

Highlight of the Month: Although not the typical highlight, my greatest joy this month was providing a COVID-19 vaccination site at Eastford Elementary School for our school staff and bus drivers. This was not an easy task to accomplish. Many thanks and much appreciation to our partners, Linda Colangelo and Sue Starkey at the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH), for making this a priority and for the time spent by Carole McCombe and Catherine Roto for attending to all of the logistical details that resulted in a smooth and successful clinic.

The clinic for administration of the second dose of the Moderna vaccine, for those individuals that received the first dose, is scheduled for March 31 at EES.

News and Notes

Educational Leadership

Successfully navigating the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic continues to occupy a large proportion of the time of the administrative team. As we move into the second year of responding to the pandemic, the lower positive tests results and the increased availability of vaccinations make for a more positive outlook. We continue to offer in-person learning and our teachers still continue to put forth expanded efforts to meet the needs of those learning on-site and remotely.

Although responding to the pandemic is a high priority, as an administrative team we recognize the importance of developing with our staff a long-term plan that will guide decisions and actions in the coming years. In addition to their traditional responsibilities, Mrs. McCombe, with support from East Conn staff, is working on the development of the vision of the Eastford learner and the establishment of a long-term plan with targeted goals. Mrs. Chretien is working with a consultant from CREC to codify our practices in special education that support the needs of all students. We meet together to ensure the cohesiveness of our work. I think it is important to note that Mrs. Chretien continually searches out opportunities to support her professional growth as well as our growth as a district. In addition to her work with CREC, Mrs. Chretien is also a participant in the PPTLI (Planning and Placement Team Leadership Initiative), which is designed to develop school leaders' ability to assure that PPT meetings are "compliant, collaborative, and comfortable" and all stakeholders have meaningful participation in the process. Mrs. Chretien's particular interest in this training is to support leadership of others who cannot attend the training. She also serves as a volunteer mentor for a new special education director through Conn CASE (CT Council of Administrators of Special Education).

Facilities

We continue to monitor and make minor adjustments to our heating system. We also completed the upgrade of the gym controls. In doing so, we found that we need to replace the damper of air handler 1 and the fire damper actuator.

We have authorized EMCOR to replace the fire damper actuator and are awaiting pricing for replacing the damper in air handler 1. Given there were many questions regarding the condition of the lift that is owned by the school, we had the lift inspected and it passed.

Collaboration and Communication

This month our collaboration efforts were focused on working with the NDDH to provide a vaccine clinic for our staff. As the State reopens, we are in close communication with the State Department of Education and the Department of Health and the leadership of school districts in our region to translate the implications of these changes to keeping schools open.

Finance

Kymerli has reimbursed our budget with all the reimbursement funds received from our CRF grant. We did not qualify for the Minority Teacher's Recruitment Grant offered by the Connecticut Alliance of Regional Education Support Centers (RESC). We did qualify for free professional development days, also

offered by the RESC alliance, to support our efforts to provide blended learning online and in-person instruction to all of our students.

I remain in communication with Julia McGrath from the office of Joe Courtney regarding the funding proposed in the American Relief Plan.

Comments on the BOE Agenda Items

XIII. New Business

- A. AFSCME Contract Negotiations Committee: The BOE chair needs to appoint the members to serve on the AFSCME contract negotiating committee. Our attorney is holding aside April 8 at 6:00 PM for a meeting with the BOE and a meeting with AFSCME to set ground rules.
- B. Scholarship Committee Dates: The Scholarship Committee will need to set a date and time prior to March 23 to review the applications received for the Ethel Cushing Gardner Scholarship Fund through the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. If you did not receive one already, committee members will receive an email about accessing the applications. Nomination information will be due to the Hartford Foundation on or before March 23, 2021. The Community Foundation Grants will close on March 22 for college applications and April 6 for high school applications. Committee members will receive the applications by April 23. Committee members should schedule a meeting in late April or early May to review the applications, given nominations are due by May 21 at the latest.
- C. Discussion and possible action on Long Term Capital Plan: The Facilities Committee met to review the long-term capital plan. An architect needed for the roof project has been added to the plan. The Boiler Committee met on March 4 to review the boiler project, including the removal of the steam boiler. The Boiler Committee recommended reducing the Boiler project amount to \$100,500, to include the HVAC and electrical work, and to have the Town assume responsibility for removing the old steam boiler by May 1. Rob Ellsworth, chair of the facilities committee, spoke with EMCOR and will provide additional information.
- D. Roof Replacement Committee: Rob Ellsworth will update you as to the request of the Facilities Committee to be appointed by the Town as the only members of the Town Roof Replacement Committee.
- E. Update on 2020-2021 School Calendar: In anticipation of potential staff reactions to the second dose of the Moderna vaccine on March 31, the administration made adjustments to the school calendar that included changes in parent-teacher conference dates, an early release date and the change of April 1 from an in-person day to a remote learning day. Recognizing that schedule changes are impactful to families, a notice was sent out to families to allow them as much time as possible to make needed adjustments for childcare, etc. As much flexibility as possible for families was included with these changes. Carole will provide additional information as needed at the meeting.
- F. Spring Sports Discussion: Mrs. McCombe will update the BOE with the most recent information regarding spring sports.
- G. Budget 2021-2022 Discussion and possible action: In February, we received preliminary information regarding the increases in medical insurance. Final information is expected in May regarding the increases in medical, dental and vision insurance. In speaking to our representative for the State Connecticut Partnership Plan this week, the preliminary increase of 3% for medical is still holding. At this time the only guidance for dental and vision is that it should not exceed 5% increase. Therefore, I am recommending the BOE considering reducing the medical insurance increase from 6% to 3% and the vision and dental from 6% to 5%. This would result in a reduction of \$10,136 dollars in benefits and an overall budget increase of \$243,764 dollars or 6.07%
The Board may also wish to discuss the recent communication from the First Selectman.

XV. Financial Reports

A. February 2021 Disbursements (sent via email)

B. Monthly Financial Summary, February 2021

If you have questions on any specific line item, please send them to me prior to the BOE meeting so that your questions can be addressed at the meeting.

C. Budget Transfers

The following transfer request is recommended at this time:

\$12,196.72 from 100.1000.1.111.00.5 (Salary Teachers, Reg) to 100.1200.3.561.00.5 (Tuition, SE, Public)