

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 11, 2022

7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Virtual Meeting

Full video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aVMYXrngz8>

Zoom recorded

Members Present

Michelle Doucette Cunningham - Chair

Herb Arico- Secretary

Ann Grosjean- Vice Chair

Tracey Anderson

Donna Cook

Briana Ross

(members all present remotely through Zoom)

Absent: Laura Rodriguez

Also Present

Superintendent of Schools, Phil Stevens

Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Erin Conley

Members of the public

1. **Call to order**

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Cunningham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Present to speak**

None

4. **Chairman's report**

None

5. **Communications**

None

6. **Superintendent report**

a. 2021-2022 update

The schools have had 40 positive COVID cases since the last board meeting. The uptick in cases across the town and state has been significant. DPH came out with new recommendations that were sent to you on January 2nd. They are no longer contact tracing in schools, which for them makes sense as they do not have one example of a student identified as a close contact contracting the virus. The screen and stay program has been eliminated because they are no longer contact tracing in schools. They also are following the DPH-recommended shortened isolation and quarantine protocols. Home tests are now being allowed, and both school nurses have a small supply of home

tests for symptomatic students and staff. The state provided approximately 300 tests for schools and they received N-95 masks from the town disbursement, and they have heard they may be getting a second distribution of tests. They have been able to overcome any staffing shortfalls so far, and hope to continue that trend moving forward.

On December 29, Griffin Health operated their last vaccination clinics at Hall School, one pediatric clinic, and one adult clinic. Thanks to Briana Ross and her daughters for volunteering. Griffin Health administered 19 first dose and 37 second dose pediatric vaccines for a total of 56 pediatric doses. The adult clinic resulted in 2 first dose and 9 second dose vaccines and 66 boosters for a total of 77 doses.

The Superintendent's office has been busy working on the budget. We are working on Portrait of a Graduate and have several meetings scheduled over the next couple of months. Superintendent Stevens has been working with Dr. Peter Prowda on the school enrollment study ordered by the School Building Committee. The SBC also has a request for proposals filed for an owner's project manager and proposals are due this Friday, and Superintendent Stevens will be helping review those. Lastly, Superintendent Stevens will be presenting the Board's projects Wednesday night to the Capital Improvement Committee.

b. Enrollment update

Center School has 207 students and Hall School has 187 students. We currently have a total of 394 students. Four students return from homeschooling on January 3.

c. Staffing

The only new staff member the schools have is Matt Flegert, who is the new secretary at HMS.

7. Financial Report

a. January financial report

Attachment #1

Superintendent Stevens highlighted the major changes to the programs.

Program 1: The art teacher, 3rd-grade teacher, and principal are now encumbered

Program 2: The new secretary and art teacher are encumbered at Hall

Program 4: They received a diesel reimbursement from Region 19

8. Committee Report

The curriculum committee is meeting on January 24. The negotiations team will be negotiating the WESS contract in March.

9. New Business

a. Approve minutes of regular meeting December 14, 2021

Attachment #2

Ann Grosjean made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 14, 2021 meeting.

Tracey Anderson seconded the motion.

D. Cook made a motion to table the approval of the December 14, 2021 minutes until they know what to do with the two emails from Michelle Christenen.

H. Arico seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico	x		
M. Cunningham	x		
D.Cook	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A.Grosjean	x		
B. Ross	x		

Motion passes

10. Old Business

a. 2021-2022 Updated Draft School Calendar

Attachment # 3

i. Parent feedback survey regarding additional professional development time

Attachment #4

Superintendent Stevens administered a survey to parents to gather feedback for the 21-22 calendar and the 22-23 calendar. They are trying every creative method to maximize professional development time for the staff as that is critical to student success. 162 responses were collected and overwhelmingly support adjusting the 21-22 calendar to add 6 early dismissal days, with 78% supporting early dismissals, and 84% of respondents selected Friday as one of their preferred days. They are investigating their ability to provide instructional tutoring by paraprofessionals at the end of the early release days. Superintendent Stevens proposed 6 early dismissal days be added to the 21-22 calendar.

They have approximately 1020 instructional hours at HMS and 1036 at CES, and the state minimum is 900 hours. The adjustment would result in a loss of approximately 12 ½ hours but would provide the staff the time needed for professional development and they would still be well above the required number of hours.

ii. Professional development schedule

Erin Conley, the director of curriculum and instruction, drafted a professional development plan for those 6 days so you could see how those days would be utilized. E. Conley walked through the calendar and what will be done on each professional day.

Discussion took place with ideas of where and what students could do during these professional development days. Such as; after school programs, enrichment programs, outside activities,

Star Hill in Tolland, PTA and/or parent volunteers. There was some concern having students miss school time and when the professional development days were scheduled.

A. Grosjean made a motion to accept the proposed 2021-2022 calendar to include the extra Friday's for professional development and also to change May the 20th to May 27th.

D. Cook seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico			x
M. Cunningham	x		
D.Cook	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A.Grosjean	x		
B. Ross	x		

Motion passes

Roll call of votes was taken.

b. 2022-2023 Updated Draft School Calendar

Attachment #5

i. Parent feedback survey regarding additional professional development time

Again, the parent survey data supports adding professional development time for staff in the 22-23 calendar. 81% of respondents would support early dismissals with 88% selecting Friday as one of their preferred days. Superintendent Stevens proposed 14 additional early release days in the 22-23 calendar which would start the first 3 months with 2 early dismissal days each month, and then it would alternate 1 per month, 2 per month for the remainder of the school year. One of the concerns parents shared is childcare and this is an issue that they are working on to see if they could provide onsite care at one or both schools on the early dismissal days. Also, they would adjust their preschool schedule so the AM and PM programs would not be impacted by this adjustment. They know several districts are looking to do the same thing, or have implemented early release days in the past to provide professional development. This adjustment would result in approximately 30 hours less instructional time but should pay off significantly in improved instructional practices and student outcomes.

ii. Professional development schedule

E. Conley drafted a list of professional development topics for the 22-23 school year and shared them in detail. E. Conley explained the topics, the approach and why the dates are planned as listed.

Some board members were concerned regarding the topics being addressed during the professional development days, the dates that were given and the hours being spent on professional development. Also child care and where the students will go during these days.

Superintendent Stevens explained the teacher’s contractual hours and the strain on the administration team. He also shared a few ideas he has for child care or options for families.

A. Grosjean made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 school calendar to include early closing dates. Including the 3 changed dates; January 13 and 17 and February 16th.

T. Anderson seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico			x
M. Cunningham	x		
D.Cook	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A.Grosjean	x		
B. Ross	x		

Motion passes

Roll call of votes was taken.

c. 2022-2023 Budget Meeting Calendar update

Attachment #6

Superintendent Stevens updated the 22-23 budget meeting calendar as the process has been delayed as a result of COVID. The content was merged into 2 nights.

11. Present to Speak WATCH VIDEO!

Sarah Baker, 7 Ridgewood Road. Sarah expressed her concern with the cost of finding childcare during professional development days. It could become quite costly for families. She had another solution such as; community service for older students. She understands that teachers need more professional development days but the children’s needs to be met too. Especially those children that have missed school because of the pandemic.

12. Board Comment

A. Grosjean thanked all the nurses. They have been incredible with families. She wants them to know how appreciated they are.

H. Arico had a couple of questions regarding transportation contracts and the masks that are being used at the schools. He stated that it’s highly recommended to use the N-95 masks over cloth masks.

T. Anderson welcomed the new secretary at Hall School, Matt. She thanked the nurses, teachers and everyone that is working so hard in the continued less than ideal situations we're dealing with. Especially with all the things happening to cover for other people and the hard work that they are doing. She thanked Phil, Erin and everyone else that is helping for trying to come up with solutions with scheduling and curriculum.

D. Cook reminded Superintendent Stevens when doing the budget please let them know what is contractual so they don't need to take a lot of time to discuss. She encouraged parents to participate in the process. She hopes all the work that Erin is setting up helps turn the schools around. She hopes it includes steps to offset the negative impact on learning because the kids have not seen faces in a long time. Part of learning is seeing the shapes peoples mouths make and getting to know your friends by what they look like. A lot of that is being lost and we are going to be facing some real challenging times. She appreciated Sarah translating their decision in the half days into what real dollars for the families. Hopefully things will lighten up and we'll be able to get some additional substitutes or programs in or send the kids to Star Hill to play in the bubble. Just lots of great, creative opportunities to let the kids be kids and learn something new.

B. Ross welcomed Matt aboard as the new secretary. She wanted to remind everyone that we give our students the best everyday and our staff and admin are working really, really hard under super tough circumstances. The fact that they can do that so well and care for our kids and also look out for their families in our community is a testament to the fact that we are indeed Willington Strong. Holding each other up and putting forth what's important to us as a community is just going to keep us going as best as we can through these difficult things. So smile at your neighbor when you can and great job everyone there at the schools. Please everybody do your best to stay healthy. And when you are not, go ahead and take care of yourselves because that's important too.

M. Cunningham agreed with Briana. She wished everyone in the community as well as the school community, whether they live in Willington or not, the very best to make it through a difficult month. She knows how much the past year and a half has really taken a toll on the staff and teachers. She stated her appreciation towards the staff, nurses and administrators. All of their long hours and sacrifices they have been making. She thanked everyone and that we welcome comments, whether by email or during "present to speak" at our meetings. The next meeting will be in two weeks when we have our budget workshop.

13. Adjournment

D. Cook made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

M. Cunningham seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico	x		
M. Cunningham	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A. Grosjean	x		

L. Rodriguez	x		
B. Ross	x		

Motion passes

Next meeting February 8, 2022

Nicole Fusco
Recording Secretary