



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CONNECTICUT

BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 22, 2021

I. Call to Order: The meeting called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Ms. Rivera.

Attendees

Present: Ms. Yesenia, President; Mr. Matt Wilcox, Vice-President; Mayor Justin Elicker, Dr. Ilene Tracey, Dr. Tamiko Jackson-McArthur, Dr. Joyner, Mr. Darnell Goldson, Mr. Larry Conaway, Ms. Lihame Arouna.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Dr. Jackson led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III.
068.21
Approval of the
Board Minutes:
3.8.21**

On the Motion by Mr. Wilcox, seconded by Mayor Elicker to approve the Minutes from the March 8, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Wilcox, Yes; Dr. Jackson, yes; Mr. Conaway, Yes; Mayor Elicker, Yes; Mr. Goldson, Yes; Dr. Joyner, Yes; Ms. Rivera, Yes; Ms. Yesenia, yes; Ms. Arouna, Yes.

Channel Name: New Haven BOE TV
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEY46ioJn9U>
Public Participation Begins 5:39pm

Public Participation: (4 Participants)

- Citywide Parent Team President (Ms. Waters)
- Tony Criscuolo
- Jessica

IV. Students' Report:

Ms. Arouna stated that she did not have a student report.

**V
Superintendent's Report:
Dr. Ilene Tracey**

Dr. Tracey reported that Mr. Phillip Penn, (CFO,) as well as Mr. Cordero (past teacher and principal) will both end their tenure with the Board. She expressed the Board's gratitude for their competent service and wished them success in their future endeavors. She also recognized other teachers who were retiring and expressed same as well as thanked them for their efficient and dedicated service towards the district's students.



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069-21

Personnel Report:

On the Motion by Mr Wilcox, seconded by Dr. Joyner to approve the Personnel Report. (Motion Passed)

Discussion

Dr. Jackson acknowledge and congratulated teacher, Tara Farley at Betsy Ross Magnet School, upon her resignation, for her dedicated service as a special education teacher.

Mr. Wilcox, Yes; Dr. Joyner, Yes; Dr. Jackson, Yes; Mr. Conaway, Yes; Mayor Elicker, Yes; Mr. Goldson, Dr. Paul Whyte, Yes; Dr. Ilene Tracey yes; Mr. Rivera, Yes; Ms. Arouna, Yes

ii. Grades Update

Dr. Tracey reported that at the last Teach and Learning meeting, Ms. Gemma Joseph-Lumpkin shared information regarding grades for the last two marking periods. Dr. Tracey added that she observed there was a strong correlation between absenteeism and failing grades for schools in the district. She said that further analysis will be done to identify the root cause. She will be working closely with principals to decide what mitigation strategies can be implemented. It is intended to use ESSERF II grant towards this as well as launching a robust summer recovery programs to help our students. She further added that as soon as the issues are identified resolution strategies will be applied.

Dr. Michele Sherban shared the data chart regarding failing grades and absenteeism. This chart compared grades between 6-8 and 9-12 for years 2020 and 2021. The data concluded that there was a significant increase of failing grades and absenteeism in 2021 compared to 2020 for both marking periods. When comparing the pre-pandemic period, there was dramatic differences with students failing 5 or more classes. This doubled in 2021 for marking period 1 and similar in marking period 2 for students failing five or more classes.

Dr. Goldson stated that the data chart required more clarity especially the data that reflected percentages that applied to gender and race regarding poor performances and absenteeism. He also requested that future statistics should reveal the overall total students.

Dr. Jackson also requested that the data be presented in percentages of the total students. She expressed concern regarding the amount of male students failing classes and being absent.

Mayor Elicker recommended that the data be compared to other school districts to observe their trend and asked what will be done to determine the problem.



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Dr. Tracey responded that they are working with the school to excavate and analyze the root cause and contributory factors that are revealed in the data chart. She said she will be relying on teacher to present feedback regarding their observations.

Ms. Hannans referred the Board to the Rise Network Report which examines performance of several high school across the states. She said even though it revealed that more students were failing their grades, it also gave concrete recommendations to address this.

Dr. Joyner stated that answers for poor performance and absenteeism stems from failing culture and poverty as per his personal research and experience in his educational career. He added to overcome this terrain, students born in these communities where gross failing is evident will need critical care and extraordinary support by parents, community and schools.

Dr. Velasquez added that there are plans in place to help orient the children for back to school. Also, the school district is working hard to educate all our children.

Dr. Jackson added that mental health factor also played a role and this has impacted the data. She commended the teachers for their efforts and said that the post pandemic trauma will also have to be addressed in the schools.

Dr. Goldson added that parent should be involved in the decision that are made in education for their children to be successful and this is important

Mr. Conway thanked Ms. Sherman for her report. He suggested reviewing all programs for the future and stated that he agreed with Dr. Goldson that parent engagement and involvement are important for student success.

iii
Absenteeism –
Gemma Joseph-
Lumpkin

Ms. Joseph-Lumpkin reported that chronic absenteeism means a student is absent for 10% of enrolled days. She added that there has been progress made overtime, however since 2021 we have been in the red zone. In response, she has collected intelligence from school teams, Connecticut Department Framework and has had guidance from families and community engagement. In addition, we have adopted research-based practices from Attendance Works – (National Academy of Absenteeism) which reveals students who are at risk for dis-engagement. She reported that a critical care and extraordinary support have be implemented. Pre-plan outreach to families was installed in April 2020. She added that the goal is for a seamless transition between the board and the school setting. She further reported that the district's attendance teams, social workers, guidance counsellors, drop off coordinators have touched the lives of families. Clifford Beers



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have assisted ensuring connectivity with families. She added that community canvassing has been expanded. A homeless team has reached out to students that are homeless. In addition, a homework helpline has been established as well as a family call center and the website is presently been updated. Additional resources is the Youth Connect. The government is building partnership with student mentors who have been trained. A code of conduct has also been adopted.

Dr. Tracey added that Gemma's department will be hosting a webinar to speak with parents regarding students need.

**VI.
Filter Schedule
an Checklist –
Joseph
Barbarotta - Go
To Service**

Filter Change Program:

Dr. Barbarotta reported that due to COVID-19, a decision was taken to get MERV13 Units. Presently MERV 13 are in all air handling and roof top units. He stated that most units have a pre-filter and a final filter. After consulting with the City building officials and engineers for the City, a filter change program was recommended. If we remain with MERV 13 as pre-filters changes will have to be done 4 times annually. If nothing gets into the MERV13 final filters, then changes will only need to be done once annually. Also, if MERV 8 is placed in the pre-filter and 13 in the final filter, changes will be once yearly. He said he is recommending a MERV 8 in the pre-filter and MERV 13 in the final filter and changing the final filter twice annually.

He proposed the custodial staff doing the filter change according to schedule moving forward. He is looking for Board's suggestion and approval for filter change schedule. He added that there are 113 pre-filter and 77 final filter to be implanted.

Further, he stated that the custodial contract has 104 positions down 11, with 93 positions presently available. He suggested reversing the custodial positions back to custodial engineers with their job descriptions without a budget increase. Also converting the 4 floating positions to regular positions so this will ensure the filters are changed on schedule dates and sign-off on them. Mr Barbarotta stated that orders are in for the 2nd series of filters and he is desirous of implementing the MERV 8 and 13.

Dr. Jackson asked if both were MERV 13 would be beneficial for the first filter to catch everything.

Dr. Goldson recommended that a comprehensive plan regarding building maintenance moving forward. He said the Board should take this seriously.



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Attorney Alexaida referenced the newspaper article that showed dirty filters in the schools. He said it was concerned about the article's content which appeared to be inaccurate and misleading. Dr. Goldson stated that Mr. Alexaida's comments regarding this was disparaging. Further discussion continued about the integrity of the pictures in the article. Mr. Alexaida stated that there is a State statute requiring indoor air quality reports to be presented on or after July 4, 2021. In addition, every 5 years certain reports created by the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Administrative Services are not due until July 1, 2021. The statute was amended in 2017 and have requested the report more frequently.

Mr. Wilcox reminded the Board that there is a Finance and Operations Committee which is charged to look at issues regarding Finance and as a result it will continue to look into it. He stated any related issues that arise a request can be made and a solution given prior to the Board meetings. Dr. Jackson asked if the pictures in the newspaper article revealing 4- year-old dirty air filters at Worthington Hooker school were not taken from that school. She Attorney Alexaida said that his was concern if the article was accurate because of the posting date of the article. Further discussion continued regarding the accuracy and integrity of the newspaper article. Dr. Jackson stated the record should omit the comment that the newspaper article was not accurate.

Dr. Goldson stated that Attorney Alexaida misquoted the statute and omitted some of the state statute as well as misquoted and disparage him would like an apology.

Mr. Wilcox stated the Finance and Operations will include Air Quality on its agenda in the future.

**VII.
Timeline & CBA
of Facilities
Management**

Mr. Penn reported that at the last F&O meeting the Board charged them for a timeline view for reaching a new RMP in selecting a new vendor for the Facilities Manager and CPAs. First option is to revise and refine existing RMP and issue within 2 weeks, then leave RMPs open for 3 weeks. Then review RMPS which seems suitable for our needs. He said the current contract is under \$1.5M. The second option looking at a vertical Organizational structure with a director of facilities with and administrative assistant to support the entire team, 4 preventative maintenance persons and an energy specialist. The structure will also proposed 3 field supervisors and one supervisor to oversee work orders. There are a total of 19 positions some will be subjected to civil service testing. He said the third option partial in-sourcing. He stated that he recommends option three and suggested filling the 4 preventative maintenance positions as well as create an engineer position which is a critical need. This is an ideal choice because this structure can be



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implemented and we can work closely with the union to make it work. He said internal salaries would be increase to 2.5% per year, benefit cost would increase by 6% per year, and external vendor cost increase 3%. Mr. Penn presented data which he explained

Dr. Jackson asked if the contract would increase due to inflation. Mr. Penn stated that the contract will increase at a rate of 3% per year.

Dr. Goldson commended Mr. Penn on the presentation. He asked if in-house cost will be \$80,000 more over a 5 year period as opposed to out-sourcing. Also, will the benefits of in-house allows control of employees and hold them accountable with achieving the goals of the district. Mr. Penn said the structure does not do that but it makes persons more responsible moving forward.

Dr. Joyner thanked Mr. Penn for is high level of performance in presenting the report. He suggested that Dr. Tracey work with the Board and staff to get solutions for the school district.

Mr. Wilcox asked if there is a timeline or next steps that could lead to recommendations from the superintendent to us and if there are final plans or tradeoffs. Dr. Tracey said she could not make any decisions presently but will work with her team to come up with solutions.

Dr. Goldson asked Mr. Penn if he knew how many districts outsource their facility management. Dr. Tracey said she could get the answer and report back.

VII
270-21
President's
Report

Ms. Yesenia stated that she there was no report at this time.

On the Motions by Ms. Yesenia requesting that the agenda be amended to include the abstract and F&L with Head start Federal Grant in the amount of \$5, 998, 275.00 to start on July 1, 2021 seconded by Mr. Wilcox

Mayor Elicker, yes; Mr. Wilcox; Mr. Goldson, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Dr. Jackson, yes Mr. Conaway, yes, Ms. Arouna, yes; Ms. Arouna, yes. (Motioned passed)

VIII
271-21
Finance &
Operations
Report

On the Motions by Mr. Wilcox approval of Head Start Federal Grant in the amount \$5, 998, 275.00 for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 as was voted on today seconded by Mr. Conway.



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Discussion

Mr. Wilcox informed the meeting that this is the Head Start Federal Grant that provides all the funding for the head start program.

Mr. Goldson stated that this is a huge grant the Board knows its purpose.

Mr. Wilcox responded by reading from the cover page of the abstract stating the purpose of the grant which covers the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. It also listed the federal reward number and allows for the continuity of high quality early childhood education for children and families in the city of new haven. It encompasses Head Start operations as well as training and technical assistant in the New Haven Public School sites. This master grant provides 531 program slots in 6 cities.

Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mr. Goldson, yes; Dr. Jackson, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Ms. Arouna yes; Ms. Yesenia, yes. (Item passed)

273-21

Motion by Mr. Wilcox to approve 1 abstract and 5 agreements listed on the agenda seconded by Ms. Yesenia.

Discussion

Mr. Goldson asked if item number 1 was an amendment of additional funding or was it moving the same fund around. Dr. Tracey said it was not additional funding. Dr. Goldson further asked if the leadership that was provided by the leadership academy costing \$20,715.00 a continuation of the past. Dr. Tracey replied that 5 years ago The Wallace Foundation provided funding to the district for leadership training for principal and assistant principals. She said leadership shifted and the entire funds was not used for professional development. As a result the fund was redeemed with extended time to utilize to prevent losing the fund.

Dr. Goldson asked if the first year the leadership academy was providing the grant. Dr. Whyte said yes.

Dr. Goldson, abstain; Dr. Jackson, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes. Ms. Arouna, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Ms. Yesenia, yes. F&New Items (passed)

**IX
Head Start Report**

Mr. Wilcox reported that the enrollment numbers under the COVID plans are fine. There will be a major push for head start enrollment for the summer through tot fall. The process to put more expand health services have commenced at the Mayo



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cite. Also, the Head Start director position have been reposted and it is anticipated that interviews will commenced in a week.

**X.
Governance
Report - SRO**

Dr. Jackson's SRO report was not presented but tabled for the presentation at the next meeting.

**i
New Haven
School Security
Taskforce Report**

Dr. Torre expressed gratitude to the Board for allowing the committee to embark on this important issue. He acknowledge all committee members and gave an overview. The committee was charged to say yes or no to SROs, however the committee went beyond. He further stated that this is the Boards responsible to guard the socio and economic well-being of the student. His urgent recommendation is that this Board consider strategies where the district can explore means to increase the amount of support personnels that are needed in the schools, e.g. school psychologist, social workers, counsellors. He stated that two of our senators have passed a bill to defund police in school and use the funding to hire employees for the school. He strongly recommended the district to approach Senator Murphy to figure out how this bill, if passed, could benefit us.

He added that the SROs should be kept, he said, under significant different conditions. In addition, ensure parents and students know the role of the SROs. Conduct a thorough review re implementation of policies and procedures as identified by the Department of Justice guidelines. A memorandum of understanding should be establish as the current one is obsolete and regulations around SROs needs have changed. He stated that parents reported that children felt intimidated when police cars are parked at schools.

Mr. Michael Romano reported that he looked at the New Haven Public school and the New Haven police arrest rate for the last 7 years and observed decrease in student arrest of 35% down to 30% for the last few years. He also reported that 2 surveys were conducted with the first going to schools where there are SROs with student. He said 84% respondents were students and the other was for the entire district 96% of respondents were parents.

Dr. Torre said we need to observe other States activities and recognize it in our findings so we can ween ourselves from SRO. In addition we should by pursue other funds to get the support personnels that's needed.

Discussion

Dr. Joyner commended the team for their work



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Ms. Arouna expressed appreciation to the Board and for all who participated in the process. She stated that it was clear from their findings that if SROs are not in New Haven schools students would not be able to focus. She stated that overall she would like to see more community members and student voices. She said she supported the recommendation made by the committee and does not support the continuation of SROs in New Haven Public Schools. She said she strongly oppose number 11 of the proposal that speaks to establishing formalize mentorship between SROs and student for the building they are assign to. She said she would like to see a timeline and a deadline for action.

Ms. Edith Johnson stated that she hoped in the future we will not need police in school. She said as a building leader safety is the number one priority for our students.

Dr. Jackson stated that the report is a recommendation and a policy needs to be established.

Ms. Yesenia thanked the committee members for their diligent and hard work they have done.

XI
**Facility Naming
Report – Dr.
Tamiko Jackson-
Arthur**

Dr. Jackson reported that the meeting is not this week and will schedule for April.

XII
**Teaching and
Learning – Dr.
Joyner**

Climate Change

Dr. Joyner welcomed the students who were involved in the New Climate Change Movement. Tristan, Adrian, Amalia, Kiana and Caitlin’s presented their proposal to the Board. They eloquently stated the goal of the committee which is to restore climate change in the New Haven School. Their committee’s interest is to impact the community and school district that they are a part of, by educating students, teachers and parents on climate change and its effects. Also to encourage student to embark upon subjects or projects that impact climate change. Another idea is for schools to house a climate week. They are seeking the Board’s approval to grant \$15,000.00 to their project They also are meeting with a grant writer to write grants. They reported that they have set up a website with climate change information as well as a newsletter for teachers. Caitlin spoke about the eight phases of their proposal while Kiana spoke about emphasizing the urgency of climate justice. She said they wanted to educate students how they can engage in their communities to mitigate climate change issues. Tristan expressed the interest of the group to have the Board fund \$15,000.00 to implement their project. He said



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this was a strategic plan that they implemented and was seeking the Board to assist them to achieve their goal.

Dr. Joyner commended them for their hard work and expressed his willingness to support them.

Dr. Goldson commended the team for their excellent work and enquired of how much money they would recommend for the start-up. In addition, what is the projected timeline to see all the schools getting involved.

Adrian responded that they anticipate the pilot program to commence this fall in the in 5 New Public schools that have not yet been identified. With the Board's approval they will hold webinars with teachers and principals as well as work with school who indicate that they want to be a climate justice school. Overall they want to create climate consciousness in schools to all New Haven Public and High Schools. She expressed their desire to see 5 pilot school by next year.

Dr. Goldson congratulated them and also expressed his willingness to support and look forward to see the requested amount in the budget.

Dr. Joyner stated that they also look for cooperate sponsorship to contribute. He stated that he will work closely with them. Adriana asked if the Board could give a commitment for the next Board meeting. Dr. Joyner informed them that this will be further discussed with the Board.

Ms. Arouna commended the student for their hard work in presenting the proposal to the Board.

Mr. Goldson suggested preempting the Superintendent on this as he believes the recommendation should come from the Superintendent and he supports Dr. Joyner's suggestion to seek corporate support.

Dr. Tracey thanked the student for their effort and work for bringing the proposal to the Board in an excellent way. She stated she is very proud of their interest, and stated she will discuss it with the administration and is desirous to see it on the school curriculum. She said Ms. Velasquez will work with the team and Dr. Joyner to see this come back to the Board as an action item.

Mr. Conaway stated that he looking forward to bringing back the students in April.

**XIV
Food
Service Report**

The minutes of meeting are on the website for perusal Food Service Policy is been updated. Ongoing agenda items of life threatening issues with a sub-committee are being worked on.



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Dr. Jackson asked if it is possible get the life threatening allergies and chain of custody of students who have allergies before September.

Ms. Velazquez responded that they are going to take action to ensure that this policy rolls out as well as working on revisions. There is a checklist with nurse and cafeteria staff. Also emblems are been created to reveal life threatening child allergies.

**XV
Compensation
Equity Committee
Report**

Mr. Conaway stated the compensation committee had been reviewing job description and salaries rates. A sub-committee is in place and recommendations will be brought to the Board. He stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 24, 2021. The committee is preparing for to the next set of negotiations.

Mr. Wilcox stated that meeting materials are posted on the website under Board of Education meetings. There is a schedule meeting on Thursday, March 11 and elections were convened. Chair-person and vice chairperson were elected. Mr. Giovanni was elected Chair and he was elected Vice-chairperson. An election for the chairperson and vice chairperson had been done. City Engineer, Mr. Giovanni was elected Chair and himself Vice-chairperson. Topics reviewed are building stewardship and commissioning schedule and grants that can be factored into capital improvement of our structures. Next meeting is April 8 at 4:30pm. Mr.

Mr. Alexaida extended an apology to Mr. Goldson expressing that while he was in the course of trying to advise the Board regarding statutes, Mr. Goldson indicated to Mr. Alexaida that he said, Mr. Goldson misquoted the statute. Mr. Alexaida stated that was not his intention and he was apologize for misquoting

**274-21
Adjournment**

Dr. Tracey recognized the new recording secretary for the Board, Ms. Myrtis Mason.

On the Motion by Ms. Yesenia seconded by Mayor Elicker, it was voted by roll call to adjourn at 9:48 p.m.

Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mr. Goldson, yes; Dr. Goldson, yes; Dr. Jackson, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes. Ms. Arounda, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Ms. Yesenia, yes.

"A video of this meeting is available on the NHPS website, NHPS.net, Public Meetings"

*Respectfully Submitted
Myrtis Mason
Recording Secretary*