

In consideration of public health and open meeting requirements, this meeting will include an option for the public to live-stream or phone in to listen to the audio of the meeting. Please note that public comment will be received by phone at the beginning and end of this meeting. Alternatively, the Board encourages the public to email any comments for Board consideration to NewtownBOE@newtown.k12.ct.us

To view this meeting, the live stream link is <https://bit.ly/38FZIJ7>

For public participation and to listen to the meeting, please call 1-646-558-8656

PIN 872 7926 3199#

Board of Education Regular/Budget Virtual Meeting
January 19, 2021

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.

REVISED AGENDA

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Item 1 | PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE |
| Item 2 | CONSENT AGENDA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donation to Newtown High School• Correspondence Report |
| Item 3 | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION |
| Item 4 | REPORTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair Report• Superintendent's Report• Committee Reports• Student Representative's Report• Action on Financial Report Month Ending December 31, 2020 |
| Item 5 | PRESENTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superintendent's Overview of Proposed 2021-2022 Budget• Elementary School Budgets• Reed Intermediate School Budget• Newtown Middle School Budget |
| Item 6 | OLD BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 Update |
| Item 7 | NEW BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion and Possible Action on 1-Year Only Teaching Positions for Newtown Middle School and Newtown High School• Action on the Minutes of January 5, 2021 |
| Item 8 | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION |
| Item 9 | 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***

January 12, 2021

TO: Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue

FROM: Kimberly Longobucco

Please accept the donation of a HP Stream Notebook at an estimate value of \$300 from Charlotte Cavatara to Newtown High School. The laptop will be used by students as needed. This is a very kind gift to the Newtown High School community. Thank you.

*Charlotte Cavatara
18 Birch Rise Drive
Newtown CT, 06470*

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT
DECEMBER 31, 2020**

SUMMARY

The sixth report of the 2020-21 school year continues to provide year to date expenses, active encumbrances, anticipated obligations and year-to-date transfers. A majority of accounts such as instructional supplies, postage and printing are estimated as full budget spend and captured in the anticipated obligation column. Full year forecasting and account analysis is well underway for unencumbered accounts, such as transportation and utilities. These amounts can also be found in the anticipated obligations column.

The overall projected year end position has changed from -\$399,303 to \$136,982.

During the month of December, The Board of Education spent approximately \$7.0M; \$5.8M on salaries; and approximately \$1.2M on all other objects. There were 3 payrolls during the month.

The Towns' capital non-recurring fund was made available to the Board of Education to assist in offsetting pandemic related expenses. The agreed upon amount was \$400,000 and has been applied towards technology equipment bringing the deficit in that account down to -\$242,872.

The municipal portion of the Corona Relief Grant was also made available by the Town to be used towards Board of Education pandemic related expenses in the amount of \$165,000 and has been applied to offset the deficit in plant supplies.

This report includes transfer recommendations in the amount of \$96,810 to adjust certified salaries for teacher program reassignments.

Salary

The overall salary account is showing a positive balance of \$13,782. This balance has decreased over the prior month by -\$176,652 primarily due to:

- re-allocation of accounts in Curriculum as we have assessed the requirements for upcoming curriculum writing in June (offsetting accounts from contracted services and staff training)
- increase in certified subs (1 new for this month) and confirmed university interns to return for the second half of the year
- two new special ed. paras have been added to our staff.

Teachers & Specialists Salaries still showing a large deficit due to the budgeted turnover number of \$624,138.

Purchased Property Services

The balance in purchased property services balance has decreased by -\$57,122; now showing a negative balance of -\$17,709. Primary drivers include:

- Building & site improvements, specifically the emergency repair account that experienced three large repairs at the high school (detailed below)

Other Purchased Services

Other purchased services experienced an increase to the balance, projecting a positive balance of \$195,840. Drivers in this area include:

- reallocation of Curriculum accounts (approximately \$24,000)
- reassessment of lunch program costs
 - with students returning full time, we are anticipating an increase to our lunch count. Breakfast will also be included in the “grab-n-go” lunches in grades 8-12.

Supplies

Changes in the supply account for an increase to the balance by \$185,124 bringing the current year end projection to \$149,115.

- The Towns’ municipal portion of the Corona Relief Grant was applied to plat supplies in the amount of \$165,000
- Virtual net metering is now online for Hawley, Sandy Hook, Head O’Meadow, Reed and the Middle School resulting in an additional balance of \$87,522. These are early projections and we will continue to analyze this account as more data becomes available.

Property

Technology equipment remains stable for now as we do not anticipate the need for additional Chromebooks or other distance learning devices. This account balance has increased over the prior month by \$449,803.

- \$400,000 of the Towns’ capital non-recurring fund has been applied to the over-expenditure pandemic related expenses in this account.

Emergency Repairs

The High School experienced three emergency repairs this month.

- Repair of the A/C unit in the band room - \$17,200.
 - 3 quotes were obtained; Global Mechanical won the bid.
- Repair of the generator water pump and replace coolant - \$6,794.55
 - Northeast Generator (State contractor, no bids required)
- Repair roof leak in auditorium - \$31,845
 - Emergency bid waiver signed on 12/16

Tanja Vadas
Director of Business & Finance
January 14, 2021

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
2020-21 BUDGET SUMMARY REPORT
FOR THE MONTH ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020**

OBJECT CODE	EXPENSE CATEGORY	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YTD EXPENDITURE	ENCUMBER	BALANCE	ANTICIPATED OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED BALANCE	% EXP
<u>GENERAL FUND BUDGET</u>									
100	SALARIES	\$ 49,586,526	\$ 51,044,554	\$ 21,001,655	\$ 29,012,555	\$ 1,030,344	\$ 1,016,562	\$ 13,782	99.97%
200	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 11,126,524	\$ 11,435,283	\$ 6,106,369	\$ 4,179,684	\$ 1,149,230	\$ 1,185,929	\$ (36,699)	100.32%
300	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$ 659,940	\$ 751,382	\$ 231,371	\$ 52,459	\$ 467,552	\$ 390,295	\$ 77,257	89.72%
400	PURCHASED PROPERTY SERV.	\$ 2,304,638	\$ 1,884,463	\$ 861,634	\$ 533,642	\$ 489,188	\$ 506,897	\$ (17,709)	100.94%
500	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	\$ 8,823,709	\$ 9,314,942	\$ 4,405,869	\$ 5,012,578	\$ (103,506)	\$ (299,346)	\$ 195,840	97.90%
600	SUPPLIES	\$ 3,347,825	\$ 3,498,335	\$ 1,668,863	\$ 208,049	\$ 1,621,423	\$ 1,472,308	\$ 149,115	95.74%
700	PROPERTY	\$ 831,904	\$ 549,402	\$ 494,703	\$ 291,159	\$ (236,460)	\$ 9,525	\$ (245,985)	144.77%
800	MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 66,090	\$ 73,415	\$ 55,724	\$ 2,150	\$ 15,541	\$ 14,160	\$ 1,381	98.12%
910	SPECIAL ED CONTINGENCY	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	100.00%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET		\$ 76,747,157	\$ 78,651,776	\$ 34,826,188	\$ 39,292,276	\$ 4,533,311	\$ 4,396,330	\$ 136,982	99.83%
900	TRANSFER NON-LAPSING								
GRAND TOTAL		\$ 76,747,157	\$ 78,651,776	\$ 34,826,188	\$ 39,292,276	\$ 4,533,311	\$ 4,396,330	\$ 136,982	99.83%

OBJECT CODE	EXPENSE CATEGORY	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YTD EXPENDITURE	ENCUMBER	BALANCE	ANTICIPATED OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED BALANCE	% EXP
100	SALARIES								
	Administrative Salaries	\$ 4,163,820	\$ 4,171,739	\$ 2,134,203	\$ 2,033,476	\$ 4,060	\$ -	\$ 4,060	99.90%
	Teachers & Specialists Salaries	\$ 31,619,798	\$ 32,208,315	\$ 12,591,492	\$ 19,922,619	\$ (305,796)	\$ 15,000	\$ (320,796)	101.00%
	Early Retirement	\$ 32,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	100.00%
	Continuing Ed./Summer School	\$ 92,408	\$ 93,096	\$ 46,613	\$ 23,293	\$ 23,190	\$ 3,750	\$ 19,440	79.12%
	Homebound & Tutors Salaries	\$ 88,213	\$ 185,336	\$ 26,955	\$ 15,341	\$ 143,040	\$ 142,085	\$ 955	99.48%
	Certified Substitutes	\$ 548,648	\$ 698,193	\$ 303,561	\$ 339,715	\$ 54,917	\$ 102,690	\$ (47,773)	106.84%
	Coaching/Activities	\$ 643,256	\$ 656,571	\$ 184,804	\$ -	\$ 471,767	\$ 437,634	\$ 34,133	94.80%
	Staff & Program Development	\$ 173,319	\$ 143,517	\$ 76,154	\$ 29,342	\$ 38,021	\$ 90,200	\$ (52,179)	136.36%
	CERTIFIED SALARIES	\$ 37,361,462	\$ 38,172,767	\$ 15,379,781	\$ 22,363,786	\$ 429,199	\$ 791,359	\$ (362,160)	100.95%
	Supervisors & Technology Salaries	\$ 917,739	\$ 995,399	\$ 525,182	\$ 459,808	\$ 10,410	\$ 15,000	\$ (4,590)	100.46%
	Clerical & Secretarial Salaries	\$ 2,310,741	\$ 2,293,467	\$ 1,079,191	\$ 1,156,707	\$ 57,569	\$ 5,585	\$ 51,984	97.73%
	Educational Assistants	\$ 2,743,151	\$ 2,875,564	\$ 1,091,905	\$ 1,567,816	\$ 215,843	\$ -	\$ 215,843	92.49%
	Nurses & Medical Advisors	\$ 764,244	\$ 860,124	\$ 320,027	\$ 530,307	\$ 9,790	\$ 12,500	\$ (2,710)	100.32%
	Custodial & Maint. Salaries	\$ 3,144,919	\$ 3,263,032	\$ 1,562,619	\$ 1,629,931	\$ 70,482	\$ 5,000	\$ 65,482	97.99%
	Non-Certied Adj & Bus Drivers Salaries	\$ 22,043	\$ 25,585	\$ 7,532	\$ 20,020	\$ (1,967)	\$ 28,000	\$ (29,967)	217.13%
	Career/Job Salaries	\$ 117,954	\$ 150,928	\$ (8,133)	\$ 101,251	\$ 57,811	\$ 10,000	\$ 47,811	68.32%
	Special Education Svcs Salaries	\$ 1,224,685	\$ 1,404,836	\$ 546,576	\$ 832,306	\$ 25,954	\$ (39,115)	\$ 65,069	95.37%
	Security Salaries & Attendance	\$ 594,071	\$ 621,957	\$ 260,439	\$ 348,326	\$ 13,191	\$ -	\$ 13,191	97.88%
	Extra Work - Non-Cert.	\$ 141,823	\$ 115,447	\$ 96,152	\$ 2,297	\$ 16,998	\$ 20,233	\$ (3,234)	102.80%
	Custodial & Maint. Overtime	\$ 214,479	\$ 233,448	\$ 139,698	\$ -	\$ 93,750	\$ 139,000	\$ (45,250)	119.38%
	Civic Activities/Park & Rec.	\$ 29,216	\$ 32,000	\$ 687	\$ -	\$ 31,313	\$ 29,000	\$ 2,313	92.77%
	NON-CERTIFIED SALARIES	\$ 12,225,064	\$ 12,871,787	\$ 5,621,874	\$ 6,648,769	\$ 601,145	\$ 225,202	\$ 375,942	97.08%
	SUBTOTAL SALARIES	\$ 49,586,526	\$ 51,044,554	\$ 21,001,655	\$ 29,012,555	\$ 1,030,344	\$ 1,016,562	\$ 13,782	99.97%

OBJECT CODE	EXPENSE CATEGORY	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YTD EXPENDITURE	ENCUMBER	BALANCE	ANTICIPATED OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED BALANCE	% EXP
200	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS								
	Medical & Dental Expenses	\$ 8,051,502	\$ 8,289,180	\$ 4,191,923	\$ 4,073,135	\$ 24,122	\$ 24,122	\$ -	100.00%
	Life Insurance	\$ 86,352	\$ 86,760	\$ 43,255	\$ -	\$ 43,505	\$ 43,505	\$ -	100.00%
	FICA & Medicare	\$ 1,523,488	\$ 1,602,597	\$ 682,802	\$ -	\$ 919,795	\$ 919,795	\$ -	100.00%
	Pensions	\$ 863,104	\$ 913,394	\$ 809,520	\$ 500	\$ 103,374	\$ 103,374	\$ -	100.00%
	Unemployment & Employee Assist.	\$ 122,970	\$ 82,000	\$ 38,699	\$ -	\$ 43,301	\$ 80,000	\$ (36,699)	144.75%
	Workers Compensation	\$ 479,108	\$ 461,352	\$ 340,171	\$ 106,049	\$ 15,132	\$ 15,132	\$ -	100.00%
	SUBTOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 11,126,524	\$ 11,435,283	\$ 6,106,369	\$ 4,179,684	\$ 1,149,230	\$ 1,185,929	\$ (36,699)	100.32%
300	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES								
	Professional Services	\$ 500,341	\$ 559,102	\$ 179,727	\$ 50,239	\$ 329,136	\$ 320,641	\$ 8,495	98.48%
	Professional Educational Serv.	\$ 159,599	\$ 192,280	\$ 51,644	\$ 2,220	\$ 138,416	\$ 69,654	\$ 68,762	64.24%
	SUBTOTAL PROFESSIONAL SERV.	\$ 659,940	\$ 751,382	\$ 231,371	\$ 52,459	\$ 467,552	\$ 390,295	\$ 77,257	89.72%
400	PURCHASED PROPERTY SERV.								
	Buildings & Grounds Contracted Svc.	\$ 716,095	\$ 664,859	\$ 330,965	\$ 254,178	\$ 79,716	\$ 89,472	\$ (9,756)	101.47%
	Utility Services - Water & Sewer	\$ 134,403	\$ 146,945	\$ 57,215	\$ -	\$ 89,730	\$ 91,730	\$ (2,000)	101.36%
	Building, Site & Emergency Repairs	\$ 503,227	\$ 460,850	\$ 217,555	\$ 109,678	\$ 133,617	\$ 156,952	\$ (23,335)	105.06%
	Equipment Repairs	\$ 283,175	\$ 351,506	\$ 138,382	\$ 73,428	\$ 139,696	\$ 121,104	\$ 18,592	94.71%
	Rentals - Building & Equipment	\$ 268,547	\$ 260,303	\$ 117,516	\$ 96,358	\$ 46,428	\$ 47,638	\$ (1,210)	100.46%
	Building & Site Improvements	\$ 399,191	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	SUBTOTAL PUR. PROPERTY SERV.	\$ 2,304,638	\$ 1,884,463	\$ 861,634	\$ 533,642	\$ 489,188	\$ 506,897	\$ (17,709)	100.94%

OBJECT CODE	EXPENSE CATEGORY	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YTD EXPENDITURE	ENCUMBER	BALANCE	ANTICIPATED OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED BALANCE	% EXP
500	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES								
	Contracted Services	\$ 750,419	\$ 669,215	\$ 595,758	\$ 48,138	\$ 25,319	\$ 300,001	\$ (274,682)	141.05%
	Transportation Services	\$ 3,827,061	\$ 4,457,135	\$ 1,579,658	\$ 2,033,695	\$ 843,782	\$ 524,013	\$ 319,769	92.83%
	Insurance - Property & Liability	\$ 378,323	\$ 378,032	\$ 300,092	\$ 80,007	\$ (2,066)	\$ 1,978	\$ (4,044)	101.07%
	Communications	\$ 142,944	\$ 146,872	\$ 76,212	\$ 89,142	\$ (18,482)	\$ (17,351)	\$ (1,131)	100.77%
	Printing Services	\$ 24,637	\$ 31,040	\$ 4,731	\$ 2,293	\$ 24,016	\$ 24,016	\$ -	100.00%
	Tuition - Out of District	\$ 3,527,920	\$ 3,399,851	\$ 1,818,434	\$ 2,656,021	\$ (1,074,604)	\$ (1,175,965)	\$ 101,361	97.02%
	Student Travel & Staff Mileage	\$ 172,406	\$ 232,797	\$ 30,985	\$ 103,283	\$ 98,530	\$ 43,962	\$ 54,568	76.56%
	SUBTOTAL OTHER PURCHASED SERV.	\$ 8,823,709	\$ 9,314,942	\$ 4,405,869	\$ 5,012,578	\$ (103,506)	\$ (299,346)	\$ 195,840	97.90%
600	SUPPLIES								
	Instructional & Library Supplies	\$ 805,612	\$ 801,275	\$ 408,545	\$ 111,997	\$ 280,733	\$ 282,223	\$ (1,490)	100.19%
	Software, Medical & Office Supplies	\$ 212,777	\$ 221,701	\$ 83,949	\$ 43,340	\$ 94,411	\$ 96,359	\$ (1,948)	100.88%
	Plant Supplies	\$ 423,659	\$ 356,400	\$ 326,894	\$ 51,741	\$ (22,235)	\$ 116,799	\$ (139,035)	139.01%
	Electric	\$ 1,164,615	\$ 1,228,072	\$ 569,117	\$ -	\$ 658,955	\$ 366,955	\$ 292,000	76.22%
	Propane & Natural Gas	\$ 347,253	\$ 431,350	\$ 102,876	\$ -	\$ 328,474	\$ 312,474	\$ 16,000	96.29%
	Fuel Oil	\$ 76,257	\$ 63,000	\$ 10,305	\$ -	\$ 52,695	\$ 52,695	\$ -	100.00%
	Fuel for Vehicles & Equip.	\$ 122,159	\$ 205,031	\$ 51,127	\$ -	\$ 153,904	\$ 108,266	\$ 45,638	77.74%
	Textbooks	\$ 195,495	\$ 191,506	\$ 116,049	\$ 972	\$ 74,485	\$ 136,536	\$ (62,051)	132.40%
	SUBTOTAL SUPPLIES	\$ 3,347,825	\$ 3,498,335	\$ 1,668,863	\$ 208,049	\$ 1,621,423	\$ 1,472,308	\$ 149,115	95.74%

OBJECT CODE	EXPENSE CATEGORY	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YTD EXPENDITURE	ENCUMBER	BALANCE	ANTICIPATED OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED BALANCE	% EXP
700	PROPERTY								
	Technology Equipment	\$ 559,515	\$ 410,000	\$ 462,919	\$ 189,952	\$ (242,872)	\$ -	\$ (242,872)	159.24%
	Other Equipment	\$ 272,389	\$ 139,402	\$ 31,784	\$ 101,207	\$ 6,411	\$ 9,525	\$ (3,114)	102.23%
	SUBTOTAL PROPERTY	\$ 831,904	\$ 549,402	\$ 494,703	\$ 291,159	\$ (236,460)	\$ 9,525	\$ (245,985)	144.77%
800	MISCELLANEOUS								
	Memberships	\$ 66,090	\$ 73,415	\$ 55,724	\$ 2,150	\$ 15,541	\$ 14,160	\$ 1,381	98.12%
	SUBTOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 66,090	\$ 73,415	\$ 55,724	\$ 2,150	\$ 15,541	\$ 14,160	\$ 1,381	98.12%
910	SPECIAL ED CONTINGENCY	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	100.00%
TOTAL LOCAL BUDGET		\$ 76,747,157	\$ 78,651,776	\$ 34,826,188	\$ 39,292,276	\$ 4,533,311	\$ 4,396,330	\$ 136,982	99.83%

REVENUES				
EXCESS COST GRANT REVENUE	EXPENDED 2019 - 2020	APPROVED BUDGET	ANTICIPATED OFFSET	
<i>Special Education Svcs Salaries ECG</i>	\$ (33,039)	\$ (26,247)	\$ (39,115)	149.03%
<i>Transportation Services - ECG</i>	\$ (354,206)	\$ (402,480)	\$ (244,709)	60.80%
<i>Tuition - Out of District ECG</i>	\$ (1,372,981)	\$ (1,381,462)	\$ (1,195,965)	86.57%
<i>Total</i>	\$ (1,760,226)	\$ (1,810,189)	\$ (1,479,789)	81.75%
OTHER REVENUES				
BOARD OF EDUCATION FEES & CHARGES - SERVICES	APPROVED BUDGET	RECEIVED	BALANCE	% RECEIVED
LOCAL TUITION	\$32,340	\$14,140	\$18,200	43.72%
HIGH SCHOOL FEES FOR PARKING PERMITS	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000	0.00%
MISCELLANEOUS FEES	\$6,000	\$1,603	\$4,397	26.71%
TOTAL SCHOOL GENERATED FEES	\$68,340	\$15,743	\$52,597	23.04%
OTHER GRANT / SPECIAL REVENUE OFFSETS				
Corona Relief Grant - State Entitlement Grant	\$380,841	\$380,841		100.00%
Town Municipal Portion of CRF Grant	\$165,000	\$165,000		100.00%
Town Capital Non-recurring Revenue Fund	\$400,000	\$400,000		100.00%

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

Minutes of the Board of Education virtual meeting held January 5, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated it was being recorded and live-streamed.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ku requested to move the Charter Revision item to the end of New Business.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the donations to Reed Intermediate School, Newtown Middle School and Newtown High School, and the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation - None

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku reported that tomorrow night the Legislative Council would take up the discussion of the CIP and the Hawley HVAC Project. She thanked Ms. Zukowski for being part of the interviews for the Director of Technology.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue said the return to school has gone quite well. The last state figures as of January 5 we have 30 cases per thousand which is a 4% positivity rate. Prior to Thanksgiving we were at 33%. These are state figures we receive from EdAdvance which are posted on our website. It is critical to use the mitigation strategies at home and at school. She meets with members of the Connecticut DPH weekly and there are testing sites for teachers and health care workers. We are planning for vaccinations for staff and waiting to hear when teachers will be vaccinated as essential workers. Anne Dalton is sending a communication to parents and staff tomorrow regarding mitigation strategies and preparing for vaccinations. She thanked the community for stepping up to be substitutes. We communicated the three-hour early release on Wednesdays to maintain equity in teacher schedules when we move into the full time schedule on January 19. The middle school and high school will release at 11:30 on Wednesdays and 12:30 for the K-6 schools. We have 709 students in cohort D so more students are staying home. Our staffing report includes one new hire at the high school. We have 15 new substitutes in total.

Mr. Cruson heard talk about prioritizing teachers for the vaccine and asked about where they will put the rest of the staff to run the schools.

Dr. Rodrigue said they have talked about the bus drivers and support specialists and other Board of Education staff working with children.

Mr. Cruson has been concerned because all of the talk was about the teachers but nothing about the other employees.

Dr. Rodrigue would ask that question at her next DPH meeting.

Mr. Delia asked if she was comfortable with the level of subs.

Dr. Rodrigue said that she was and we've opened up the Applitrack system so that can now be used to apply.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Vouros reported on the Curriculum & Instruction meeting on December 22 where the Middle School schedule was discussed. He encouraged his colleagues to endorse the motion to move the Middle School schedule forward.

Dr. Rodrigue addressed the devices we have been providing students. We had originally reported that this year we would have given the freshman devices and moving forward giving them to seventh graders to have through their senior year. Because of the complexity with devices we changed our thinking. They are not being given to freshman. We will replenish them at the high school and starting next year every freshman will get a device for the four years.

Student Representatives:

Mr. Jerfy reported he was glad to be back and see all teachers and classmates on line.

Regarding college applications, all have been sent out and many students have heard back. He was looking forward to going back January 19.

Ms. Clure was in school Monday and Tuesday and it felt good to be back. The top concern she heard was about lunch. They can't sit outside and students were worried about seating but were told teachers would find places for them to eat. CIAC will meet this Thursday to decide winter sports. There are no mid-terms this year. The last semester begins January 25.

Mr. Vouros asked if she would get a schedule where Board members might be able to hear some of the Capstone presentations.

Item 5 – Old Business

COVID-19 Update:

Dr. Rodrigue told the Board it is challenging to come back when there are rising cases in Connecticut. We brought in Stephanie Stroeve who is a parent and has a strong background in public health and expertise in the areas of epidemiology and microbiology for a meeting with the teacher and para union's executive boards. She spoke about safety in schools, use of PPE, and answered questions. Anne Dalton was on both of these meetings. We are looking at other presenters, including a doctor from Griffin Hospital.

Item 6 – New Business

Newtown Middle School Schedule:

Tom Einhorn, Newtown Middle School Principal, presented the proposed schedule. The process began over the summer and 17 different schedules were developed. The instruction time per day increased from 314 minutes to 329 minutes with no learning lab. We added math and reading interventionists and additional support for special education students. Most middle schools have world language every day so we wanted to add a teacher to each cluster to offer it every day. We are sunsetting Family and Consumer Science classes and will add Health, Tech Ed and Computer Integration classes along with new course opportunities. New course proposals will be forthcoming along with a Cooking Club for interested students. We are moving to three clusters at each grade level with 3.2 world language positions, one math interventionist, two new courses to be determined, and two special education positions. This gives a net reduction to staffing of .8.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Newtown Middle School schedule for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Vouros said they spent two lengthy sessions on this schedule and he endorses it. It's very thorough, extremely well thought out and benefits the children immensely.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if the current world language curriculum would have to be rewritten and what is the process going forward.

Mr. Einhorn said he and Mrs. Uberti set money for curriculum writing and the additional time for Tech Ed and computer support.

Mrs. Uberti noted they have been working with Dr. Longobucco and the world language department at the high school. We will be taking their curriculum and making modifications for the middle school. The bigger impact will be at the other end of the high school as the students will complete the course earlier so we might need a course at the end of the high school year. The course is modeled off the current Spanish at the high school which is Rosetta Stone.

Mrs. Leidlein asked which languages will be offered.

Mrs. Uberti said French and Spanish but students who had Spanish since Kindergarten will be surveyed next year to see how many will take Spanish or switch to French.

Mr. Delia asked if the middle school was equipped for a culinary program.

Mr. Einhorn said they had a classroom with four ovens and a kitchen. The teacher is retiring the end of this year and will be difficult to replace. We want to provide the interested students with an area for culinary classes.

Mr. Vouros said a suggestion was made to look into the cooking club and bring the culinary students to the middle school to assist the cooking club advisor. Mrs. Uberti has monitored all of this with Mr. Einhorn and another suggestion was made to possibly have Project Adventure as its own class.

Motion passes unanimously.

Special Education Update:

Mrs. Deborah Petersen provided an update on the Special Education Department's action plan regarding reading and providing services during this time. We have 10 staff Wilson certified and five trained in Orton-Gillingham and a few outside reading evaluators are being used with positive feedback. At the start of year we received guidance from the state which spoke to students that required the most support. The students in our programs struggled the most with accessing any education on the computer and not receiving one-to-one support. We brought those students in every day with a shortened day on Wednesday to get them back into some routine. We also looked at other students attached to our support services and brought them in four days per week. We also offered drop-in services from BTs and OTs. Pre-school began the year in school all week and received services in person.

District Assessment Report:

Dr. Frank Purcaro presented the NWEA and PSAT/SAT results.

Mr. Vouros asked the plan to present this information to the parents and when it's presented to them we have to find a way that it individualizes it so they really understand what the assessment is saying about their child. What will be said to them to help them understand what we are going to do to make sure these gaps are filled?

Dr. Purcaro said that students are doing well on large scale assessments so we aren't seeing huge gaps. There may be specific skills at specified levels where students are struggling. That analysis is the next step at the building level and classroom level. We need to see what students are struggling with.

Mrs. Uberti stated that we always send out the results to parents with the letter to address this year because it is unique year. We will be working with the teachers to help them understand the data and pick out what they do and do not know.

Ms. Zukowski said there were comments about the disruptions due to Covid and asked if we will be able to review how our results compared to like schools at some point this year.

Dr. Purcaro said that if the state has the assessments in the spring we would have the district comparisons. He was not sure if we can get that from NWEA. We believe the state testing will take place.

Mrs. Ku asked if we could also get the district comparisons for the PSAT and SAT.

Mrs. Uberti stated that information comes from the state but they didn't release it because not all districts could administer the test.

Mr. Delia referred to the high school fail rate and asked how many of those students are remote learners and what is being done for intervention for remote students who are failing.

Dr. Purcaro said we don't have the remote data but a large portion of the group who are disengaged are remote learners. Teachers, counselors and administrators are reaching out to these students. A number are struggling learners. The high school is doing everything they can to re-engage those students. Not having them in the buildings adds another layer of difficulty to this process.

Mr. Delia asked if it was a fair assumption that there is a direct correlation to students not engaged in learning remotely and the fail rate.

Dr. Purcaro said that was correct and we see that increase as we go higher in the grade levels.

Mr. Delia asked what we do with the students not showing up for school.

Mrs. Petersen said we hired a special education teacher for the high school which has helped. We also reached out to outside agencies for students who don't come to school. Some agencies will go into the home to work with students.

Mrs. Uberti stated we are having conversations and collecting data on non-special education students who were disengaged to expand the opportunity for them to return to school four days if we stay on hybrid. We are trying to identify those students in all our schools. The ELL students are also having difficulty.

Mr. Delia applauded Dr. Rodrigue and the team in their decision to bring students back and also the teachers for trying everything they possibly can for them and the stresses they are dealing with.

Mr. Vouros asked what will happen if we have high school students who are not doing well and failing and don't have enough credits to graduate. Is there a plan to bring them in during the summer so their failures turn into passes so they can graduate?

Mrs. Uberti said the upper classmen are doing better than those in the lower grades. For seniors in danger of failing they are holding meetings with parents and work to create specific plans to get the students to do the work. We did that last summer and provided tutoring opportunities for students who had incompletes.

Dr. Rodrigue stated we would do this at the high school even without the Covid issue. This is a social emotional issue for students. We want to be sure they are making connections but there are a lot of students who need support. A lot of the surprises we heard tonight are what they are seeing in other districts.

Mr. Delia asked if there was anything the Board can do now to engage the students not engaged and what planning there will be to fill in the gaps.

Dr. Rodrigue said everything we are doing is internal and we have the staffing. This really spoke to the actual assessments and where the students are. We knew there would be gaps to fill in.

Mrs. Uberti said we don't know in January how horrific it will be in June. We will find that the typical on-grade students will rebound and the struggling students have a longer haul to catch up. Many more students are on distance learning now but we hope to see a decrease. We have a lot of resources with the most important being having really good people.

Ms. Zukowski is concerned about third grade math students missing concepts and if Algebra II students will be unwilling to take other math classes.

Dr. Purcaro said regarding third grade math, the math specialists are working with these students. He spoke to Dr. Longobucco regarding Algebra II and her math department is extremely dedicated and understands the data and are addressing SAT math problems on a daily basis.

Mrs. Ku appreciated this information. The data presented could be from a normal year. There is an assumption the older students are better equipped to handle distance learning but the data tells a different story. We do need to pay attention to the middle and high school students also.

Minutes of December 15, 2020:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of December 15, 2020. Mr. Vouros seconded.

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

Charter Revision Considerations:

Mrs. Ku and Ms. Zukowski met twice to discuss these revisions.

Board of Education Elections: Mrs. Ku stated that the recommendation is that Newtown Ordinance 124 should be merged into the Charter, specifically calling out that 9-204 of the Connecticut General Statutes applies because when the last Charter revision was filed the election process for the Board of Education was unintentionally indicated as following a different statute. The Legislative Council passed an ordinance which now references the current statute.

Date for Referendum: Mrs. Ku said the recommendation is to review voting information to understand whether moving the referendum date or expanding accessibility via absentee or mail-in ballot might increase voter turnout.

Special Appropriations: Ms. Zukowski noted that the Charter says the only person who can initiate special appropriations is the First Selectman with the approval of the Board of Selectman

and the Legislative Council. The appropriations process does not include the Board of Education. Our recommendation is to have that reviewed to include the Board of Education as a possible Initiator of Special Appropriations.

Board of Education Non-lapsing Account: Ms. Zukowski said a letter from the Town Council to Dan Rosenthal and Paul Lundquist stated that putting money in the Non-lapsing Account is similar to a special appropriation. This is recommending another model for doing financial appropriations.

Appropriating/Fiscal Authority: Ms. Zukowski stated there is some confusion as to who is the proper fiscal authority. Our recommendation is to clearly define the fiscal authority and appropriations authority for Newtown.

Practices Related to Appropriating/Fiscal Authority: Ms. Zukowski said we present our budget to the Board of Finance and they send it to the Legislative Council which is the board that will support their recommended budget. We also are required to go to the Legislative Council Education Subcommittee with our budget and are questioning if that duplication is necessary.

Regulation Review: Ms. Zukowski said there is a discussion on the creation of financial regulations that say they will be referred to the Board of Selection and Financial Director prior to action but there are some that involve the Board of Education and we are asking why we are missing in this section.

Town Departments versus Departments of the Town: Mrs. Ku said the Board of Education is given as an example of a town department which means we are a recipient of funds from the general fund. The recommendation is to replace the term town department with an appropriation assignee, Newtown agency or another term that more clearly focuses on the assignment of a body that will receive funds and review the sections that currently reference town department to determine whether the language accurately applies to the Board of Education and current practices.

Finance Director: Mrs. Ku stated that this only applies to municipal negotiations. The Board of Education handles their negotiations. We are asking that the Charter be clear on this.

Budget Process: Mrs. Ku said the section is unclear and the request is to clarify that section.

Town Clerk and Meeting Conduct: Mrs. Ku said the recommendation is to review whether bylaws have to be filed with the Town Clerk since they are already filed in Central Office and are online.

Ex Officio Membership on the Board of Education: Mrs. Ku said this states the First Selectman is an ex officio member of all town bodies including the Board of Education and the request is to review whether the Board of Education should be excluded from this section. It seems inconsistent with the Newtown government structure in which the Board of Selectman have a role parallel to the Board of Education and the Superintendent has a role parallel to that of the First Selectman.

Voting at Meetings: Ms. Zukowski stated the Charter says you have to say yes or no when voting. If we go with the Charter, we would be in violation if a member abstains from approving the minutes if they were not at that meeting. The need is to review whether they should soften that language.

Filling Vacancies: Ms. Zukowski stated we need to reconcile the state statute pertaining to the Board of Education and our Charter. The request is to make it clear as we can't tell if we go with the statute or Charter.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Charter Revision considerations. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – Public Participation - None

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

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary