

NEW CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
GENERAL MEETING
NEW CANAAN HIGH SCHOOL ~ WAGNER ROOM
September 20, 2021
7:00 P.M.

I. Call to Order

Chair, Ms. Parkhill, called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Attendance:

	Carlson	Gardiner	Hayes	Naughton	O'Connell	Parkhill	Rashin	Richardson	West
Present	✓ (remote)	7:11 (remote)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Absent								✓	✓

II. Minutes Approval

September 8, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Mr. Hayes moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. O'Connell.

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

III. Review and approve Agenda: September 20, 2021

Mr. Hayes moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Naughton.

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

IV. Public Comments

Members of the audience spoke of their support of the Board's DEI goal. They would like to see more movement in the hiring of faculty members of different ethnicities and in the curriculum for students. One audience member asked where the Board stood with the approved time change for students because she felt there was currently no clear direction for families.

V. Reports and Recognition

A. Open Choice Overview and Discussion

Dr. Charles Dumais

Dr. Charles ("Chip") Dumais, the Executive Director of CES gave an overview of Open Choice to the Board. The program started in 1966. There are currently 40-50 districts who are a part of Open Choice

which includes more than 3000 students. Nearby towns that participate include Westport, Weston, Easton and Fairfield. Towns that choose to participate are contiguous with the sending school since there are restrictions due to bus route limitations. Transportation for extra-curricular activities for participating students also needs to be worked out. This year the state has added 50 seats for Norwalk students and 50 seats for Danbury students. CES helps to coordinate transportation for the participating districts and facilitates any issues that may arise. CES also runs the lottery for choosing students and provides professional development for districts that receive students. Some issues that receiving districts need to consider are allotting seats in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and having no fewer than two seats per school. In the program all students who participate are treated in every way like a resident of New Canaan. Grant money is given per pupil, usually \$4000 in the first year and \$3000 in subsequent years. Special Education costs are covered by the sending school minus the grant money given per student. Both the sending and receiving schools participate in certain special education decisions. There is no requirement for any district to participate in the Open Choice program. The decision to participate should be made no later than January.

B. COVID Update

Dr. Luizzi and Cabinet

Overall, the district continues to do well due to the high vaccination rates of staff and continuing mitigation strategies at all the schools. Currently, there are 752 staff members that are fully vaccinated with another 10 partially vaccinated. There are 42 staff members who are not vaccinated and 103 staff members who have not responded to the survey. The district is following up but is assuming them to be unvaccinated as well. Staff members who are not vaccinated will have to test each week and results must be in by Sunday for the employee to report to work on Monday. Testing is available in town or in Stamford/Norwalk which can be rapid or PCR tests. No home tests will be allowed.

Schools have been looking for ways to incorporate more parent volunteers and the elementary schools will be allowing a few vaccinated parents to assist with book fairs. Since the fairs are going to be held outdoors, parents may shop with their students at the bookfair.

Many school districts have been dealing with bus driver shortages. Dr. Luizzi assured the Board that we are not having any issues due to the commitment and goodwill that we have created with Dattco over the years.

C. Statement of Accounts

Dr. Jo-Ann Keating

After two months of activity, 6.7% of the budget has been expended with another 14.4% encumbered. In September, salaries will be encumbered which encompasses 60% of the budget. Health benefit claim activity is being monitored and overall, the budget is in line with prior years.

VI. Action Items

A. 2022 Board of Education Meeting Dates

Move to approve as a first reading the 2022 Board of Education Meeting Dates.

Mr. Hayes moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Naughton.

B. Annual Contract Signature Authorization

The Board of Education moves to authorize Bryan Luizzi, Superintendent of Schools, and Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Operations, to sign contracts on behalf of the Board of Education, effective July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

Ms. Rashin moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Gardiner.

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

VII. Public Comments

A member of the audience spoke to the Board about the research they had done on the Open Choice Program. They suggested that the Board also do their research about SPED reimbursement, how the lottery works and transportation for extra curricular activities. Another parent was unsure about what to do with or who to send the vaccination status of their child.

VIII. Announcements and Future Business

Next BOE Meeting: October 4, 2021

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Hayes moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM, seconded by O'Connell.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Ms. Penny Rashin
Acting Board of Education Secretary