

Central Berkshire Regional School District School Committee

Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 16, 2023

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held in-person and remotely at Nessacus Middle School, on Thursday, November 16, 2023 and was called to order by Chair Peters at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was being video and audio recorded.

For the record, the chair does not vote unless noted.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Alpert, Case, Crane, Craft-Reiss, DiTomasso, Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Stuart, Peters.

Absent: Members Eberwein and Tucker.

Also Present: Superintendent Leslie Blake-Davis, Assistant Superintendent Michael Henault, Director of Finance & Operations Gregory Boino, Recording Secretary Beth O'Connor, and Members of the Audience.

ARTICLE 12650 REORGANIZATION

A. Nominations for Chair of School Committee, November 2023 – November 2024

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS

To open the floor for nomination for school committee chair.

MOVED BY MEMBER LACATELL, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

To nominate Rich Peters for school committee chair.

MOVED BY MEMBER LATTIZZORI, SECONDED BY MEMBER GELINAS

To close the floor for nominations.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Peters thanked the committee for their continued support and confidence.

B. Nominations for Vice Chair of School Committee, November 2023 – November 2024

MOVED BY MEMBER FARELLA, SECONDED BY MEMBER LOUNSBURY

To open the floor for nomination for school committee vice-chair.

MOVED BY MEMBER CASE, SECONDED BY MEMBER PETERS

To nominate Bonny DiTomasso for school committee vice chair.

MOVED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

To close the floor for nominations.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

C. Appointment of District Secretary

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That Leslie Blake-Davis be appointed District Secretary through November 2024.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously

D. Appointment of District Treasurer

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS

That Richard Jette be appointed District Treasurer through November 2024.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously

E. Appointment of Legal Counsels for the District

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & LeHane, LLP, be appointed special education legal counsel for the Central Berkshire Regional School District from December 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously

Note: Dupere Law Offices was appointed general legal counsel for the district July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

F. Appointment of Physician for the School District

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That Dr. John Dallenbach be appointed physician for Central Berkshire Regional School District from December 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously

G. Subcommittee Preferences

A form will go out to members to select their preferences for subcommittees and interest in chairing a subcommittee.

ARTICLE 12651 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

ARTICLE 12652 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Student Reports

1. High School Representatives

Aidan Garcia reported that Yondr pouches are going well at the High School, some students are choosing to leave their phone home. Apollonian Players presented 'You Can't Take It With You' last week. Charlie Brown Christmas will be in December and a musical in the Spring. National Honor Society inducted the class of 2025 last week. The Berkshire Eagle released the quarter one publication, it covered the fall sports teams and clubs. Through the greenhouse the Wahconah beautification project is ongoing. Flowers, trees and plants have been purchased to continue to improve landscaping at WRHS. The student body is happy to give back to the new school in this manner. Turkey Fest hosted by the class of 2025 will be November 21st.

2. M.A.S.S. Certificate of Academic Excellence Award

Superintendent Blake-Davis spoke in high regard to this year's recipient Aidan Garcia. She highlighted his high academic standing, comprehensive community service and standout leadership through his time at CBRSD.

B. Other

ARTICLE 12653 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

Vice Chair DiTomaso reported the warrants were previously approved.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 26, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-09

PAYROLL

General Fund: Operating Expenses

Employee Wages	\$ 599,555.80
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Other Funds

Revolving Accounts	\$ -
Grants	\$ 92,551.70
School Lunch	\$ 15,182.21
Total Other	\$ 107,733.91

Total Payroll	\$ 707,289.71
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Employer Medicare	\$ 9,532.71
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Total Payroll and Taxes	\$ 716,822.42
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 26, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-09D

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts

Payroll Deductions

403B (Various Companies)	\$ 16,954.06
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ -
Berkshire United Way	\$ 11.30
Union Dues	\$ 6,820.41
Federal Income Tax	\$ 52,146.66
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 13,789.76
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ 114,251.24
OBRA Retirement	\$ 1,519.58
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 9,532.69
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 30,894.41
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 4,769.06

Total Payable	\$ 250,749.17
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 27, 2023

Warrant #AP24-09

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses: General Fund

Accounts Payable	\$ 412,515.78
Employee Health & Dental Insurance District Share	\$ 299,708.25
Retiree Health Insurance District Share	\$ 132,062.15
Total General Fund	\$ 844,286.18

Operating Expenses: Other Funds

Agency: Employee Share Health & Dental Insurance	\$ 83,700.75
Agency: Retiree Share Health Insurance	\$ 27,332.15
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 4,378.00
Grants	\$ 29,928.42
Total Other Funds:	\$ 145,339.32

Revolving

School Lunch	\$ 30.08
CBRSD Robotics	\$ 295.00
CBRSD Use of Facilities	\$ 4,964.84
WRHS - Football	\$ 2,162.86
WRHS - Gift Account	\$ 75.98

WRHS - PSAT	\$ 1,433.00
WRHS - Soccer, Boys	\$ 633.21
WRHS - Soccer, Girls	\$ 898.21
WRHS - Track, Boys & Girls	\$ 65.00
WRHS - Volleyball	\$ 340.00
Total Revolving Funds	\$ 10,898.18

Total Authorization for Payment	\$1,000,523.68
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 27, 2023

Warrant #APW24-08

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Capital Expenses: Other Funds

WRHS Building Project	\$ 8,810.00
Total Other Funds:	\$ 8,810.00

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 8,810.00
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 9, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-10

PAYROLL

General Fund: Operating Expenses

Employee Wages	\$ 694,379.80
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Other Funds

Revolving Accounts	\$ -
Grants	\$ 97,713.08
School Lunch	\$ 20,351.65
Total Other	\$ 118,064.73

Total Payroll	\$ 812,444.53
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Employer Medicare	\$ 11,056.67
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Total Payroll and Taxes	\$ 823,501.20
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 9, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-10D

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts

Payroll Deductions

403B (Various Companies)	\$ 17,279.06
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ -
Berkshire United Way	\$ -
Union Dues	\$ 6,823.39
Federal Income Tax	\$ 66,961.55
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 16,611.66
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ -
OBRA Retirement	\$ 4,492.52
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 11,056.72
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 35,927.96
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 116.92

Total Payable	\$ 159,329.78
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 10, 2023

Warrant #AP24-10

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses: General Fund

Accounts Payable	\$ 157,216.01
Employee Health & Life Insurance District Share	\$ 953.38
Retiree Health & Life Insurance District Share	\$ 254.30
Total General Fund	\$ 158,423.69

Operating Expenses: Other Funds

Agency: Employee Share Health & Life Insurance	\$ 158.12
Agency: Retiree Share Health & Life Insurance	\$ 136.30
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 300.00
Grants	\$ 10,742.23
Total Other Funds:	\$ 11,336.65

Revolving

School Lunch	\$ 274.98
Arbiter Pay	\$ 1,000.00
WRHS - Cross Country, Boys & Girls	\$ 658.00
WRHS - Football	\$ 2,611.00
WRHS - Soccer, Boys	\$ 1,256.00
WRHS - Soccer, Girls	\$ 1,696.00
WRHS - Student Activities	\$ 8,619.49
WRHS - Track, Boys & Girls	\$ 65.00
WRHS - Volleyball	\$ 1,093.00
Total Revolving Funds	\$ 17,273.47

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 187,033.81
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B. Gifts, Donations and Grants

1. Acceptance of Donation of Concession Stand

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the donation of a Concession Stand at Wahconah Regional High School, as recommended by the District Treasurer.

Director Boino shared plans for the concession stand that were presented at the finance subcommittee. Jeff Canterella and Glenn Lagerwall are proposing the project. Local construction companies have already agreed to providing work for the concession stand and the group will reach out for donations once the school committee approves the donation. Location of the concession stand was chosen because of access to the sewer line. Bathrooms will be AD complaint and closer to the fields than the school. Bathrooms will be closed in winter as water will be shutoff to the building.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 12654 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 26, 2023

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

To accept the minutes of the regular meeting of October 26, 2023.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 12655 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Report

1. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Blake-Davis reviewed her report, which is attached to the official minutes. Highlighted topics: Superintendent's Goals, Building a Safe, Welcoming and Equitable School Community, Parent/Giver Conferences, Portrait of a Graduate, M.A.S.S. Award for Academic Excellence.

2. Follow Up Questions-DIP/SIP/MCAS Data

Superintendent Blake-Davis asked if there were any follow up questions on the data that was presented at last month's meeting. Consensus of the committee was to look at different options for presenting the data possibly over two separate meeting times. The information was important and highly valued but recommendations to have MCAS Data at one meeting and DIP/SIP at a separate meeting.

B. Recommendations

None

C. Other

Superintendent Blake-Davis announced that MA Secretary of Education Dr. Patrick Tutwiler will be coming to speak at WRHS's Civility day on February 15th, time TBD. This is a day that began under Charles Bradshaw, a retired Latin teacher at WRHS. The school committee, administrators and DEIB group will be invited to attend.

A. Report of the Chair

1. MASC/MASS Joint Conference

Chair Peters reported that resolutions one and five passed at the MASC/MASS Conference and the other resolutions failed or were tabled. He attended workshops on: regional issues for regional schools and how the capitol stabilization fund works, crisis communications, AI, (artificial intelligence) in schools and a speaker on Diversity Equity and Inclusion who spoke to DEI work in school districts. He emphasized that the speakers and workshops are very informational and if you have an opportunity to attend a conference in the future it is worth it.

Member Stuart also reported on workshops concerning: DEI speaker who spoke on superintendent evaluations, DEI coordinators, family engagement coordinator, data collection coordinator and the importance of data collection on a variety of topics from MCAS to DEI. Noted the importance of collecting good DEI data for extended years not just one or two years and the importance of that data. Spoke to DEI in regards to MCAS concerning gaps and targets. Workshop with legal representatives in regards to public posting for example social media. As well as peoples first amendment rights to free speech, example public speaking at a school committee meeting. Attended the Understanding of Chapter 70. Assistant Superintendent from Pittsfield spoke to their DEI work concerning matching staff and student population, including but not limited to race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Lastly a workshop on people's personality styles. Discussion on how personalities play out in meetings and how to use the different personalities when running a meeting or presentation.

Assistant Superintendent Henault highly recommends going, it is a very good educational resources and a great way to network with other educators. He went to six sessions and learned something out of each one.

2. School Committee Self Evaluation

Chair Peters reported on the self-evaluation forms that school committee members submitted. The results of the form were in the packet.

3. Follow Up-Bullying Audit

Chair Peters reported that after consulting with the districts legal counsel concerning bullying audits on past Problem Resolution System Complaints (PRS) that DESE is our third-party audit. DESE reviews the PRS that is submitted in regards to a bullying incident. DESE gives a finding to the PRS and that finding is sent to the district. The School or any outside auditor cannot get any information on that PRS other than the finding from DESE. There has only been one PRS submitted in Superintendent Blake-Davis's tenor with no finding and one before her tenor with no finding.

Discussion on our current bullying process: reviewing and updating our policies with MASC, procedure of a community member who submits a PRS through DESE, the protocol followed after the submission, data collection and what data a third party would have access to, definition of a finding and CBRSD systems that are in place in regards to bullying reporting. Safety and Wellness will have quarterly reports on bullying data. The bullying policy is up to date as it follows state law and is updated accordingly.

Assistant Superintendent Henault let the committee know that CBRSD is in the process of creating the bullying form to be digitally submitted. This will allow a form to be submitted anonymously.

Superintendent Blake-Davis spoke to another system in place to help students receive support, this is the monitoring of student emails. Concerning context is red flagged when certain information comes up examples; swearing, self-harm, drugs. The alert goes to administration in the buildings and Central Office.

A. Reports

1. Curriculum
 - a. Report

Member Lattizzori reported that the subcommittee will be meeting on November 28th. On the agenda is; discussion with the J.S. Bryant School potentially opening in Cummington, review of Special Education with Nate Loux and a report from Member Craft-Reiss from the Curriculum Council.

2. Finance
 - a. Report

Member DiTomaso reported that the subcommittee will be meeting on December 12th at WRHS.

- b. Certified Excess and Deficiency (Information Only)

This report is found in the packet. Director Boino commented this is based off of the financials at the end of the year. In relation to last year, it is about \$13,000.00 higher.

3. Policy
 - a. Report

Member Stuart reported the subcommittee is meeting on November 20th at 6pm at Nessacus and will be looking at Section B of the Policy Manual. Also looking at changing the meeting day so that Member Crane is able to attend.

4. Personnel
 - a. Report

No report. Executive session minutes will be approved at the next meeting in executive session.

- b. Executive Session – Negotiations

None.

5. Safety and Wellness
 - a. Report

Member Lounsbury reported that the subcommittee met November 15th. The following update was provided; Superintendent Blake-Davis reported on the health & wellness in the CBRSD Schools according to the reports from the district nurses. The Districts Health and Wellness Advisory will meet on December 5th and Member Lounsbury will attend as school committee representative. Discussed the WRHS HVAC system and the pandemic mode setting. The Dalton Police Department did not receive the grant for the Student Resource Officer. If this is a position that the school committee would like to move forward with the next step would be sending it to the financial subcommittee to review for funding in the 2024.

The next meeting is December 13th via zoom, tentative agenda; quarterly report on bullying, harassment and infractions, a report from Kerry Mason on the State Health and Wellness Standards update.

B. Others

6. Wahconah Building Project
 - a. Report

No Report.

Member Stuart asked when will the district complete electrical work to the visitor's side of the baseball dugout that was discussed at last month's meeting. Director Boino stated the district will get quotes on project and it will be ready for baseball season. He noted it will cost more to run lines to that side of the dugout because of needing to go around the backstop. Member Stuart also asked about the reason for the design of gravel on the asphalt around the

building. Concerned about the upkeep of the design. Chair Peters will ask the designer for the reason for that design. Also asked availability of outside electrical outlets for students to charge their phones. No answer for this at this time.

7. Regional Agreement Ad Hoc

a. Report

No Report.

Members spoke to their towns and how they are doing concerning receiving the Regional Agreement and the deadline of January 1, 2024. Superintendent Blake-Davis and Chair Peters will write a letter to towns to remind them of January 1st deadline.

8. Superintendent AD Hoc Evaluation

a. Report

Member Craft-Reiss reported that the subcommittee has met six times since beginning their task. She went over the five-part process through MASC that was in the packet. Also in the packet is the Superintendent's self-assessment and evaluation.

The Ad Hoc committee revised the Superintendent Evaluation form based on feedback received from the full committee. The end result is a more streamlined document with links to assist the author of the document. Each member took an Indicator and revised as needed. They viewed training videos provided by MASC and will bring these forwards to full School Committee meetings starting in January. Each of the six videos is five minutes long. They used the Superintendent self-evaluation tool that was found on DESE website. After an in-depth conversation with a Berkshire Hills School Committee representative, they suggested the model which includes a small committee to meet with the Superintendent quarterly to update goals and discuss evidence. The Ad Hoc committee will then report to the School Committee after each of these meetings and provide information that will be helpful in writing the evaluation. The School Committee be given the opportunity to complete evaluation as well. After that the Ad Hoc Committee will review all of the completed evaluations and create the final document to be discussed at a School Committee meeting and be submitted to DESE. Recommended that the Superintendent Evaluation be completed using a 2-year cycle as permitted by DESE.

MOVED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS, SECONDED BY MEMBER APLERT

That the Superintendent Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of members Alpert, Craft-Reiss, Farella, and Lounsbury, continue to meet quarterly with the Superintendent for the purpose of reviewing implementation of goals and collecting evidence to support the process.

Discussion on putting members names in motion and the possibility of this subcommittee becoming a committee. For continuity agreed to keep the people who have been on the Ad Hoc committee and if/when it becomes a subcommittee would be opened for members to join.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 12658 PERSONNEL

Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

BWES Lawrence Love, Custodian, Probationary, 1-Nov-23

NRMS Paige Secord, Paraprofessional, Probationary, 3-Nov-23

WRHS Sunshine March, Assistant Cook, Resigned, 6-Nov-23

Note: All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

ARTICLE 12659 OLD BUSINESS (Unfinished Business)

(Any business not completed or postponed from a previous meeting, or not covered if a meeting had to be adjourned for any reason prior to concluding entire agenda)

ARTICLE 12660 NEW BUSINESS (Emergency Business)

(Unforeseen business developed subsequent to posting of meeting and requiring timely attention. Member requests to place items on a future agenda [without deliberation of the substance of such item])

Chair Peters reported that Nicole Tucker has submitted her resignation from the CBRSD School Committee. The vacant seat opening will be posted and if anyone submits an application the committee will appoint candidate for the Dalton seat next month. Member Craft-Reiss noted Member Tucker will be missed she did a great job with Safety and Wellness.

ARTICLE 12661 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair Peters thanked everyone for serving on the school committee and the good work they are doing.

Member DiTomasso shared that she attended a legislative session addressing Healthcare and Medicare for all. In the future this may potentially come back to the school districts.

MOVED BY MEMBER LATIZZORI, SECONDED BY MEMBER APLERT

Moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:32pm.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously

The following documents were emailed to members and are filed with the official minute

Superintendent's Report

Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form

Superintendents Performance Evaluation

M.A.S.S. Award for Academic Excellence Biography on recipient Aidan Garcia

Certified Excess and Deficiency Report

School Committee Evaluation Results

5 Step Cycle Evaluation Slides

WRHS Bathroom & Concession Project 23-24