

BOARD OF EDUCATION

MICHAEL J. TESTANI
Acting Superintendent of Schools

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD cont.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

JOHN R. WELDON
Chairman

HERNAN ILLINGWORTH
Vice-Chairman

BOBBI BROWN
Secretary



"Changing Futures and Achieving Excellence Together"

SYBIL ALLEN

ALBERT BENEJAN

JOSEPH J. LOMBARD

JESSICA MARTINEZ

JOSEPH SOKOLOVIC

CHRIS TAYLOR

Bridgeport, Connecticut

June 3, 2020

Board Members:

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, June 8, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via a Microsoft Teams Live Broadcast event. Public viewing access to the meeting will be made available through <https://www.bridgeportedu.net/stream>.

Bobbi Brown
Board of Education Secretary

**BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
AGENDA OF REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

**Monday, June 8, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.
Microsoft Teams Live Broadcast Event
Bridgeport, CT**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Public Comment (Agenda Items Only)**
- 5. Approval of Board Minutes**
 - a) 5/26/20 Regular Meeting
- 6. Chairman's Report**
- 7. Committee Reports/Referrals**
 - a) Facilities
 - b) Finance
 - c) Governance
 - d) Teaching and Learning
 - e) Personnel
 - f) Students & Families
 - g) Contracts
 - h) Ad-Hoc Committee: GCS Males of Color
- 8. Superintendent's Report**
 - a) General Report
 - b) Public Q&A Regarding District Operations During COVID-19
- 9. Old Business** – None to be Transacted
- 10. New Business**
 - a) Discussion and Possible Action Concerning E-Rate Contracts
- 11. Adjourn**

Monday, May 26, 2020

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held May 26, 2020, by video and audio conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. Present were Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Hernan Illingworth, Secretary Bobbi Brown, Joseph Sokolovic Joseph Lombard, and Albert Benejan. Sybil Allen joined the meeting subsequently as noted.

Acting Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dasha Spell urged that the board help with promoting Bridgeport residents to respond to the 2020 Census. She said Bridgeport could lose out on additional money due to lack of response, with the next census not occurring until 2030. She noted Mayor Ganim has done advocacy in this area.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

Mr. Sokolovic moved to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of May 11, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown and unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT:

Mr. Weldon said he would defer to the superintendent on the evolving process about graduations.

Ms. Allen joined the meeting.

COMMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Illingworth said the Facilities Committee and Governance Committee will meet on June 1st.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Finance Committee met on May 13th. He said there is somewhat pleasant news because it tentatively looks this is going to be one of the first budget years in a long time that we won't have to remove any staff. He said one area of concern is the lack of printed material being presented at the meeting for board members because the numbers are difficult to track. He asked that going forward that written materials be provided, even though numbers are fluid. He said the next meeting will be on June 3rd.

Mr. Illingworth said the Governance Committee will meet on June 1st.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Teaching & Learning Committee will meet soon.

Mr. Weldon said the Personnel Committee met on May 13th and interviewed for four executive positions and recommendations were submitted to the superintendent. The next meeting will be tomorrow, with interviews for principal positions.

Mr. Benejan said the Students & Families Committee will meet on May 28th.

Mr. Weldon said the Contracts Committee has yet to meet, however, the superintendent will be submitting some items soon.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Ad Hoc Committee Great Cities Schools/Males of Color will meet on June 9th.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND AGENDA:

Mr. Testani said he is finalizing letters to the four executive director candidates who have been chosen: Victor Black, Selena Morgan, Herminio Planas, and Melissa Jenkins. He said they will be continuing in their roles in a permanent position.

Mr. Testani said food and nutrition has done an amazing job and served well over 600,000 meals since the closure. Two additional locations at Discovery and Dunbar will be opened. He said which buildings will participate in summer meals is still to be decided.

Mr. Testani said the last date for students to complete and hand in work will be June 17th. He said the final classes will be held on June 10th. He said he believed the recent poor weather has helped keep kids engaged in distance learning.

Mr. Testani said principals are scheduling times for families to retrieve belongings that were left in schools or medications stored with the nurses.

Mr. Testani said printed materials will be distributed this week as well as donated book packs for K to 8 students. The latter was the result of the Connecticut Partnership's donation to the Alliance districts.

Mr. Testani said times will be set up for students to return district-owned devices. He said high school summer school

will be conducted online. This year there will be no cost for the virtual classes for credit recovery.

The superintendent said surveys of parents on reopening continue. He urged that parents not fill out the survey more than once.

Mr. Testani said due to the slow reopening of the state unfortunately live graduations will not be allowed. He said even districts that have not been highly impacted by COVID will be subject to the same state guidelines. He said the district will purchase signs for display on lawns or in windows to celebrate graduates. There will be a video montage of all graduates and taped congratulatory messages. He invited board members to record small messages as well. All the high schools are scheduling car parade events.

Mr. Testani said planning will be underway for reopening in the fall, including models where there is a full reopening, a hybrid model or distance learning.

Mr. Weldon noted Mr. Testani does Facebook Live events every Friday at 9:00 a.m.; links are available on the district's website.

Ms. Brown said she was glad to hear about the availability of devices for students in summer school. Mr. Testani said he believed summer school would be in good hands under the direction of Vernon Thompson.

Mr. Benejan said he had heard reports that staff were not responding to parents.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said there had been about 4,000 responses to the parent survey as of last week.

Mr. Testani described the ways the high schools are planning to distribute diplomas to graduates who arrive in cars.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the virtual graduation ceremonies will be held by each individual high school.

In response to questions submitted by the public, Mr. Testani said right now board employees are not required to be tested, but state guidelines are being followed, with masks being provided. He said he assumed students when return to school buildings there would be temperature checks of people entering.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said if the district is allowed to be reopened the appropriate guidelines will be followed. He said opening the district in distance learning without face-to-face contact would be extremely challenging for students.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said a reopening with a split schedule would require concessions from the state Department of Education on required hours as well as buy-in from collective bargaining units. He said every-other-day schedules would probably infringe the least upon contractual rights.

Mr. Testani said currently summer guidelines require all students, parents, and staff on school grounds to wear masks unless they have a medical exemption. He said the district has ordered a half a million masks, but it would be challenging to provide everyone masks on a weekly basis.

Mr. Testani said he made clear to parents on Facebook Live that there was a difference between distance learning and homeschooling.

Ms. Allen noted split-sessions were used in the past for educational purposes.

Ms. Brown suggested students receive health information when they come back. Mr. Testani said the first week or two of school reopening would have to be around getting into a new norm.

In response to a question about testing, Mr. Weldon noted testing of staff would require negotiation with unions. Mr. Testani said he tested negative a few weeks ago.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next agenda item was on soliciting bids for non-commodity commercial food, paper goods and cleaning supplies for the 2020-21 school year. John Gerrity, director of food and nutrition services, asked for consent to move forward with the bids to be posted by the city's purchasing department. He said non-commodity food items are grocery and bakery items, fruits and vegetables, breakfast items, milk, and paper and cleaning supplies.

Ms. Allen moved *"to authorize the food and nutrition center to solicit bids for non-commodity commercial foods, paper goods and cleaning supplies for the 2020-21 school year."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was an addendum to the contract for transportation services with We Transport, LLC.

Mr. Testani said it was hope when schools closed that bus companies would be able to resume service when schools reopened. He said negotiations went back and forth with We Transport in order for them to maintain service when school resumes. He said school districts would be in trouble if the bus companies collapsed.

Mr. Testani said an understanding was reached with We Transport that the dollar amount to be paid would be 55 percent of the remaining days of school from closure, minus a few days over the 180-day threshold. He said this would allow employees to remain on the bus company's books so they can maintain service in the fall.

Mr. Testani said the agreement only covers the remaining days in this school year and does not bind the district in the fall.

In response to a question, Mr. Weldon said the daily rate was about \$113,000 a day for buses and it would be reduced to about \$62,000 per day for the 62 days of closure. Mr. Weldon said the total to be paid would be \$3,878,912.

Mr. Testani said the state did not take back funds from school districts with the understanding that we would continue to pay contracts to a reasonable extent. He said other districts paid more than the 55 percent that was received by We Transport. He said they had been a good partner with the district for the length of the contract.

Mr. Weldon said he understood We Transport furloughed employees so they are collecting unemployment benefits. He added that the company could possibly apply for some stimulus programs.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the matter was not vetted through the Finance Committee. He said he felt compelled to negotiate given the order from the governor.

Mr. Weldon said the agreement was only put together over the past week and given the board meeting was coming up, and We Transport was in a cash flow crunch, he decided as chair of the Contracts Committee to let it go to the full board.

Mr. Illingworth said the concern was the district is paying the company while they elected to furlough all their employees. He said it might be double-dipping on their end.

Mr. Weldon said the agreement indicates the funds are for expenses actually incurred by We Transport to cover active drivers and the cost of health insurance, if any, and the cost of maintaining the fleet.

Mr. Testani said the district jeopardizes CARES Act funding if we don't hold up our end of the bargain. He said the district is being given money to cover expenses that are incurred due to COVID-19.

Mr. Illingworth said he was not against school bus drivers, but the district incurred additional costs from the pandemic, some of which may not be reimbursable.

Mr. Testani said he initially was inclined not to pay We Transport anything. He said the drivers were eligible for unemployment plus the additional \$600 payments. He noted the mayor received a letter from the Teamsters' union. Once the district received CARES funding negotiations began and the 55 percent figure was agreed to, which will mean We Transport will be there for the district when they are needed.

Mr. Sokolovic said the matter was broached in the Finance Committee, without the exact numbers. He added there are some silver linings for the district from COVID, including possibly getting through the year without laying people off. He said the 45 percent of the contract is basically gravy to the district. He added some people with the \$600 bonus are making more money than he is from going to work every day. He recommended approval.

Mr. Weldon said he was comfortable with the agreement if Mr. Testani and Ms. Siegel were.

Ms. Brown said she understood what the district and the bus company was up against. Ms. Benejan and Ms. Allen said they agreed.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the rate was negotiated so favorably compared to other districts because some may have jumped the gun early and did not anticipate being closed for the whole year. He said he believed both the district and We Transport got a fair deal. He said he stressed to the City Council that CARES funding was not free money and contracts would have to be paid.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to approve Amendment I between the Bridgeport Board of Education and We Transport, LLC, as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and related declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergency.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

Mr. Illingworth moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Draft



Information Technology Services Department

Bridgeport Public Schools

May 29, 2020

Regular Board Meeting 6/8/20

RE: Information Technology Services Agenda Item

Agenda Item: *"Vote to approve or disapprove Resolution for Schools and Libraries Universal Services (E-Rate) for 2020-21"*

Dear Bridgeport Board of Education Members,

Please find attached, our yearly legally required submission and ratification document for Bridgeport Public Schools E-Rate submission for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The E-Rate program almost entirely funds and provides for 90% direct payment of **all of Internet and District connectivity** for our Category 1 submission. Category 2 provides 85% of the funding for the vast majority of all infrastructure equipment for District technology operations. **This ratification is an essential and required** part of our yearly financial obligations for the Bridgeport Public Schools. If any questions should need to be answered, Rachel Botts of Kellogg & Sovereign, our E-Rate consultant will be available for questions during the meeting.

Attached to this memo please find:

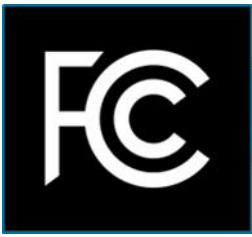
- Board Resolution signatory sheet for Chairman of BBOE (*Required*)
- Category 1 submission, Form 471 for BPS
- Category 1 Summary Sheet
- Category 2 submission, Form 471 for BPS

Thank You,

Jeffrey Postolowski

Director of ITS

Information Technology Services



E-Rate: Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries

The FCC's E-Rate program makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the Universal Service Fund (fcc.gov/encyclopedia/universal-service-fund), E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries.

The ongoing proliferation of innovative digital learning technologies and the need to connect students, teachers and consumers to jobs, life-long learning, and information have led to a steady rise in demand for bandwidth in schools and libraries. In recent years, the FCC refocused E-Rate from legacy telecommunications services to broadband, with a goal to significantly expand Wi-Fi access. These steps to modernize the program are helping E-Rate keep pace with the need for increased Internet access. (Learn more about modernization of the E-Rate program: fcc.gov/e-rate-update.)

What benefits are available under the E-Rate program?

Eligible schools and libraries may receive discounts on telecommunications, telecommunications services, and Internet access, as well as internal connections, managed internal broadband services and basic maintenance of internal connections.

Discounts range from 20 to 90 percent and are based on the poverty level of the schools. Rural schools and libraries may also receive a higher discount. Recipients must pay some portion of the service costs.

See the list of eligible services at usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/eligible-services-list.aspx.

How does the E-Rate program work?

An eligible school or library (see eligibility definitions at usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/definitions.aspx) identifies goods or services it needs and submits a request for competitive bids to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). USAC posts these requests on its website for vendors to bid on. After reviewing the vendors' bids, the school or library selects the most cost-effective eligible products and services using price as the primary factor. It then applies to USAC for approval for the desired purchases.

Next, USAC issues funding commitments to eligible applicants. When a vendor provides the selected services, either the vendor or the applicant submits requests to USAC for reimbursement of the approved discounts.

The bid request and competitive bidding processes must comply with FCC rules and also state and local procurement requirements.

How are schools and libraries in my area benefiting?

To find which schools and libraries in your area benefit from E-Rate, use USAC's commitments tool at usac.org/sl/tools/commitments-search/AdvancedNotification.aspx.

How are requests prioritized?

If demand for E-Rate money is greater than the available funds, funding is allocated first to the highest poverty schools and libraries, then the next-highest poverty applicants, and so on.

How much funding is available?

In 2014, the FCC's the Second E-Rate Order increased the cap for the program to \$3.9 billion in funding year 2015, indexed to inflation going forward. The funding cap for funding year 2019 is \$4.15 billion.

Does the E-Rate program duplicate state and local efforts?

The FCC's plan complements the efforts of states and localities to bring advanced telecommunications and information services to schools and libraries. When the E-Rate program was established in 1996, only 14% of the nation's K-12 classrooms had access to the Internet.

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last Reviewed: 12/31/19



Bridgeport Public Schools Staff Movements

As of
June 08, 2020

I. CHANGE OF CLASSIFICATION

	NAME	OLD POSITION/NEW POSITION	EFFECTIVE
1.	Carla Fontes-Alers	Acting Principal/Principal	06/02/2020
2.	Linda Bagoly	Acting Principal/Principal	06/02/2020
3.	Beth Furnari	Acting Principal/Principal	06/02/2020
4.	Lindsay Davis	Assistant Principal/Principal	06/02/2020

II. RETIREMENTS

	NAME	SCHOOL	POSITION	YEARS of SERVICE	EFFECTIVE
1.	Ana P. DaSilva	Central High School	Special Education Teacher	21 Years	07/02/2020
2.	Connie M. Dougherty	Central High School	School Counselor	37 Years	07/01/2020
3.	Helen D. Giles	Classical Studies Magnet Academy	Principal	13 Years	06/19/2020
4.	Vincent Samuolis	Fairchild Wheeler	School Social Worker	24 Years	06/19/2020

III. SEPERATION FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

	NAME	SCHOOL	POSITION	EFFECTIVE	REASON
1.	Nash Arbid	Central High School	French Teacher	06/08/2020	
2.	Melissa Liscio	Dunbar School	Elementary Teacher (Gr.4)	06/19/2020	Resignation
3.	Elisa Logush	Fairchild Wheeler	Biology Teacher	06/19/2020	Resignation
4.	Carol O'Connell	Wilbur Cross	Art Teacher	06/08/2020	
5.	Catherine Ramos	Cesar A. Batalla	Elementary Teacher (Gr.6)	06/08/2020	Resignation
6.	Gladys Walker-Jones	Waltersville School	Principal	06/08/2020	