Board of Education Regular Meeting
November 19, 2019, 6:30 PM
Middletown Common Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Deborah Cain, Anita Dempsey-White, Dina Ford, Sean King, Lisa Loomis, Jonathon Pulino, Delita Rose-Daniels, and Justin Taylor

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Conner, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Magda Parvey, Chief of School Operations and Communications Marco Gaylord, Chief of Administration Christine Bourne, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Amy Clarke, Director of Innovation & Grants Natalie Forbes, Interim Manager of Human Resources Melaina Cossette, Manager of Transportation Mark Langton, Finance & Resource Management Specialist Cheryl Walcott, Minute-taker Christine Bourne and visitors.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Conner called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Dr. Conner asked Student Representative Evan Davis to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Dr. Conner called for a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION: Move to adopt the Agenda, was made with a motion by Mr. Pulino and a second by Mr. King

MOTION: Move to add to the Consent Agenda, Item XII.F. Reestablishment of Standing Committees passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to act an Executive Session, Agenda Item XIII.B. passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Cain – unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to adopt the Agenda, as amended, passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Mr. King – unanimous vote.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Conner stated that ballot index cards (color blue for Chair; color green for Vice Chair; and color yellow for Secretary) are being distributed to each Board member.

Dr. Conner called for nominations for Board Chair. Ms. Loomis nominated Deborah Cain, with a second by Mr. King. Dr. Conner asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Dr. Conner instructed Board members to complete their blue Chair ballot. There was no opposition so Ms. Cain was elected Chair with a unanimous vote. Dr. Conner announced that the new Board of Education Chair is Deborah Cain.

Chair Cain called for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Ford nominated Mr. Pulino for Vice Chair. Ms. Dempsey-White nominated Mr. King for Vice Chair. Chair Cain asked if there were any other nominations. Chair Cain asked Board members to complete their green Vice Chair ballot. Ballots were counted and Chair Cain announced that the new Board of Education Vice Chair is Sean King.

Chair Cain called for nominations for Secretary. Chair Cain nominated Ms. Dempsey-White as Secretary, with a second by Mr. King. Chair Cain asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Chair Cain asked Board members to complete their yellow Secretary ballot. Ballots were counted and Chair Cain announced that the new Board of Education Secretary is Anita Dempsey-White.

Chair Cain introduced the new Board of Education members to the body and welcomed the returning members.
V. DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

V.A. Middletown High School Diversity Day Recognition

Dr. Conner asked Principal Colleen Weiner and Teacher Trevor Charles to the podium. Principal Weiner thanked Trevor Charles for planning, organizing and producing the school-wide MHS Diversity Program for the last twelve years noting his commitment to the students and their right to voice, and ensure an environment of inclusion and unity.

V.B. Recognition of Interim Assistant Principal

Dr. Conner called Joseph Cassella to the podium to thanked him for his continuous support of Middletown Public Schools and his willingness to support our schools and administrative team.

V.D. Recognition of Former Board of Education Member

Dr Conner recognized Edward Ford Jr. as a Board of Education member who was recently elected to the Middletown Common Council and recognize his two years of work on the BOE.

V.E. Recognition of ParaEducators

Dr. Conner recognized Sheryl Wolfgram, President of the Middletown Federation of Paraprofessionals (MFP) who has worked closely with Dr. Conner in collaboration with the Middletown Administration. Dr. Conner then called up ParaEducators who collectively have 145 years or more service and thanked them for their dedication to Middletown Public Schools. Amy Clarke recognized the ParaEducators and spoke of their impactful relationships and dedication to our students. She added that they do not get the recognition that they deserve. Ms. Clarke read the names of more than three dozen ParaEducators with 15 years or more service to the Middletown Board of Education. Ms. Wolfgram recognized Anita Hennessey who has 51 years of service to our Middletown community.

Board member Anita Dempsey-White shared her challenges as a student and recognized coach/paraprofessional Cecil Heckstall, who guided her throughout her schooling, attributing her successes to Mr. Heckstall’s caring guidance throughout her school years.

VI. PUBLIC SESSION

Chair Cain explained the rules of Public Session and opened the floor for public comment. No one from the public came forward to speak.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

VII.A. Report of Student Representative

Student Representative Evan Davis provided an update on Student Council activities noting that on November 18th the Key Club is hosting a Powder Puff game. On Wednesday there is a Student Council-organized pep rally and then at night the football team is playing. Student Council is holding a collection of clothing/canned foods.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

VIII.A. Minutes of October 8, 2019 BOE Regular Meeting

VIII.B. Grants Status Report

VIII.C. Grant – 2019-2020 Alliance District
VIII.D. Grant - Perkins
VIII.E. Grant – Title 1, 2 and 3
VIII.F. Grant – Title 4

IX. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
IX.A. Financial Report
Ms. Bourne and Ms. Walcott came forward and provided an overview of the Financial Statement and Line Item Transfer Report.

IX.A.1. Action on Line Item Transfer Report

MOTION: Move to approve the Line Item Transfer Report passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Mr. King – unanimous vote.

IX.B. Facilities Department
There were no questions for the Facilities Department.

IX.C. Personnel Report
There were no questions for the Personnel Department.

IX.D. Transportation Report
There were no questions for the Transportation Department.

X. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT
X.A. Aerospace & Manufacturing Presentation
Dr. Conner shared the Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) with the Board of Education which we use to ground all of our decisions in equity principles. Dr. Conner distributed the Middletown 2021 Scorecard which shows indicators to specific strategies. Dr. Conner then shared the District’s Monitoring Plan. This shows the steps to achieve the strategies of the SOP. Everything the district is doing is outlined month-by-month and shows the status of each strategy and goal. There is a level of alignment and coherence.

Dr. Conner spoke about strategies to give students college and career readiness with “No College Debt”. Dr. Conner welcomed Nick Simmons from Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz’s office. Mr. Simmons is Governor Lamont’s Manager of Strategic Initiatives, a role in which he leads a variety of key initiatives for the Governor. He has been leading Governor Lamont’s recent initiative to enhance the state’s workforce development system through the creation of the Governor’s Workforce Council and its mandate to coordinate and set strategy for the state’s workforce ecosystem.

Dr. Conner introduced Natalie Forbes, Colleen Weiner, Michelle Gohagen, Paul Pelletier, Crystal Caouette and Dave Reynolds in their collaboration of this exciting program in Aerospace Innovation design. Michelle Gohagen presented a video and introduced Nick Simmons. Mr. Simmons is the Manager of Strategic Initiatives for Governor Lamont and the Workforce Council where by 2025 the economy is going to demand a second degree. The university system is not designed to handle that need. The Council is intending to take the stakeholders to engage the employers to look to manufacturing opportunities for our youth, which is only one subcommittee to discuss career pathways. How can we scale programs like the one in Middletown and bring the right people to the table. Ms.
Gohagon said a district goal is to provide resources and experiences for equity for the success of all students.

Mr. Reynolds spoke about the Aerospace and Career Pathway program. We have 10 programs in Career and Tech Ed, 6 programs have a number 1 ranking, 5 offer college credits, 5 student organizations under Career in Tech Ed, 4 is one and four students is member of one of the programs; and 100 students in work based learning and the then thumb that you approve the program for our children.

Mr. Pelletier, Tech Ed teacher, spoke about advanced manufacturing. It is anticipated that there are 30,000 – 35,000 openings in manufacturing in Connecticut. He spoke of students participating in postgraduate studies, noting that the college debt can be enormous. The average college debt is $30K. He introduced Mac MacIntire who is partnering with the Middletown Board of Education and will talk about Aerospace Manufacturing Consortium. Pratt and Whitney, General Electric, Rolls Royce, Honeywell and other companies make large engines, but only about 25% of what goes into the engine. The rest is made all over Connecticut and there are significant opportunities for careers in these smaller companies as well. Asuntuk Community College has a great manufacturing program. There are 13,000 open manufacturing positions in Connecticut right now. They also need administrative positions, truck drivers. There are 25,000 large commercial jet engines on back order right now and this doesn’t include smaller engines, helicopters, etc. This industry needs young people to make these industries successful. Opportunities are out there. You need to inspire these kids in math, science, business and communication.

Ms. Weiner and Ms. Forbes will discuss the logistics of the program - how to obtain course credit, certificates, and career experiences without college debt. Ms. Weiner explained that this is one of many pathways the district is exploring for our high school students. Many students are leaving school with college credits, but this would provide work-ready experiences that does not need immediate college and some businesses might pay for college experiences. There would be no college debt. Ms. Weiner is excited about offering more opportunities to have these experiences in multiple pathways. She hopes the program can start possibly as early as this Spring. The district will offer a Fall course in Mechanical Technology and Aerospace Design course. These need Board of Education approval. The hope is to create a lab in the summer; engage college partners; and get college credit approval.

Ms. Forbes talked about the funding plan for year 1. State grant cycles run from July 1 – June 30. A total of $77,000 has been submitted for phase one. We expect approval in 4-6 weeks. Next year we are projecting grant funding from $143,000. District leaders will look at additional funding for next year – possibly through grants, federal or private, or through the general fund as needed. Industry partners can possibly lend support including tooling or professional development. The launch of phase 1 will occur in August of 2020 and will cost approximately $300,000. We are still looking for $75,000. We need to prepare the space for student use.

There was a discussion and staff responded to questions. Dr. Conner thanked the work of the team in getting to this point.

XI.B. District Data Team

Dr. Conner reported that there is no news on the District Data Team.

X.C. District News

Chair Cain reported that there is no District News.

XI. COMMITTEES
XI.A. Budget Committee

Committee Chair Sean King reported there was an informational meeting last night. In addition to what was reported, there is an overtime report which numbers look good. There was a report on the school lunch programs. There was a discussion about the school lunch accounts. This generated some confusion in the community with regard to the four schools that do not have the free universal school lunches. There needs to be additional conversations about the CEP schools and why all of our schools are not eligible for this program. In addition, at the Budget Committee meetings information is being provided about district contracts. He said the Finance staff is doing a great job in keeping the BOE informed about the bidding, RFP, and other processes. This is a new report to the Budget Committee. Facilities Director Peter Staye provided an overview of the five-year plan. In addition, there was an outline of the Budget timeline which is in tonight’s Board packet. Mr. King reminded the BOE that the Budget Committee meetings are the second Monday of the month and welcomed BOE members and community members to attend and participate.

XI.B. Curriculum Committee

Committee Chair Lisa Loomis reported that the October meeting had a presentation from Middle School students asking for a Student Coalition at the middle school. The Aerospace presentation was done at the Curriculum Committee meeting. Mr. Raucci will share some new courses that might be proposed. Assessments, audit and reduction. Administration is sensitive to the number of tests students are required to take. Math and Reading inventories provide data that is more strongly aligned to SBAC and easier to understand. The hope is to move away from NWEA math testing, and stick with Reading and Math inventories – which will gain 12 hours or more of instruction. This needs to be approved by the Professional Development Committee. This is a significant concern to parents. A discussion about Advanced Placement (AP) tests which have significantly increased. Increased diverse representation in AP was meant to increase exposure to more rigorous curriculum. The pass rate was not necessarily the goal, but we expect to work toward a larger pass rate as the rigor moves through elementary and middle school. The committee also looked at college credit opportunities. Board member Dempsey-White questioned whether the testing was a struggle for the teachers or the students. Dr. Conner responded that a more focused assessment, identifying readiness level is more in line with other districts. This strategy will increase teacher instruction time.

XI.C. Facilities Committee

Committee Chair Debra Cain reported that the committee toured Snow School. Director of Facilities Peter Staye discussed the contracts that are going out at this point through the New Middle School Building Committee. The foundation is slated for early January 2020. Mr. Staye reported on the five-year plan and will report on some major repairs that are needed. Chair Cain invited Board members and the community to attend the Facilities Committee meetings.

XI.D. Policy Committee

There was no report on the Policy Committee.

XI.E. Representative Reports

There were no reports.

XI.F. New Middle School Building Committee

Chair Cain explained that there was nothing to report for this Committee.

XII. ACTION ITEMS

XII.A. Approval of Current Humanities Course Add Early College Experience (ECE) Option
Chair Cain asked Curriculum Committee Chair Lisa Loomis to speak to this action item. Dan Raucci, ELA Supervisor explained the Humanities course. We would continue our relationship with Wesleyan University but would expand student experience with this opportunity. Student Representative Evan Davis asked if MHS seniors would be able to take the course and Mr. Raucci assured him that they would. Mr. Raucci spoke about fee waivers for students on the free lunch program. Ms. Loomis explained that this course that has been offered in the past, we are just offering the UConn credit opportunity. Mr. Raucci explained that there might be an expanded writing component to it.

MOTION: Move to approve that the Current Humanities Course add an Early College Experience (ECE) option was made with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis unanimous vote.

Chair Cain called a brief recess at 8:35 PM for the Control Room to change the video tape. The meeting resumed at 8:41 PM.

XII.B. Approval of Latinx Literature Elective

Chair Cain asked Mr. Raucci to speak to this action item. He explained that they would be studying writings from Latinx authors, cultures, customs and experiences. Krista Bianchini is working with Yale University to assist in designing the course.

MOTION: Move for approval of a Latinx Literature Elective passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

XII.C. Approval of Aerospace Design Course

Curriculum Committee Chair Lisa Loomis spoke to this action item.

MOTION: Move for approval of an Aerospace Design Course passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XII.D. Approval of a Mechanical Technology Course

Curriculum Committee Chair Lisa Loomis spoke to this action item.

MOTION: Move for approval of a Mechanical Technology Course passed with a motion by Ms. Loomis and a second by Mr. King – unanimous vote.

XII.E. Approval of a Drone and Flight Science Course

Curriculum Committee Chair Lisa Loomis spoke to this action item.

MOTION: Move for approval of a Drone and Flight Science Course passed with a motion by Ms. Loomis and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

Added to agenda at beginning of meeting:

XII.F. Policy #9130a Policy on Standing Committees

Chair Cain explained that the four standing committees are: Budget, Curriculum, Policy, and Facilities Committee are reassigned. Chair Cain asked the members to review the committees and to email her the committees they would like to participate on.

MOTION: Move to re-establish the Standing Committees in the Bylaws: Budget, Curriculum, Policy and Facilities passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
XIII.A. New Items

Chair Cain added that since they are a newly established board, each Board member needs to select schools they will adopt.

Chair Cain thanked everyone.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Move at 9:02 PM to go into Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing Items with Attorney/Client Privilege and the Discuss Student Issues passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

Public Session

MOTION: Move at 9:39 PM to return to Public Session passed with a motion by Mr. Pulino and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to amend this evening’s agenda to add Agenda Item XIIIIC. Authorization for Superintendent of Schools to Hire Hearing Officer passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to hire a hearing officer for an Expulsion Hearing passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 9:42 PM passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

Christine Bourne
Chief of Administration

CB/mp