

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIALBUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON JUNE 23, 2021 AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Kathryn Hallen-Secretary; Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan, Andrew Martelli, Timothy White

Board Members Absent: None.

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools. Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Curriculum Report

Ms. Ham, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, reported on the meeting held June 14, 2021. She reported that Michael Sheehan submitted a letter to the CPSCovid19 email address prior to the meeting. The letter stated concerns about the State, SERC (State Education Resource Center), and the district's work related to race, equity, social justice, and systemic racism and the African American, Black, Puerto Rican, and Latino Studies course. The letter was read in full at the meeting for the record.

Cheshire High School English teacher, Dawn DeMeo, gave an overview of a school trip to Puerto Rico in the spring of 2022. Ms. Silano next gave an overview of the first ever Cheshire Curriculum Writing Institute which will take place on June 24, 25, 28, 29, and 30. Nearly 80 teachers will be involved for the five-day institute and represent curriculum updates in the vast majority of departments at every level which will include representatives from our Pupil Personnel Department. Acceleration will continue to be an area of focus beyond the 2020/21 school year. Fifty-one teachers attended the Connecticut Center for School Change (CCSC)

Acceleration workshop series in March. CCSC will be providing professional development related to acceleration to our administrators next week as well as monthly sessions throughout the year. During the 2021/22 school year, Cheshire will restart its partnership with the Connecticut Science Center. Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator, shared that Grades 1 and 2 teachers will receive direct professional development from the Science Center on the professional development day in November, RAMS will engage in five “train the trainer” sessions throughout the year, Dodd Science teachers will have a one day NGSS training in September, and Dodd Science teachers will also have six one hour Professional Learning Community sessions throughout the year during their division meetings.

Ms. Ham reported that Kevin Hanlon presented an overview of the end-of-year Reading and Math data for Grades 1 through 6. The overall trends in performance for the end-of-year data mirrored the previous trends in students meeting Reading and Math benchmarks. Similar to the mid-year data, reading performance was primarily near or at recent historic levels and Math performance was primarily at or slightly above recent historic levels. The Committee received an update on the African American and Black, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies course. It will be a mandated course in two years, but we will be piloting a new course next year. This will be an elective course for Cheshire High School students beginning in the 2021/22 school year. Eighty-four students requested to take the course for the 2021/22 school year.

II. Approval of Textbook

Based upon its review and following the public viewing period, the Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board approval of the purchase of the following textbook:

Textbook	Publisher	Grade
enVision Algebra 2	Pearson	9-12

MOTION by Ms. Ham and seconded by Mr. Perugini.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the purchase of the textbook: enVision Algebra 2.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

III. Approval of Out-of-Country Field Trip

Ms. Ham stated that Board of Education policy requires that out-of-country field trips receive permission from the Board of Education. Cheshire High School teacher, Dawn DeMeo has requested permission to take students to Puerto Rico from April 18, 2022 through April 24, 2022. Superintendent Solan recommends approval of this request and reminds the Board that the Superintendent reserves the right to cancel the trip should national security or health issues warrant.

MOTION by Ms. Ham and seconded by Mr. Perugini

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the participation of Cheshire High School students in the educational field trip to Puerto Rico from April 18, 2022 through April 24, 2022, with the understanding that there is no cost to the Cheshire Board of Education.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

B. PERSONNEL

I. Appointment of Assistant Principal

Superintendent Solan presented Katharine Carlucci to the Board of Education. He is recommending that Ms. Carlucci be appointed as Assistant Principal. After several successful years as a teacher in Greenwich, CHS, and Easton-Reading, Kathy returned to Cheshire to serve as an English Language Arts teacher at Dodd Middle School in 2014. She was immediately a standout performer and appointed to the role of Team Leader for the 2015 school year. She also began serving as the co-chair of the Washington, DC trip that year as well. Kathy has served on a myriad of committees and has been the consummate team player and leader throughout her career. Kathy holds a bachelor's and master's degree from UCONN and a 6th year degree in Educational Leadership from SCSU. We are very excited to appoint her to the role of Elementary Assistant Principal for Norton and Chapman schools.

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan and seconded by Ms. Ham.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education appoint Katharine Carlucci to the position of Assistant Principal, effective June 24, 2021. Further, that Katharine Carlucci be compensated in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between the Board and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.*

Ms. Harrigan and Mr. Perugini voiced total support of this appointment.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

II. Review/Approval of Teacher Sabbatical Request

Tara Corcoran, Highland School Teacher, has requested an unpaid sabbatical leave in accordance with Article XII, Section 12.5 of the Agreement Between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Education Association.

MOTION by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Hallen.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education grant an unpaid Sabbatical Leave to Tara Corcoran, in accordance with Article XII, Section 12.5 of the Agreement Between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Education Association of Cheshire beginning August 26, 2021 through the remainder of the 2021/22 school year.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

III. Report on Meetings held June 17 and 23, 2021

IV. Approval of Contract of Superintendent of Schools

MOTION by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education extend the contract of Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024.*

Discussion:

Mr. Grippo noted that he voted against the extension of the contract last year but will support the extension of the Superintendent's contract tonight. He said that Dr. Solan has done a fantastic job and performed incredibly well during the pandemic. Ms. Ham said that she also voted against the extension last year and will vote in favor of the extension this year as a vote of confidence. Mr. Martelli said he will vote in favor of this extension. He said that Dr. Solan consistently kept our schools open and did what is right for the students. Mr. Perugini said he will support this motion as Dr. Solan has done a fantastic job. He said there was immense pressure faced during the pandemic with the unions and the community.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

MOVED *that the Cheshire Board of Education amend the contract of Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools to provide a total compensation increase of 13.6%, effective 7/1/2021.*

Ms. Harrigan said that she fully supports the compensation increase and the extension of the Superintendent's contract. Dr. Solan has done an incredible job not only this past year during the pandemic, but for the past five years he has been Superintendent. There has been extraordinary rates of increase in student performance. She said we need to bring the Superintendent's compensation up to par with other high achieving school districts and this increase starts to do that.

Ms. Hallen said that she will also enthusiastically and strongly support the increase to Dr. Solan's compensation. His performance not only over the past year, but during his entire tenure with regards to test scores, our position in the State, leadership skills, hiring amazing staff, and his focus on social-emotional learning and critical thinking has been very impressive.

Mr. Martelli said he initially thought the compensation package was high. He said he spoke with parents and staff in the district and shared the very positive comments he received. Mirroring what a Town Council member stated recently when the Council gave a substantial raise to the Town Manager, he said that under the Superintendent's stewardship, we have exceeded expectations in special education and general education rankings, maintained an outstanding quality of education at a value for the Cheshire taxpayer, and kept the budget in line while maintaining services that parents and the Board expect. Dr. Solan has been a guiding sail during the pandemic

Mr. White said that this increase is to make his salary more competitive with his peer group and asked if when he was originally hired, his salary was discussed. Mr. Perugini said that when Dr. Solan was hired his competition was at the bottom of the list of his peers because he did not have the same experience nor his doctorate.

Mr. White asked Dr. Solan to justify his 13% increase while several of the bargaining unions are getting 2% increases. Dr. Solan replied that the work that all of the individuals in the bargaining units do is tremendous and valuable. He added that as a leader of that team, he has great responsibility. He manages a \$75 million budget, the academic welfare of over 4,000 students and the safety, welfare and success of over 800 staff. He said when he was hired, although he had no experience as a Superintendent, he did have 12 years committed to our district. He now

has 16 years of commitment. He said the decisions he has made for our district have caused tremendous success. Dr. Solan said the increase is commensurate with what his peers make.

Mr. White asked Dr. Solan to detail the increase for the record. Dr. Solan said the majority will be in his base pay - \$215,520 and will include a retirement increase of \$4,000; with a \$2,000 doctoral stipend. The total compensation will be \$240,849.

Mr. White told the Superintendent that he did a great job this year. His request was to keep kids in school and he did it when most other districts were not in person. This was despite widespread teacher opposition. Dr. Solan made decisions based on what was best for kids overall in collaboration with our public health officials. In September, we had in-person learning and most kids attended in person throughout the year. It was a huge accomplishment and he sincerely appreciates what the Superintendent did. Mr. White said he is looking forward to working on SMART goals with the Superintendent.

Ms. Ham said she is echoing what colleagues said and thanked the Superintendent for all he has done. She said she cannot support such a large increase. She supports a generous raise, but would support something more in keeping in what our teachers and key administrators are seeing. She said she cannot accept such a wide disparity. She said we are doing well with SBAC but would like to see more improvement with SATs.

Mr. Grippo said that back in March, 2018, he told the Superintendent that the “buck stops with you”. He said since that day things have improved. In September, kids needed to be back in school and the Superintendent made that happen. He said he knows this is a massive raise, but he has to ask what the price is of our schools remaining open. Our middle school and elementary schools were fully open the entire year and the high school was open as much as it could be. The Superintendent had to work with and sometimes go to battle with the Health Department, the State and the Governor’s Office to keep schools open. Because of that, we are likely one of the most successful and prepared districts in the state. Even though it is hard for him to vote for this large raise, there is no other way to say thank you.

Mr. Perugini said he will definitely support this motion. He said his support is not only for this past school year. During this pandemic year, one of the Superintendent’s biggest accomplishments was working with local educators, our teachers, administrators and support staff. Dr. Solan

was a calming force and made sure everyone was safe. Mr. Perugini said this is a \$28K increase. He said he is not doing this to make Dr. Solan number one in DRG B, but out of nineteen districts, Dr. Solan's current salary is 3rd from bottom. Most of the other districts don't perform as well as ours – not only with test score but also with social-emotional learning. Mr. Perugini said this raise is well deserved. He thanked Dr. Solan for everything he has done to keep our kids safe this year.

VOTE: The Motion passed 6-1 (Ms. Ham opposed).

Dr. Solan expressed his gratitude to the Board. He said he has been a member of Cheshire Public Schools for 16 years now. He said he wanted to be sure that, at no time, did the Board say “we will give you a raise if you keep the students in school.” He said kids are best served academically and social-emotionally by being in school with their peers. The focus since day one was keeping kids in the schools and doing so safely. That was accomplished with the help of 800 people. Everyone's job was different and significantly harder. He said our teachers' union was incredibly supportive and a partner from day one. These 800 people helped to keep schools open and he thanked them all. Dr. Solan said he is looking forward to a continued partnership with the Board.

C. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held June 23, 2021

Mr. Grippo noted the policy committee met briefly this evening to review and move forward Policy 5141 Student Health Services for a third reading and approval.

II. Third Reading and Approval of Policies

Mr. Grippo reported there were no changes to this policy since the first reading.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Ms. Hallen.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policy 5141 Student Health Services, and direct the Superintendent to put said policy into immediate effect.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan reported that today concluded the second day of their in-service for administrators. They focused on acceleration – moving students ahead to stay on grade level.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update**

Chairman Perugini noted that the Board is looking at dates for when to hold a retreat. The retreat will be a working meeting to plan for the coming year. He announced the Fiscal meeting to close out school year will be held on June 30, 2021. The Town Council and Board plan to have a joint meeting something in July regarding the School Modernization Plan. Lastly, he announced that the next business meeting will be held on August 19, 2021 in Town Council Chambers.

Mr. White noted that during the Personnel Committee meeting, they ran out of time and could not discuss an agenda item and asked if they wanted to amend this agenda to add the item. Dr. Solan said it was not a pressing issue and Mr. Perugini said they can discuss it at a future meeting.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: _____.