

Monday, December 20, 2021

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held December 20, 2021, at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Educational Center, 60 St. Stephens Road Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present were Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Secretary Joseph Lombard, Joseph Sokolovic, Albert Benejan, Sybil Allen, Michael Maccarone, and Erika Castillo. Albert Benejan and Christine Baptiste-Perez arrived subsequently as noted.

Supt. Michael J. Testani was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

JoAnn Kennedy thanked the board for taking up the subject of public comment and current restrictions on agenda items only. She added she was glad we were going to hear from the students tonight. She said this was the right thing to do.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

Ms. Allen moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 6, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

Ms. Castillo said the minutes should be amended concerning a comment by Ms. Baptiste-Perez.

Ms. Castillo moved “to amend the minutes in that regard.” The amendment was seconded by Ms. Brown and unanimously approved.

The minutes as amended were unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT:

Mr. Weldon read committee assignments. The Facilities Committee will be chaired by Mr. Weldon, with members Benejan and Maccarone. The Finance Committee is chaired by Mr. Sokolovic, with members Baptiste-Perez and Brown. The Governance Committee is chaired by Mr. Weldon, with members Benejan and Lombard. The Educational, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee will be chaired by Mr. Sokolovic, with members Brown and Castillo. The Personnel Committee is chaired by Mr. Weldon, with members Allen and Lombard. The Students & Families Committee is chaired by Albert Benejan, with members Brown and Castillo. The Teaching & Learning Committee is chaired by Mr. Sokolovic, with members Lombard and Baptiste-Perez. The Contracts Committee is chaired by Mr. Weldon, with members Lombard and Baptiste-Perez. The Districtwide Branding Initiative is chaired by Ms. Brown, with members Benejan and Castillo.

The charter school governing council board liaisons are as follows: Achievement First/Bridgeport Academy: Ms. Baptiste-Perez. Bridge Academy: Mr. Benejan. Capital Prep: Mr. Benejan. Charter Oak: a staff assignment, Dr. Selena Morgan. New Beginnings: staff assignment, Dr. Melissa Jenkins. Park City Prep: staff assignment, Ana Sousa-Martins.

The School Building Committee representatives are Mr. Weldon and Mr. Benejan. The representative to CES is Mr. Weldon.

Mr. Benejan said he would defer the rest of his report for student representative reports.

Latonia Ferguson of Central High reported on her school. Among the items she highlighted were 17 students participating in the University of Bridgeport acceptance day; a multicultural event involving parents and students; and a wellness day planned for the second semester in January.

Avery Flechtner from Fairchild Wheeler IT reported on her school. Among the items she highlighted were two successful lockdown drills at the school and a Spirit Week currently ongoing.

Aleena Khan of Fairchild Wheeler Aerospace said the school recently had an award ceremony for the first quarter, with over 40 percent of students receiving honor roll. The school is also participating in the Spirit Week. There were recent basketball and soccer tournaments.

Mr. Benejan arrived at the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS:

Ms. Brown reported on the Districtwide Branding Initiative Committee. She said as of last week there is a new attendance billboard on I-95. She said the Bridgeport Public Schools hashtag has been adopted. The next committee meeting will be on January 19th.

Supt. Testani said there will be a referral to the Contracts Committee from the staff on an RFP for a special education review to be conducted.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Educational Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission will meet the third Monday of each month, starting with January 17th. He welcomed the new members.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Finance Committee will be meet on January 12th.

Mr. Weldon said the Governance Committee met on December 14th and discussed tonight's agenda item, along with the structure of public comments. The next meeting will be on February 7th.

Mr. Weldon said the Personnel Committee would meet on Wednesday to interview candidates for the position of assistant principal at Bassick High.

Mr. Benejan said the Students & Families Committee did not meet in December. The next meeting will be on January 20th.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Teaching & Learning Committee will meet on January 18th.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Supt. Testani said he wanted to remind everyone that there is no option for school districts to go remote according to the state, despite the increase in Covid cases. Any change in that policy would have to come from the Department of Education and the governor.

The superintendent said it is not an option even when it comes to weather-related cancellations. There will be traditional snow days this year.

Ms. Baptiste-Perez arrived at the meeting.

Supt. Testani wished everyone happy holidays and new year.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next item was discussion and possible action to add student representative reports to the order of business of Regular Meeting agendas. Mr. Weldon said the Governance Committee discussed this and it was agreed to place the item just prior to the public comment.

Mr. Benejan moved *“to add the item student representative reports as Item IV immediately following the roll call.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

Mr. Sokolovic moved that the motion should be *“to waive the first and second read and amend bylaw 9130 to insert student representative reports in number four, just prior to public comment, and shift everything down.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown.

The motion to waive the first and second readings was unanimously approved.

The motion to add the student representative reports was unanimously approved.

Ms. Allen moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Approved by the board on January 10, 2022