

BOARD OF EDUCATION

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD cont.

MICHAEL J. TESTANI
Superintendent of Schools

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

JOHN R. WELDON
Chairman

BOBBI BROWN
Vice-Chairman

JOSEPH J. LOMBARD
Secretary



"Changing Futures and Achieving Excellence Together"

SYBIL ALLEN

ALBERT BENEJAN

SOSIMO J. FABIAN

JESSICA MARTINEZ

JOSEPH SOKOLOVIC

CHRIS TAYLOR

Bridgeport, Connecticut

February 17, 2021

Board Members:

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, February 22, 2021, 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>.

Joseph J. Lombard
Board of Education Secretary

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

**Monday, February 22, 2021 – 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) February 3, 2021 Special Meeting
 - b) February 8, 2021 Regular Meeting
- 6. Chairman's Report**
- 7. Committee Reports/Referrals**
 - a) Ad-Hoc Districtwide Branding Initiative
 - b) Educational Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - c) Facilities
 - d) Finance
 - e) Governance
 - f) Personnel
 - g) Students and Families
 - h) Teaching and Learning
- 8. Superintendent's Report**
 - a) General Report
 - b) COVID-19 Update
- 9. Old Business** – None to be Transacted
- 10. New Business**
 - a) Discussion and Possible Action to Purchase New Mathematics Program for Grades 2-5 and 9-10
 - b) Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendation from Aquaculture Floating Classroom Naming Committee
- 11. Adjourn**

Monday, February 3, 2021

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held February 3, 2021, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Joe Sokolovic, Sosimo Fabian, and Sybil Allen. Albert Benejan joined the meeting subsequently as noted.

Supt. Michael J. Testani was present.

The sole agenda item was discussion and possible approval of the 2021-22 budget request and the food and nutrition services budget plan.

Supt. Testani said even though the board is scheduled to receive significant funding from COVID grants, that is not to replace or provide a substitute to the local contribution that needs to be made. He noted the funds to be received are specific to certain categories and subject to regulations and do not relieve the local government from making the contribution to the MBR. He noted the timing of the additional funds was not the best due to the onset of the budget season. He said the budget request was reasonable and what was owed to the children in the district.

Mr. Sokolovic said he has read the Bridgeport municipality is going to receive significant funding as well, which means they can afford the board's ask.

Marlene Siegel, chief financial officer, presented on the 2021-22 budget request.

Ms. Siegel displayed a slide showing the district's enrollment, with percentages of ELL students(20.20) and special education population(17.84).

Ms. Siegel said the net current expenditures per pupil is the lowest in Bridgeport among peer districts, and is ranked 155 out of 166 districts in the state. She said this also impacts the cost on out-of-district placements, with the cap rising over the past five years.

Ms. Siegel said the district's goals are a structurally balanced budget, a school-based budgeting model, fiscal accountability, and comprehensive fiscal management. The allocation model consists of a position allocation built on equitable and uniform staffing formulas, with consideration for school-specific needs.

Ms. Siegel said the fiscal challenges are utility costs, legal services, transportation, special education, absence coverage, and benefits due to rising costs each year.

Ms. Siegel said the current budget, 2020-21, consists of \$256 million in the operating budget, with the city's share of 26.9 percent and state ECS of 73.1 percent.

Ms. Siegel described the state and federal grants.

Ms. Siegel said \$2.3 million was added to the state Alliance/ECS in the current year. It is expected that the district would receive an additional \$2.3 million in 2021-22, but that has to be finalized by the state legislature.

Ms. Siegel said the city contribution in the current year was an additional \$2.25 million to the MBR. In 2019-20 there

was a \$1.4 million credit for bus transportation from the city in order to allow the board to maintain the transportation limits. In 2021, the city contribution for bus transportation fell short by \$650,000. The shortfall was compensated for by savings in transportation due to the reduction in the school calendar from 182 days to 177 days.

Ms. Siegel said the growth factor in the current year, 2021, was 1.82 percent. She said the growth factor in the last six years has been an average of 1.14 percent. She said this revenue is insufficient to keep pace with escalating costs even after ongoing efforts at cost control and management.

Ms. Siegel displayed a slide with cost controls.

Ms. Siegel said the 2021-22 operating budget request is a \$17.4 million request, divided into \$2.3 from the state, \$6 million from the city, and the gap plan that will amount to \$8.7 million. The \$17 million includes \$4.8 million in collective bargaining; as well as health insurance; MREF pension costs; special education; transportation costs.

Ms. Siegel said it is hoped that the full \$2 million in the Internal Service Fund(ISF) built into the budget plan will not be needed. In 2021, \$3 million from the 2019-20 surplus in the ISF is being applied in order to balance.

Ms. Siegel also described turnover savings and the effects on step movement in the teachers' contract.

Ms. Siegel said the \$6 million request from the city is fair and reasonable because it includes \$500,000 to maintain the direct payment by the city to We Transport and includes \$650,000 to compensate for the funds that the city did not allocate in 2021 to maintain the \$1.4 million credit. The

balance is \$4.8 million to contribute to the non-discretionary costs, which include salary increases, health insurance, and MREF growth.

Ms. Siegel described how the remaining \$8.3 million gap will be closed. There is a surplus on reserve in the ISF of \$3.5 million and there is a potential surplus in 2021 of about \$1 million, as well as the \$2 million pre-2018-19, if not used in the current year, would be available next year. She said it will include an increase in Title I revenue.

Ms. Siegel said the gap resolution plan includes, as in prior years, position consolidation where appropriate, position conversion after attrition, program adjustments, and the use of grants for curriculum and technology renewal, and deficit prevention mode.

Ms. Siegel said the district office is streamlined with 94 fulltime employees

Ms. Siegel displayed a graph which indicated 70 percent of the budget is dedicated to instruction and 22 percent to administrative support of schools.

Mr. Benejan joined the meeting.

Ms. Siegel described core curriculum renewal, which are generally on a six-year cycle. She noted digital services typically expire after six years.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said if Bridgeport was funded like Hartford the district would have an additional \$100 million. She said net current expenditure per pupil(NECP) includes the operating budget and all grants

received. She noted New Haven and Hartford have more magnet schools due to decisions made many years ago.

Ms. Siegel said she provided a document to the Finance Committee in October which reviewed the city contributions across the peer districts. She said Waterbury contributes a significant amount to their schools as well funding all the benefits of district staff.

Supt. Testani said the municipality in Hartford contributes significantly more to the school district than Bridgeport does.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said schools are instructed and reminded during the year that parent involvement funds must be expended in the current year. Unexpended funds will be forfeited by the school, but they are not forfeited by the district. Those funds go into an unexpended balance, and they can be rolled into the next year.

Supt. Testani said the parents should not be spending time on asking where the money goes, they should be taking the advice that Mr. Benejan and he have given them on how to spend it.

In response to a question about potential union concessions, Supt. Testani said Bridgeport teachers and employers are severely underpaid in comparison to neighboring districts, particularly in areas considered shortage areas such as math and science. He said it will be even harder to attract good talent coming out of the pandemic. He added that the collective bargaining agreement was just signed a year ago and it would be very bad for morale to even raise the issue.

Dr. Fabian agreed and said he wanted to make sure that was considered and eliminated for the reasons articulated by the superintendent. Supt. Testani said this year our teachers have done a lot more, given we have so many students split between in-person and remote learning.

Mr. Sokolovic said as a fiscally conservative Republican it would be penny-wise and pound foolish to request concessions. He said it would be devastating to morale when the great majority of teachers are cooperative in the pandemic conditions.

Mr. Sokolovic said compared to New Haven and Waterbury, Bridgeport gets about the same funding per pupil from the state ECS. However, the difference is the New Haven and Waterbury municipalities contribute more than Bridgeport. He said the board was asking for an additional \$301 per student. He said our students are worth that much, particularly since the city passed a resolution to redirect funding from public safety towards social services and education.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested the information on page 26 be broken out by per-pupil amounts for the board's talking points.

Ms. Siegel presented the food and nutrition services budget plan. She said each year the district enters a projected number into the city MUNIS system that enables us to set up the budget. The amount of revenue that will be generated is projected at the beginning of the school year, but revenue can vary. She said the budget is set up at \$20.43 million.

Ms. Siegel said the projection is made on the expectation that 2021-22 will represent a return to some degree of

normality, with usual revenue generated. She said in 2020-21 a shortfall in revenue is anticipated of between four and five million dollars, which is being covered in the operating budget.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said the employee costs of food and nutrition employees in past years are in the document. She said expenditures to date in the current year are posted in the financial condition report every two months. She said through attrition the food and nutrition department has not been replacing fulltime employees unless absolutely necessary. She added there was a curtailment of the use of hourly employees that were not needed under the pandemic situation.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said state ECS/Alliance funding flows directly to the district as a grant via a bank wire, and does not go into a city account. Mr. Sokolovic said the city's budget indicates the city contributes 41 percent of their budget to education, which is inclusive of the state ECS.

Mr. Sokolovic said if the state funding was removed the city's percentage devoted to education would be somewhere between 18 and 19 percent by his last calculation. He said this should be made clear when we speak to people about the budget.

Ms. Siegel said, after calculations, the city contribution is 29.6 percent of the district's total budget without Alliance included.

Mr. Weldon said Mr. Sokolovic is saying that the city is purporting that they are giving 41 percent of their budget,

which includes the state ECS, and thus they are inflating the number.

Supt. Testani said the mayor's budget last year was \$571 million and it contributed \$69 million to education. Ms. Siegel said the \$571 million includes the ECS share. The superintendent said the \$69 million is about 17 percent of the city's budget with the ECS funding excluded.

Dr. Fabian said the conversation demonstrates the reasonableness of the ask that is being made with the budget. He said as a city taxpayer what he is left with is that the funding being asked for is extremely reasonable, and is supported by equitable principles and as well as good business sense.

Mr. Weldon said Mr. Sokolovic is saying we need to clarify that the ECS is a pass-through and the city's budget based on its own tax revenue is the correct way to look at the city's budget.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *"to approve and endorse the 2021-22 budgetary request of the City of the Bridgeport and the food and nutrition budget as well."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

The superintendent said he was in the works of scheduling a meeting with the state legislative delegation. Ms. Siegel said the City Council's Budget & Appropriations Committee typically convenes in April.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

DRAFT

Monday, February 8, 2021

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held February 8, 2021, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Secretary Joseph Lombard, Albert Benejan, and Joseph Sokolovic.

Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Valle-Shastri said no one had signed up for public comment.

There was a moment of silence for Charles Gray, a Bassick High custodian who passed away. Mr. Benejan said he was a great person.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

Ms. Brown moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Weldon announced the members of the newly created Ad Hoc Districtwide Branding Committee: Ms. Brown, Dr. Fabian, and Mr. Benejan. Ms. Brown will be the chair.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS:

Mr. Weldon said the Facilities Committee met a week ago and there was a facilities update from the superintendent. An item on a basketball court was referred to the full board this evening. He said the next meeting is on March 1st.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Finance Committee would meet on February 10th

Mr. Weldon said the Governance Committee met last Monday and discussed remote participation by board members in meetings. He said he is drafting a possible policy that would allow board members to participate up to a certain amount of times each year remotely.

Also discussed was the possible inclusion of non-board members on standing committees. Mr. Weldon said after discussion there seemed to be a consensus it would be more complicated to implement than it was worth.

Mr. Weldon said there was a discussion of the student handbook that was created by the superintendent's office, and it will come back to the committee in the future.

Mr. Benejan said the Students & Families Committee met on January 28th. He said Ms. Rocha-Reaes reported on parent engagement funds spending. He said information on bullying was not available by Mr. Young and he hoped to hear from him at the next meeting.

Mr. Benejan said finally the parents have voted to reestablish the District PAC and have approved the draft bylaws. He said the PAC leaders participated in a meeting first with Supt. Testani in a roundtable, followed by a meeting

in which voting took place. Parent leaders from Classical Studies, Read School, Central High, Barnum, Bassick and Hall voted in favor of the District PAC. Abstaining were Fairchild Wheeler and Harding High. Edison voted no.

The schools voting in favor of the draft bylaws were: Classical Studies, Read, Central, Bassick, Hall and Fairchild. Edison abstained.

Mr. Weldon suggested Mr. Benejan place the item on the agenda of the Students & Families Committee to start the District PAC, so that the public has notice of what is going to be voted on and who is going to vote.,

Mr. Benejan said the matter was previously discussed in the Students & Families Committee for months. He said Ms. Rocha-Reaes sent the draft bylaws to all PAC and PTSO leaders.

Mr. Weldon said he believed there should be more structure. The superintendent said it was mentioned in the notice that after the roundtable Mr. Benejan would meet with school PAC leaders to discuss the bylaws and the possible implementation of a District PAC. He said he did not participate in the discussion after the roundtable.

Mr. Weldon said he was not opposed to the District PAC, but it seemed like the vote happened casually. The superintendent said he was hoping for at least fifty percent representation in the vote. Mr. Benejan said the discussion went back to a roundtable in November at Harding High. He said he sent out an agenda in advance of the meeting. He added the motions were made by the parent leaders in the meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic said Mr. Weldon had legitimate concerns, but it has been difficult to get parental involvement because there is not a District PAC to reach out to the parents and they were disengaged and having trouble coordinating. He said he believed it was a valid vote and the parents who voted should not be disenfranchised. He said sometimes there are elections in Bridgeport where only a few hundred people vote.

Mr. Weldon said his only concern was that the people were given notice that a vote could take place, but it sounded as if there was notice to parents. Mr. Benejan said he wanted everybody to be on the same page and didn't want anyone to think things weren't done right. He said he believed the parent meeting was very positive.

Mr. Sokolovic asked that there be an update at the next committee meeting.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said questions about student yearbooks should be sent to him for referral to principals.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Teaching & Learning Committee would meet on February 16th

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/AGENDA:

Supt. Testani said the district's reopening for in-person learning continues to be successful. He said in-person learning participation at high schools in Bridgeport and across the state is fairly low. He said positive COVID cases are dropping in the community and have not been frequent in schools. There is full, in-person learning for ELL students, 504 plan students, and students with IEPs. There is full in-

person instruction at elementary schools except where class sizes exceed 15 students.

The superintendent said it was anticipated in the next three or four weeks vaccinations will be opened to board employees, regardless of age. It is hoped that a site just for board employees can be established.

The superintendent said the high schools held a successful FAFSA day for parents and high school seniors. He singled out Ms. Rocha-Reaes for organizing it and thanked Justine Osborne and Christopher Purzycki, guidance counselors at Central High, who contributed their time. He said this would be annual event going forward.

Supt. Testani said the role of guidance counselors was a passion of former board member Hernan Illingworth while he was on the board.

In response to a question, Ms. Rocha-Reaes said a demographic breakdown by race and gender had not been compiled, but could be obtained through Power School data. Mr. Sokolovic suggested that data be obtained to target interventions. Supt. Testani said that he could be accomplished by data management.

Th superintendent said there were weather issues possible tomorrow. He said collective bargaining govern employees reporting to work. He said no matter what decision is made there are groups of individuals who feel they are not treated properly. He added he has told the collective bargaining leadership that we will follow the contractual obligations. He said he was open to negotiating an MOU or MOA if desired.

Supt. Testani said he believed remote learning was not as engaging as in-person learning to all of the students.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next agenda item was on a basketball court at Black Rock School.

Principal Steve Cassidy of Black Rock School said the project was presented to the Facilities Committee and is a collaboration with Full Court Peace, which has previously worked with courts at Cross, Curiale & Barnum Schools. He said the court would be created on a vacant lot, and provide fitness for students and would help encourage the diverse student body playing together after school.

Mike Evans of Full Court Peace said he was honored to be accepted into the city. He added the climate nationally has given his group tailwinds because the donor base is mostly suburban that wants to do good for its neighbors. He said he has spoken to Mr. Wallack about another school and he will continue to do more courts until the board tells him to stop.

Supt. Testani said he would try to include the Over Under initiative to include pop-up soccer goals in the court.

Ms. Brown moved *“to authorize the installation of the basketball court in conjunction with Full Court Peace at Black Rock School.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

DRAFT

MATHEMATICS TEXTBOOKS

Herminio Planas

Executive Director of Elementary Education and Mathematics

February 2021

RATIONALE

- Textbook licenses for grades 3-5 (Math In Focus) expired in June 2019. Currently, schools have hardbound textbooks and teacher manuals available throughout their classroom. No digital licenses are available. We are utilizing other resources to supplement the program in these grade levels.
- Textbook licenses for the Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II courses expire at the end of the 2021 school year.
- Actual textbook licenses for grade 2 (Ready Classroom) expire at the end of the 21-22 school year. Yet, licenses for key components such as the assessment engine (I-READY) and instructional acceleration programs have already expired.
- Need a consistent textbook for grades K-8

GRADES 2-5 MATHEMATICS

- Last year, adopted grades 6-8 Into Math Program
- A grade 3-5 pilot was implemented at 6 schools in Bridgeport (Batalla, CSMA, Bryant, Madison, Dunbar, Columbus)
- Teachers were trained on the usage of Into Math Program and Waggle
- 4 workshops were presented to grade 3-5 teachers as part of the pilot (including those teaching special education and bilingual classes.)
- Specific sessions have been set up for groups who needed extra support (i.e. usage and customization of Waggle, interpretation of assessment data, etc.)
- Results from the pilot showed an overall successful implementation of program and coherence to our current curriculum. Provided electronic resources that helped teachers greatly through COVID pandemic teaching.

GRADES 2-5 MATHEMATICS

- In order to create a meaningful pathway through the grade level, we need one program grades K-8. (Currently, we have 3 programs.)
- Plan is to add grades 2-5 for the 21-22 school year and grades K-1 the following school year (school year 22-23)
- A pilot will be implemented in grades K-1 next year in preparation for the 22-23 school year.
- IT has field-tested all devices in grades 2-5 in preparation for this implementation.
- Curriculum will be updated to meet the recommendations of this program during summer 2021.

COST

The cost of the program is \$1,173,626.40.

This includes:

- 6-year license of the Into Math Program (including all electronic components)
- All teacher materials in print
- Consumable books for all students every year
- Use of Waggle for all students (grades 2-5)
- All professional development for the implementation of the program.

**GRADES 9 AND 10 MATHEMATICS
TEXTBOOKS
(ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY AND ALGEBRA II)**

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

TEXTBOOK	Mathematical Content Total (27 points)	Organization and Structure (33 points)	Assessment (15 points)	Total (75 points)	Ranking
Into AGA	26	27	14	67	1
Reveal Math	24	25	12	61	2
Illustrative Mathematics	21	24	13	58	3

BEST FINAL OFFERS

TEXTBOOK TITLE	COST
Into Math	\$548,103.16
Reveal Math	\$615,230.62

Includes:

- 6-year license for the usage of the program for all 7 high schools
- Online access to student and teacher books
- 1 set of student textbooks per course/per high school (including 1 set of teacher's manuals per course)
- Professional development needed to implement the program

Naming Committee – 1/28/21

On 1/28/21 @ 10:30 AM, a meeting was convened to determine the name of the new vessel being constructed for the BRASSTEC program. Members of the naming committee included:

- Captain Ken Tober
- Captain Mark Petkevich
- Captain Paul Lepanto
- Kirk Shadle
- Carla Ebmeyer
- Holly Turner
- Rebecca Gladych
- Liz Kranyik
- Dave Henry

A staff consensus was made to stick with the naming theme of the Catherine Moore, looking for a namesake that has ties to the Bridgeport, Black Rock, and ideally the Aquaculture Program. The committee took nominations, discussed the pros/cons of each nominee, and then ultimately voted. The three names nominated were:

- Kaye Williams (founder of Captain's Cove and longtime friend/neighbor of the program)
- Gustav Whitehead (first in flight, Black Rock native)
- John Curtis (former Aqua director)

After the aforementioned discussion, a formal vote was taken and all parties unanimously agreed on: Kaye Williams. We further agreed to add the common boat name prefix "R/V" to officially denote the educational purpose of the boat as a "Research Vessel." We are excited for the Williams family, who have agreed to the honor, to have their patriarch as the namesake of our vessel, especially given that it will reside on the dock adjacent to their office. We are confident our longstanding partnership will only strengthen over time and are honored to educate students in the years and decades to come aboard the new vessel.

We hereby submit to Superintendent Testani the desired name for the new vessel currently under construction with Wesmac Boat building company is: **R/V Kaye Williams**

Respectfully,

Dave Henry, Aquaculture Director

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF MOVEMENTS
As of February 17, 2021

I. PROBATIONARY HIRES

	NAME	SCHOOL	POSITION	EFFECTIVE
1.	BIANCA RIVERA	ROOSEVELT	CO-TEACHER	01/28/2021

II. RETIREMENTS

	NAME	SCHOOL	POSITION	YEARS of SERVICE	EFFECTIVE
1.	BEVERLY MAKAR	BRYANT	TEACHER	31	06/30/2021
2.	LISA PETRUZZELLI	BEARDSLEY	TEACHER	33	03/01/2021
3.	PAUL LEPANTO	AQUACULTURE	BOAT CAPTAIN	15	06/30/2021

III. SEPARATIONS

	NAME	SCHOOL	POSITION	EFFECTIVE	REASON
	WESLEY DAUNIS	JOHNSON	5 TH GRADE	03/12/2021	PERSONAL