

**EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT
Special Meeting Minutes - Thursday, March 26, 2020**

7:30 p.m. – Via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/820113908?pwd=TxDU2RORGJraXUrU2dpSEpSK0p6dz09>

Meeting ID: 820 113 908

Password: 003007

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+16465588656,,820113908# US (New York)

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I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Chair C. Simonelli called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Chair C. Simonelli, Vice Chair R. Reichle, Secretary K. Carey-Trull, W. Raber, K. Bilodeau, C. Sevarino, F. Neill, D. Swaim, S. Andrews, Dr. Christine DeBarge

Also in attendance: Board Recording Secretary A. Kalesnik, community members

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: VOTE

2019-2020 Calendar Update

Dr. C. DeBarge is proposing two changes to the 2019-2020 EWPS School Calendar:

1. The addition of 4 days to the end of the school year due to the 4 inclement weather days used to date- The last day of school will now be June 18, not June 12 as originally posted.
2. The change of the April Break from the week of April 20 to the week of April 13, due to the Governor's executive order to close schools through April 20, which is the start of our currently posted April Break.

A motion was made by F. Neill, 2nd by R. Reichle, to vote to approve the proposed calendar changes.

Chair C. Simonelli inquired if we would be adding any professional development days to allow teachers a break away from the "virtual classrooms" and allow them additional prep time.

Dr. C. DeBarge noted she has not yet heard that was necessary.

The vote was as follows:

W. Raber – yes, R. Reichle – yes, K. Carey-Trull – yes, D. Swaim – yes, S. Andrews – yes, C. Sevarino – yes, K. Bilodeau – yes, F. Neill – yes, Chair C. Simonelli – yes. The vote was unanimous: 9 yes, 0 no.

IV. NEW BUSINESS: VOTE

Policy Update: 6114.81 Emergency Suspension of Policy

Dr. C. DeBarge informed the Board this policy was sent to superintendents by CABE as a suggestion to address time sensitive issues relative to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

She noted the policy would allow the Board to permit the superintendent to make time-sensitive decisions, which would normally be brought to the Board for a vote, during the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, including, but not limited to:

- Signing contracts
- Adjusting the calendar
- Closing schools
- Re-assigning employees
- Bid process

A motion was made by W. Raber, 2nd by R. Reichle, to approve the policy as presented.

F. Neill brought a grammatical error in the policy to the Board's attention. She also inquired if the Board should set a certain dollar amount in #3 of the policy relative to signing contracts during the COVID-19 emergency.

Chair C. Simonelli noted that the Board does not currently designate dollar amounts to the superintendent relative to the budget. The Board approves the budget and the superintendent determines the allocation of funds based on her discretion and staff/student needs.

K. Bilodeau inquired if the policy specifies that all authority is given only through the duration of COVID-19 emergency.

Chair C. Simonelli noted it is an assumed understanding.

The vote was as follows:

W. Raber – yes, R. Reichle – yes, K. Carey-Trull – yes, D. Swaim – yes, S. Andrews – yes, C. Sevarino – yes, K. Bilodeau – yes, F. Neill – yes, Chair C. Simonelli – yes. The vote was unanimous: 9 yes, 0 no.

The Board commended Dr. C. DeBarge for all her hard work during this emergency situation.

V. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION

Distance Learning Update

Dr. C. DeBarge provided an update on the current COVID-19 situation:

- Breakfast and lunch “grab & go” bags are being offered to all East Windsor students, with pick-up at East Windsor Middle School from 7:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m. – Our staff served 208 meals today, a significant increase from the 40 that were served on day one of the school closures – East Windsor students who attend a magnet school are also offered “grab & go” meals – Our Hartford CHOICE students are being offered meals through Hartford
- She commended the staff for all their hard work in the planning and execution for distance learning, being they were informed on a Thursday that schools would be closed early the following day - EWMS and EWHS staff prepared plans that would be accessed by students via the Portals – BBES staff planned, photocopied, and prepared student packets for parent pick-up or mailing
- Staff was available at Central Office the following Monday for BBES student packet distribution to parents
- She will be sending out a newsletter on March 27 to provide updates to parents
- EWMS and EWHS will be amending their attendance procedures
- BBES will roll-out “See-Saw” learning and will distribute laptops on Monday, March 30 (at EWMS) to over 100 elementary students who have requested one
- Numerous resources are available to staff to prepare lessons
- Staff conducting professional development for colleagues via Zoom or audio recording for website access
- Teachers conducting virtual class meetings, Zoom lessons, etc.
- Counseling taking place via Zoom or phone by our social workers
- Therapy for special needs students via phone – teletherapy, Zoom, tutoring, etc.
- Nurses taking calls from parents regarding attendance, student health, etc.
- Administrative Assistants are checking office voicemail to address parent phone calls and are taking daily attendance
- Incoming postal mail being monitored and processed by D. Ross and A. Kalesnik
- Attendance at all 3 schools is fantastic, as well as the participation rate
- Some districts have not yet rolled out their distance learning plans –

F. Neill inquired if our students will be where they need to be academically at the end of the school year.

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Dr. C. DeBarge noted we are following the guidance from CSDE, but online learning is not a substitute. However, we are delivering as high quality of a program that we can to our students.

C. Sevarino inquired if 4th grade students will still be given the opportunity for a tour of the middle school as part of their transition into the school next year.

Dr. C. DeBarge informed the Board they are looking into ways to conduct the tours. At minimum, they may be able to do a virtual tour, but we will do our best to give them every opportunity available, given the circumstances.

She also noted that she and the high school administration are looking into ways to conduct a traditional graduation for the Class of 2020, in the event they are given the opportunity. We are also considering ways to do a virtual graduation, if necessary. Parents have provided some excellent suggestions that are being considered.

S. Andrews inquired if the high school guidance department would be conducting alternative meetings for scholarships, etc.

Dr. C. DeBarge noted that they, too, are currently conducting Zoom meetings to address those topics.

K. Carey-Trull inquired as to a way to notify the townspeople that it was their support for laptops over the years that allows us to be doing what we are doing for student learning during the emergency.

Dr. C. DeBarge noted that Chair C. Simonelli spoke to that comment in her recent presentation to the BOF.

F. Neill inquired if EWMS could be more flexible in their attendance procedures. She has three children in different grades and it is sometimes difficult to have her children sign in on time at the beginning of each class period.

Dr. C. DeBarge informed her and the Board that they are changing their attendance procedure to once a day.

The Board thanked the staff for their flexibility throughout this entire emergency process.

Dr. C. DeBarge noted that our staff has also volunteered to work with M. Maltese to assist her with the Food Pantry and other town services, as well as to assist with our needs.

R. Reichle inquired as to the process for our bill schedule during the shut-down.

Dr. C. DeBarge informed her that F. Neill reviewed the recent schedule. It was scanned and emailed to her by M. Thomas for review and signature. M. Thomas will continue to conduct the bill schedule in this manner.

Chair C. Simonelli noted there were over 200 emails sent on the CAFE Board Chair List Serve from districts asking what other districts are preparing for distance learning. She could not believe the flood of districts in the state who have not yet rolled out their distance learning plans.

The Board gave Dr. C. DeBarge and our staff a round of applause for all the work that has been done for our distance learning.

Dr. DeBarge expressed that the expectation for our students is for them to engage in schoolwork – We are not looking for perfection.

K. Carey-Trull inquired about the situation with the BOF and the budget.

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Dr. C. DeBarge stated the Governor made executive orders which eliminated a referendum/town meeting that would create a group setting. First Selectman Jason Bowsza stated, at the Board of Finance meeting on March 25, that the Board of Finance will set the budget. It also gave the town governing body authority to extend the deadline to submit the budget by a month (From April 15-May 8).

S. Muska, BOS liaison to BOE, provided clarification that the vote for the extension would need to be brought before the BOS, which will be done for their meeting next week, where they can approve up to a 30- day extension.

Chair C. Simonelli thanked S. Muska for the clarification.

Dr. C. DeBarge thanked the Board for trusting her and the staff to do what they believe is best for our students during this emergency situation.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 1.) Written remarks must be submitted via email to the Board of Education Chair at csimonelli@ewct.org, prior to the start time of the meeting.
- 2.) Written remarks must be prefaced by the name and address of the submitter.
- 3.) Any comments should be made in an appropriate manner. Inappropriate comments will not be shared with the Board. Charges or complaints of a personal nature against any individual employee of the Board of Education should be sent to the immediate superior of the person to whom the complaint relates. All such charges or complaints concerning a Board of Education member or Superintendent of Schools should be sent to the Chairperson of the Board and to such other Board members deemed appropriate. (ref. BP 9325)

No emails were received by the Chair prior to the meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by K. Bilodeau, 2nd by R. Reichle, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

The vote was as follows:

W. Raber – yes, R. Reichle – yes, K. Carey-Trull – yes, D. Swaim – yes, S. Andrews – yes, C. Sevarino – yes, K. Bilodeau – yes, F. Neill – yes, Chair C. Simonelli – yes. The vote was unanimous: 9 yes, 0 no.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Kalesnik
Recording Secretary

Approved: 4/8/20