



**East Windsor**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Inspiring Growth. Achieving Success.

# Superintendent Evaluation

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*Dr. Christine DeBarge*

Evaluation period: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Review conducted as defined in Board Policy 2400

The East Windsor Board of Education met to evaluate Dr. Christine DeBarge and developed the following Performance Evaluation.

## I. Educational Leadership

Christine is an effective educational leader and chief executive who consistently meets the established performance goals in the area of Educational Leadership. The following examples provide a few of the ways Christine has demonstrated these qualities:

- a. Under Christine's leadership, the district handled the loss of the former High School principal, the appointment of a new Assistant Principal, the appointment of an interim principal and the hiring of our new principal without disruption to the staff and student body. The transitions were smooth, painless and work continued uninterrupted. She provided a mentor for both the new assistant principal and incoming principal.
- b. Christine also identified an existing staff member to promote into the Director of Curriculum position. This has proven to be an excellent decision as Mr. Rouillard has been a true asset to the district. In his short time as Curriculum Director, Mr. Rouillard:
  - has researched and piloted new math curriculum materials for FY21,
  - has implemented use of Smarter Balanced interim assessments,
  - is investigating ways to increase student opportunities for various pathways to graduation,
  - is updating graduation requirements,
  - has worked to identify potential students who should be encouraged to pursue AP courses,
  - is working to enhance teacher instruction and student learning across the district through the Coaching Model,
  - is developing Portrait of a Graduate through district-wide collaboration,
  - and continues to revise curriculum.
- c. Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and implementation of Restorative Practices at our schools continue to have a positive impact on students and the school culture. As a result of these programs we have begun to see a decrease in discipline referrals at all three schools.
- d. Under Christine's direction, Broad Brook school implemented a Standards-Based Report card this year with a planned implementation at the Middle School for FY21. The Board has heard no negative feedback which provides indication that it is working well and has been well received and accepted.
- e. In the area of instruction, Christine's leadership has resulted in the following accomplishments and enhancements:
  - Monthly meetings with the EWEA representative keep lines of communication between staff and administration open, allowing a collaborative environment that will serve everyone well going forward.
  - The East Windsor Middle School STEM class again successfully participated in the CT Invention Convention. East Windsor selected two eighth-grade students to participate in the state competition at UConn and both were selected to attend Nationals. At least one of our students has been selected to attend Nationals in every year but one

that our students participated. Additionally, one of last year's EWMS representatives at the state level was selected as one of 26 students to be in the running to be the first CT Invention Convention Inventor of the Year. All of these students represent what EWPS has identified as key qualities in its Portrait of a Graduate and the success of our students speaks very highly of this program's quality.

- f. Christine has identified that student performance is not at the level she or the Board expects. She is working proactively to find efficiencies and creative ways to increase student performance in the face of diminishing resources due to budget cuts that don't provide enough funds to meet the mandated requirements and contractual obligations. This affects the ability of East Windsor schools to provide the supports, interventions and extra-curricular activities needed for students to succeed.
- g. Distance Learning was implemented upon the Governor's notification that schools would be closing. EWPS was ready for the transition within 2 days while many districts state wide took weeks before beginning. This speaks to the quality of the work that has been ongoing for some time which resulted in our ability to make this transition so quickly.
  - The distance learning plan created by the staff was granted a CSDE waiver which allowed EWPS to count distance learning days as instructional days. While all schools were later granted the waiver without having to submit a plan, it again speaks very highly of Christine and our staff that they put together an effective plan that was accepted in its original form while other district plans were being returned for clarification and change.
  - Christine provided ongoing communication with staff and families providing information on everything from availability of food for students to instructional updates, grading changes, assistance for families needing internet or technology, and much more.
  - Worked with our Technology department to ensure over 100 laptops were distributed to families that needed them. Worked with staff to ensure all other necessary instructional materials were distributed to students.
  - Managed district resources to address needs arising from distance learning.
  - Coordinated with town departments regarding status and services and maintained communication with the First Selectman and the Chief of Police.
  - Directed Cafeteria staff to provide breakfast and lunch Monday – Friday for all town resident children, including during the April vacation. While this was later mandated for all schools in the state, Christine and the cafeteria staff began this program on day two of the school closure.
  - Coordinated health information with the EWPS Nurse Leader and ensured that all school-based health resources were made available to families.
  - Participated in health district virtual meetings.
  - Participated in conference calls with Commissioner Cardona as scheduled and Governor Lamont weekly.

- Implemented an Incident Command Structure within the district for response which allowed for efficiency and faster responses to issues, questions and concerns.
- h. Christine excels in creating a collaborative partnership with the Board of Education and keeps us well informed. She serves as a valuable resource, provides well thought out recommendations and works with the Board to determine a clear path to provide the best outcome for students.
- i. Christine has ensured the mentoring of EWMS and BBES students by EWHS students four times annually to deliver SEL lessons has continued successfully. Additionally, a staff to student mentoring program was initiated at the EWMS for approximately 20 students which has improved attendance and lowered discipline referrals. These positive relationships help students to grow as individuals.
- j. In the area of Teacher improvement and retention,
  - Christine provided a new teacher orientation and TEAM program, transitioned to a new TEAM facilitator and provided an updated TEAM plan to CSDE as required.
  - Christine has written many letters of commendation for staff based on parent or staff comments or behavior observed directly but has also disciplined staff as needed following formal complaints and investigations.

## **II. Organizational Management**

Christine has excellent organizational management skills and has fully met the established performance goals in the area of Organizational Management. The following examples provide a few of the ways Christine has demonstrated these qualities:

- a. Under Christine's direction, staff continues to conduct safety drills and continually reviews and updates safety and security processes.
- b. Professional development was also focused to empower teachers to utilize classroom level responses including Restorative Practice and Restorative Circles to assist students with behavioral growth.
- c. Christine's work to determine best practices and find potential means of savings for the Cafeteria was having some positive influence over the budget prior to the pandemic.
  - Oversaw changes in Food Service program in conjunction with Food Service supervisory staff.
  - Contracted with a Food Service consultant to review overall programming and provide recommendations.
  - Worked with the consultant to evaluate current Food Service staffing and make recommendations.
  - Conducted site visits of other Food Service programs and reviewed findings with EWPS Food Service supervisory staff.
  - EWPS Food Service became a Farm to School district.
  - Changes have resulted in a decrease in expenses during the FY20 year up through the time of school closure.

- d. Successfully transitioned HR to an electronic time card system for hourly employees, eliminating almost all paper timesheets.
- e. Christine has continued to implement changes to improve communication with parents and families including the creation of the EWPS Facebook page. She contracted with an education consultant to conduct a communications audit, communication plan and website review. This work has been helpful to Christine in creating a communication plan during the pandemic. Having the Facebook page during the pandemic has allowed the students to stay connected to the school and each other by the use of various videos and messages.
- f. In the area of finances, Christine continues to:
  - Provide regular updates of the district's financial status to both the BOE and BOF in coordination with Andy Paquette of The Management Solution. Formal reports are provided to both boards monthly.
  - Work successfully with staff and the board to conduct union negotiations with multiple units over the last year, including a switch to the state insurance plan which has benefitted the district and town financially.
  - Actively pursue grants and funding opportunities which resulted in the award of two competitive grants for technology and instructional materials and a grant from AT&T to support college and transition activities.
- g. In the area of budget preparation,
  - Christine always provides a well thought out budget plan and adjusts as new information becomes available. This was especially evident this year with the multiple decisions made at the federal and state level due to the pandemic which had significant effect on the budget plan. She has modified the original plan with administrative staff to develop a budget that is aligned with district goals, assists with the additional needs created by the pandemic and provides the best quality instruction and programs possible.
  - Collaborated with the BOE Chair to create the FY21 budget presentation.
  - Worked with staff and the BOE Chair to provide responses to BOF budget questions, providing clarity and transparency in the budget process.
  - Kept staff and families informed on a regular basis regarding FY21 budget.
  - Ensured a 5-year maintenance plan is available and being implemented within the available budget.
- h. Christine oversaw the conversion to Munis software for financial and HR functions.
  - She acted as the Board of Education contact for the transition, participating in meetings with the Treasurer (Town contact) and Munis staff regarding required activities.
  - Reallocated funds for FY20 costs that became payable mid-year. These costs were not planned for because they were not communicated to us by the Town until the bill was issued.

- i. Christine continues to address staffing concerns in collaboration with the Human Resource Manager and makes key personnel decisions that strongly support student growth and achievement.
- j. Updated multiple BOE policies for BOE consideration
  - Specifically worked with the Board of Education to identify, interpret and then modify policies related to the community donation for Junior Varsity sports and has begun developing a pay-to-participate policy with the Board Policy subcommittee.
- k. Professional development provided to all district staff for all of the many mandated topics as well as providing options for professional development during COVID 19 closure through the district website. Additionally, she provided opportunities for teachers to participate in PD specifically related to the social emotional impacts of COVID 19 which many participated in.

### **III. Community and Board of Education Relations**

Christine continues to build and maintain effective relationships with the community and Board of Education and exceeds expectations in the area of Community and Board of Education Relations. The following examples provide a few of the ways Christine has demonstrated these qualities:

- a. Keeps the Board Chair informed on a timely basis of all pertinent events and issues and has continued this throughout the closures. Christine provided weekly communications to parents and the BOE to keep everyone well informed.
- b. Established a Zoom account in coordination with the Town for use by town and school staff as well as BOE meetings during closure.
- c. Christine has developed a good relationship with the local reporter and has been available to him during and outside of work hours through text, email and phone calls. She has also provided local media with press releases related to exciting and important events in the East Windsor schools and invited them to school-based events. This has resulted in an increase of coverage with many positive stories printed and positive feedback received from the community.
- d. Conducted community survey about community priorities for the East Windsor Public Schools and incorporated that data into the budget plan and presentation.
- e. Fostered a positive relationship with the newly elected First Selectman.
- f. Continues to maintain a positive, productive relationship with the East Windsor Police Department, including the Chief, Deputy Chief and Detective Sergeant, working with the department to transition to a new School Resource Officer.
- g. Participated in CAPSS and Hartford Area Superintendents Association (HASA) meetings to remain informed about political, financial and other changes to education in Connecticut and their impact on East Windsor specifically.
- h. Communicates effectively and successfully with members of the public, staff and families. This includes communicating effectively with those making formal complaints.

- i. Has been recognized by staff for communicating regularly and effectively regarding various topics including the budget and school closure.
- j. Christine has been an advocate for EWPS by providing written testimony to legislators regarding the creation of a Special Education Excess Cost Collaborative and by working with the Chief Strategic Planning Officer for CSDE regarding the Residence Requirement proposed by the Hartford Public Schools related to Choice reimbursement.
- k. Worked with the Parks and Recreation Director to ensure the success of the Power Pack backpack program and supported the Parks and Recreation Director in the creation of a pantry where students can obtain needed personal products and food items privately at the High School.

#### **IV. Personal and Professional Qualities and Relationships**

Christine has exceptional personal and professional qualities and relationships and has consistently met the established performance goals in this area. The following examples provide a few of the ways Christine has demonstrated these qualities:

- a. Christine carries herself very professionally and is caring and kind, even in difficult situations with parents.
- b. Christine has ongoing discussions with other Superintendents regarding various subjects pertaining to district business, such as the State budget, changes in legislation, school cancellations, best practices for Food Service and general education.
- c. Christine consistently acts in a manner that best represents the interests of the school district and the students. Christine always takes a “student first” approach to decision making.
- d. Christine consistently references board policy to assure adherence as situations occur, recommending policy changes when appropriate.
- e. Christine’s ability to interact effectively with individuals and groups is demonstrated through the outstanding relationships she has built with Town staff and Town Board and Commission members.
- f. Christine consistently sets high standards for both her staff and herself and is an extremely strong advocate for public education.

#### **V. Summary**

In summary, the Board is extremely happy to have Christine as a member of our team and appreciates her exceptional work ethic which was even more evident during the Covid-19 crisis. While other more affluent districts appeared to struggle, under Christine’s leadership EWPS was ready in all aspects to begin remote learning and care of our students on day one of the mandated closure. She has worked diligently on financial matters to ensure EWPS is in the best possible position to maintain current programs despite the current hardships. Christine’s focus has steadily remained on all of the needs of our students and she continues to work to improve educational outcomes. The Board appreciates the positive relationship we share with her and anticipates continued improvement of the strong educational foundation that has been established.

VI. Signatures

Catherine A Simonelli  
Catherine Simonelli, Chair, East Windsor Board of Education

June 10, 2020  
Date

Christine DeBarge EdD  
Dr. Christine DeBarge, Superintendent, East Windsor Public Schools

June 10, 2020  
Date