

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON APRIL 18, 2024 AT 7:30 PM**

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Board Members Present: Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippo, Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke; Timothy White

Board Members Absent: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anthony Perugini

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Jodie Roden, Principal-Norton School; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator

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**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.  
In Ms. Rosenberg’s absence, Dr. Harrigan led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Andrew Elliot and Ella Paul, student representatives for the 2023/2024 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. Andrew gave an update spring sports, the marching band recognition and academic achievements. Ella reported on the leadership conferences, eighth grade orientation, the success of the play, Best Buddies and AP exams.

**2. PRESENTATIONS**

- A. School Partnership Award  
Mr. White, the Board of Education representative to Norton School, introduced the school’s recipient, Melissa Ruggiero. Ms. Ruggiero keeps Norton School “afloat” with her donations of balloons at various times during the school year. Ms. Ruggiero has a daughter at Norton, and when she is aware of different activities, she kindly donates the balloon displays from her own business. Some of the creations have included a neon balloon arch for our PTA Bingo night, a balloon display for her trick or trunk booth during Halloween, and an amazing black and white Dalmatian balloon arch in the front of the building for our 101st Day of School! Ms. Ruggiero adds to Norton School festivities with her thoughtfulness and generosity. The Board of Education thanks Ms. Ruggiero for going above and beyond for the students of Cheshire Public Schools.

**3. AUDIENCE**

The following people spoke concerning the draft Equity and Diversity proposed draft policy that is on the agenda for a first reading.

Doug Noble, 30 Jessie Court. Mr. Noble spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Tucker Deming, 230 Oregon Road. Mr. Deming spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Faith Ham, 633 Cortland Circle. Ms. Ham spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Joe Kulas, 1761 Tuttle Ave. Mr. Kulas spoke in favor of the proposed draft policy.

Pam Salamone, 659 Cornwall Avenue. Ms. Salamone spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Tom Bartley, 60 Brigadoon Drive. Mr. Bartley spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Robert Ham, 633 Cortland Circle. Mr. Ham spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Alica Heapy, 1761 Tuttle Avenue. Ms. Heapy said she is interested in hearing how the policy would be implemented.

Jane Bate, 454 Riverside Drive. Ms. Bate spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Michael Sheehan, Cheshire. Mr. Sheehan spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Thomas White, 44 Ives Hill Court. Mr. White spoke against the proposed draft policy.

Helen Wilson, 25 Briar Court. Ms. Wilson spoke in favor of the proposed draft policy.

#### 4. **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

##### A. **CURRICULUM**

##### I. **Report on Meeting Held April 15, 2024**

Ms. Cullinan reported that the Committee met and discussed two items, the approval of a textbook and an out-of-country field trip.

##### II. **Approval of Textbook**

Ms. Cullinan reported that the Curriculum Committee recommends the purchase of the following textbook:

<u>Textbook</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Krugman's Macroeconomics for the AP Course	Bedford, Freeman & Worth	11-12

**MOTION** by Ms. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. Ecke.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the purchase of the textbook, Krugman's Macroeconomics for the AP Course, as recommended by the Curriculum Committee.*

Discussion:

Mr. White stated that he is not a fan of the author of this textbook, but will vote in favor of this motion, as it is a basic textbook that does not contain his views on economics.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

**III. Approval of Out-of-Country Field Trip**

Ms. Cullinan reported Cheshire High School teacher, Dawn DeMeo, has requested permission to take students to the Dominican Republic in April 2025. Both the Curriculum Committee and Dr. Solan support this request.

**MOTION** by Ms. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. White.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the participation of CHS students in the educational field trip to the Dominican Republic from April 12, 2025 - April 20, 2025.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

**B. FINANCE**

**I. Finance Report**

Mr. Masciana reported they completed nine months of the budget year, and have expended or encumbered 90.6%. They have already begun work on year-end planning, preparing for summer work and summer purchases. He said he has no concern about our budget this year. They had anticipated the special education outplaced tuition line would be over budget by \$480,000, but it actually improved. Regarding the Food Service Program, the negative balance has dropped below \$18,000 as of this week and they are continuing efforts to try to collect unpaid balances.

**II. Medical Benefits Update**

As of the end of the month, our reserve balance increased by \$122,285 to \$1,920,369. The claims this month were \$1,139,082. Mr. Masciana also reported on Stop-Loss reimbursements and prescription reimbursements.

**C. PERSONNEL**

**I. Report on Meeting Held April 8, 2024.**

Ms. Cullinan reported the Committee reviewed the Cheshire Public Schools Connecticut Increasing Educational Diversity Plan. This plan came out of a committee of eight district team members who met many times over the course of the year to discuss the policy. Per statute, the State of Connecticut requires districts to submit an Increasing Educator

Diversity Plan prior to May 15. The plan needs to be formally approved by the Board of Education prior to submittal.

**II. Approval of Cheshire Public School's Connecticut Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.**

Dr. Solan explained the state requires every Connecticut district to submit a plan that highlights recruiting, hiring and retention of a diverse candidate pool. We were asked to develop a vision that indicates that Cheshire Public Schools aspires to provide our students with a highly qualified staff that reflects the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of our students to best support their development as complex thinkers and social emotional learners. If we establish equitable practices for increasing racial, ethnic, and diversity of educators that will provide an inclusive equitable environment, that will provide opportunities for students to prepare for transition into a multicultural and diverse society. Our student body is approximately 80%, white, and 20% other races. Our teaching faculty, however, is about 97% white. He noted that we have engaged in a variety of practices to recruit, hire and retain the best possible people with a particular effort to try to recruit a more diverse teaching staff, reflective of our student population. Unfortunately, we have not been terribly successful in that respect.

**MOTION** by Ms. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. Grippo.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan for Cheshire and give the Superintendent or their designee authority to make any necessary plan revisions with the understanding that said revisions will be communicated to the Board of Education.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

There was discussion regarding implementation and enforcement of this mandate.

**D. POLICY**

**I. Report on Meeting Held April 1, 2024.**

Mr. Ecke said the Committee reviewed policies for possible first and third readings. Mr. Ecke reported the Committee spent a great deal of time discussing Policy #0523 Equity and Diversity. He said it is a work in progress and members of the Committee have questions regarding this policy. He thanked everyone who came to the meeting and shared their thoughts, and they will be discussing this policy further at their next meeting.

**II. First Reading of Policies**

Mr. Ecke gave a first reading to policies #0523 Equity and Diversity and Policy #6200 Adult Continuing Education.

**III. Third Reading and Approval of Policies**

Mr. Ecke brought forward policy #6145.21 Status Level Sports Program for a third reading.

**MOTION** by Mr. Ecke and seconded by Mr. Grippo.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policy #6145.21 Status Level Sports Program and direct the Superintendent to put said policy into immediate effect.*

Discussion:

Mr. Grippo said the Committee worked hard on creating this policy that outlines a pathway for a club or team to become a varsity sport at the high school level.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

There was discussion regarding our Adult Education program that is now run through Wallingford Public Schools. Mr. White asked if there are any trade certifications available. Ms. Cullinan asked if Dr. Solan would provide the number of Cheshire residents who are participating in the Wallingford program. Dr. Solan said he would provide that information at a future meeting.

Mr. Grippo reiterated his concerns with the definitions that are included in the draft Equity and Diversity policy. He asked Board members for their feedback regarding inclusion or exclusion of those definitions.

Mr. White said he is not inclined to support an equity and diversity policy. He said there is value in what we already do but does not feel we need a policy.

Dr. Harrigan said there is always a question of whether a policy is needed. She spoke to many people and thinks the real question is, should we have an Equity and Diversity policy. She said it is important that people feel supported.

Mr. Grippo said he agrees but this policy does nothing to further those goals. We have policies in place to support students and staff. This policy is more punitive than aspirational.

**E. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

None.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Ms. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. Ecke.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the Minutes from meetings held on March 21, 2024 and April 11, 2024.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan acknowledged two members of the audience, one being his intern and the other is an educator from South Korea who is visiting Connecticut for a few months and is spending 3 days in Cheshire. He announced there would be a meeting on April 30 at 6 pm at Norton School for members of the community to attend to learn about construction plans for this summer. He also announced that on May 2, the Cheshire High School Showcase meeting would discuss the ALICE strategy.

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Harrigan announced the upcoming meetings.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Grippo, and seconded by Mr. Ecke, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Anne Harrigan, Board Vice Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

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