

## **WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, August 10, 2021**

**Virtual Meeting: Zoom**

**7:00 p.m.**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Members Present**

Herb Arico - Chairman  
Elena Testa - Vice Chairman  
Michelle Doucette Cunningham - Secretary  
Ann Grosjean  
Tracey Anderson  
Donna Cook  
Laura Rodriguez  
(members present remotely through Zoom)

#### **Also Present**

Superintendent of Schools, Phil Stevens  
Members of the public

#### **Call to Order**

Chairman Arico called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

#### **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Arico led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **2. Present to Speak**

No one was present to speak.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Arico made a statement: as the pandemic and economic downturn continues our students will continue to see some disruption. We must prepare for our students to return to school.

#### **4. Communications**

Chairman Arico reported that CAFE is offering a virtual equity summit series and learning and leading for racial and social justice. The CAFE newsletter highlights 2021 education summaries to inform us of new legislation passed. He then read a thank you letter from CAFE regarding our membership. The Board received a communication from the Superintendent regarding a joint statement from the Connecticut State Department of Education, CT Association of School Superintendents, CT Association of Boards of Education, CT Association of Schools, American Federation of Teachers, and CT Education Association on a culturally responsive education. Chairman Arico highlighted a letter from Jamie Koprek.

#### **5. Superintendent Report**

##### **a. Staffing**

Superintendent Stevens stated that we have had some staff movement as is typical in the summer. We have hired several paraprofessionals including Mary Bryant, Joanne Briggs and Andi St. Jean. We still have one para opening for a resignation we just received from Jayzel Samaniego. Jayzel accepted a position to help forward her career as she eventually wants to be a certified teacher. We have a finalist for a 7th grade English language arts position as Bridget O'Connor has resigned. Bridget will be working as an interventionist as she hopes to gain her remedial reading certification and become a reading specialist. This afternoon Rich Napoli, CES principal, notified me that he is resigning from his position and moving on to another district closer to his home. I will be looking for an interim principal to start the school year and wish Rich a successful future.

Lastly, we welcome Erin Conley as our Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Erin has significant experience in curriculum development and revision, administrative leadership as a principal, providing professional development, and will have her doctoral degree by December. Erin was a principal in New Haven for the last two years. References said she is passionate about curriculum and her energy is contagious. Based on her prior experiences and proven track record, I look forward to what she is going to be able to accomplish. This position is grant funded for three years.

b. School opening 2021-2022

We are working on our school opening plan and still receiving guidance from the CT State Department of Education and Department of Public Health. I will provide the Board with the updated opening plan once it is complete, but here are a few of the highlights that we know so far. First, we are still waiting on additional guidance around masking, but at this point the Governor's executive order requires masks in schools through September 30. Masks are required on buses and recommended for all staff and students by the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics regardless of vaccination status.

E. Testa questioned if masks are required on buses and recommended for staff and students.

Superintendent Stevens clarified that per the Governor's executive order, masks are required for students on buses and all staff and students in school through September 30, 2021.

E. Testa questioned whether masks are mandated?

Superintendent Stevens said yes.

H. Arico questioned when are students able to remove their masks?

Superintendent Stevens answered that when students are outside, have food breaks, drink water and during mask breaks. The majority of the day, staff and students will wear masks. Extra masks are available at school and on the buses. We expect more details around masking before the start of school. Regarding social distancing, the guidance is to have at least 3 feet between students and we will be showing staff desk formations they can use to set up their classrooms. We will not be cohorting this year so we have ordered air purifiers to use in spaces without ventilation that were not used last school year. The disinfection routine has been reduced as touch surfaces are not a significant risk for transmission of COVID. Regarding quarantining, students and staff who are asymptomatic no longer need to quarantine if identified as a close contact as long as they have their vaccination. Remote learning will only be available to students with disabilities as identified through planning and placement meetings, students who are quarantining, and in other rare instances. It will not be by parent choice as it was last year. Remote learning cannot occur during inclement weather either, but is being considered for the 22-23 school year. We plan to operate sports and clubs this fall. At this point, there is no vaccination mandate, but staff and families will be able to provide the school nurse proof of vaccination if they chose. The idea is that we implement a layered system of mitigation strategies to keep our students and staff safe.

Lastly, we are applying to implement the National School Lunch Program again this year and expect all breakfasts and lunches to be free to students again this school year. As a result, the Board does not need to set lunch prices until the 22-23 school year.

H. Arico asked if desk cleaning will be done.

Superintendent Stevens stated that the disinfection cleaning does not have to be done as much because it has been determined that airborne transmission occurs. The cleaning regimen will continue.

L. Rodriguez asked if students will be able to eat lunch in the cafeteria keeping the 3 foot distance?

Superintendent Stevens said they will be eating in the cafeteria at a 3 foot requirement. Lunch waves have



been added to HMS.

H. Arico asked how many lunch waves are there?

Superintendent Stevens said CES has 5, one per grade level. In the past HMS had 2 waves, 5/6 and 7/8 but this year HMS will have 4 lunch waves.

L. Rodriguez asked if during good weather if lunch could be outside?

Superintendent Stevens said we are looking into that however we would need coverage both inside and outside and would rather have teachers use this time for planning and preparing.

c. Kevin Legare field dedication

The baseball field dedication for Kevin Legare, our HMS baseball coach who passed away in February 2019, is scheduled for August 28. Kevin coached at HMS for 6 seasons and passed away from cancer. We will have a brief ceremony at the Town Office Building baseball field at 4:15 p.m.

d. Summer building update

We have had a busy summer updating some critical items in our buildings. At Center School, we are in the process of installing the Promethean boards. Regarding the roof at Center School, Silktown roofing has completed some patching in the areas we had leaks during the heavy rains. We had some wet ceiling tiles at CES that we thought were leaks, but it turned out to be condensation from the ventilation system that we are supposed to run full time. We are in the process of having a company insulate the ventilation ductwork so we don't have a problem with wet ceiling tiles. Lastly, we had some security upgrades installed allowing door access with cameras at several doors at CES and have applied for grant reimbursement.

At Hall School, we are in the process of installing the Promethean boards, several stairwells have received a facelift with new treads to cover asbestos tiles, and the gym floor has been entirely refinished. We had a hot water boiler fail inspection and are working to fix the issue. We also were flagged at HMS for our fire alarm system as the breakers don't trip and shut off the kitchen equipment so we are fixing that issue. Regarding the roof at Hall School, Silktown roofing has completed some patching in the areas we had leaks during the heavy rains.

e. Summer school

We had a small summer school this year and things went very well. Student attendance was good and the staff was very happy with the outcomes. Thank you to Katie Rychling, Michelle Shine, and Deb Callahan for taking the time this summer to meet the needs of our students, especially during Covid.

D. Cook asked how long ago was the improper ductwork for ventilation done and could we go back to the vendor for correction?

Superintendent Stevens stated that it's been a long time since it was done, but since Covid we have been required to run the system during the summer.

D. Cook asked if we are running the ventilation system when no one is there?

Superintendent Stevens said we have people in the building so it is a DPH requirement.

## **6. Financial Report**

Superintendent Stevens reviewed the July, 2021 financial report.

## **7. Committee Report**

It was determined that the BOE Finance Committee report would be addressed during item 9a.

## 8. New Business

a. Approve minutes of regular meeting July 13, 2021

Attachment #2

Michelle Doucette Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of the BOE regular meeting of July 13, 2021.

Laura Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Elena Testa made a minor change to the phrasing of the minutes in the last paragraph on page 13.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico	✓		
M. Cunningham	✓		
D.Cook	✓		
T. Anderson	✓		
A.Grosjean	✓		
E. Testa	✓		
L. Rodriguez	✓		

Motion passed.

b. Approve minutes of Finance Committee meeting August 4, 2021

Attachment #3

H. Arico stated he could not find the July 13, 2021 recorded minutes.

M. Doucette Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of the BOE finance committee meeting of August 20, 2021

D. Cook seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico	✓		
M. Cunningham	✓		
D.Cook	✓		
T. Anderson	✓		
A.Grosjean	✓		
E. Testa	✓		
L. Rodriguez	✓		

Motion passed.

L. Rodriguez stated that the July 13, 2021 minutes are posted on the Wilmington YouTube page.

**9. Old Business**

a. Community Health Center, Inc. contract

Attachment #4

H. Arico stated that the BOE finance committee met regarding the contract language and suggested edits.

P. Stevens stated that edits were made regarding parental consent. He stated that in the 2021 school year, only 4 students out of 4,817 students did not have parental consent for the School Based Behavioral Health Clinic. They will now only see students with parental consent. If the student doesn't have parental consent, 211 Emergency Services will be contacted.

E. Testa stated she supports this.

P. Stevens stated that only 10% of students receiving CHC services qualify for group counseling in groups of 3-6, if like diagnosis conditions.

M. Doucette Cunningham stated that the committee did not come to consensus on group counseling.

L. Rodriguez emphasizes that parents are notified of group counseling.

M. Doucette Cunningham moved to approve the Community Based Health Center contract with the edits as provided.

L. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

E. Testa asked if parents will be made aware of group counseling.

L. Rodriguez and P. Stevens stated yes.

E. Testa asked if the contract states parents will be notified of group counseling.

M. Doucette Cunningham stated that group counseling will occur with written parental consent.

E. Testa asked can we be sure?

P. Stevens showed the contract language showing written parental consent.

E. Testa asked if the company told us that.

P. Stevens said they told the entire Board that when they create a plan for a student the parent has to approve the plan.

A. Grosjean stated that in 2C of the contract it states that "The parties acknowledge and agree that CHC shall not provide behavioral Health Services to a student or any minor unless a parent or legal guardian gives written consent for such behavior health services."

D. Cook asked if that also provides what method of counseling would be provided?

P. Stevens said that is correct.

H. Arico reminds the Board that there is a motion on the floor.

M. Doucette Cunningham moved to approve the Community Based Health Center contract with the edits as provided.



L. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico			✓
M. Cunningham	✓		
D.Cook	✓		
T. Anderson	✓		
A.Grosjean	✓		
E. Testa	✓		
L. Rodriguez	✓		

P. Stevens stated that a roll call vote needs to be conducted.

H. Arico asked P. Stevens to conduct the roll call vote.

H. Arico	abstain
M. Doucette Cunningham	yes
A. Grosjean	yes
T. Anderson	yes
E. Testa	yes
L. Rodriguez	yes
D. Cook	yes

Motion passed.

P. Stevens thanked the Board for their work.

b. Board goals

Handout

P. Stevens presented the Board goals and stated that D. Cook suggested we not be so wordy and keep it simple. He gave examples of other district goals for comparison and what was discussed during the BOE retreat.

H. Arico had a question on school culture and climate. He said we have provided a welcoming environment that is socially, emotionally and physically safe. He asked when you address the administrators about this, what can we expect? He also stated, "an inclusive setting" is a tricky term. It can mean one thing to one person and something else to another. He continued "...and student diversity" has a wide range of topics that you could consider.

E. Testa stated she agrees. It brings lots of different perspectives, some negative, some positive but some very negative.

L. Rodriguez stated that all our students are different. We don't want them to be factory assembled cookie-cutter. So embracing student diversity is accepting each child the way they are and that they are different and being different is a beautiful thing. When you're inclusive you are accepting each child and including them and you are making sure that they feel a sense of belonging in school. There's nothing negative about

accepting each child and including them and helping them to feel they belong in school. That's what we want, because if they don't feel like they belong in school, they don't want to be there.

E. Testa said then maybe that's how we should word it, to strive to help children to have a feeling of belonging. Like something simple because inclusive setting I'm not saying those are bad words I'm saying that one means different implications. So if we could simplify it as Laura said, it sounds wonderful.

M. Doucette Cunningham stated that this is the only goal that did not have a recommended change but was passed last year. And last year Elena, you changed this language to make it acceptable to you. So this language you approved last year. I don't know what has changed that you don't like it. I'd rather focus our time on the recommended changes than the one we already agreed upon.

E. Testa said I don't agree.

H. Arico said I can understand what student diversity is and I've taught enough in the schools so I know inclusive settings, but when the administrators sit down and they list their goals, what are they going to include in there?

P. Stevens said we are going to look at our climate surveys that our students completed and we're talking about a sense of belonging. Do you feel like you're an important member of your school? Have you said mean things to anybody? Have students said mean things to you? There's all sorts of data that we use to try and change those things that are around the culture of our buildings so that everybody feels like they're an important member of our school community.

H. Arico said there are so many terms being thrown around at the present time that diversity means one thing to one person it may mean entirely different to another person and I would be interested in seeing what you come up with in your list of areas.

D. Cook said unfortunately we are in an environment where the definitions of words are changing so frequently that sometimes it becomes difficult when you're trying to write a document like this. I wonder, if less is more, if we could just leave it that the Willington Public Schools will provide a welcoming environment for all students.

L. Rodriguez said I'm curious what is the other meaning of diversity and inclusive that you are all alluding to? Because I have never heard it in any other way that students are all different and inclusive means to include them so that they feel they belong.

D. Cook I had experience where a student was excluded and was bullied because they weren't getting on the bandwagon. So I think it is simpler if you just say a welcoming environment for all students.

E. Testa That sounds wonderful for all students, a welcoming environment. It's simple, no matter who you are without using words that could trigger different things.

L. Rodriguez I still don't see what the opposite meaning is. You gave an example of when this doesn't happen.

D. Cook stated kids are going to be who they are, our teachers are going to be who they are. As a nature of a community we are going to have diversity just because each individual is different. We want our teachers treated with respect. We want our students treated with respect. We want our administrators treated with respect.

M. Doucette Cunningham said the reason we're producing these goals is that as a Board we are meant to give some direction to the administrative team about what we prioritize about what's important to us as a community and what we want to focus on for the next three years. So by making this very generic, we aren't giving Phil what he needs.



E. Testa said I don't think that using "embracing student diversity in an inclusive setting" carries so much weight that we cannot stay without it. I think if we just remove those few words like embrace student diversity and leave it as an innovative culture.

M. Doucette Cunningham said that is not acceptable. Last year we had a big discussion about celebrating diversity and you were so opposed to it Elena. I went against everything in my heart to settle for language with "embracing student diversity in an inclusive setting". Why are you changing this? Why is embracing student diversity no longer acceptable?

E. Testa said we are moving in a direction where our society started to call diversity things which are not normal. So the definition of what you think is normal and what I think is normal or what someone else thinks is normal could be very different nowadays. So that's exactly what the word diversity represents today, not a year ago, but today it is very sharp. That's why I would like to be politically neutral and not touch that particular word.

M. Doucette Cunningham said so you think that the words "embracing student diversity" will not provide help to students that need it?

E. Testa said no, I think that when students need help they should get it and not fall into the category that he's just different while he really needs help. There could be different definitions. So I would feel very safe to remove those words.

L. Rodriguez stated, so here's my issue about removing or being very generic. It sounds as though you want to go back to thinking of the world like colorblind, so we're just welcoming everyone but we're not recognizing that children are different that we have black children, hispanic children, female children, male children, and they should all feel comfortable and safe and happy and are able to learn and grow to their full potential. You know our world is not a colorblind world. Our children are different and they need to be seen differently. And so if you just leave it as this generic welcoming environment you're not setting any kind of a goal to make each child feel welcome and belong. We need to recognize that they have differences that stem from race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and these are from their own identities and they feel different and they need to be embraced and feel like they're included and they belong at school. So just saying a welcoming environment is not actually making those children feel welcome.

D. Cook stated if you welcome all children how would anybody feel less. If we treat each child as the precious gift they are, I fail to understand how anybody would be less than included. I'm sure that our staff doesn't care about what the external package a child is in, it's the person they are, they're hopes, dreams, talents struggles, and as they grow and develop that they would be encouraged to excel in the areas they excel in and helped in the areas they struggle in so they can just be the best they can be.

T. Anderson said I want to bring your attention back to the joint statement on the importance of culturally responsive education that was approved by more than a dozen education associations, the CT Association of Schools, CT State Dept. of Education, CT Association of Superintendents, CT Boards of Education, American Federation of Teachers and the Connecticut Education Association. The wording that they use in this statement: goals of improving academic lives of students in Connecticut's increasing diverse student body, this includes sustaining equitable and welcoming learning environments in which all students feel valued, respected and safe to learn and grow and this diversity represents a multitude of backgrounds and identities and encompasses a whole list of things. So to me it seems like we're not off base using that language when it's been supported by so many organizations in our state to foster culturally responsive education. The semantics we are all arguing right now are supported by organizations that we should be following.

H. Arico said I just want to say that I read that joint statement thoroughly and noticed that it is being supported by all those different organizations, but doesn't necessarily mean that I have to accept what they're feeding us, and that's what they're doing. They're pumping this information out and you're simply gobbling it up and saying this is what it should be. I don't agree with them on a lot of the issues that they



have presented here. This is one point of view as far as being culturally responsive to our students. I think what they're doing is trying to inculcate ideas into our district and into our system nationwide because even the Commissioner of Education in Washington advocates all of this and is pushing his cultural responsibility education. I don't agree with what they are trying to do. I think it's a detriment to our education system and sidetracking what we should be doing in our schools. I think that by giving a youngster a good education and training him so he is a critical thinker then all of this other stuff will take care of itself, and that is much more important than some of these other things that they are trying to push down our throats. Also the State Board of Education is pushing it and if you go into colleges you'll find that all of your colleges are doing the same thing. And even as a Board we don't talk about our curriculum. I feel very strongly that our goal should be teaching youngsters the basic subjects and this other information is taking hold and we're spending more time on this. EO Smith has four subjects a week in the morning that they spend 45 minutes to an hour talking about the wellness of these students. It may be significant and may be important to them but to me I still think that our main goal should be a relevant and engaging curriculum to train the minds of our youngsters so they can go out and survive in our world.

L. Rodriguez shared that I agree with both Donna and Herb and if you combine them I think you are talking about what we're talking about as far as culturally responsive instruction. So, yes, the goal is to teach them about their world, to be critical thinkers, to evaluate information, to become lifelong learners. But you have to reach each child where they are. What Donna was saying about the welcoming environment, if we make each child feel that they belong, that they are worthwhile, that their culture and their background is seen. That's my one difference Donna, when you're talking about "why isn't welcoming good enough" is each child needs to be seen as an individual with all their differences and that their background and their culture is valuable. And once they feel they belong and feel safe, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, then absolutely that's when you've got them and can teach them all of these skills and they can become independent lifelong learners. So I agree with both of you, I think you just need to put them together and that's really what culturally responsive teaching is all about.

D. Cook said I spent most of my public education years being the minority and I never thought of it that way until all this stuff comes out where I go down the checklist and you find out that you were in the minority. If the teacher needs to understand each student's cultural background that sounds like a real onerous responsibility. Every family has their own culture and their own ways of doing things so that just seems to be a bit onerous and if each student is just welcomed for who they are, why do we have to put all this other stuff in there?

L. Rodriguez said, so to me it's fascinating to incorporate when children can bring things that they've experienced at home into the classroom. It's not that you're doing a bunch of research on their lineage or genealogy, just let them bring it into the classroom in discussions. Then they're seen and they're able to share their knowledge and experiences.

T. Anderson shared I'm currently taking classes to become a reading specialist and what students are taught in university is we need to provide windows and mirrors so kids can see themselves in what we're doing, and also see windows into other people's lives to be welcoming and understand where people are coming from. We also have to look at the culture of students because if their cultural experience is different, we need to allow them to express themselves in a way they are comfortable with. Expecting a student to show eye contact and they're from a culture that's not acceptable, forcing them to look us in the eye is going to create a situation where a kid is being disruptive but it's just because we are not understanding where they're coming from. Teachers need to know their students better than maybe they did when we were in school. We have to put more effort into it maybe than was done in the past and that's because of research and the ways we've learned how to teach in a better way.

D. Cook asked if we have 20 kids in a class the teacher is expected to develop 20 different educational programs?

T. Anderson stated no, but teaching and meeting them where they're at. One student might be able to do the reading in a high level novel, someone else is going to need to get the information in an easier level to read



the novel, someone will do better to see it visually in a video, they might need both audio and video, they may need a combination of three different things and it's your job as a teacher to recognize that and find what's going to best fit them. It sounds like a lot of work, but what's being taught as the best methods and best practices for teachers these days.

A. Grosjean said we also have to remember that we are living in a very global society. Many of our children are going to grow up and work all over the world. We also have to remember that in a few years Connecticut is going to be over 50% what we define as diverse. I think we need to spell these things out so that we can prepare the kids for the future and what the work is like and what it will be like.

M. Doucette Cunningham said I move that we go to the first goal and there is a recommendation on the academic piece that is included under student growth and success. Nobody's commented on that at all. Does anyone have problems with that?

D. Cook said I like that one.

A. Grosjean said it was also what Tracey was saying, how you modify what you are teaching for each of your students "...align systems to continuously improve student performance."

H. Arico said I don't have any problem with the student growth and success goal.

M. Doucette Cunningham asked if anyone has a problem with sustainable and the strategic investments goal.

H. Arico stated that the one he had a question about is the school culture and climate we have regardless of if we had it last year or the year before that, right now I do not particularly like that.

A. Grosjean asked if the superintendent could share the climate survey done with the schools to better understand school climate and culture goals.

P. Stevens said yes and that it would be shared with the iReady and SBAC data.

T. Anderson said I'm hearing Phil say he needs us to move on these goals tonight because he has to work with his administrative staff on Thursday. So perhaps we could take a minute and type out some suggestions or work on tweaking what we have .

A. Grosjean said I agree with Tracy that I like both the Willington and Coventry statements under student growth and success. I think they work well together.

L. Rodriguez agreed as well.

M. Doucette Cunningham stated the goal: The Willington Public Schools will identify, define and measure the critical skills and attributes that are required for success and foster intellectual risk-taking to increase achievement for all students by providing a rigorous, relevant and engaging curriculum.

M. Doucette Cunningham moved to accept the goals and the belief statements as they are currently edited on the screen.

A. Grosjean Seconded the motion



A roll call vote was taken

H. Arico	No
M. Doucette Cunningham	Yes
A. Grosjean	Yes
E. Testa	No
T. Anderson	Yes
L. Rodriguez	Yes
D. Cook	No

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico		✓	
M. Cunningham	✓		
D.Cook		✓	
T. Anderson	✓		
A.Grosjean	✓		
E. Testa		✓	
L. Rodriguez	✓		

Motion passes

#### 10. Present to Speak

Gary Anderson thanked those who voted for the last motion. I find it a little bit disturbing to be honest that three of the members of the Willington Board of Education disagreed with terms as benign as diversity and inclusion. That should be something that we are all striving for and I don't think there should be any question about that in my opinion. I feel like some people are trying to politicize those terms and really they're not political words. These are things we should all stand behind. One of my children was listening to the call here and he gets it so I wish that we would all kind of come along and start to understand those things in the way that our kids do.

#### 11. Board Comment

H. Arico thanked Phil for the information on the opening of school and that he hopes that we have 100% of our students back. It's very important that we have in person teaching in our schools for our students. Virtual is ok but it is not as productive as in school learning.

M. Doucette Cunningham said I wish the administrative team success as they fill vacancies this month. Thank you Phil for the information regarding the opening of school. There is more work than usual to get ready and I wish you godspeed as they do important work to keep our kids safe. I want to express my pleasure and relief that we have approved the Health Center Contract for behavioral health services to provide children with the types of counseling that they need. There is a horrible shortage for individual counseling services in this part of the state and given the pandemic I think there are many kids who are going to need individual counseling to be able to learn year and I think we did right by our students and families. I was relieved that contract changes were simplified and made it easier for all of us to come to an agreement. It's been a very long road and it's taken us 18 months to get this approved. I'm very pleased that students in Willington will now have some of the services that they so very much need.

A. Grosjean thanked Rich Napoli for all he has done at Center and wished him well in his future, and welcomed Erin Conley. It is wonderful to have her here working with our teachers to get our curriculum to be shared with everyone. Thank you to the teachers who taught summer school this year.

T. Anderson said I'd like to wish our staff who have moved on good luck, especially Rich. I can't wait to work with Erin as she develops the curriculum and we get up close and personal with it and learn more about the curriculum for our schools. I'm also excited that we finally approved the Community Health Center contract after one year and one-half of lots of discussion. I think that will be a large benefit for our district. I wish all administrators, staff, teachers and bus drivers a great beginning to this school year.

D. Cook stated I am pleased to be part of a Board that is not making parents stand out in 100 degree heat or four hours in order to participate in the BOE. Unlike Virginia, I'm thankful that we have the Zoom opportunity. I would like to continue to urge community members to show up to meetings and to participate in the process. I believe that each one of the Board members works very hard and is really trying to make our schools the best they can be. Parental feedback and community involvement is very important so thank you to those who show up to meetings, whether I agree or disagree with your opinion it doesn't matter you're showing up and participating and that is important. I heard the slogan "live your best life" and I encourage each of us to live our best life.

E. Testa said I totally agree with Donna that it is an extremely sensitive time in history and that's what we are living in now and it is very important for parents to have as much participation in our meetings as possible because we can do nothing if nobody is involved and we can achieve anything if people get involved. The main thing is we all want the best for our children. So if we work together as a Board, the teachers, the parents, which is going to produce the best fruit possible in children's lives so I would emphasize and encourage parents to get involved and to be aware of everything that's going on and ask questions don't be afraid. Thank you so much to everyone who participated in this meeting. I would also like to congratulate the children with the beginning of a new school year, it's exciting in spite of everything going on with Covid.

L. Rodriguez said for those staff who have moved on to other places, I wish them well. Welcome to Erin, I definitely look forward to working with her on developing the curriculum. I absolutely agree with Donna and Elena about parental participation which is so important. We all do this work because we want the best for our children and our parents want the best for their children so it is so critical to get involved and become aware. And with that I have to address the letter that was read earlier from Jamie Koprek. There was so much misinformation in that letter and I do not know what the procedure is but I do hope that the Board addresses that misinformation about the Community Health Center because they will not be administering medications and vaccinations. The importance of masking is really emphasized and this is the piece, as a person with a degree in biology and as a science educator, I still do not understand why people do not understand that when you put a mask on it is not for yourself it is for other people around you. It is keeping your droplets contained so you're not infecting someone else. The idea that putting a mask on is parental choice would then be the choice of the parent of the other child whether your child wears a mask or not. You wear a mask for other people. I'm a parent and I certainly wouldn't want my child to infect another child, especially one who might be vulnerable. The incidence of children getting sick from Covid is rising and we cannot ignore the dangers of the delta variant so we've got to mask up, get vaccinated to try to stop the spread so that we don't get a variant that is immune to the vaccine. I had to say that because there is so much misinformation going around the community I think that needs to be addressed. I wish staff, faculty and students a great start to the new year.. It's going to be another crazy year and hopefully it will get better as the year goes on.

H. Arico said 100% of our 65+ Willington residents have been vaccinated . The age group of 44-64 is 61%, and the 16-44 age group, which would be most of our parents, is 43.34% and the 12-15 age group is 43%. I find it surprising that the 16-33 age group is only at 43.34%. I don't know what that means. Thank you Laura for those comments. Good luck with the opening of school Phil. If you need us for a special meeting let us know and we will be available.



## 12. Adjournment

M. Doucette Cunningham moved to adjourn

E. Testa seconded the motion

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
H. Arico	✓		
M. Cunningham	✓		
D. Cook	✓		
T. Anderson	✓		
A. Grosjean	✓		
E. Testa	✓		
L. Rodriguez	✓		

Motion passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

\*Next regular meeting September 14, 2021\*

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TOWN CLERK