



**Cromwell Public Schools**  
***Placing Student First***

**CROMWELL BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Regular Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 28, 2020**  
**Minutes and Motions**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Camilleri at 7:01p.m.

**II. Roll Call including Introduction of Administrators and Student Representatives**

Board of Education

Present: Mr. Camilleri, Mrs. Cantwell, Mr. Flanders, Mrs. Kelleher, Mrs. Lamberson, Mrs. Post, Mrs. Russ, Mr. Matrullo (arrived at 7:31pm)

Absent: Mrs. Merli

Administration

Present: Dr. Macri, Mrs. Binnington, Mrs. Burke, Mr. Butwill, Mrs. Cocchiola, Mrs. DiFiore, Mrs. DiMauro, Mr. Kuckel, Mrs. Lynch, Mr. Litwinczyk, Dr. MacLean, Mrs. O'Leary, Mrs. Wyskiel

Absent: None

Student Representatives

Hunter Vooyoys - CHS Representative

Absent: Clara Rojas- CHS Representative, Paolo Messina and Aubrey Zimmerman-CMS Representatives

Mayor- Mr. Faienza

Town Council - Mr. Henehan

Board of Finance - None

**III. Approval of Agenda/Additions and Deletions & Chair's Review of Agenda Highlights**

Mr. Camilleri proposed to revise the agenda by removing Item XII. A. Policy 4118.11 under Policies- Second Read. Policy will be submitted at the next meeting on February 11, 2020.

Motion to Approve the Agenda as amended made by Mrs. Post, seconded by Mrs. Cantwell  
Vote: Unanimous.

#### **IV. Celebrating Our Faculty/Staff**

Ms. Cocchiola presented and recognized **Carol Aksterowicz and Marissa Humphrey**, both 7th grade science teachers at CMS. Ms. Cocchiola stated that they were instrumental in getting the Kindness Challenge organized and kicked off at the Middle School. Mrs. Aksterowicz and Mrs. Humphrey have been involved for a couple of years with Dr. Visone and the Teacher Leadership Academy. This year they wanted to build community at the middle school. A staff survey was given and Mrs. Humphrey wanted to focus on kindness. Mrs. Humphrey found the Kindness Challenge, which originated in California, about eight years ago, and now it is in 150 countries. The Kindness Challenge focuses on a week of activities for the students such as wearing ties to be tied together with kindness and shine bright with kindness, wearing bright clothing to promote kindness, to name a few. Mrs. Humphrey spoke and wanted to find ways to incorporate kindness and through examples of opening a door, saying thank you, doing simple gestures. Flowers and raffle tickets are given to the students.

#### **Celebrating Our Students**

**Olivia MacDonough, Adrianna Faienza and Austun Visone** of CMS were student ambassadors for the Kindness Challenge. They were invited out of the 20 ambassadors at CMS to speak at the Board meeting. Austun shared implementing sticky notes on student lockers with kind messages. Olivia shared one of things was different colored tables in the cafe. Students were assigned a color at random to mix up the student experience. They were able to meet and converse with other students they may not have met or known. Adrianna stated students made hearts for Covenant Living with messages to wish them a good day or Happy Valentines.

Ms. Cocchiola thanked the students and teachers. It was a great way to start a Monday and she looks forward to the rest of the week. Mr. Camilleri also thanked the teachers and students and everyone that had a role in this event. Mr. Camilleri stated it is a vital effort and is important not just in the schools but the broader community too. It is timely, helpful and important to start to spread the word. Dr. Macri stated the project is very difficult to put together and appreciates the leadership of Mrs. Aksterowicz and Mrs. Humphrey and to involve student ambassadors was amazing. Dr. Macri is very grateful to have this opportunity with Central CT University and Dr. Visone. Dr. Macri thanked Mrs. Aksterowicz and Mrs. Humphrey and the students involved.

#### **V. Correspondence None**

#### **VI. Public Comments (2-3 minutes per speaker– general information or agenda items)**

Mr. Camilleri invited Mrs. Neumon to explain the red shirts that the many teachers in the audience were wearing. Mrs. Neumon stated she is the E.A.C. President, as well as a science teacher at CHS. The “Red for Ed” movement is a nationwide movement which gained traction a few years ago. It is to show the support of education and students and show unity for the teachers. Mr. Camilleri appreciated the support and is happy that the partnership and collaboration is going in a very helpful direction. Mrs. Neumon commented that it has been a very positive start to the school year and is really happy with the way things are going and looks forward to the future.

#### **VIII. Report from Student Representatives**

Hunter Voos stated students took midterm exams last week. For four days, students took two exams each day, and all their final scores will be in PowerSchool by tomorrow, January 29th by 8:00am. Students in Mrs. Randazzo’s UConn calculus class started their UConn exam today, January 28th and Thursday, January 30th. 16 students will sit for the exam and will receive 4 UConn credits. They met on Sunday morning to finish studying. The second semester began yesterday for high school students. Many seniors are excited and scared to begin their last semester of high

school and to finalize their post-secondary plans. A few seniors took the opportunity to graduate early and will rejoin their classmates at graduation in June. The prom committee has been busy planning the prom. Recently the junior and senior class voted for a starry night themed prom, and the committee is creating invitations and centerpieces, and working with Saint Clements Castle to arrange other decorations. There are only four months until the prom, on May 16th, and the students are getting excited. Students took club photos. The next family meeting for the Greece/Italy trip is on Monday, February 10th at 6pm at CHS, the nurse will deliver information about the mandatory medical form. Ms. Smolka notified students and families via google classroom and email. The boys' basketball has a record of 6-4. Although it was a close game, they unfortunately lost against East Hampton last Friday. They have a game today, January 28th away at Haddam Killingworth. The girls' basketball has a record of 9-3. Their last game was also against East Hampton, which they won. They have a game going on right now against New London. Hockey had a home game yesterday they won 3-0. Their record so far is 8-2. Their next game is tomorrow, January 29th, against Eastern CT Eagles. The indoor track team is busy getting ready for shorelines. They had a meet on Friday where some kids qualified for their events. Matthew Pepe was 1st team defense all Pequot football honored at the Aqua Turf Club this past Sunday.

Mr. Camilleri asked Hunter if he wanted to comment about the budget proposal of having students- rather than the District-pay for AP testing and if students would pay for the testing. Hunter felt that it would be expensive but it would not discourage him to take AP classes but might discourage him from taking the exams.

#### **IX. Report of Liaison from the Town Council and Board of Finance (focused on issues of interest to the school community)**

Mayor Faienza had the honor of participating in the Kindness Challenge on Monday at Cromwell Middle School. He said it was a great event. He noted that he issues a proclamation that officially kicked off the week and made this officially the Town of Cromwell great kindness week. Also challenged students and the community for kindness to be shared not only for this week but always. Mayor Faienza thanked teachers, student ambassadors and everyone that took part in this event.

Town Council updates were given on ECS. A joint meeting of the Board of Finance, Town Council and Board of Education will be held on February 20th at 7:00pm at ECS. An agenda will be published shortly. Encouragement was given for the community and employees to learn about the process and attend the meeting.

An ordinance change for the winter parking ban is being proposed. Currently it starts in November and ends in April. There is no parking during certain hours. Looking to change the ordinance to potentially only have bans in effect related to weather issues.

Mayor Faienza shared that the Town is in the process of settling a new policy for a fund balance. Currently there is no cap or bottom line for the fund balance. It is funded very well and probably around 20% which is high. The Board of Finance are proposing a cap of 17% and a floor of 15% be implemented. The Board wants to have at least 60 days of capital funds should there be a catastrophic event. The Town now has a capital fund which will be used for capital improvement projects for the town. For economic development, a major announcement will be announced soon regarding a major corporation moving to Cromwell.

Mr. Camilleri commented that Mrs. Petrosky-one of Mayor Faienza's high school teachers- will be retiring. Mayor Faienza commented that she is a great teacher and wished her the best of luck. She will be missed and is a great asset to the town. He shared the important impact she made on his high school years.

**X. Superintendent's Updates and Responses to BOE Comments/Action Items from Prior Meeting** None

**XI. Presentations of Students, Staff and Third Parties** None

**XII. Policies- Second Read and Possible Approval**

A. Second Read and Possible Approval: Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified – Nondiscrimination – Policy 4118.11 from CABE

Potential approval of this policy was removed from the agenda to be considered at the February 11, 2020 meeting.

B. Second Read and Possible Approval: Students – Student Attendance and Truancy – Policy 5113.2 from CABE

Motion to approve Policy 5113.2 from CABE made by Mrs. Cantwell seconded by Mrs. Russ. Vote: Unanimous.

C. Second Read and Possible Approval: Students – Student Records: Confidentiality– Policy 5125 from CABE

Mr. Flanders stated this policy is covered under state and federal statute and having a policy pertaining to the law may add to confusion of the law as amended.

Motion to approve Policy 5125 from CABE made by Mrs. Cantwell seconded by Mrs. Lamberson. Vote: (5) Opposed: Mr. Camilleri and Mr. Flanders, Abstention: Mr. Matrullo.

D. Second Read and Possible Approval: Students – Student Conduct – Policy 5131 from CABE

Motion to approve Policy 5131 from CABE made by Mrs. Kelleher seconded by Mrs. Cantwell. Vote: (6) Opposed: Mr. Flanders.

E. Second Read and Possible Approval: Students – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments – Policy 5131.7 from CABE

Motion to approve Policy 5131.7 from CABE made by Mr. Flanders seconded by Mrs. Cantwell. Vote: Unanimous.

**XIII. Old Business-** None

**XIV. New Business**

A. Action: Approval of Minutes and Motions – January 14, 2020 meeting

Motion to Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes and Motions of the Board of Education- January 14, 2020 made by Mrs. Post seconded by Mrs. Kelleher. Vote: Unanimous.

B. Proposed Education Budget 2020-2021

Mr. Camilleri discussed that this presentation is for a proposal and no vote will be taken on this presentation during this meeting. The budget discussion is one of the most important

during the year and encouraged the feedback, comments and questions in between meetings be sent to Mr. Camilleri and Dr. Macri so questions can be addressed for the next meeting. Mr. Camilleri also noted how important it is to have input from the community on this budget process.

Dr. Macri thanked Mrs. Burke for working very hard with the team to put together a budget that is a necessity not a wish list. Dr. Macri also thanked her mentor, Dr. Patricia Charles, for her guidance. The budget binder was presented to the Board last week for review. The goals of the budget is very much aligned with the district improvement plan.

Mrs. Burke explained the binder which is organized into different sections for each of the schools, special education department, staffing benefits and tuition, professional development and curriculum, central administration, system wide facilities, capital outlay and information on grants. Details of the summary of the different objects were also included. Documents were prepared by the Principals, Mr. Litwinczyk, Mrs. O'Leary and central office and a summary outline with budget history from prior years was included.

At Mr. Camilleri's request, Mrs. Burke explained the process of the budget and explained that typically the first meeting is presented by the Superintendent. A proposed budget is presented and high level information is given. Several meetings to follow will be on February 11th and February 25th which are additional meetings for clarification and questions. The Superintendent's budget becomes the Board of Education's budget and will be presented to the Board of Finance on March 26th. By this date a decision will need to be made on the budget by the Board of Education to give enough time to present it to the Board of Finance.

Dr. Macri talked about the importance of transparency and will share and present a proposed budget for the 2020-2021 school year. A PowerPoint presentation was reviewed to the Board with an explanation of the different line items. Major budget drivers are salaries, benefits, transportation, tuition, which includes special education and magnet schools, energy and state mandates. Budget summary was reviewed from past years. Proposing for the 2020-2021 school year is a 5.62% increase. The components and major factors for the budget are contractual obligations, tech software, copier contracts, licenses, transportation, professional technical services, SRO's and property services. Only a 4-5% of the annual budget is put towards instruction, supplies and materials. Each budget object was reviewed and the proposal for the following positions were presented: 2 social workers, 1 ESL teacher, 1 world language teacher, a College/Career Advisor for CHS and a Chemical Hygiene Officer-stipend. Reductions include eliminating printers in classrooms at ECS, payment for AP exam testing, proposed culinary room renovations at CHS. Current cuts do not include the elimination of any current staff positions.

Cost avoidance measures were presented. Some examples are putting off maintenance items, student computer maintenance fee to be charged, review Dattco contract, reduce legal fees, internal PD and training, CIRMA may have free training to provide for staff. Reduced printing and mailing. Mail machines from Pitney Bowes can reallocate funds and get new machines that are more efficient. Students pay for AP testing. Cromwell is one of the few districts fully funding these AP tests. Proposal to shift the cost to families to pay for the AP testing, however, any hardships for families in need would be provided. Discussion to send a survey during the summer to the students that attend magnet schools to find out the reasons for leaving was had.

Mr. Flanders commented regarding the capital funds and possible collaboration to combine the needs of the schools and the town. Using town resources instead of using outside contractors was discussed. Mrs. Cantwell requested for a proposal for the location of need for the 2 proposed social workers and wanted to know the needs of each school regarding a

social worker. Mr. Flanders commented on the need for the College/Career Advisor and suggested having a school counselor. Mrs. Lamberson suggested having this be an administrative assistant position but didn't know enough about the role of the advisor. Mrs. Lamberson asked for a description of the position. An explanation was given by Mrs. DiFiore and Dr. MacLean on the Capstone project required for the current freshman, Class of 2023. A discussion regarding the difference between the uses of a Capstone College/Career Advisor vs. hiring another school counselor to address this initiative took place with BOE members and school/district administrators. Mrs. Russ asked if there is written guidance for the students on implantation of this project. Mrs. DiFiore stated they have established a curriculum for Capstone and is ready to have the staff implement this requirement. Mr. Flanders thanked and appreciated Mrs. DiFiore and Dr. MacLean on the explanation and clarification of the Capstone project. Mrs. Lamberson wanted information on having a Social Studies teacher added for the Middle School. Mrs. Lamberson was concerned that one was not in the current proposal. Mrs. Cocchiola commented on having 1 additional Social Studies teacher would help alleviate the numbers but she would have to look at the schedule to see if Focus and other exploration piece would remain in the schedule. Mr. Matrullo wanted clarification on the Magnet School costs for tuition and additional services for students. Mrs. Burke explained the line items and explained it is a cost to the district. Data of grade level students attending magnet schools was requested. AP course fees were discussed and data was requested regarding the tests, scores and number of students before making a decision to remove from the proposed budget.

Mr. Camilleri asked a general question about the arts and athletics program. He has asked Dr. Macri for information on overall spending (and, if available, per student funding) for these two important areas.

Mrs. Russ asked Mrs. DiFiore if the world language teacher position will relieve the stress that is on the current teachers and Mrs. DiFiore believes it will help. Mrs. Russ asked Mrs. Cocchiola if the Focus and Enrichment would remain in the schedule for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at the Middle School for next year under the proposal and Mrs. Cocchiola stated that due to the incoming student numbers the Focus and Enrichment portion of the schedule would have to be removed. Other budget questions by the Board were asked to the specific school administrators and answered by them. Student assignment books were recommended to be online for the handbook portion and possible elimination of them in the future. Hunter commented that google classroom for assignments is not as effective and explained the benefit of writing the assignment. Organizational skills and study skills as well as writing down an assignment for homework is a benefit to most students. Another benefit is the communication it gives between home and school. Mr. Butwill will provide information from teachers on the use of the handbooks for the next meeting.

Mr. Henehan discussed getting an annual report/memo and it is used to discuss the opportunities where there might be some synergies of the town regarding paving, working on the baseball fields, soccer fields, mowing the lawn is all a headline that gets done together. The spreadsheet will be shared by February 25th.

The Board requested the administration present the financial impacts of having 4 social workers for the district (and data to help the Board understand how many are truly necessary) and 2 social studies teachers for CMS to review the cost numbers with these positions to have a comparison.

Dr. Macri stated that as the Superintendent of Schools, her number one priority is students and staff. Dr. Macri hopes to engage more community members and officials to understand the value of education and the necessity of the budget proposal.

Mrs. Russ is extremely grateful for the work and effort Mrs. DiFiore put into the freshman class. The freshman students and parents have felt a difference coming to the High School and felt the staff was prepared for them. Mr. Camilleri stated he believes the Board of Ed's consideration of the financial impact to the taxpayers is an important part of the job. Wants to make a proposal that the Board is comfortable with not only to meet the educational needs of the students but also is something that can be advocated to the public. Mr. Camilleri thanked Dr. Macri and her team on the extraordinary job of preparing the presentation and the team work from other employees in putting this together and being open and transparent about where the priorities are.

[The 2020-2021 Superintendent's Budget Proposal PowerPoint Presentation](#)

**XIX. Public Comment (Agenda items only – maximum of 3 minutes per speaker) None**

**XX. Topics for Future Agendas and Possible Action to Approve Additional Topics-**

July 14- Characterization of the impact of Magnet Schools and management of the costs

<i>February 11</i>	Proposed Education Budget 2020-2021
<i>February 25</i>	Winter Student Data Review
<i>March 24</i>	Set 2020 Graduation Date
<i>May 12</i>	Out of State Field Trips
<i>June 9</i>	Food Service Program – Milk Bid Approval
<i>June 9</i>	Class of 2020 Post Graduation Plans
<i>June 9</i>	Stipend Approval for 2020-2021
<i>July 14</i>	
<i>August 11</i>	Board's Evaluation of Superintendent
<i>August 11</i>	End of Year Board Reports 2019-2020

Motion to Approve the Topics of Future Agendas with the addition to the July 14th meeting made by Mrs. Russ, seconded by Mr. Matrullo. Vote: Unanimous.

**XXI. Comments, Updates and Announcements from Board Members and Administrators**  
None

**XXII. Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 10:36 p.m. made by Mr. Flanders, seconded by Mrs. Kelleher. Vote: Unanimous.

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:36pm**

Respectfully submitted,

*Alessandra Corvo*

Alessandra Corvo  
BOE Recording Clerk