



PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL OFFICE
27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Erin Collette
TOWN CLERK
2021 SEP 16 AM 9:12
PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Present: Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Foote, Mr. Zbuska, Jr., Ms. Ellen Roth and Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

Absent: Mr. Seaman

Also Present: Mr. Falcone, Acting Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mrs. Melillo, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mrs. Kulesa, Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 18, 2021. Motion Mrs. Lucian, seconded Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions motion carries.

4. **Presentations**

* Out of State Field Trips

The following students, Matthew Elwell and Zachary Oemeke, were introduced by Mr. Keane, to present an overview of the events planned for out of state field trips.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the following out-of-state field trips with the understanding that the trip may be withdrawn at any time due to circumstances outside of the school district's control. This includes, but is not limited to, the actions of Homeland Security, Government or Law Enforcement Agencies and imposed requirements of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The district will not be responsible for the funds lost due to a trip cancellation.

Terryville High School

(a) October 1, 2021 – Eastern States Exposition (“The Big E West Springfield, Massachusetts for students in the marching band and color guard.

(b) October 9, 2021 – UMass Band Day; McGuirk Alumni Stadium, At UMass, Amherst, Massachusetts for students in the marching band and color guard.

Motion Mrs. Johnson, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

Comment: Mr. Keane – He has spoken to the bus company and cancellation can be made 2 days prior to the event without penalty.

5. **Superintendent's Update**

- Welcome Student Representative – Matthew Elwell; Rebecca Dorsey (who is not with us tonight due to a college course she is taking;) and Zachary Oemecke
New Board Member, Lou Zbuska
- Great Opening Week of School
 - Each school had activities set up to help students feel comfortable and to help transition back;
 - At all grade levels, the district is working to reset the norms of how school runs to return to normal;
 - Teachers and Administrators are focusing on the following: Behavioral Expectations; Academic Expectations and Academic Rigor
- Transportation - Elementary Bus Issues - Expected based on the new runs and protocols that were created due to reconfiguration. Thank you to Mr. Tencza, Mrs. Loveland, Mrs. Turner, Sherry Hoag and members of the bus company and the entire faculty and staff. The issue is much better and the district is exploring alternatives to shorten the time students are on the bus.

Athletic Events and Transportation – Transportation will be difficult to schedule due to the shortage of bus drivers. This problem is not just specific to our district but rather all over the state. The district's Athletic Directors are going to be working with the bus company and securing alternative transportation to create a schedule that will avoid as many busing issues as possible.

- COVID Update
 - Mask mandate will expire on September 30th.
 - The district is still waiting direction from the State on what will occur after the September 30th date expires. Once information is received it will be shared.
 - Mask Guidelines at Athletic Events – The CIAC is leaving it to the discretion of individual districts on how they would like to proceed. The district will align itself with the Berkshire League. For fans at indoor sports, all spectators will be required to wear a mask. For fans at outdoor sports, masks will not be required.
 - Up to this point in time, there has not been a case that has impacted the schools. There have been cases but no close contacts and no quarantines that are related to the schools. If and when there are, Mr. Falcone will send out communication to the Board, parents and community.

- Regulation for Mandatory Vaccinations – September 27th
 - Summary of guidance shared by the district's attorneys in regards to the September 27th mandatory vaccination was summarized and sent out to the entire faculty and staff on Tuesday evening September 7, 2021
 - Any religious or medical exemptions and any individual refusing to be vaccinated would need to complete the appropriate paperwork and inform the Superintendent in writing by September 15th.
 - Unvaccinated employees will be required to test weekly and submit their results to their school nurse. PCR or a Rapid Test and proof and evidence of results of Friday of that week in order to return to work the following week. These rules are legal, binding rules that we need to follow as all school districts. If you do not follow the guidelines, you may not be employed by the district any further.

6. Student Representatives

Matthew Elwell

Matthew is a senior at Terryville High School, Treasurer for the Class of 2022, and President of the Student Council. He has participated in band for 4 years. He will be reporting on sports. Volleyball, Boys' and Girls' Soccer, Golf, and Cross Country have practices. Scrimmages and competitions began today, September 8th.

Rebecca Dorsey – Absent (report given by Matthew Elwell)

Rebecca is a senior and the current Vice President of the Student Council. She is also the President of the Leo Club, National Honor Society, Secretary of the Class of 2022 and Editor of the school newspaper. Her favorite subject is English and she is an English Intern at the high school. She is also taking a creative writing course at Tunxis Community College. She enjoys art and hopes to leave a positive impact on the school and the community through her leadership and community service.

The week prior to the students returning to school, seniors were able to paint their parking spots, further cementing and continuing the tradition that was started last year and bringing color and personality to the high school's parking lots.

After a year and a half of massive changes to the school environment, seniors, being the only class to have experienced a full normal school year, are needed to step up and lead to rebuild the high school norms and school culture.

Zachary Oemcke

Zachary is a Junior at Terryville High School and is Secretary/Treasurer of the Student Council. He has been a part of the high school band and marching band for 3 years and has played many of the brass instruments since the 6th grade. He enjoys painting and outdoor activities, especially competitive kart racing around the North Eastern part of the United States and has done this since he was a child.

Zachary shared with the Board how this school year has started off for him. Great in his opinion. The first day of school was exciting and a surprising thing to experience. Beginning on the second day, everyone seemed to have returned into the swing of things and were easily able to make their way to all of their classes. The idea was raised, at a Student Council Meeting, that having everyone back into the building again may be difficult and provide certain challenges. Based on the first week of school, these concerns were evaporated and he is looking forward to a great 2021 – 2022 school year.

- Class Officer Elections are ongoing. Election will be on September 17th.
- The 4th Annual Suicide Prevention Campaign. September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Students will be receiving information regarding positive mental health tips and suicide prevention education. This year's campaign concludes with the Suicide Prevention Rally and Walk which will take place, rain or shine, on Saturday, October 9th. Participants will meet and rally at the high school in the parking lot at 9 a.m. and decorate their cars. They will then motorcade to Rockwell Park in Bristol to join the regional Suicide Prevention Rally sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention that begins at 10 a.m. There will be speakers, educational booths, concluded with a walk. All students will be required to complete a permission slip before the event and are responsible for providing their own form of transportation. Brochures were distributed to Board Members.

7. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

Mrs. Kulesa – Anyone planning to speak during Public Comment is asked to please sign in at the back table so that we have your name and address.

Mr. Falcone – Even if you are not participating during Public Comment, we ask that you please sign in for contact tracing purposes.

Denise Przystawski – Grade 4 Teacher, Plymouth Center School
Commented on the email sent out to faculty and staff regarding COVID Vaccination Requirements and her dissatisfaction.

8. **Unfinished Business**

(a) Second Read and Possible Approval of Policy Series 3000 – Business/Non-Instructional Operations – Relations with Vendors – P3313 & R3313

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve revised Policy Series – Business/Non-Instructional Operations – Relations with Vendors – P3313 & R3313. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

(b) Second Read and Possible Approval of Policy Series 5000 Students – Students – Electronic Devices – P5131.81(a).

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve revised Policy Series 5000 Students – Students – Electronic Devices – P5131.81(a). Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion,

Mrs. Johnson – Asked if the teachers had any input on this motion and if their opinions were brought forward because we did not get this from our session last month. How do the teachers feel about this? This affects them.

Mr. Falcone – This does affect them. I do not know if this went to teachers or not. I believe it went to the Board to make a decision on whether they wanted to move forward with changing the policy with electronic devices. I do know the administrators took a look at it and there were two options that they were provided. This is the option they decided to go with. I cannot say if they were creating this policy from scratch and that this is what they would have chosen entirely. But, I think looking for consistency in our schools that is kind of what was presented to them. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Mrs. Johnson – It does but it's not necessarily what I wanted to hear. Is there any possibility that I could put one of our high school teacher's on the spot and ask how he feels about it or how they feel about it? I don't even know if you've seen it. I'm just concerned we did this in a siloed and we did not get input by the right people.

Mrs. Kulesa – I completely agree. I say things like that all the time. You know that, the people that this effects the most other than, of course the students, should have input in the decision making or at least in the policy as written.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – I know at least for the middle school; my daughter did hear about the new rule. She was not very happy about the headphone part so I know it did get told somehow someway to the kids about cellphone and earphones at least in the middle school because my daughter came home complaining about the headphone part.

Mrs. Johnson - They have been told this before we even

Mrs. Kulesa – Well they probably were told it might be coming.

Mrs. Johnson – But again, that is what the students are saying. What are the teachers saying about this? I'm thinking some of the teachers actually allow them to use their phones for certain.

Mr. Falcone – So, originally the policy that, there were two policies that I was asked to sort of create. One was almost a zero tolerance with no phones in the classrooms at all. If they are seen they are taken and returned at the end of the day, no phones at all. The second policy which was the one that I would say that Mike Hults and Angie Suffridge were more in favor of, was while the teachers are basically teaching the class, the students would not have phones out and then at the teachers' discretion they can have phones out. Some examples that I have worked with them on in speaking with them were in Miss Ritchie's class in the high school, if you are working on an art project it's okay to have your buds in and be working or if you are working on a creative writing piece that is fine. Truly, when the teacher is speaking, out of respect to the teacher, earbuds should be out. Your focus should be on the teacher. So, that was the hope with the wording of that document.

Mrs. Johnson – And I will agree with that piece, absolutely they should be paying attention to their teacher; again, I don't want to do this in siloed and that is what I have a problem with.

Mrs. Kulesa – I think it leaves enough discretion to the teachers where if they feel that it's not a distraction for them, they make that personal decision I would imagine. I don't think anyone is going to be walking around and saying why are you letting them having them out. I would not imagine that would be the case. As an elementary school teacher, this is not something that I deal with so I'm not really sure how they would really feel about it.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – The second part is a big issue is the video recording and tick-toc.

Mrs. Johnson – I agree with that too, 100%. Again, I agree with everything we have here, I just do not want to this without having the people that this effects the most be on board and understand that this coming down and guess what we are changing our policy and tomorrow morning this goes into effect.

Mrs. Kulesa – I guess I would also say to that, if we make the decision, if we go through with it, it's a policy it doesn't mean we cannot revise it at a later date if needed.

Mrs. Johnson – Just voicing my concern.

Mrs. Kulesa – Any other questions, or concerns? Hearing none, we will move to the vote, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

9. **New Business**

(a) Draft of Board of Education Meeting Dates for the calendar year 2022.

Each Board Member was provided with these dates in their packet. It was will voted on at the October 13, 2021 Board of Education Meeting.

(b) ED-099 – Healthy Food Authorized Signatures Change Form

MOTION: To entertain a motion to authorize Mrs. Lucian, Board of Education Secretary, to execute the Authorized Signatures Change Form with Revisions pertaining to the ED-099 Agreement to the Child Nutrition Program. Motion Mrs. Johnson, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

(c) First Read of Policy Series 1000 – Community Relations/Use of School Facilities – P1330(a) and Regulation – R1330(a)

Each Board Member was provided a copy of the policy and regulation in their packet.

Mr. Falcone reminded the Board Members to contact Mrs. Piskorski on or before Tuesday, September 14th if they plan on attending the CABE/CAPSS Convention on November 12, 2021.

(d) First Read of: Policy Regarding: Administrative Procedures – Limited Exemptions from In-Person and Eligibility for and Provisions of Continued Educational Opportunities During the 2021 – 2022 School Year

Each member received a copy of this policy in their Board of Education Packet.

(e) Code of Conduct for the Middle and High Schools - Tabled until October 13, 2021 Board of Education Meeting.

He has been directed to have the principals at the high school and the middle school to work together to create a Code of Conduct. They are working together to create this Code of Conduct to create consistency within both schools in case there is a disciplinary act that takes place so that what we are doing at the high school mirrors what we are doing at the middle school with regard to consequences for students and/or non-consequences for students. Mike, Angie and Darren are working on that as we speak. We were hoping to have this for you this evening but they are still working on this. So, this will be tabled for the next meeting.

10. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. Finance/Operations - Mr. Tencza, Business Manager

- Included in the packet are the following; Accounts by Facilities Report for August, 2021 and 3 different submissions: (1) Business Office Activity Report; (2) Board of Education Budget Summary through August, 2021 Report; and (3) Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget % by Month.
- The Accounts by Facilities Reports will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance
- Approval of RFP for Athletic Trainer

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the RFP (Request for Proposal) for an Athletic Trainer as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, any opposed, motion carries.

B. Personnel Report – Mr. Falcone, Acting Superintendent

Mr. Falcone reviewed the Personnel Report indicating the resignations received since the September Board Meeting and the unfilled positions both certified and non-certified.

11. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

12. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Seaman -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

Absent – Report given by Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

The 1st meeting will be on line, Zoom, on Tuesday, September 21st. Presentation of budget and approval, setting fundraisers for the year.

OPEN -- Plymouth Center School

No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

The PTA filled the staff room before students returned with refreshments, snacks and they provided breakfast from Rise & Dine on September 12 for all staff. The 1st meeting will take place on September 28th at 7 p.m. Open House is on Wednesday, September 15th.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Booster Club

Lemonade Booth at the Terryville Fair was great. Thank you to all of the volunteers, those who purchased lemonade and all of the students who participated. The 1st meeting will be on Monday, September 13th at 6:30 p.m. There will be a table at Open House on Thursday, September 9th. Just a reminder if you want to apply for a scholarship through the Booster Club, you must be a member for 3 consecutive years.

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

No Report

Mr. Foote -- SEPTA

No Report

Ms. Roth -- CABE

November 11th – Delegate Assembly (in person), Marriott Groton

November 12 – CABE/CAPSS Convention

December 18th – New Board Member Leadership Conference (in person), Hartford Sheraton

Mrs. Johnson -- EdAdvance

No Report

Mr. Showers --- District Safety Committee

No Report

13. **Board Comments**

Mr. Showers – Welcomed Lou to the Board

Mrs. Johnson – To the teachers who spoke up, she thought this was great as they deserve a voice.

Mr. Foote – Lou, you should be up to saint hood if you spent all those years in the Jr. High School.

Mr. Zbuska – Those were the best years. He is glad he taught Jr. High. He loved every minute of it. That's an extremely interesting age.

Ms. Roth – Welcomed Lou. Teacher spoke well (inaudible)

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Her children had a great time back at school and appreciated those fun days. Good communication with the bus schedule. Encouraged the student representatives to get students to come to the Booster Club Meetings and to get involved. Student input is very important.

Mrs. Lucian – Welcome to the student representatives.

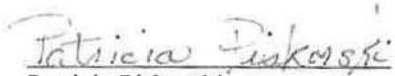
Mrs. Kulesa – In speaking to the student representatives, she indicated their information and opinions are highly valued. Their reports do not just need to be updates. It could include a concern or idea to make things better. The Board truly wants to hear their voices.

14. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education is on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

15. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second, Mrs. Lucian all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted,


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education