

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: December 9, 2013
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

Members Present: Mr. Guy Buzzannco, Chairman
Mr. Eric Berthel, Vice Chair
Mr. Ray Nardella, Secretary
Mr. Tom Lambert
Ms. Janelle Wilk
Ms. Leslie Crotty
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa

Members Absent: Mr. Jim Gambardella
Mr. David Guerrera

Others Present: Dr. Thomas McDowell, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Andrew Terzigni, Student Council Representative

A. Convene Regular Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

B. Salute to the Flag

C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

D. Award Recognition

Dr. McDowell – Thank you Mr. Chairman, each year the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents congratulates students receiving the Leadership Award and this year we had a lovely awards dinner at the Cornucopia in Torrington on the 20th of November when these students and their parents were all congratulated and received awards. This evening, we wanted to bring these students forward again so that the board could recognize them. I am going to introduce each student and read a little bit about the student. I also wanted to say that we have a reception in a little while and we would like to ask those students and their families to remain for that reception.

Alec Mayo – Watertown High School – Alec is a 12th grade student at Watertown High School. His many achievements include being a member of the National Honor Society, recipient of the President's Award for Academics, CABE Student Leadership Award, and recognition as a CAPT scholar. He coached youth baseball and played baseball since age 4 to present, receiving the Coaches' Award for baseball. It is evident that Alec likes to help people, tutoring 5th graders in his sophomore year, peer mentoring in his junior year, and Link Crew Coordinator in his senior year. It is my honor to present Alec for the second time. (Applause)

Shannon Pflomm – Watertown High School - Shannon Pflomm is a twelfth grade student at Watertown High School, who ranks in the top ten in her class. Her achievements are numerous: some of them being Academic Awards in all her years, CAPT Scholar, Treasurer of National Honor Society, Link Crew and Delta. She was elected President of the World Language Honor Society. She is very active in sports, participating in indoor/outdoor track, cross country, receiving the Coaches' Award in 2012. Shannon participates in many community activities that raise money for different causes. Shannon also received the Superintendents award when she was a student at Swift Middle School. Congratulations! (Applause) Just as a side note, Shannon's father, Gary, was a finalist this year for Watertown Teacher of the Year.

Lauren Pavao - Swift Middle School - Lauren Pavao is an outstanding eighth grade student at Swift Middle School. She is a member of the Swift Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society and is involved in many school activities including Peace Pals, Peer Advocates, Spanish Club, Chorus, Cheerleading, Student Council President, and W.O.A.H (Watertown-Oakville Adolescent Heroes). Outside of school, Lauren is involved in CCD and is a member of the Miss America Organization. Lauren was Little Miss Watertown 2007, Petite Miss Greater Watertown 2010, and Junior Miss Watertown in 2012. (Applause)

Ahmed Malik – Swift Middle School - Ahmed Malik is an outstanding eighth grade student at Swift Middle School. He is a member of the Swift Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society and is involved in many school activities including Peace Pals, Peer Advocates, Science Club, Student Council, Jazz Band, Spanish Club, and the World Language Haunted House Committee. He is a member of the cross country team. Outside of school, Ahmed is involved in religious school, travel, soccer, swimming, diving, and running. Ahmed participates at swim camp and helps younger swimmers. Congratulations! (Applause)

That is probably the best part of being a superintendent, is acknowledging kids for doing well.

Mr. Buzzannco – It always impresses me, the significance of this honor. It proves time and time again, we don't just have great students, we have great kids. Certainly they achieve academically, at a very high level, but they are well rounded in so many ways. As we saw tonight, they are involved in the arts, they deserve each and every one of those awards that Dr. McDowell read. You saw that each of them had a commitment to serving others and I don't know if I was that much of a humanitarian in middle school, so where this comes from, I don't know, but it is an amazing gift and it is wonderful to be able to have them with us tonight. And it is a privilege to honor them.

Mr. Lambert – It is very nice to see these young students come up here. Some of them are repeaters. Here, not in the office, but, what is behind these great students are great families. I know some of these personally and I can attest that they are behind their kids 100% and their kids are 100% behind their families. I think that is an honor for those families that are here this evening. These young students excel and we are very proud of them.

Ms. Crotty – I would also just like to thank the recipients for providing such an exceptional role model for the students in Watertown. (Last sentence not picked up by mic)

Mr. Berthel – All I want to say. Lauren, Ahmed, Alec, Shannon is wow. Wow, that is really impressive, congratulations.

Dr. McDowell - The Board of Education would like to recognize the Watertown Wall of Honor Inductees. The following individuals were nominated to receive this most prestigious award: Brian Dillon - Brian Dillon graduated from Watertown High School in 1981 and touched many people in Watertown by sharing his story about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Brian has chosen to help society learn as much as possible about ALS by donating his brain and spinal cord for research upon his death. Brian published: His ALS Blog-<http://alsfighter.wordpress.com>. He was a hard working father and husband that left a lasting impression on everyone he met. Brian Dillon died from ALS in February 2013. He lived by his motto "ALS fighters will not surrender". Patti LeClerc, sister of the late Brian Dillon, will present a short presentation.

Patti LeClerc – Thank you. On behalf of the Dillon family, Monique Dillon, Brian's daughters, the entire Dillon family, we want to thank you for this honor. Brian would have loved to have been here to accept this in person. He was a man of many words. That is a very big understatement and with keeping with Brian's spirit, I tried very hard to say what we would have liked to have said to you this evening. And to that extent, I tried to be myself in keeping it brief. (Power point presentation along with speech)

Brian Dillon is an ALS fighter, he always was, and he always will be. He will not surrender. ALS took him, but he lived his own life. For some of you who don't know what ALS is, it is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. It is a progressive neuromuscular disease. The upper motor neurons in the brain and the spinal cord, the lower motor neurons stop working. And when motor neurons stop working and sending impulses, the muscles waste away, causing paralysis. Approximately 15 people are diagnosed every day in the US and about 30,000 are living with ALS right here in the US. No one knows how or why someone gets it, there is no cure. A typical life span is 3 – 5 years from diagnosis and only one medicine is on the market right now that is available and it might only prolong your life 3 – 6 months. When Brian found out he had ALS, he didn't ask why me? He said, "Well, when life hands you lemons, squeeze hard and make lemonade. Don't add sugar, it will be sour, by hey, that's life. It is what it is." I am living my life fighting ALS. This is from his blog. His first blog entry was, "I honestly don't believe I will live long enough to see the day when they will find the cure for this disease, however, I do believe I can help raise awareness." He stared right out with

that. His family did rally around him, we all did Team Dillon. That is Brian, with us, the other siblings, there are 7 of us. The Dillon's, we are all ALS fighters. Team Dillon is a little team, as you can tell and that is only some of us and you can see Brian in the middle there at one of the walks at Walnut Hill Park for the ALS Association of CT. It affected Brian and his wife Monique dramatically, it changed their lives forever. Think positive, keep fighting. He carried on, no matter what the circumstances. He worked on his computer....he lost the ability to speak, but he was able to work on his computer and that certainly carried him through projecting his ideas and his ability to share his ideas. He made four You Tube videos. My ALS Tornado, My Emotional Rant, What is ALS?, ALS Destroys. These are still on You Tube and can be found under ALS fighter Brian Dillon. He made educational slides that he shared on Facebook and on emails with people who were new to the disease and people who needed to learn more about it or were asking questions. He shared his personal information. This slide is about his ability to breathe or his lack thereof. He had awareness slides, May is ALS awareness month and he shared slides. He made the news paper a couple of times. Once for his ALS awareness at Swift, we did an ALS gumball guess and the students learned about ALS. He also helped raise funds for others with ALS, he either went to or actively promoted them or made sure he shared the information so others new about it. He went to the Valentine's Plunge...just told us he was going. So we all went, in New Jersey, in February, and jumped into the Atlantic Ocean. It was 44 degrees and the water was 42 degrees. We raised a tremendous amount of money to help people with ALS. This flag that he is holding, my son his holding a demo of it, had over 100 names of people with ALS on it. He plunged all the way up to his knees; his health wouldn't allow him to go any deeper, although he really wanted to. He was nuts! It was cold. He won the fundraiser of the year award from the ALS Association of CT and that was him receiving an award at the ball. He met Richard Blumenthal there, although he had already met him through correspondence, he was sharing with him a business card that says please support ALS. And in front of him you will see what is called a "buggie board" which was his most common form of communication. He wrote on it, as it was easier to write than to speak. ALS is not contagious, but choosing to help can be. He always spread encouragement, if you have nothing else to give you can give a smile, you can give encouragement. He also let people know how he felt and he appreciated people encouraging him. He was a big supporter of ALS TDI which is a therapy development institute. They are one of the only institutions working solely towards the cure for ALS. He went to the Tri-State Trek which supports ALS TDI and he could not bike ride the 275 miles across three states, but he was there at the finish line cheering them on. He did the plunge several years in a row. And then we did the plunge last year, because of Hurricane Sandy, in March, right after his death. But we brought him there, there is a picture of his blanket and we shared his ashes, as he really loved the ocean. We need a cure for ALS. Brian advocated for that all of the time as we Dillon's do. The CT Chapter of ALS has walks three times a year. Brian chose to donate his brain and spinal cord to ALS research, he set that up way in advance of his death, knowing that could happen. And after his death, we were lucky to find out we could also donate his heart valves and skin, and so they were. We want an end to ALS and we would like students to consider a career in health, research and technology. There is so much help that is needed in each of these areas and ALS patients would be so grateful. And the people of Watertown and Oakville we ask

that you log onto the ALS Association of CT webpage...it lists ways that you can contact elected officials and encourage them to fund ALS research and advocate for ALS. Don't become discouraged, a cure is near. Keep a smile on your face and optimism in your heart. ALS fighters will not surrender. And we thank you very much for this honor. (Applause)

Dr. McDowell – We do have a plaque...when we take a break in a few minutes, this plaque will be mounted out in the hall, with the rest of the wall of honor, but if you want to hang onto it for the rest of the presentation?

Our next wall of honor inductee is Dr. Joshua Paul Hazleton - Joshua Hazelton graduated in 1998 from Watertown High School. He told his father that he always wanted to be a doctor. He worked and studied hard and received his doctorate in 2002. Dr. Hazelton is an attending Surgeon at Cooper University Hospital, Department of Surgery/Division of Trauma & Surgical Critical Care Unit in New Jersey. He has presented dozens of lectures for medical students and devotes his time doing what he enjoys and making a difference, which includes helping and caring for people in need. I have a statement that Dr. Hazelton sent that he asked if I would read this evening, which I am honored to do.

"I would like to thank the Wall of Honor Committee members, Dr. McDowell, and the Board of Education for this great honor. I apologize for my absence this evening. I know my mother is particularly disappointed that I could not be there tonight but I also know that she understands my commitment to my patients...after all; it was observing her dedication and an Emergency Medical Technician that ignited my interest in a career in medicine. In fact, my success can be attributed to a decision my parents made in 1985 when they left a small town in Waterbury for a larger town in Watertown....a move that was based solely on the chance for their three children to pursue an education in this school system.

Growing up in Watertown exposed me to some of the finest teachers in the state of Connecticut. I have fond memories of Baldwin School and sitting in Mr. Beauchamps office eating a cupcake...because that is what you did when you were in "trouble"....and for five years I had the opportunity to sit in classrooms of caring individuals who took the time to make sure the shy kid who was too embarrassed to admit he needed glasses was getting a quality education. Hemingway, Swift and eventually Watertown High School all provided experiences that shaped who I am today. I developed a love for math and science during these years and had teachers who perhaps saw something and helped me explore those interests. There is one teacher that I would like to mention. Mrs. Lynn Karr-Hassler had a profound impact on me during my senior year of high school. She was the instructor for the Certified Nurses Aide course; a class that helped me understand and appreciate the role of every member of the health care team. Even now, when I'm in the operating room with a critically injured patient, I remember to say "thank you" to everyone who touches that patient, regardless of their job description.

I am being honored this evening for my achievements in my professional life. I have worked hard to become a Trauma Surgeon and one of the busiest Level 1 Trauma Centers in the country. I have a passion for teaching and performing research at 2 medical schools in southern New Jersey. I am proud to work in an institution that is the primary provider for the poorest and

most violent city in the country....the need for quality health care is greater here than anywhere else. I don't mention the things that I have done to brag but rather to draw your attention to the two individuals that, without their love and support, none of this would have been possible. I ask that you recognize my parents, Evan and Elaine Hazelton, who are there tonight. By now, my mother is likely crying and my father is sitting there with a bit of a shy smile on his face. From them I learned humility, hard work, dedication, responsibility and how to stand up for myself. I have learned that nothing is impossible, even when you are told that it is. It is their pictures that should be going on the wall this evening. I simply got to where I am today by doing as they did and listening to what they told me....mostly listening to what they told me. I hope to visit Watertown High School early next year when I make a trip home to establish a scholarship for graduating students who choose to pursue an education in a health care field. Everything I have accomplished was because someone helped me along the way and I intend to give back and much as I can. Once again, thank you for this incredible honor." (Applause) We are going to take a break in a few minutes and show you where the wall of honor is and then a reception as well, but you can hang on to that until we do.

Mr. Buzzannco – As Dr. McDowell said, we will have a recess in just a few minutes so that we can congratulate these students that won these awards and get a chance to meet the families of the wall of honor inductees. I think you have noticed the theme tonight, with all of the students and inductees, is one of service, of putting others in front of self. So it is our honor to celebrate those individuals tonight. Before we have our recess, I would like to acknowledge we have many people in the room tonight that who were involved in Friday and Saturday night's play at the high school, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. If you saw it, you know it was absolutely fantastic. I would like you to help me welcome the people who are here with us tonight from the production staff. We have one of the student directors, Andrew Terzigni, he is here tonight. We also the set designer here tonight, one of the set constructors, the lighting supervisor here with us, the sound designer, and we have the designer of this playback and they are all in the person of Andrew Terzigni. (Applause) I mention that, only because while he gives an outstanding report from student council, I have a feeling he may underreport just how terrific this production was. I don't know if you got to see it or not, but it was not exactly waiting for (?)...its not two guys sitting around talking. There is a lot of moving parts in this production, hundreds of lines to be memorized, just constant motion and a lot of props. A very challenging play and it was mounted with an outstanding dedication and quality by Andrew and his team. It is just a pleasure to have him as part of this board. Another example of someone who is talented and gifted in so many ways. So Andrew, with that, there is your introduction for your report for student council this evening.

E. Report from Student Council Representative – Andrew Terzigni

Andrew Terzigni – Thank you. Last Friday and Saturday, the fifth play of recent years took place. It was attended by over 480 people between both nights. I'm going to try and be unbiased as I can here but it was a fantastic show. I can speak from being there every day for the

last three months, that every student involved did such an amazing job and the show they put on proved it.

Watertown High School is trying to advance the DREAM program and make it a part of the culture at the high school. Dr. Carnemolla wanted to figure out a way to make sure every student knows what the DREAM motto stands for and what they can do to be a part DREAM student. They decided on creating videos demonstrating what every letter of DREAM stood for. Last month was the letter D for demonstrating determination. For the months of December and January the letter is R for respect.

Mid term exams begin next week. They are being held before break again because the administration found that it worked better for students and teachers and allowed everyone to enjoy their vacations without the worry of exams.

Winter sports practice went into full swing last week. The first game will be the girls' basketball game on Wednesday and all other sports will have their first games either on or close to the 18th. On Nov 21st, ten students, Mr. Medic, & Mr. Valletta attended the CIAC Sportsmanship Conference at the Aquaturf. The conference was to provide leadership and sportsmanship training. Watertown was 12 out of 620 people from CT at the conference.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you for that report, Andrew. At this time, if there are no objections from board members, I will call for a ten minute recess to get a change to enjoy this terrific reception and give you time to take photos if you would like. We will reconvene at 8:15.

F. Public Participation

Mr. Buzzannco –Does anyone wish to address the board? Does anyone wish to address the board? If not, we will close our first round of public participation and we will move onto item G, Committee Reports.

G. Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair-No

Policy and Labor Committee, Mr. Eric Berthel, Chair-No

Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. Eric Berthel, Chair-No

Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair-No

Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair-No

H. Communications – Secretary – Mr. Nardella

Mr. Nardella – None

I. Minutes

Mr. Buzzannco – Are there any corrections or changes to the regular meeting minutes of November 25th, 2013?

Mr. Nardella – Mr. Chair, I would like to submit one correction. On page 16, section N, the comments that I made, actually, C.J Saraceno's name is spelled incorrectly, it should be Saraceno.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you for the correction, Mr. Nardella, are there any other corrections to the minutes of November 25th?

Agenda Item Number: I.1a
Subject: Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting – November 25th, 2013

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: I move that the board approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting on November 25th, 2013, as corrected.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: I.1b
Subject: Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting – December 2nd, 2013

Motion Presented By: Mr. Nardella
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Berthel

Text of the Motion: I move that the board approve the minutes of the special Board of Education meeting on December 2nd, 2013, as submitted.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

J. Superintendent's Recommendation and Report

1. Appointments – (Information Only)

- a. Ms. Marianne Pannoni to the position of Paraprofessional, Category #2 at Swift Middle School, effective November 25, 2013 for 25 hours per week at the hourly rate of \$16.82.
- b. Ms. Wendy Goodman to the position of Paraprofessional, Category #2 at John Trumbull Primary School, effective December 2, 2013 for 20 hours per week at the hourly rate of \$13.37.

2. Resignation – Information Only

Ms. Jane Blakeman from the position of Category 2 Paraprofessional at Watertown High School, effective December 13, 2013 for personal reasons.

3. Presentation – Bus Transportation Update

Dr. McDowell – Mr. Vincent Cappiello, Area General Manager at First Student Bus Company, and also the manager in town, Michelle, here and Mr. Cappiello is going to give an update to the board of education regarding first student transportation.

Mr. Cappiello – Thank you. You should all have the power point presentation in front of you. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come up and speak in front of the board today. We are excited about continuing our relationship with Watertown. We have been here for a number of years and in the community and we enjoy what we do. I want to continue that moving forward. I know for myself, I have personal ties here in Watertown, I have nephews that ride the bus here, Michelle is from Watertown and there are a lot of First Student folks that have ties here as well. It is important to us to remain in the community.

On the first page of your hand out, I just want to talk a little about our maintenance program. And some of the things that we do as a company to make sure that our buses are properly maintained. Our preventive maintenance program, we get it right by keeping the buses properly maintained and on the road. We use an electronic vehicle inspection report. It is also called Zonar. And it makes our drivers every morning before they go out and every afternoon before they go out to through pre trip on their bus before the bus leaves the yard. Everything from lights to tires to brakes. And then that gets reported back to a program in dispatch that lets us know if there is a bus that has an issue. Our technicians...we have a program in place where we incentivize our technicians to become ASC certified, which is an industry standard for maintenance. We offer them an additional .10 an hour for every ASC certification they receive. We pay for that test and if they pass it...they pay for it and if they pass it, we reimburse them and then they get the .10 raise. We continuously assess our shops, one thing we do bring all of our shops in the US online to the same program. Every shop is not the same, some have one bay, some have two bays, but the thought process is that if you are a technician in one shop, you should be able to walk into any shop and all of the procedures are the same. So if we need help here, if we have an emergency, they can step right in and help us out as we can with

someone else. We also created a maintenance website. You see Facebook and Twitter and all that, but this is kind of the maintenance answer to all that where the techs can go online and post different issues that they may be having and fixes that they have found. Everyone else in the country can get online and see if they can get an answer and figure something out. Our preventative maintenance program is every 90 days where one of the Watertown buses come in and is gone through head to toe. That is our policy and a state recommendation as well. We incorporate 168, I counted this morning, different check points that we check on the bus. And in some cases, our standards are higher than the state and federal recommendations. Our technicians complete both online and hands on training before they are allowed to service any equipment. We are currently 100% PM compliant both for our own policy and the state. Since January of 2013, we have had only four on road breakdowns and that is with ½ million miles traveled. They were minor items as well. Going back to the maintenance on the prior page, we follow the LEAN principles and you will see they talk about a 5S tool and that is part of setting our shops up the same way. It helps to sustain the shops and each shop is awarded a level for each level that they receive. There is silver, gold and bronze...once they achieve it, they go on to the next level. They increase their PM compliance or they increase their efficiency ratings.

Our focus program helps us to help you be more focused. It helps with payroll which is our single biggest expense. We can use it to track the drivers, we know where they are and when they are there, helps make more efficient routes. We keep track of the drivers and make sure the routes are running on time. If they are clocking in a few minutes late that means the route is late, so this way, they know we are keeping track of it and its not happening. Also if someone is absent, we are able to keep track of them that way and make sure all of the routes are covered. The next page is actually a screen shot of one of the buses in FOCUS where we can track the buses. As Michelle said, if some one is late, we can bring up a yellow dot when it gets closer to the time they are supposed to be here and when it gets to their time a red light comes up and we know they have not checked in yet and we need to get someone else on that run. The next slide just shows a bus with all of the technology and equipment that we offer and have on some of our vehicles. The child check mate system is something that forces the driver to go to the back of the bus at the end of every trip to check for sleeping children. They have to go in back and deactivate it and come back up front. We also have theft mate which ties into the child check mate. If you are on a trip or a charter, and someone enters the bus, and an alarm goes off. It is another way to keep our students and drivers safe. You will see something called my first pass child notification, we don't have that here, but it is available, and basically it is like a slide card for the students where they get on the bus and slide a card and it tells you that they are on the bus and when they get off the bus. It is in development right now. We have the safety crossing arms, everyone has seen those, that forces the child to walk around. One of the things that really helps the districts is our drive smart anti idling program. That allows us to track how long a bus idles for. It tracks idling time and speed. We get this report on a daily basis on anyone who idles over three minutes. It gives us the opportunity to go back to that driver to find out what happened. The less we idle the greener we are and the less fuel that is spent. And we have our computer web based maintenance and zonar. The last slide really just talks about drive

smart and what it does. I won't go into it all, as we talked about some of it previously. We have an honor role each week. Anyone who has a smart day, which is no idling and no speeding, they get on the honor role and we do something for them. It helps to keep everyone engaged. That is all I have and I appreciate the time.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you. Do board members have any questions?

Mr. Lambert – Idling can be something that is not the driver's fault. Say they pull up to a house or a stop and there is no one there, yet someone comes out of the house late and they have to wait for them, how is that controlled when it happens once or twice?

Mr. Cappiello – Do you mean if a student or parent is coming out late? (Yes) Typically the driver will come to us, we will call the school and the school will call the parent.

Mr. Lambert – So it is driver activated to you? (Yes) Because that will generally slow the whole route down. Once that happens in one spot, the rest are behind and later. Ok, so you are on top of that.

Ms. Crotty – I have a question on the increase of age of the busses and the new contract. What that will mean for increased maintenance on the buses...at what point in their age do you see an increase in maintenance?

Mr. Cappiello – Really with our program, we have seen busses go that have 200,000 just as good as when they had 80,000 on them. Really it is all about how they are maintained. A bus is a bus. If it is properly maintained, it is no different from your car. If you keep up with it and maintain it properly, then there is no reason a bus could not last you 12 – 15 years. Especially here, if you get up into New Hampshire or Maine, we have seen some rust issues at that age, but not too much here. That really is one of the only things that would force us to take a bus off the road. Otherwise, mechanically, with brakes and tires, it is just routine maintenance.

Ms. Crotty – I do have a follow up on the bus ages...is there anything on the interior of the bus or in the technology of the bus that is different between a 5 yr old bus in the fleet and a 10 yr old bus in the fleet?

Mr. Cappiello – Absolutely. I think some of the controls in the older buses, I don't want to say outdated, but not as technology savvy as today's. You have air doors now where you just turn a button and a door opens and some buses you still have to crank a door open. They are minor, yes.

Mr. Lambert – Just a quick question when it comes to older buses, like older cars, have you had any experience with the new liquid salt they are putting on the roads that are supposed to be eating up brake lines?

Mr. Cappiello – Not so much here, we may be experiencing that more up in New Hampshire and Maine and that area. They just started using that up here; it may not have caught up to us yet. But if it is going to eat a brake line, it will eat it if it's a 10 yr old bus or a 2 yr old bus.

Mr. Berthel – I just have a question on what the average mileage you put on a bus in Watertown each year.

Mr. Cappiello – We put in 100 miles per day. On average. From January to about a week ago, we were in the 500,000 mile range.

Mr. Buzzannco – Let me go back to the question on the age of vehicles, is there a difference in the number of on the road issues with a fleet with a maximum age of lets say 8 yrs vs a fleet of 10 yrs?

Mr. Cappiello – I would say no, just routine maintenance. I can't stress that enough, that is the key. If the bus is well maintained, it doesn't matter if its 8, 10, or 15 yrs old. I have contracts where there are no age contracts in CT and we run buses that are 12/13 yrs old.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thanks, another question that I have is that we are seeing bus companies in CT converting their buses from diesel to propane. Can you share with the board your position on that and any plans you may have?

Mr. Cappiello – We offer it, and we can help a district thought that process, but I don't know if in CT now if we have anything that is propane. It is much bigger out west. But it is an option we can work with our districts for.

Mr. Buzzannco – What is First Student's position on that? Does it reduce a districts cost to go from diesel to propane?

Mr. Cappiello – It is hard to say, only the initial investment in propane is a lot. The busses are more expensive. If a district has it and they are using it in say, the town vehicles, and they can incorporate the buses into that, it may be better for them, but the initial investment is quite high. Long term, maintenance on the buses is much better, from some of the studies that we have seen.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you....before we let you go, I want to remark on something. We talked about maintenance primarily tonight, but service is also a very important element of what a student transportation company does. I just wanted to share with you one example of that with the board...just a few days before school started in 2013; a request came in from a parent to the central office. She put in a request for a change in a bus stop. Not a change in the route, but asked if a bus could stop at a different location because a parent felt it was more convenient and safer for her child. Terry relayed that question to Michelle, about 10 in the morning, Michelle got in her car, drove over to the neighborhood where the mother lived, assessed the situation, came back, called Terry and said we can make that change without any problem at all. Terry got back to the parent before noon. That is one of the benefits of having a locally present

transportation company. Not only that, but having people like Michelle managing that company. I wanted to share that with you and thank you for that service and for what you do.

Dr. McDowell – Just one comment, that there will be language that says that if there are any buses that are having any problems, it is our call for First Student to replace that bus. And that was language that Vinny gave us. I asked the question and he said he would include that.

We have another presentation on instruction and best practice, Mrs. Parlato, our director of Director of Curriculum & Instruction, will present information about the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessments, including how the upcoming state standardized assessments mirror the knowledge and skills enumerated in the Common Core State Standards. Additionally, Ms. Parlato will explain how the curriculum revision efforts in the Watertown Public Schools align with the requirements of the Common Core State Standards as well as the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

Ms. Parlato – (Summary Only)

The state put out a power point on the standards so that all will have the same message. All standards are a statement of what students should know and be able to do in a particular grade or after a particular course. CT was in great shape and had good standard before Common Core. It is not as a dramatic a shift in teaching in CT as it is in some states. Since 2010, CT and 46 other states have adopted CCSS. There is a clear alignment between CCSS and college readiness and career expectations. Overall, it allows students to participate in a global economy; it is about applying knowledge and problem solving and a consistent and rigorous focus on high level skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language. Also in numeracy standards.

There is an emphasis in non fiction reading and text. As they participate through the grade level, they become more complex. Questions are no longer plot based or summary based, they have to do “close reading” to find evidence to back up the position they might have to take. Writing is about taking a side and back it up with evidence, there is also narrative and explanatory writing as well. There is an emphasis in speaking and listening as well. They need to be able to present back to others and take part in a discussion. These standards are also broken out for social studies, science and technical subjects. They must be able to understand complex text and perform complex tasks.

The math standards in K-8...there is a huge shift from procedural skills to understanding what they are actually doing. Rather than being able to procedurally (from memorization) it is building the focus on why we do this and how it applies. Fluency is also very important in not only speed but in accuracy. They will need to apply math understanding by solving real world problems and actively discuss the solutions. In grades 9 – 12, the same ideas apply. In word problems the emphasis falls on decision making and using numbers to make decisions. Again, based on real world events.

There are 8 practices that drive the common core for math. They are: make sense and persevere in math, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with math, use appropriate tools, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. (K – 12) As we update our curriculum, and align with the CCSS, these are being integrated. It takes very long time to get this done, but we do have a standardized template to follow and we are getting there. There are parent resources for all of this that can be found at www.sde.ct.gov. You can click on the CCSS link and then on grade by grade parent guides. A second resource can be found at www.pta.org and click on parent guide to student success.

The new test we will be taking this year is called the Smarter Balanced Assessment or also known as SBAC. We need to make sure we assess properly, and more rigorously, than CAPT and CMT. It is important to note that with CAPT/CMT, Connecticut was already above the rest of the states as we used open ended questions on our tests whereas most states used only multiple choice. Our students are in good shape having them already using open ended questions. As for results, we used to have to wait for these results until the next school year, whereas with Smarter Balance we should have them in the same school year. (by the second year of the test)

The testing is online only. This helps when students need more time, eventually it will also have talk to text as well. The score on the test should align with where they are in their studies, their course grade, and in the upper levels, to prepare for college. For this year, it will be a field test, trying out new things to see what works and what does not. For the 2014 – 2015 school year, it will be the actual test.

It is important to note that when selecting the testing process, it was not just the state department of education that chose. Teachers actually used the test to make sure it could be understood by their students and aligned with their teaching and their course. Grade 11 testing is what will show their college readiness. We start testing in 3rd grade and end in high school. Summative testing in grade 11 is in the last weeks of school. In the 2014-2015 testing, it will be adaptive testing. If an answer is right, then the next question is harder, and so on. When a question is wrong, it will go back. It will go back and fourth until they get to a 50% ratio. This year, it will be just questions only. These tests had higher education involved to make sure the questions aligned and to make sure we are assessing properly. Also, next year, there will be interim assessments, like a quiz, before the test to see where the students are throughout the year.

For the test, they will have online resources, videos, pictures, prompts, and then take all of this information and do something with it; a performance task. We will still get student level reports this year. It will still give a level of college readiness, even though the answers will not change this year based on right or wrong. For special populations, the reading will go down to a second grade level, if needed. No matter what the grade, the test will meet the individual child where

they are. This is completely different from CAPT/CMT, where the child would get frustrated that they could not understand the test.

We are ready with our computers, our servers and our bandwidth. If we had to take the test tomorrow, we could. An example of Smarter Balance was shown for 3rd grade, where a story passage was given, tools were given to mark the text by circling, and then the question is asked. The students then type their answer in the space provided. This is an example of an open ended question. A second example for math was given for fifth grade. They do get scrap paper to do calculations, but the point was to show numeracy and literacy together to give an answer in an open ended format.

Another example was given linking ideas with information. You will need to determine the main idea of the test, recount key details and explain how they support the main idea and use information gained from illustrations to demonstrate understanding. (Where, when, why, how) Again, this is a 3rd grade example. Students will also have a panel discussion on the test after using all details to answer the question in an opened ended presentation.

A question was asked about a matrix by grade to show where we stand with the alignment for CCSS. We can get that in a month or so. Another question was asked about how we know we are ready and there is a website we can hook into to with our system and we get a printout with usage. We are over 75% in recommended use, which is very good. All of our computers have the proper browser and we ordered new headphones as there are listening to videos on the test. The next question dealt with how we are preparing if the scores with SBACK are radically different than CMT or CAPT, how will we make sense of that? Is it because of curriculum or the test? How will we evaluate that? The answer is to know that the new curriculum is not fully written yet and won't be until next year. And, this year is the field test, we it will hard to determine if it's the test or curriculum. I would put more stock in the 14-15 test, but the year after is the real example.

It was touched upon how to get the children ready so there was no shock value. We should note that CMT/CAPT was written totally different and was truly a year behind. We need to point that out to students so they understand if scores radically drop. For teachers, they will be able to see where a group of questions were answered so as they can see where a class does well and needs improvement. It will not be single questions for this, but areas or groups. It is a work in progress.

Colleges will look at the SBACK scores and will be on the transcripts. It is not known if field test will be sent to secondary schools, but CAPT will be sent as they are taking both tests. (Juniors) Another question was asked on who is responsible to mandate a multistate testing endeavor and it was broken down to show that a district is responsible for the curriculum, the measure of how well you wrote it and taught it is that test. Local decisions for a national test. Finally, it was asked what was being down to prepare the students that used to use a pencil and a bubble test and going to a full blown computer test. Students have been given different rubrics to help

them in down time in class. In the middle classes they are using things in their computer classes to help and there is a pre test that we will use to ready them.

K. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Buzzannco – This is our last regular meeting before the holidays and the gift I will give you is the same one I gave you last year, and I don't think you will mind, a very brief report. I would just like to wish everyone on this board, the superintendent, every member of our district, every parent and student a very happy holiday and a very healthy and productive new year. It is a season of giving and the employees of our district don't just limit their giving to just the holidays. Our children are the blessed recipients of your gifts every day. For all you do for our children, for feeding them, keeping them safe, keeping them warm, for managing all the behind the scenes work that goes on with a district of this size, developing their minds and their characters, we thank you. I want to especially thank you for smiling on the outside when you were having the kind of day where you really weren't smiling on the inside. And many of us have the job where we can choose to lay low on certain days; school district employees don't have that kind of job. Members of this district put children first, however, and I want you to know how grateful I am for your dedication and professionalism and for your love of our children. Please enjoy a well deserved Christmas break. Thank you and we will see you all here in January.

L. Action Items – Items to be Approved by Consent

Agenda Item Number: L.1

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Out of State Field Trip to Orlando, Florida

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve field trip to Orlando FL from February 6th, 2014 – February 10th, 2014 for a total of 16 Watertown High students.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: L.2

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of an Extension and Amendment of the Current First Student Transportation Contract.

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Berthel

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the board approve a bid waiver to extend and amend its current First Student transportation contract for five years, through the 2018-2019 school years, with a total price increase of 11% over the five year period.

Discussion: Mr. Buzzannco – What is on the table tonight is approving an extension for a bid waiver for the First Student contract over the next five years. Watertown Board of Education follows a competitive bidding process where we present requests for proposals to receive bids for contracts over a certain dollar amount. There are exceptions to that competitive bidding process where it's in the districts best interest to work with a single source provider. One of those exceptions is when the nature of the services to be performed are best provided by one source because of that source's expertise or prior knowledge. In the contract we had with First Student, all is aligned with that waiver to our policy. I think you might have sensed that tonight. You may know that our central office not only out sources the transportation function to First Student, we also out source the management of that transportation. Determining the routes, balancing the fleet, addressing questions and answers and requests from parents. As such, First Student has an extensive knowledge, of Watertown's particular needs and has developed an expertise in serving those areas. That is why, in my view, the exception applies. Even a competitor who eventually get on par with the knowledge and expertise that First Student has, would need an extensive amount of time to do that. With First Student's performance over the last decade, we have just had a high level of performance already with our existing source of support there. Additionally, First Student operates right in Watertown. A competitor is unlikely to have that advantage of operating out of Watertown. That is what happens when you have that transportation right in town that allows First Student to attract local employees, it allows the company to service our children quickly and more efficiently because the buses are coming and returning from the heart of town. It also makes First Student much more responsive to our needs. With the example we said earlier with Michelle getting across town and getting an answer back within an hour is a typical response we have seen from them. Is there any further discussion or questions at this time?

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: L.3a

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Family Medical Leave of Absence

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that, under the Family Medical Leave Act, the Board approve the request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence for Ms. Christine Shortsleeve, Physical Education teacher at Swift Middle School, commencing February 4th, 2014 for approximately six weeks, with the use of accumulated sick time and a doctor's note to return.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: L.3b

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Family Medical Leave of Absence

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, under the Family Medical Leave Act, I move that the Board approve the request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence for Ms. Erin Mathews, Fourth Grade teacher at Judson Elementary School, commencing December 6th, 2013 for approximately six weeks with the use of accumulated sick time and a doctor's note to return.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: L.4

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the Acceptance of Gifts

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Berthel

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board gratefully accept the donation of a gift card to Swift Middle School from Labonne's Market with an estimated value of \$50.00.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

M. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments

Mr. Buzzannco – Do any board members have any comments or future proposed agenda items for this evening?

Mr. Nardella – Mr. Chairman, through you? I would just like to echo your sentiments and wish everyone in the community and everyone involved in the board and the district the best holidays and a very safe new year.

N. Public Participation

Mr. Buzzannco – Does anyone wish to address the board this evening? Does anyone wish to address the board? If not, we will close our second round of public participation and ask for a motion to move into executive session.

O. Personnel

Agenda Item Number: O.1
Subject: Move into Executive Session

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the performance of the Interim Superintendent of Schools. Attending the Executive Session will be Josephine Cavallo-Rosa, Guy Buzzannco, Eric Berthel, Ray Nardella, Leslie Crotty, Janelle Wilk and myself, Tom Lambert.

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

P. Action Items – Adoption of Items to be Approved by Consent

Agenda Item Number: P.1

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of an Amendment to the Interim Superintendent's Contract

Motion Presented By: Mr. Nardella

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Berthel

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the board approve an amendment to the Interim Superintendent's contract such that the Board of Education, upon the conclusion of the Interim Superintendent's employment under the contract, agrees to pay the Interim Superintendent at his per diem rate of Seven Hundred Twenty-five Dollars (\$725.00) for each unused sick/personal day.

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Q. Adjournment

Agenda Item Number: Q.1

Subject: Adjournment

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Ray Nardella
Secretary of the Board of Education

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary