

NEW CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
GENERAL MEETING
NEW CANAAN HIGH SCHOOL ~ WAGNER ROOM
September 8, 2021
7:00 P.M.

I. Call to Order

Chair, Ms. Parkhill, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Attendance:

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O'Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Present	✓ (remote)	✓ (remote)	✓	✓ (remote)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Absent									

II. Minutes Approval

August 23, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Ms. West moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Hayes.

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O'Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

III. Review and approve Agenda: September 8, 2021

Mr. Hayes made a motion to amend the agenda to add an action item regarding Eversource and the LED lighting at Saxe Middle School, seconded by Ms. Richardson.

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O'Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

Ms. Richardson moved to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Mr. O'Connell.

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O'Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

IV. Public Comments

Members of the community spoke regarding the mask mandate and expressed their views that masks should not be required in schools. There was also a community member that spoke about later start

times and would like the board to expedite the process. The board also received emails of public comment regarding start times and DEI.

V. Reports and Recognition

A. Principals Opening Day Report

Principals

The principal of New Canaan High School, Mr. Bill Egan, shared some of the excitement from the first week of school. Unlike last year which was hybrid, all students were welcomed back to school this year at NCHS. Staff began prior to the opening of school with professional development where they were able to deepen their knowledge and skills. This summer there was a lot happening at NCHS. There were summer camps, floor replacements, and an ongoing roofing project. Mr. Egan thanked all the staff that made the building look great and those that enabled a great start of school. He stated that the first week was a smooth transition and that students seemed genuinely excited to be back. They are engaged and learning. This year at NCHS the schedule is a fully rotating block schedule which allows greater depth in each subject, less time in the hallways, and more time for students to engage in learning with their teachers and peers. Freshman study halls are being offered, students have sleep-ins/leave earlys. Also new this year is 'Ram Time', scheduled every Tuesday afternoon for any student needing extra help. There are 1290 students at NCHS and Mr Egan thanked the PFA for their continued support and involvement in the school. He thanked the Administrators and the BOE for their support as well.

Mr. David Gusitsch thanked the custodial staff, administrative staff, teachers, PTC, and others who made it possible for such a successful opening of Saxe Middle School - welcoming 1342 students. As always, the focus at Saxe continues to be academic excellence as well as a focus on educating the whole child. Students at the middle school are in an ever changing, developmental phase and teachers and staff are proud and happy to be by their side during this developmental process. Saxe continues the 5 C's - with this year's "C" being a focus on caring - ensuring that each child feels included, safe and cared for. Saxe initiated executive functioning bootcamps, voice and choice, grade level meetings, and outdoor meet and greets. The goal is to develop kind and well rounded people while providing academic excellence. The building has been upgraded over the summer with new boilers, some fresh paint, and a solar panel project.

Ms. Kris Wolek, principal of East School, spoke of the successful beginning of the school year at East School. To follow all that is happening at East, Ms. Wolek encouraged families to follow on Instagram @east_school. There are 35 new families at East (grades 1-4) and the staff was thrilled to welcome them with special school tours. East welcomed the new kindergarten class with a fun play event on the kindergarten playground. There was also a Welcome Back ice cream social that has been a tradition for many years. The school hosted outdoor meet and greets for kids to meet their new teachers and the teachers attended in person professional development. All of this positioned East to be well prepared to welcome 525 students on August 30th of which 103 are new kindergartners. Things have been very busy as everyone is now able to move throughout the building - specials are back in the designated classrooms (i.e. science room, library, art room, etc), lunch in the lunchroom, etc. The PTC has been hosting tours after school to new families from this year, and last year. Classes are currently drafting their classroom charters which is part of the emotional intelligence learning. Teachers are utilizing remote platforms such as Seesaw and Google classroom in combination with in-person tools and strategies to maximize learning. Virtual open houses are coming up as well as various PTC events. Additionally, there will still be outdoor tents for class time that will be expanded

this year and, thanks to the PTC, there are plans for the outdoor courtyard to be renovated for outdoor learning. Ms. Woleck ended by thanking all staff that made the successful opening possible.

Mr. Matt Kascak spoke of South School's strong start to the school year beginning with the inspiring teacher convocation and the meet and greets where students could meet their teachers outside and look into the windows of their new classrooms. New families and kindergarten families were invited to popsicle playdates which was a huge success thanks to the South PTC. South welcomed 523 students (K-4) this year, 50 of them being new students, totaling 28 sections. The school was ready to open thanks to the building and custodial staff and additionally, thanks to the donations from South School families, the front of the school looked great with the flower beds trimmed, mulched and weeded and beautiful arrangements in the outdoor pots. South was also the recipient of a new information kiosk including an enclosed information board with updated garden information and a rain barrel watering system for the garden. This was a donation from a Boy Scout and former NCHS student. Mr. Kascak thanked all the families that cared for the garden over the summer so that it would be ready to go for the school year. He additionally thanked the PTC as an integral partner with the school by enhancing education for all. Mr. Kasack spoke of the tours for new families after school which have been well attended. Additionally, planning is underway for many PTC events in the coming months. Teachers have hit the ground running and students are excited to be back and getting into their routines. Outdoor spaces are being used as much as possible for learning and mask breaks.

Ms. Jan Murphy spoke on the opening of West School. Every year there is a book that is chosen at West and this year it is Be You by Paul Reynolds, which focuses on kids learning to be themselves. There are 408 students K-4 this year, and 42 Pre-K students. Last year's theme was 'everything is the same but different,' this year is 'more of the same but a little bit different'. The early bird program is back, all students are attending specials, eating in the lunchroom, and the outdoor learning center is fully open thanks to the PTC and especially the PTC Presidents who have worked hard to make that happen. This year West welcomed 44 new students and the Kids Care Club led tours for new families while Ms. Murphy spoke to parents. The PTC hosted the annual bike rodeo and each Kindergarten class held playground playdates. There were outdoor meet and greets that were well attended and prior to the first day, the West School staff held in person professional learning to prepare for the year ahead including curriculum, emotional intelligence learning, etc. Faculty are working to develop classroom charters and mood meter plans. The solar project is complete and the underground oil tank was removed, Ms. Murphy thanked all for making that happen. She also thanked the PTC for the tours they provided new families and hosting the many events planned this fall. Ms. Murphy thanked all that made the opening of the school such a huge success.

B. Capital Update

Mr. Dan Clarke

Mr. Clarke gave the facilities update and spoke about their focus on getting the schools ready for opening each day. They focused on ventilation, marking the floors, sanitation and disinfection. Additionally, there was summer preventative maintenance completed including HVAC system testing, cleaning and filter changes. The emergency systems were tested (fire alarms, generators, kitchen equipment, etc). The HS roof replacement is going well however, due to the number of rain days this summer, it has been extended into the school year. Additionally, there has been flooring replaced at the HS. Various safety and energy conservation projects are currently taking place which will lead to continued cost savings for the district. The lights on the parking lot poles/gym lights/exterior lights have been replaced with L.E.D. lights at the HS and Saxe. In house electricians completed this project resulting in savings on installation costs. During phase 2, all existing lights will be replaced with L.E.D

at the HS and Saxe. The PV solar system is mounted at Saxe and one of the boilers has been replaced and they are in the process of replacing the other two as well. In the design phase is a new CHP (Combined Heat and Power) unit at Saxe which will use natural gas to create its own electricity source. The West School PV Solar System, removal of oil tank, and flooring projects have been completed. Also in progress is a chiller replacement at West. Interior painting projects at each of the schools have been completed, South and East PA systems have been upgraded, and the boiler at South will be replaced as forecasted. Additionally the gym floor at South has been repaired and the paving and sidewalk repairs at South, West, East and the High School are being completed.

VI. Action Items

A. End of Year Financial Report

Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, the Director of Finance and Operations, presented the FY 2021 Year-End Unaudited Financial Report and Statements. The original appropriation for the General Fund was \$90,880,629. In April 2021, the Board of Finance (BOF) and Town Council (TC) approved a special appropriation of \$1,977,731 to fund FY 2022 projected claims for the health benefits, which are processed in the Internal Services Fund. This additional funding increased the BOE's appropriation to \$92,858,360. The district's actual expenditures were \$91,134,166 and encumbrances on June 30, 2021 were \$383,949 for a total of \$91,518,116 or 98.6% of the appropriated budget. Actual expenditures in the Operating Budget include \$467,651 for COVID-19 expenses. There were savings from expenditures for operations because of restrictions and limitations created by COVID-19 which enabled the district to underspend its budget by \$1,340,243. There were two budget transfers to close out FY 2021. First off, the Operating Budget provides funding to the BOE's Internal Services Fund (ISF) for employee benefits. Based on the Town's reserve funding policy for the Boards ISF, the actual fund balance June 30, 2021 was \$411,797 less than what was projected to be needed in FY 2022. Balances in other line items in the FY 2021 budget are adequate to fund the projected shortfall as follows: Other Employee Benefits \$110,295, Salaries \$152,611 and Property Services \$148,891. Additionally, at year-end the administration assessed floor cleaning equipment to determine if it was more effective to repair or replace equipment. This review led to replacement in the amount of \$62,780. Funding for this equipment is covered by: Other Equipment Line Items \$2,968 and Property Services \$59,812.

Other highlights include the non-lapsing account for COVID-19. The BOF and TC approved a non-lapsing special appropriation for COVID-19 expenses in the amount of \$1,943,091. Actual expenditures were \$1,634,944 hence the remaining balance of \$308,147 will carry over to FY 2022. The town also received numerous Federal and State Grants. Expenditures for these grants must support the specific purpose for which they were awarded. The total award for all grants of FY 2021 was \$2,253,586. The district spent \$1,508,148 leaving a balance of \$745,438, of which \$724,430 is available for carryover for the public schools in FY 2022.

The School Lunch Program continued to provide services to our students and staff in compliance with the COVID-19 Serve Safe regulations. There was a decrease of \$1,203,565 in revenues, which was partially off-set by a decrease in expenditures of \$661,583 which resulted in a net loss of \$457,775 for FY 2021. As a result, the fund balance for the program was reduced to \$463,964.

Facilities Rentals were directly affected this year by restricted access to school facilities and therefore there was limited activity. The district received cash donations of \$484,726 in FY2021 which were used to enhance academic programs of the district, supplement the athletic and visual arts programs, purchase materials and books, renovate playgrounds and courtyards and beautify school facilities. The Summer

Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

VII. Comments from the Public

None

VIII. Announcements and Future Business

The Hazel Hobbs Scholarship has been established. Additional information and a donation link are available on the New Canaan Scholarship Foundation website.. Next BOE meeting: September 20, 2021.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Gardiner moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 PM, seconded by Ms. West.

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O’Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No									
Abstain									

Respectfully Submitted,

Ms. Jennifer Richardson
Board of Education Secretary