

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

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held on November 1, 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 (by phone)	T. Vadas
D. Cruson	7 Staff
J. Kuzma	3 Public
J. Larkin	
A. Plante	
K. Kunzweiler	
D. Godino	

Ms. Zukowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the donations to Middle Gate School and the correspondence report. Mrs. Kuzma seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Ms. Zukowski reported that the Board of Finance is reviewing the CIP request and we will get questions as the work progresses.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Melillo would be asking the Board to approve the school lunch extension and will use our dining funds to help support our community. They can only be used for school lunches or to support the lunch program. Due to the pandemic we have a surplus and many districts are extending their lunch programs also. He enjoyed attending the Unified Sports Soccer Tournament on Wednesday afternoon and visited the scarecrows in front of the middle school. Last Friday Sandy Hook School hosted their One School, One Read event where he was joined by Ms. Zukowski, Mr. Vouros, Mr. Ramsey and the First Selectman. He attended the Rotary Student-of-the-Month dinner where students Savanna Robertson and Samuel Villagran were recognized. Regarding the mandated reading program we will evaluate and compare the programs and decide the best course of action. Recommendations will be brought to the Board through C & I for review.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Cruson noted that Policy met last week and there were no questions about the policies for approval tonight. They began reviewing recruitment and selection and the hiring of staff policies as well as those on substitute teachers, student teachers, interns and consultants.

Mr. Vouros reported that C & I met last week. Mrs. Uberti provided information on kindergarten skills when students start school. Professional Development for certified staff will be on November 8. Mrs. DiBartolo provided updates on the new standards on social studies and the K-8 curricula. He also went to the high school PTA meeting.

Student Representatives Report:

Mr. Godino reported that this week and last week have been Spirit Weeks. The Unified Soccer tournament had an amazing turnout of attendees. The Pep Rally was held in the stadium with the band and dance team.

Ms. Kunzweiler noted that rehearsals continue for the fall drama "Almost Maine." Athletics have had great success in competitions and the senior class is busy with college applications. Quarter one has come to a close.

Item 5 – Old Business

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 1700 Possession of Firearms on School Property. Mrs. Kuzma seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 4118.234 & 5141.231 Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs. Mrs. Kuzma seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 5131.911 Bullying. Mrs. Kuzma seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – New Business

Newtown Federation of Teachers Contract:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the ratified Newtown Federation of Teachers Contract. Mrs. Plante seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Zukowski noted that the negotiations on both sides was civil and productive and thanked Mr. Goodrich from the Board of Finance for attending tonight's meeting.

Hawley School Ed Specs:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the Ed Specs for the Hawley HVAC Project. Mrs. Plante seconded.

Mr. Melillo spoke about the grant and one of the requirements is to approve the ed specs which is an overview of how the project will improve the air quality in the school.

Mr. Larkin asked if we had any savings by doing this.

Mr. Melillo said the money we receive will offset some of the bonding. There is also money set aside by the State.

Mrs. Larkin asked if we could put in another school.

Mr. Melillo said the timeframe around the project is it has to be concluded by the end of the 2022-23 school year. If it falls outside of that time period we would have to pay for any overages. We will create an application for other projects we have a need for.

Mr. Ramsey said years ago there was an air quality report and asked if we have data on that and if we will get a report after the project is completed.

Mr. Melillo said we could get a post-air quality report after the project is completed.

Mr. Ramsey said the previous study was for the middle school.

Mr. Melillo will see what data we have

Motion passes unanimously.

Extension of Free Student Meals:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the extension of free student meals through January 20, 2023. Mrs. Larkin seconded.

Mr. Melillo said we have to give at least 30 days as to when this program ends.

Mrs. Vadas suggested sending the information out tomorrow. A lot of districts are doing this as it's a federally funded program.

Ms. Zukowski asked how much in the fund was designated for school lunches.

Ms. Vadas said approximately \$600,000 right now.

Ms. Zukowski asked how much of this we will be drawing down.

Mrs. Vadas this will be for approximately 20 days but we will use other funds also. The SMART Funds run out the middle of December. The cost is about \$171,000 for the 20 days. The net cost is roughly \$62,000.

Mrs. Larkin asked if we could extend it again in a month.

Mrs. Vadas doesn't see why we couldn't. We need to make note of the participation.

Ms. Zukowski suggested revisiting this in CFF.

Motion passes unanimously.

BOE Communications Sub-committee Newsletter:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the Communications Sub-committee District Highlights Newsletter. Mrs. Larkin seconded.

Mr. Ramsey thanked those who contributed. We have incredible people working in the maintenance department.

Mrs. Plante asked to work with Mr. Ramsey on his part of the newsletter as parts were confusing to the reader.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to amend the motion pending grammatical and structural feedback to the introduction by Mr. Ramsey. Mrs. Plant seconded.

Motion passes unanimously.

First Read of Policies:

Mr. Cruson noted that Policy 4-111, Student teachers be rescinded because they decided to not have a new policy on them because most is governed by the universities.

Policy 4118.231 & 4218.321 Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace is specifically for our staff. We worked with the HR Director and two policies were combined. This will replace the existing policy.

Action on Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of October 17, 2022. Mrs. Larkin seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of October 18, 2022. Mrs. Larkin seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to approve the minutes of October 22, 2022 with the clerical corrections. VOTE: 6 ayes, 1 abstained (Mr. Vouros) Motion passes.

Item 7 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Mrs. Larkin seconded.

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Donald Ramsey
Secretary

October 25, 2022

Dear Board of Education Members:

I am writing to seek BOE approval to accept the following donations made to Middle Gate School:

- Ring's End: paint and supplies (approximately \$300)
- B&D Provisions: gift basket (\$50 value)
- Queen Street Gifts: gift certificate (\$10)

Thank you for your consideration.

Chris Geissler
Middle Gate School

TO: Chris Melillo, Superintendent
FROM: Suzanne D'Eramo, Director of Human Resources
RE: Superintendent's Report – Staffing Update for **OCTOBER 2022**
DATE: October 28, 2022

OCTOBER 2022

CERTIFIED RETIREMENTS:

None

CERTIFIED RESIGNATIONS:

None

CERTIFIED NEW HIRES:

Kristina van Heiningen – NHS SPED

CERTIFIED OPEN POSITIONS:

None

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT HIRING NOTES:

Here is a recap of all certified/non-certified staff who began working in October:

Teacher = 1

Building subs/LT subs = 2

Paraeducators = 1

Tutors = 1

Security Officers = 2

NELC = 1

Clerical = 1

Grant Specialist = 1

Of the 10 newly hired employees, 4 indicated a diverse ethnicity or race other than white. This equates to a total of 40% broken down as follows:

Black = 2

Hispanic = 2

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.

Community Relations

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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.

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

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Newtown, Connecticut

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

Defintions (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



TO: Members, Newtown Board of Education
FROM: Jessica Richman Smith
DATE: October 25, 2022
RE: Newtown Federation of Teachers Contract

The Newtown Board of Education (the "Board") has reached a tentative agreement with the Newtown Federation of Teachers (NFT) following a series of negotiation sessions and a mediation. The NFT voted to ratify the tentative agreement on October 25, 2022.

A copy of the proposed new contract, along with a redline showing the changes from the current contract, is appended hereto. In addition, I have summarized below the key provisions of the proposed new contract and additional information regarding the Teacher Negotiation Act and settlements more generally during this negotiation season.

I. **Economic Changes**

A. **Duration:** July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026.

B. **Salary Schedule:**

- **2023-2024:** Teachers not yet at the maximum step shall advance one step. 0.5% general wage increase below the maximum step; 2% general wage increase at the maximum step.
- **2024-2025:** Teachers not yet at the maximum step shall advance one step. 1.5% general wage increase below the maximum step; 2% general wage increase at the maximum step.
- **2025-2026:** Teachers not yet at the maximum step shall advance one step. 1.8% general wage increase below the maximum step; 2.25% general wage increase at the maximum step.

Three year total (simple): 11.5%

C. **Health Insurance:**

- **HSA contribution:**
 - Board contributes 45% to HSA in each of 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026, respectively. Current language is a 45% contribution.
 - **Deleted:** Effective with the 2021-22 contract year, the Board will not process employee contributions into employees' Health Savings Accounts

on a pre-tax basis, unless the Board and the Federation mutually agree otherwise.

- **Employee premium cost share:** Employees contribute to the premium cost share 23.5%, 24%, and 24% in each of 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026, respectively. Employees currently (2022-2023) contribute 23.5% to the premium cost share.
- **Wellness incentive:** The measurement period for completing the physical examination will be the period beginning July 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2025, instead of the calendar year. The Board will make its additional HSA contributions by June 30, 2026.

D. Stipend increases:

- **Selected committee and curriculum work (36.1):**
 - Add “curriculum work”.
 - Increase from \$42.50 to \$50.00 per hour.
 - Teachers who receive additional compensation for additional responsibilities (*i.e.*, Department Chairs, Curriculum Coordinators, Lead Teachers, Math Specialists, Math/Science Specialists, Reading/Language Arts Consultants, and the Director of School Counseling at Newtown High School) shall not be eligible for the compensation in this subsection for subject-specific committee meetings (*e.g.*, math committee meetings).
- **Student support work (36.2): New:** The Board agrees to continue its practice of paying teachers for certain student support work outside the teacher work day as such work day is described in Article 19 (*e.g.*, teacher monitoring of students, group tutoring at the K-4 level). When such work is done at the request of the Board, teachers shall be compensated at the rate of \$50.00 per hour.
- **Appendix A (coaches):**
 - Increase all stipends by 1% in each of 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26.
 - Add Cross Country Middle School to Category IV.
- **Appendix B (activity positions) and related side letter:**
 - Increase all stipends by 1% in each of 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26.
 - The parties agree to form a committee to discuss how changes to Appendix B are made. The committee will be formed by January 1, 2023 and will conclude its work by June 30, 2023 unless the parties mutually agree to a different timeline.
- **Appendix C (homebound instruction):** Increase from \$47.50 to \$50.00 per hour.

II. Key Language Changes/Updates

- A. **Teachers assigned to more than one school (10.4): New:** If a teacher is assigned to teach classes at different schools and, as a result, is required to travel between or among different schools during the school day, the teacher shall be reimbursed at the IRS allowable rate at intervals determined by the administration and provided the teacher complies with the travel reimbursement guidelines available on the Board’s website. No teacher will be eligible for any reimbursement for travel expenses unless he/she actually used his/her own automobile.

B. Personnel files (14.3 & 14.4):

- Employees have 5, rather than 3, working days to sign negative material.
- **Deleted:** All items placed in a teacher's personnel file shall be date stamped on the day of submission.

C. School calendar (18.1): The work year will not be reduced below 187 days during the term of the new contract.

D. K-4 Math/Science Specialists and 5-8 Math Specialists (18.5):

- Work 5 extra days beyond 187 (**new for 7&8**).
- 5-8 Math Specialists compensated additional 8% (**new**). K-4 Math/Science Specialists continue to be compensated additional 5%.
- Appointments shall be made on or before April 15 for no more than 1 year but incumbents may be appointed for multiple 1-year terms.

E. K-8 Reading/Language Arts Consultants (18.7):

- 5-8 Reading/Language Arts Consultants compensated additional 8% (**new**). K-4 Reading/Language Arts Consultants continue to be compensated additional 5%.
- Appointments shall be made on or before April 15 for no more than 1 year but incumbents may be appointed for multiple 1-year terms.

F. Department Chairs, Director of School Counseling at Newtown High school, Middle School and Reed Intermediate School Curriculum Coordinators, and Lead Teachers (25):

- Added Director of School Counseling at Newtown High School.
- Middle School and Reed Intermediate School Curriculum Coordinators work 5 extra days beyond 187 (**new**).
- Appointments shall be made on or before April 15 for no more than 1 year but incumbents may be appointed for multiple 1-year terms.

G. Family sick leave (31.1): New: Teachers may utilize up to five (5) accumulated days of sick leave annually for purposes of caring for an ill member of the teacher's family. For purposes of this section, "family" is defined as a teacher's spouse, child, or other family member who resides in the teacher's home.

H. Personal leave (35.3 & 35.4):

- Requests for personal leave must be made at least 7 calendar days, rather than 24 hours, in advance, except in cases of emergency.
- **New language in bold italics:** An absence immediately before or after a vacation ***or between May 1 and the end of the school year*** shall not be compensated unless specific approval for such compensation is given before an absence by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, after written application has been made by the teacher with a copy to the Principal. In no case shall a teacher request to use more than two (2) days in any school year under ***the portion of this paragraph pertaining to an absence immediately before or after a vacation. In no case shall a teacher request to use more***

than three (3) days in any school year under the portion of this paragraph pertaining to an absence between May 1 and the end of the school year.

- I. **Pilot Sick Leave Bank (side letter):** Agreement to pilot a sick leave bank through June 30, 2026 under the terms and conditions set forth in a side letter.
- J. **Math Specialists and Reading/Language Arts Consultants for Grades 5-8 (side letter):** The Board eliminated the Middle School Curriculum Coordinators for math and reading/language arts effective June 30, 2022. Math Specialists and Reading/Language Arts Consultants for grades 5-8 shall assume the responsibilities previously assigned to the Middle School Curriculum Coordinators in these areas.

III. Additional Information

A. **Teacher Negotiation Act, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-153a et seq.**

- **Negotiation timeline and stages:**

- Timeline for negotiations is set by statute and cannot be extended or otherwise waived. Negotiations must start by the 210th day prior to the budget submission date.
- Stages of negotiation include negotiations, mediation, and (if necessary) arbitration.

- **Agreement:**

- When the parties reach an agreement on a successor agreement, the contract agreement must be ratified by the parties. The statute does not address the issue of ratification, but virtually all negotiated settlements lead to a tentative agreement, which is then submitted to the full board of education and the unit membership for approval, *i.e.*, ratification.
- If a contract is not ratified, the matter is submitted to mediation (if it has not yet been conducted) and then to arbitration. In such cases, the arbitration panel will give significant weight to the history of negotiations and will thus often issue an award which includes the same terms as the tentative agreement reached earlier.
- If the tentative agreement is ratified, the final agreement must be signed and then filed with the town clerk and the Commissioner of Education.

- **Arbitration:**

- The arbitration panel must consider the evidence presented and accept the last best offer of one of the parties on each issue in dispute.
- The panel must make its decision on each issue in light of the statutory criteria.
- The statute provides that the arbitrators must give **priority** to the **public interest** and the **financial capability of the school district**, including consideration of other demands on the financial capability of the district.

- In light of such financial capability, the panel should consider the following factors:
 - The negotiations between the parties prior to arbitration, including the offers and the range of discussion of the issues;
 - the interests and welfare of the employee group;
 - changes in the cost of living averaged over the preceding three years;
 - the existing conditions of employment of the employee group and those of similar groups; and
 - the salaries, fringe benefits, and other conditions of employment prevailing in the state labor market, including the terms of recent contract settlements or awards in collective bargaining for other municipal employee organizations and developments in private sector wages and benefits.

B. Teacher Contracts¹

- Statewide settlement average this season: 12.15%
- Statewide settlement average in the 2021-22 season: 9.86%

¹ Data included herein is as of October 21, 2022. All references to salary settlements herein are the three-year total including both step cost and general wage increases.

Hawley Elementary School
Air Quality Improvement
Educational Specifications

RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

Hawley Elementary School is part of the Newtown, Connecticut public school district. Originally constructed in 1921, with subsequent building additions in 1948 and 1997, the school consists of an aggregate of 60,460 square feet. The building provides elementary education for grades Kindergarten through 4. There are 301 students (2021-22) and 37 staff members. Presently, the building does not have adequate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) for the 1921 and 1948 sections of the school. These areas have a mix of baseboard radiation and fan-powered unit heaters to provide heat only. Rooms have operable windows to provide ventilation when outdoor conditions are appropriate. There is no mechanical ventilation to provide fresh air during winter months. The 1997 section does have a ducted HVAC system supplied with rooftop air conditioning units and duct-mounted heating coils. This building section also has perimeter baseboard radiation.

There have been long-standing complaints from teaching staff regarding the lack of ventilation. Especially amongst the staff members on the 3rd floor (1921-wing) and 2nd floor (1948-wing) as these areas become uncomfortably warm during early fall and late spring. Further, opening windows, while providing some relief, becomes a distraction for students due to the proximity of the building to US Route 6. Further, the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 highlighted the need for ventilation and an improvement to air quality for health and safety purposes.

The undertaking of this project will allow for a completely new HVAC system to be installed in the building in the 1921 and 1948 wings, as well as provide additional HVAC coverage to several classrooms in the 1997 wing which are not connected to the existing HVAC system in that area. Additionally, the existing HVAC equipment in the 1997 wing is approaching the end of its useful life and requires replacement. Moreover, this equipment operates with R-22 refrigerant which is a hazard to global warming.

During the course of the project, other incidental improvements will be made such as abatement of hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead paint, and installation of new ceilings in classrooms and hallways. Other required work includes increasing the electrical service and switchgear, and adding structural steel to support the HVAC equipment.

The project does not involve programmatic changes to the facility. All existing spaces will maintain the same usage following completion of the project.

In order to facilitate the nature of such a renovation, the school will be closed during the 2022-23 school year. Staff and students will be displaced to Reed Intermediate School (grades 2, 3, 4) and Sandy Hook Elementary School (grades K, 1). It is anticipated that construction will

be completed by May 2023 which will allow sufficient time to reoccupy the school at the start of the 2023-24 school year.

LONG RANGE EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The long-range plan for the school facilities in Newtown calls for provision of a safe and appropriate learning environment. In order to comply with this aspect of the plan, it is necessary for Newtown to install an updated HVAC system at Hawley Elementary School. We will also adopt a comprehensive maintenance plan with regularly scheduled inspections.

Please see attached: HVAC_EdSpecs_Strategic Plan

LEARNING/EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Hawley Elementary School is one of four K-4 schools in the district. The project does not involve programmatic changes to the facility. All existing spaces will maintain the same usage following completion of the project.

The mission of the Newtown Public Schools, a partnership of students, families, educators and community, is to inspire each student to excel in attaining and applying the knowledge, skills and attributes that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global community. We accomplish this by creating an unparalleled learning environment characterized by: Continuous Improvement, Quality Instruction, High Expectation, and Civic Responsibility.

To meet this end, learning and educational activities at Hawley Elementary School are informed by the curriculum standards set forward by the CT State Department of Education.

ENROLLMENT DATA AND PROPOSED PROJECT CAPACITY

Enrollment in Hawley school in September, 2022 and October, 2022 is 286.

In 2020, Newtown Public Schools contracted with Peter M. Prowda, Ph.D. to conduct a comprehensive school enrollment analysis and to develop enrollment projections for the entire school district. These district-wide and school specific projections were meant to serve as a planning tool for the future to represent the most likely direction of Newtown Public Schools. The below ten-year enrollment projections report for the Newtown Public Schools is for years 2021 through 2031. The projections include K-12 students who are predicted to attend Newtown Public Schools as of October 1 st for each school year.

With three other schools serving K-4 in the district, the capacity of Hawley school is sufficient to meet all long-term projections. Undertaking this HVAC project ensures the building will be suitable for use for the foreseeable future.

Hawley Elementary School Enrollment Projected to 2031

School Year	Birth Year	Births ¹	K	1	2	3	4	Total
2020-21	2015	40	48	57	61	61	52	279
Projected								
2021-22	2016	47	64	49	63	64	61	301
2022-23	2017	37	51	65	53	65	63	297
2023-24	2018	48	65	52	70	55	64	306
2024-25	2019	45	61	66	56	73	54	310
2025-26	2020	45	61	62	71	58	72	324
2026-27	2021	44	61	62	67	74	57	321
2027-28	2022	46	63	62	67	70	73	335
2028-29	2023	46	63	64	67	70	69	333
2029-30	2024	46	63	64	69	70	69	335
2030-31	2025	46	63	64	69	72	69	337

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The installation of new HVAC equipment will have a direct impact on the entire school, but primarily be focused on the 1921 and 1948 building sections.

During the construction, the school will be closed for one full school year. Staff and students will be displaced to Sandy Hook Elementary School (grades K, 1) and Reed Intermediate School (grades 2, 3, 4). This will allow unrestricted access for demolition, hazardous remediation, and construction to take place without students present. Ceilings will be removed in hallways and classrooms to allow for duct and hydronic pipe installation. HVAC units will be installed in the attic of the 1921 section as well as on the roof of the 1921 multipurpose room. Main supply and return ducts will run in vertical chaseways with branch lines distribute to VAV boxes in classrooms, workrooms, and offices. HVAC units will be installed on the roof of the 1948 section. Main supply and return duct runs will be installed in corridors of the 1948 while branch lines distribute to VAV boxes in classrooms, workrooms, and offices. New roofing will be installed over the 1921 section multipurpose room and other roof penetrations will be repaired in the 1948 section for the HVAC equipment installation.

After construction is complete, the displaced students and staff will reoccupy the building prior to the start of the 2023-2024 school year. All areas of the building will be unchanged in terms and physical dimensions and use. However, in some locations, ceiling heights will be lowered to accommodate the aforementioned duct and pipe installation.

BUILDING SYSTEMS

The school building systems components consist of intrusion alarm, security cameras, public address system, VOIP phone system, clocks, addressable fire alarm system, building management system/temperature controls, limited HVAC coverage, and condensing boilers.

Existing systems that will be affected by this work include the intrusion alarm, security cameras, public address system, clocks, and fire alarm system. Each of these systems will be lowered in many places due to ceiling height changes. The fire alarm system will receive new devices to support the proposed new HVAC equipment, such as duct smoke detectors. The building management system will be added onto in order to tie-in the new HVAC equipment.

The existing boiler plant will not be modified with the exception of new branch heating lines to support variable air volume (VAV) reheat coils. The existing boiler plant has sufficient capacity to support these additional loads.

The new HVAC installations will not have any additional impact on existing systems, other than outlined herein above.

INTERIOR BUILDING ENVIRONMENT

The scope of this project involves the installation of HVAC equipment and related components. There will be no changes to windows or doors. There will be changes to acoustics through the addition of drop ceilings with acoustic tile in areas that previously did not have such installation. The school recently received LED lighting improvements and these fixtures will be reinstalled. Due to the installation of ductwork and other services, ceiling heights will be lowered which could improve lighting in classrooms and hallways. All designed HVAC and electrical systems will meet current building and energy codes.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

The scope of this project involves the installation of HVAC equipment and related components. There are no changes to the site or its usage.

CONSTRUCTION BONUS REQUESTS

Hawley Elementary School does not house any of the special programs eligible for a school construction bonus.

COMMUNITY USES

During normal school hours, the school is dedicated to educational needs for students.

Outside of normal school hours, there is community use of the facility. These areas include the gymnasium, cafeteria, and multi-purpose room. Groups that use these areas include after-school programs (EdAdvance), boy scouts, girl scouts, PTA, and recreation department. Additionally, on the property there are athletic fields used by youth sports groups for baseball, softball, and football.

LAST DAY FOR STATE APPROVED FREE MEALS WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2022

Newtown Public Schools will continue to offer free meals until January 20th

PAID MEALS START Monday January 23, 2023

In the State of Connecticut, the School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) funds has been enacted allowing all students to temporarily receive free breakfast and lunch meals regardless of family income. Newtown PS allocation will provide funding for free meals through November 30, 2022. Newtown Public Schools will continue to offer free meals through January 20th 2023. On January 23rd 2023 the district will revert to charging for meals.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH MEAL PRICES

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH
ELEMENTARY	N/A	\$3.10
MIDDLE SCHOOL	N/A	\$3.35
HIGH SCHOOL	\$2.45	\$3.60/\$4.50
REDUCED – PRICE	\$0.30	\$0.40
MILK - 8 OZ	\$0.75	\$0.75

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

We encourage families who are in need of financial assistance (and who have not done so already), **to complete and submit the confidential Free and Reduced Price Meal Application to ensure meal benefits are available for students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.**

Parents or guardians can submit this application by mail to Determining Official Jacki Kulikowski at Newtown High School 12 Berkshire rd. Sandy Hook, Ct. 06482, Jacki Kulikowski, or email her at kulikowskij@newtown.k12.ct.us. The application is available online in the Food Service portion of the Newtown PS website. The application includes detailed instructions on how to complete and submit to the Food Service Department. Applications can be submitted at any point in the school year as household income may change during the year.

Additional information and the application can be found by visiting the below link:
<https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/>

Please reach out to John Morris with any concerns, Food Service Director at john.morris2@compass-usa.com any questions.

How to make PAYMENTS INTO your child's ACCOUNT

There are 3 ways to place money onto your child's account:

Cash: Highly discouraged at this time, however, it will be accepted in any amount at any register at each school. Please send in the amount to be placed on account, change back is not always available for large bills.

Checks:

- Written for a minimum of \$25
- Made out to **Newtown Food Service**
- Written in blue or black ink
- Include your child's first and last name for reference.

Online payment: Credit card payments are accepted through the Newtown PS Website – Click on Parents at the top of page – Nutrition & Lunch Menus – Quick Links on lower right – My School Bucks, please note there is a transaction fee charged which is explained on the website.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

All students use their student ID# to access their meal account to purchase snacks and a la carte items. Their Student ID is the number that identifies them in the district and is the same number used to access their Chromebook. This allows:

- Quicker service in the line
- Students with allergies and food restrictions to be identified
- Parents to put controls on their child's purchases

Students are expected to pay for snack items at the time of service. This means that funds in the students account should be available to them daily. Snack purchases will not be made if the student owes money for unpaid meals.

Our Point of Sale program works directly with **Mosaic/My School Bucks** to provide detailed information about your children's account, so you can view it FREE anytime! We strongly recommend that all parents sign into **Mosaic/My School Bucks** to access your child's account information.

From **My School Bucks** you can:

- View balances & receive low balance email reminders
- Check your child's spending habits
- View online account statement & make payments
- Set up automatic payments based on account balance

You can log onto www.myschoolbucks.com to monitor each child's account.

Newtown

Estimated Revenues & Expenses (20 days)

Cost to Program to fully fund meals
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	<u>Total Meals Served</u>	<u>Reimbursement Rate (Federal)</u>	<u>Total Federal Reimbursements</u>	<u>Lost Revenue from Paid Meals</u>
Lunch				
Free	4,169	\$ 4.41	\$ 18,385.29	
Reduced	1,441	\$ 4.01	\$ 5,778.41	
Paid	36,396	\$ 0.85	\$ 30,936.60	\$ 121,926.60
Lunch	42,006		\$ 55,100.30	\$ 121,926.60
Breakfast				
Free	410	\$ 2.26	\$ 926.60	
Reduced	107	\$ 1.96	\$ 209.72	
Paid	2,378	\$ 0.50	\$ 1,189.00	\$ 5,826.10
Breakfast	2,895		\$ 2,325.32	\$ 5,826.10

<u>Revenue</u>			
Total Reimbursements	\$	57,426	\$ 185,178
Alacarte Sales (estimate)	\$	50,000	\$ 50,000
Adult Sales	\$	1,250	\$ 1,250
Vending	\$	100	\$ 100
Total REV	\$	108,776	\$ 236,528

<u>Expenses</u>			
Net Product	\$	70,000	\$ 70,000
Labor T&B	\$	75,000	\$ 75,000
Other	\$	13,000	\$ 13,000
Fees	\$	13,450	\$ 13,450
Total Expenses	\$	171,450	\$ 171,450

Net Cost to Program	\$	(62,674)	\$ 65,078
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District Highlights

VOLUME 2-ISSUE 4 NOVEMBER 2022

NEWTOWN MAINTENANCE & FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

DEAR NEWTOWN COMMUNITY,

More often than not, when we think of corporate entities and governmental agencies, we envision flowcharts that outline vertical layers of authority. School systems are a little different. Perhaps we can envision a more lateral flowchart model. If we look at the deeper meaning of a school SYSTEM, then we are able to see more clearly that everyone working in that system are really caregivers to all the students and families in the community. If we look at the system in detail, we can see that every person working within the central office and individual schools are vital members of a precision machine (metaphorically speaking) made up of interdependent parts. Schools are special places where every member of the staff has the potential to influence and encourage students in ways that last a lifetime. With the regular part of their duties, custodians/maintenance and facilities personnel re-create pristine welcoming places each day for students. Shimmering floors, refreshed classrooms, and spotless cafeterias await the hustle bustle of students each day. All the things that make for "good working order" and answering calls, that respond to every imaginable facilities issue during the day, becomes routine for these caring, creative, and flexible staff members. This issue of District Highlights is proud to illuminate the custodial/maintenance and facilities part of our school system and the enormous impact behind the scenes that all these staff members generously contribute for the benefit of the Newtown Public School Students. Enjoy!

Don Ramsey, BOE Communications Subcommittee Chairman

FIELD OF DREAMS



By Chris Melillo, Superintendent

In the 1989 movie, *Field of Dreams*, Kevin Costner plays an Iowa farmer named Ray Kinsella. As a farmer, Ray has fallen on hard times, but while standing in his corn field one day, he sees a vision of a baseball field where part of his cornfield is accompanied by a voice telling him, "If you build it, he will come". Ray then sets out to build the baseball field from his vision, being spurred onward by a voice telling him that if he builds it, they will come. Much like this movie, many in Newtown saw the potential that an artificial multipurpose field would bring to the greater community. The benefits of the artificial turf field would increase play space by allowing multiple teams to use the field during the same sports season. Modern turf fields also reduce injuries, allow play under adverse weather, and at the same time decrease water use compared to natural turf.

Previously, a grass multipurpose field endured heavy use by multiple high school sports, marching band and many local youth organizations. The excessive use of the field resulted in an area where the grass would not grow and would result in the field becoming a literal "dust bowl." The new turf field allows for increased usage in the area due to its durability, versatility and low-maintenance characteristics. This field can be played on essentially 24 hours a day, seven days a week.. These fields are especially useful in the spring and fall, when temperatures are more moderate than in the heat of the summer.

Through a collaborative effort from the greater Newtown community. Newtown Public Schools unveiled its new multipurpose turf field in early September. With support from the Parks and Recreation Commission, a private donation, Newtown High School athletic groups, town funding, and youth sports groups made this "dream" become a reality. Currently, the field is being used by Newtown Youth Football, Newtown Marching Band, and Newtown High School Football. Later in the year, a majority of the field sports will have access to the field, as well as

Newtown Youth Lacrosse. Most school sports fields are also used for gym class, band practice, community activities as well as practices and games.

HAWLEY HVAC PROJECT

By Dan Cruson

In August of 2003 the Climate Control Committee, a group of Newtown School District staff, administrators, and parents, released a report analyzing all 6 district schools (Reed was under construction at the time). The report detailed a number of recommendations classified as short term, median term and long-term projects. Among the long-term recommendations were large scale improvements to the HVAC systems at Hawley, Newtown Middle School, and Middle Gate, in that order, to address issues with air quality. This began the 20-year journey to bring the first of these projects, installing a modern HVAC system at Hawley, to fruition.

The project that was recommended and is currently underway is more than just air conditioning. The goal was to improve the air quality within the building through the ability to properly filter and temper air being drawn in from outside the building. Air conditioning is a part of the project, but it is an added benefit to the project. When I spoke with Bob Gerbert, the Director of Facilities, about the project, he likened it to buying a new car. He said that you would go out and buy a car for \$45,000 and if air conditioning was only \$2,000 extra you would probably spring for that added benefit. The same is true here, the majority of the system is focused on manage the air flow through the building but since it is already doing that it can also cool the air when needed.

To accomplish this, the entirety of the 1921 and 1948 section of Hawley needs to be outfitted with duct work. In addition, there will be 2 air handlers added to the lower roof of the 1921 section, 2 air handlers added in the roof of the 1921 section, and 4 air handlers added to the roof of the 1948 section of the building. The 1997 section of the school was originally built with 6 air handlers to drive the HVAC for the public portions of that section (gym, library, offices, etc). However, a 7th air handler will be added to extend the existing system into the classrooms that are in that section of the building. All of this will handle the delivery of fresh air from outside into the building. In cooler months it will also temper the air coming in so that it arrives in the rooms warmer than if it came directly in, although the existing heating system will continue to handle the main heating of the building. And in warmer months the system will be able to cool the air to keep the building at a comfortable temperature.

In the summer of 2020, design work began in earnest so that a clear picture could be created of the time and cost that would be required to make this project a reality. The district hired Christopher Williams Associates to do the architectural designs and BVH to complete the mechanical and electrical engineering diagrams. Once those were complete, Downs Construction took the designs and did walk throughs of the building to prepare a cost estimate as well as two potential schedules for completing the work. The two schedules gave the Board of Education the option to either move the classes at Hawley out of the building for a year or try and complete the project in three distinct pieces across three years.

After much discussion it was decided that the safest plan for the students and staff of Hawley would be for them to be out of the building while work was being done.

Planning to be able to do the work necessary to bring a modern HVAC system to the two oldest parts of Hawley, which were built in 1921 and 1948, was a herculean task. Since the project was scheduled to take close to a year to complete, temporary classrooms had to be found for the students and teachers to move to for the 22-23 school year. Space was found at Sandy Hook and Reed Intermediate school that could be used by the classes from Hawley, while space at Head O' Meadow was made available for the Pre-School program that is normally at Sandy Hook to use. Once school let out in June, the actual work could begin with the maintenance staff and temporary summer employees working with Siracusa Moving and Storage across three days to transport everything from Hawley to either Sandy Hook or Reed Intermediate so it would be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

Work continues to be on schedule and on budget since June. As of late October 2022, all of the ceilings and wall demolition has been completed in the 1921 and 1948 portions of the building and the work of installing the ducts and wiring is ongoing. There are two parts of the project which have been delayed by supply chain issues, a main switch gear and a transformer which are currently scheduled to arrive in July. However, both parts are not needed until near the end of the project, so their delay has not caused work to stop or even slow down. So, the continued hope and expectation is that students will be able to return to Hawley school in August of 2023 to higher air quality and a more pleasant learning environment.

I would like to thank the Director of Facilities, Bob Gerbert, for sitting down with me to discuss the project's history and current progress.

DISTRICT SUMMER PROJECTS

By Janet Kuzma

When school lets out in June, most of our students & staff take a much needed break and spend time with their families. While our custodial and maintenance staff don't get to take the summers off, they do get a chance for a change of pace and to showcase some of their skills through the districts summer projects. This past summer was no exception with projects being done at five of our seven schools.

There were multiple projects that took place at Head O' Meadow school over the summer to give the school some much needed updates. As a former student of Head O' Meadow back in the 1980's, I had to chuckle when I returned to Head O' meadow a few year ago to see the decades old bright green rubber floor still there. After many years of use, the floor began to have some trouble spots which became a tripping hazard. It was obviously time for some updating. The project was completed on time and ready to welcome kids on the first day of school.

Also at Head O' Meadow, there were bathrooms throughout the school that were in need of some updating. What is unique about this project is that portions of it were hired out to vendors. We also had the skills among our maintenance staff to keep a good portion of the work in house. Between the vendors and the in-house staff, they worked very hard to get this project completed by the start of school in August.

Head O' Meadow was also in need of replacement carpeting around their media center. Some remedies were tried, like re-gluing, but eventually the carpet continued to curl up around the edges and become a tripping hazard. There were also similar issues with carpets at Middle Gate & Reed School which led to replacing those as well. Both the green and the blue house on the upper level of Reed received new carpet.

At Newtown Middle School, our staff was working hard to give the main gym a fresh coat of paint to spruce it up. Newtown Middle School also saw a portion of the sidewalk replaced beginning from the street down to the C-Wing. This is a project which will continue over the next few summers to get the entire sidewalk replaced.

Last but not least, two summer projects were completed at Newtown High School. The entire carpet flooring was replaced in the Lecture Hall due to regular wear and tear. The carpet is essentially one big piece and over time the tears become irreparable. The computer lab at the High School also received new flooring. This room was originally carpeted but was replaced entirely with vinyl tile flooring. The new flooring will be easier to clean and repair if necessary.

I would like to thank Bob Gerbert, Director of Facilities, for taking the time to speak with me about all the summer projects. When asked if there was anything else he would like to add, Mr. Gerbert said he would like to thank the maintenance and custodial staff for their hard work and effort in collaborating with vendors. Both staff and vendors worked many late nights and weekend hours to make sure the projects were completed. I would also like to join Mr. Gerbert in thanking everyone who helped make the return to school more pleasant with some much needed updates.



HOM GYMNASIUM



HOM BATHROOM



NMS GYMNASIUM



NHS LECTURE HALL



NHS COMPUTER LAB



RIS UPPER LEVEL
BLUE HOUSE



MIDDLE GATE HALL
CARPET



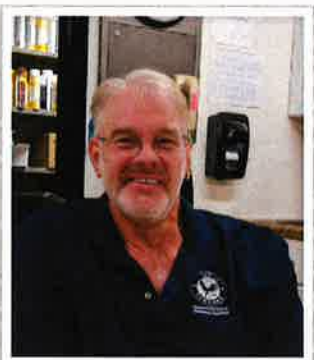
NMS SIDEWALK
REPAIR



HOM MEDIA CENTER
CARPET

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

A MORE PERSONAL VIEW OF SCHOOL BASED CUSTODIANS



STEVE CARLSON



ERIC VENTURA



RICH MILLS

By Don Ramsey

In addition to exploring the day to day operation of our schools from a custodial/maintenance

perspective, it is most interesting to delve into the personalities behind the tools and equipment. For this article, we have selected Steve Carlson at Head O'Meadow School, Rich Mills at Reed Intermediate School, and Eric Ventura at Newtown High School. I want to thank each of these gentlemen for submitting to a personal interview and allowing me to see a more personal side of what motivates their all-important work.

Steve Carlson has been with us since 1992 when he began as a part time employee with tours at Hawley School as the Head Custodian and service at Newtown Middle School. He greeted me with a most affable manner and smiled generously for the camera knowing that he would be featured in a district wide publication. He told the story of Head O'Meadow in September of 2022 when he arrived as needing quite a bit attention. He credits all the teachers that showed gratitude for all his efforts to bring the school back online with spit shine cleanliness and good

organization. He credited much of his motivation to the interpersonal comradery of all the staff

at Head O'Meadow and the support of grateful parents who attend PTA functions and volunteer type activities. He enjoys tremendously the joy and spirit of kids during the day as well as special events with families. Speaking of Steve in the most complimentary way, Mr. Tim

Napolitano said, "He along with the team, work hard to make sure that our building is taken care of. He is always willing to help with anything asked of him. He has built relationships with

the students and staff. We are lucky to have him here at HOM!"

Working as Custodian since the opening of Reed School, Rich Mills is fast out the gate to express that helping kids is the intangible reward of his position. We had a long discussion about the challenges of moving and setting up 16 -18 classrooms from Hawley School to Reed

Intermediate while the HVAC project is underway at Hawley. From the most intimate inside perspective on the move, he is most positive about the "smooth transition" forming a school within a school in a most collegial way. He feels a great deal of satisfaction in facilitating that move from last June until the opening of schools when classroom facilities were ready for teachers and students to hit the ground running. Rich's ever cheerful demeanor is known by me on a personal level since the time of his service at Newtown Middle School before his transfer to Reed Intermediate upon that school opening mid-year of the 2002 - 2003 school year. Rich really enjoys his work and appreciates the fact that often he is the "first face" parents see when coming into the building during special events and performances. Though he especially enjoys his time in the cafeteria interacting directly with the students, he did point out the challenges of going from four lunch waves to six lunch waves after the merge of Hawley

School Students. Like Steve Carlson at Head O'Meadow, Rich expressed how parents show appreciation for his efforts to support various PTA functions and other after school events and

meetings. Speaking of Rich in a most grateful way, Reed School Principal, Dr. Matt Correia expressed that, "Rich is a dedicated and hardworking individual. It's always a Yes with Rich, no matter the task or difficulty level. Rich has been part of the RIS Custodial Team for years and works closely with administration, the main office and entire Reed Staff. Within his role, he

checks in with staff daily, is always seeking to provide support and make our days a little easier. He is kind, caring, and a go getter. We are truly lucky to have him at Reed!"

Newtown High School is the largest facility in the district. Along with that are challenges that traverse the needs of faculty in many types of educational settings. As I arrived on the campus,

Eric Ventura greeted me and we proceeded to the main office conference room for the interview. Indeed, Eric is a 1985 graduate of Newtown High School! Relating his experience as a student, Eric had nothing but fond memories including his role as manager of sports teams at the time. After graduation he worked for Stew Leonard's before taking on his role as Custodian at Newtown High School in the school year 2000 – 2001. In a most energetic and affectionate way, Eric emphasized that he found a home at Newtown High School. He alluded to a simple mission to just "make people happy". He mentioned his desire to be responsive and flexible to every need. While it is apparent that the regular duties of a custodian at such a large facility is varied due to the variety of educational offerings that include a natatorium and other specialized areas of activity oriented instruction, our conversation was centered around his activities to support the sports programs on his own time. He attends games and offers donations for plaques and banners and the state of the art scoreboard that overlooks the Nighthawks Football Stadium. Speaking of Eric in the most appreciative way along with all the other custodial staff that she said are, "simply amazing", Newtown High School Principal Dr. Kimberly Longobucco added that, "Eric is a hard worker who is dedicated to making sure everyone is taken care of. He always responds quickly and is a pleasure to work with. Eric is also an avid Newtown High School sports supporter. He attends all of our games and shares in the victories of our student athletes. We are very lucky and endlessly thankful to have Eric on the NHS team."

BOB GERBERT, DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES



By Janet Kuzma

I am very excited to take this opportunity and share a little bit of a “closer look” at Bob Gerbert, Director of Facilities.

Bob is a life-long CT resident. He was born and raised in Stamford but now lives with his wife of 13 years and 8 year old twin boys, in Trumbull. He began working for the Newtown Public School district in August of 2019 after leaving an unpleasant job at Purdue Pharma in Stamford. Prior to that, he worked for the Town of Stamford where he was the project manager for school capital projects. He knew from this experience that he wanted to work in a school district.

When you speak to Bob you can immediately see that he has passion for what he does. When asked what his favorite parts about the job were, he didn't hesitate and immediately responded

with, "I love the people!" What he also enjoys about the job is how with different facilities, "There is a new adventure every day and you're always getting presented with different kinds of tasks". Through all of the tasks, he has the opportunity to work with different people and move from building to building. He manages roughly 60 employees and he said, "It's a pleasure to work with every one of them because they are all going in the same direction and really care about their jobs".

I asked Mr. Gerbert if there were any challenges that he foresees in the near future and he expressed that while there are always budget challenges, we can expect to see some supply chain issues coming up as well. It can be crippling to a district if we are not able to get certain products, such as cleaning supplies, paper products, tools, and the like. While supply issues appeared to have improved for a while, it looks as though we might see issues coming back with higher prices on many items.

On a more positive note, I concluded my interview with Mr. Gerbert by asking him if there are any goals/projects that he is looking forward to completing. He expressed that when he came to Newtown there was a divide between the "town side" and Board of Education and that he wanted to bridge the gap. He would like for people to realize that now there is a good working relationship between both the town side and the Board of Education. He is also a member of several committees where there is collaboration between the two entities. As far as goals, he wishes to try and get ahead of the curve and be more proactive about things instead of waiting until things are broken to reactively address.

It was an absolute pleasure to interview Bob and I would like to thank him for giving us the opportunity to get to know him a little better on a personal level.



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STUDENT TEACHERS

The Newtown Public Schools accepts a responsibility to provide apprentice teaching opportunities for student teachers from colleges and universities.

The Superintendent may enter into agreements with colleges and universities concerning the assignment of student teachers. Agreements that have financial obligations for the Newtown Board of Education will be submitted by the Superintendent for approval and funding. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall determine the number to be placed in the schools at any one time.

Reference: CGS 4-109,4119

Adopted 3/12/96

Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace

The purpose of this policy is to establish a workplace that is free of the effects of alcohol and second-hand smoke, and free from drug abuse. By accomplishing this purpose, the Board also seeks to promote a safe, healthy working environment for all employees and to reduce absenteeism, tardiness, and other job performance problems that may be caused by alcohol and/or drug abuse. This policy is adopted in accordance with state law and the Drug Free Workplace Act.

Definitions

“Any area” means the interior of a school building and the outside area within twenty-five feet of any doorway, operable window or air intake vent of a school building.

“Cannabis” means marijuana, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-240.

“Controlled substance” means a controlled substance in schedules I through V of section 202 of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 (21 U.S.C. 812), including marijuana.

“Inhalant” means use of products in a manner not intended and for the purpose of becoming “high” or intoxicated.

“Electronic cannabis delivery system” means an electronic device that may be used to simulate smoking in the delivery of cannabis to a person inhaling the device and includes, but is not limited to, a vaporizer, electronic pipe, electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device.

“Electronic nicotine delivery system” means an electronic device used in the delivery of nicotine to a person inhaling from the device, and includes, but is not limited to, an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe or electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device, including, but not limited to, electronic cigarette liquid or synthetic nicotine.

“School property” means any land and all temporary and permanent structures comprising the district’s school and administrative office buildings and includes, but is not limited to, classrooms, hallways, storage facilities, theatres, gymnasiums, fields, and parking lots.

“School-sponsored activity” means any activity sponsored, recognized, or authorized by a board of education and includes activities conducted on or off school property.

“Smoke” or “smoking” means the burning of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other similar device, whether containing, wholly or in part, tobacco, cannabis or hemp.

“Vapor product” means any product that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit or other electronic, chemical or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, to produce a vapor that may or may not include nicotine or cannabis and is inhaled by the user of such product.

Employees shall not be involved with the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of an illegal drug, a controlled substance, or alcohol, or inhalant and shall not be under the influence of such substances while on school property or while conducting Board business on or off school property. Any employee who discovers illegal drugs, a controlled substance, or alcohol, or inhalant on school property shall notify the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee who shall investigate the matter.

An employee must report any conviction under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off school property while on Board business to the Superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) days after the conviction. The Board will notify any agency awarding a grant to the Board of such conviction within ten (10) days thereafter.

Employees shall only use prescription drugs on school property, or during the conduct of Board business, that have been prescribed to them by a licensed medical practitioner, and such drugs shall be used only as prescribed. However, in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-408a through 408q, the Board specifically prohibits the palliative use of marijuana on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or during the conduct of Board business, and specifically prohibits employees from being under the influence of intoxicating substances during work hours.

The Board prohibits smoking, including smoking using an electronic nicotine delivery system (e.g., e-cigarettes), electronic cannabis delivery system, or vapor product, and the use of tobacco products in any area of a school building, on school property, including property owned, leased, contracted for, or utilized by the Board, or at any school-sponsored activity.

While Connecticut law allows for the legal use of marijuana under certain circumstances, because marijuana use is still prohibited under federal law, the use of marijuana at work, or outside of work if it impairs an employee’s ability to perform their job, constitutes a violation of this policy.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Employee Assistance

In appropriate circumstances, the Board shall provide an employee with an opportunity for rehabilitation in overcoming addiction to, dependence upon or other problem with alcohol or drugs.

Employees who feel they have developed an addiction to, dependence upon, or other problem with alcohol or drugs are encouraged to seek assistance. Certain benefits for alcoholism or drug addiction are provided under the Board's group medical insurance plan. An employee may be given an opportunity to participate in a rehabilitation program that requires absence from work for bona fide treatment. Such absence may be charged to the employee's accrued and unused sick leave, subject to the provisions of the employee's collective bargaining agreement and/or any applicable Board policies and regulations.

P4118.231(c)
4218.231

Any request for assistance with a drug or alcohol problem will be treated as confidential and only those persons "needing to know" will be made aware of such request.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233a(h) (definition of school-sponsored activity)

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-342

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-342a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-408a through 408q (palliative use of marijuana)

June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-1

United States Code:

Pro-Children Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7973, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, Public Law 114-95, § 4001

Drug Free Workplace Act, 41 U.S.C. § 8101 et seq.