

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
January 11, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	ADMINISTRATION PRESENT
Dr. Archer	Mrs. Woodcock Dettor	Dr. Smith, Superintendent
Dr. Corcoran		Mr. Decker, School Business Administrator
Mrs. DeForest		Mr. Reyes, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Gross		Mr. Franz, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Leach		
Mrs. James-Murad		
Mrs. Rhodes		
Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz		

Mrs. Rhodes called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Mrs. Rhodes gave a statement regarding the events of the past weeks.

Red Ram Recognition

Mrs. Rhodes acknowledged and thanked the school nurses, and OT and PT staff who have been on the front lines of the pandemic. She said they are part of the first group eligible to be vaccinated. She also acknowledged the teachers, who are part of the next wave of eligible groups for the vaccine. She hopes that all will take advantage of this opportunity. Mrs. Rhodes also acknowledged the IT team and thanked them for all they do to support learning. She said a community member reached out with this recognition and encouraged anyone with a suggestion for Red Ram Recognition to reach out to her.

Community Comment Time

Christiana Semabia was scheduled to comment, but passed, stating instead she encouraged all to be intensely self-reflective.

Approve Minutes of Board of Education Meeting, December 21, 2020

Mr. Gross moved and Mrs. James Murad seconded the approval of the minutes of the Board of Education meeting of December 21, 2020.

Motion carried (8-0-0).

Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations

Dr. Corcoran moved and Mrs. James Murad seconded the approval of the Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations as follows:

NONINSTRUCTIONAL

Request for Retirement

Name and position	Location	Effective
Theresa Charles Teacher Aide	Moses DeWitt	1/18/21

Motion carried (6-2-0). Mrs. Rhodes and Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz opposed.

Approve Funds to Implement Three-Year Contract with Jamesville-DeWitt Food Service Unit

Dr. Smith reviewed the terms of the Three-Year Contract with the Food Service Unit and recommended approval.

Mrs. James Murad moved and Mrs. DeForest seconded the motion to approve of Funds to Implement a Three-Year Contract with the Jamesville-DeWitt Food Service Unit.

Motion carried. (8-0-0).

Policy Review – First Reading

The following policies were brought to the board for a first reading:

- 7630 [Committee on Special Education \(CSE\)/Committee on Pre-School Special Education \(CPSE\)](#)
- 7640 [Student Individualized education Program \(IEP\): Development and Provision](#)
- 7641 [Transition Services](#)
- 7642 [Extended School Year Services and/or Programs](#)
- 7643 [Transfer Students with Disabilities](#)
- 7650 [Identification and Register of Children with Disabilities \(Child Find\)](#)
- 7660 [Parent Involvement For Children With Disabilities](#)
- 7670 [Due Process Complaints: Selection and Board Appointment of Impartial Hearing Officers](#)
- 7680 [Independent Educational Evaluations](#)
- 7690 [Special Education Mediation](#)

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz said Mrs. Menapace contributed to the committee providing her experience and legal knowledge regarding the policies as they were all related to special education.

Mr. Reyes stated that Policy 7612 was revisited and adjustments made.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz stated that Mrs. Menapace did a great job recommending changes to the policies to fit practice.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz shared the committee's discussion regarding policy # 7660 and language regarding parent notification. The committee agreed that parental consent, though not required by law, is best practice.

With regard to policy 7680, the Committee found the policy to be too brief, and took six paragraphs from the original policy and added them to the current policy.

Mrs. Rhodes asked if it would be helpful to have these policies read by someone not involved to check for understanding. Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz said that would be a great idea. Mrs. Rhodes asked Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz to take back to the Committee for interest and if so pursue that before they come back for a second reading.

Policy Review – Second Reading

The following policies were brought to the board for a second reading:

- 7610 [Special Education: District Plan](#)
- 7611 [Children With Disabilities](#)
- 7612 [Grouping By Similarity of Needs](#)
- 7613 [The Role of the Board in Implementing A Student’s Individualized Education Program](#)
- 7614 [Preschool Special Education Program](#)
- 7615 [Least Restrictive Environment](#)
- 7616 [Prereferral Intervention Strategies](#)
- 7617 [Declassification of Students With Disabilities](#)
- 7618 [Use of Time Out Rooms](#)
- 7620 [Students With Disabilities Participating in District Programs](#)
- 7621 [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Mr. Gross moved and Mrs. DeForest seconded the approval of Board Policies 7610, 7611, 7612, 7613, 7614, 7615, 7616, 7617, 7618, 7620 and 7621.

Motion carried. (8-0-0).

Potential Consideration for Future Meetings

Mrs. Rhodes stated that the board is continuing to move many of the items for consideration forward. She said that Dr. Smith will reach out to the Town of DeWitt to set up a meeting to talk about shared priorities. She also said that a review of the Master Teacher Program is scheduled for the January 25th board meeting. Mrs. Rhodes said that Dr. Smith is reaching out to several different consultants with regard to a recommendation on building capacity.

Max said he has heard back from a Town Board member who has put him in touch with the Environmental Committee.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz asked if there is any discussion about moving the item of later start times at the high school up on the priority list. Mr. Decker responded that he has had conversations with principals and leadership of the middle and high schools. He cautioned about moving too quickly on this as the master schedule is going to be very difficult with the implementation of the capital project. He said he would not recommend it right now.

Mrs. Rhodes thanked him for helpful feedback and said we can flag it as an agenda item for a future meeting.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz said that a student or parent brought it to her and thought that it was worth a look from a child’s perspective, especially with information on how parents and children are managing their schedules.

Mrs. Rhodes said we can revisit that topic after the capital planning is done.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Smith updated the board on the Shoppingtown proceedings. He said the sale has closed, the County has taken possession of the property, and the Town is working with the County to subdivide the Chili's parcel which will be maintained by the former owner. He said the attorneys are working on a settlement agreement which will set the assessment at \$18,000,000 for the next three years. Dr. Smith also provided the board with a COVID update. He shared information on ongoing testing and vaccinations. He said the vaccination information from the state and the county has been challenging to follow but the great news is that staff will be getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

Mr. Gross asked if a staff is on leave and they are vaccinated, will they be able to come off of leave. Dr. Smith said yes, there are provisions for returning early from a leave of absence.

Interim Report on Superintendent's Goals: Dr. Smith shared and reviewed his Interim Report on Superintendent's Goals for 2020-2021, which included goals and evidence of achievement.

Mrs. Rhodes asked how we are evaluating/measuring the learning for lead learners.

Mrs. Rhodes asked if, in light of the recent events, would the District be convening the District Safety Team. Dr. Smith stated there will be conversations with administrators and the Town of DeWitt to make sure that the recent events at the capital will not increase the threat against schools.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz asked about the curriculum audit and how we are maintaining objectivity of people performing reviews; how do we make sure they are objective, free of bias. Dr. Smith said he doesn't believe that you can ever completely eliminate bias but through the work and training with the Metro Center, we want our leaders to become aware of the biases they hold and increase their understanding of and need to address perspectives of students and families.

Mrs. Rhodes asked if we are using parents in the curriculum audit process. Dr. Smith responded no, not at this time. He said our goal is to increase our professional capacity to do this work and we may introduce outside experts at some point in the process.

Dr. Archer asked for clarity on the training timeline. Dr. Smith responded that there 12 sessions to complete the learning on the Culturally Responsive Framework. At this time, the Curriculum Council and the Lead Learners have gone through seven sessions. The Curriculum Council has add two additional sessions on the curriculum audit process.

Dr. Archer asked what the plan is to move all areas of the curriculum through the review process. Dr. Smith responded that as training in the scorecard is completed we will create a curriculum review cycle, beginning with the K-6 ELA review.

Mr. Gross asked if there is certain expectation of time/review of curriculum. Dr. Smith explained that the ultimate goal is to have an ongoing curriculum review cycle scheduled so all curriculum are reviewed on a regular basis.

Mr. Gross asked when we will have our staff trained. Dr. Smith responded that the instructional leadership will be trained by the end of the year. He said there also be ongoing professional learning that will take place going forward.

Dr. Corcoran asked what the process is if someone sees something glaring in the curriculum. Dr. Smith responded that there would be a conversation with Mr. Franz, the building principal and department leadership. The conversation would be around making an immediate change.

Dr. Smith concluded his report by stating that the pandemic has challenged the ability to move things along. He said he wants to be respectful of the challenges that teachers are facing and try to find a balance of moving the district forward to meet the goals set forth by the Strategic Plan while recognizing the workload on teachers during this difficult year.

Assistant Superintendent's Interim Report On the School Resource Officer Task Force

Mr. Franz updated the board on the SRO Task Force's continuing work towards building consensus to provide a recommendation to Dr. Smith. He shared that the Task Force is in agreement on three things; establish and maintain inclusive climate and culture, have the best possible supports in place for students struggling or in crisis, and ensure the safety of students and staff particularly in a school shooting event. Mr. Franz shared that he and Ms. Johnson shared a starting point for a recommendation which included a role dedicated to specific safety training for staff as well as emergency preparedness training. He said the results of the staff survey were shared and then the group used this information to delve deeper into the role of this position. Mr. Franz said that at their last meeting an associate professor for criminal justice at the State University of New York at Oswego, whose research focuses on school and mass shootings in the U.S., joined the group for a discussion. He said the Task Force has engaged in a number of strategies to build consensus and this will continue with individual meetings this week and a final meeting on January 20. The expectation is to provide Dr. Smith with a recommendation shortly thereafter. He said he is planning on providing a report to the board that outlines the process and the data used to make a decision.

Dr. Corcoran asked Max and Mrs. James Murad to share their experience. Mrs. James Murad said that Mr. Franz and Ms. Johnson has done a great job in bringing in different perspectives. She said it has been a hard process but a good job is being done trying to come to a consensus. Max agreed with Mrs. James Murad that it has been a hard process trying to get to a midpoint. He said he is cautiously optimistic about an agreement on the 20th and that it might take a little more time.

Dr. Corcoran asked what prompted meeting with smaller subsets of the group. Mr. Franz said that they were trying to connect with individuals to see where they stand.

Dr. Archer asked about the data that has been requested over the course of the last six months and if the Task Force does not come to a consensus, can the board still receive some report on the data that has been collected.

Mr. Franz replied that all artifacts that have been used to consider the recommendation, will be provided in the report.

Mr. Leach asked about the working definition of consensus. Mr. Franz shared information on the scale being used with 1-5 with 1 being, *I fully support the position* and 5 being, *I disagree with the decision and we should explore something else*.

Mrs. Rhodes asked Mr. Franz how he feels his role as Asst. Superintendent of Equity is informing his leadership on this Committee. Mr. Franz said he (along with Ms. Johnson) have tried to be extremely thoughtful about ensuring everybody's perspective is being heard and shared.

Mrs. Rhodes asked if the board could expect a report prior to the next meeting, as the board will need to take action. Mr. Franz responded yes.

Dr. Corcoran asked if the board would receive the report prior to the meeting in order to have time to digest the information.

Mr. Franz said the job of the Task Force is to provide Dr. Smith with a recommendation and deferred to Dr. Smith about a timeframe for the report. Dr. Smith reviewed the timeframe for a consensus and recommendation along with the date of the next two board meetings. It was decided that a report would be provided to the board during the week of January 25th and discussion be on the agenda for February 8th.

Board President's Report

Mrs. Rhodes reviewed the board's role in the interim evaluation process. She said the board will be using the NYSSBA template again this year and she will be sharing it with the board. She said she will compile the results into one document and review it with the board during Executive Session on February 8th and then give it back to Dr. Smith. Mrs. Rhodes spoke about the importance of a legislative liaison on the board and how it would help us understand what is being advocated for on a state and federal level. She asked for an interested volunteer for the role. Mrs. Rhodes also spoke about the board retreat which was scheduled for January 4th and cancelled. It was decided that at this time, it will not be rescheduled and the retreat in March will be focused on building a governance handbook. She concluded her report reminding people to continue using all safety protocols and reminded everyone of the glimmers of hope we are seeing with staff receiving the vaccine.

Unfinished and Continuing Business

There was none.

At 8:39 p.m., Mr. Gross moved and Dr. Corcoran seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried (8-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Decker
Clerk of the Board

BOARD APPROVED: 1/25/21