

Superintendent's Report: January 2022

Highlight of the Month: The good news is that, amid a surge of positive COVID-19 cases, we were able to safely open our doors to in-person learning this month. A “shout out” to the EES staff and families for making this possible.

News and Notes:

Educational Leadership

- I attended planning meetings with staff from EastConn and CREC to secure the resources needed to move forward with our strategic plan initiatives in the English/Language Arts and Math curriculums and social emotional learning.
- Due to the continuing increase of positive COVID-19 cases, safely keeping EES open for in-person learning has been a major focus of my attention this month, particularly during the first week of reopening the school. There have been numerous updates and meetings. The administration has provided families and staff with timely updates on the current information and resultant procedural changes, particularly with respect to quarantine and isolation.
- Much of my time has also been focused on maintaining a functioning heating system.
- I am attaching a copy of the Leadership Goals and the Strategic Plan. Other than the new members, you have all seen these documents in the past. When we approved the BOE goals in November, we discussed the possibility of setting aside time for a more intensive review of the goals in January. Given we may be coming together as a new 7 member Board for the first time in January, I suggest that we consider this review in February, either as part of the regular BOE meeting or as a BOE workshop. In the meantime, it is important that all BOE members review the goals and the strategic plan since these are the documents that guide the formation of the school budget.

Facilities:

- We continued to have issues with the operation of our boilers due to air in the oil lines. EMCOR sealed all the piping from the boiler room to the exterior walls. We engaged the services of Service Station Equipment to work on the lines leading to the oil tank and the oil tank itself. With the support of the BOE Facilities Committee, Rob and Steve, and the on-site support of Paul Torcellini, volunteer and Town selectman, Service Station Equipment completed a redo of the tank configuration which cost \$14,626, which seems to have resolved the problem with the boilers. We continue to monitor the situation daily. We have spent many dollars to date on repairs for our heating system, beyond the cost of the original heating project.
- The Town Roof Committee met on December 21. An RFP for an architect for the roof project has been posted. The committee decided to pursue State reimbursement, and this process requires the use of an architect. The committee is scheduled to meet on January 13 prior to the BOE meeting to review any proposals received and recommend a firm to the BOE for appointment. We are under a tight timeline for completing and submitting the application to the State for approval.

Collaboration and Communication:

- Deb Richards and I have been in constant contact concerning the Town and school protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance:

- The administration continued to work on the development of the 2022-23 budget proposal.
- A draft of the long-term capital projects plan has also been developed.
- As mentioned earlier, we have incurred additional expenses related to our heating system.
- We continue to incur additional expenses in substitute costs.

Comments on selected agenda items:

V. Appointment of Board of Education member: Michael Adam-Kearns has been endorsed by the Democratic Town Committee for the open seat on the BOE. At this meeting the BOE will vote on this appointment. Dependent on BOE vote, Michael can be sworn in and participate in the remainder of the meeting.

XI. Unfinished Business

- A. Committee Appointments: BOE Chair will announce the subcommittee appointments.
- B. School Calendar 2022-2023: We did not receive any additional comments on the proposed calendar. A copy of the 2022-2023 proposed school calendar is provided in the packet for your review and possible action at the meeting. As mentioned previously, the proposed calendar was developed in collaboration with school staff.

XII. New Business

- A. Discussion of the Ethel Cushing Gardner Music Scholarship: Applications for the Ethel Cushing Gardner Music Scholarship have been posted and distributed to high schools and former recipients. Application deadline is February 1. The newly appointed Scholarship Committee will be notified of the protocols and timelines they must follow. A member of the BOE who has served on this committee may wish to provide additional information to the BOE.
- B. Resignation of Grade Two Teacher
A copy of Laurie Bardley's intention to retire is included in your packet for review and action.
- C. Resignation of Pupil Services Director
A copy of Mary Jo Chretien's intention to retire is included in your packet for review and action.
- D. Discussion and possible action: Hiring an Architect for Roof Project
The Town Roof Committee will review all applications (hopefully we receive some) and make a recommendation to the BOE for approval of a firm. State Construction projects require an architect. The Town policy which was recently shared with the committee states that the BOE is responsible for paying for the architect. This procedure has not been consistently followed and the request for the architect was placed on last year's capital project list, therefore not included in the school budget. To adhere to Town policy, establish better communication with the BOS, and move the project forward, I recommend that the BOE approve this expenditure.
- E. Capital Plan, Discussion:
A draft of the updated Long Term Capital plan will be presented at the meeting. The BOE Facilities Committee will need to meet to finalize the plan that will be recommended to the BOE and shared at the LOCIP meeting. A Town policy defining the cost of projects that can be included in the long-term Capital Plan was recently shared with me. It differs from the lower limit of \$20,000 which was previously shared with me. I have attached a copy of the policy. At the meeting we can discuss the possible impact this increased lower limit may have on the BOE budget. To improve communication and consistency of understanding and practice, Deb Richards and I have discussed a combined meeting of members of the BOE and the BOS to review this and other Town policies.
- F. Budget 2022-2023, Discussion The proposed budget for the 2022-2023 school year will be presented at the meeting. As I mentioned earlier, this budget is the result of a collaborative effort of administration and school staff. The BOE does not need to act on this budget as the Finance Committee of the BOE will begin a detailed review of the Budget on January 27. All BOE members are encouraged to carefully review the budget and send any questions to me so they may be addressed at the January 27 meeting. I am happy to meet with any new BOE member to explain the budget and the budget process in further detail.

XIV. Financial Reports

As always, if you have any questions regarding any of the financial reports, please do not hesitate to forward them to me prior to the BOE meeting so we can be best prepared to respond. We are not requesting any transfers at this time.