

**Watertown Board of Education
Special Board of Education Meeting**

Meeting Date: August 17, 2020
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: REMOTE MEETING

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

Members Absent: None

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. Taylor**
- D. Minutes**

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

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes from the July 27, 2020 Regular Board of Education Meeting.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion passed

Agenda Item: D.2
Subject: Minutes of the July 28, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes from the July 28, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: Ms. Rinaldi
Vote: Motion passed

E. First Round of Public Participation (reopening comments or questions reserved for item J).

Ellie Miske – 78 Cannon Ridge Dr. WTN – Read a letter signed by 200 Watertown High School Alumni regarding a change of the mascot at the high school and listed many reasons as to why.

Amelia Luciano – 947 Bunker Hill Rd., WTN – Was the Valedictorian in 2006 at Watertown High School and supports the changing of the mascot as read in the above letter.

Colleen Murphy – 175 Woodruff Ave., WTN – Read a letter supporting the change in the mascot at Watertown High School. The letter was from Rodney Butler, Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

(All letters are on file with the Board of Education)

Ms. Crotty – I would like to thank you all for participating and suggest that at the September 14th Board of Education Meeting that we will respond to your petition and to the letters that you have submitted to the Board.

F. Succession Planning

Discussion: Appointment of Interim Superintendent

Ms. Crotty – At a special meeting that took place at 6:30 this evening, the Watertown Board of Education appointed Dr. John Ramos as Interim Superintendent of Schools, effective August 27, 2020. Dr. Ramos moved to Watertown to serve as a Superintendent in 2002 where he quickly became an integral part of the community and was recognized as a visionary leader and organizational leader. Prior to 2002, he was the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Norwalk Public Schools and previously the principal of Norwalk High School. Dr. Ramos remained in Watertown as Superintendent until he was appointed the Connecticut Deputy Commissioner of Education in 2004. Since that time, Dr. Ramos has served as Superintendent of Schools in Bridgeport, Groton, and the CEO at Middle East International School in Qatar, focusing on achievement of US accreditation. After two years in the Middle East, he returned stateside to serve as Superintendent of the Schools in South Orange and Maplewood New Jersey. Dr. Ramos is the Founder and President of Equity and Excellence Imperative, LLC that provides expertise in elevating organizational development and capacity building, social emotional support, coaching, cultural transformation, and business and community engagement. His most recent work includes consulting for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Center School for Change, School for Ethical education, and the American Consortium Center for training. Although Dr. Ramos' career took him far beyond the boundaries of this town; he and his wife, Reverend Jacqueline Ramos, never left Watertown. They have continued to reside here for the last 18 years. Dr. Ramos received his Doctorate in Educational Administration from the Teachers College at Columbia University where he also served as an adjunct professor. He received his MPA in Public Administration from the University of Rhode Island and Bachelor's degree in English and American Literature from Brown University. Dr. Ramos will consult directly with Dr. Harrison for 3 days prior to assuming the role as Watertown Interim Superintendent of Schools on August 27th, 2020. We all look forward to officially welcoming doctor Ramos back to the Watertown Public School family and we are very grateful for his support of our district.

Dr. Ramos - Thank you to the Board of Education for your confidence and support. I have a statement I would like to read into the record. My commitment is to help achieve as seamless as a transition as possible, to sustain and build upon current District commitments and momentum. Initially, this means supporting the critical work taking place now to reopen our schools safely, trying to get back to as normal as possible. Clearly, our immediate priority is to open the year safely. My job is to step into the decision-making process and work with the existing team and plan. If adjustments are required, we will make and communicate them together. Beyond Covid-19, there is a fundamental responsibility to provide quality, equitable educational opportunities for all students. We will do this by staying true to our comprehensive plan. My experience has been that you have an outstanding, committed group of educators here in Watertown. That was certainly the case in 2004 and I know that it remains a fact today. Because of what this Board of Education, the town, and Dr. Harrison have done together, we

have an infrastructure and working relationship that will get us through this critical moment in time. Again, I want to thank the Board for its confidence and I look forward to meeting and working with all of you.

G. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments – (Information Only)

Ms. Emily Freundt to the position of Fourth Grade Teacher at Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired on an annual contractual salary of \$49,748.00, Step 3, MA degree, per the Watertown Educational Association Contract.

Ms. Michelle Kociszewski to the position of Family & Consumer Science Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired on an annual contractual salary of \$95,860.00, Step 16, sixth year, per the Watertown Educational Association Contract.

Ms. Kristen Lauria to the position of Music Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired on an annual contractual salary of \$51,873.00, Step 4, MA degree, per the Watertown Educational Association Contract.

Ms. Mallory Lessard to the position of 7th Grade Science Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired on an annual contractual salary of \$70,984.00, Step 11, MA degree, per the Watertown Educational Association Contract.

Ms. Krista Michaud to the position of Special Education Teacher at Judson Elementary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired on an annual contractual salary of \$64,614.00, Step 9, MA degree, per the Watertown Educational Association Contract.

Ms. Cristina Murphy to the position of School Secretary/Guidance Department at Watertown High School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired at the contractual hourly rate of \$18.53, Step 1 of the Watertown Educational Secretaries Agreement.

2. Transfers – (Information Only)

None

3. Resignations – (Information Only)

Ms. Ashley Onion from the position of Food Service Director for Watertown Public Schools, effective August 21, 2020 for the purpose of accepting a position in another school district.

Ms. Leslie McKeon from the position of Library Clerk at Judson & Polk Elementary Schools, effective September 3, 2020 for the purpose of retirement. Ms. McKeon has worked in the district for 24 years.

Ms. Lynn Kelly from the position of School Nurse at St. John School & Watertown School District,

for the purpose of retirement. Ms. Kelly has worked for the school district for 28 years.

Ms. Ashleeann Traner from the position of Library Media Specialist at Polk and Judson Elementary Schools, effective August 21, 2020 for the purpose of accepting a position in another school district.

Ms. Theresa Maratta from the position of Speech & Language Pathologist at Swift Middle School, effective August 7, 2020 for personal reasons.

4. **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Harrison – Good evening board members and community members. I want to bring your attention to some of the appointments that are on the agenda. I would like to welcome Dr. Ramos. He was one of the first people to reach out to me when I was named Superintendent and while I was still in North Carolina. He has been a colleague and a friend of mine since I had been here and I am elated that the Board is moving forward to work with him in this role. I look forward to us working together through the transition and continuing to see the growth that we started together in this community continue under his leadership. Again, on your agenda tonight you will see a number of appointments which represent the hard work from our administrators over the last several weeks. They were interviewing new people and getting our schools ready for students. At the start of this upcoming school year, we are ensuring that we are fully staffed. There are a couple of resignations that I want to point out and one is Ashley Onion who served as our Director of Food Services. I want to note that while we are sad to see her go, we are excited about her opportunities that are coming up in her career. We will be moving forward in the interim collaborating with EdAdvance to make sure that cafeterias continue as we move into the start of the school year. They will be implementing the plans that she put in place. I am going to keep my comments short at this point because I know people are interested in hearing about the updates about the return to school. I will be sharing that in just a moment.

H. **Communications – Secretary**

Ms. Wilk - Yes Madam Chair, I would like to acknowledge the receipt of Dr Harrison's resignation letter dated August 11th, 2020. In a meeting earlier this evening, the Board accepted his resignation effective August 27th, 2020.

I. **Reopening Plan Update**

Dr. Harrison - Tonight I want to talk about some of the updates to our reopening plan. As a reminder, our District's three re-entry priorities are related to the health and well-being of our students and staff, focusing on logistics and operations, and of course, instructional delivery. This also guided the work of our administrators and leaders throughout the district as we have been preparing for students to return next month. I also want to remind all of you of the six guiding principles from the Connecticut State Department of Education and these were the guiding principles that we were to use as individual districts to develop our local plans and then also listed on the slide are the five health and safety protocols an infection mitigation strategies

that really are at the heart of the things that we are focusing on as we are planning to reopen schools. Since receiving the initial guidance from the state, and that was right at the end of June; we were to use the plan to develop our local re-entry. Since receiving that information, we have had seven addendums that have been sent from the state. When I initially presented our draft of a plan, one of the things I shared was that we expected to get updates from the state and that we would make updates to our plan accordingly. Tonight, I will be talking about three areas of updates related to the seven addendums. The first thing we will talk about is temporarily opting into remote learning. I will talk a little bit about guidance related to preschool and I really want you to be aware of addendum 3 which is additional information resource document for students with high needs and our special education department has been using those guidelines as we have been planning for our students, not just for the fall, but in working with some of our students during ESY. We will also talk a little bit about addendum four tonight which is interim guidance for decision making regarding the use of in-person, hybrid, or remote learning models. Addendum 5 is included in the plan oh, so if you go to the plan that is on our website, you'll see some additional information there. There are some scenarios, and I will talk a little bit about this in relationship to the questions, although it is not a focus area for tonight's presentation. Addendum 6 is more information about reopening in regards to students with disabilities and again, our student services department and special ed supervisors have been working to implement that. You'll hear a little bit about with some of our discussion about hybrid learning and then finally, addendum 7 we just got on Friday and this is additional information regarding of the K-12 music programs and make sure that we are following the latest safety and health guidelines from the state and The National Music Organizations. Tonight, I want to start with addendum one which is related to voluntary remote learning. We were able to get a preview of the information shared in this addendum and it was already included in our plan , but I know since our last presentation, we gave parents the opportunity to sign up for voluntary remote learning and we have had some questions about what it will look like and tonight I am happy to have Kristen Raymond, who is the new principal at Judson Elementary School and she will talk to us a little bit more about voluntary remote learning.

Ms. Raymond - To give you an idea of what remote learning will look like at the elementary level, we have placed all of the students who have opted for distance learning within a classroom. If they choose to come back in, there is a spot for them within that classroom. Our teachers are going to be provided time within their week and school day to plan for these students who are engaging and distance learning. The planning will in encompass what is happening in the classroom. For instance, if they are working in science and working with seeds and plants, the assignment the student would have at home will be connected to that. If they are learning how to write expository pieces, then the students at home will also be working on that. At any time, if the students decide to come back to school, they will be exactly where they need to be and where their class is. The assignments will be given in a menu style, which means it is in an asynchronous, and will be able to complete the assignments at their own pace. Teachers will be given time to do this together so that all 4th grade, or whichever grade, will be getting the same assignments at home. The Connecticut State Department of Education also put out the CT Learning Parent Hub which can be accessed through the district website. We want to make sure that the students at home feel connected to their classmates and teacher so we do want to include some areas where our students at home will have the opportunity to do a Google meet or watch the teacher in live stream. We see that as a great fit during morning

meeting time, if circles are being done, social and emotional learning; these are great times to incorporate our students at home. If our students are at home that typically qualify for intervention, they will also have the opportunity to have that service as well virtually. That will happen once the groups are identified and they will be able to remote into the intervention group. It will look a little different to our special education students as it has to be individualized according to their IEP. Each of our special education students will have their plan based on their IEP and it will be on a case-by-case basis.

Dr. Harrison - One thing I would like to add to that is that for 8 through 12 students, we will be talking in just a moment about hybrid learning where two days of the week day will work in person and three days of the week they will be learning remotely. Families who have chosen remote learning for students in grades 8 through 12, essentially, they will be participating in both groups and be able to benefit from the live streaming for their class. The plan that we have here is continuing to evolve and our principals will be adding additional details as they are working directly with teachers and as we are continuing to gain ideas and workout plans with our teacher's union as well. I have to say that our Union has been working very closely with our planning team and we have had many opportunities to talk about voluntary remote learning and we will keep those conversations open so that we can develop what that looks like. From a parent standpoint, one thing that is important that we communicated is that students who are doing voluntary remote learning; they will need a lot of parent support at home. I want to really make that point very clear for our families that this is a choice that will be very intensive for families that are supporting their kids. Particularly at the younger levels, as they are learning new concepts, they are really building on the supports that they are given from their families. As we think about what schools look like for some of our youngest students that are coming in, a lot of the learning for those first few days and I would even say maybe even a week or so of school, a lot of that is learning the building, procedures, routines; so those first couple of weeks might look a little bit different for voluntary remote learning then it would if you were to fast forward down the road. Finally, just a reminder that this is a temporary choice. At any time, the State Department of Education could determine that we should no longer be offering voluntary remote learning to families and if that were the case, those students would be expected to come back and participate in-person learning. One of the things we are also trying to plan for is for their eventual return to the classroom and making sure they have students that they feel connected to and they know their teacher and are prepared for the return.

The second piece I want to talk to is related to addendum two. This gives us additional clarity for preschool. Our preschool programs are governed by the Office of Early Childhood. They sent recommendations to the State Department of Education and that is where the guidance from addendum two came from. All K-12 students and staff must wear a cloth, paper or disposable mask/face covering that covers the nose and mouth when inside the school building. Although Pre-K students are not required to wear masks in their classrooms based on guidance from the CT Office of Early Childhood, pre-K students will be expected to wear masks while in the halls transitioning from their classroom to anywhere else in the building. In John Trumbull, our preschool is in their own pod, so there will be limited mobility of them throughout the building, but that is something we want parents to know. Superintendent's had conversations with the Commissioner about districts that have Pre-K programs right alongside kindergarten programs and while they recognize that the expectations that we would have for a Pre-K 4 year old versus the kindergarten four-year-old of the mask are going to be different. They do recognize that and

it is one of the challenges we will be working with her students on. Students and staff are required to wear masks in order to trap droplets that are released when the wearer talks, coughs or sneezes. Wearing masks will help reduce the spread of the virus by people who have COVID-19 but don't realize it. We recognize that a very small number of students may have a medical condition that makes mask-wearing unsafe and need to request an exemption. Since I mentioned this in our last meeting, we have gotten more guidance from the American Association of Pediatrics and what we are learning is that there are not very many medical issues that would require an exemption. So, we anticipate a very small number of students who will be submitting a doctor's note. An example of a medical condition would be if a student may have a burn on their face and it is in the process of healing where wearing a mask would irritate it; that may be a student who would get a medical exemption for a period of time. If there are students whose medical conditions make wearing a mask an unsafe or dangerous situation, we really encourage families to choose the voluntary remote learning option that we just spoke about in the previous slide. That really is to maintain the safety of all of our students but then also to maintain the safety of our staff. Many of our staff, as you can imagine, are in high risk categories so we want to make sure we are not just creating a safe environment for our students, but for our staff as well. Any family members or parents who are planning to send in a doctor's note regarding the mask exemption; should be sent to the principal and nurse by August 24th. That is so that we have the information and can develop any additional plans that may be necessary which may include providing teachers with additional PPE if needed or thinking about some schedule changes for that student.

Next, I would like to talk a little bit about addendum four. It is related to interim guidance for decision-making regarding the use of in person, hybrid, or remote learning. Our decisions of knowing when to move from one model to the next will be driven by our health data. I want to point out that in late July the governor announced that school districts have more flexibility to determine which model is the best model for them as they are planning to return to school. Initially, based on our health data, we felt confident moving forward when all students in person learning 5 days a week. The plan was to carefully watch our health data in order to see if a change needed to be made to hybrid or to remote learning. This slide gives us additional information where it talks about the leading indicator and you can see it is less than 10 new cases per 100,000 in population. That favors in person learning. You can see that if that number moves from 10 to 25 new cases or 25 + new cases, you would then move to moderate or high. In addition to looking at that lead indicator, there are secondary indicators looking at the percent of positivity rate and to see if there is direction of change so that we are not just looking what are the numbers on a weekly basis but looking for trend data to see if we have trends moving up and looking at a 7-Day rolling average, and then looking at covid-19 and influenza-like illnesses; really monitoring not to see the impact that that is having on our community. With those indicators, we make decisions to move from level to level, but also the indicators that we used to determine our reopening plan. In addition to those two, there are these other areas that look at the design of the physical space, our ability to cohort, compliance with self-screening, HVAC, and then our ability was cleaning and disinfection. When we looked at all of this together, it became necessary for us to look again more carefully at the ability to cohort. When I first presented, it was really clear that cohorting at the high school is not a possibility because of the ways that students are grouped into their classes. There are no consistent cohorts throughout the day. As the Middle School continued with their scheduling processes, it became really clear the 8th grade students would also have some of the challenges that we have related to

cohorting. Cohorting looks at how well are we able to minimize interaction with other cohorts. Elementary kids will have their primary cohort that they are a part of, but then they may be pulled out for a reading group, or a speech teacher. While it may be a secondary cohort, it is relatively stable. When we have students that are with a brand-new group of students every time the bell rings, it obviously makes it more challenging. As a result, we determined the best way to reopen for the fall is so that Pre-K through seventh grade all students returning for full in-person learning. they will attend five days per week and following all the health and safety mitigation strategies. It is important to note that our principals are working hard to develop their individual school plans. They're implementing all of the strategies that we have laid out for them at the district level. For 8th through 12th grade students, all students will return to a hybrid model for the first quarter of the school year. This will allow us to really look at opportunities to look at cohorts differently by having just half of the students; it will offer additional distancing in the classroom and students will be grouped into A students and B students by their last name. Two important notes are that September 1st through 4th will be early release days for all students. You'll also hear Ms. Dillion talk about our students in 8th through 12th grade with IEPs as those students will have the option for in-person learning and she will share more information about that in just a moment.

It is important to note that as we start this school year, especially now that we have part of our district starting hybrid, and some of the district is starting with in-person learning, we know there will likely be a period throughout the school year where we will have to shift to remote learning based on the indicators, or we may need to shift to remote learning in response to some cases within our community. Ms. Fekete has been designing our professional learning that is specifically targeted at these three different models for learning. I want to share a little bit tonight about her approach to professional learning.

Ms. Fekete - I want to provide you with insight on how we are preparing teachers to get ready for when students, on September 1st. We added some days to the beginning and that was really helpful to make sure we provide a good, solid and robust plan for teachers. The plan was based upon the feedback that we received from our parents, students and teachers. We obtained a lot of feedback of how it went when we did distance learning in the spring. We also took a hard look at all of the guidelines that the state provided about what they were expecting in each of those three models. We used those documents and a careful review of best practices was also done to determine where our focus should be. Our priorities for professional learning are to ensure safety of all students and staff, fully re-engage students after the lengthy COVID-19 closure, build a strong sense of community and connectedness to meet the social and emotional needs of students, and build upon the foundation we built in spring 2020. Our teachers worked very hard in a very short amount of time to move to a model that we really didn't have in place prior to that time. They are ready to say what are the lessons we learned from that and how do we go on to get better. The final piece in designing the professional development is that it has been very carefully designed to ensure that as teachers move through that training over the first six days before the kids come back, that there is opportunities for direct application to practice. They need time to plan. It is one thing to share ideas, but then you have to provide people the opportunity to digest those things and put them into practice. There are six separate practices to professional learning and they are: all of the health and safety protocols from the state will be provided for all staff oh, there will be a component on social and emotional well-being, there will be opportunities to reflect on distance learning from the spring, teachers will be reviewing

State guidelines and will look at concepts, strategies, and tools for all three of the possible teaching models for this year. That way we are really prepared no matter what the scenario is. Finally, staff will be exposed to numerous technology tools and platforms that have been curated they can utilize to bring their instruction to a place where they're able to engage students to the fullest extent possible.

Dr. Harrison - Even for the students who are beginning the year with full in person, every day; one of the things you will see is a lot more technology integration at the start of the school year. This will help with our younger students who may not be used to using technology in the classroom or Google classroom what they are doing in person learning. You will see that it is designed to make the transition from in-person to hybrid to remote a lot smoother. That helps build capacity with our students right from the beginning and helps them use some of the digital tools from an instructional standpoint.

I want to take a moment and shift now to our administrators. I asked Dr. Parlato and Ms. Lertz give an overview as to what hybrid learning at the 8 to 12 grade levels so it can answer some of the questions.

Dr. Parlato - To begin with I have what the definition of hybrid learning is; it is a combination of both in-person learning and remote learning. When students are in the building and participating in classroom discussion, of course that is in person learning. When students are at home and logging into classes that are on their schedule, that is remote learning. The intent is that all students are engaged in learning every day. One of the major differences you will see with this model compared to what we did in the spring is that students at home will be logging into live instruction. They will be logging into synchronous instruction; meaning that they will log in at the same time the class is taking place on their schedule. They will watch the teacher teach while the other half of the class is actually in school.

Ms. Lertz - As many of you may know, there are many variables unique to eighth grade. If you combine all of these variables, it creates many different pathways for students. These include 9th grade options such as Spanish, French, and algebra, grade 8 math, literacy essentials, multiple music electives, and a specific unified arts rotation. These all factor in and together it is impossible both play students into small cohorts who travel together throughout the day while still providing appropriate programming. We will use a hybrid model for grade eight students and this will help to better mitigate the risks of the spread of covid-19. I will give you an example of two eighth grade students who have different needs and will go on different paths. You have two students who both take French; one student takes algebra and the other student takes grade level math. One sings in the chorus and the other plays the saxophone. One needs tech ed and the other does not because they already took it. These are the many different factors in an eighth-grade student deals with and that is why we are going hybrid.

Ms. Parlato - For Watertown High School, we have many of the same reasons. The high school program of studies provides a great variety of academic opportunities for students. In every student's schedule, there is a lot of variety because of the number of electives and choices that they have to make. So, because of that, just like eighth grade, we are not able to create small groups of 22-25 students who will travel together because there are too many variables and variations in student schedules. The hybrid teaching and learning model will allow us to create

two cohorts so that we have 50% of the students at school at the same time. It also allows us to mitigate or reduce better the risk of the spread of covid-19.

Ms. Lertz - If you follow the schedule shown here, we have Monday through Friday and on Monday and Tuesday our students who have their last name beginning with A through K will be in person at Swift. The students that are in the L to Z cohort will be remote learning. The same happens on Thursday only it will be flipped. L to Z will be in person and a through K will be remote. On Wednesdays, all students will participate in remote learning while at home and all teachers will provide live instruction from their classrooms. The important thing to note here is that learning will take place every day of the week.

Dr. Parlato - You see here a similar schedule for Watertown High School. On A1 day we have students with last names A through K in school and L through Z will be learning remotely. You can see the periods that are offered on A1 days on the slide. On B1 day, the same students come to school, last names A through K in school and L through Z learning remotely. You can see the periods below that are offered on the B1 day. Just like the Middle School, we will have a distance learning day where all students are doing remote learning at home are logging into live teaching with our staff. Some of the things that will happen on the distance learning day would be reteaching of key concepts, conferencing with students, extra help provided, small group instruction academic intervention, and some opportunity for extension collaboration and enrichment. You can also now see on the A2 and B2 days at the cohorts are switched where A - K students will be remote and the L - Z students are in school. You can see the periods offered on those days here. Very soon we will send out a letter that not only explains this in detail, but also a schedule for all of September so that families know which days are offered so they know which students are in school and what students are remote for every single day in the month of September. Regarding arrival at the high school, our drop-off locations are exactly where they have been. Parent drop-off will be in the small loop and bus drop-off is in the front in the large loop. Of course, we have student drivers and this year the parking fee will be 50% less because they are in school 50% of the time. One change is that students will report to one of three locations if they arrive before 7:35 am. They can go to the cafeteria, the auditorium, or the library and we will have supervisors in there to make sure there are not too many students in any of those locations and making sure they are seated in a distant fashion. One additional change is that there will be no home rooms this year. Last year when students arrived, they went directly to homeroom and this year to reduce this movement, and to reduce passing time, we eliminated home rooms so that students will go right to their first block class when they come to school. Students will sit at individual desks in the cafeteria and we will also have an outside classroom when weather permits. We will make sure that the desks are placed at least three feet from the center of one desk to the next desk and the markings on the floor in the cafeteria will direct students or to stand, especially if there is a line for them to pick up their meals. Students will wipe down their desks at the end of the lunch period.

Ms. Lertz - Students who are participating and voluntary remote learning work for students whose day it is to be remote learning, they have the option to have breakfast and lunch picked up at Watertown High School at 9:15 a.m. in the large loop. Prices for the fall for grade 6 through 8 are listed below.

Dr. Parlato - Talking about classroom and safety protocols, would apply to both the high school and middle school, students and staff will wear a mask at all times unless the student has a medical exemption that is submitted to us prior to August 24th. At both the middle school and high school there will be a total of two mask breaks per day in addition to lunch at specific times. Students must use hand sanitizer as they enter and exit a classroom. We will have floor markings in the hallways and arrows and a division down the center of the hallways so that students understand the traffic flow for safety. Like with the cafeteria, in a classroom student will wipe down their own desk and chairs at the end of the class. The wipes are food safe whereas the student wipes the surface down they can then put food directly on the desk.

Ms. Lertz - Our desks in the classrooms have been arranged so that there are 3 ft apart per American Academy of Pediatrics. With the hybrid model, additional student spacing is much more feasible in the classroom. In the areas designated to eat lunch, the desks are 6 feet apart because students' masks will be down and will actively eating.

Dr. Parlato - We have developed an attendance policy for distance learning days for both Swift and the high school. During the live distance learning lesson when students are learning remotely at home, they will follow the following steps in regards to attendance: they will log into the Google meet for their specific class when it is the time for that class, they will turn on their camera to be visible, they will type their name into the chat box, and they will answer the question posted by the teacher on the Google classroom at the end of the lesson. If they complete those steps, they will be marked present for distance learning for that class.

Ms. Lertz - There will be no fall sports at Swift but that will be looked at for winter and we are hoping for a positive there. Clubs are projected to be beginning on October 1st. The late bus will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays and this will all be spelled out in our parent letter that we will send home.

Dr. Parlato - There is a slight change to dismissal at Watertown High School. Traditionally, grade 12 students who had a study hall at the end of the school day, if they had permission from a family member or parent, they were able to leave early and not stay for that study hall at the end of the day. This year, because we are trying to accomplish a staggered dismissal, we will have a flex period at the end of the day. Flex is a school-wide study hall and if students have available transportation, and parent permission to be dismissed, then we will allow all students in grades 9 through 12 the ability to be dismissed from Flex, which is essentially the last hour of the day. If seniors have a study hall prior to flex, they can also be dismissed with parent permission from that study hall and of course, from Flex. Another change for the high school is that our end time is 2:05 p.m. That is to allow for additional time for our buses to do the elementary and middle school bus runs and taking into consideration the sanitizing that needs to be done. Some things to note on our after-school activities, the CIAC determines what happens with high school sports and as of right now, high school sports are on hold until we hear further from the CIAC. Student-athletes and families will receive information from our athletic director. Clubs and meetings of clubs at the high school will be remote until October 1st. The club advisor will create a Google classroom for the club and they will hold the meetings via Google meet so that the clubs can still happen remotely. This year, we are going to require that students not remain at school after dismissal unless they have a meeting with a teacher by

appointment or if they are participating in our Pathways credit program. We will also offer a late bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the late bus comes between 3:45 and 4 pm.

Ms. Dillon - Once we shifted to a hybrid learning model, we took a look at all of our students who have IEPs which is an individual education program. Based on both the numbers and the way the students' names aligned across the district for grades 8 through 12 it felt to be almost 50-50 for students A through K and then L through Z. We looked at many options and we are very pleased to say which is specific again to grade 8 through 12, we are able to both offer for all students that have an active IEP the opportunity to attend two additional days, which is their off-cohort days. They will have the option to attend in person up to four days a week. There are some students in grade 8, that because of their programming and the classroom with which they receive most of their instruction and services are in one room, that we will be having some conversation with some specific families about offering them to come in on the Wednesday as well. That is because six and seventh grade at Swift Middle School it's open and the school is running. Students that have IEPs in grades 8 through 12 will receive a link. The link will have you tell us whether or not your child will participate for the additional days or not and we would like to hear from you either way. It is optional, not required. We are recommending it because we recognize that this group of students, although a continuum and variety areas of need are addressed in an IEP, lots of the services that the students receive can be offered with more flexibility in person and are typically more effective in person. We are encouraging families to take advantage of this opportunity to send their students all four days but it is important for you to tell us. We will also need to know how that child or children will be transported so will you know whether to setup busing or not or whether or not you may be another potential person in the loop dropping someone off. It helps us with numbers and configuring. If you do not receive a link, because we are only as good as our power school information, and her child has an active IEP in grades 8 through 12 through the end of the day tomorrow, please reach out to the office of student services and our number is here on this slide.

Dr. Parlato - All of our course offerings, including our new foods of course, will proceed as scheduled with a few adjustments to implement safety protocols. For example, our weight room is currently closed and will be closed for the foreseeable future. However, we offer a course known as weightlifting and the teacher will modify the curriculum so that students do bodyweight as opposed to being in the weight room itself. All the courses will run as scheduled and we made a very definitive effort to make sure that we did that. As you can see, all the plans discussed tonight either reference the Connecticut Department of Education's school reopening plan or the Watertown Public Schools Fall 2020 District Reopening Plan. I can speak for all of my colleagues when I say we are putting a lot of thought into the plans moving forward to make sure that the well-being and safety of our students is at the Forefront of our minds. We thank you so much for listening and understanding our information.

J. Public Participation – Questions and Comments regarding the School Re-Opening Plan (Please state name, address and topic of discussion)

To listen to the question and answer session, please visit
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpvTYCfD7GY>

K. Covid – 19 Temporary Board Policy Changes – Second Reading**New Policies****Policy Concerning Temporary Policies and Regulations Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic -**

This new, temporary policy serves to explain the process of implementing and repealing temporary policies and identifies the requirement of the school district to comply with federal and state laws, regulations and guidance as related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy Concerning Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic - This new, temporary policy authorizes the administration to develop appropriate health and safety protocols to safeguard the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, the policy requires the administration to provide appropriate and clear notice of these protocols to students and staff.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) – NEW - This new policy tracks the requirements of the FFCRA concerning employee leave for reasons relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy will sunset on December 31, 2020, in accordance with federal law.

Temporary Policy Changes

Green Cleaning Programs - The temporary revision clarifies that disinfectants and sanitizer may be used by the schools in accordance with the green cleaning statute and a recent memorandum from the Department of Administrative Services.

Use of School Facilities - In accordance with the recent state guidance, the temporary revisions provide flexibility to the administration to limit or restrict the use of school facilities by private and community organizations. These revisions also require compliance with health and safety protocols by any private or community organization that is permitted to use school facilities.

Visitors - The temporary revisions allow the administration flexibility to limit or restrict non-essential visitors into the school buildings, and require any visitors to comply with the school's health and safety protocols.

Volunteers - The temporary revisions allow the administration flexibility to limit or restrict non-essential volunteers into the school buildings, and require any volunteers to comply with the school's health and safety protocols.

Employment Checks - The policy was revised to indicate that timelines regarding state and national criminal record checks may be modified by the district in accordance with any executive order issued by the Governor or any order issued by the Commissioner of Education that is related to the COVID-19 pandemic or public health emergency.

Use of District Computer Systems - The policy and regulations were revised to clarify the board's responsibility relative to computer systems. Specifically, the revisions clarify that the board has installed computers and a computer network (including Internet access) on board premises and may provide other electronic devices that can access the network, but does not necessarily provide computers and Internet access in locations other than the board premises. The regulations and notice regarding electronic monitoring were also revised to specify that employees are expected to exercise appropriate judgment and may be monitored electronically when engaged in remote teaching or use of a digital teaching platform.

Attendance, Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism - The temporary revisions to this policy require schools to actively monitor student absences and collect data concerning medical absences to

allow the district to identify trends that would suggest the spread of illness, such as COVID-19, in accordance with state guidance. Note that we anticipate receiving additional guidance from the State Department of Education concerning attendance and students who do not attend school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Assessments - The Health Assessments policy has been temporarily revised to address recent Department of Public Health guidance. Specifically, the revisions implement flexibilities in the timing for required health assessments upon initial entry to school, in either 6th or 7th grade, and in either 9th or 10th grade. Of note, the Department of Public Health has not at this time relaxed or otherwise amended the immunization requirements for school attendance.

Student Discipline - The temporary revisions to this policy clarify that students may be disciplined, including suspended or expelled, for failing to comply with the school's health and safety protocols developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The revisions further provide that expulsion hearings may be held virtually if physical presence in school is limited or restricted.

Transportation - This policy was temporarily revised to provide that the district will request that parents volunteer to transport their children to school, in accordance with state guidance. The revisions further clarify that parents are responsible for the safety of their children while walking to and at the bus stop, which includes following health and safety rules.

Use of District Computer Systems - The policy and regulations were revised to clarify the board's responsibility relative to computer systems. Specifically, the revisions clarify that the board has installed computers and a computer network (including Internet access) on board premises and may provide other electronic devices that can access the network, but does not necessarily provide computers and Internet access in locations other than the board premises. Similarly, the policy was amended to clarify that the board will implement technology protection measures (e.g., filtering technology) for board-owned computers or devices and board-provided Internet access, to the extent practicable. Finally, the regulations were amended to reflect current federal and state statutory definitions unrelated to COVID-19.

Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices by Students - The policy was revised to reflect that privately owned technological devices, including desktop computers, may be used during instructional time if specifically permitted by instructional staff or necessary to access a digital learning platform or remote learning. The policy was also revised to reflect that the improper use of such technology is prohibited when utilized for school or at a school-sponsored activity, that searches of privately owned devices can only occur if such devices are on school property, and that reports of theft, loss or damage to such devices can be made if the suspected incident occurred on school property or at a school-sponsored activity.

Meeting Conduct - This bylaw has been temporarily revised to permit a board of education to convene virtually and to limit or restrict public comment during virtual board meetings.

Model Annual Notifications - The annual notifications document was revised to include temporary changes to the student discipline notice and the employee notice of electronic monitoring. The annual notification document was further revised to include the required employee notice under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA).

Ms. Crotty - This is your second opportunity to express any questions or concerns regarding the covid-19 temporary policy and procedures that we received at the last meeting. Do we have any questions or concerns?

L. Report from the Board Chair

Ms. Crotty – On behalf of the Town Council I would like to invite the public to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Town Hall that will take place on 8/20/2020 at 12:00 noon. I can tell you that we are very excited to have the Board of Education Office moving there in September.

One of my most favorite songs associated with the Passover holiday is “Dayenu.” Dayenu, a word in the Hebrew language, that literally means “it would have been enough”. And that brings me to our current Superintendent- you see, there were so many things he has done for us in his 2 ½ years “that would have been enough” ...dayenu.

The first time I met Dr. Harrison in person, it was clear that he had a passion for his field, but, more importantly, for children, and I knew he was going to use his extensive experiences, intelligence, and passion for the benefit of the Watertown Public School’s community...I could not wait for people to meet him. The first visit to our schools, his very first day, was one of the most exhilarating days in my tenure on the Board. I watched Dr. Harrison walk into building after building, classroom after classroom for the first time, with an incredible sense of joy and enthusiasm. I watched as children shared their excitement about meeting “the new boss of our schools” with such anticipation- a result of our staff laying the foundation for a great first visit. There were cards, letters, and posters throughout the buildings- and hundreds of staff and children welcoming Dr Harrison to our district with open arms. That is who we are, that is what we do... but what I did not anticipate was the common thread among the entire visit through each of our schools.... There was light coming from every direction, but none as bright as the light coming from our students of color. One boy in particular, at John Trumbull, was brought over by Principal Laura Meka. She said “you have to meet him-and he has to meet you”. She brought the student over to us. He looked up at Dr. Harrison in a way I have never experienced before. He was looking up at him in awe and in happiness as if he was looking in a mirror of possibilities in a way that solidified with absolute certainty; there was joy in his face. I took a few steps back as to not interfere with this sacred space that suddenly surrounded the two of them. I selfishly snapped a photo of that moment. It was indescribable, and Mrs. Meka was right. Dr. Harrison, thank you for what you did for that boy on your very first day. Dayenu. - it would have been enough.

Thank you for being a strong voice for our students, advocating for their thoughts and ideas to be heard in every aspect of their education and for your collaborative approach to decision making. You came into this district with such enthusiasm and passion, and it led to real work getting done. I believe that the District Improvement Plan will continue to bear fruit long after you are gone. I am most thankful for the time you dedicated to Watertown Public Schools and its community, to the countless ways in which you reached out and impacted individual students, staff members, and parents in their time of need. You will be missed, and long remembered. Thank you for how much of yourself you gave to us. Dayenu.

In the 19 years that I have been involved in the district as a parent, a volunteer, lay leader, and Board Member, I have always been amazed and grateful for the lengths our district employees are willing to go for our students. But this, this time with this pandemic, this is different. Like doctors, nurses, law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, and so many others- educators are being asked to care for our community in ways that most professions do not touch. I cannot begin to imagine how each staff member is feeling and while we consider *everyone’s* concerns, nothing changes about this fact: it is a scary, uncertain time and a lot is being asked of school

districts and those who work within them. One thing is for certain: decisions will not be made based on the economy or the election or any political ideals. Decisions will be made based on the health and wellbeing of our students, staff, and the loved ones they all return home to. Every decision, every minute, of every day.

To say that the Watertown Public School community has had some curve-balls lately would be an understatement... but what I do know is that what we have is amazing leadership teams, building administrators, teachers and staff members who are the backbone of this school system. Custodians who are making sure our buildings who are the backbone of this school system, building crews making sure the buildings are ready and maintenance crews who are making sure our grounds are safe. Paraprofessionals who are thinking about their students and Secretaries dedicated to keeping everything running smoothly. Teachers who are trying to grasp and plan for another school year full of unknowns, and nurses who are preparing isolation rooms and equipment and implementing health and wellness protocols. Administrators who are working to develop the safest operational plans and schedules and social distance protocols, and Food Services staff who never really stopped preparing and prepping for our children since we closed in March. Social workers and school psychologists who are developing plans to ensure our students get what they need-thinking about the ways trauma and depression and isolation can be recognized and addressed. They are the ones who continue to move us forward, grow our district in ways that have moved us far over the last decade, and continue to inspire us with their passion and commitment to the children and families of our town. We are #watertownstrong and we will see each other through 2020 in the best way possible. Thank you to all who continue to encourage, support, and uplift our community.

M. Communications – Secretary

None (repeated item)

N. Committee Reports:

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

Dates are currently being reviewed for negotiations between the Watertown Board of Education and the Watertown Education Association. I would also like to thank everyone for reviewing the temporary covid-19 policy package that we will be taking action on this evening.

Budget and Finance Committee, Ms. Diane Bristol, Chair – No
Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Thomas Lambert, Chair – No
Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Robert Makowski, Chair – No

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

Agenda Item:	O.1
Subject:	Consideration of the Approval of COVID-19 Temporary Policy Packet for Watertown Public Schools – Second Reading

Motion Presented By:	Ms. Bristol
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Makowski
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move to approve the Covid-19 Temporary Policy Package as presented.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

P. Future Agenda Items and Board Members Comments

Ms. Eastman – Read a letter of thanks for Dr. Harrison and let him know it was an honor to work with him.

Mr. Malagutti – Expressed his thanks for all he did for the people of Watertown. Also let him know how much he enjoyed working with him.

Ms. Rosa – Read a letter of thanks for moving our district forward and took the opportunity to wish him the best.

Mr. Makowski – Thanked Dr. Harrison for taking a chance on us and the move up to CT from NC. Thanked him for his professionalism and energy and his dazzling PowerPoints.

Ms. Rinaldi – Thanked Dr Harrison for all he did and wished him well in his new district. She also thanked him for putting up with all of her questions. She wished him and his family luck.

Ms. Wilk – Thanked Dr. Harrison and wished him the best of luck

Ms. Bristol – Thanked Dr. Harrison and loved that he gave us our vision and mission and marching orders; the direction we needed to move forward in. Wished him the best.

Q. Adjournment

Agenda Item:	O.1
Subject:	To adjourn the meeting

Motion Presented By: Ms. Eastman
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 10:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board