

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
Antolini School [Library](#)
June 6, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.
Google Meet joining info
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/fgp-fuai-hcv>

PRESENT: Superintendent, Jeff Sousa; Chairman Karl Hermonat; Tim Klepps; Tom Buzzi; Penny Miller; Deirdre Tindall; Travis Bonhomme; Tony Persechino; Kelly O'Dell Longhi; Mary Stempien; and Colleen Wipperman, Recording Secretary

A. Chair to Open Meeting: 7:01

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Chair to Select Order of Business: None

D. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment: There was no communication to the board.

Laura Fritch of 64 Holcomb Hill Rd- Advocate for the staff and students, particularly at NHES. Would like the board to make sure that in the future, before making decisions like removing a grade section, that the people that are directly affected be made aware.

Camille Buford of 495 Town Hill Road- Likes the Google surveys but they can be misleading or misunderstood. She would like the surveys to be more thorough with detail in sentencing or structure.

E. Board of Education Chair's Report:

To be more efficient with the Board's time and to avoid the back and forth arguments, each board member will have 2 minutes to speak. One board member at a time without interrupting. If additional time is needed, we will need to raise our hand. Voting will happen like a roll call. You will have a chance to discuss then vote.

F. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Jeff Sousa announced that Janet Scully will be retiring after 20 years. He also celebrated all staff district wide for their student centered work this year. Mr. Sousa highlighted students and invited the community to the Art Show at Antolini June 8, from 3:30-5:30. Mr. Sousa acknowledged Mrs. Savage for her hours of countless work in preparing the Art Show.

1. Recommendation of ELA curriculum

Superintendent Jeff Sousa presented the board with highlights that support his recommendation for the implementation of the EL Education pending board approval. One of the major differences between this program and the one we have now is the new program is systematically based on the phonemic literacy skills we know students will respond to. Cost is projected at \$100,000. Expected to receive a \$13,000 grant this year and next year.

MOTION by Tom Buzzi to adopt ELE curriculum as recommended. **Second by** Penny Miller.

UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSES

2. Update on enrollment and class section implications

Superintendent Jeff Sousa met with administration, classroom teachers, interventionists, and parents. Superintendent Sousa's recommendation is to not have the 4th section of kindergarten but to have a 4th section of grade 2. He does not recommend consolidating those classrooms into 3 sections. There will be two sections at NHES and two sections at BAK.

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to add 2nd grade section for 2023-2024 school year for a total of four sections and authorize the superintendent to offset the \$90,000 cost of that section by reducing other areas of the 2023-2024 budget. **Second by** Penny Miller.

Discussion

Board members are concerned about the number of students currently enrolled for the 2023-2024 kindergarten sections. It was mentioned that if the number goes over the 20 per class, Superintendent Sousa will consult the BOF.

UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSES

Superintendent Sousa wanted to make a clarification regarding CJR. CJR does provide support to all, not solely for special education.

G. Routine Business

1. Line item transfer -

Received a tuition check for \$9,854.19 that was used to cover overages to Administration Salaries, Administrative Assistant Salaries and Salaries Secretary Substitutes.

Due to new negotiated contracts, unforeseen overtime and an inherited budget, these numbers had to be adjusted. These numbers do not include raises given to some members of the Central Office staff. We may have more line item transfers for these lines to close out the fiscal year.

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the line item transfers as presented. 2nd by Tony Persechino.

UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSES

Travis Bonhomme asked if the Board could add discussion to the next board meeting regarding the special ed needs and special ed caseloads at Antolini School.

2. Approval of minutes - May 16, 2023

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the minutes as presented. Second by Tony Persechino

UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSES

3. Expenditure report

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the expenditure report. Second by Tony Persechino.

UNANIMOUS

MOTION PASSES

H. New Business

Policy Subcommittee met on May 31, 2023 -

First reading A policy on Independent Evaluations -

New changes/suggestions: Ensure that the person contracted for services is qualified and experienced (specifics for each area as opposed to simply being licensed). Ensure the evaluator works with school staff and has the opportunity to see the student in the school setting. The reports are completed in a timely manner. Ensure cost is reasonable, and explain the procedure.

Superintendent Jeff Sousa wants to make sure we hold third parties responsible in alignment with the expectations to meet the needs of our students. This guidance came from surrounding districts, and checked in with CABE to make sure it is in accordance with our policies. CABE will review and if we make policy after 2nd reading they will post on our website.

I. Old Business

Policy Updates (Second Reading)

A policy on Minimum Duty-Free Lunch Periods for Teacher

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the policy on Minimum Duty-Free Lunch Periods for Teachers. **Second by** Mary Stempien

UNANIMOUS

MOTION PASSES

A policy on Class Size

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the policy on Class Size. **Second by** Tony Persechino

Discussion

Board members are concerned that 25 students in grades 3-6 is too many. A couple suggestions were to see what the surrounding districts ratios are and to just lower the number of students now. Leaving the numbers where they are will give flexibility when projections are given. Another obstacle is coming up with the money to hire more staff to create smaller classes. In the end, we need a board policy with the current language that provides flexibility.

AYE: Tom Buzzi, Deirdre Tindall, Penny Miller, Karl Hermonat, Mary Stempien, Tim Klepps, and Tony Persechino

NAY: Travis Bonhomme and Kelly O'Dell Longhi

MOTION PASSES

An update to policy on Student Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy

MOTION by Tim Klepps to approve the update to policy on Student Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy. **Second by** Penny Miller

UNANIMOUS

An update to policy on Student Discipline

MOTION by Tim Klepps to approve the update to policy on Student Discipline. **Second by** Penny Miller.

UNANIMOUS

J. Reports

Superintendent Jeff Sousa updated the board that NHPS is now a member of EdAdvance. A letter will be sent to the State Department of Education.
Congratulations to Christian and Alex Plourd, School Psychologists welcomed their baby Audrey this past week.

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to enter executive session at 8:10pm. **Second by** Penny Miller.

UNANIMOUS

MOTION PASSES

K. Executive Session

New Hartford Board of Education Superintendent Evaluation

MOTION by Mr. Hermonat to extend superintendent Sousa's contract for three years starting 7/1/23 through 6/30/26. **Second by** Mrs. Miller

UNANIMOUS

MOTION by Mr. Hermonat to increase superintendent Sousa's annual salary to \$180,250 for the period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 which represents a 3% increase. **Second by** Mrs. Miller.

UNANIMOUS

L. Adjournment

MOTION by Mrs. Miller to adjourn at 8:55 pm. **Second by** Ms. Tindall.

UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted by,

Colleen Wipperman
Recording Secretary

Recorded meetings will be posted to:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg