

**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
October 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Board of Education Goal:
To engage in a cycle of continuous improvement to ensure all students are educated with
high standards and achieve at the highest levels of learning
in the Montville Public Schools.**

**Library Media Center
Montville High School**

Item 1. Call to order/ Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Sandra Berardy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introduced new Board Member Wills Pike and student representative Gigi Johnston.

All stood and pledged the flag. Board members participating were: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Carol Burgess, Dana Ladyga, Sheelagh Lapinski, Monica Pomazon and Wills Pike.

Also present were Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Jennifer LeMay, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, M.J. Dix, Amy Espinoza, and Heather Sangermano, Student Board Representatives David Baukus and Gigi Johnston and Town Council Liaison Joe Jaskiewicz.

Board Chair Sandra Berardy proposed the following changes to the agenda; Add Student Board report as item 4b. Move item 5d to item 2a. add item 6f.Appointment of members to subcommittees to Committee Liaison reports.

Motion: To modify the agenda as proposed by Sandra Berardy.

Moved by: Monica Pomazon
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga
Vote: Carried (8-0)

Item 2. Hearing of delegates and citizens (regarding agenda items only)

None

a. Acknowledge resignation of Board Member Steven Loiler

Board Chair acknowledged the resignation of Board Member Steven Loiler and introduced new Board Member Wills Pike.

Superintendent Pallin - I received notice from Tom McNally that Steve Loiler submitted a letter to the Town Clerk resigning from the Board of Education effective Sept. 23 due to conflicts with his work schedule. Steve served on the Board for 11 years and his service to Montville Public Schools is greatly appreciated.

Item 3. Letters and communications

None

Item 4. Approval of the Consent Calendar

Motion: The Board moved to approve the consent calendar.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (8-0)

a. Budget report from Kathy Lamoureux; Business Manager

Since the last Board meeting we have been working on grant applications. The normal Title I, II, III, and IV grants have been submitted and most have been approved. I want to acknowledge Mel Almond for collaborating with the private schools and the tremendous amount of work she does to complete these grants.

We received notification that Montville received approximately five hundred twenty five thousand dollars under the Coronavirus Relief funding. This grant was allocated under specific category limits for personnel and non-personnel supports and requires that all the funds are spent by December 30, 2020. After the original release of the grant, the State has given some latitude in reallocation between categories which was helpful. The grant application is requesting consideration of funding for new staff needed to cover staff who were unable to return to work due to the pandemic from the start of school until 12/30/2020. Additionally, the grant application will request funds to cover the increase in permanent substitutes, monitors covering the medical rooms, the security officer at Tyl, and some of the increase in hours needed by the custodial staffing. If the grant is approved, this funding will cover these positions until the end of the calendar year. Some of the supply costs that were originally written into the CARES grant have been moved to this grant. Once this grant is approved (modified submittal date of 10/23) the CARES grant will be modified to move some of the supplies to staffing to help offset the above positions after 1/1/2021.

Certified Salaries are projected to have an overage at this time. This is a result of late hires, medical leaves, and a position that has not been filled because of the hybrid and virtual learning. We will continue to monitor this because the school year has just begun.

The Regular Tuition (object 1100/560) currently is trending to have an overage based on the information uploaded to the state. We have not received bills at this time but it appears there are 9 less students in the New London magnet schools than what was budgeted for and about 20 less in the LEARN magnet schools which was mainly a result of the closing of the Dual Language School and the Friendship School.

The last item I want to comment on for this budget review is regarding the transportation department. We have subcontracted transportation at the beginning of the school year to cover runs and after school activities because of a shortage of drivers. It is too early to determine the impact of this because there is not enough trending but we will continue to monitor it.

Dana: Can any part of the grants or surplus accounts be used towards technology? Laurie: Unfortunately the grant's sole purpose is to bring students back to in-person school and cannot be used towards technology to help with distance learning. Kathy: We are projecting a surplus for the end of the 2019-2020 year and hope that the town will transfer that to the 2% account for use in part towards technology.

b. Student Board Report

Board Representative David Baukus introduced Junior Student Representative Gigi Johnston.

David: Students are relieved and grateful to be back in the building. This is evident in participation in class and student government to really bring the spirit back to school. We are working to plan events which can be done safely. Spirit week was changed to a two week cycle to provide each cohort with maximum participation. These activities will resume once in-person learning returns. The student body has been more flexible than ever, working with faculty to get the most out of their classes and to stay safe.

Gigi: I have chosen to participate in the hybrid model which can be challenging at times. I stay after for soccer and the days in school are very beneficial and teachers are able to clarify and prepare us with work for our remote days, including online resources and lab materials. The remote days are more challenging. We are required to wear masks during sports. Teams have adapted their sports for safety including changing football to 7v7 matches.

Item 5. New Business

a. Elementary Program Leader/Special Education Supervisor Position

Laurie: I am very pleased to announce that we have filled the vacancy for the elementary program leader position. Theresa Gouveia comes to us from New Britain where she serves as the lead special education teacher and administrator on duty, supervising services for over 100 special education students. She was named the 2019 New Britain teacher of the year and had glowing recommendations. Theresa will begin work in Montville on Nov. 16 and in the meantime, Laura Zurell will work remotely part time to ensure PPTs and student services are on track. We had to repost the position, but ultimately we had a strong pool of candidates and brought two back for second interviews. Dana was the Board representative on the interview team.

Dana- it was very interesting to be part of this process. All of the candidates had some impressive resumes. Theresa had a very natural calmness to her and I believe that she will be a great asset.

Wills – Does she have people actually working for her? Laurie: She is an administrator and will be supervising and evaluating special education staff.

b. Consideration and action to approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar

Moved by: Monica Pomazon
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga
Vote: Carried (8-0)

Laurie: Our regional superintendent group reviewed LEARN's proposed calendar for next year and agreed to common dates for professional development and vacations. Using those dates, we have developed a draft calendar for next year which I have run by the administrators and MEA

president for feedback. We are proposing beginning the year for students on Aug. 30 and starting with two half days for the first two days of school. Beginning the year with half days this year was extremely helpful in transitioning into a new year as bus drivers learn new routes and students transition back to school, especially since this first week of school will be a full week next year. We will use the afternoons for professional development and therefore will not hold a Sept. half day for PD. In past years, we have held a full day for PD on the last day of school and we believe we could better use PD time embedded in the school year, so we are proposing moving that date to Feb. 18. That will give families a longer weekend for Presidents' Day. The last day of school for students and staff would be June 10.

c. Discussing regarding teacher evaluation for 20-21 school year

Laurie: The CSDE offered districts flexibility in teacher evaluation this year and our Professional Learning and Teacher Evaluation Committee decided to implement those flexibilities in Montville. The flexibilities are designed to highlight the critical importance of the social and emotional learning and well-being of students and staff along with students' academic growth. Teachers are encouraged to select student learning indicators which focus on social and emotional learning, student engagement, and family engagement. Administrators' school goals would focus in part on these areas as well. All teachers will be observed at least twice during the school year and they will receive narrative feedback. Summative ratings will be waived, but summative conferences with a narrative summary will continue. Non-tenured teachers will continue to be evaluated according to our current teacher evaluation plan.

Monica – Is the observation always in house or can it be done while they are doing remote learning? Laurie- It can be either; principals can now observe any class which is happening remotely, teachers can see that the principal has joined the remote class, and this allows the principal to observe remote classes.

d. Discussion regarding Montville Marvels and administrative team Board Presentations.

Laurie: I talked to the administrative team and we are proposing a change in the way administrators provide presentations to the Board. We have selected four topics that we think are important to present this year: Distance learning including attendance, engagement, schedule, and instructional activities (November), Use of one-to-one technology (January), Social and emotional learning (March), and Student assessment results (May). We would like to schedule these presentations for every other month and have one elementary and one secondary principal co-present so that you hear about each topic for all students throughout the grade levels.

We also discussed the best way to recognize Montville Marvels so that we do not increase the number of people present at a meeting. We would like to begin recognizing Marvels in November. We propose that we present the Marvel with their certificate during the school day and post photos and/or videos on our website and to present at the Board meeting.

Monica – Have you considered presenting the Marvels in person using the auditorium?

Bob – Why don't we give you plan a try and look at other options based upon feedback received.

Sandra – The basis of the program when is started was to recognize students who made academic

gains and I want to be sure that this is not lost in the presentation.

Item 6. Committee and Liaison reports:

- a. **Montville Education Foundation** – *No meeting or agendas received*
- b. **LEARN** – *Bob: I have an executive committee meeting on Friday*
- c. **CABE/NSBA** – *The CABE CAPSS Convention will be virtual. NSBA has cancelled just about every event for the next year. I am willing to participate in the delegate assembly again this November. CABE is hoping to hold the CABE Convention in the spring.*

Motion: The Board moved to assign Bob Mitchell to the CABE Delegate Assembly.

Motion: Monica Pomazon
Seconded: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (8-0)

- d. **Montville Youth Services Bureau** – *Sheelagh – Students painted a rainbow crosswalk and hope to do a second one across Chesterfield Road. Students are doing raffle baskets as a fund raiser and the baskets will be displayed at the polling locations. Their baskets will be Montville themed.*
- e. **Board Chair remarks** – *Board Chair Sandra Berardy thanked the Administrative Team for their hard work, recognizing that the changes have been challenging and the Administrative Team has worked to meet the needs of the students during this difficult time.*
- f. **Appointment to Sub-Committee** - *Wills will join the Policy and Finance Committees.*

Item 7. Superintendent's Report

- a. **Report from the Director of Special Services – Ms. Paula LaChance**

Mrs. LaChance was absent and there was no report.

- b. **Report from Assistant Superintendent – Mrs. Dianne Vumback**

Attendance: We have been spending a considerable amount of time navigating the monitoring and tracking of student attendance within the Powerschool system to align with the State's expectations. We have students who attend both in person and remote from home during their hybrid schedule as well as fully remote students and we are responsible for tracking the daily attendance for each of these groups. We are working on ways to create consistency within buildings as well as across the district. We have had some glitches with reporting features, however it appears to be on the

student information system's side with PowerSchool. We are compelled to look for trends to not only ensure engagement and learning, but also to be kept apprised of the students' social-emotional wellbeing during these difficult times.

Social Worker Update

I have been meeting somewhat regularly with the social worker team. They have been incredibly busy supporting students and adults – because while the nature of their roles have not changed, their accessibility (more and more students are in need of some form of social-emotional support) and delivery of services (providing services while students are in-person and remote) has changed dramatically. Montville has a strong and capable team and they have been doing a tremendous job taking care of our community.

Title IX Training

All building principals and their Title IX coordinators have taken the required Title IX course presented by the Connecticut State Department of Education. There were new regulations and they provide guidance on when and how we are to respond to allegations of sexual harassment. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in education and in employment. The new regulations – effective August of 2020 – have addressed sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination.

Professional Development

We are working with Connecticut ADL (Anti-Defamation League) on finalizing the Anti-Bias training for staff on Election Day (November 3rd). This program has received rave reviews by districts throughout the state. We will also have our crisis and preparedness training for emergency situations with our new staff, some technology support training, among other relevant professional development offerings.

ALICE training will be modified to include COVID safety measures for staff safety.

c. Report from the Superintendent – Mrs. Pallin

Covid-19 Cases and Actions Taken

Three categories of COVID-19 positive cases have emerged as we have received and dealt with reports of positive tests.

- 1. Positive case in a person who has not been to school / work for an extended period of time (e.g. they have been quarantined, their first symptoms were on a Monday and they haven't been at school since the previous Tuesday, they work alone in a section of the building in the evening, they are a fully remote learner, etc.).*

These cases do not impact the operations of the school buildings and are noted in weekly update which I send to families.

- 2. Positive case in which there are a few close contacts who can be identified and quarantined without closing a large portion of a school.*

These cases impact only one school building and I am notifying everyone in that school community only

- 3. Positive case with a number of close contacts, or an inability to insure we can accurately identify all of the close contacts, which causes us to close a school or a significant portion of the school*

In these cases I am notifying the whole district

In all cases in which close contacts are identified (people within 6 feet of a person who had a positive test result for a cumulative time of 15 minutes or more), personal phone calls are made to the close contacts clearly explaining their next steps and the quarantine expectations.

In all cases, we word our communication to protect the identity of the individual who had a positive test. It is difficult to provide a communication that helps the community to understand that we have cast a wide net when looking for close contacts and taken a conservative approach in order to ensure safety in our schools without disclosing too much information about the specific situation. I am working to provide that balance.

Teachers' Work this Year and their use of Wednesdays

With the hybrid model, our teachers are planning two sets of lessons for every day; one that meets the needs of the in-person cohort and one that meets the needs of the distance learning cohort. Even if students are Zoomed into the live classroom, at some point during the class, they are released to complete independent work at home because that is more effective than watching the in-person learners. If the teacher decides to partner in-class and distance learners within the classroom, the planning for those activities is substantively different than planning for an activity where all students are in the room.

Examples of Wed. work:

- Live Zoom class meeting for both cohort 1 and 2*
- MS / HS Zoom meetings throughout day with different class sections*
- Replicate all in-person instruction for online learners (make / find videos, write concise, clear directions, modify for EL and special ed students)*
- Record read-aloud books*
- Record all directions for remote work for struggling readers (for every assignment provide typed and voice directions)*
- Correct all electronic work both in writing and in recorded one-on-one conversations with the student*
- Listen to student recordings individually to hear their verbal responses or reading*
- Convert all paper assignments and student work into electronic assignments, convert presentations into Google Slides*
- Meet with paras to plan for paras' work with in person and distance students*
- Create packets of materials to be completed at home so students are still writing and are off-line for part of the day*
- Collaborate with teachers of same grade course to identify pacing and necessary adjustments to the course scope and sequence*
- Meet virtually with individual students and small groups of students who need help*
- Call parents whose students are struggling*
- Meet with grade level SRBI team / collaborate with special ed teachers about individual*

students' needs

- *Transition student materials from cohort 1 kits to cohort 2 kits to minimize shared materials*
- *Respond to student and parent emails*
- *Conduct and write up evaluations of students*
- *Search for recipes that can be cooked with appropriate distancing, modify labs for distance work*
- *Email parents to update on student grades, attendance, engagement*
- *Counselors have Zoom meetings with students throughout the day for individual support*

Surveys – Parent, teacher and student surveys are being administered this week to gather feedback about our hybrid instruction, students' social and emotional needs, etc. We will collect these results and then a team of teachers, administrators, students and parents will analyze results to suggest improvements, plan needed professional learning, etc. Surveys will be given 5 times this year to promote continued growth and improvement and to measure progress.

Bob and Dana: Believe that the information shared at the meeting about the decision making process should be shared with the community. It was agreed that the information will be shared on the website. Jim: Have you considered sharing the information about the higher positivity rate in remote students with those families? Laurie: Each time a parent chooses to exit their students to fully remote learning, the administrator reaches out and explains what the students are missing from the in-person learning experience.

Monica: What grade level has the highest number of remote learners? Laurie – It is across the district with Mohegan having the highest number of students.

Item 8. Citizens Comments

Jenny Natale; We are currently in negotiations with the Board and thank you for your openness and eagerness to work with us. I see each of you trying to understand and listening.

Motion: That the Board enters executive session at 7:12 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the results of an investigation regarding a personnel matter.

Moved by: Jim Wood
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga
Vote: Carried (8-0)

Motion: That the board exits executive session at 7:23 P.M. with no votes taken.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (8-0)

It is anticipated that the Board will meet in executive session to discuss the results of an investigation into a personnel matter.

Item 9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Carol Burgess
Vote: Carried (8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sandra Berardy, Chair
Montville Board of Education
Minutes Approved: _____

Monica Pomazon, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

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