

*Filed subject to approval*

Regular Meeting  
Easton Board of Education Agenda  
Helen Keller Middle School – Media Center  
Tuesday, September 14, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.  
Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members: Stinson, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Wible, DeJesus

Administration: McMorran, Fox-Santora, Clapp, Pierson-Ugol, Del Conte, Scrofani

Others: 20 members of the public

CALL TO ORDER

J. Stinson called the Easton Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 1, 2021 Special ER9 Joint Boards of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 Regular Easton Board of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 14, 2021 Special ER9 Joint Boards of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 21, 2021 Special Easton Board of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 30, 2021 Special Easton Board of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the July 6, 2021 2021 Special ER9 Joint Boards of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the July 12, 2021 Special Easton Board of Education Meeting. Approved.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 24, 2021 Special ER9 Joint Boards of Education Meeting. Approved.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farm Road, said she would like to have Board of Education meetings back to a Zoom option, the technology is available and no reason to not utilize it. It would benefit the entire community to be able to attend meetings either in person or via zoom. We need

to have a better remote learning option for quarantined kids. SSES needs to have a Robotics and Coding class, it has been in the works for years but has never started.

Anne Manusky, 20 Morning Glory Drive, said she is against masking in the classroom, it has detrimental effects on children. Would like to see all curriculum posted online for parents to view. She questions the sex education curriculum in the fourth-grade classroom.

Rachel Mazzerelli, 29 Ground Pine Lane, said she is in the healthcare profession and questions the quarantine policy of vaccinated vs unvaccinated children. Citing scientific research, the policy doesn't make sense. If students are quarantined, where is the education coming from? Why isn't virtual learning an option?

Hillary Desmond, 71 North Park Avenue, thanked the school board for the hard work on behalf of Easton's children. Was very happy with how the school year has started.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

#### REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. McMorran thanked all for being in attendance. ER9 has hired over 80 new staff members over the summer to serve the needs of the children. The district is in conversations on how to handle distance learning with quarantined students. ER9 is working with teacher unions to develop a solution to this issue. Dr. McMorran discussed his awareness of all sides of the issues in regards to masks, vaccines, distance learning, and quarantining.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Dr. Pierson-Ugol complimented the success of the summer academy. The program was well run, well attended, parents and staff gave positive feedback. 269 students participated in the program. She discussed the stalling of Impact math curriculum development due to lack of funds/staffing. Funds needed to be moved around for a multitude of reasons. This school year, curriculum development in Impact math is starting and professional seminars have begun and will continue. The climate committee is also meeting and working towards confirming the findings, making changes based on the results of the climate survey. Dr. Pierson-Ugol discussed the use of covid grant money which was spent on summer academy, professional learning, hiring math para-educators, building substitutes, parent workshops in collaboration with special education, anti-bullying training, and the purchasing of additional materials that support mitigation efforts against COVID. Student teachers will also be utilized as extra support staff this school year. J. Cheida asked about the rigid rules in regards to the youngest students. Dr. Pierson-Ugol explained that the previous mandates have been dropped, however keeping children distant is challenging in the youngest grades. In addition, keeping them separate allows for minimal quarantining and contact tracing. J. Cheida stressed the importance of positive social interaction among early learners. J. Parker asked when the results of the culture/climate and DEI survey would be made available? The answer was it would be ready by the next regular school board meeting.

Director of Special Education: J. Del Conte discussed new staff members that were hired for special education vacancies. IEP student numbers have shifted due to children moving in and out of the district. PPT meetings are starting and service schedules set. IEP's have gone through a format change due to state guidelines. This is a big undertaking and the process has begun. J. Parker asked

if the state was requiring a rewrite of all current IEP's and Tri-annual reports to meet the state guidelines? J. Del Conte said, while it was still unclear, she did not believe so.

**Director of Technology and Digital Learning:** Sarah Scrofani introduced herself as the new Director of Technology and Learning. She discussed her work to understand the needs, goals, and initiatives of the district. Where we are and where the district needs to go. This includes looking at the communication, curriculum, platform, and data. What is the data telling us and what analysis needs to be done. She is looking at communication platforms, systems and networks, technology readiness, support, opportunities at each grade level, data collection, analysis, and parent resources.

**Director of Finance and Operations:** None

**HKMS:** Dr. Steven Clapp reported a good start to the school year. Students have been excited to come back. The library is now in full use, adjustments have been made to where students sit at lunch, mask break are occurring at lunch, and he welcomes feedback from students. S. Clapp discussed staff changes and movements throughout the building. The security officer position is still vacant and he is working hard to fill it with the right candidate for HKMS. 32 new students have joined the HKMS community. The PTO sponsored summer events, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent event over the summer, and various community building activities. The back to school night will be held virtually.

**SSES:** Kim Fox Santora spoke about the wonderful start to the school year. Students were excited, happy, and loved being back in school. Some changes that show we are moving in the right direction including table placement, desk placement, moving to special classrooms, physical education taking place in the gym. SSES has hired a variety of new staff members that has complimented the school well. K. Fox-Santora discussed enrollment and projections going forward. 35 new students were welcomed into the building, 12 students withdrew. The PTO funded a new balance beam on the playground, a mascot costume, and a laminator. Back to school night will be held virtually.

#### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The school climate committee has been discussing anti-bullying policies, which will continue moving towards a first reading. The DEI committee met and an analyst is looking at the results and making suggestions based on the DEI survey that was completed. J. Parker asked for the identity of the analyst and how they were chosen? Dr. McMorran stated that Dr. Pierson-Ugol and he made the decision and hired an agency outside of the school realm.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ESTABLISHING DR. JASON MCKINNON AS AUTHORIZED SIGNER FOR THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM**

**Motion: move to approve Dr. Jason McKinnon as authorized signer for the Child Nutrition Program ED099 agreement effective 9/20. (Parker, Wible). Approved. Unanimous.**

#### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: BUS ISSUES**

Dr. McMorran met with the bus supervisor to discuss spacing, length of bus routes, how long students are on busses, mask mandates, and safety concerns. A major focus is routes and how long students are sitting on busses to and from school. A data report will be submitted and analyzed by the district.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Hillary Desmond, 71 North Park Ave, thanked Dr. McMorran for his hard work and wished him well. She appreciated the efforts of posting on social media.

Carolyn Oppenheim, 25 Hunting Ridge Road, believes the board and the community can come up with an option that allows community members to attend the BOE meetings. She recognizes full Zoom meetings allow meetings to go on longer than needed/wanted and feels a good middle ground can be reached.

Julia Bassett, 180 Freeborn Road, as a community we need to come together and respect one another's opinion. The last year has been incredibly divisive and as a town, we need to learn to accept various viewpoints.

Rachel Mazzerelli, 29 Ground Pine Lane, reiterated her point about listening to the science of this virus. Thanked Kim Fox-Santora for helping her daughter get a 504 meeting on the calendar at the end of the school year.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Devon Wible thanked T.McMorran for all his hard work and stepping up to help the town of Easton.

J. DeJesus: suggested that talking to First Selectman Dr. Bindelglass about COVID issues would be helpful.

R. Hicks thanked Dr. McMorran for all he has done for ER9. He feels positive and optimistic about the current board and upcoming school year.

J. Cheida is happy to be back in person and recognizes the importance of being together as a board. Talking, eye contact, and team building is important as a board. She stated Zoom has its place but also has negative impacts.

J. Parker his "second retirement" from ER9 and wished him well

J. Stinson thanked Dr. McMorran as well as the BOE for all their hard work

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education Regular Meeting be adjourned. Parker, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Submitted by Jeff Parker  
Easton Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Kim Keil