

NEW CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NCHS WAGNER ROOM
January 9, 2023
7:00 P.M.

I. Call to Order

Chair, Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Attendance:

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Present	✓	✓	✓ (7:23 pm)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Absent									

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Review and approve agenda: January 9, 2023

Mr. Bennett made a motion to amend the agenda to update the amount of the donation for the East School Outdoor Learning Center under Action Item A to \$83,197.42.

Mr. Naughton moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Rashin.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

Ms. Parkhill moved to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Mr. Alves.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

IV. Approve Minutes:

December 19, 2022 - BOE Regular Meeting

Ms. Parkhill moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Hogan.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain					✓				

V. Comments from the Public:

Members of the public spoke in favor of and opposed to the proposed addition of Columbus Day as a day off of school for the 2024-2025 school year calendar. In favor of the holiday, one resident cited its status as a Federal Holiday, importance to Italian-Americans and celebration of exploration. Others felt that adding a day in June is disruptive to families, sends the wrong message to teachers who would prefer to be in school, is difficult for working parents and misses an opportunity for in-school learning about Columbus.

VI. Action Items

A. East School PTC Outdoor Learning Center Phase II

Move to approve a donation of \$83,197.42 from the East School PTC to fund Phase II of the Outdoor Learning Center.

Ms. Parkhill moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Rashin.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

B. Superintendent's 2023-2024 Budget Proposal (1st Read)

Move to accept, as a first reading, the Superintendent's 2023-2024 Budget Proposal

Ms. Rashin moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Hayes

Dr. Luizzi gave an overview of the 2023-24 Budget Proposal. Return on investment can be seen in the school start time results, athletic successes, visual and performing arts awards and standardized assessment scores across the district. The proposed budget for 2023-24 is \$103.8M, inclusive of employee benefits. Cost saving opportunities help to offset budget increases and include in-sourcing of printing, maintenance, SPED transportation and skilled services. There are also environmental savings through the use of natural gas, propane updates, LED lighting updates and solar.

The overall budget increase requested for next year is 4.87%, or 3.51% excluding Employee Benefits. Salaries and Employee Benefits comprise 82% of the budget and Employee Benefits are the highest increase at 11.75% due to an increase in the Stop Loss Premium over last year.. Enrollment is a key driver of budget costs and staffing requests include a Literacy Academy Teacher, a Classroom Coach and an additional Campus Security position.

Capital Requests for the 2023-24 school year total \$5,326,289 for Facility updates (\$4,354,750), Technology needs (\$731,539) and Transportation (\$240,000).

C. 2024-2025 District Calendar (2nd read)

Motion to accept, as a second reading, the 2024-2025 District Calendar as first moved by Ms. Rashin and seconded by Mr. Hogan.

Mr. Hayes motioned to approve the 2024-25 District Calendar as presented. Ms. Rashin seconded the motion.

Mr. Naughton made a motion to amend the motion to add Columbus Day as a day off of school and change the last day of school from June 11th to June 12, 2025. Seconded by Ms. Toal.

Mr Hayes, Ms. Rashin, Ms Schwedel and Ms Parkhill spoke against adding Columbus Day as a holiday stating: (1) Columbus Day successfully has been an in-school day since 2012, (2) the District will lose a valuable day of education in October and substitute for it a less valuable day in mid-June, (3) teachers like having that full week in October for instruction, (4) the BOE traditionally makes decisions in the educational best interests of the students and adding Columbus Day as a holiday is not in the students' best interests, (5) the District already has numerous days off during the fall including Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Election Day and Thanksgiving, (6) schools will provide robust in-school learning about Columbus as is done with Veterans Day, (7) many parents do not get Columbus Day off and some will have difficulty providing childcare.

Mr. Bennett, Ms. Toal, Mr. Naughton and Mr. Hogan spoke in favor of adding Columbus Day as a holiday stating: (1) Columbus Day is an important Italian American Holiday and should be a day off so families can celebrate, (2) Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah do not always fall on school days so adding Columbus Day would not be that disruptive, (3) it would be helpful for students' mental health to have another day off in the fall, and (4) since Columbus is a controversial subject and teachers would be mandated to teach it on Columbus day if in school, we should take it off their plates.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
No			✓			✓	✓	✓	
Abstain									

Mr. Bennett requested a motion to approve the amended proposed district school calendar for 2024-2025 having Columbus Day as a Holiday and move the last day of school to January 12th, 2025.

Ms. Toal so moved to approve the amended proposed 2024-2025 calendar, seconded by Mr. Hogan.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
No			✓				✓	✓	
Abstain									

*Mr. Bennett requested a motion to clarify that the last day of school in the amended proposed 2024-2025 calendar will be **June 12th, 2025**.*

Mr. Naughton so moved, Ms. Toal seconded.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
No			✓				✓	✓	
Abstain									

Ms. Rashin moved to have the holiday added to the 2024-25 school calendar be listed as "Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day". Seconded by Mr. Hayes.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
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Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

D. Governance BOE Standing Committee Charter (1st read)

Motion to accept, as a first reading, BOE Governance Standing Committee Charter.

Ms. Parkhill moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Naughton.

VIII. Public Comments

A member of the public reminded the Board that Columbus Day is not a religious holiday as other days they had discussed and added that they felt that the decision made was not based on the best interest of the students and staff.

IX. Announcements and Future Business: Board of Education Workshop, January 18th at 5:00 pm.
Next Board of Education Meeting, January 23, 2023

X. Adjournment

Ms. Toal moved to adjourn at 9:50 PM, seconded by Mr. Alves.

	Alves	Bennett	Hayes	Hogan	Naughton	Parkhill	Rashin	Schwedel	Toal
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

Respectfully Submitted,
Erica Schwedel
Board of Education Secretary