

**NORWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Norwich, Connecticut**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF:  
February 13, 2018  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING – BOARD OF EDUCATION  
KELLY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Yvette Jacaruso, Joyce Werden, Heather Romanski, Dennis Slopak, Robert Aldi, James Maloney, Mark Kulos, and Patricia Staley.

**ABSENT:** Aaron Daniels

**STAFF:** Abby I. Dolliver, Superintendent  
Dr. Thomas J. Baird, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment  
Athena L. Nagel, Business Administrator  
Jamie H. Bender, Director of Student Services & Special Education  
Amber Rutigliano, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent  
Administrators, Principals and Teachers

**MEDIA:** The Day, WICH/WCTY

Dr. Yvette Jacaruso called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

Dr. Jacaruso asked Joyce Werden to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Made by Dennis Slopak (seconded by Robert Aldi) to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON:**

Dr. Jacaruso reported that Attorney Peter Maher is going to conduct a meeting with the Board on practical tips on becoming a more informed Board member. Date and time to be announced.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Joshua Glenn of 32 Elmwood Avenue commented on the proposal to reconfigure the schools. He understands the position the Board is in but does not want his children to attend different schools. He cautioned against letting NFA tuition dictate the budget.

Tamara Lanier of 595 New London Tpke spoke for a friend whose grandson is in a Special Education program. The family is currently dealing with the loss of their grandfather. She feels the school is working against the family not with them during this difficult time concerning scheduling of his PPT meetings. She feels the school system is failing this young man.

Alyssa Pendleton of 107 Hunters Road has a child at Huntington School. She is concerned about the reconfiguration of the schools and stated that there are more cons than pros to this model. Larger

class sizes and numerous transitions are difficult for students. K-5 schools are very helpful for the parents. She is concerned about the amount of time that the children will be on the school bus.

Kerri Simons of 38 Woodland Drive has 2 children at Veterans School. There is a diminishing importance of the “neighborhood school” with this proposed reconfiguration. Transitions increase the anxiety in children. Splitting up families at different schools is not meeting the educational and emotional needs of the students. She urged the Board to consider other alternatives.

Jason Morris of 145 Canterbury Turnpike stressed the importance of class sizes across the district. An \$800,000 savings is simply just cutting labor costs; teachers. He urged the Board to find another plan and to give more information to the public.

Ryan VanLew of 98 Fifth Street is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student at John B. Stanton School. He has had to attend four different schools since he began in NPS and has not moved once. He urged the Board to let him remain at Stanton School.

Sean Langlais of 142 Harland Road has a student at Huntington School. He wants to keep the neighborhood school concept. He doesn't think it's right to disrupt a school that is doing so well. He is also concerned about the spreading of the flu virus from a biological perspective.

Christine Trasko of 26 Crouch Avenue has 2 foster children that attend Veterans School. They are happy and safe for the first time in their lives. Veterans School is like a family to them and has been very supportive of the needs of her family. She doesn't want to cut money from the budget at the expense of the children and urged the Board to come up with a different solution.

Crystal Janelle of 2 Chapel Hill Road in Yantic said she loves her school and doesn't want her children to have to change schools. She questioned why Moriarty School would stay the same and the other schools would not. It is hard to get parent involvement now; it will be even harder with children at numerous schools. She asked the Board to find other ways to save the schools.

Martha Palmer of 32 Elmwood Avenue said her kids love their school and are upset about the potential move. Her children got into the Integrated Day Charter School but she turned it down for them to stay in the Norwich Public Schools. She is worried about the busing situation as well.

Sheila Hayes of 288 Central Avenue welcomed the new board members. She stated that this school reconfiguration has been a model that has been looked at in the past. The Board should not be making decisions on how to educate the children based on the budget. She urged everyone to contact the Mayor and the City Council members.

#### **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:**

Mrs. Dolliver reported on:

- Enrollment
- Magnet Middle Schools-Discovery Nights & lottery application
- KMS Band Concert on January 17<sup>th</sup>
- Strategic Planning Session with the City of Norwich on January 20<sup>th</sup>
- Plan of Conservation Committee on January 10<sup>th</sup>

- MLK luncheon at NFA on January 12<sup>th</sup>
- Adult Education partner districts
- Upcoming Event: All City Music Festival on March 7<sup>th</sup> at KMS at 6:30 pm
- 2017-2018 school calendar update

**MOTION:** Made by Robert Aldi (seconded by Mark Kulos) to approve the 2018-2019 Norwich Public Schools calendar. Motion passed unanimously.

**DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES:**

Jamie Bender, Director of Student Services & Special Education gave a detailed Power Point presentation on the Budgetary Impact of Student Services and Special Education.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT**

Dr. Thomas Baird reported on:

- Middle Magnet schools update
- Susan O'Connell professional development
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool grant for middle schools
- State funding update on elementary after school programs
- Safety & Security grant update
- Veterans School SIG grant update

**COMMITTEES:**

**Policy Committee**

Joyce Werden reported that the next Policy Committee meeting will be held on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 4pm in the Central Office conference room.

**Budget/Expenditure Committee**

Athena Nagel reported on the Budget Expenditure meeting held on February 8<sup>th</sup>. She discussed the proposal of reconfiguring the schools as discussed at the budget meeting. She also discussed staffing and transportation needs. There is a public budget hearing on February 21<sup>st</sup> from 6-8 pm in the KMS Auditorium as well as a Budget Expenditure meeting on 2/27 at 5:30 pm and on 3/6 in the KMS Community Room. All of these meetings are open to the public.

**Transportation Committee**

Athena Nagel reported that there was only one bid for the busing contract. She would like to award the bid to First Student Corporation. There will be wi-fi cameras on the buses as well as GPS included in the contract. There will be front, middle and back cameras on the large buses. Ten buses have been added to the fleet and the fleet will consist of a combo of new and used buses. There will be ten new buses added (5 regular education and 5 special education buses).

**Leadership Evaluation Committee**

Joyce Werden updated the Board on the Self-Evaluation Review for the next BOE meeting. The next meeting will be held on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm in the Central Office conference room.

**LIAISONS:****Integrated Day Charter School Liaison**

Joyce Werden reported that she was unable to attend the last meeting. The next meeting is on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Otis Library Liaison**

Yvette Jacaruso reported that over 700 students attended the Anne Frank exhibit.

**LEARN Liaison**

Al Daniels via written report stated that LEARN has approved maintaining the Student Support Services 18-19 magnet evaluation fees as unchanged. Jay Hartling, Superintendent from Ledyard shared growth they are seeing in their district at the last meeting.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

Al Daniels via written reported stated that he attended the City of Norwich Goal Planning retreat. They were lead in a discussion of perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In response to a long-term plan for the entire city, City Council members said they want to look again at a school redesign but did not want the highest and best land to be used.

Dennis Slopak reported that he is attending Uncas school on Tuesdays to work with the Math Team. He also attended the City of Norwich Goal Planning retreat and was pleased with the facilitator.

**MOTION:** Made by Robert Aldi (seconded by Dennis Slopak) to accept the Kelly Middle School construction project 104-0112 complete. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Robert Aldi (seconded by Dennis Slopak) to accept the Kelly Middle School asbestos abatement project 104-0113 complete. Motion passed unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** Made by Joyce Werden (seconded by Mark Kulos) to go into Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:45 pm.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:07 pm. There were no votes taken in Executive Session.

**MOTION:** Made by Patricia Staley (seconded by Dennis Slopak) to authorize the Superintendent to negotiate and settle a pending Workers' Compensation claim. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Patricia Staley (seconded by Mark Kulos) to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heather Romanski*

Heather Romanski,  
Secretary