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CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
TOWN CLERK  
EASTON CT

*Filed subject to approval*

## EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/94739190799?pwd=R1JGeU00bFlaVEt3UURue21YeG9Mdz09>

Meeting ID: 947 3919 0799

Password: 06612

September 8, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.

### Minutes

#### ATTENDANCE

Board members: Stinson, Goldstein, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Wible

Administration: Harrison, Pierson Ugol, Reiss, Del Conte

Others: 39 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary

#### CALL TO ORDER

J. Stinson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the July 27, 2020 Regular meeting as submitted. (Goldstein, Hicks). Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 11, 2020 ER9 Joint BOEs Special meeting as submitted. (Goldstein, Wible). Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 14, 2020 ER9 Joint BOEs Special meeting as submitted. (Goldstein, Hicks). Approved, 5-0-1. (Chieda abstained).**

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road, Easton: asked about the cleaning procedure for bus drivers and buses in-between the bus runs for the different schools.

Adam Parker, Wedgewood Road, Easton: said that his kids were learning remotely on this first day of school and that it was a pretty smooth process. He also said thank you and kudos to everyone, that the plan is working.

Nikki Kaldawy, Staples Rd, Easton: thanked the teachers and staff for everything that they're doing.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

R. Hicks said welcome to Dr. Harrison, who, he noted, is a fellow New Jerseyite.

J. Chieda said a huge thank you to the teachers and staff. She also said that the entire town needed this, and that pulling this off was heroic.

G. Goldstein welcomed Dr. Harrison, and said that both of her children reported positive experiences on the day. She also said thank you to all who were involved.

D. Wible welcomed Dr. Harrison, and said that she watched the video he had shared with staff and thought the video was inspirational. She also said thank you to everyone who was involved with opening the schools.

J. Stinson welcomed Dr. Harrison, and said that he is excited to begin work with Dr. Harrison. He also said that from the perspective of a parent and BOE member he knows there are so many people to thank, starting with Dr. Pierson Ugol and the building administrators. J. Stinson said that what they are doing is not easy to do.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rydell Harrison, first said that he was excited to be speaking as Superintendent and thanked Dr. Pierson Ugol, S. Reiss and V. Cram for all of their hard work. Dr. Harrison said that it is typical for a new Superintendent to have a 90-day plan and that he will be meeting with BOE members, administration and staff to explore the topics of: who are we as a community; who are we as a school district; what are our aspirations; and, how can he lead this over time. He said the purpose of his report will be to: increase organizational effectiveness; ensure effective and transparent operations; establish effective support for students; and, overall building stakeholder trust. Dr. Harrison said that he looks forward to continuing to connect with staff, students and families.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Pierson Ugol, said that she was so pleased to have no dramatic changes or special requests on which to report. She said that she was thrilled to welcome teachers and students back, and that even though everyone was wearing masks, it really did feel like the first day of school. Dr. Pierson Ugol said that the ER9 website has been updated, that technology continues to arrive and that parents should make contact with school offices with any updates on the status of their children. She also said that the focus has shifted from reopening to staying open.

Director of Special Services, Jennifer Del Conte, said that the Special Education teachers came back to work and immediately rolled up their sleeves and got to work, with reviewing IEPs and how to implement them, as a priority. J. Del Conte presented a report that compared Special Services data from September 2019 to September 2020 in SSES and HKMS. She also said that there will be a second Special Services Q & A on Thursday, September 10, and that a teacher had been hired for the Junior Bridges Program.

Samuel Staples Elementary School Principal, Kimberly Fox Santora, first said that the day had been the single most unique day in her career, and that she could not stress enough the brilliance of our teachers. K. Fox Santora reported on: the student population by grade; new certified and support staff members; and the need for cafeteria/recess aides. J. Chieda asked if the BOE could receive a breakdown on the number of student withdrawals by homeschooling vs. moving out of district situations. K. Fox Santora said that she is able to provide the BOE with such a report.

Helen Keller Middle School Principal, Susan Kaplan, first thanked the staff for all of their hard work over the summer; she said that there were groups of students assigned to staff members, with the staff members then calling and keeping in touch with these students. S. Kaplan also thanked the PTO for the breakfast and lunch they provided to staff, and the Easton Parks & Rec Department for all of their work on the school grounds. S. Kaplan reported that there are, as of this meeting, 320 students enrolled at HKMS, with 21 new enrollees and nine withdrawals; and also that 88% of the student population is

participating in the hybrid model and 12% are temporarily learning from home. She said that there will be a virtual Open House on September 15, and that more information on this event is forthcoming.

Director of Finance & Operations, Scott Reiss, reported that there were no transfers for 2019-2020 in his report as this year has been closed out, and that a final request for funds from the town has been made. S. Reiss said that the school district of Easton had received the following grants: Federal CARES Act, through ESSER, in the amount of \$24,1146.39; Coronavirus Relief Fund in the amount of \$87,302; and Everybody Learns in the form of 104 Chromebooks. He reported that the final amount for unexpended funds is \$577,357.71, which he said is right on track. S. Reiss also said that the amount of July claims for the Employee Health Insurance came in at \$151K, which was lower than he had expected.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: OPENING DAY EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

K. Fox Santora said that they were able to disembark all students from cars and buses by 8:55am and that buses, cars, students and staff were all great. She said that inside the building everyone was wearing masks and that people were happy and engaged. K. Fox Santora did say that dismissal, however, was not spectacular as there was a back-up of cars even with the police directing traffic; they will come up with a better plan. SSES Assistant Principal, Michael Brownstein, spoke about recess, saying that the students were placed in small groups and they seemed glad to be able to take a mask break; he said that, overall, it went very smoothly.

S. Kaplan thanked parents for prepping their students for the day, and that arrival went very smoothly with everyone in their classes by 8:15am. She said that pick-up went smoothly as parents did put the names in their windshields as instructed, but that some modifications will occur. S. Kaplan said that there were some minor issues with Google. J. Stinson asked about teacher morale and readiness. S. Kaplan replied that last week people were anxious, but that today was uplifting. J. Parker asked if teachers felt the need to go outside. S. Kaplan replied that some teachers did take their classes outside for a mask break. HKMS Assistant Principal, Ann Mohr, said that classes cannot live-stream while outside the building, and that today was more about connecting with one another.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: EASTON LEARNING FOUNDATION GRANT OF \$1,700 FOR SWIVL CAMERA AND IPAD FOR PE

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the grant of \$1,700 for the purpose of purchasing a Swivl Camera and iPad for the P.E. department at SSES. (Hicks, Parker). Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATION

G. Goldstein reported on the latest meeting of the Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, saying that they had decided upon the application process for community members and students to join the Task Force. There will be one community member from each town and one student from each building on the Task Force. Information will be disseminated through the ER9 website, and they will let building administrators create the process for finding student representatives. The deadline for applications is November 3, 2020.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road, Easton: said that no one had answered her question about the cleaning of the buses in between bus runs.

J. Stinson replied that they did discuss this issue at the meeting and there is a protocol for the bus cleaning, and that the BOE will get more detail from the bus company.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Parker thanked Dr. Pierson Ugol for all of her work this summer and her calm head in getting it accomplished. He also thanked S. Reiss for helping us find our way through this financially challenging time.

R. Hicks said that he echoes J. Parker's comment and that we are all very fortunate to live in this community.

J. Chieda said to Dr. Harrison that we are all so glad that you're here.

D. Wible said that she is looking forward to the rest of this week and school year.

J. Stinson thanked everyone and everyone on this call.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education meeting be adjourned. (Hicks, Chieda).  
Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Gretchen Goldstein  
Secretary, Easton Board of Education

Recorded by,  
Sarah Ota