

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

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held on July 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3 Primrose Street. .

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	1 Staff
D. Leidlein	3 Public
J. Vouros	1 Press
R. Harriman-Stites	
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Public Participation

Janet Kuzma, 12 The Boulevard, has twins entering second grade at Hawley School and is concerned about the project with another year of disruption and if this was the right time to do this. She was disappointed the three-year option was not considered. She asked to pick a plan with the least disruption for the students such as eating in the cafeteria and specials not being held in regular classrooms. We need to give children stability.

Item 3 – Discussion and Possible Action on Hawley HVAC Options

Dr. Rodrigue conducted meetings and walkthroughs with Chris Moretti of the spaces at Sandy Hook and Reed and provided maps of each school with the spaces to be utilized for Hawley students which are preliminary. There will be some repurposing of space but both schools felt they could take care of what was needed. Once an option is approved by taxpayers in the referendum we will begin working on the scheduling details. Middle Gate and the middle school will follow Hawley with air conditioning projects because appropriate ventilation is needed in those schools. The staff at Sandy Hook and Reed have been very accommodating.

Mr. Moretti added that they walked through with both principals who explained the spaces which are more than adequate. Grade levels are together and classes are next to each other. By having grade levels together and in proximity to each other is helpful. We want grade levels to eat lunch together and have grades K-2 and 3-4 together. There will be staff researching the questions we listed from the last meeting. Questions will be addressed and both principals have been extraordinary in finding what we need with their staff and wanting to have what is best for our community.

Mr. Delia asked if the classes in Sandy Hook were empty rooms.

Dr. Rodrigue told the Board they were moving the preschool out of Sandy Hook and found additional space for resource classes.

Mr. Moretti said we are also over planning because we don't know what the enrollment will be. He tends to have three Kindergarten classrooms and Sandy Hook as four. In Reed School there were places with multiple spaces for certain classes.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if the Reed playground was okay for third and fourth graders.

Mr. Moretti said it was and they also have the blacktop and fields. We will divide our staff including secretaries and custodians, as well as he and the lead teacher.

Mrs. Ku asked about the lunch periods.

Mr. Moretti said they can fit multiple groups in their cafeteria and will look at the schedule. He would like Hawley music, art, and Spanish teachers to teach our students.

Dr. Rodrigue noted that we will try not to put art on a cart but we have to see how this plays out. Mrs. Ku asked if there would be a separate lunch period for Hawley students. Mr. Moretti said it was possible for us to have the cafeteria for Hawley students. He doesn't want to send one class at a time.

Mr. Delia was concerned about Hawley specials and running teachers back and forth and asked if he would need more people.

Mr. Moretti said we used to have double gym classes with two teachers. We would hope to not have special teachers got to both buildings if possible.

Mr. Vouros suggested looking at the boys rooms at Reed.

Mr. Cruson questioned the specials teachers that are presently shared with Hawley.

Mr. Moretti stated we share art with Middle Gate, music with Sandy Hook, and Spanish with Middle Gate.

Mr. Cruson hoped they would just be sharing with Sandy Hook.

Mr. Vouros said it was important in planning to know what will work for Mr. Moretti. We might need more staff and the Board should know that.

Mr. Moretti said the committee needs to begin meeting to work on these decisions.

Mr. Delia asked if there would be parents on the committee.

Mr. Moretti said it's going to be an administrative committee but parents will have a voice through PTA meetings, possibly an evening with him and Dr. Rodrigue, or providing an open document which allows parents to submit questions because we want their input. He will also speak about this at open house.

Mr. Delia asked if students in the same family will ride separate buses if in different schools. Dr. Rodrigue said they would be on separate buses.

Mr. Cruson thought we were running the same Hawley bus routes.

Dr. Rodrigue said it changed and noted that the routes would be similar. Some of this is premature as we still need the referendum approved. Also, Jenna Connors, Reed Assistant Principal, was at Hawley and knows the students, which is helpful.

Mrs. Ku said this project was proposed 12 or so years ago but never done. The proposal over several summers is unreasonable.

Dr. Rodrigue said when you bid all at once it's better than bidding four years because of price increases. When doing this work during the summers it would have to start and stop, and work would also go into the school year. It was not reasonable after speaking to the construction manager and architects.

Mr. Moretti said they didn't even think they could finish a section before the next school year started.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the other option is not just the summer but partially the school year with work being done with students and staff in the building. Option 2 is a lot more disruptive for students.

Dr. Rodrigue said Hawley School has a small footprint. Equipment needs to be stored and the cost would escalate each year, as well as having safety issues.

Mr. Delia asked if there was another school in the area not being used that we could use. Dr. Rodrigue said that transportation for parents is a big deal as well as updating the school. She reached out to St. Rose for space but there was no room.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Hawley HVAC Option 1 which includes the relocation of Hawley School staff and students to Sandy Hook School and Reed Intermediate School for the duration of the proposed project scheduled to run from June 2022 through April 2023. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites questioned whether we should put something in the motion that this is contingent upon the referendum passing.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to amend the motion to add "contingent upon voter approval at referendum." Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Delia said this is the best for the children and the safest, healthiest and most conducive to learning.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said there was never an ideal time but this project and has been in motion for 12 years. This will give our students a healthy environment, is the best option, and she trusts everyone to do what is best.

Vote: Main motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – ARP/Essex III Grant

Dr. Rodrigue and Kristen Larson provided details on the American Rescue Plan which is focused on our needs and the priorities from the State. Newtown was allocated \$1,253,726 with the application due August 16, 2021. The State priorities are 1) learning acceleration, academic renewal, and student enrichment, 2) family and community connections, 3) social, emotional, and mental health of students and of school staff, and 4) building safe and healthy schools. 20% of the district's allocation must address priority #1.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was concerned about staff costs that won't go away. She wants the supports for the students to remain and suggested finding more grant money.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that we pulled a lot of things from our budget that would have been in our budget for this as priorities.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites wanted to be sure this was appropriately noted in next year's budget.

Item 5 – Action on Minutes of July 6, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of July 6, 2021. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

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

Item 6 – Adjournment

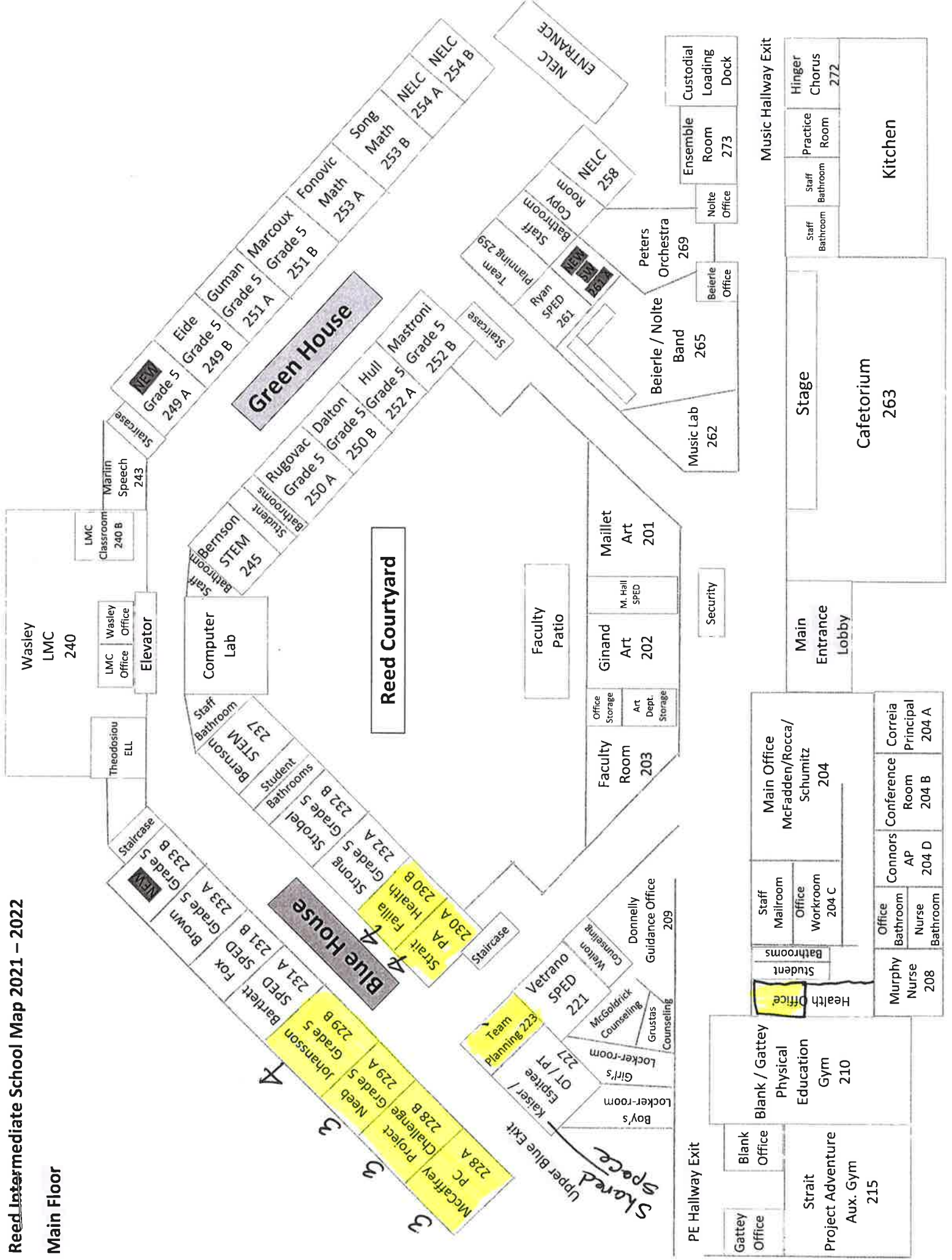
The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

Reed Intermediate School Map 2021 - 2022

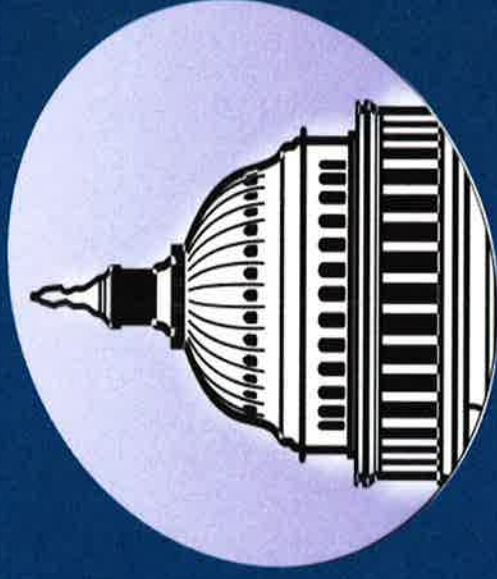
Main Floor



American Rescue Plan

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)

Update: July 20, 2021



ARP ESSER Facts

- Funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, signed into law on 3/11/21.
- Provides an additional \$112.8 billion nationwide for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER).
- Newtown allocation is \$1,253,726.
- ARP ESSER application is due 8/16/21.
- Districts must show that they requested stakeholder feedback on their ESSER plans.
- Funds can be used to cover expenses from March 2020 to September 2024.

ESSER III State Priorities

1. Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment
2. Family and Community Connections
3. Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of the Students and of School Staff
4. Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide
5. Building Safe and Healthy Schools

**20% of district's allocation must address Priority #1*

Newtown ARP ESSER Draft Plan for 2021-22

Priority 1: Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, Student Enrichment

Item	School	Est. Cost
1.0 ELL Teacher	K-12	\$64,959
.5 Math Interventionist	HOM	\$48,879
1.0 Math Interventionist	RIS	\$101,585
1.0 Special Education Teacher	NHS	\$80,529
1.0 Speech Language Pathologist	NHS	\$70,000
Special Education Support for TAP Program	NHS	\$10,000
Non-certified Staff Support for ARC Program	NMS	\$17,000
Support for Homework Clubs	NMS/RIS	\$14,860
New Tutoring Program for Elementary Schools	K-4	\$58,320

(Continued) Newtown ARP ESSER Plan for 2021-22

Priority 1 (continued)			
EduClimber - student data management tool license	District		\$21,683
Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment kits	K-8		\$34,850
Bus transportation for summer enrichment programs	District		\$2,951
Additional Special Education Staff for ESY 2021	K-12		\$8,670
Additional Staff NMS and NHS Summer School	NMS, NHS		\$3,519
Priority 2: Family and Community Connections			
Blackboard for notifications/two-way communication	District		\$13,799
Family information nights for new math program K-5	K-5		\$2,125
Family information night for ELL students	K-12		\$425
Staff stipend to support digital signage/event streaming	NHS		\$4,120

(Continued) Newtown ARP ESSER Plan for 2021-22

Priority 3: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and Staff			
Increase Social Worker Position from .4 to 1.0	RIS		\$36,140
Priority 4: Strategic Use of Tech, Staff Development, Digital Divide			
300 Chromebooks for elementary students	K-4		\$126,210
Licenses for Rosetta Stone at NMS, Code HS, Achieve 3000, EdPuzzle, Discover Video	District		\$27,069
Priority 5: Building Safe and Healthy Schools			
No budget items in 2021-22. Potential HVAC project moving costs in 2022-23. Some vaccine clinic related costs for 2020-21 (\$607)			\$607

Total Est. ESSER III budget for 2021-22 school year: \$748,300
 Remaining budget for 2022-23 school year: \$505,426

Ideas for 2022-23 School Year

- ★ Continue to fund key items from ESSER II and III
 - Math and Reading Interventionists
 - ELL Teacher
 - Digital licenses
- ★ (New) Hawley HVAC project moving and storage costs

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held on July 6, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	1 Staff
D. Leidlein	30 Public
J. Vouros	
R. Harriman-Stites	
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education go into executive session regarding the evaluation of the Superintendent. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – Executive Session

The Board came out of executive session at 6:47 p.m.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ku requested moving the discussion of the Hawley HVAC to after reports.

Item 3 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of June 15, 2021 and the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Public Participation

Item 5 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku noted that CAFE will be starting affinity groups for boards of education in an effort to support boards in their work addressing racism and equity and they are also looking for boards to submit resolutions for the next legislative session. We will meet again July 20 to follow up on the Hawley discussion.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue spoke about our staffing update and that we reposted our coordinator of equity and inclusion position. The finalists will go through several rounds before reaching her, a PEAC representative and two students. She provided Newtown data regarding the Kids in Crisis presentation from the previous meeting. The new turf and track are being installed in the high school stadium. She thanked Bob Gerbert and his staff for their efforts in getting the schools ready for fall. There is no further guidance from the state yet but there will be meeting in July.

Mr. Vouros asked what was holding up finding the coordinator.

Dr. Rodrigue said the committee felt the candidates were not as qualified and not the right fit. Mrs. Uberti noted that we interviewed four candidates but decided to repost. We made some changes such as the whole committee interviewing all of the candidates who applied.

Committee Reports:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee met and reevaluated the policies on the agenda.

Mr. Delia said the Joint Work Group for the non-lapsing fund met twice last week and are nearing an agreement.

Mrs. Ku thanked everyone for being part of this work group and was impressed how they represented the board.

Item 7 – New Business

Discussion of Hawley HVAC Project:

Mrs. Ku invited Bob Mitchell and Mr. Rosenthal to join the conversation.

Dr. Rodrigue provided two viable options around the project and potential uses of space.

Option one is less costly with a nine-month construction period. The challenges are moving students to Sandy Hook and Reed because Middle Gate and Head O'Meadow are too far and would need additional buses. Both principals feel this would work.

Option two has multiple phases with summer and school year work. Some students could remain at Hawley but will not be able to access certain areas of the school. We would need an outside walkway. This option would be more costly and there are potential safety concerns with students and staff on campus during the work.

Mr. Mitchell said we want to get a good number for the cost difference between options one and two. With these documents we know it's actually buildable.

Mr. Rosenthal said the Superintendent did a good job covering the phasing options. This is an education decision which was covered well. The option that makes the most sense is less expensive. The process is to get it on the ballot in November and to have everything to the Secretary of State's office by Labor Day.

Mr. Delia was concerned about price increases and if the project could come in lower.

Mr. Mitchell said we were carrying a significant contingency of a little over 10% and are certain we are carrying enough.

Mr. Delia asked if there was a guarantee of air quality.

Mr. Mitchell noted that it would be tested every day.

Mrs. Leidlein was concerned about the Hawley parking lot and if students are in the building where the equipment would be put on site.

Mr. Mitchell said we don't want to lose the baseball field so we will need a staging area and we could possibly lose the gym for a period of time.

Mr. Rosenthal said anticipated busing and moving costs haven't been determined. American Rescue Plan funds might be used and Bob Tait was looking into that possibility.

Mr. Vouros asked if there would be representatives from the Board on this project along with Bob Gerbert.

Mr. Ku said there will be meetings where Board members are assigned to the committees.

Mr. Vouros stated that he didn't want option two because no students should be in the school during the project.

Ms. Zukowski was comfortable with option one.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we would have additional information by July 20 to help in our decision.

Mrs. Ku stated the public needs to weigh in on this.

Mr. Cruson said option one will add approximately 10 minutes for transportation.

Mrs. Leidlein said the past year there has been anxiety for our children and asked if we will need any additional resources to prepare students for being in a different school. She also asked if there has been any thought about potential resources to help the students feel a sense of community being in the other school.

Chris Moretti said he was confident the parents, students, and staff at Hawley will rise and make it work. We need to plan for the incoming kindergarten class that year and our exiting fourth graders. We will do whatever we can to be part of the larger community. About 175 students will go to Sandy Hook and 130 to Reed. There will be some families with siblings in different schools. Counselors, psychologists, and social workers will work together.

Dr. Rodrigue will recommend having students visit the schools.

Mr. Delia asked in option one there is one PE teacher for two buildings and if there would be issues with gym usage.

Mr. Moretti will work with the principals regarding his PE teacher to determine when and where that person would be needed. His biggest hurdle is having five to nine-year-old students on a construction site and traveling through the building.

Mr. Cruson said in option one students could return to Hawley before the end of the school year and was worried about the change to a new building at that time.

Mr. Moretti feels there is a beauty in the early return and they would celebrate being back. It would be a wonderful way to end the year.

Mr. Delia was not in support of option two. He wants to make sure we are adequately staffed to meet the needs of the students and is in support of additional staff if needed.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites wants to know what this will look like and that the students will be part of the culture in the school.

Mr. Gerbert said a concern with option two is air sampling and relying on a tight seal in an old building. There could be other distractions including noise and other pitfalls to work in an occupied building. Option one will be a much cleaner job.

Mrs. Ku thanked Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Mitchell for being here.

Mr. Mitchell noted that Bob Gerbert is a superior facilities manager.

Item 6 – Old Business

Second Read of Policies:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said incorrect policies were sent to the Board. Only policies 3160 and 3171 will be discussed tonight.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve policies 3160 Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers and 3171 Non-Lapsing Education Fund. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we just changed Board of Finance to town's fiscal authority. In policy 3171 there are a few other changes but we wanted this policy in place due to time constraints and having it in place for the non-lapsing fund.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – New Business (continued)

Letter to State Officials:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the letter to the State officials. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia spoke about the letter he and Ms. Zukowski developed. Dr. Rodrigue also reviewed the letter.

Ms. Zukowski questioned the sentence in paragraph three regarding board members being in the field of education.

Mr. Delia felt it shows member of the Board have experienced this with their students.

Dr. Rodrigue noted that she made that suggestions because it was important for them to hear there are educators on our Board.

Mr. Cruson felt it makes it sound like all of us are in the field of education and suggested a change.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to amend the motion to have the second sentence in the third paragraph read, "As a board which includes many professionals in the field of education, we understand the challenges we have faced and will face." Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mrs. Ku proposed a change in the third sentence of the second paragraph

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved to amend the motion for the third sentence of the second paragraph to remove the words "and staff based on" be replaced with "dependent on State DPH guidance."

Mr. Cruson seconded. Vote: 2 ayes, 5 opposed (Mr. Delia, Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein, Mrs. Harriman-Stites, Ms. Zukowski) Motion fails.

MOTION: Mr. Delia move to amend the motion for this sentence to say "making masks optional for students and staff dependent on State DPH guidance. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Vote on main motion: 6 ayes, 1 nay (Mrs. Ku) Motion passes.

Communications Sub-Committee Newsletter:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the August 2021 Communications Sub-Committee Newsletter. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Cruson said we focused on volunteers and will put this out before school starts the second or third week of August.

Mrs. Ku appreciated the newsletter and Ms. Zukowski thanked the volunteers who spoke to them.

Motion passes unanimously.

Nurses Contract:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the ratified Newtown Public School Nurses Contract for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

Mrs. Ku said this was a very productive negotiations and she appreciated the expertise and support the nurses bring to our schools.

Motion passes unanimously.

Healthy Food Certification:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition standards during the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Vadas said this is the first year we have to do this because the high school is included. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event, and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Vadas said all food purchases have to run through the program. Food items will change at the high school for them to comply. Motion passes unanimously.

Minutes of July 21, 2021:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of June 21, 2021. Mr. Vouros seconded. Vote: 6 ayes, 1 abstained (Mr. Cruson) Motion passes.

Item 8 – Public Participation

Connie Cooper, 13 Todds Road, Sandy Hook, as a member of the Democratic Town Committee she thanked the Board for their work to promote antiracism in our schools. She is a retired teacher in Waterbury which is a diverse community. Being married to a black man she learned what it was like to live as a black person. We should be open to learning from black people. Stereotypes fill the void that a lack of exposure to diversity leaves. You have opened a window to teach and model the truth. Consequences of straying off course lets our students and society down. She appreciates your hard work advocating for antiracism.

Justin Birtwell, 13 Roosevelt Drive, Newtown, has two school age children, thanked the Board for their long-term service to this community. Discussing race is crucial but he was concerned about how it is addressed. Talking about race we are using terms that come from critical race

theory. Talking about race is an opportunity to build a better society. Good discussions about race is the answer. Critical race theory encourages intolerance and divides people. If the Board of Education is going to promote and introduce the concepts of critical race theory he asked that equal weight is given to refusing the tenets of critical race theory.

Carrie Grummons, 5 Black Walnut Drive, has four children. They moved here from California and almost didn't because of the lack of diversity here. We knew we would work hard to teach our children how to be allies to their black and brown peers. It's important to learn about black history.

Katheen Banas called in from Orchard Hill Road and spoke about a book to be made part of the curriculum called "Lies My Teacher Told Me" by James Loewen and read quotes from parents. She disagrees with the author and asked to have it discussed at the next board meeting.

Eric Paradis, 85 Riverside Road, thanked the Board for working on equity, inclusion, not being silent, and taking some leadership.

Kimberly Rackley, 8 Thunder Ridge, thanked the Board for taking those first steps. She is a third generation educator and a home educator. She wants Newtown students to get a good historical education. You have an ethical duty to teach children about our past. Students learn best in a diverse community. The Board has an ethical duty to teach truth over propaganda.

Item 9 – Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education go into executive session regarding the evaluation of the Superintendent and the extension of the contract for the Director of Business and invited Dr. Rodrigue. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Executive session ended at 6:47 p.m.

Item 10 – Public Session

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education extend the employment contract of Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue as Superintendent of Schools, through and including June 30, 2024, and MOVE FURTHER that the Board Chairperson be authorized to finalize and execute the employment contract with Dr. Rodrigue for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the one-year contract extension for the Director of Business. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

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

Item 11 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary