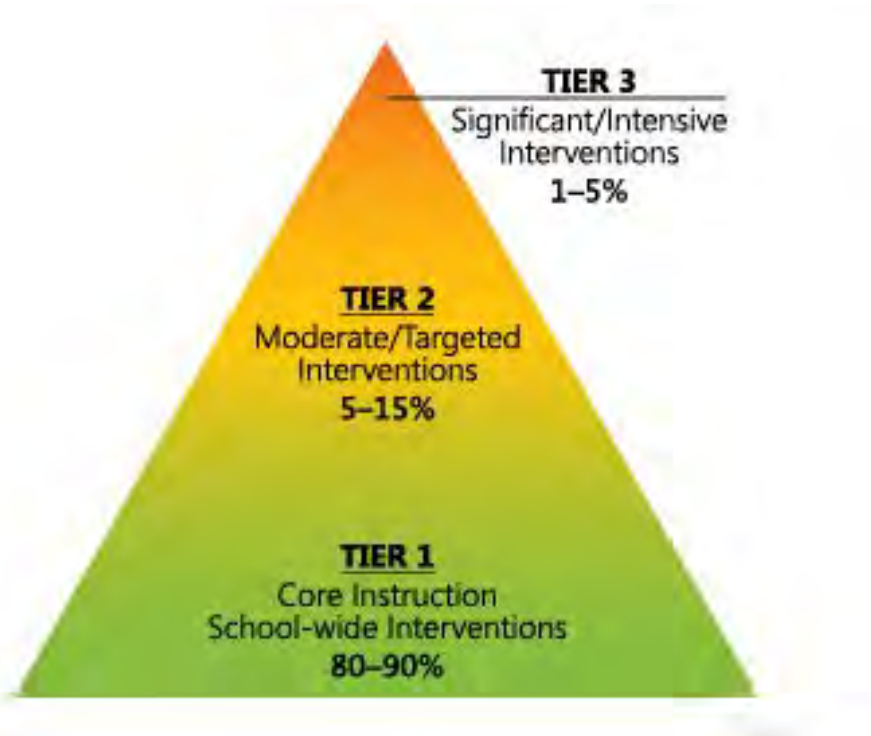
The key components of MTSS include:

- Universal screening of all students early in the school year
- Tiers of interventions that can be intensified in response to levels of need
- Ongoing data collection and continual assessment
- Schoolwide approach to expectations and supports
- Frequent communication between home and school

MTSS uses collected data to assess student needs and provide them with interventions in appropriate tiers.



# The 3 Tiers of Support



Tier I - Whole Class

Tier II - Small group, targeted instruction

Tier III - Intensive Interventions

The tiers represent tiers of support that increase in terms of frequency (how often), intensity (size of the group) and duration (how long).

# Who is part of the MTSS Student Support Team?

## Core Team Members

Principal

Lead Teacher

Language Arts Consultant

Math Specialist

School Counselor

## Invitation Only

ESL Teacher

School Nurse

School Psychologist

BCBA

Special Ed Supervisor

Behavior Intervention Para

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

General Education Teacher

## Special Ed Personnel


Is not part of the regular MTSS process

Can be consulted when needed



# Role of the MTSS Student Support Teams

Each school team has a responsibility to:

- Create a culture in which all staff take responsibility for the success of all students.
  - Meet regularly to address concerns about individuals or groups of students and engage in **collective problem solving and decision-making**.
  - Support students both by anticipating and preventing issues before they occur and by developing interventions and/or resources when issues do arise.
  - Support staff members by introducing a variety of strategies and building capacity to support all students.
  - Evaluate and troubleshoot the implementation of MTSS plans.
  - Document intervention plans and progress.
- 

# Effective Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Process

**Regularly review school-wide data:** Proactively identify students with academic and/or behavioral concerns

**Define the problem:** Difference between what is observed/measured and what is expected

**Analyze the problem:** Why is this problem occurring?

**Develop and implement the intervention plan:** develop an instructional/intervention plan that matches the identified student need and has the most likelihood of success.

**Evaluate the response to intervention:** Progress monitoring is the method for measuring the effectiveness of an intervention.



# Evaluating the Response to Intervention

**Based on the data review, is the intervention working?**

***If yes, either...***

continue intervention if more progress is needed or dismiss student from intervention.

***If no...ask more questions...***

Has the intervention been implemented with fidelity?

Does the intervention need more time?

Does the goal need to be modified?

Does the intervention strategy need to be modified?

Does the frequency, duration or intensity need to increase?

Is the intervention addressing the correct concern?





# Expectations for Building Administrators

Facilitate MTSS SST meetings at-least monthly

Monitor integrity of interventions

Monitor integrity of data

Build capacity within general ed to respond to intervention

Engage in practices that contribute to a collaborative environment

Commit to a culture of improvement by engaging in case reviews

Dedicate a portion of the meeting time to process review.



# Expectations for Data-Collection and Analysis

Review student achievement data from a variety of sources.


Documentation of all intervention plans, including the tracking of attendance and progress monitoring results.

Continued professional development in data collection and analysis for administrators, lead teachers, interventionists and counselors throughout the year.




# The Importance of Consistent Implementation

Effects of later steps in the MTSS process depend on the efficacy in which the earlier steps were carried out.

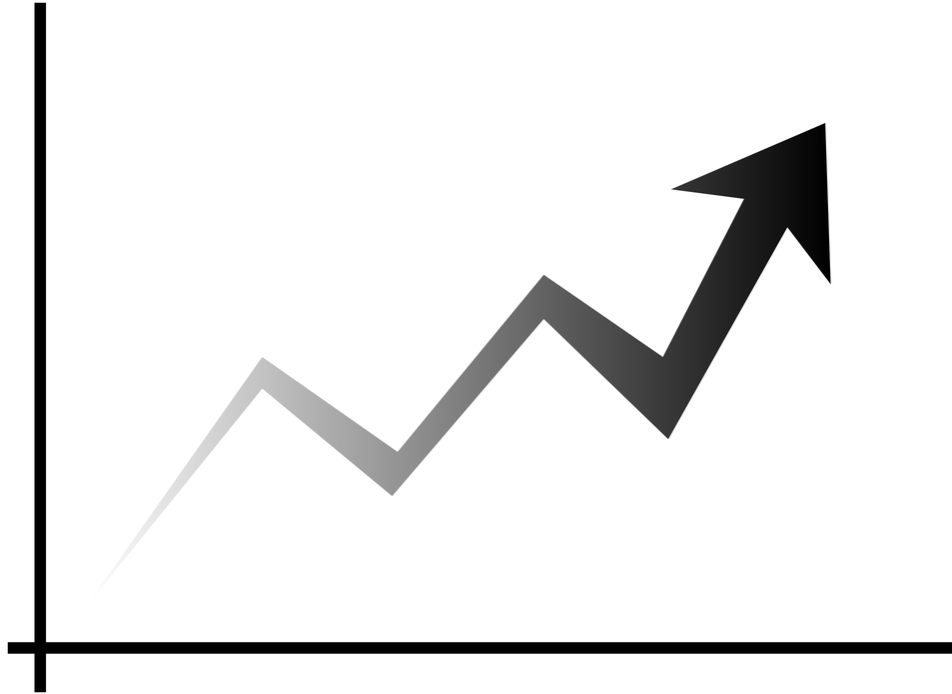
- Screening guidance that ensures equitable access to intervention
  - Consistent materials and strategies for targeted interventions
  - Agreed upon progress monitors to determine progress or lack of
  - Protocols for collection and recording of data
  - Building the collective efficacy of teachers
- 

# Focusing on Continuous Improvement

A review of MTSS (SRBI) practices in the district over the past two years indicates there are some areas of strength and some areas in need of growth. This year, working in conjunction with district leaders, our K-8 MTSS leadership teams will:

- define and utilize specific criteria ranges for identifying students in need of MTSS
  - define and utilize specific criteria ranges for moving students through MTSS
  - identify progress monitors for reading, math and social/emotional behavioral interventions
  - create and implement behavioral support plans with fidelity
  - Consistently document interventions and utilize common protocols for tracking progress over time
- 

*I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn. –Albert Einstein*



## Community Relations

### ~~Otherwise Lawful Possession of Firearms~~ or Deadly Weapons ~~on School Property~~

~~Notwithstanding the otherwise lawful possession of firearms defined in Section 53a-3, in or on the real property comprising school district property by persons who hold a valid state or local permit to carry a firearm and would otherwise legally traverse school property with an unloaded firearm for the purpose of gaining access to public or private lands open to hunting or for other lawful purposes, such entry into Board of Education Offices or onto school property by these persons for these purposes is prohibited by the Board of Education.~~

Students and staff are prohibited by the Board of Education from possessing firearms or deadly weapons for any reason, whether otherwise lawful or not, ~~in or~~ on the real property comprising the ~~public or private~~ district's elementary or secondary schools or administrative office building, on school transportation, or at a school sponsored activity as defined in Subsection (h) of Section 10-233a.

The issuance of a permit to carry a pistol, revolver or other firearms or deadly weapon does not authorize the possession or carrying of a pistol, revolver or other firearms or deadly weapon on ~~school district property~~ the real property of any school or administrative office building, on school transportation, or to a school-sponsored activity. The Board of Education prohibits such possession on school district property.

Entry into Board of Education Offices or onto school property by persons who hold a valid state or local permit to carry a firearm or deadly weapon and would otherwise legally traverse school property with an unloaded firearm or deadly weapon for the purpose of gaining access to public or private lands open to hunting or for other lawful purposes, is prohibited by the Board of Education.

The Board of Education may employ or enter into an agreement for public school security services with a firearm or deadly weapon, as defined in state law, only with a sworn member of a local police department or a retired state or local police officer, or retired federal law enforcement agents and retired police officers from an out-of-state police department, as stipulated in 10-244a.

A peace officer, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-3, engaged in the performance of his or her official duties who is in lawful possession of a deadly weapon or firearm may bring such item on the real property of any school or administrative office building in this district, on school transportation, or to a school-sponsored activity.

Unless subject to the peace officer exception listed above, any person who possesses a deadly weapon or firearm on the real property of an elementary or secondary school in this district, or administrative office building, on school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity, whether or not the person is lawfully permitted to carry such deadly weapon or firearm, will be reported to the local police authorities once school officials become aware of its possession. A student who possesses and/or uses any deadly weapon or firearm on the real property of an elementary or secondary school in this district, or administrative office building, on school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity in violation of this policy shall be disciplined in accordance with Board of Education Student Discipline Policy P 5131.7 and Administrative Regulations R5131.7.

The Board of Education reserves the right to forbid anyone caught possessing a deadly weapon or firearm on the real property of its school buildings or administrative office buildings, on school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity, from using any and all school facilities.

Students and staff are prohibited by the Board of Education from possessing firearms for any reason, whether otherwise lawful or not, in or on the real property comprising the public or private elementary or secondary school or at a school sponsored activity as defined in Subsection (h) of Section 10-233a.

(cf. 5114 - Suspension/Expulsion/Exclusion/Removal)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
29-28 Permit for sale at retail of pistol or revolver. Permit to carry a pistol or revolver. Confidentiality of name and address of permit holder. (as amended by P.A. 98-129)  
29-33 Sale, delivery or transfer of pistol and revolvers. Documentation requirements. Waiting period. Exempted transactions. Penalty. (as amended by P.A. 98-129)  
52a-3 Definitions.  
53a-217b Possession of a weapon on school grounds: Class D felony. (as amended by P.A. 01-84)  
P.A. 13-188 An Act Concerning School Safety  
10-244a Employment of persons to provide security services in a public school while in possession of a firearm (as amended by P.A. 14-212 and P.A. 14-217)

Policy adopted: May 5, 2015 , Effective July 1, 2015  
Policy revised: April 5, 2016

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Newtown, Connecticut

## Personnel/Students

### Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs

The Board of Education prohibits all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. For purposes of this policy, the term “recommend” shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child use psychotropic drugs.

### Definitions

“**Psychotropic drugs**” means prescription medications for behavioral or social-emotional concerns, such as attentional deficits, impulsivity, anxiety, depression, and thought disorders and includes, but is not limited to stimulant medications and anti-depressants.

“School health and mental health personnel” means:

1. school nurses or nurse practitioners appointed pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-212;
2. school medical advisors appointed pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-205;
3. school psychologists;
4. school social workers;
5. school counselors;
6. school administrators;
7. other school personnel (such as a teacher designated as a child's Case Manager) who have been identified by a Planning and Placement Team, Section 504 team, Student Assistance Team or similar group of district professionals as the person responsible for communication with a parent or guardian about a child's need for medical evaluation;
8. a school professional staff member designated by the Superintendent to communicate with a child's parent or guardian about a child's need for medical evaluation.

The District shall follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement and delivery of services to children with disabilities or suspected disabilities provided in state and federal statutes that govern special education.

Procedures shall be established by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee (or Director of Special Education) delineating the manner in which school personnel and school health and mental health personnel shall communicate with each other regarding children who may need to be recommended for a medical evaluation. ~~Such procedures shall also include how school health and mental health personnel should communicate the need for a medical evaluation to the child's parents/guardians. Such procedures shall be consistent with all mandatory and existing procedures and due process safeguards governing assessment and diagnosis.~~

Such procedures shall also include how school health and mental health personnel should communicate the need for a medical evaluation to the child's parents/guardians. Such procedures shall be consistent with all mandatory and existing procedures and due process safeguards governing assessment and diagnosis. These established procedures are included in the accompanying regulations.



## **Personnel/Students**

### **Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs (continued)**

Further, upon the consent of the student's parents or guardian, obtained, in writing, through the Planning and Placement Team process, school personnel may consult with the medical practitioner regarding such use.

In addition, the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) may recommend a medical evaluation as part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation, as needed to determine either a child's eligibility for special education and related services, or educational needs for an individualized education program (IEP).

The Board recognizes that the refusal of a parent or other person having control of a child to administer or consent to the administration of any psychotropic drug to the child shall not, in and of itself, constitute grounds for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to take such child into custody or for any court of competent jurisdiction to order that such child be taken into custody by the Department, unless such refusal causes such child to be neglected or abused, as defined in C.G.S. 46b-120.

(cf. 5141.4 - Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect)

Legal Reference:        Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 10-212b Policies prohibiting the recommendation of psychotropic drugs by  
                                 school personnel. (as amended by PA 03-211)  
                                 46b-120. Definitions  
                                 10-76a Definitions. (as amended by PA 00-48)  
                                 10-76b State supervision of special education programs and services.  
                                 10-76d Duties and powers of boards of education to provide special education  
                                 programs and services. (as amended by PA 97-114 and PA 00-48)  
                                 10-76h Special education hearing and review procedure. Mediation of  
                                 disputes. (as amended by PA 00-48)  
                                 State Board of Education Regulations.  
                                 34 C.F.R. 3000 Assistance to States for Education for Handicapped  
                                 Children.  
                                 American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.  
                                 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.  
                                 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, 29 U.S.C. § 794.

Policy adopted:

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Newtown, Connecticut

## Personnel/Students

### Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs

It is the policy of the Newtown Board of Education to prohibit all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system.

Procedures delineating the manner in which school health and mental health personnel, as defined above, shall communicate with each other regarding children who may need to be recommended for a medical evaluation are as follows:

#### Procedures

- A. A school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may communicate with other school personnel about a child who may require a recommendation for a medical evaluation, provided that 1) there is a legitimate educational interest in sharing such information; and 2) such communication shall remain confidential, to the extent required by law.
- B. A school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may communicate a recommendation to a parent or guardian that a child be evaluated by a medical practitioner provided that 1) based on such person's professional experience, objective factors indicate that a medical evaluation may be necessary to address concerns relating to the child's education and overall mental health; and 2) any communication includes the basis for the recommendation.
- C. If a parent or guardian determines that it is necessary to share medical information, including results of any medical evaluation, with school personnel, he or she may do so at any time. School personnel who receive such information directly from a parent must maintain the confidentiality of such information, to the extent required by law.
- D. Any school personnel with a legitimate educational interest in obtaining information from a child's medical practitioner outside the school who is not a school employee must obtain prior, written consent from the child's parent or guardian to communicate with such outside medical practitioners. Any school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may request written consent from the parent or guardian. To be valid, the written consent must: 1) be signed by the child's parent or guardian; 2) be dated; 3) provide the child's name; 4) provide the name of the medical practitioner and relevant contact information, to the extent known; and 5) indicate the scope of the consent.

## Students

### **Bullying, Teen Dating Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention**

The Newtown Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination.

#### **Definitions**

**Diversity Characteristics:** Diversity Characteristics as set forth in Policy 0523 include, but not limited to, race, culture, color, creed or religion, ancestry, national origin, mental and physical ability, age, marital status, physical appearance, family structure, citizenship status, sexual orientation, alienage, gender expression or identity, economic status, veteran’s status, and any other protected class in conformance with federal, state and local laws.

**Bullying:** For purposes of this policy, “Bullying” means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:

- (1) causes ~~an individual~~ physical or emotional harm to an individual, including but need not be limited to intimidation, humiliation, and/or verbal or physical abuse;
- (2) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
- (3) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture. ~~based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.~~

**Teen Dating Violence:** For purposes of this policy, “Teen Dating Violence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

**Harassment:** For the purposes of this policy, harassment is any unwelcome conduct on the basis of one or more Diversity Characteristics that creates a hostile environment, which occurs when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

## Students

### Bullying, Teen Dating Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention

#### Definitions (continued)

**Discrimination:** With respect to students, unlawful discrimination occurs when a student is denied participation in, or the benefits of, a program or activity of the Board because of one of more Diversity Characteristics.

**Cyberbullying:** For purposes of this policy, “Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

In accordance with state law and the Board’s Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior, teen dating violence, harassment or discrimination on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education the Board; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device. ~~owned, leased or used by the Board.~~

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior, teen dating violence, harassment or discrimination outside of the school setting if such action (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such action was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such action was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying, teen dating violence, harassment or discrimination is likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior, teen dating violence, harassment or discrimination shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

## Students

### **Bullying, Teen Dating Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention**

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing, implementing, and periodically reviewing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222d(b) as amended.

The Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks. In addition, the district shall post training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222s as amended.

cf:      0523 – Equity and Diversity  
          5145.42 – Racial Harassment of Students  
          5145.53 – Transgender and gender Non-Conforming Youth  
          5145.5 – Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

#### Legal References:

Public Act 19-166  
Public Act 21-95  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145a  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145o  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220a  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222g  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r  
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

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

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held on October 5, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 3 Primrose Street.

D. Zukowski, Chair	C. Melillo
J. Vouros, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Ramsey, Secretary	T. Vadas (absent)
D. Cruson	2 Public
J. Kuzma	
J. Larkin	
A. Plante	
K. Kunzweiler (absent)	
D. Godino (absent)	

Ms. Zukowski called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education approve the correspondence report and the donations to Sandy Hook School and Newtown High School. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Ms. Zukowski reported that she and Mr. Melillo hosted our community conversation on Thursday with about 15 parents. Some of the topics included the high school cell phone policy, transportation and safety, classroom inclusion, parent communication, student engagement, and teacher diversity. Our teacher's union negotiations finished and she thanked everyone involved. She also mentioned the ad hoc district committees starting soon which include our Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate. Mr. Vouros and Mrs. Kuzma will be on this committee. A committee will be formed as part of the teacher's contract negotiations to review and update processes related to extracurricular activities and she would like two Board members to join this committee. The first meeting of the committee regarding the move back to Hawley will meet October 24 to discuss the move. She asked for one Board member to be on this committee. She enjoyed joining Mr. Geissler at the Middle Gate Mix-it-Up lunch last week which encourages children to sit at tables with students they may not know.

Item 3 – Public Participation (continued)

Two people joined the meeting late but there were no comments.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Melillo noted that Monday morning he and Mrs. Plante went to the Workspace in Bethel. It was purchased by EdAdvance and CES and he is interested in leveraging this space to assist in providing career pathways for Newtown students. There is also the possibility of having a regional program. The State of Connecticut released the K-3 core reading programs that all schools must implement or apply for an approved waiver. His monthly newsletter came out on September 30. He also spoke about the success of the community meeting and mentioned wanting to revamp our website.

We have been doing instructional rounds and observing and documenting practice and will use these as a means of improving instruction.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Vouros reported on the Curriculum and Instruction meeting. The anticipated curricula for discussion was reviewed and Mrs. Uberti spoke about her student performance overview she would be presenting to the Board.

Mr. Cruson noted that the Policy Committee met yesterday and reviewed the bullying prevention and intervention policy which was being sent to legal for review. We also discussed our smoking, drinking and use of drugs policy which will be coming to the Board for approval. We reviewed the weapons policy and our recruitment and selection policy.

Mrs. Kuzma met with Dr. Correia at Reed. Students in the grade 5 Bridges math program are doing well. The PTA Color Games competition is back from October 31 to November 4.

Mr. Cruson attended the Head O'Meadow PTA meeting. They have a new board this year and they want to bring back cultural arts along with other ideas to give back to the school.

Mrs. Plante commented on her visit to the Workspace with Mr. Melillo. She also met with him at Reed where the students have settled in very nicely.

Ms. Zukowski joined Mr. Geissler at the Middle Gate Mix-it-Up lunch which encourages children to sit at tables with students they may not know and join in conversations.

#### Item 5 – Presentations

Mrs. Uberti presented the student performance overview for the 2021-22 school year which provides a wide overview of how our students are doing. Results must be taken in the context of what teachers and students dealt with due to the pandemic. Learning also continued to be disrupted last year due to illness and quarantining. Despite these issues, she is encouraged by our students' performance and extremely confident they will reach their full potential.

Mr. Cruson verified that the state is no longer using the DRG comparisons.  
Mrs. Uberti said that was correct and they have not been updated.

Mrs. Larkin feels we have to take into consideration when making town comparisons what you find in that comparison. She asked if we contact districts that are doing well to see what programs they are using.

Mrs. Uberti said when we started looking at math programs we reached out to every district on our list doing better than us to see how they were doing and there was no consistency and some were not using a program at all. The superintendents and assistant superintendents meet regularly and share what we are doing but we have to determine what will work best for us here.

Mr. Melillo said there are variables in comparing with other districts. Teacher practice is looked at and many districts use the same us. If we want high achieving students it's all about best practices and how we perform in the classroom and that's where we need to focus. Our students have been away from effective learning and our teachers had to implement a whole different way of teaching. We are now getting back to best practices.

Mrs. Kuzma referred to the comments on focusing on students who need extra support and how to decide if it was due to Covid or if it would have been needed anyway. Also, is there an increase in intervention and are we able to support it with the staff we have?

Mrs. Uberti said if there is a particular weakness across a grade level it is not an intervention but a tier one issue which is about instruction occurring in the classroom. We are using iReady as a universal screener for reading and math and Dibbles as a finer screener for reading in grades K-3. This will help us differentiate between the student needs and how we are going to address them. We are in the process of creating a document that lays out how we identify these students and are looking at what resources we have available. We added math interventionists in the elementary schools and another math interventionist at the middle school. She has been looking at the middle school math performance as there appears to be gaps. We may offer an afterschool program for these students.

Mr. Ramsey inquired if feedback is provided to teachers after instructional rounds.

Mrs. Uberti said we collect observational evidence from the observation and see if we agree on the seven indicators. We collect data over time and a picture emerges to determine what areas need to improve.

Mr. Ramsey asked that after you collected the data is there a long-term plan for professional development.

Mrs. Uberti said there was and when we collect data we will address it with the teacher.

Mrs. Larkin asked how the elementary grades are defined. The more concerning scores last year are in grades five and six and asked if grade five could be considered elementary so they have the educational support before school.

Mrs. Uberti said there are supports available at Reed because they can provide more intervention during the school day. We have a strong connection between grades four and five because when students change schools there is a step back and they typically catch up the next year. The same is in the middle school.

Mrs. Larkin asked if students are missing building blocks how do we go back and reteach the material and how are you able to finish teaching everything the rest of the year.

Mrs. Uberti said you are doing both at the same time by teaching the regular curriculum and providing supports. We have tools that pinpoint the deficits as well as teacher lessons for the students. They can also get personalized instruction.

Mrs. Larkin asked if it was possible to teach what has to be done by the end of the year. Did we test students on something not taught yet which is why they don't test as well?

Mrs. Uberti said we have to accelerate learning for those students.

Mr. Melillo said our job is to see what we can compact or expand for the needs of the students. We use the data to see what we have to adjust and continue to monitor.

Ms. Zukowski referred to slide #4 which is grade based data and asked if that would provide some light on how well our curriculum is being taught and measured.

Mrs. Uberti it would and has a lot of influencing factors.

Ms. Zukowski noted that slide #5 brings in the concept of a cohort and that slide #6 doesn't look like eighth graders learned much more than seventh graders.

#### Item 6 – Old Business

##### Second Read of Policies:

Mr. Cruson noted the committee did not receive any questions.

MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education rescind Policy 4-106.1 Athletic Coaches. Mr. Ramsey seconded. Motion passes unanimously.



MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education rescind Policy 4-107 Coaching Students Out of Season. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 4-115.3 Evaluation of Coaches. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 6142.101 School Wellness. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – New Business

Superintendent's Goals:

Mr. Melillo stated that his goals are around understanding the climate and needs of the district, the strategic plan, and portrait of a graduate. He is also focusing on instructional rounds, the district budgetary process, and project goals.

Mrs. Plante asked if he had what he needed to achieve these goals.

Mr. Melillo stated that the Board is very supportive and he has things in place to keep the lines of communication open to be sure the Board is aware of what is happening.

Minutes of September 20, 2022:

MOTION: Mrs. Plante moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of September 20, 2022. Mr. Ramsey seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved to adjourn. Mrs. Kuzma seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Donald Ramsey  
Secretary