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The PIN is 331 047 489#

Board of Education Regular/Budget Meeting
February 1, 2022

Council Chamber
7:00 p.m.

As citizens of our community, we will conduct ourselves in accordance with Newtown's Core Character Attributes as displayed in our character tree. We will be responsible for our actions and show respect for each other. We will interact peacefully, productively, and politely. We will be trustworthy and honest and show compassion toward others. Newtown's continued success is contingent upon our ability to persevere, to follow through with our commitments, and to stay focused on the greater good.

A G E N D A

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| Item 1 | PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE |
| Item 2 | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION |
| Item 3 | REPORTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair Report• Superintendent's Report |
| Item 4 | SECOND READ AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON POLICY 4118.21 ACADEMIC FREEDOM |
| Item 5 | BOE NEWSLETTER – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION |
| Item 6 | DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE 2022-2023 BUDGET |
| Item 7 | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION |
| Item 8 | ADJOURNMENT |

***During the first Public Participation, the Board welcomes commentary regarding items on the agenda. After being recognized, please state your name and address for the record. We request that speakers be respectful and limit comments to not more than three minutes. The Board of Education does not discuss personnel items or student matters in public. During the second Public Participation, commentary may address the agenda or may introduce issues for the Board to consider in the future. The Board does not engage in dialogue during either public comment period. If you desire more information or answers to specific questions, please email the BOE: NewtownBOE@newtown.k12.ct.us*

TO: Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent
FROM: Suzanne D'Eramo, Director of Human Resources
RE: Superintendent's Report – Certified Staffing Update for JANUARY 2022
DATE: January 28, 2022

JANUARY 2022

CERTIFIED RETIREMENTS:

Karolyn Baumgartner (eff. June 30, 2022)

CERTIFIED RESIGNATIONS:

Helenann McMahan – MGS SPED (PAL Program – 1 year position)

CERTIFIED NEW HIRES:

Veronica Egas – NHS Spanish

Jenna Skelton – NMS SPED

CERTIFIED OPEN POSITIONS:

MGS SPED (PAL Program – 1 year position)

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT HIRING NOTES:

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

Teachers = 2

Building subs/LT subs = 5

Custodians = 2

Paraeducators = 6

Clerical = 1

Of the 16 newly hired employees, 3 indicated a diverse ethnicity or race other than white. This equates to a total of 19% broken down as follows:

Hispanic or Latino = 3

Personnel – Certified

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Academic freedom, the freedom to teach and to learn, is essential to the fulfillment of the purposes of the school system.

~~Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think. To study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea. Public school classrooms are forums for inquiry, not arenas for the promulgation of particular viewpoints.~~

Since teaching and learning are among the missions of our public schools, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Newtown Board of Education affirms the distinction between teaching and indoctrination. Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think. To study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea. Public school classrooms are forums for inquiry, not arenas for the promulgation of particular viewpoints. While communities have the right to exercise supervision over their own public school practices and programs, their participation in the educational life of their schools should respect the constitutional and intellectual rights guaranteed school personnel and students by American law and tradition.

The Board will make every effort to maintain an atmosphere of academic freedom within the schools that are without partisan, embrace diversity of thought, foster equity in perspectives and inclusion of ideas.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

53a-193 through 53a-200

Keyishian v. Board of Regents, 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

Perry v. Sindermann, 408 U.S. 593 (1972)

Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)

Sterzing v. Fort Bend Independent School District, 376F. Supp. 657 (S.D. Tex 1972)

Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972)

Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

Amendment to U.S. Constitution, Article I

Connecticut Constitution, ARTICLE FIRST, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/8/81)

Appendix A

FREE TO LEARN

A Policy on Academic Freedom and Public Education

Adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education

Academic freedom is the freedom to teach and to learn. In defending the freedom to teach and to learn, we affirm the democratic process itself. American public education is the source of much that is essential to our democratic heritage. No other single institution has so significantly sustained our national diversity, nor helped voice our shared hopes for an open and tolerant society. Academic freedom is among the strengths of American public education. Attempts to deny the freedom to teach and to learn are, therefore, incompatible with the goals of excellence and equity in the life of our public schools.

With freedom comes responsibility. With rights come obligations. Accordingly, academic freedom in our public schools is subject to certain limitations. Therefore, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms that:

Academic freedom in our public schools is properly defined within the context of law and the constraints of mutual respect among individuals. Public schools represent a public trust. They exist to prepare our children to become partners in a society of self-governing citizens. Therefore, access to ideas and opportunities to consider the broad range of questions and experiences which constitute the proper preparation for a life of responsible citizenship must not be defined by the interests of any single viewpoint. Teachers, school administrators, librarians, and school media specialists must be free to select instructional research materials appropriate to the maturity level of their students. This freedom is itself subject to the reasonable restrictions mandated by law to school officials and administrators.

At the same time, local school officials must demonstrate substantial or legitimate public interest in order to justify censorship or other proposed restrictions upon teaching and learning. Similarly, local boards of education cannot establish criteria for the selection of library books based solely on the personal, social or political beliefs of school board members. While students must be free to voice their opinions in the context of a free inquiry after truth and respect for their fellow students and school personnel, student expression which threatens to interfere substantially with the school's function is not warranted by academic freedom. Students must be mindful that their rights are neither absolute nor unlimited. Part of responsible citizenship is coming to accept the consequences of the freedoms to which one is entitled by law and tradition. Similarly, parents have the right to affect their own children's education, but this right must be balanced against the right other parent's children have to a suitable range of educational experiences. Throughout, the tenets of academic freedom seek to encourage a spirit of reasoned community participation in the life and practices of our public schools.

Since teaching and learning are among the missions of our public schools, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms the distinction between teaching and indoctrination. Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think. To study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea. Public school classrooms are forums for inquiry, not arenas for the promulgation of particular viewpoints. While communities have the right to exercise supervision over their own public school practices and programs, their participation in the educational life of their schools should respect the constitutional and intellectual rights guaranteed school personnel and students by American law and tradition.

Accordingly, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, in order to encourage improved educational practices, recommends that local school boards adopt policies and procedures to receive, review, and take action upon requests that question public school practices and programs. Community members should be encouraged, and made aware of their rights to voice their opinions about school practices and programs in an appropriate administrative forum. The STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION further recommends that local school boards take steps to encourage informed community participation in the shared work of sustaining and improving our public schools.

Finally, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms that community members and school personnel should acknowledge together that the purpose of public education is the pursuit of knowledge and the preparation of our children for responsible citizenship in a society that respects differences and shared freedom.