



Stratford Board of Education

STRATFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION – OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: May 22, 2017

Meeting Location: Victoria Soto School
699 Birdseye Street, Stratford, CT 06615

Approved: **DRAFT**

Recorded By: Teresa Lycoudes/
Secretary to the Board of Education

1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Title	Location	Present
James Feehan	Board Chair		Y
Leonard Petruccelli	Board Vice Chair		Y
Theresa Sheehy	Board Secretary		Y
Chris Barnaby	Board Member		Y
Maria Buturla	Board Member		Y
Susan Lance	Board Member		Y
Eric Lazaro	Board Member		Y
Dr. Janet Robinson	Superintendent	Central Office	Y
Clarence Zachery	Chief Operating Officer	Central Office	Y
Linda Gejda	Asst. Superintendent	Central Office	Y
Teresa Lycoudes	Recorder / Board Secretary	Central Office	Y
Jack Dellapiano	SAA Representative	SHS Principal	Y
Mike Fiorello, Kristin Record, Robin Julian	SEA Representatives	BHS & VSS - Instructors	Y
Lou Spetrino	Videographer		Y

2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Administration Center / Board Room – 1000 East Broadway

3 MEETING START

Meeting Scheduled to Start: 6:30 PM

Actual Start Time: 6:38 PM

4 AGENDA

- **Opening Remarks by Chair**

1. Board Chair (James Feehan) called the May 22, 2017 Board of Education meeting (held at the Victoria Soto School Auditorium) to

order at 6:38 PM. A quorum was confirmed, and Mr. Feehan asked everyone to stand and join **Board Member, Susan Lance**, for the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Presentations** – Recognition for the following students and staff members occurred.
 1. **Town Spelling Bee Winner** – Dr. Robinson welcomed **David McLarin, (Grade 5) Eli Whitney Elementary School**, and presented him with a Certificate honoring his achievement for winning the Town Spelling Bee.
 2. **BHS Seniors “Act of Heroism”** – Dr. Robinson recognized Bunnell High School students, **Trevon Palmer, Julianna Anglin, and Stephen Brennan** for the act of heroism that took place in March 2017. On March 7th, as they were on their way home, they smelled an odor at Eli Whitney Elementary School. Instead of ignoring it, they decided to go inside and alert the office. The odor turned out to be a gas leak.
 3. **CABE Leadership Awards** – Dr. Robinson invited the Principal of each of the schools listed below to join her at the podium to help in honoring students who received a 2017 CABE Leadership Award. CABE Leadership Awards are given to students who were picked from among their peers for exhibiting leadership qualities as defined by a list of criteria developed by a subcommittee of CABE’s (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Board of Directors. The criteria for this award is:
 - Willingness to take on challenges.
 - Capability to make difficult decisions.
 - Concern for others.
 - Ability to work with others.
 - Willingness to commit to a project.
 - Diplomacy
 - Ability to understand issues clearly.
 - Ability to honor a commitment.

The following students were recognized and selected to receive a CABE Leadership Award:

- **Flood Middle School (Assistant Principal, Greg Grigas)** – Ethan David, Tatyanna Reyes
- **Wooster Middle School (Principal, Bryan Darcy)** – Sean Youngquist, Grace Wright
- **Bunnell High School (Principal, Dr. Nancy Dowling)** – Joseph Pellegrino, Angelina Lee LaMonica
- **Stratford High School (Principal, Jack Dellapiano)** – Gavin Scofield, Hannah Shimura

4. Student Representatives

- **Bunnell High School** – Joseph Pellegrino
- **Stratford High School** – Roula Kouvatas

5. Valedictorian and Salutatorian 2017

- **Bunnell High School – Dr. Nancy Dowling, Principal**
 - **Valedictorian** – Joseph Pellegrino
 - **Salutatorian** – Lawrence Lam
- **Stratford High School – Jack Dellapiano, Principal**
 - **Valedictorian** – Roula Kouvatas
 - **Salutatorian** – Ndidi Anekwe

6. SEA (Stratford Educators Association) Retirements – Retiring teachers were honored, and the SEA gave out the following Human Relations awards:

- **Friend of Education** – Ally Taccogna (Parent, Nichols)
- **Teacher** – Ed Chappa (Teacher, Second Hill Lane Elementary School)
- **Community Champion** – Michael Ginicola (Phys. Ed – Nichols Elementary)

7. 2017 Teacher of the Year

- **Samantha Rosenberg** (Franklin Elementary School) was honored for her recent honor of being named Stratford’s Teacher of the Year. An award certificate and bouquet were presented by Dr. Robinson (Superintendent) and Dr. Gejda (Assistant Superintendent)

8. Other Recognitions – Dr. Robinson also recognized some other staff members who received honors during the 2016-17 school year. They are:

- **CAS Principal of the Year** – Carla Armistead, Chapel Street Elementary School
- **CAS Assistant Principal of the Year (elementary level)** – Lori DiBlasi, Franklin Elementary School and Wilcoxson Elementary School.
- **CAS Assistant Principal of the Year (secondary level)** – Chris Koch, Bunnell High School
- **CT Association of Science Teachers’ “Excellence in Middle School Teaching Award”** – Tracy Andersen, Wooster Middle School

Dr. Robinson, on behalf of the Stratford Board of Education, congratulated all of the students and staff recognized for all they accomplished during this 2016-2017 school year.

Music Entertainment was provided by students of Flood Middle School, Wooster Middle School and Bunnell High School.

After the entertainment, Chairman Feehan announced the meeting would recess for the reception.

The meeting reconvened at 8:40PM.

- **Public Participation** – There were two public speakers. Those who spoke are as follows:
 1. **Sara Seaburg** – 505 Wilcoxson Avenue, Stratford CT – **Budget / Fine Arts**
 2. **Karen Rodia** – 2115 Cutspring Road, Stratford CT – **Budget / Fine Arts**
- **Student Representatives Report** – The 2016-2017 School Representatives to the Board of Education were introduced. **Joseph Pellegrino represented Bunnell High School. Roula Kouvas represented Stratford High School.** Both students gave reports about the various happenings and events throughout the month of May at Bunnell and Stratford High Schools. They each thanked the Board and Administration for the opportunity to serve as Student Representative to the Board of Education for the 2016-17 school year.

Chairman Feehan expressed the Boards appreciation for the Student Representatives and wished them the best in their future endeavors.

- **Superintendent’s “Status of the Schools” Report** – Dr. Robinson reported about the following items:
 - **Upcoming End of Year Events**
 - **Senior Scholarship Awards for BHS & SHS – May 31, 2017 at 6:30 PM**
 - **Graduation 2017 – June 14, 2017**
 - **District Website** – Dr. Robinson informed the gathering that a lot of positive feedback has been received for the website by both community and staff. She said the new website is much more user friendly for both the viewers and staff members.
 - **Strategic Planning Process & Committee** – The final meeting of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee took place on Saturday, May 20, 2017. After the fall sessions, four action teams were convened. The plans of these four action teams were presented at the May 20th meeting. The five year plan will be on the June agenda for adoption.
 - **Common Core Standards, etc.** – Mr. Feehan asked where the District stands with the Common Core Standards, etc. Dr. Robinson reported that the NGSS have just completed

their standards. She said there has been several sessions of curriculum writing taking place in the attempt to bring the District forward. Mr. Feehan asked if the district is caught up. Dr. Robinson responded that it is an ever on-going process and a district is never caught up.

- **Consent Agenda**

- Mr. Feehan entertained a motion for the items contained in the **Consent Agenda** (meeting minutes, overnight trips, personnel assignments and budget transfers).
 - **Item 1: Meeting minutes from March 27th regular meeting.**
 - **Item 2: Personnel Status Document (May 2017) (included in Board Agenda).**
 - **Item 3: Overnight Trip to Natures Classroom (Stratford Academy – Johnson House)**
 - **Item 4: Budget Transfers - There are none**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MRS. LANCE, TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT THE **CONSENT AGENDA (Items 1 & 3). THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
(7:0)

Discussion took place about **Item 2: Personnel Status Document** – After review and discussion, the following took place:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI TO TABLE ITEM 2. Mr. Feehan stated that he had some questions. With that being said, Mr. Petruccelli withdrew his motion.

Mr. Feehan stated, in lieu of where the budget stands at this point in time, he believes a “hiring freeze” may be in order. Dr. Robinson asked for clarification. Mr. Feehan said that he believes a complete freeze would be in order.

Mrs. Lance stated that she agreed; however, there are positions that need to be filled (that are not new positions). She said some positions are necessary for academics to continue.

Dr. Robinson asked when the freeze would go in effect. Mr. Feehan said the freeze would be effective immediately.

MR. LAZARO MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THE PERSONNEL DOCUMENT UNTIL AFTER THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETS; SECONDED BY MR. PETRUCCELLI.

Mr. Barnaby stated “as a point of order”, the document should not be sent to a Committee that it was not being presented to. Mr. Feehan said, if the item is tabled at the Board level, that is where it would stay. He said the Finance Committee could always waive the rules and add the item to the agenda.

At this point, a recess was called. The Board of Education meeting recessed at 9:07 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 9:12 PM.

Mr. Feehan asked for a vote on the motion to table. MR. LAZARO WITHDREW HIS MOTION. MR. PETRUCCELLI AGREED TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MOTION.

Further discussion took place around the personnel document (i.e. curriculum writing). Mr. Lazaro questioned the number of curriculum writers, and also asked if the curriculum writing was necessary for the standards previously discussed. Dr. Robinson stated that yes, the curriculum writing is to make curriculum whole and compliant with the standards and to also help keep the District moving forward.

Mrs. Lance asked for the dollar amount for the curriculum writers and the total number of hours necessary to complete their task. Dr. Robinson stated that she would make that information available. Mrs. Sheehy asked if a specific budget is approved for the curriculum writers. Dr. Robinson said that a specific amount is approved in the budget for curriculum writing. Further discussion took place surrounding curriculum writing for social studies. Upon hearing no further discussion,

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MR. BARNABY TO APPROVE THE PERSONNEL DOCUMENT (ITEM 2). The motion carried 6:1

MR. PETRUCCELLI MADE A MOTION TO WAIVE THE RULES AND ADD THE PROPOSED HIRING FREEZE EFFECTIVE MAY 23RD FOR THE 2017-2018 BUDGET TO THE AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. BARNABY. Mrs. Lance suggested the freeze be “as of this date” to July 1st.

Dr. Robinson asked how this freeze will impact ESY and summer school. ESY is a program for special education students and is

mandated by the State of Connecticut, and regular summer school is necessary for students who may have failed a particular course, etc. to bring them up to par in their academics and credits. For these students, tuition is charged. Dr. Robinson said summer school runs for approximately four weeks.

MR. PETRUCCELLI WITHDREW HIS ORIGINAL MOTION. MR. BARNABY AGREED WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MOTION.

Mrs. Lance made a motion that no new positions for 2017-2018 will be hired, excluding summer school personnel; seconded by Mr. Petrucelli.

Mr. Feehan asked if anyone wants to make a motion to add a date to the hiring freeze. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to remain with starting at present date to July 1st.

Mr. Feehan entertained a motion to call the question.

A MOTION WAS MADE TO CALL THE QUESTION BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY. MOTION CARRIED 5:2.

MR. FEEHAN RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL MOTION MADE BY MRS. LANCE FOR THE HIRING FREEZE TO BE PUT INTO PLACE; SECONDED BY MR. PETRUCCELLI. MOTION CARRIED 5:2.

Mr. Feehan commented on the discussion. He said that he believes the Board is taking the correct approach in freezing the hiring of new personnel. He then instructed Dr. Robinson and Administration that no hiring is to be done excluding ESY and summer school. He instructed Dr. Robinson to notify the Board if a situation arises requiring an immediate response. He said, at that time, a special meeting could be scheduled.

- **Items for Discussion / Action**

- **Proposed: HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION 2017-18**

- A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MR. BARNABY TO CERTIFY. The motion carried 7:0.

- **Enrollment / EdSight Numbers** – Mr. Feehan informed the gathering that he took the liberty to talk with the folks at EdSight about the district's enrollment numbers. Mr. Feehan stated he believes what is confusing to the public regarding enrollment is the data provided by the District for October 1st enrollment is off by approximately 140 students. Administration gives out an official

number solely at October 1st, and Mr. Zachery said this difference (140 students) is the outplaced students. Mr. Feehan said the issue is that furthermore, the state has said outplaced students *are* included in that number. Mr. Zachery said that he would have to research what numbers are put into EdSight and by whom (department). He said Preschool numbers may have been excluded. Mr. Feehan said the numbers must match. He said the District's report and the numbers reflected at EdSight should match. Mr. Feehan reiterated that the October 1st numbers must align with EdSight. Mr. Zachery said he would discuss with the Data Specialist as to the enrollment numbers submitted to EdSight. Mr. Feehan said for next month's meeting, he would like the explanation for the difference in the enrollment numbers. He then asked for a motion to table this topic.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO TABLE THIS ITEM. The motion carried 7:0.

- **Email Service Change to Microsoft 360** – Mr. Molloy gave a brief synopsis of the District's current email provider. Mr. Feehan asked what the cost is associated with the current provider. Mr. Molloy stated approximately \$20,000. Mr. Molloy stated that in the near future, the District will be going to free email service with Google. He said this would be district-wide covering both staff and students. Mr. Molloy said his department has plans of this work taking place over the summer months. Mr. Feehan asked when this will go into effect. Mr. Molloy said he hopes that the District can see some cost avoidance for 2017-18.
- **Budget Adoption** – Mr. Lazaro requested the budgeted amount from the Town Council be presented to the Board in real dollars. Mr. Zachery stated the amount is **\$1,110,665** according to the Town Chief Administrative Officer. Mr. Lazaro asked the overall budget amount for 2017-2018. Mr. Zachery stated the full budget dollar amount would be **\$107,905,667** based on the Town Council's recent allocation.

Mr. Feehan stated that officially, a budget is in place with a 1.04% increase over last year. He said no one knows if a veto by the Mayor will occur or when. In addition, if there is a veto, there is the potential of receiving a ZERO increase for 2017-2018. Mr. Feehan charged the Finance Committee with reviewing the numbers allocated and to do everything to make this budget work. He asked that rationality and respect always be first and foremost. Mr. Feehan said the Board must take the high road and find a way

to make the budget allocation work. He said fear in the community must be replaced with unity and compromise.

Mr. Feehan also asked that no disrespect be given to Town Council Members.

- **Additional Custodian Hirings** – Mr. Feehan stated that during the budget hearings, Councilman Cann brought up the issue of custodial overtime. Mr. Feehan said that Mr. Cann’s idea is to hire a pool of extra custodians that could fill in when vacation or sick time arises. He asked the opinion of Rich Ruggiero (Director of Facilities) on this matter. Mr. Ruggiero informed the group that a lot of the custodial overtime is not paid by the Board of Ed. He said it is paid by the departments offering programs or events (i.e. Sterling House, Town Rec Department, and Public Works). Mr. Petrucci asked where the monies go when custodians are utilized in this manner. Mr. Zachery said it is reconciled by journal entries and shown as “in kind” services. Mr. Feehan asked if Mr. Cann’s suggestion could be done and how would it work out. Mr. Ruggiero said it would not relieve overtime or sick leave. Mr. Zachery reminded the Board that Mr. Ruggiero has always asked for additional custodians, but that is one of the areas that has always been cut during the budget process. Mr. Ruggiero said that overtime could probably be cut down, but then the wait would be longer for the work that’s needed to be done by Public Works. Mr. Ruggiero said the custodians take care of things like painting, etc. He said this is done to keep the schools looking good for the students and community.

Mr. Ruggiero stated that without the summer helpers and summer overtime, it will be hard to have the schools ready and in good shape by the start of the next school year (2017-2018).

- **Tabled Items -**

- **Scholarship Opportunities for District Student Teachers / Minority Teacher recruitment**
- **Strategic Plan**
- **Middle School Attendance Policy**
- **Magnet School**
- **Residency Verification (Grade 5)**
- **Audit Status**
- **Enrollment Numbers**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MR. BARNABY TO REMOVE ITEM #2 (STRATEGIC PLAN) FROM THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mrs. Lance reported that she attended the Strategic Planning session held on May 20th. She said a lot of good work took place for the good of the District.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO PLACE STRATEGIC PLANNING BACK ON THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7:0.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO REMOVE ITEM #4 – MAGNET SCHOOLS FROM THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7:0.

Mr. Feehan offered an update on the Magnet Schools topic. He said the law suit as a matter of procedure has taken a recess until a complete administrative review has taken place with the State Department of Education. He said Bridgeport has not won; the law suit still stands.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. LANCE; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO PLACE ITEM #4 – MAGNET SCHOOLS BACK ON THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7:0.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. BARNABY; SECONDED BY MR. PETRUCCELLI TO REMOVE RESIDENCY VERIFICATION FROM THE TABLE FOR DISCUSSION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Barnaby stated that he believes the district doesn't need to go through another grade level of residency verification again. He stated that he felt comfortable leaving residency for administration to handle. Mr. Lazaro concurred with Mr. Barnaby. He added that, at the same time, he does not want to lose sight of residency verification.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. BARNABY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO REVIEW RESIDENCY QUARTERLY AT THE BOARD MEETINGS. MR. FEEHAN ASKED THAT THE RECORD SHOW THE LAST DATE REVIEWED IS MAY 22, 2017. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. BARNABY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO PLACE RESIDENCY VERIFICATION BACK ON THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7:0.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO TAKE AUDIT STATUS OFF THE TABLE FOR DISCUSSION.

Mr. Feehan said in updated the upcoming audit, there were two problems encountered:

1. Some of the questions are considered to be something that an auditor cannot answer.
2. Cost of the audit.

Mr. Feehan informed all that there has been no discussion of cancelling the audit. He said the cost has not been made known, at this point in time. He said an audit of this type would most likely not be cheap.

Mr. Feehan continued by stating that should anything negative be found (uncovered) by the auditors, all staff shall and will be expected to be cooperative.

He said no members of the community should be contacting the attorney directly. Mr. Feehan said he could ensure that the audit would be transparent. He said the timeframe would be somewhere toward the end of June and would be conducted over the course of approximately two to six weeks. He said at the end of the audit, the findings report would be sealed by the attorney and given directly to the Board.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. PETRUCCELLI; SECONDED BY MR. BARNABY TO PLACE THE AUDIT STATUS TOPIC BACK ON THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED 7:0.

▪ **Old Business for Information / Discussion**

There was none.

▪ **New Business for Information / Discussion**

There was none.

▪ **Committee Reports**

- **Athletic Review** – Mrs. Lance reported the Athletic Review Committee did not meet during the month of May. She said she did not know when the Committee would be able to meet; however, she is hopeful it will be able to meet before the close of school.
- 4. **School Plant / Planning Committee** – The School Plant Planning Committee did not meet during the month of May.
- Finance Committee** – Mr. Petrucelli reported that the Finance

Committee (regular) did not meet during the month of May. He said the Committee has scheduled a special meeting for May 23, 2017 for the purpose of holding a budget workshop to talk about the 2017-2018 budget and moving it forward.

5. **Curriculum Committee** – Mrs. Sheehy said the Curriculum Committee did not meet during the month of May. She said the committee does plan to meet in June.

▪ **Other Committees:**

- **CABE** – There was no report.
- **CARE** – There was no report.
- **CES** – Mrs. Sheehy reported that she was unable to attend the meeting, and reminded the Board members that she does not have an alternate to attend the meeting.
- **Town / BOE Liaison** – Mr. Feehan reported the Town / BOE Liaison met on May 2, 2017. He said the discussion revolved around the budget and was productive. He said the meeting consisted of good dialogue and a good exchange of views.
- **Town Building Needs** – Mr. Petrucci reported that the Town Building Needs Committee met. He said an injunction is being filed which could mean a delay for the Stratford High School project.
- **PTSA** – Dr. Robinson reported that the PTA Council met and talked about the budget process. Dr. Robinson also informed the gathering that Jennifer Falotico (former PTA Council President) is pursuing a position at the State of Connecticut PTSA level.

- **Committee Appointments / Assignments** – There were no Committee appointments or assignments.

- **Board Goals 2016-18** – Given the timeframe, the Board Goals for 2016-18 will be reviewed at the June Board meeting.

- **Good and Welfare** – The following items were reported:

- Early Dismissal (May 26) – Teacher PLC Day
- Memorial Day (May 29) – Administration and Schools Closed
- Graduation Ceremony (June 14) – BHS & SHS 6:00 PM
 1. More information will be sent from Central Office as to who will be attending which graduation ceremony.

- Last Day of School (June 16) - District
- **ADJOURNMENT**
 - The meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM upon a motion made by Mr. Petrucelli seconded by Mrs. Buturla, and carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Stratford Board of Education is scheduled for **Monday, June 26, 2017**. The meeting location will be the Board Room at the Administration Center (1000 East Broadway) and the meeting time will resort back to the normal start time of 7:15 PM.

Meeting recorded and minutes transcribed by:



Teresa Lycoudes, Board Secretary & Executive Assistant to the Superintendent