



**TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 6:00 P.M.  
355 Migeon Ave – Remote Meeting**

**Minutes**

1. Call to Order: 6:00 P.M.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call: Ms. Cappabianca, Mr. Corey, Ms. DePretis Ms. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Maniccia, Ms. Todor, Ms. Fappiano, Ms. Richardson, Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Arum, Ms. Schulte, Ms. Herold, Mr. Barlow, Ms. Klimaszewski  
Absent: Mr. Eucalitto (Excused)
4. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
5. School/Community Service/Public Participation:  
Mr. Lafreniere made himself available for questions based on survey results for the Washington DC Trip option for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. There was a lot of participation from the 9<sup>th</sup> graders on the survey. He will be present during the meeting to answer any questions.  
Joanne Grant – Shared the current concerns from the TPS community: shared gym equipment, follow up procedures on absences, we should be more proactive than reactive with COVID planning. She would like the district to share more detailed, pertinent information regarding individual COVID cases.
6. Possible Executive Session on a Union Matter: Ms. Richardson made a motion to go into Executive Session on a union matter inviting in Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Schulte, Mr. Arum, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.  
The Board entered in Executive Session at 6:09 P.M.  
The Board returned in Open Session at 6:18 P.M.
7. Information Sharing Session:
  - A. Superintendent's Report: Ms. Lubomski started her report sharing all the wonderful Veteran's Day celebrations at each site. The students learned a lot more by being in school. The celebrations though virtual were incredible. THS and TMS did a virtual wall to honor the staff who served and veterans of family members. Elementary students learned about the branches of services. Contract tracing has been absorbing a great deal of time. She gave a shout out to the site administrators, nurses, confidential staff, and her central office team. The Torrington Area Health has been an amazing support during this difficult time.
    1. Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) Update: Ms. Ferguson gave the updates on OTL. Election Day was a professional development day. Some

highlights of the OTL are: The teachers were introduced to the Lesson Planning Grid. Teachers received training on how to access STAR reports to use data to guide instruction. We are conducting a curriculum inventory at THS. A team is working with Performance Matters to provide all data files so that teachers and administrators have access to students' historical data. We are developing a rollout plan for Securely Classroom, a tool that helps teachers keep students on task on their devices. We are creating a new backup strategy and disaster recovery plan. Finalizing new system to onboard and off-board users automatically for students and staff.

2.Special Education Update: Ms. Klimaszewski provided the special education update. The numbers are pretty much the same. We had 21 students move into district with IEPs. There were 11 students who exited from special education this year. The district average for outplaced students is 15.23% and the state average is 16%.

- B. Monthly Financials – Our finances are in the black. We received the COVID reimbursement funds from the State. We are in good financial shape right now.
- C. COVID-19 Expenses (CRF funds)– The grant ends December 30<sup>th</sup>. Expenses need to be incurred by that time. There will be an update next month.
- D. COVID-19 Issues – Ms. Lubomski presented a PowerPoint on Providing Quality Instruction, the 2020-2021 COVID Pandemic. Torrington Area Health stated that currently the virus is not as “deadly” however, it is spreading faster. She explained the difference between a **whole school closure** vs. a **cohort isolation**.

**Whole school closure** happens because of more possibilities for more contacts and exposures:

- Staff-Variety Roles
- Staff-services provided in a variety of locations
- Staff covering other classes
- Siblings/family members across multiple schools
- Impacts multiple staff causing coverage issues
- Accurate contact tracing impossible to conduct
- K-3 challenging to maintain social distancing

**Cohort isolation:**

- Isolate a class

- 1 person student/staff member – minimal contact with others
- Related services specials
- Layout of physical space (social distancing)

**Contract Tracing Process:** Contact tracing has become an enormous and complicated task.

1. Investigation: Contract Tracing: within 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes, seating chart, contact TAHD
2. Questions of each case: Date of test, date of results, symptoms, contacts, where was test taken, what type of test, last day in school
3. Bus company must be called
4. EdAdvance-Food Service must be called to establish a new food distribution schedule based on needs
5. Translation – all docs, call families if necessary
6. Call all contacts, send all letters to contacts, to school, to community, if closure
7. Complete state reporting
8. Fax all docs to TAHD

**Impact:** Due to the cases impacting our schools:

- Staff absences due to direct contact: 142
- Students out due to direct contact: 424
- Staff absences for other COVID related issues: 38
- COVID ADA accommodations: 42 staff approved.

**Why Shift to 100% Temporary Remote Learning:**

- Virus is so widespread that contact tracing web has required numerous and repeated school closures.
- Intermittent school closures are very disruptive to families and negatively impact the consistency of the learning process. Families need more predictability.
- The increasing need for various staff to quarantine is making coverage in the building challenging and in some cases impossible.
- The current in-person experience is not being provided as intended nor optimal right now as substitute coverage may be provided by staff who are not as knowledgeable in the area of instruction.
- Lack of availability of certified special education teachers, speech language pathologist and para-educators make us vulnerable to ensuring the coverage of all special education services.
- Due to challenges in-person teachers are having, distance learning is proving to be a more consistent, focused experience currently.

**Proposed Calendar Change:**

- All schools transition to remote learning from 11/19-11/24/2020
- Thanksgiving Holiday 11/25-11/29/2020
- Remote learning from 11/30-12/4/2020, all schools
- Students return to in-person (K-5) and hybrid (6-12) learning on 12/7/20-12/22/20 with distance option
- Schools closed from 12/23-1/4/2020, winter break
- Remote learning occurs from Jan 4-Jan 8
- Students return to in-person (K-5) and hybrid (6-12) learning 1/11.

We would re-evaluate again as needed, before we decide to return in person.

Ms. Fappiano and Ms. Richardson stated that they like this plan. Mr. Kissko thanked the administrator for the plan. Mr. Maniccia likes the idea that the contact tracing will continue through the distance learning. Mr. Corey thanked the administrators and appreciates them making changes to respond to the situation as needed. The Chair stated that we, as a school system, have a responsibility to protect our students, staff, and families and we will protect their confidentiality while keeping everyone else's safety in the forefront. Ms. Fappiano asked how will the closure impact special education testing? Ms. Klimaszewski stated that the initial testing deadlines remain effect. She is going to talk to the state department about virtual testing and see if it is valid, reliable, and confidential.

- E. TMS Window Replacement Project – the City Council approved the resolutions on Monday
- F. Board Goals Update – Mr. Kissko stated that they were presented at the School Improvement Committee. He said the Board will present the final Board Goals in December.
- G. Receive Bylaw Revision – One month you get them, and the next month you will vote on the revision. We are looking to expand the Budget and Facilities & Technology committee with one more committee member because there is a lot of work. One chair, 3 committee members and an alternate. The quorum would be 3.
- H. Policy #6170 – Sexual Harassment – Students – This is a necessary change due to statutory changes and was brought to the full board to accept as presented.

- I. Policy #6170A – Title IX Sexual Harassment – Students –  
This was discussed in Policy due to statutory changes and it is brought to the full board to accept as presented.
- J. Policy #4080 – Sexual Harassment – Personnel – This was discussed in Policy due to statutory changes and it is brought to the full board to accept as presented.
- K. Policy #4080A – Title IX Sexual Harassment – Personnel –  
This was discussed in Policy due to statutory changes and it is brought to the full board to accept as presented.
- L. Washington DC Trip Survey Results – The results were shared from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. What is important to note is there were only 17 responses. Mr. Lafreniere stated that he was shocked that he did not get a greater response. Based on these results, we can proceed with the Washington D.C. as planned with only the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (permitted travel is allowed). He stated that the price will not increase as long as he has 35 students. Ms. Richardson and Mr. Maniccia both agreed that there is not enough interest in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade for the trip and therefore should only include the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- M. New Course Proposals: These course proposals were discussed at the School Improvement Committee and the committee was supportive of the courses.
  - 1. Applied STEM (Tech Ed Engineering Pathway)
  - 2. FIRST Tech Challenge: Exploring Robotics & Coding
- 8. Committee Reports:
  - A. Budget Committee – Mr. Maniccia reported that they went over monthly financials, Covid-19 expenses, and TMS Windows. The substitute pay increase will go in affect this Monday. The budget timeline will be presented next month.
  - B. Facilities & Technology Committee – Mr. Barlow reported that the Committee reviewed building management systems for the 5 schools. The Committee plans to have an Executive Session on school security.
  - C. School Improvement Committee: Mr. Kissko reported that the committee talked in detail about the board goals. The committee will discuss distance learning at the next meeting.
  - D. Policy Committee: Ms. Hoehne reported that the committee discussed the Sexual Harassment policies that came up in tonight's meeting.
  - E. Building Committee – Tuesday was the deadline to receive the RFQs. We received 8 RFQ proposals. They will be reviewed and narrowed down to 4 architects to be interviewed.
- 9. Action Items:
  - A. Possible Approval of the TEVAL Plan – Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the TEVAL plan, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.

These minutes were approved by the Torrington Board of Education on December 29, 2020.

- B. Monthly Financials – Mr. Maniccia made a motion to approve the monthly financials, second by Mr. Kissko. All in favor.
- C. Possible Vote on Union Matter – Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the MOU with Local 1579, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
- D. Policy #6170 – Sexual Harassment – Students – Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve policy #6170, second by Ms. Todor. All in favor.
- E. Policy #6170A – Title IX Sexual Harassment – Students - Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve policy #6170A, second by Ms. Todor. All in favor.
- F. Policy #4080 – Sexual Harassment – Personnel - Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve policy #4080, second by Ms. Todor. All in favor.
- G. Policy #4080A – Title IX Sexual Harassment – Personnel - Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve policy #4080A, second by Ms. Todor. All in favor.
- H. Washington DC Trip: Ms. Richardson made a motion that the Washington DC trip remain on the date as scheduled and only include the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, not include the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, provided travel is allowed, second by Ms. DePretis. Mr. Corey opposed. Everyone else in favor. Motion carries.
- I. New Course Proposals:
  - 1. Applied STEM (Tech Ed Engineering Pathway)  
Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the course proposal, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
  - 2. FIRST Tech Challenge: Exploring Robotics & Coding - Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the course proposal, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
- J. BOE Regular Meeting Minutes – October 28, 2020 – Mr. Maniccia made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor.
- K. BOE Special Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2020 – Ms. DePretis made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
- L. Committee Meeting Minutes – Mr. Maniccia made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor.
  - 1. Policy Committee – February 5, 2020
  - 2. School Improvement Committee - October 7, 2020
  - 3. Budget Committee – October 14, 2020
  - 4. Facilities and Technology Committee – October 14, 2020

5. Building Committee – October 22, 2020

M. Consent Agenda: Appointments, Retirements & Resignations – Ms. Richardson made a motion to approve the consent agenda, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.

10. Comments for the Good of the Order (Paraphrased.)

Cathy – “Thank you to Sue L., Sue F., and all the administrators for taking such a great approach for in person and distance learning. As a community we all need to take a responsibility to make the right choices and stay safe. Happy Thanksgiving!”

Nikki – “Same as what Cathy said – teachers, staff and administration all of what you do to have not the kids affected by what is going on. The referendum is very exciting, thank you Fiona for putting your heart and soul into it.”

Jessica – “Thank to Sue L., Sue F., and our team - hang in there.”

Sue D. – “I echo what the ladies said – thank you to both the Sue’s for the long hours they put in. Happy Thanksgiving.”

Armand – “Thank you to everyone top on down. I know what it’s like on the front line in the building. I can’t imagine what it’s like being here. It is tough right now, but we will get through this.”

John – “Happy Thanksgiving – Continuing accolades to the staff for getting the max education during this time.”

Ellen – “I echo what everyone else said – you guys are phenomenal. Happy Thanksgiving!”

Chair – “Thank you to the community for supporting the referendum - it’s a game changer for Torrington. I am hoping that people will support us on our food drive on Friday. We will be at Torrington High School 3-6:30 P.M, there is a great need this year. Thank the staff and everyone else. We are back in emergency mode. We will have to reevaluate when we are gathering and keep our in-person numbers at 10.

11. Items for Upcoming Agenda:

- A. Monthly Financials
- B. Budget
- C. Capital Plan
- D. COVID-19 Expenses
- E. COVID-19 Issues

12. Future Meetings:

**Thursday, November 19, 2020 (at Torringtonford)**

5:30 p.m. – Building Committee

6:30 p.m. – Grievance Committee

**Monday, December 2, 2020 (at Migeon Ave.)**

6:00 p.m. – School Improvement and Community Relations Committee

7:00 p.m. – Policy Committee

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020 (at Migeon Ave.)**

6:00 p.m. – Facilities/Technology Committee

7:00 p.m. – Budget Committee

**Wednesday, December 16, 2020 (at Migeon Ave)**

6:00 p.m. – Regular Board of Education Meeting

13. Adjournment: Mr. Kissko made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 P.M.