

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Board of Education Meeting**

Meeting Date: May 11, 2020
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: REMOTE MEETING

Members Present: Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman
Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary
Mr. Robert Makowski
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi
Ms. Diane Bristol
Ms. Cindy Eastman
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa
Mr. Jason Malagutti

Members Absent: Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman

Others Present: Dr. Rydell Harrison –Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business Manager

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

B. Salute to the Flag

C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

D. Minutes

Agenda Item: D.1
Subject: Minutes of the April 27, 2020 Regular Board of
Education Meeting

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes from the April 27th, 2020 Board of Education meeting as presented.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion passed

E. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments – (Information Only)

None

2. Transfers – (Information Only)

None

3. Resignations – (Information Only)

None

4. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Harrison – Board members, at our last meeting I shared information about phase two of distance learning. During phase two, we are focused on providing more live learning opportunities like mini lessons for the entire class, small group instruction, for tier II or tier III intervention groups, question and answer sessions during live office hours, or telehealth services led by our social workers, school psychologists, speech teachers, occupational therapists, and our physical therapist. During this phase, we are also focused on providing direct instruction for new concepts for using teacher created audio and video recordings. At our Admin Council meeting this past week, our administrators shared examples of what they are seeing since this new phase began during their virtual walkthroughs. They report that teachers have been finding creative ways to connect with students and have been implementing many of the tools that they learned during last week's professional learning sessions. Based on feedback from the staff, we see that teachers have been learning from their colleagues and have responded positively to seeing examples of how their virtual tools that we have been talking about have worked across the district. In rolling out this phase, we are intentionally focused on live opportunities particularly for students who students that may be struggling academically. And so while our overall participation continues to remain above 96%, which is very strong, in many cases, we have been...the amount of live connections that we have with some of those target groups, is not where we would like it to be. Our teachers and principals have been making calls and talking to parents and some of

our administrators have even done home visits where they are (socially distant home visits) to engage with our students and to get them on board. We will continue to do that and find more opportunities to connect with our students and particularly those students that may have been struggling. We also continue to find the best ways to support our families and making sure we are connecting them to resources. We recognize that this period is not just about supporting students and their academic world, but thinking about some of the challenges that families may be having during this time with their own illness or health concerns and making sure we are doing everything that we can to connect them to the needed resources.

Also, at our last meeting, the board approved the updated grading proposal which will shift our high school grading process to a pass/fail framework. We also included a pass+ in our proposal and each of those categories had a number grade that was connected to them. These numbers will be used in calculating the final grades at the end of the year for year end courses and also for semester long courses. After Dr. Parlato shared the approved plan with the Watertown High School community and families, she received some feedback regarding the pass+, which was being converted to a 95, in the initial proposal that was approved. Dr. Parlato and I discussed this last week and with some of the concerns that she was hearing from some of the families and also from our students. I asked her to draft a revised proposal for me to review, which she did, and we are meeting to discuss this tomorrow. So I just wanted to let you know, I will be following up with you regarding that discussion to talk about any next steps. Our district, like other districts around the state, we are navigating through these uncharted waters. It is really important during these times that we are relying on feedback that we are hearing from our families and students and making any updates and changes that are necessary. So, I just want to take a moment and say how much I appreciate our students and our parents who have reached out to share their thoughts and concerns on this, on distance learning, on the number of issues....and I also want to thank our administrators for being willing to make revisions when necessary because ultimately our goal is to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students.

You will notice on your agenda tonight, there are no resignations or hires at this point.

F. Award Recognitions

Dr. Harrison - Tonight we will be recognizing many of our exceptional students. While we wish that they could be recognized by the BOE in person, we hope that they know how truly proud we are of all that they have achieved. Throughout the presentations this evening, we will take a moment to share a little more about award recipients that are from the senior Class of 2020. We'd first like to recognize our Board of Education Student Representative, **Jordan Arnold**. It has been a pleasure having Jordan serve as the student representative on the Board of Education for the 2019/2020 school year. Always thoroughly prepared, Jordan has diligently fulfilled his duties on the Board and we thank him for his service. At each BOE Meeting Jordan has reported on the goings on at each of our 5 schools in the district, and never missed a meeting unless it was for academic or athletic reasons. As we will hear later in the meeting, Jordan has chosen to be involved in many organizations that serve others, and we are very proud to have had him as a colleague on the Board of Education. Thank you, Jordan, for your dedication and commitment to our schools, we wish the best of luck in your future endeavors

and look forward to hearing good things about you as you continue your education in the Mechanical Engineering Program at the University of Connecticut Storrs.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Student Leadership Award

Mr. Makowski - The Watertown Board of Education wishes to congratulate the following students who were chosen by their principals to receive the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Student Leadership Award. Students were chosen based on their exceptional leadership skills. We are pleased to announce our 2020 award winners:

Swift Middle School:

Lana Kolba - Lana is an outstanding member of the 8th grade class at Swift Middle School. Lana has a superior academic record and is President of the Swift chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. She is involved in many school clubs including Student Council, Peace Pals, WOA, Spanish Club, and is the Secretary of Leo Club. She proudly represents Swift as a member of the Swift Band, Jazz Band Ensemble, Bucket Band, and Saxophone Ensemble. She is also a member of our Cross Country and Unified Sports Teams. Outside of school, Lana is a member of the Young Marine's Organization where she earned the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, the Watertown Parks and Recreation Spring and Summer Cross Country Conditioning, Nutmeg Striders Outdoor Track and Field, and has completed over 100 hours of community service. We are proud of all of Lana's accomplishments.

Jason Hanis - Jason is an outstanding member of the 8th grade class at Swift Middle School. Jason has a superior academic record and is a member of the Swift chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. He is an active member of WOA, the Leo Club, and Spanish Club. He proudly represents Swift as a member of our Swift Band, Jazz Band Ensemble, and Bucket Band. He is a member of our Soccer and Unified Sports teams. Outside of school, Jason is a Boy Scout who has volunteered his time scouting for food, participating as a summer camp volunteer, and Bags for the Homeless. He enjoys hiking and camping and we are very proud of all of Jason's accomplishments.

Watertown High School:

Hannah Jack: Hannah participates in numerous service organizations at Watertown High School, including Link Crew, Interact Club, World Language Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, and National Honor Society. She was selected to participate in the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council as well as a student discussion facilitator for the Anti-Defamation League's "Names Can Really Hurt Us" Assembly Program. Hannah has participated in the All-State Music Festival and the All Eastern Honors Choir, and she is an active participant in the Watertown High School Theater Program. Hannah is also a member of the Watertown High School Varsity Field Hockey Team. Academically, she has earned honor roll status each marking period, and last year, she was awarded the Harvard Book Prize. She is the daughter of Kathryn and Scott Jack.

Jordan Arnold: Jordan is a senior at Watertown High School who participates in numerous service organizations including the Leo Club, Link Crew, Best Buddies, Interact Club, Future Business Leaders of America Club, the World Language Honor Society, and the National Honor Society. Jordan was selected to serve on two prestigious groups in the district this year: as a member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council and as our Student Representative to the Watertown Board of Education. Jordan is also a three-sport athlete who competes in soccer, indoor track, and outdoor track. On top of all of these contributions, Jordan works for the Watertown Park and Recreation Department and he volunteers for Special Olympics of Connecticut. He is the son of Lynn and Timothy Arnold of Oakville.

Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS)

Dr. Harrison - Congratulations to the following students for receiving the Superintendent's Award sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents (CAPSS). This award is given annually to four deserving students in Watertown for leadership, academic progress, and accomplishments.

Swift Middle School

Casey O'Toole - Casey is an 8th grade student at Swift Middle School. She is a member of the National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, Leo Club, Peace Pals and Spanish Club as well as a variety of music ensembles. Casey is also a member of Swift's basketball and volleyball teams. Casey participates in many activities outside of school, including the North End Recreation Basketball league. Casey and another 8th grade student won a national contest sponsored by Nike and the WNBA. Congratulations Casey!

Caeden Sullivan - Caeden is an 8th grade student at Swift Middle School. His warm smile and kind manner make him an outstanding citizen of our community. He has served as a member of both Peer Helpers and Leaders and we are especially proud of his dedication to always working hard at everything he does. Caeden is talented at coding and has experience in developing games in a program called Unity. He has spent time taking boxing lessons and even has experience working on an ice cream truck. Congratulations Caeden!

Watertown High School

Priscilla Nascimento - Priscilla is a 12th grade student at Watertown High School who truly represents our Vision of a Graduate. Priscilla demonstrates kindness and determination on a daily basis. She has been involved in many activities at WHS, including serving as the president of the Literary Club and as team programmer for the Black Magic Robotics. Priscilla believes in community service, and participates in the Delta Club and earned the Silver Award from the Girl Scouts. She is a true role model for her peers. Congratulations Priscilla Nascimento!

Joseph Noga - Joseph is a 12th grade student at Watertown High School who also represents our Vision of a Graduate. He is a member of both the National Honor Society and World Language Honor Society. He plays trumpet in the Wind Ensemble and in the Pit Band for the Spring Musical. Joseph has earned honor roll status each marking period in his high school career, and outside of school, he has earned a Black Belt in Karate. Joseph is interested in majoring in Game Design, along with Writing, at the post-secondary level. Congratulations Joseph Noga!

CAS-Middle School-Scholar Leader Award

Ms. Wilk - The Watertown Board of Education would like to recognize the following two students from Swift Middle School, who received the Connecticut Association of Schools Middle School Scholar Leader Award. Consideration is given to academic success, leadership, active participation in school and community organizations, citizenship, a positive influence on school climate, dependability, responsibility, character, and integrity.

Sabrina Moffa: Sabrina is an eighth grader at Swift Middle School and a member of the Swift Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society based on her outstanding academic record. She is a member of Student Council and is actively involved with the Swift Band, Bucket Band, Clarinet Ensemble, Select Choir, and Jazz Band. Sabrina is also played on the Girl's Volleyball and Cross Country Teams. Outside of school, Sabrina has performed in the Naugatuck Teen Theater, Curtain Call Kids, and loves piano and singing. She volunteers her time by helping to build the theater stage and singing in her church choir. She also loves summer sailing. Sabrina is deserving of this prestigious award and we are very proud of her.

Jacob Fenn: Jacob is an eighth grader at Swift Middle School and the Vice President of the Swift Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society based on his outstanding academic record. He was a peer helper, a peer leader in seventh and eighth grade, and always attended the Peer Leader conferences. Jacob has played in the Swift Band for three years, participated in Unified Sports, and attended the Unified Sports Summit. Outside of school, Jacob plays travel soccer, baseball, and in-town basketball. Jacob is an active member of his church, attends CCD, and volunteers at church events. He also participated in the MS Walks to raise money for a family friend. Jacob is deserving of this prestigious award and we are very proud of him.

Watertown High School - Connecticut High School Fine Arts Award

Ms. Eastman - The Watertown Board of Education would like to recognize the following seniors from Watertown High School who received the Connecticut High School Fine Arts Award. Students must excel in the performing or visual arts and possess the qualities of scholarship and leadership in their respective field

Our first recipient of the Fine Arts Award is **Cailin McGuire**. Along with an excellent academic career at Watertown High School, Cailin McGuire has been deeply involved in many aspects of

the school community. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Link Crew, the Band Council, the President of the Tri-Music Honor Society, and has served as a Class Officer as Public Relations Manager. Cailin won a prestigious HALO Award in 2019 for best original and incidental music in a play for her musical compositions for the school's Fall theatrical production. Cailin has been consistently involved in Girl Scouts since Kindergarten, and she has completed many service projects as part of that organization. Cailin is the daughter of Kellie Lambert and Christopher McGuire, and she will attend Western Connecticut State University in the fall, majoring in Music Education. Congratulations Cailin!

Our next recipient of the Fine Arts Award is **Irene Pham**. Irene Pham's beautiful and thought-provoking artwork has been displayed in the hallways of her school from her earliest days as a student. Along with amazing artistic talent, Irene has excelled in the classroom. She is a Top 10 student in the Class of 2020, she has consistently made the honor roll over the past four years, and she is a member of the National Honor Society. Outside of the classroom, Irene is the president of SAGA, she has designed life-size puzzle piece displays for the Project Puzzle Piece Autism Awareness program, and she has learned to read and write in Vietnamese through her temple. Irene was a four-year member of the Girls' Swim and Dive Team, where she earned the Coach's Award for her consistent performance. In the fall, Irene will attend the University of Connecticut, majoring in either Fine Arts or Graphic Design. Congratulations Irene!

CAS-CIAC Scholar-Athlete Award

Ms. Bristol - The Watertown Board of Education would like to recognize the following two high school seniors who received the Scholar Athlete Award. These students have excelled in both their academic and athletic careers.

Daniel Ottowitz - Along with achieving a stellar academic record, Daniel has participated in a wide variety of activities during his time at Watertown High School. He is a four-year member of three varsity athletic teams: cross country in the fall, indoor track in the winter, and outdoor track in the spring. Daniel is also a member of the National Honor Society and World Language Honor Society for Spanish, and as a junior, he was awarded the Advanced Placement United States History Award. Outside of school, Daniel has volunteered at the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen and for the Steep Rock Association. Daniel is the son of Jim and Kim Ottowitz, and he will attend the University of Connecticut in the fall. He is interested in Mathematics, History, and Linguistics.

Aubrey DeStefano - **Aubrey** has achieved a superb academic record while at Watertown High School. She received underclassman awards in Grades 9, 10, and 11, the Smith College Book Award in Grade 10, and the Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction Award in Grade 11. Along with her success in the classroom, Aubrey is a three-sport varsity athlete with soccer in the fall, indoor track in the winter, and outdoor track in the spring. Aubrey is also a member of

the National Honor Society, where she served as its president, the World Language Honor Society, Link Crew, and she is editor-in-chief of the 2020 Yearbook. Aubrey is the daughter of Joseph and Karin DiStefano, and she will attend the University of Notre Dame in the fall, where she is interested in a double major in Mathematics and Biological Sciences.

Connecticut Invention Convention (CIC)

The Watertown Board of Education would like to congratulate the following students from Polk & Judson Elementary Schools, who are winners of the Connecticut Invention Convention. Congratulations to our Polk Elementary School 5th Grade Winners: **Lahndon Flamengo** and **Samantha Grimes**. Congratulations to our Judson Elementary School Winners who also advanced to the state level:

Olivia Brevetti – Grade 5

Ella Russell – Grade 5

Ella D’Uva – Grade 5

Wyatt Brandt – Grade 5

Austen Stango – Grade 3

Reagan Dubai – Grade 5

Quinn Delaney – Grade 5

Judson Elementary School - Spelling Bee Winner

Congratulations to Spelling Bee winner - **Nathan Lubus**, a 5th grade student who advanced onto the state spelling bee competition at the University of Saint Joseph. Congratulations Nathan!

Swift Middle School-Geography Bee Winner

Congratulations to the Geography Bee winner – 7th Grade Student David Perugini!

G. Class of 2020 Salutatorian & Valedictorian

Ms. Rinaldi – The Watertown Board of Education wishes to recognize and congratulate the Watertown High School Class of 2020 Salutatorian and Valedictorian. Congratulations to our Class of 2020 Salutatorian – **Aubrey DiStefano** and Congratulations to our Class of 2020 Valedictorian – **Daniel Ottowitz!** This is quite an accomplishment, and we are so proud of you and excited for your future!

H. School Re-Entry Advisory Council (SRAC) Update

Dr. Harrison – The School Re-Entry Advisory Council or SRAC is developing a comprehensive plan for re-opening Watertown Schools that is prioritizing the health and well being of students and staff, providing solutions to the logistical challenges associated with school operations, and focuses on instructional delivery. On this past Thursday, May 7th, I facilitated our school re-entry advisory meeting that included the following members: Ms. Leslie Crotty, Board Chair, Cathie Rinaldi, Board Member, Lisa Fekete, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Janet Parlato,

Watertown High School Principal, Mary Jean Mangione, Swift Middle School Asst. Principal, Jen Galik, Polk Elementary Principal, Annette Dillon, Special Education Supervisor, Ofc. Josh Bernegger, Watertown Police Department Acting Chief, Terry Baldwin, President of the Watertown Education Association, Dr. Craig Czarsty, our school Medical Advisor, and Sarah Simmons, our Nurse Coordinator for the district.

The goal of the meeting was to honor the potential concerns related to opening schools based on the current information that we have and also to provide an overview of the process that we will use to develop this comprehensive plan to revamp our normal operations this fall. The SRAC team was divided into three groups: the health and wellbeing, operations and logistics, and instructional delivery. We began to identify subject matter experts for each of those teams that will be given the opportunity to provide input on the development of the re-entry plan. I want say a special thank you to Ms. Cindy Eastman for agreeing to be our subject matter expert for the instructional delivery team and those invitations for that team went out earlier this week. Each team will utilize the TregoED protocol to identify and clarify issues and concerns related to each of the working groups. We will also assess the priorities and identify specific next steps and ultimately our goal is to create a compiled list of action steps that will be developed into our final plan. The last step in that process is doing a risk analysis and developing a contingency plan.

I. Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair - No
Policy and Labor Committee, Ms. Janelle Wilk, Chair – No
Budget and Finance Committee, Ms. Diane Bristol, Chair – Yes

I want to thank you, Dr. Harrison, for the presentation of the budget that was presented to the Town Council on May 4th. It went well and we had some great conversations. As a reminder, I want to let everyone know, that on May 26th, we will have the Town Council meeting where they will have the public hearing on the budget and during that time, they will be allowing for public participation. I have no update on how that will work, but I would encourage all to attend and voice your opinion on that budget.

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

We are moving along with the upgrades for the security at John Trumbull Primary School. The sides are being installed and it looks like a couple of weeks and that should be ready for inspection.

Also, we have a new target date for the opening of the Municipal Center, which is May 26th, which depends on the weather.

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

J. Communications – Secretary

None

K. Report from the Board Chair

None

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

None

M. Future Agenda Items and Board Members Comments

None

N. Adjournment

Agenda Item:	N.1
Subject:	To adjourn the meeting
Motion Presented By:	Ms. Rosa
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Malagutti
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board