

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held virtually on October 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	T. Vadas
D. Leidlein (absent)	7 Staff
J. Vouros (absent)	1 Press
R. Harriman-Stites	2 Public
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was being recorded and held remotely instead of in person because some people were feeling under the weather and unable to attend in person. All are attending remotely.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Celebration of Excellence

The celebration was moved to the next meeting

Item 3 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of September 15, 2020 and September 24, 2020, the donation to the Sandy Hook School Music Department, and the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Mrs. Ku removed the minutes of September 15, 2020 to the end of the agenda. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Public Participation

Item 5 - Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku reported that the Board of Finance approved the recommendation of the Board of Selectman to transfer \$400,000 to the capital and nonrecurring fund. The Legislative Council will discuss this at their next meeting and sought opinion from the Town attorney about which body has authority over the Education Non-lapsing Account which is on their agenda. The Board of Finance will continue discussion about our CIP next week.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue said that 90% of K-6 graders returned to school this week. She has only heard positive comments from staff and families. We have lower ridership and bus monitors are rotating now. All precautionary measures continue as part of our reentry plan. She was on a call with DPH and Connecticut is at 0% cases. Regarding our staffing report, Carol Howard, grade 1 teacher at Head O'Meadow School, will retire October 30, 2020 and we are filling many of our para positions. The first PEAC meeting will be tomorrow with a new subgroup to address diversity and equity. We had the first of a series of antiracism workshops with 16 Newtown employees attending which is being facilitated by the Connecticut Center for School Change. It was about sharing stories and developing your own narrative. She has a scheduled phone call with Kerry Lord to see what else we can add to our November 3 professional development day.

Mr. Cruson referred to the bus monitors and noted this was the second round of monitors. We had them the first 12 days and now for two additional weeks. Dr. Rodrigue said we have more children now and the monitors are still supporting our routes.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Cruson stated the Communications Committee met yesterday and reviewed the equity and diversity newsletter. We hope to bring it to the Bboard at the first meeting in November. We also discussed the articles done so far with some still outstanding. At our September 14 meeting we discussed the next newsletter with a focus on technology.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee met last week and went over changes to the equity and diversity policy. We also looked at the racial harassment policy and the 4000 personnel policies.

Mr. Cruson reported that the Safety and Security Committee met for the first time since the pandemic. Mr. Pompano gave an overview of how things are over the last six months. The discussion was around an assortment of changes in policies and changes in the traffic agents around the opening of school.

Mr. Delia stated that the Board of EdAdvance approved their budget for this year. They are phasing out their drivers ed program because it's not sustainable. They also send Covid reports to the superintendents.

Mrs. Ku reported on the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. Dr. Rodrigue provided an update on our commitment to honoring diversity and equity in our curriculum. We are piloting two new math resources in K-5 with a recommendation in early spring. There are new online resources being used in the district. We also talked about teacher advisory groups to better understand the challenges of synchronist learning. She just wanted to note that the commitment of our technology department, administrators and teaching staff in getting this hybrid model to work has been extraordinary.

Student Reports:

Mr. Jerfy reported that he spoke to a student in Cohort D and the music and art classes going fine. Half of the students are still at home. Clubs are back to normal but with the larger clubs work needs to be done because it's difficult to meet with the number of students participating. There will also be virtual clubs this year.

Ms. Clure spoke about the various sports games being held. The Unified Sports program has begun. Last Monday CIAC said each athlete can have two family members attend their game but no fans can attend away games. Seniors are working on college applications. The SAT was given on September 23 with scores to be released around October 9. All school counselors made videos on how to apply to college. October 5 to 9 is Solidarity Week. The Gay and Straight Alliance sent a google form to show solidarity. The band and guard had their first performance on September 26 at the Blue and Gold Stadium which was recorded.

Item 6 – Presentations

Diversity and Equity:

Dr. Rodrigue spoke the Board's resolution that builds on our practices. We want to look at current practices that demonstrate a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for students and staff which needs to be consistent K-12. We will develop future practices in alignment with our values, beliefs, and commitments as outlined in our BOE Resolution, and also continue to assess, modify, and support our practices to ensure they promote equity, inclusivity and respect. We need a system that provides a voice for students and families.

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about the development of the Board's resolution which will help us move forward. Our goal is to have students feel a sense of belonging and safety. All students and

staff need to feel valued and stay and remain socially connected. We need to make sure the barriers that existed be eliminated. We need to honor existing practices but we need to do more and expand practices. As a future commitment, Dr. Rodrigue proposed the inclusion of a Diversity & Equity Compliance Officer to work to support students, staff, and families in finding resolution to issues. She will be looking at recruiting persons of color in our district. 18% of newly hired employees registered at non-white which is a positive for this district. There are students who really care about each other and leaders and staff who care about students. She is very proud of what we do. We need to evolve and change and grow to make it a better learning environment for our students.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites appreciated the presentation and was glad this has been moving forward with a firm commitment to carrying out what is in the resolution. This sets a good standard and framework.

Mrs. Ku noted that our strategic plan includes this in it. It is worth revisiting our strategic plan but she appreciates all that is going on that addresses issues the Board is very interested in addressing. She appreciates all the work moving toward that and the percent of minority hiring we are doing. We never had that reported before and were glad to see that was shared and would continue to be monitored.

Item 7 – Old Business

COVID-19 Update:

Dr. Rodrigue gets weekly reports from EdAdvance on Covid cases and we are tracking expenditures. We will have a detailed report at the next meeting as well as some of the funding coming our way. We've worked closely with Donna Culbert and Matt Memoli on sports with protocols in alignment with the CDC. Football is engaging in a 7 on 7 style competition with limited spectators at home games.

Mr. Memoli said all fall sports are operating on a low to moderate risk according to CDC guidelines. We have cross country, hockey and volleyball. Unified team started yesterday. It's been wonderful to have these students competing.

Superintendent's Goals:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's Goals for 2020-2021. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Ms. Zukowski asked for the difference between points 1 and 2 of the second item and points 5 and 7 of the first item.

Dr. Rodrigue said point 1 is focused on the Board and keeping you updated on cases and trends. The other talks about giving the community as well as staff updates on decisions related to Covid including the appropriate school modes we may move in and out of for example hybrid to full distance.

Ms. Zukowski also questioned the last point in the first goal and point 2 of the following goal. Dr. Rodrigue said the first area is supporting the administration, staff and community regarding the emotional challenges of Covid. The second was more about an overall vision and looking at the environment. She can rework that one so they are not so closely related.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said she didn't understand the last one about equity and diversity and the quote about deliverables.

Dr. Rodrigue said she was using it as term but wants to use that to connect to outcomes and was really talking about outcomes.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt she should consider changing it to outcomes and remove the quotes.

Mrs. Ku agreed with changing it to outcomes.

Dr. Rodrigue would clarify the second item.

Ms. Zukowski asked if would make sense to have a goal related to special education. She did a 10-year study and found that special education costs increased by \$4M (2020 dollars) in those 10 years. We should focus our attention on how to manage special education better and have it be a specific goal.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that a lot of those costs were out of our controls based on IEPs, students coming in and outplacements. She would put that in as a goal.

Ms. Zukowski said she sees so much effort Dr. Rodrigue is doing in that area it would be good to have a goal.

Mr. Delia didn't understand that goal. If it is out of Dr. Rodrigue's control, we would have a goal which depends on the population enrolled. How can she have a goal of doing something without knowing how many students will be enrolled?

Dr. Rodrigue asked if this was about rising costs or wanting to bring students back to be educated here.

Ms. Zukowski said this was about forging a better relationship to keep students here instead of out-placing them.

Dr. Rodrigue said there are outplacements out of our control. She would be glad to write a goal but wanted to be sure it isn't about costs.

Ms. Zukowski wanted to think of ways of making things sustainable such as having a regional program.

Mrs. Ku wondered if this is an appropriate goal and wanted to hear from other members.

Mr. Delia said Ms. Zukowski brings up a good idea for a goal to support programs for special needs students but he wants to make sure it's not a financial goal. The Board is charged with the fiscal responsibility of setting a budget. There is a disconnect here he is not comfortable with.

Mrs. Ku wants to be sure we provide appropriate education for our special education students.

Mr. Cruson agrees with the point about the trouble around making it a financial goal. It's important to continue to support and improve our offerings. He shared Mr. Delia's concern about making it a financial goal.

Ms. Zukowski stated it should not be a financial goal but a program goal to make them as sustainable as we can. We have to make the option for students who want to stay here and make a program to meet their needs.

Dr. Rodrigue said we have seven special education programs in the district. When students and families leave it isn't for something we failed to do but for other reasons having to do with their needs.

Mr. Delia suggested approving these goals and possibly consider amending them rather than waiting for two or three weeks to which Mrs. Ku agreed.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – New Business

School Schedule:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the November 2 return to school schedule for Newtown Middle and Newtown High Schools. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Dr. Rodrigue noted that the middle and high school students will return full time November 2. It's more challenging in these schools with social distancing and in hallways and lunch. These students ride the buses together and will include some early dismissal time.

Dr. Longobucco said they came up with similar schedules for the middle school and high school students. Our students are doing an excellent job wearing masks and doing what they need to do. With the removal of lunch this will work. We have limited cafeteria spots for high school students to have lunch with some being outside. We would run five classes each day and provide a travel and lunch block, students would go home and then log onto their last class by 1:42. That gives them their six classes per day. She presented this to her faculty this afternoon and there was positive feedback. It reduces periods from 57 to 50 minutes which also allows teachers lunch and prep time. On early dismissal days they will have all classes at school.

Mr. Einhorn spoke about the middle school schedule. They have minimized the time students are in the hallways but lunch has challenges with all students returning. The schedule allows us to have students for six periods and the last one remotely. We will have a rotating last period of the day so the same class is not remote each day. They would go home, have lunch, and take their last class. He also presented to his staff today and had positive comments. They have met with the cafeteria staff regarding the grab and go lunch for students to take home and we have an orderly way to do that.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked if students in after school activities, sports, or clubs have to take the bus home for their last class and have to find a way to school for practice.

Dr. Longobucco said they would and have been doing that now. Our fall sports are set to end the first week in November. They are not planning to keep students in the building but special education will remain in the school all day.

Mr. Einhorn said a lot of clubs are remote and will continue that way.

Dr. Longobucco said they first spoke to All Star to see if they could get the students home in time for their last class.

Ms. Zukowski asked if we were still within the required hours of class time.

Dr. Longobucco said we were and have been running 85 minute periods. We will be within the 900 hour limit for the duration of the year.

Ms. Zukowski asked how snow days would be counted.

Dr. Longobucco stated we were still waiting for guidance on that.

Dr. Rodrigue said the State is still not waiving snow days so they won't be counted even though students can be remote. It does require a change in legislation.

Mr. Cruson asked if this had been looked at by students.

Dr. Longobucco has spoken to a handful of students. They just want to come back every day and did not care about the logistics and just take one online class per day.

Mr. Cruson was on board with students needing to be in person but this is confusing to him. This seems overly complicated and the travel is a concern about losing students having to get virtual. It only leaves about 20 minutes to have lunch and get back on line. He has trouble being comfortable with this plan, feels it's not what is best for students, and that we might be better with the hybrid plan.

Dr. Longobucco said this is the schedule in the order our students are used to. 75% of our building has been operating under this except the last five weeks. She feels confident they can do it.

Mr. Delia asked if the community was involved in any of this planning and was feedback sought from parents.

Dr. Longobucco did not have parents look at this plan. It's out traditional high school schedule used for years.

Mr. Delia asked if there were any issues for parents regarding the drop off areas.

Mr. Einhorn said they started the year dropping off A-wing students in the horseshoe. We had C-wing students dropped off at that wing. This is working well and we are releasing a few minutes earlier. We are confident the schedule will work. Lunch is the biggest driver here.

Dr. Longobucco said currently students are in two full days. When we return the students will be in school 23 hours a week. The value of in person time with the teachers is significant. Jillian Clure added that a lot of students are looking forward to full time.

Mrs. Ku felt the biggest concern of hers was the cafeteria and how to make it a safe environment for students. We need to think about when we spoke about this earlier when we said the K-6 students would be going back all in and then the 7-12 students would return. We made a commitment to this and stick with what we said we would do initially.

Dr. Rodrigue said we have to continue to look at this as temporary. During her superintendent calls about this issue every district has the same issues with secondary schools returning with different options. In some cases classrooms are just not big enough in some districts. This is a good space to bring students back safely. She doesn't agree to be in the hybrid.

Mrs. Ku asked what would happen if we went to all distance learning.

Dr. Longobucco said if we had a brief closure for a couple of days we would keep this schedule and if needed a change we would go to the hybrid.

Mr. Einhorn said the middle school would revert back to this schedule also on a long-term closure.

Mr. Cruson asked if anyone talked to All Star about this plan and additional costs that might happen.

Dr. Rodrigue said they did and there were a few questions about special education vans and preschool transportation but we worked it out. The higher needs students would remain in school.

Mr. Cruson said bus drivers will be in two hours earlier and have down time they wouldn't normally have. It seems unfair to the drivers to have two hours they don't get paid for.

Dr. Rodrigue said none of that was brought forward.

Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Cruson) Motion passes.

Newtown Association of Administrators Contract:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the ratified Newtown Association of School Administrators Contract. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Ku said this was a productive discussion and thanked everyone who was involved. Motion passes unanimously.

Authorization of Signature:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education authorize Tanja Vadas to execute agreements, apply for grants, or to sign other documents as necessary in the normal course of the school system's business, including documents that support the adopted budget or that implement the Board's established policies or programs. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Motion passes unanimously.

Policy 0523 Equity and Diversity:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 0523 Equity and Diversity. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said this was the second read on this policy and they had feedback from the Board, public and staff on this policy. This policy is codifying what we put in the resolution. We will be looking at our policies with an equity lens.

Mr. Cruson said that regarding adding the upstander definition the committee had a thoughtful discussion about which term we wanted to use and decided to use upstander.

Ms. Zukowski asked if when it talks about teaching is the upstander going to apply broadly to all of our student body and staff or to all except people of color and our staff and student body. Mrs. Harriman-Stites expects that all students and staff to be upstanders.

Ms. Zukowski asked what it meant when you refer to recruit, employ, support and retain staff that is balanced and reflects the diversity of the student body and we have a student body made up of different races and reflect diversity would we be satisfied with that.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt that would be a wonderful place to start. We are not saying the percentages of staff and students have to match exactly. The language is clear to strive for a more diverse work force and looking at ways to increase diversity in our work force.

Ms. Zukowski wanted to set the bar higher and offered language in the previous meeting to address diversity in the State of Connecticut.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee discussed her point but decided we were comfortable with the language in the policy.

Mr. Delia said regarding creating multiple pathways he was curious about marginalized.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said they used that language throughout as standard language. If a student feels marginalized and they are not getting an equitable education we want to be sure we are addressing the needs of all students and trying to be as inclusive as possible.

Mr. Cruson felt we were getting too tight lensed on certain groups and wanted to not leave anyone out. The goal was to try and open it up but not leave any group out.

Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Ms. Zukowski)

Ms. Zukowski stated her reason for voting against the Equity and Diversity Policy. "I shared my concerns about some aspects of this policy in our last meeting of August 8. I'm not going to repeat those concerns. I will simply say that I think we could do better. This is a very important area for me and I'm just a little saddened at the limitation of the scope we have in certain areas."

BOE Budget Assumptions and Priorities:

Mrs. Ku provided last year's document for discussion.

Mr. Cruson noted that #4 didn't list equity and diversity which should be included.

Mrs. Ku suggested equity and diversity have its own bullet point to which Mr. Cruson agreed.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites agreed.

Ms. Zukowski asked if there will be money needed to support equity and diversity.

Mrs. Ku indicated there would be a financial implication.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites thought that it might be listed under priorities.

Mr. Delia suggested adding an assumption around setting an effective and timely budget calendar to visit every year.

Mr. Cruson hesitated on that because we already set the calendar.

Mrs. Ku referred to #2 about having a level funding plan for technology.

Ms. Zukowski said we are replacing technology and providing freshmen with their own Chromebook so we have a plan that might change from year to year and suggested possibly changing "level" to "consistent."

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we always used the word level because that was a commitment we made to the other boards in keeping the budget consistent year after year dollar wise but we are in a much different situation now.

Mr. Cruson said technology has always been a level funding plan year after year and was not sure if we should do that each year because it isn't reasonable. He doesn't want to lock into the same dollar figure each year.

Dr. Rodrigue thought the history for that term was because technology was hit year after year. The past few years it had an adverse impact when developing the budget. With level funding, even if we didn't need it we didn't want to go below the figure or so far above but it wasn't in other areas of the budget. It's time to change "level" to something more appropriate.

Mrs. Ku referred to #3 and wanted to add ventilation and air capacity in the schools but decided to remove it from the list.

Mrs. Uberti referred to #8 regarding curriculum improvement and suggested to strengthen the statement to address possible learning deficits due to the disruption of the educational process. As the year goes on we may find additional needs. Regarding technology, we might be looking at technology in a different way next year and assessing where we are. No one knows what the expectation will be for parents and the need for technology.

Mrs. Ku referred to #8 to include equity and diversity but that may need to be a separate piece. She asked everyone to send her their suggestions for additions or deletions for the next meeting.

Minutes of September 15, 2020:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to approve the minutes of September 15, 2020. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Vote: 4 ayes, 1 abstained (Mr. Cruson) Motion passes.

Item 9 – Public Participation

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

Item 10 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held September 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Reed Intermediate School Library.

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

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and stated the meeting was being recorded. All Board members were in attendance with the exception of Mr. Delia who was on video and Mr. Vouros who joined by phone. Mr. Cruson was absent. Mrs. Uberti was on video.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to add the discussion of anticipated and unanticipated COVID expenses to the end of our agenda. Ms. Zukowski seconded.

Mr. Delia wanted to speak about the discussions at the Board of Finance meeting the night before so we were on the same page moving forward with these expenses.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of August 25, 2020, the minutes of September 8, 2020, and the correspondence report. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Ms. Zukowski requested the August 25, 2020 minutes be removed.

Motion on the minutes of September 8, 2020 and the correspondence report passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku welcomed the two high school students, Rushil Jerfy and Jillian Clure, to the meeting. At last night's Board of Finance meeting they reviewed the CIP with little comment and spent a lot of time on the Non-Lapsing Account with all motions failing. We will send a letter to the Legislative Council to let them know the funds will be turned over to the Town. Some of the reasons for not approving our request were this was a new or not defined process and that taxpayers would not benefit if the funds were not used for COVID expenses. Mrs. Ku wants the Board to start the self-evaluation process and also to set budget goals. There will be a non-meeting after this meeting regarding negotiations.

Supt Report: Dr. Rodrigue reported on classroom and remote learners and the positive feedback she has received from parents. Certified staff updates include the retirements of Mardi Smith, Reed music teacher and Eileen Tabasko, Head O'Meadow reading/language arts consultant, and the resignation of Rachel Smith, middle school computer teacher. There have also been multiple new hires for teaching positions. We will be sending a communication to parents regarding the extension of our summer lunch program through Whitsons which will extend free lunches through December 31. She has recognized all of our custodians who have done so much to maintain clean schools and minimize the spread of infection. They've done a fantastic job.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said it's very joyful for the students to be kept motivated and engaged and expressed her gratitude.

Mr. Delia said his son is enjoying himself and was doing cross country. He asked about students having lunch in the schools.

Dr. Rodrigue said there were no complaints and very few students in the cafeterias. We just have cold lunches right now. The lunch pickups for the distance learners was going well.

Committee Reports:

Ms. Zukowski reported on the Communications Committee meeting and was looking forward to putting out a newsletter focused on equity and diversity. They are waiting for meetings with staff members.

Mr. Vouros joined the Reed PTA meeting by phone and they introduced a number of new families in the community.

Student Reports:

Jillian Clure reported positive feedback from the students with the return to school. Desk shields are taking time to get used to and online classes are going well. Students are practicing for fall sports and Unified sports will have their unified soccer program. She spoke to the National Honor Society regarding events and fundraisers. There is also a high school tutoring group.

Rushil Jerfy said he was in Cohort D which is all distance learning at home. It was a bit rough at first but teachers are doing a good job regarding how to learn effectively and are providing supplemental videos. Cohort D might be better if taught separately. He feels online teaching is helpful.

Ms. Zukowski wanted to hear how the art students were doing and have a feel for their experiences.

Financial Report:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the financial report for the month ending August 31, 2020. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mrs. Vadas reported that emergency repairs which exceeded \$5,000 included \$6,750 for a pipe repair at Head O'Meadow, \$16,876 for replacement of the Reed school intercom due to a power surge from a storm, and \$17,322 for repairs to both chillers at Reed. Plant and technology equipment accounts are negative due to the Covid pandemic. More Covid detail will be in the September report.

Mr. Delia said the Board of Finance referred to a surplus of \$56M in July but now he sees a surplus of \$15M and asked why at the beginning of the year we are showing big surpluses and when we will see a more accurate reflection of the expenditures and projected surplus or deficits.

Mrs. Vadas said the \$15M is not real right now as we are still encumbering expenses. In October everything should be in which will reduce that balance.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 5 – Presentations

Sustainable Energy Commission:

Alan Adriani attended the meeting to give a presentation on the Sustainable Energy Commission. Kathy Quinn and Fred Hurley joined the meeting by phone.

Mrs. Ku asked them to attend and share what they have been doing in our schools.

Mr. Adriani said there are nine members and he was the Vice Chair. They look at energy efficiencies and reusable energy in the schools and to ways to save energy. HVAC uses 66%, lighting uses 14% and hot water heating uses 7% of the schools' energy. The energy upgrades in the schools were discussed as well as the Solar PV systems which provide a credit for the schools.

Mr. Adriani spoke about their observations in walking through the high school and recommended adding roof top units for air conditioning and an air flow system in the pool room to add to the CIP to begin work in two years. For the middle school there are five roof top units for the CIP. The insulation in the attic needs to be replaced. Also, there are two boilers with no backup which should be added to the CIP.

Mrs. Ku thanked him for sharing this information. She said the ventilation systems are running more because of the Covid and expected energy savings will be different this year.

Mr. Delia thanked them for coming and mentioned he has been working with Alan for awhile now and we are lucky to have him helping us. He is also the Chair of the Hawley Committee. Mr. Delia suggested putting this on a Communications Committee agenda.

Item 6 – Old Business

COVID Updates:

Dr. Rodrigue stated another Covid case was reported today but the person has not been in any schools since the opening but had limited time outdoors after school. Our health indicators are still very positive in the schools. We are working together with Donna Culbert and Anne Dalton to contact trace for this case. People do ask for more information but we don't want to name anyone or share the school which could lead to identifying the person. We are also waiting for Chromebooks but were able to use existing technology in the schools until they arrive. Students are happy to be back and it has worked well. We are working on keeping track of Covid expenses which are real expenses. The \$1.5M was reported to the State.

Ms. Zukowski inquired about the technology the teachers used between school and home.

Dr. Rodrigue said surveys were taken regarding needed devices. Some staff chose to use their own but we also provided them. Every class also has a desktop with camera. Teachers can also work in school on Wednesdays.

Mrs. Uberti said only the high school teachers have laptops. The rest have desktops in their classrooms. They were provided with a laptop if needed at home.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said parents inquired how long cameras were left on by teachers during remote teaching lessons.

Mrs. Uberti said we requested that students have their cameras on for a greater connection to teachers and peers. During the lessons the camera is focused on the teacher or learning materials. We want students to attend with their cameras on.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the concern was sharing the home environment with classmates.

Mrs. Uberti agreed there should be an awareness of how the background is displayed. They were asked to not have their microphones on. This was a recent concern and teachers reached out to parents about their concerns.

Dr. Rodrigue said the key is flexibility.

Ms. Zukowski asked that given what happened at the Board of Finance meeting regarding the costs associated with Covid, that they be broken down by if they were already expended, if already encumbered, and the expected future costs. Having the expenses in these categories might be helpful.

Dr. Rodrigue said we came in with those items which are needed beyond the budget.

Ms. Zukowski shared that a college in Arizona tested waste water for Covid in dorms and determined cases very early. Uconn and Yale are looking into this. She asked if it would make sense to start an investigation and sent an email to Donna Culbert who was going to forward an inquiry to the State Department of Health working with Yale. She asked if we should start looking at retrofitting with equipment to make this happen and options paying for it and start that conversation or wait for guidance from Donna.

Mr. Delia felt we should have a CIP meeting about this. We would need additional money for that so we will have to address it. He thanked Ms. Zukowski and would set a meeting with that on the agenda.

Mrs. Ku said from a health perspective she would want to know what happens if you find a positive.

Ms. Zukowski said the Department of Health would come in on that if it's something we could do.

Mr. Delia would start at the CIP but it's a bigger conversation. He thanked Dr. Rodrigue and received a number of phone calls regarding the positive case and he agrees with her method and it was the right way to handle it.

Mrs. Ku agreed and that the method of not releasing more information is important. Contact tracing is huge to keep this under control.

Dr. Rodrigue shared that Donna Culbert said this is a community issue, not a school issue.

Item 7 – New Business

Facilities Summer Work Update:

Mr. Gerbert thanked Mr. Adriani, Mr. Hurley and Ms. Quinn for their presentation. He doesn't know if any other town is close to where Newtown is using solar for energy. He went over the list of work accomplished in each school over the summer and couldn't say enough about our custodians, maintenance employees and contractors for their work this summer.

Mr. Delia thanked him for his excellent work and was extremely impressed with what he has done and what the future holds.

Ms. Zukowski said he was wonderful. She referred to the bulk of the items on page 156 of the budget book and asked him to reconcile summer work with the projects listed. This could be a possible topic for a future CIP meeting.

Mr. Delia agreed.

Mr. Gerbert shared that he had that information.

Mr. Delia asked him if some expenses not planned for were on this list.

Mr. Gerbert said Mrs. Vadas mentioned a couple of them in the financial report like the chillers and PA system at Reed. We shift priorities when they come up.

2021-2022 Budget Calendar:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 School Budget Development Calendar. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Ms. Zukowski was concerned with having just a week to have the book. She asked to move that date from January 12 to the prior Friday.

Ms. Vadas said they are on a very tight schedule and we're down a person. If we had the weekend and the Monday we could then have a final check. The printing takes a full day.

Mr. Delia suggested setting it for January 8 and letting us know if more time is needed.

Dr. Rodrigue suggested staying with the calendar and reassess as we get closer and hand them out on Friday if we can. We won't know until midway through the process.

Motion passes unanimously.

Superintendent's Goals:

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about her goals for 2020-2021 which are

- Support administrators, staff, and the community in managing the academic and emotional challenges resulting from COVID-19;
- Articulate a clear vision that promotes an academically sound, emotionally safe, and equitable learning environment for all students;
- Develop and communicate an operational plan that considers the educational needs of the district with the current economic landscape;
- Provide support and mentorship for the new Director of Business;
- Develop a systemic approach to monitor the expectations and "deliverables" related to Diversity and Equity.

Ms. Zukowski referred to the 28 new families with special education students. We had an excellent program years ago especially for autistic children. She asked if there will be a strategic plan to show what we do for our students is sustainable. Pressures of budget brought it down.

Dr. Rodrigue said our programs include the 18 to 22 program, the transition program, the autism program as well as the Better Day Café which is part of the transition program and are attracting parents. We have a good system and the issues that came up have helped because we took a step back and have a different approach with families and are being upfront with support we can provide.

Ms. Zukowski is concerned history could repeat itself. We have to have a plan to possibly have a regional program and will be sustainable for the long term.

Dr. Rodrigue said we repurposed positions and have other ideas how we utilize support personnel. There are a lot of ways to sustain programs. We will look at it strategically. We have new programs now and she didn't want them to fail.

Mrs. Leidlein said in looking at data to see where the needs are we don't have the same trail of data as in the past. What are they saying at the State level regarding increasing in-house data to decide if what we are doing is sufficient to continue the learning process?

Dr. Rodrigue is attending a webinar next week on that topic. A lot is using in-house data and continuing to look at how to focus on students using in-house assessments. The assessing need is on the academic side and emotional side.

Mrs. Leidlein wants to make sure we keep the data trail going.

Mrs. Uberti said the State is planning to have a State assessment in the spring which needs to be taken in person. We are planning to administer the NWEA in October when the K-6 students

return and test them in person. The window would also apply to middle school and some ninth graders when they're in school. That would allow us to compare where they are in October compared to where they were last January and give us a base line and test again in winter and spring to monitor our own growth. For younger learners, they are shorter assessments. Some online learning platforms that are new have quick baseline assessments which will help to see where students are with potential deficits.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if we have any understanding about the SAT, PSAT and ACT.

Dr. Rodrigue said ACT and SAT will be given at the high school September 23 and October 14. Mr. Delia wanted to be sure Mrs. Vadas, the new Director of Business, has support in this new position.

Mrs. Vadas said she signed up for the CASBO mentorship program and there is also a good network of district managers.

Discussion of Anticipated and Unanticipated Covid Expenses:

Mr. Delia said last night was a tremendous disappointment for him. He urged the community to watch the Board of Finance meeting. We are stewards for the children of Newtown. We presented a very honest forecast and list of expenses for Covid. Many motions for all stipulations were made and we have no money in our account. Bob Tait said Legislative Council will be able to take care of this. We need to review in public what these additional expenses are, what they could be and talk about a plan of attack. As a Board, we have to start the discussion of what we are going to do. He refuses to cut funding when the money was there. We are going to take our surplus to help the children.

Mrs. Ku appreciated these comments. We were all frustrated by the process.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was not even sure of the options as she was upset also. She wished all the work they did on the process would make it a no-brainer. This was money the voters allocated to educational expenses and approved. As a taxpayer and parent, we need to make it clear that it should be used for educational expenses.

Mrs. Ku said the Legislative Council was discussing this tomorrow night. She spoke to Board counsel Matt Ritter who said the Legislative Council doesn't have the authority to do anything different. The Board of Finance is the authority of that account. The Legislative Council can appropriate the money from the capital nonrecurring fund and we can request that be used for Covid expenses.

Ms. Zukowski felt we could take a short term and long term set of actions. The Board of Finance felt comfortable the money could be designated for Covid relief and put in the capital nonrecurring fund and mediated by the Town. If that happens, the first subtlety is the Board of Finance is the financial authority. The Legislative Council takes care of the special appropriations of no more than \$1.5M. The total amount of a special appropriation is 1mil of the grand list which is \$3M. The first step is to get the money into the capital nonrecurring fund. The second step is we can get that money. That is a reasonable option. It could put the Legislative Council in a bind if it goes over \$3M but it is an emergency. The longer term is to revisit the non-lapsing fund process with a cross Board discussion about the responsibilities of each Board. We should look into that and understand the processes. The interfaces need to be clearly identified. That's a longer term solution.

Mr. Delia doesn't want to say we have to be careful. He wants to get something in place for Dr. Rodrigue to make this work and that the Board is behind her.

Ms. Zukowski suggested this is another topic for the CIP/Facilities Committee and invite people to get their thoughts on this.

Mrs. Ku said it would be good for us to write a letter to the Legislative Council and ask the process they expect us to follow.

Mrs. Leidlein asked with the money given back to the Town if it meant other entities use the money.

Mr. Delia said yes that any group can use the money. Parents are not going to want to find out the money goes to something else.

Mrs. Ku said we need to know the timing when the letter should go out. They want to close off books by Sept. 30.

Mrs. Leidlein said if the Legislative Council is speaking about it we should ask to have a discussion on the best way for the Board of Education to communicate the needs so we have some security that the money will remain available to the Board of Education. We know a discussion is tomorrow night. Can we have additional time to come back with a plan and ask them if they can provide any additional information arriving at a plan?

Ms. Zukowski said whether it comes out of our balance or fund balance it's not necessarily a problem. The Board of Finance talked about how they aren't supposed to put any more money into the account. In terms of initiating a special appropriation request, there is nothing about the school district.

It was agreed the education money should be put in an account.

Mrs. Leidlein stated we need something concrete and in writing so we don't have issues where we understand the process and then it changes. We have to know the timetable and steps we take to have access to the funds.

Mrs. Ku thought it would be good if all Board members went to the meeting tomorrow night. We will work on a potential letter and schedule a meeting next week to follow up. We've been sent a message through the budget cut from last year for the special education portion of the non-lapsing account and the non-action last night. We should not plan on using the non-lapsing account.

Mr. Delia stated we said if we didn't use it for Covid we would use it toward next year's budget. Mrs. Ku would schedule a meeting for next week.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to approve the minutes of August 25, 2020. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Ms. Zukowski gave her suggested changes.

Page 5:

We should go for the average of the last three years of overages. Change \$100,000 to \$400,000 as a good place to start.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites ~~agreed to~~ suggested keeping it to the \$100,000.

Page 6

Ms. Zukowski said there could be unexpected flair ups and asked if we have plans for testing our teams ~~and those we will be playing.~~

Page 7

Ms. Zukowski read the proposed change to the minutes of August 6, 2020 on page 2, paragraph 5 to remove the first sentence "Ms. Zukowski asked if we will meet the CDC social distancing requirement if we allow 50% of the students to be 3 feet apart when wearing a mask." The first sentence should read: "Ms. Zukowski asked if moving to the Hybrid Learning Model would allow all or most of our students to be spaced according to the full 6' CDC social distancing guidelines. And if so, she noted that the use of masks would further enhance student safety."

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Public Participation:

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

Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Michelle Ku
Chair

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held virtually on September 24, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	T. Vadas
D. Leidlein	1 Press
J. Vouros	12 Public
R. Harriman-Stites	
D. Zukowski	

Item 1 – Call to Order

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with Board members joining virtually and members of the public joining by phone. The meeting was also being recorded. Board members were on video except for Mr. Vouros who joined by phone. Staff members on video were Dr. Rodrigue, Mrs. Uberti, and Mrs. Vadas.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3 – Public Participation – None

Mrs. Ku noted that there were a couple of emails from the public that address agenda items.

Item 4 – Old Business

Discussion and Possible Action: Potential COVID-Related Expenses:

Mrs. Ku stated that this topic is what inspired the BOE to have this special meeting. At the last meeting the BOE was trying to understand how to deal with additional expenses Newtown will experience this year due to COVID. Mrs. Ku also reminded that it was decided that the BOE is not able to transfer the surplus from last year to the non-lapsing fund which we would normally use for that. The Board of Finance will be considering a recommendation from the Board of Selectman to appropriate \$400,000 into the Capital Non Reoccurring fund for COVID related expenses. Mrs. Ku gave some options for the Board of Education to consider.

The first possible option was the BOE Chair and/or Superintendent writing a letter to the BOS requesting a special fund to be established. The second option was discussion whether the BOE should put a spending freeze in place but Mrs. Ku noted that she is not recommending that option. Another option would be to ask the Business Director to provide some additional accounting on a monthly basis outlining the COVID expenses that have been incurred and what we can expect to incur in the future.

Mr. Cruson is concerned that the money is not in a non-lapsing fund and does not like the idea of having to go through a spending freeze. Mr. Cruson also expressed that he is concerned about running out of money at any given point and be in trouble. Mr. Cruson asked how much have we actually spent versus what is anticipated.

Mrs. Vadas stated that she has been preparing financials to see where exactly Newtown is and comparing it to the draft that was originally presented to the Board. Mrs. Vadas feels confident that the number is close to 1.5 million dollars. There are still a lot of expenses that are going to happen but there are also some offsets. Referring back to the original document from Mr. Bienkowski, he showed a savings of \$245,000. Mrs. Vadas reminded that we would have \$400,000 from the Capital Non Reoccurring Fund, \$380,000 from the Corona Relief Grant, and some money left over from Novo. In total, Mrs. Vadas feels confident that we can use about \$780,000 to offset our expenses. Mrs. Vadas agrees with Mrs. Ku and does not feel that a freeze is appropriate right now.

Mr. Cruson recommends that Mrs. Vadas give a report to the Board more often to keep a closer eye on this.

Mrs. Vadas agreed.

Dr. Rodrigue noted that staffing is an issue, along with Technology. There are issues with not currently having Chromebooks and not knowing when they will be available. Dr. Rodrigue spoke with Mrs. Uberti about other alternatives. The technology number could possibly change significantly.

Mrs. Ku asked for a financial update next month.

Mrs. Zukowski is recommending a new practice where we could look and see how much we have expended, how much we have encumbered and how much we expect. After knowing that, she suggested to make requests for additional special appropriations.

Ms. Harriman-Stites asked where the \$400,000 number came from. It does not seem like enough for what we need. She also asked what the process is to obtain the funds.

Mrs. Ku stated that the Board of Selectman came up with that number because there is \$380,000 in Corona Relief fund from the State, \$245,000 in identified savings in the current BOE budget, in addition to the \$400,000 that they would be appropriating would equal \$1,025,000.

Mrs. Vadas stated that we would access the money by a simple journal entry and putting the invoices against the particular fund.

Mr. Vouros is completely against imposing a freeze at this point. The teachers and students do not need a freeze of any kind during this time.

Mr. Delia believes that it is more beneficial to wait until the end of October for an update because there is a CIP meeting before that. He also agrees that freezes are not a consideration at this point in the year. Mr. Delia does not feel a sense of urgency.

Dr. Rodrigue agreed.

Mrs. Ku wanted to make clear that she brought up the spending freeze not because anyone suggested that but only because it has been how we've dealt with issues in the past and we have had to put a spending freeze in place early in the year.

Discussion and Possible Action: Budget Calendar Revision:

Mr. Delia has been looking at the volume of meetings in the calendar. He noted that it takes a lot of time to consider the budgets. The Board of Finance is an advisory board and only makes recommendations and would like to consolidate two of their meetings into one. This would push one of the Board of Education's meetings back a week. It would give more time for the BOE and staff to prepare. Mr. Delia recommends combining item 16 and 17 and then asking the Board of Finance to submit questions in writing. This would allow the Board of Education to push items 10 – 14 back a full week.

Mr. Cruson is concerned how this would impact the deadlines from the Town Charter. Pushing the deadlines back a week would come close to the February 14th deadline.

Mrs. Vadas stated that she would need to get the budget over to the Town Finance Director by February 2nd to get in the paper by February 5th. To answer Dan Cruson's question, Mrs. Vadas said she was unsure if it would be allowed to combine the meetings but it is a possibility.

Mr. Cruson is in favor of trying to get more time to review the budget; however, it seems unlikely because of the deadlines.

Ms. Harriman-Stites is unsure about making calendar adjustments to other boards without their input. Without knowing if they would be on board with this adjusted calendar, Ms. Harriman-Stites would not be comfortable making that decision.

Mr. Delia agrees with Ms. Harriman-Stites that we would need to reach out to other Boards.

Mrs. Ku said that she can reach out to other Chairs to make the budget calendar more efficient.

Item 5 – New Business

Discussion on BOE Business Office Reporting Structure

Mrs. Ku said that The First Selectman, Dan Rosenthal, introduced a concept that he thought the Board of Education could consider. It would involve a change in the reporting structure in the Business Office.

Dr. Rodrigue considers the conversation with the First Selectman more of an informal discussion and would focus primarily on the possibility of rethinking the structure of our Director and the Director on the Town side. It would require looking at all functions on both sides to see if it was possible to share services. Dr. Rodrigue reached out to other school districts and found that they have similar structures as Newtown where there is a Town Finance Director and Business Director for the schools.

Mrs. Ku stated that she spoke with the First Selectman as well and he thought it would bring a more cooperative spirit among the Boards and the offices. It would also provide a smoother transition because Newtown has a new Business Director. Mrs. Ku repeated that this does not fit the shared service model and has gone to many CUBE workshops exploring this idea.

Ms. Harriman-Stites asked if Mrs. Vadas could speak on her relationship with the Town Director and if there is a collaborative spirit.

Mrs. Vadas stated that from the beginning we have worked well together. Mrs. Vadas feels that the Town and BOE are two very separate, different entities. The Town and BOE both work with the E-Finance system and Mr. Tait has been a great help when there have been questions or issues.

Ms. Harriman-Stites agreed that Mr. Tait is a great resource and is in favor of looking into shared services in the future. However, Ms. Harriman-Stites is not following the train of thought on this "shared service" and does not see how it will help save money or make things more efficient.

Mrs. Zukowski asked to clarify what Mr. Rosenthal proposed.

Dr. Rodrigue answered and said that the Town Finance Director would become more of a CFO and the Business Director would stay as the Director. The department would then share some of the services like payroll and accounts payable. Dr. Rodrigue also shared that Mr. Tait has more of a relationship with other Boards and Mr. Rosenthal thought it would be beneficial to the BOE.

Ms. Zukowski would like to see the direct benefit of a shared service in terms of administrative. She noted that some things that might be lost are types of decision making support that the BOE gets from the Business Director currently. Ms. Zukowski would like more particulars before being able to support or not support this decision.

Mrs. Leidlein does not agree with this proposal from Mr. Rosenthal. She believes that it would blur the lines between having the two separate budgets and the fact of how the monies are managed between the Town and the District.

Mr. Delia agreed and finds it confusing to have the same person oversee two different budgets.

Discussion and Possible Action: Re-Entry K-6 Schedule for Wednesdays:

Mrs. Ku asked Dr. Rodrigue to introduce this proposal before Mr. Delia makes a motion.

Dr. Rodrigue started by stating that this is a fairly simple proposal and is asking the Board to support a 2-hour early release on Wednesdays even after K-6 return from Hybrid which is scheduled for October 5, 2020. Dr. Rodrigue said that she believes that the teachers will need to continue to have appropriate time to prepare for instruction of in-person and remote learning. It is just as beneficial for the students to have that break.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if lunch was included in the 2-hour early release.

Dr. Rodrigue said that it is.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to continue the 2-hr early release days on Wednesdays in K-6 for deep cleaning of buildings and to support teacher preparation for both in-person and distance learners. Mrs. Leidlein seconded.

Mrs. Leidlein said that being a middle school teacher and having preps during the day, she can attest that they are precious, particularly in this climate where we have teachers who are prepping for students who are learning virtually versus in-person learning. Mrs. Leidlein wholeheartedly approves this.

Mr. Delia asked if it would be a half day for teachers.

Dr. Rodrigue said that it would only be an early release for students.

Mr. Delia asked if there was an end date.

Dr. Rodrigue said that she spoke with Mrs. Ku regarding this and there is no end date at the moment. Once the plan is finalized for grades 7-12, there will be more understanding of what the end date can be.

Mr. Delia stated that he approves this proposal.

Ms. Zukowski added that the parents may be displeased with another change. She asked if there is anything that the school can do to provide after school care for K-6.

Dr. Rodrigue said that there is after school care through EdAdvance and also spoke with Mr. Ariniello at the Community Center and he said that he may continue offering after school care.

Ms. Zukowski asked if families have the option to stay with the Hybrid model versus going back to in-person learning full time.

Dr. Rodrigue said that it was a discussion; however, it makes very little sense because you would lose the cohorting and can be more disruptive to the classroom. Dr. Rodrigue feels confident that the District can come back full time safely.

Ms. Harriman-Stites is in support of this proposal but does echo some of Ms. Zukowski's comments about working families and it being a burden on those families who thought we were likely going back to full time to now having it change. She continued by stating that this is not a decision we are making lightly without consideration to the family's needs.

Mr. Cruson said that he is against this proposal and does not believe that a temporary early dismissal on Wednesdays is beneficial to students because it is a loss of education time. Teachers have been able to meet with students after dismissal on Wednesdays for extra help and that will not be as easily possible with students transporting home during that time. Mr. Cruson believes that if we are not ready to go back to full time then we should stay in Hybrid.

Mrs. Leidlein asked for Dr. Rodrigue to clarify that this decision is not about the safety of the students but more so to give teachers more planning time.

Dr. Rodrigue said that Mrs. Leidlein is correct and it is about giving teachers more prep time.

Mr. Vouros is in complete agreement for giving teachers more time for planning.

Mrs. Ku applauded the teachers for what they have been doing this year. She added that she is amazed and proud of all the staff for how far we have come from last year.

Vote: 5 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Cruson). Motion passes.

Item 6 – Public Participation

Stephanie Strover, 7 Possum Ridge Road, Newtown stated that she is so thankful for the care that staff has been giving to all the children throughout this time. Mrs. Strover expressed her concern about finances during this because it is a lot of money to pay for after school care, especially if you have multiple children. She asked the Board to consider this while making decisions.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Ms. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel Cruson, Jr.
Chair

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Portland OR 97220

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Correspondence Report
08/25/2020 – 09/14/2020

Date	Name	Subject
9/14/20	Michelle Ku	BOF – Non-Lapsing Fund Update
9/15/20	Kathy June	Certified Staffing Update
9/16/20	Michelle Ku	Fwd: Board of Education Non-Lapsing Account
9/16/20	Michelle Ku	BOE members at LC meeting
9/16/20	Michelle Ku	Re: BOE members at LC meeting
9/16/20	Michelle Ku	Scheduling a Special Meeting
9/16/20	Michelle Ku	Sustainable Energy Commission Presentation
9/16/20	Ana Wight	Matter that needs attention (Covid Case on Sept. 15 th)
9/17/20	Liza Leuallen	(Student Special Ed Concern)
9/18/20	Michelle Ku	Fwd: Mon 9/18 BOS Meeting
9/18/20	Michelle Ku	Thursday, Sept 24 Meeting
9/18/20	Kimberlee Rackley	Concerned Citizen – Racial Equity in Newtown Schools
9/22/20	Sarah Connell	BOE Special Meeting Agenda 9/24/20
9/23/20	Michelle Ku	Informational – regarding the Education Non-Lapsing Account
9/23/20	Kiley Gottschalk	BOF amended agenda
9/23/20	Lisa Carella-Ashla	Support for Continued Hybrid through Winter
9/24/20	Michelle Ku	Shared Services Documents
9/24/20	Katie Burke	Special Meeting Topics
9/24/20	Michelle Ku	Possible Motion
9/24/20	Stephanie Stroever	Question about new business for tonight
9/24/20	Alexander Ache	Public Comment: Return to On-site Schooling
9/25/20	Kiley Gottschalk	BOF 9-24-20 cancelation notice and BOF 9-29-20 agenda
9/29/20	Donna Norling	Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Minutes
10/1/20	Kathy June	October 6 BOE Meeting
10/2/20	Kathy June	BOE Mailing – October 6, 2020
10/5/20	Kathy June	Revised October 6 Agenda
10/5/20	Michelle Ku	BOE Meeting Information
10/5/20	Kathy June	Revised Proposed Motions

TO: Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent
FROM: Suzanne D'Eramo, Director of Human Resources
RE: Superintendent's Report – Certified Staffing Update for September/October 2020
DATE: October 5, 2020

OCTOBER 2020

Retirements:

Carol Howard – HOM Grade 1 (effective Oct 30, 2020)

Resignations:

None

New Hires:

HOM

Reading/LA Consultant – Robyn Notaro

RIS

Music – Teresa Peters

Open Positions:

HOM Grade 1

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT HIRING NOTES:

Here is a recap of all non-certified and certified staff we have hired to date (as of Oct 1):

Certified teachers/ Long-term substitute teachers = 25

Building subs = 10

Nurse/nurse subs = 3

Paraeducators/para subs = 6

BT = 1

Coaches = 5

Custodians = 3

Clerical staff = 2

Security officers/security officer subs = 3

In school suspension tutor = 1

NELC child care providers = 2

Of the 61 newly hired employees, 11 indicate a diverse ethnicity or race other than white. This equates to a total of 18% broken down as follows:

Hispanic = 6

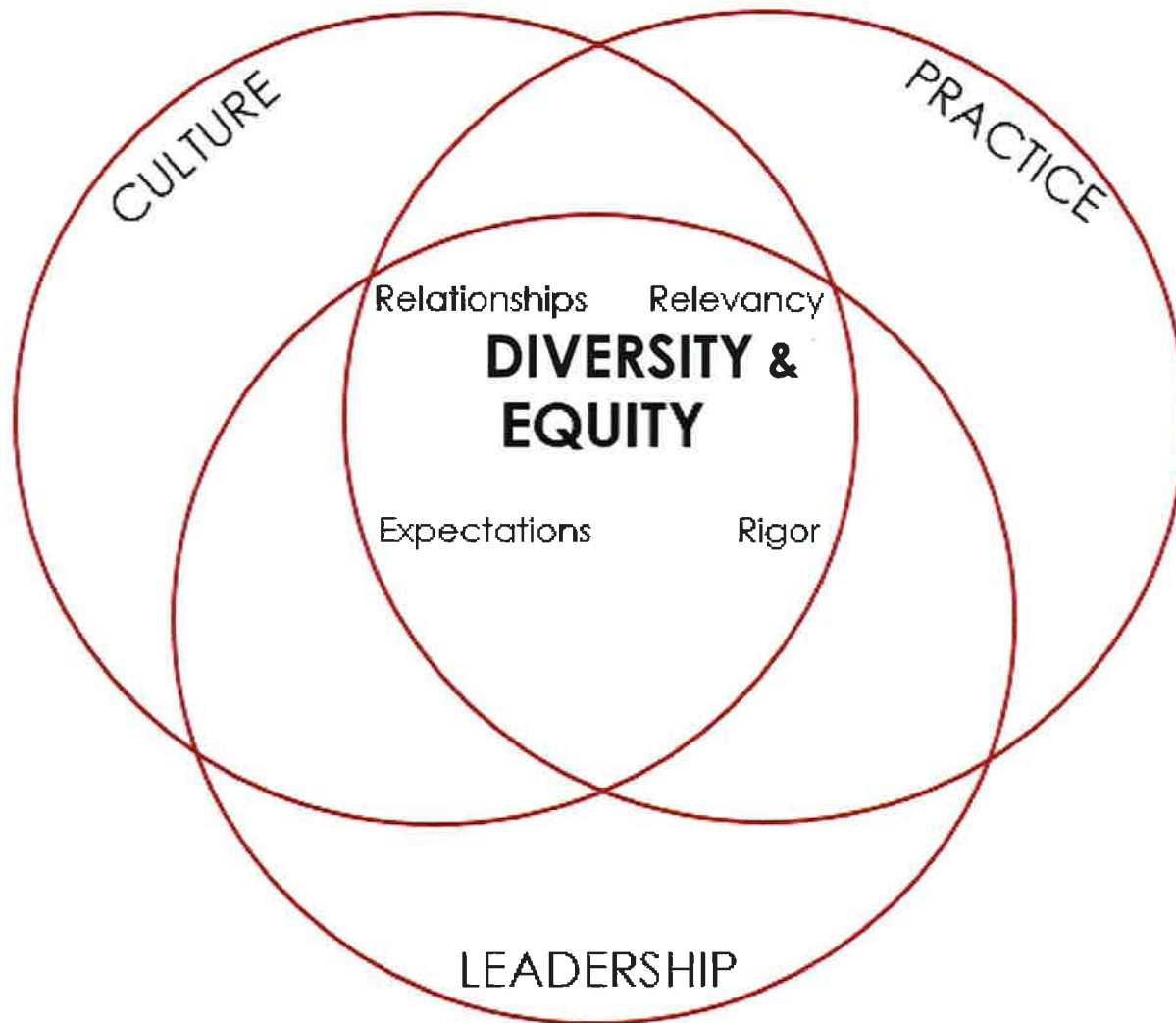
Asian = 3

Black/African American = 2



DIVERSITY & EQUITY

The Building Blocks of an Equity
Framework



The
Interrelationships
that Support
Diversity & Equity

A Framework for Change...



Review current practices that demonstrate a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for students and staff.



Develop future practices in alignment with our values, beliefs, and commitments as outlined in our BOE Resolution.



Continue to assess, modify, and support our practices to ensure they promote equity, inclusivity, and respect.

BOE RESOLUTION

- ❑ Support development of academic pathways, instructional activities, extracurricular opportunities, and field experiences that promote a richer awareness of culture and racial diversity;
- ❑ Review and monitor policies on diversity, inclusion, and equity;
- ❑ Review curriculum in grades K-12 through the lens of multicultural and diverse perspectives;
- ❑ Establish a clear protocol that records and reports incidents of racism occurring within the schools and holds all staff and students accountable for their actions;
- ❑ Review and employ mechanisms (e.g., anonymous tips, trusted adults) to allow students and staff to share sensitive or confidential information that will help in the investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, and racism;
- ❑ Continue to support best practices and social/emotional programs and resources to ensure that every student feels safe in a supportive environment;
- ❑ Provide training for all staff aimed at maintaining a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students, including students of color;
- ❑ Support the Superintendent's initiatives in creating community conversations in diversity and equity that will lead to systemic improvements.

Inclusivity (Ohio State University)

Fairness and respect

Foundational element that is underpinned by ideas about equality of treatment and opportunities

Value and belonging

Individuals feeling that their uniqueness is known and appreciated, while also feeling a sense of social connectedness and group membership

Confidence and inspiration

Creating the conditions for high team performance through individuals having the confidence to speak up and the motivation to do their best work

From Commitments to Practices...

Current Practices

- A Diversity and Equity resolution adopted by the BOE in August.
- The drafting of a new Diversity and Equity Policy
- Community Conversations with students, staff, and parents
- The ongoing promotion of an Anonymous Tip app for students to share concerns
- The inclusion of an SEL (Social Emotional Learning) program
- Courses and programs that embody diversity and cultural awareness
- The development by leaders and staff in developing a framework for change

Future Commitments

- Proposing the inclusion of a Diversity & Equity Compliance Officer (Superintendent Goal) to work to support students, staff, and families in finding resolutions to issues.
- Conducting a review of curriculum K-12 through the revision process to ensure multicultural perspectives and voices, as well as eliminating bias and institutional racism in our programs (Office of the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Teaching and Learning).
- Enlisting the input of students regarding their views and perspectives regarding literature and texts that address various cultures, voices, and biases.
- Examining our practices in reporting acts of bullying, harassment, and racism, as well as holding all members of the school community accountable for their actions.
- Ensuring academic programs in place embrace build a stronger awareness of cultural diversity and equity.
- Supporting workshops for staff, students, and leaders around issues of racism, with a focus on being "upstanders" in the reporting of incidents that conflict with our values and beliefs (and outlined in our Strategic Plan, Resolution, Diversity & Equity Policy).
- Engaging staff in a District-wide professional development day on Diversity (Dr. Derrick Gay, Work with Diversity - November 2020).
- Developing a Diversity & Equity subgroup through PEAC to support future district commitments as outlined in the BOE resolution, policies, and practices.



**Our ability to reach unity in
diversity will be the beauty and the
test of our civilization.**

Mahatma Gandhi



 **VANTAGECIRCLE**

Rodrigue, L. Superintendent Goals

2020-21

- Support administrators, staff, and the community in managing the academic and emotional challenges resulting from COVID-19
 - Meet regularly with administrators to monitor the goals, practices, and protocols in place outlined in the Newtown Re-Entry Plan.
 - Remain visible in buildings to show ongoing support of staff and students
 - Continue to respond to staff and parent questions or concerns related to COVID-19.
 - Work closely with the Director of Health in responding to COVID cases and implementing appropriate protocols and communication.
 - Update the BOE regularly on COVID-19 cases, trends, and decisions regarding the status of school closure (as applicable).
 - Working with school leaders and members of the Central Office Cabinet, develop a system of social-emotional supports for staff and students
 - In concert with the Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Teaching and Learning, develop ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to support distance learning and the use of technology.

- Articulate a clear vision that promotes an academically sound, emotionally safe, and equitable learning environment for all students.
 - Continue to keep the BOE, community, and staff updated on decisions related to COVID pandemic, including cases, trends, and appropriate school modes of learning (all-in, Hybrid, or distance learning).
 - Work closely with the Assistant Superintendent to ensure staff and administrators are provided professional development opportunities to implement remote learning for students.
 - Hold all leaders accountable for the ongoing and consistent review of data related to teaching and learning, as well as social-emotional practices that support students.
 - Support members of PEAC (subgroups) to continue their work in the areas of community partnerships, branding and communication, and budget
 - Using the BOE Resolution and new policies as a framework, establish a new PEAC subgroup devoted to areas in Diversity & Equity.

➤ Develop and communicate an operational plan that considers the educational needs of the district with the current economic landscape.

- Along with the input of the Director of Business and school leaders, review the resources necessary to meet the future needs of the district while considering current State and local economic trends.
- Monitor and make budgetary decisions based on enrollment, class size, and other factors, including COVID, that continue to impact the district.
- Utilize in-house and State data to determine new programming or staffing needs to support disengaged or failing students, as well as costs associated with such needs.
- Communicate the district's operational plan to all stakeholders (e.g., video, open forum, senior citizen talks, PTA) to increase public engagement and support.
- Work with the PEAC subgroup (budget) to implement potential strategies for increasing community awareness and investment in the 2021-22 budget.
- Empower the district grant-writer to search for new funding opportunities to support district needs as they relate to COVID-19.
- Review potential cost saving measures, such as retirement package and repurposing of staffing positions, to offset increases to the budget.

➤ Provide support and mentorship for the new Director of Business

- As the evaluator, work closely with the new Director of Business to support her role and responsibilities.
- Working collaboratively with the Director, offer support for changes in the business office to improve efficiencies.
- Encourage professional development opportunities (e.g., CASBO) that will help support the new Director in her new role.

➤ Develop a systemic approach to monitor the expectations and “deliverables” related to Diversity & Equity

- Explore and identify the role of a District Compliance Officer to provide support to staff, students, and families in dealing with and resolving complaints of harassment, bullying, and racism.
- Work with members of the Administrative Team and district staff to implement and monitor expectations outlined in the BOE resolution and policies related to Diversity and Equity.

- Establish clear protocols K-12 in the recording and reporting of incidents related to racism, as well as the measures of accountability.
- Work with the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Teaching and Learning to implement curricular revisions and instructional strategies that embrace multicultural perspectives and diversity.
- Support professional development opportunities for staff to promote a deeper understanding of diversity and equity, as well as their role in maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment.
- Coordinate district-wide staff development in November with Dr. Derrick Gay presentation on the topic of Diversity.
- Update the BOE and community regarding data related to harassment, bullying, and racism – including resolutions. Share State and National trends as comparative information.

Newtown Middle School Schedule November 2020

Regular Day Schedule Days 1 - 6						
Time Slot	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00- 8:04	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:08-8:48	1	2	3	4LL	5LL	6
8:52-9:32	2	3	4LL	5LL	6	7
9:36-10:16	3	4LL	5LL	6	7	1
10:20-11:00	4LL	5LL	6	7	1	2
11:04-11:44	5LL	6	7	1	2	3
11:48-12:28	6	7	1	2	3	4LL
Travel/Lunch						
1:42-2:32 Remote	7	1	2	3	4LL	5LL
Two Hour Early Dismissal						
Time Slot	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00- 8:04	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:08-8:42	1	2	3	4LL	5LL	6
8:46-9:20	2	3	4LL	5LL	6	7
9:24-9:58	3	4LL	5LL	6	7	1
10:02-10:35	4LL	5LL	6	7	1	2
10:39-11:12	5LL	6	7	1	2	3
11:16-11:50	6	7	1	2	3	4LL
11:54-12:28	7	1	2	3	4LL	5LL
Three Hour Early Dismissal						
Time Slot	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00- 8:04	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:08-8:33	1	2	3	4LL	5LL	6
8:37-9:02	2	3	4LL	5LL	6	7
9:06-9:31	3	4LL	5LL	6	7	1
9:35-10:00	4LL	5LL	6	7	1	2
10:04-10:29	5LL	6	7	1	2	3
10:33-10:58	6	7	1	2	3	4LL
11:02-11:28	7	1	2	3	4LL	5LL
Two Hour Delay						
Time Slot	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
10:00-10:04	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
10:08-10:32	1	2	3	4LL	5LL	6
10:36-11:00	2	3	4LL	5LL	6	7
11:04-11:28	3	4LL	5LL	6	7	1
11:32-11:56	4LL	5LL	6	7	1	2
12:00-12:24	5LL	6	7	1	2	3
12:28-12:52	6	7	1	2	3	4LL
Travel/Lunch						
2:02-2:32 Remote	7	1	2	3	4LL	5LL
Three Hour Delay						
Time Slot	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
11:00-11:04	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
11:08-11:33	1	2	3	4LL	5LL	6
11:37-12:02	2	3	4LL	5LL	6	7
12:06-12:31	3	4LL	5LL	6	7	1
12:35-1:00	4LL	5LL	6	7	1	2
1:04-1:29	5LL	6	7	1	2	3
1:33-1:58	6	7	1	2	3	4LL
2:02-2:28	7	1	2	3	4LL	5LL

NHS Calendar –November-January 2021

November 2020 (18)

<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>
2 A	3 Election Day	4 B	5 C	6 D
9 E	10 F	11 G	12 H	13 A
16 B	17 C	18 Eve Conferences D	19 Day Conferences E	20 F
23 G	24 H	25 A	26	27
30 B				

December 2020 (17)

<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>
	1 C	2 D	3 E	4 F
7 G	8 H	9 A	10 B	11 C
14 D	15 E	16 F	17 G	18 H
21 A	22 B	23 C	24	25
28	29	30	31	30

January 2021 (19)

<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>
4 D	5 E	6 F	7 G	8 H
11 A	12 B	13 C	14 D	15 E
18	19 Exams (1&2)	20 Exams (3&4)	21 Exams (5&6)	22 Exams (7&8)
25 F	26 G	27 H	28 A	29 B

Two Hour Early Dismissal	Three Hour Early Dismissal	Two Hour Delay Opening	Advisory	School closed for students- Staff Pvppt
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Newtown High School Schedule November 2020-January 2021

Regular Day Schedule- A-H								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8:00 - 8:50	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
8:55 - 9:45	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
9:50 - 10:40	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
10:45 - 11:35	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
11:40 - 12:30	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
Travel/Lunch								
1:42- 2:32 - Remote	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3
Advisory Schedule								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8:00-8:40	ADV	ADV	ADV	ADV	ADV	ADV	ADV	ADV
8:45 - 9:25	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
9:30 - 10:10	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
10:15 - 10:55	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
11:00- 11:40	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
11:45- 12:25	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
Travel/Lunch								
1:52 - 2:32 Remote	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3
Two Hour Early Dismissal								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8:00-8:42	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
8:47 - 9:28	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
9:33 - 10:14	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
10:19 - 11:00	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
11:05 -11:46	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
11:51 - 12:32	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3
Three Hour Early Dismissal								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8:00-8:32	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
8:37 - 9:08	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
9:13 - 9:44	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
9:49 - 10:20	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
10:25 -10:56	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
11:01 - 11:32	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3
Two Hour Delay								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
10:00 - 10:30	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
10:35 - 11:05	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
11:10 - 11:40	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
11:45 - 12:15	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
12:20 - 12:50	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
Travel/Lunch								
2:02 - 2:32 Remote	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3
Three Hour Delay								
Time Slot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
11:00 - 11:31	1	7	5	3	6	4	2	8
11:36 - 12:07	2	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
12:12 - 12:43	3	1	7	5	4	2	8	6
12:48- 1:19	4	2	8	6	3	1	7	5
1:24 - 1:55	5	3	1	7	2	8	6	4
2:00 - 2:32	6	4	2	8	1	7	5	3

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity (continued)

The responsibility for the disparities among our youth rests with adults, not the children. The Board is aware that student achievement data from across the country reveal similar patterns and those complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities faced by students. Rather than perpetuating such disparities, the Board believes the District must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed. This means differentiating resource allocation, within budgetary limitations, to meet the needs of students who need more supports and opportunities to succeed academically. The district will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all diverse students, including those who are marginalized, disenfranchised, and students of color.

~~The District schools will significantly continue to change/improve its practices in order to achieve and maintain racial equity in education. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories.~~

With these commitments in mind, the Newtown Public Schools shall:

- Provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
- Create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of its diverse students, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement from all racial groups, including those who are marginalized, disenfranchised, and students of color.
- Recruit, employ, support and retain a teacher, administrator, instructional and support workforce that is balanced and reflects the diversity of the student body.
- Provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating cultural, gender, racial and ethnic disparities in achievement.
- Ensure that each school creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the District's student population, their families and communities.
- Remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under representation in programs such as talented and gifted and Advanced Placement.
- Review existing policies, programs, professional development and procedures to ensure the promotion of racial equality, and all applicable new policies, programs and procedures will be developed free of racial disparity. ~~with a racial equity approach.~~

- Include other partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise, including families, government agencies, institutions of higher learning, early childhood education

P0523(c)

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity (continued)

organizations, community-based organizations, businesses, and the community in general, in meeting the District's high goals for educational outcomes.

- Provide, consistent with state regulations and District policy and within budgetary considerations, materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff, and which are geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.
- Ensure staff and leaders set goals to promote and monitor the implementation of goals-commitments outlined in the Diversity & Equity Resolution.
- Familiarize students and staff with clear expectations for being an “upstander” to maintain a safe, civil and respectful school community.

The Board recognizes that these are long-term goals that require significant work and resources to implement in all schools. All District employees are responsible for the success and achievement of all students. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy, including an action plan with clear responsibility. Annually, the Superintendent shall report to the Board on the progress towards achieving the goals outlined in this policy.

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 1110.1 – Parental Involvement)
- (cf. 1110.3 – School Governance Council)
- (cf. 1210 – Community Associations)
- (cf. 1212 – Volunteers)
- (cf. 1330 or 3515 – Use of School Facilities)
- (cf. 1205 – Participation by the Public)
- (cf. 4111 – Recruitment and Selection)
- (cf. 4111.1/4211.1 – Affirmative Action)
- (cf. 4118.11 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4118.113/4218.113 – Harassment)
- (cf. 4118.3 – District Minority Recruitment Plan)
- (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
- (cf. 5118.1 – Homeless Students)
- (cf. 5131.911 – Bullying/Safe School Climate Plans)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.52 – Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.53 – Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth)

(cf. 5145.6 – Student Grievance Procedure)
(cf. 6115 – Ceremonies and Observances)
(cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

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Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity (continued)

(cf. 6141.21 – Religions in the Public Schools)
(cf. 6141.22 – Religious Accommodations)
(cf. 6141.311 – Programs for limited English Proficient Students)
(cf. 6171 – Special Education)
(cf. 9133 – Board of Education Advisory Committees)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
46a60 Discriminatory employment practices prohibited.
10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year olds. (Amended by P.A. 97-247 to include “sexual orientation” and P.A. 11-55 to include “gender identity or expression”)
10-153 Discrimination on account of marital status.
17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.
Connecticut State Board of Education, “Position Statement on Culturally Responsive Education,” adopted May 4, 2011
Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.
29 CFR 1604.11, EEOC Guidelines on Sex Discrimination.
Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.
34 CFR Section 106.8(b), OCR Guidelines for Title IX.
Definitions, OCR Guidelines on Sexual Harassment, Fed. Reg. Vol 62, #49, 29 CFR Sec. 1606.8 (a) 62 Fed Reg. 12033 (March 13, 1997) and 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (January 19, 2001)
Section 8525, ESEA as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act
Meritor Savings Bank. FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, No. 97-282 (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26, 1998)
Gebbs v. Lago Vista Indiana School District, No. 99-1866, (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26, 1998)
Davis v. Monro County Board of Education, No. 97-843, (U.S. Supreme Court, May 24, 1999.)
The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, 38U.S.C. §4212
Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008
The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008
Public Law 111-256
Meacham v. Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory 128 S.Ct. 2395, 76 U.S.L.W. 4488 (2008)
Federal Express Corporation v. Holowecki 128 S.Ct. 1147, 76 U.S.L.W. 4110 (2008)
Kentucky Retirement Systems v. EEOC 128 S.Ct. 2361, 76 U.S.L.W. 4503 (2008)
Sprint/United Management Co. v. Mendelsohn 128 S.Ct. 1140, 76 U.S.L.W. 4107 (2008)

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity

The Board of Education (Board) is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools and to achieving the mission of ensuring that all students graduate ready for ~~college~~ post-secondary education, career and life. The Board believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by District staff, administrators, teachers, community and families. ~~The Board is focused on closing the opportunity gap and creating learning communities that provide support and academic enrichment programs for all students. [or: The Board believes that every student has the potential to achieve and it is the responsibility of the District to give each student the opportunity and support to meet his or her~~ their highest potential.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following terms shall have these meanings:

- A. “Diversity” includes characteristics of persons including, but not limited to race, culture, color, creed or religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, mental and physical ability, age, marital status, physical appearance, family structure, citizenship status, sexual orientation, ~~sexual~~ gender expression or identity, economic status, veteran’s status, and any other protected class in conformance with federal, state and local laws.
- B. “District staff” includes all employees, consultants and contractors of the Newtown Public Schools.
- C. “Educational equity” means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students, and (2) eliminating the racial or cultural predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories including rates of graduation.
- D. “Institutional racism” means the collective failure of a public or private organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their race, color, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in practices, processes, systems, attitudes and behavior. It looks beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systemic biases that may be built into institutions. These systemic biases discriminate against and disadvantage people of color through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness or racial stereotyping.
- E. “Upstander” means someone who speaks or acts in support of an individual, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

The concept of educational equity extends beyond formal equity, where all students are treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, class, or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, ~~gender~~, sexual orientation ~~including~~ gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, have the opportunity to benefit equally. The District schools will continue to change/improve its practices in order to achieve and maintain racial equity in education.

D R A F T

PRIORITIES
2021-2022 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

1. Support funding for appropriate class sizes at all levels of instruction.
2. Continue a level funding plan for expansion and sustainability of technology with access and equity for all students.
3. Create a plan for maintenance of facilities and vehicles that includes a budget increase to provide air conditioning capacity in the schools.
4. Continue to pursue opportunities to share services, where appropriate, between the Board of Education and all town departments and participate in regional services when they are beneficial to the district.
5. Ensure adequate funding for mental health resources to meet student needs
6. Ensure adequate funding for special education to meet anticipated enrollment and needs as well as maintain a contingency item in the budget for unanticipated changes in enrollment or needs.
7. Ensure consistency in the support for all extracurricular activities in the district.
8. Continue to pursue curriculum improvement and innovation in order to ensure that the educational needs of all students are supported.

D R A F T

ASSUMPTIONS
2021-2022 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

1. The Newtown Board of Education's mission to inspire every student to excel will be the foundation of all decision making.
2. Open and honest communication and cooperation will be maintained with other municipal boards and the community throughout the budget process.
3. State and Federal financial support of education will not keep pace with increased programming mandates and will be further reduced by legislation and reductions of grants and other supports to local communities.
4. Safety, security and health standards will be supported through continued training of staff; e.g., District Security, Safe School Climate, Blood Borne Pathogens, Sexual harassment/Title IX, Mandated reporting, OSHA (Office of Safety and Health Administration).
5. Salaries and benefits will be based on commitments incurred through collective bargaining and other employment agreements.
6. Existing programs and services will be reviewed, evaluated, maintained or adjusted as the educational needs of students change.
7. Overall certified and classified staffing levels will be adjusted based on enrollment, programming, safety factors and facility considerations.