

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: November 09, 2015
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

Members Present: Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman
Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary
Mr. Victor Vicenzi
Mr. Jim Gambardella
Mr. Robert Makowski
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi
Ms. Cheryl Albino

Members Absent: Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa

Others Present: Dr. Bridget Carnemolla – Superintendent of Schools
Karina Mancini – Student Council Representative
Jill Browne – Business Manager

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

Ms. Crotty recognized all Veterans in the auditorium and asked them to lead us in the salute to the flag.

B. Salute to the Flag

C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

D. Award Recognition

The Watertown Board of Education would like to congratulate the following John Trumbull Primary School Students who were recognized for Student of the Month for October:

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>First Grade</u>	<u>Second Grade</u>
Eloise Hogrefe	Genevieve Grohs	Kamryn Geary
Avani Hellman	Juliette Molina	Camryn Geiger
Chloe Quadrato		Hannah Van Stone

E. Oath of Office**Newly elected members are sworn in**

Ms. Lisa Dalton, Town Clerk, swore in newly elected members to the Board of Education. They include: Tom Lambert, Rob Makowski, Cathie Rinaldi, Vic Vicenzi, and Cheryl Albino.

F. Reconvene Regular Meeting**G. Election of Officers**

Sec. 10-218. Officers. Meetings. "Each board of education shall, not later than one month after the date on which the newly elected members take office, elect from its number a chairperson and elect a secretary of such board and may prescribe their duties. The votes of each member of such board cast in such election shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours, excluding Saturday, Sunday or legal holidays, and shall also be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which taken, which minutes shall be available for public inspection at all reasonable times. If such officers are not chosen after one month because of a tie vote of the members, the town council or, if there is no town council, the selectmen of the town shall choose such officers from the membership of the board. The chairperson of the board of education or, in case of such chairperson's absence or inability to act, the secretary shall call a meeting of the board at least once in six months and whenever such chairperson deems it necessary or is requested in writing so to do by three of its members. If no meeting is called within fourteen days after such a request has been made, one may be called by any three members by giving the usual written notice to the other members". The organization, according to this statute and policies of the Board of Education, shall be as follows:

A Chairperson of the Board

A Vice Chairperson of the Board

A Secretary of the Board

Agenda Item:	G.1a
Subject:	Election of Officers – Chairman of the Board
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Wilk
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of Leslie Crotty as the Chair of the Board of Education.
Discussion:	Mr. Lambert - Many of us on this Board of Education have had some time to evaluate Leslie Crotty as our

Board of Education Chairwoman and how she responds to the challenges of this office. She has spent countless hours attending board sub committees, representing the board of education in various meetings with the town council, negotiating union contracts into the early morning hours, and creating our board of education meeting agendas with our Superintendent. During her past role as Board Chair, she has always gone out of her way to give every board member a voice and every discussion of a motion that has come before this board. She has mentored new board members as a kind and compassionate collaborator who gently steers them into areas that will help obtain personal growth while they gain trust in their own abilities. We need a proven leader as our next Board Chair and Leslie has the experience and leadership skills necessary to continue the important work of this board. But, Leslie's most important asset is she is a concerned parent and has a personal stake in the education of all of the students of our district. To this end, it is my honor and distinct privilege to place in nomination Leslie Crotty as the next Chairwoman of our Board of Education.

Opposed: None
 Abstained: None
 Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: G.1b
 Subject: Election of Officers – Vice Chairman of the Board

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk
 Motion Seconded By: Ms. Rinaldi

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of Tom Lambert as the Vice Chair of the Board of Education.

Discussion: Ms. Crotty – I have had the pleasure of working with Tom for a little over two years, including some campaign time. And in that time, he has become to mean more to me than I probably ever could have imagined. He is a voice of reason in chaos, he is one to

shine the light on others and not himself, he has a huge amount of experience that he shares at appropriate times in very insightful ways, he has been a very strong support system and mentor to me, and carries on the work of this board in an exceptional way that we all could learn something from. So, it is with great pleasure, that I also support him being the Vice Chair. Sometimes, I feel like he holds me up. So, thank you for nominating him.

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: G.1c
Subject: Election of Officers – Secretary of the Board

Motion Presented By: Ms. Rinaldi
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Makowski

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of Janelle Wilk as the Secretary of the Board of Education.

Discussion: Ms. Crotty – I have had the pleasure of working with Janelle for more than two years. Together, we have campaigned, and were victorious in our elections. Together with Guy and I know from Guy, he has great confidence in Janelle’s ability and her background that she brings to the school district. She is extremely passionate about Watertown Schools, having been born and raised and gone to school in this community, and she brings that passion to all that we do. I am very thrilled to have Janelle to be an officer of this board.

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

H. Minutes

Agenda Item:	H.1
Subject:	Minutes of the October 26 th , 2015 Regular Board of Education Meeting
Motion Presented By:	Ms. Wilk
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Vicenzi
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of the minutes of the October 26, 2015 regular meeting of the Board of Education as submitted.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

I. Report From Student Council Representative – Karina Mancini

Good evening, here are this week's school updates: Students in reading classes at JTPS are thinking more about what is happening in a story and using punctuation to guide their expression. In math class, students are working on addition and subtraction facts to 12, and thinking through math problems that add or subtract 0, 1, or 2.

At Judson, Student Council is hosting a Food drive and Turkey of the Year contest, where students pay 25 cents to put a feather on their favorite teacher's turkey. The teacher with the most feathers will be recognized as "Turkey of the Year" and all proceeds from this event will benefit the Watertown Food Bank. Judson also received donations of dictionaries and 25 chrome books from the Rotary Club. They are very appreciative of these generous donations. At Polk school, sponsored by Watertown Social Services, they have begun their annual Giving Tree again this year. Tags with items for families in need throughout the community are hung in the tree for families and staff to take and make donations. Also, Polk's Fun Run, sponsored by Student Council, profited a total of \$3,597.07. The money raised will go towards purchasing much needed items for the school. There will be another Fun Run hosted by Polk in the spring. At Swift, computer education classes are creating an online newspaper, which includes articles of interest for young peers. Students practiced technology skills, and language arts skills. Also, 10 Swift athletes will be participating in the Junior NVL leadership day, selected by their coaches. They will be doing team building activities about healthy choices to share with their peers.

Watertown High School will be hosting a Veteran's Day art show on Tuesday, November 10th, from 3-4:30 pm. Students throughout all Watertown public schools have prepared artwork to

display for the Veterans that attend. WHS National Honor Society will be providing refreshments and the Band will provide music. WHS will also host the 8th grade open house on Monday November 16th for all students interested in finding out more about what WHS has to offer.

J. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments (Information Only)

- a) Ms. Beth Adams to the position of Kindergarten Yellow Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- b) Ms. Catherine Calabrese to the position of Kindergarten Blue Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- c) Ms. Hannah Collier to the position of Second Grade Yellow Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- d) Ms. Sarah Conroy to the position of First Grade Green Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- e) Ms. Jennifer Gulli to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 2, at Watertown High School, effective November 9, 2015, at the contractual rate of \$14.01 hourly, Step 1, 30 hours per week.
- f) Ms. Kathryn Kovacs to the position of Special Education Teacher at Watertown High School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being hired on an annual contractual salary of \$59,127.00, prorated (127 days/\$40,371.66), Step 8, MA degree, per the WEA contract.
- g) Ms. Maryellen Lafferty to the position of First Grade Yellow Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- h) Ms. Jessalyn Laffey, to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 2 at Watertown High School, effective, November 9, 2015, at the contractual rate of \$14.01 hourly, Step 1, 30 hours per week.
- i) Ms. Jennifer Longo to the position of Second Grade Blue Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- j) Ms. Lydia McCarthy to the position of Second Grade Green Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- k) Ms. Monica Quadrato to the position of Kindergarten Green Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- l) Ms. Dorothy Rinaldi to the position of Webmaster at Polk Elementary School, for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$2,278.00.
- m) Ms. Judy White to the position of First Grade Blue Pod Leader at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2015-2016 school year, being paid the contractual stipend of \$506.00.
- n) Ms. Deborah VanSteenbergen to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 2 at

Watertown High School, effective November 4, 2015, Step 1, at a rate of \$14.01 per hour, 30 hours per week.

2. Grant – Informational Item

The 2015-2016 Title III, Part A, Subpart 1 - English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement Grant application has been completed and submitted to the State Department of Education for approval. The total amount of the Title III Grant is \$10,460.

The grant monies will be used to attain the services of a tutor to work with students who are English Language Learners, and to purchase instructional supplies for use with these students.

Dr. Parlato wrote the grant.

3. Presentation – 2015 Test Results

Dr. Parlato, Director of Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development will present a report on the 2015 test results as follows:

- Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Science
- Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Science
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Smarter Balance Language/Arts and Mathematics

Dr. Parlato – We will begin this evening talking about some of the types of testing that are in this report. We will talk about smarter balanced consortium results also known, as SBAC. In 2015, that was given in grades 3 through 8 and also grade 11. For the upcoming school year it will be given in grades 3 through 8 and in grade 11 students will take the SAT as the mandatory required test by the state. Smarter balanced testing is given in 18 states in our country and the tested subjects are language arts/literacy and mathematics. A very important difference with smarter balanced testing is that it is computer administered and it is not paper/pencil testing. We will also talk about the Connecticut mastery test also known as the CMT Science. Students in grades 5 and 8 took the CMT and students in grade 10 took the Connecticut academic performance test or CAPT. Both of those tests are paper/pencil administration and not on the computer. Two additional tests that will talk about are high school level tests and one is the SAT and also some advanced placement testing. These are college-level studies while they are still in high school. One thing you'll hear a lot about tonight are DRG's. These are district reference groups and Watertown is in district reference group D. In the state of Connecticut we have DRGs A-I. The factors that make up a district reference group are listed on the slides. They look at median family income, percentage of families below the poverty level, single parent families, non-English speaking families, percentage of homes that have a bachelors degree or higher, and then the percentage of

parents in white-collar or higher management positions. In DRG, there are 24 towns including Watertown.

Here are the headlines for our testing in grades 3 through 11 for 2015 administration: we saw strong performance in language arts/literacy within our district reference group. We are very high in grade 3 and overall higher than we spend in the past years in language arts/literacy. On the other hand, mathematics performance remains an area of concern. It has been an area of concern for the past 8 years, but we are fortunate in that we have some very definitive action steps in place that are addressing mathematics across our schools. Additionally, there has been some underperformance in science, but again we have action steps in place that will address that. One of the issues with science you will see, is that the state has yet to address a set of standards for science performance. Because of that districts throughout the state are floundering to figure out what curriculum should be used. Our SAT scores fall below the state average in all 3 areas. It is important to note that there is a new version of the SAT that will be given in March which allows us to make sure that our curriculum is aligned with the new SAT. The state will fund the taking of the SAT for all of grade 11. At the same time, we are taking a look at our advanced placement curriculum and figuring out what ways we can best address students' needs in these classes to increase their achievement.

Looking first at the smarter balanced testing, there are 4 achievement levels. The state's expectation is that the students achieve a level of 3. (There are several slides shown to where the towns in are DRG stand along with the state average broken down by grade and all are explained) The 1st slide shows that 67.3% of students in grades 3 met the state standards in language arts/literacy. This placed a 9th in our DRG. That is the highest performance we have seen in quite some time. That is outstanding work. In grade 4, 61.3% meeting standards in language arts/literacy. The placement in the DRG is lower but that is still a good about meeting the state standard. In grade 5, over 50% of students meeting the standard of above 3. Grade 6, 63.9% of students meeting the standard. Grade 7, 67.4% for a 13th rank in our DRG. Again, a very solid performance. In grade 8, 55.9% for a 17th rank in the DRG. Again, more than 50% of our students ranking with a 3 or 4 and above the state standard. I want to pause and say this is the 1st time the students have taken a computer-based test and that is very important to note and to see that level of performance, which was excellent, and in addition, the questions on these exams are of a more challenging level that students have seen on the standardized test ever before. It is a very good sign that students are achieving at this level, having never taken a computer test before and having questions that are much more rigorous that they had seen on standardized testing before.

Grade 11 smarter balanced is a bit of an anomaly. There is a bit of a movement in the state for grade 11 students to opt out of testing. It became a buzz on social media and so we had 65% of students not take the smarter balanced in grade 11 by parents opting out. Unlike other districts, we didn't force the issue and force them to turn the computer on and click them through the test. So we only had 35% of our students take the test which impacted our scores to a certain extent. So please take the grade 11 scores with a grain of salt. As opposed to the other grades, we had 99% of our students in grades 3 through 8 take the test.

Now switching over to mathematics, and beginning with grade 3, you can see we are ranked 8th in the DRG with 63.8% of students meeting standard. Grade 4, is 36% of students meeting standards, keeping in mind of course that is the 1st time they have taken a test on the computer with mathematics that is very common core aligned. The grade 3 students have had common core aligned curriculum since kindergarten and the grade for students had it for a year less. Grade 5, 26% of students meeting standard. Grade 6, 31.7% of students meeting standard. Throughout the state, language arts/literacy scores were much higher for just about every town. We have concluded that because the math is so different in the way that it is taught may be one of the reasons why the scores are where they are where in language arts/literacy, we have always taught in a similar fashion. With the common core, there is more nonfiction we read, but the teaching and the concepts and content of math is very, very different and it is taking students some time to catch up with that kind of teaching. Grade 7, 35.3% of students meeting standard. And in grade 8, 32.4% meeting standard. Grade 11 is not a number I would even consider because I think it was even more than 65% of our students who did not take the test. It was probably closer to 70% who opted out. Looking at CMT and CAPT Science, their performance level have different terms, where the state expects that you get either goal or advanced. The number I will report is the percentage of students who made goal or advanced. In grade 5 science, 44.2% of students at goal. Grade 8 science, 70.2% of students at goal and a rank of 20 in the DRG. The 8th grade science scores have been moving up incrementally over the last 5 years. That is a nice movement in the DRG and then having 70% of students at goal is fantastic. Grade 10, 44.4% of students at goal. For science, we do have a few steps. Taking a look at the curriculum in each grade level, trying to figure out how we can align with what is written in our curriculum with both the common core and what the state is calling the next generation science standards. We are mapping are learning targets at each grade level to make sure we are not having duplication in what we teach. It also helps us to make sure we don't have holes in what we teach based upon the standards that are being put forth.

The next few slides are for high school assessments. The 1st is for the version of the SAT that was given to us now. As you recall, the highest score you can get on each section of the SAT is 800. You can see our placement in the DRG in relation to the state average. Our high score in SAT reading is 482. SAT mathematics you can see up on the slide remembering the highest score you can get is 800. SAT writing is a score that, when students very often enter college the writing score is something university necessarily looks at, however it is still something we report out on. Again, 800 is high score and you can see where our placement is in the DRG. We do have the next steps for the SAT. Because it is going to be our standard testing for grade 11, it will require us to make sure what we are teaching, essentially from grades K-12, aligns with the SAT. The good news is, the SAT is a logical progression with the grades 3 through 8 testing. The test was rewritten knowing that it did not align with the common core state testing. At the high school level, we will take a look at testing format so they are not surprised when they take the SAT. Although 800 will still be the high score, the number of responses students have may be reduced. There will also be no penalty for guessing anymore. That will change the strategy the students use while taking the SATs. There is an

SAT prep course offered at the high school and will make sure that our tasks and assessments are appropriately challenging for students as they move through the grade levels. The last bit of testing will talk about is advanced placement testing. The point of AP is to provide students with college level content while they are still in high school. AP is a nationally recognized program and you can go to about any state and find a wide variety of AP classes are offered in tests that are given. AP exams are scored on a 1 through 5 scale, where 5 is the highest. Depending on a score a student receives, they can receive college credit, depending on the score received and the institution to which they apply. For a score of 3 or higher, credit is usually granted, for a less competitive college, where a 4 or better is usually taken on for a more competitive college. We are fortunate that we offer a wide variety of AP courses. (A list of courses is shown) A slide shown to show the student averages of test scores for 2013 to the present. There were 280 exams taken in 2015 at Watertown high school in a slide showed all of the percentages of scores. The goal when you analyze AP tests is to enhance participation. You want more students to have that experience with college levels courses at the high school level and you also want to increase your scores. Taking a look at course curricula is very important in making sure that in our AP courses what we are teaching is what is being taught in any school in the country. The AP teachers at Watertown high school participate in a learning community to make sure they are teaching the course appropriately and that it is challenging enough for the students. We work through the Counseling Department to encourage students to take AP classes and AP teachers will begin to his other schools to see how they are teaching their AP classes to make sure we are aligned with schools that have particularly higher scores that are also in our DRG.

Ms. Crotty – Q – Are the students encouraged to take the AP exams, and by encouraged I mean do they take steps to motivate the students to understand the importance of taking the exam after they've taken the class? **A** – At the beginning of the year, there is a huge push in motivations for the student. The reason you are in this class is to potentially earn college credit. **Q** – So for the kids I just want to have a strong transcript and not take the AP exam, do we work to encourage them and do we know the percentage of the kids who take the exam versus how many kids just take the classes? **A** – Overall, it depends on the class. I don't have the numbers with me. **Q** – In your 1st bullet point on your next steps for AP, you talked about the curriculum for the freshman cohort, I assume that also talks about honors courses to prep them for AP courses as well? **A** – That is correct.

Mr. Lambert – Q – Should the student have to qualify to take an AP course? **A** – They may have to meet certain prerequisites. AP calculus is a good example, as there is a certain progression of mathematics in order to qualify for AP calculus. **Q** – So in other words they have to qualify they can't just pick an AP course? **A** – It depends on the course. Math is very particular, but a student can opt to take AP US history based upon history courses they have taken. **Q** – Do the counselors get involved in helping them choose courses? **A** – They do, of course. And that begins in 7th grade, making sure that if you take for instance, this math it will open up this pathway for you as you approach high school.

Ms. Crotty – Q – I would like to piggyback off that for a moment. Let's say you are in an AP history class. The student is a good student, average scores comparatively to the school as a

whole, and decides if they want to challenge themselves in an AP class. Is that something we welcome? Is there a prerequisite in terms of her recommendation from a prior teacher to take an AP level class? And how does that child that affect the amount of curriculum that that instructor can cover in a year's time based on where those kids are coming from? Does it take longer if we have students that are not used to that level of intensity? Does it affect the ability to finish the curriculum in a school year? **A** – An AP course is almost like a script every single day. AP US history is a good example, because you start in the colonial times and you have to get as far as you possibly can by May. A student isn't going to slow that down because that train has started rolling and it will be incumbent upon the student to seek extra help or participate in peer study groups, or whatever that student has to do to catch up. But it cannot slow the curriculum down an AP course.

Dr. Carnemolla – Just to make sure we are clear, one of the founding principles of AP courses were as they were implemented over the last 8 to 10 years, was to increase the number of students taking AP courses. The original idea was to bring as many students as possible, and going back to the prior question, any student may self select an AP course, with very few exceptions, where usually they are mathematics based. Possibly a science course also. That said, all students who are there may not be there for the same reasons. Some may be there because they are intent on taking the AP exam and getting that for 5 score so that they cannot have to take that course when they get to college, freeing up their schedule, opening up the possibilities, and reducing the amount of money that is paid out in tuition. There will also be the students who are there simply because they are looking for the challenge of the college-level advanced placement material. Many of the students, as the course was on, may decide not to take the exam. Some of that is dependent upon the track the student is on. For example, a student who is looking to move on in STEM, and is in a number of AP courses, and has a lot of work and a lot of studying, will make priority choices on which tests to take. Certainly we are interested in improving these AP scores, looking at the curriculum to the pacing, but with that also said, but we are not getting a true picture of is how many students are actually taking these exams. For instance, looking back on one of these slides with a student who got a 4 on a science course, that student might of been the only one who took that test. One of things that is skewed about what we are looking here tonight is, although this is the average score, there could have been 5 students that took the test or could up and 60 students who took the test.

Ms. Rinaldi – **Q** – I have a question about the SAT tests. All of 11th grade will be taking the SATs come March. In the past, juniors were able to take the tests more than once. Will that be something they can still do? **A** – Yes, so the required state paid for SAT will be in March. After that, the students may take it as very times as they like at their own expense. I would also like to make a comment, as someone who administered the testing; it is very difficult for the students who are taking on the computer. Not to mention how to maneuver the computer, with the mouse and the calculator and they are not used to doing this at all. We are working on bringing up the scores, but I know for students taking it for the 1st time it was not easy. And also some people may not know that if the questions are 2 parted, they have to get both parts correct in order to get credit for that question as well. It is also a test

in typing, where they have to type the response, so students may not be proficient on the keyboard yet, and that also impacts the scores as well in a way.

Mr. Lambert – Q – I am sure that the elephant in the room is a question of, all things considered, why are the other towns who took the same test as our kids, getting such better scores than us? **A** – I would say that there are significant consequences to the numerous leadership transitions in this district over the past 8 years. We have been triaging, in my time in the last 3 years, what is our most areas priority, what with its 1st? That was language arts/literacy and you can see the results.

Ms. Crotty – Q – What percentage of students in different areas... In these percentages, where do we hope to move to? Where do we want to see the numbers move up to? **A** – Because the language arts is an pretty solid shape now, and we now have a math instructional specialist, so in terms of the triage, math would be next and then science is a very forgotten subject. To tell you the truth, we have to get literacy and math straight before we even look at science and social studies. You can see the science scores are not acceptable, but that's what we have to work on as we prioritize over time.

Dr. Carnemolla – I would like to take it a little to the ground level. The district as a whole has been doing a lot of work for years. I don't want to distract from the fact that we had administrators working hard in the buildings and teachers working hard every day. Teachers worked hard every day as standards were changing, the targets were changing, and without a lot of information about what the tests were going to look like from the state. If you look back at the scores, and look at where we are in 3rd grade versus where we are everywhere else, it's very telling as to where we are as a district. Those third-graders have had the advantage of 2 solid years changes that have been implemented. They've had changes to their curriculum which was actually written, technology improvements, as we cannot lose sight of the fact that even before 3rd grade, the students have to have continual access to computers and be doing some of the work that is expected of them on computers, not just on paper. Because otherwise, they will come for this testing and it will be quite difficult. We sat through this, as adults, doing the math on the screens, not on paper, and even just that is a huge difference. When a student has to go from paper and pencil testing all of these years to sitting in front of a computer, is a huge change for them. Looking over what is change, we have literacy/language arts curriculum that is in very good shape right now for grades K through 5, and we are still sending people out for training, but in math, as Janet said, we had to say where we going to focus 1st? The choice is made to focus on literacy 1st a couple of years ago. Now as you know, we are shifting and getting to a better place for literacy. Does that talk about the higher grades as well? No. And that's because we had a get our house in order from the ground up. We've been working hard at grades K through 5 so that we start making a transition from grades 6 through 8 and then through grades 9 through 12. Also we do need to keep people where they are, as Zach it's lost along the way. We get something going and then someone else comes along, this is one of the reasons why we need to retain staff. We all know where we are headed and as long as we keep that ball rolling, we can expect to sit here 3 years from now and see scores that look much better. Regarding foundations, yes the reality is we bring students into AP courses, and they are not necessarily

well-prepared and math for the 11 years prior, we can expect to see the scores were seeing. We have to make sure we are better preparing our students for the day they come in the door in kindergarten until we get them to the high school level. Science is a perfect indicator of this, because as Dr. Parlato said, even last year the classrooms in grades K through 5 didn't know what to do in science. Trying to put this all together at once is a difficult task, and as disappointed as I am to see some of the scores, no one wants to be at the bottom of our DRG, it's not reflective of where we have been and how much growth there has been going forward and I think we can see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Gambardella – Q – I have a few. Which of these tests does the faculty have advanced exposure to for the student to take them? **A** – There are smarter balanced practice examples that teachers know about. This year they gave us a larger body of practice tests and segments of the tests for students and teachers to learn from. **Q** – Is it possible for faculty to be familiar enough with the smarter balanced test to be able to teach to the test? **A** – They teach to the skills of the test, and the skills of the test are aligned with the common core state standards. They don't teach to the test, in terms of each individual question. **Q** – What I am saying is what they have enough knowledge of the test in advance, to be able to know which questions would be on a test? **A** – No. **Q** – How about the CMT? **A** – Its impossible to know which questions are on the test. We know which areas are on the test, for instance Earth science, but in terms of specific questions, no. Just the types of questions, and that some are open ended and some are multiple-choice, but not specific questions. **Q** – I noticed that there were a few towns that tended to bounce around grade to grade in the same subject area, and then there are other towns that did not seem to bounce around. The state scores tended to be fairly stable. Do you have any thoughts on why that would be? **A** – Well, would say to reiterate the earlier point, I imagine if anyone of those districts had someone in place to make sure they had a direction for curriculum instruction and assessment over the past 5 or 6 years, I mentioned that the answer. I imagine it's the stability of who's in charge and planning the direction.

Dr. Carnemolla - I think it is the overall point of having a picture, roadmap, and buying the materials that teachers need. Some of which we still didn't even do this past year to be completely honest. We had math materials that didn't exist in certain grades, where we made that a budget priority last year, and to make sure we had some of the same things school to school. Professional development for the teachers, we can't say enough about the fact that we have to keep our eye on where we are headed and support it with all of our resources. I'm not just talking about the money, but the priorities and the people that we put in the seat to do the jobs, to coach the teachers, to oversee it, it's not going to happen overnight. We need to continue down the path that we party started. In math alone, teaching math has completely changed in the past 3 years. Even more in the last 2 years since the smarter balanced tests. What the teachers need to teachers changed, and therefore professional development continues to evolve so that they can teach the students and give them the help they need. The standards of changed, and to Mrs. Rinaldi's point, it's not just about getting the right answer in math, it's about the student showing that they have learned the process that is aligned with the common core conception and how they come up with the

answer. If they cannot do that, on the smarter balanced, they are losing the point even if they got the answer right. Not to mention, they have to use the mouse in the right places and type out their response.

Mr. Makowski – Q- What type of timeline are we looking at the overall movement in these results? As Dr. Carnemolla mentioned, it is not an overnight result, is it a 2 to 3 year thing is in a 5 to 10 year thing? I think that is something, as we look at the big picture, we want to make sure that you can gauge how we are doing. **A –** I think what we hope to see is incremental growth every year throughout the grades. I think the time it takes will depend a lot on what we do in the next few years, especially with setting priorities about where we focus our time and effort and our money. We have to continue with replacement of technology because there is no way to teach to the standards in any of the grades without it. We have to continue writing curricula from grades 5 on in math, we have to continue aligning with what they do from one grade to the next across the district, which we have been lacking in in recent years. I think in the next 3 years we should definitely see improvement across the gamut, especially in grades K through 5. **A –** From a board perspective, I think responsibility lies also to make sure we align our goals with what we are hearing from our professionals is needed to achieve those goals. We have to make sure we are in full support of that as a board and that we continue to make sure we align our budgetary goals along with that.

4. Superintendent's Report

I want to speak a little bit today, about the work Ms. Archibald has been doing, who is our math specialists for grades K through 6. I have been fortunate I have been out and able to see some of it with my eyes. Ms. Archibald has been going school to school working with all of our K through 5 teachers and is starting to branch out a little bit into grade 6. We do want to fill that gap a little into grade 6 to make sure we work with the alignment. At JTPS, she has been modeling lessons that use our new math workshop instructions and their delivery method. This is a plan that needs consistency and all teachers need access and training. She has been continuing, at our request, to analyze grades K to 2, to analyze and understand if and when we need to take our series to grades 3 to 5. We put the grades 3 to 5 series in at Polk and Judson this year. She has an electronic resource folder for all teachers to access and they can get to it from their computer. It has materials for many lessons and this helps the teachers put together those materials that they need to teach to the new curriculum.

In grade 6, she has been meeting with the teachers during their PLC time to review all of the units that they are putting into place. This past week, I happen to see Ms. Archibald co-teaching math lesson based on some of the new standards and a 6th grade class at Swift and she was doing a fantastic job. The teachers tell me all the time she is a godsend is doing a great job with the new curricula, materials, and putting things together to make a new standard. She has been out there working with teachers every day. She is not sitting in an office somewhere going over data, she has hit the ground running with us and has been out there working. Likewise, we have continued with our Columbia training over at JTPS, where this year we sent several teachers to attend workshops at Columbia University, to support

the readers and writers workshop's across the grades of K to 2. In addition, we are bringing trainers from Columbia University out to John Trumbull and they will spend 6 days there this year and demonstrate lessons, actual classrooms, and then the teachers will practice the same lessons with the guidance of the person from Columbia. This program is going very well and while it has been a tremendous amount of work for our teachers, they have gotten a lot out of it and you cannot ask for much better than one of the top teaching colleges in the United States, to come and work with our teachers, and is going very well. The teachers that have gone out to Columbia come back and share what they have learned with their other teachers. They follow a train the trainer model.

We have continued on with the exploratory committee for full-day kindergarten, continuing to look at programming and the impact going forward. She also went to the PTO meeting to discuss the implementation on full day kindergarten. We had a full day of professional development for teachers on November 3, and all of our teachers from pre-K to 12, or every teacher participated in a session about learning targets. We had our building administrators do those in our own schools. This is a new way of doing some things in Watertown also, where we as an administrative team where all of our time spent together is focused on professional development. Every other week, Dr. Parlato and I are with the administrators, and the key there is systemic improvement where all of us are on the same page with our own knowledge and the administrators bring it back out to their buildings.

I wanted to take a moment and thank all of our administrators for delivering that information back to their own buildings as we are learning together, and now our administrators are in our experts bringing much of the PD back to our buildings and they are doing a great job of it. In the past 2 weeks, I believe I have been in every school at least one day. I have been out and about quite a bit, nothing has really changed much there. I was at the senior center last week, where they had invited me back to the cards to the troops, where is a joint effort with the VFW to get all the cards shipped out for our troops in Kosovo. I would also like to bring up, as you know we started last year bringing our seniors up to our play. The board was instrumental in our spring show also. We have it scheduled that the seniors can attend the play for free on December 3. We will have refreshments for them at 5 o'clock and then the play will start at 530. I have heard back from the senior center that there is an issue that they do not have a van driver. It is an issue because many of our seniors don't drive anymore or cannot drive at night. That would've put a dent in how many seniors can actually make the play. As you know, we released our 2 vans last year, so I let them know I would come back to the district and see if I could find a volunteer. I was able to get one from our district to drive the van and I am happy to be able to say we are able to do that. I am happy that was able to be worked out as our seniors love coming to the play. The high school also ran a successful Café Delights program, which is something that are transition students, some of which are in special education, some of which are in regular education, where they run a restaurant, mostly deserts, out of the high school for a few hours and get a good turnout and raise a lot of money. It's a great community engagement exercise as we get so many business owners and parents to come in.

K. Public Participation

None

L. Report from the Board Chair

This evening I wish to welcome our 2015 Watertown Board of Education and I thank you all for your commitment to our schools and to this community.

While each of you may not yet have had the opportunity to familiarize yourself with all of the Policies of this Board, Members are required to adhere to them. We are required to conduct ourselves in a fair and impartial manner, and must carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the law. We must refrain from interfering with the implementation of a Board policy decision by the administration; refrain from interfering with the duties of any school official; and refrain from divulging to anyone any aspect of matters considered and discussed in executive Session. The authority of the Board is specific, as we concern ourselves with the questions of educational policy, and not with the administrative details of the district's operations.

There is a variety of research that documents the value that school boards and their members add to the development of an effective public education system. Over the past 5 years The Center for Public Education has shared research that provides what they believe to be the best practices for new and veteran board members. Among other things, they found that effective Board members in high-performing districts have attitudes, knowledge and approaches that separate them from other Boards and policy makers and led them to publishing The 8 Characteristics for Effective School Boards. I will share those with you in written form now. Their research concluded that "school boards in high-achieving districts hold a shared vision about the capabilities of both students and staff—they believe that more is possible and are motivated to improve results for students. They are policy and accountability driven, focusing their time and energy on governance-level actions related to student achievement and classroom instruction, and spend less time on operational issues. The Center for Public Education found that poor Board governance is characterized by factors such as micro-management by the board; confusion of the appropriate roles for the board member and superintendent; interpersonal conflict between board chair and superintendent; and board member disregard for the agenda process and the chain of command.

The research showed that Effective Boards engage in goal-setting processes that can drive action in the district to improve. They align resources, including staff professional development, around those goals. They are data savvy—using data to both diagnose problems and to monitor and drive continuous improvement efforts. They communicate with and engage staff and community and work well together as a team and in collaborative leadership with their superintendents. And, they commit to their own learning, building their own knowledge and skills that it takes to govern.

In this environment of fiscal constraints, a desire towards high achievement for all students, and a national environment focused on accountability, we must strive to be even more effective for every day that we are provided the opportunity to serve on the Watertown Board of Education.

I am confident that together, we will provide this community with a Board of Education that is a blue print for future success.

M. Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair – No

Policy and Labor Committee – Mr. Victor Vicenzi, Chair, – No

Budget and Finance Committee – Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair – No

Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair – Yes

We had a meeting tonight and we discussed the following: the generator at JTPS, the facilities needs and priorities for the 2016 2017 school year, future project list, lighting efficiencies, and the Judson elementary school tree damage.

Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Robert Makowski, Chair-No

N. Communications – Secretary

None

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

Agenda Item: O.1
Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the Acceptance of a Gift

Motion Presented By: Mr. Makowski
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Rinaldi

Text of the Motion: Madam Chair, I move that the Board accept the donation of two (2) Samsung Chromebooks in the amount of \$506.12, to Judson Elementary School Form DonnorChoose, a non-profit organization, and that a letter of thanks be sent to the donor.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

P. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments

None

Q. Public Participation

None

R. Executive Session

Agenda Item: R.1
Subject: To move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the collective bargaining agreement between the Watertown Education Association and the Board of Education.

Motion Presented By: Ms. Rinaldi
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Makowski

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board move into Executive Session for the purpose of a discussion regarding the collective bargaining agreement between the Watertown Education Association and the Board of Education. Attending the Executive Session will be Leslie Crotty, Janelle Wilk, Vic Vicenzi, Rob Makowski, Jim Gambardella, Cheryl Albino, Bridget Carnemolla, Jill Browne, Tom Lambert, Alisha DiCorpo, and myself, Cathie Rinaldi.

S. Regular Session

Agenda Item: S.1
Subject: Action regarding the collective bargaining agreement between the Watertown Education Association and the Board of Education

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Wilk

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30th, 2019 between the Watertown Education Association and the Board of Education as presented.

T. Adjourn

Agenda Item: T.1
Subject: To Adjourn the Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Wilk

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that we adjourn.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board