

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**February 8, 2021**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION PRESENT</b>
Dr. Archer		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. Woodcock Dettor		

Mrs. Rhodes called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Red Ram Recognition**

Mrs. Rhodes recognized the Business Office and Mr. Decker and thanked them for their hard work and dedication. She also recognized the crossing guards at the schools and the work they do to keep our students safe. Lastly, she recognized the high schools students and parents who are involved with Operation Graduation. These students and their parents are working hard for this year's event even though we are not yet sure what this spring holds.

**Community Comment Time**

Mrs. Rhodes reminded the public that comment time is not an open dialogue but a time for the public to speak.

Christina D'Angelo commented on the District's and Board's position on providing five days of school.

Maureen Aliana commented on the K-6 ELA curriculum and asked for the Board to add back in the comment time at the end of the meeting.

Paul Gratien commented on whether or not the District is working on developing a plan for five day instruction.

Mrs. Rhodes stated that reopening has not been delegated to the Board and the Board is not able to vote on it.

Rachel Wagner commented on her experience on the SRO Task Force as well as the outcome.

**Approve Minutes of Board of Education  
Meetings, January 25 & 31, 2021**

Mrs. DeForest moved and Mrs. James Murad seconded the approval of the minutes of the Board of Education meetings of January 25 and January 31, 2021.

Motion carried (9-0-0).

### Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations

Dr. Corcoran moved and Mr. Gross seconded the approval of the Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations as follows:

#### ***INSTRUCTIONAL***

<b>Name and position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b><u>Appointments</u></b>		<b>Effective</b>
		<b>Annual Salary</b>	<b>Cert</b>	
Timothy Fesko Math Teacher Regular Sub Replacing M. Anthony	MS	\$28,124.46 (B+M-30)	Prof. Math 7-12	1/27/21-6/30/21

#### **Extra duty assignments/extended teaching 2020-2021**

##### **High School – Second Semester**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
Jordan Berger	Drama Club Advisor	\$1,073
Dan Blumenthal	Instrumental Performance Group Advisor	\$1,287
Kelsey Deyo	Musical Director	\$5,043
Jestina Drake	Musical Vocal Director	\$3,152
Beth Quackenbush	SPARK	\$1,669

#### **Extra duty assignments/extended teaching 2020-2021**

##### **Middle – Second Semester**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
Justin Bird	Good Time Singers	\$757
Kristen Panzetta	Fiddles on Fire	\$488

#### **Extra duty assignments/extended teaching 2020-2021**

##### **Coaching – Winter Season**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
David Sciacca*	Modified Boys Basketball Coach	\$2,966
Kurt Sweeney	JV Girls Head Basketball Coach	\$4,448
Brian Cieplicki*	JV Girls Asst. Coach (Volunteer)	\$0

\*Pending completion of the certification process

#### **Resignation**

<b>Name and position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Effective</b>
Keith Cieplicki	JV Girls Head Basketball Coach	2/2/21

#### **Request for Retirement**

<b>Name and position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Effective</b>
Robert Leo Brown Social Studies Teacher	High School	6/30/21

Motion carried (7-2-0). Mrs. Rhodes and Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz opposed.

**Approve Funds to Implement Three-Year Contract  
with the Jamesville-DeWitt Transportation Unit**

Dr. Smith reviewed the terms of the three-year contract with the Transportation 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 Transportation Unit.

Motion carried. (9-0-0).

**Policy Review – Second Reading**

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

- 8110 [Curriculum Development, Resources, and Evaluation](#)
- 8130 [Equal Educational Opportunities](#)
- 8210 [Safety Conditions and Prevention Instruction](#)
- 8220 [Career and Technical Education](#)
- 8240 [Instruction in Certain Subjects](#)
- 8241 [Patriotism, Citizenship, and Human Rights Education](#)
- 8242 [Civility, Citizenship, and Character Education/ Interpersonal  
Violence Prevention Education](#)
- 8250 [Animals in the School \(Instructional Purposes\)](#)
- 8271 [Internet Safety/Internet Content Filtering](#)
- 8280 [Instruction for English Language Learners](#)

Mrs. Rhodes asked how the dots are being connected between policies and procedures, with regard to Policy # 8110. Dr. Smith replied that this policy sets an expectation that the curriculum be continually reviewed and that this is one of the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan and falls within the job description of Asst. Superintendent Franz.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz pointed out the last sentence in #8110 which talks about the Board periodically reviewing information to evaluate the effectiveness of the District and how it will allow the Board to be more involved in the review of curriculum. Mrs. DeForest will note that for the Governance Manual.

Mr. Gross moved and Dr. Corcoran seconded the approval of Board Policies 8110, 8130, 8210, 8220, 8240, 8241, 8242, 8250, 8271, and 8280.

Motion carried. (9-0-0).

**Potential Consideration for Future Meetings**

Dr. Smith shared that he is working with a representative from the Town of DeWitt and they have agreed to move forward with conversations on topics of mutual interest to the Town Board and School Board. He is waiting for available dates in March to meet.

Mrs. Rhodes addressed the issue of adding back the Community Comment Time #2 and it was agreed that it will be added back to the agenda starting with the next meeting.

### **Budget Discussion: Fringe Benefits**

Dr. Smith shared information he received while attending the CNYSBA Legislative Forum. He summarized the highlights of financial expert Dr. Rick Timbs, including state foundation aid being frozen for the 2021-22 budget which is the majority of aid that is used for operations.

Dr. Smith gave a review of the budgeting process to date and presented the Fringe Benefits portion of the budget (see Supplemental Minutes). There is a .04% increase in this segment of the budget over last year's budget. The Athletics and Central Office portions of the Budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **SRO Task Force Report**

Mr. Franz and Ms. Johnson provided the Board with a report on the SRO Task Force (see Supplemental Minutes). The report included information on the formation of the Task Force, goals, membership, data points, summary and key elements of the data, commitment to equity, consensus building attempt and results, proposed next steps, and a summary of the meetings.

Dr. Archer asked what the plan is to address the qualitative data expressed by black students in the focus group. Mr. Franz responded that they believe there is additional missing information and they are committed to find that information specifically around students and families of color. He asked Dr. Archer if there was a specific piece that she was referring to and she said that she was particularly concerned with the piece where students expressed that the SRO was there to help teachers feel safe from students. Mr. Franz responded that was concerning to them as well and will do more questioning and engagement to understand what that means.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz asked about the survey questions surrounding safety and the SRO and how the students feel about safety in general. Then, the data about when we have an SRO versus when we did not have an SRO. Mr. Franz said you would have to draw conclusions from the questions asked but that specific question was not asked. Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz shared her concerns that students felt that the SRO's role is disciplinary and that staff identified interactions with the SRO concern discipline.

Dr. Corcoran referred to the professor of Criminal Justice from SUNY Oswego, and asked if any experts of color were involved. Mr. Franz responded that there was an expert on restorative practices that was invited. He is a white male who worked in schools that had diverse populations.

Dr. Archer asked for a definition of student outreach. Ms. Johnson responded community based programs, and as an example explained that the SRO is currently working on a program for students that don't have access to the DMV, so that they get tested for their driving permit at the high school.

Dr. Archer commented that the Task Force has work ahead to address the clear divide.

Max stated that the racial divide was evident in the discussions that took place in the groups.

Mrs. James-Murad said she thinks the Task Force brought to light some of the problems of how the current SRO is being used and if we continue with an SRO, there needs to be clarification of the role.

She said she felt bad that people did not feel their voices were heard and that she would be happy to answer any questions. She felt it was a very difficult issue.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz said she would have liked to have seen in the report, the good things the SRO did and the things we haven't activated yet, such as particular safety recommendations.

Dr. Corcoran asked if it was safe to say that the report was not necessarily in support of having an SRO or not having an SRO. Mr. Franz said that argument could be made.

Dr. Archer asked, if using the data, is there evidence that the SRO can stay in place and the District continue with its' commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Mr. Franz responded that Max had asked our expert on restorative practices if these two things are mutually exclusive and he took away that he didn't feel that they were mutually exclusive.

There was a discussion around the two options presented, a SRO or a safety officer. Mr. Franz shared the other options that were discussed including a civil service type of position similar to a hall monitor, a peace officer, and a non-deputized police officer.

Mrs. DeForest asked about the school familiarization program which was presented in the fall and if that had been discussed. Mr. Franz said it was reiterated with the Chief of Police that the police department would still be required to keep us safe. He said there was a perception with some of the Task Force that having an officer who was less familiar with our students and building was less valuable.

Mrs. DeForest asked about the focus groups and the comment, not specific to the SRO, but the mention of concern of fear of police in general. Ms. Johnson responded that it was trust as it relates to police in general, not specific to the current SRO.

Max shared that the first few meetings there was more of a broad discussion of the options and the options of School Resource Officer and School Safety Officer came about during the final meetings.

Mrs. James Murad said her perception of those members of the Task Force that struggled with the decision favored a School Resource Officer primarily because they believed that in the event of a school shooter a retired police officer might not be able to activate a response as quickly as an SRO.

Mrs. DeForest shared data on students' fear of an intruder and suggested it ties into safety and fear of a school shooter.

Mrs. Rhodes asked Mr. Franz if any data supported that an SRO would increase safety in the event of a school shooting. Mr. Franz said the reports from the Congressional Research Service stated that no publicly available research has evaluated whether or not SRO's serve as an effective deterrent to school shootings. He also said that, Dr. Jackie, the expert, provided examples that would support an SRO as well as examples of events when mistakes were made.

Mrs. Rhodes asked Mr. Franz if there is a model of an SRO that would build equity. Mr. Franz said he believes that there is more work to be done, like the work Ms. Johnson did, on a grander scale. He also said that we need to have more dialogue with districts that have an SRO program that have been focused on equity as there is value to gathering that information.

Mrs. Rhodes asked Mr. Franz how he felt he advanced or defended equity during the course of this process. Mr. Franz responded by giving examples including intentionally recruiting Task Force members with different perspectives and different racial backgrounds, attempting to come to consensus, and disaggregating student data. He said the focus groups facilitated by Ms. Johnson helped to sort out information and have conversations with individuals. He shared other equitable practices including interviews with other districts and providing artifacts.

Dr. Archer asked Mr. Franz when he will be digging deeper into the student data. Mr. Franz responded immediately, as well as reaching out to individuals on the Task Force.

Mrs. Rhodes stated that the Board will not be voting on anything tonight and this report was a way for the Board to hear and process it. She said Dr. Smith will come to the Board at the next meeting with a recommendation on how he wants to the Board to move forward.

Mrs. DeForest thanked Mr. Franz, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. James Murad and Max for all their information and asked, if there are follow-up questions, can they reach out to Ms. Johnson and Mr. Franz.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Smith thanked Ms. Johnson, Mr. Franz, Mrs. James Murad, Max and all of the members of the Task Force for their willingness to engage, listen and learn about this topic. He also acknowledged the frustration of parents of black and brown students. He talked about providing a safe, caring, equitable and challenging learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. He talked about moving forward with the recommendations of the Task Force. Dr. Smith said he will come to the Board with a recommendation at the next meeting along with a timeline for the next steps.

Dr. Smith shared with the Board that he was contacted by a district neighbor living near the middle school who has an agreement with the District that was written in 1967 allowing them to use a parcel of land owned by the District. He said the family is interested in acquiring that parcel of land, which is actually an appendage to the middle school property. He said that after consultation with Mr. Decker and Mr. Crawford, there is not a need to hold onto that piece of land and explained the process to sell it and the costs involved. He said that while we don't need that land, we have a responsibility to the district residents to not incur costs with this type of action. He asked for board members to share their opinions. Mrs. Woodcock Dettor said these types of costs are normally incurred by the seller which would be the District. Mr. Leach suggested we propose the buyer incur these costs. Mr. Gross asked if there was any utility for the district to actually use that property and Dr. Smith responded that there is no utility for that parcel as we are not confined for space at this time. The board agreed to continue to move forward with the process to separate and sell the parcel in a fiscally responsible manner.

Dr. Smith talked about families' expressing interest in moving to a five day, in person instructional model. He shared that following the second quarter the District identified a number of students struggling with remote learning at each level and that based on criteria will be able to bring the most vulnerable students back for more in person learning. He said that the State has not yet relaxed it's guidelines of six feet between students' desks and until the guidelines change, we do not have enough space to accommodate all students in person. He sympathized with families' frustrations and hoped that the recent ruling on sports is a precursor to change in social distance requirements. He encouraged any parents, families and board members who feel strongly about a return to five day instruction, to reach out to state officials and the Commissioner of Health as we are bound by their rules. Dr. Smith shared a space utilization graphic of Jamesville Elementary School which showed the spaces being used and the

number of students attending which illustrated the space constraints if students returned full-time. He said that he has heard of conversations in the news regarding full remote learning for the fall. He cautioned that this is not based on any data and assured families that he wants to get back to in person as soon as we can. Dr. Corcoran asked about what students were considered for additional in-person learning. He responded that it is students in grades 2-12. Dr. Corcoran asked about the availability of a specific space at Jamesville Elementary and could that be used. Dr. Smith responded that there are pockets of spaces across the district where we could bring students back and not violate social distancing guidelines but at the same time, he does not want to tell some parents that we don't have the room for their students. He said this is why we are prioritizing based on the most vulnerable students. Dr. Archer asked what criteria were used to prioritize students, did it include IEPs and students with 504 plans. Dr. Smith responded that in addition to those students, all students were considered based on the rubric. Mrs. Rhodes asked about space constraints at the elementary schools and if grade levels could be lumped together, would other schools have the space to absorb the additional students. Dr. Smith said that is not always the case and there is no consistency in this regard. Mrs. Rhodes asked if there would be enough space if we asked remote learners to make a commitment for the rest of the year. Dr. Smith said that is a possibility we will look at going forward. Dr. Archer has asked about using spaces not being utilized such as the stage and Dr. Smith stated they have looked at that during the summer and it did not solve the problem.

Dr. Smith shared that on the February 25<sup>th</sup> the Board of Education will hold a public forum and provided an outline of what the agenda will look like, topics include a K-6 ELA program and district technology needs. He said the forum will be followed up with a community survey that will help with the information received at the forum.

Dr. Smith provided the Board with a sports update regarding the COVID testing of athletes. He said the County and their emergency management group is providing the testing which will take place weekly for all athletes. He said we are putting together a team of people to be trained in swabbing, reading and reporting the results and will receive the first shipment on Wednesday. Mrs. Rhodes asked how athletes have been tested and do they arrange their own tests for now. Dr. Smith responded that the County has informed him that they are comfortable with testing to begin after the arrival of the test kits on Wednesday. Mrs. Rhodes asked for confirmation that the athletes have been practicing this past week and this coming week without being tested first and that the County is comfortable with that. Dr. Smith responded that yes, the County is comfortable with that fact. There was a discussion about the testing including when tests are received from the County and when the tests are given to the students. It was stated that students have been practicing together for over a week and have not been tested.

Lastly Dr. Smith shared good news that Jamesville-DeWitt was notified that the District is one of only 56 schools in the country to win the Advanced Placement Computer Science Female Diversity Award for 2020 in Computer Science and AP Computer Science Principles. He congratulated the High School, and in particular, Mr. Jay Lang, the teacher of those courses for the work he has done to diversify the computer science program.

### **Board President's Report**

Mrs. Rhodes asked the Board if they had any thoughts about the forum to please let her know. She said the Board will be adjourning to Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss the Superintendent's Interim Evaluation. She talked about compiling the Board members' comments and ratings and how the NYSSBA template can be buggy and shared that there is a new technology option called Super Eval which will help her significantly. She is looking into it and will share the information with the Board. Mrs. Rhodes shared a comment from the last meeting from a Board member regarding

the ex-officio student Board member, Max. She wanted him to know that he is a valued member of the Board even though he is not a voting member. She asked other Board members to consider his perspective. In addition, she said several Board members have reached out to her with regards to making a motion. She said that Board members are always welcome to make a motion and if there is a question about it, feel free to ask. She reminded the Board of the retreat scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>. She said that Mrs. DeForest has been working on putting together the Governance Manual for the retreat. In addition, Mrs. DeForest is looking into support for the manual from NYSSBA. Mrs. DeForest is looking into pricing.

### **Unfinished and Continuing Business**

Mrs. DeForest shared that she had to take her daughter to the high school last week and saw the rows of boxes and bags of materials outside the gymnasium. She said she was amazed at how much work goes into the preparation of these packages for students learning remotely. She wanted to say thank you to the teachers teaching both in person and remote students for all that they are doing to accommodate and make sure we are meeting the needs of every family and student.

Mrs. Rhodes concluded by reminding everyone to continue wearing a mask and social distancing.

Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz commented that she wanted to be on record saying that she is very concerned with the harm and damage that can be done to our students with using the SRO for disciplinary purposes, educational purposes, for building relationships, and student management, which are the roles of the administration and the teaching staff. She said all parents, not just parents of students of color should be concerned about this. She said the Board needs to make clear the purpose of the SRO.

At 9:45 p.m., Dr. Corcoran moved and Mr. Gross seconded the motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of the Superintendent Evaluation.

Motion carried (9-0-0).

At 10:14 p.m. Dr. Corcoran moved and Mr. Gross seconded the motion to adjourn Executive Session.

Motion carried (9-0-0).

At 10:16 p.m. Mrs. Woodcock Dettor moved and Mrs. Rivera-Ortiz seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried (9-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Decker  
Clerk of the Board

**BOARD APPROVED: 3/1/21**