



Education Committee - Board of Representatives

Diane Lutz, Chair

Megan Cottrell, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2019
Time: 6:45 p.m.
Place: Democratic Caucus Room, 4th Floor Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lutz, Vice Chair Cottrell and Committee Member Reps. Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo and Graziosi. Excused was Rep. Stella. Also present were: Rep. Lee; Michael Handler, Administration; Dr. Tamu Lucero, Andy George and Jackie Heftman, BOE; Bharat Gami, Building Dept.; and two members of the public, including a Stamford public school student.

Chair Lutz called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
¹ 1. E30.046	REVIEW; Discussion of Long-Term Plan for Stamford Public School Facilities. 11/12/19 – Submitted by President Quinones	Report Made and Held

Mr. Handler and the Committee discussed in detail the [attached](#) Long-Term Facilities Plan presentation.

- The SAMG (Stamford Asset Management Group) has modeled out these costs extensively. Whether done as traditional model or as public/private partnership, swing space is needed to be leased for two years per school while the schools are being worked on.
- It is about 70% more expensive to do this via the traditional City model than doing it via public/private partnership.
- The way it has been done for the past four decades is not working. A new model of school management is needed.
- Stamford needs a lot of school space very quickly.
- Sometimes these types of public/private partnerships start out strong then have problems years into it.
- What is involved in Stamford losing legal control of property?
- Stamford needs to build solid school facilities and also manage debt.
- How can Stamford keep control of schools and manage debt reasonably?
- Will the private management have to adhere to the same stringent codes of energy, ambient noise, HVAC, etc?
- A school building is an integral part of the education of our students.

¹ Video Time stamp: 00:01:00 Part 1

- ²2. [E30.045](#) REVIEW; Modular School Construction Techniques **Report Made and Held**
11/07/19 – Submitted by Reps. Lee and Lutz

Chair Lutz and Rep. Lee explained that this item is on the agenda to start an exploratory conversation about other options to that which SAMG has approached. Rep. Lee, Mr. Gami and the Committee discussed it.

- Modular construction is way to build Stamford’s needed school buildings in a short period of time.
- Modular buildings are not temporary “portables”.
- There are greater efficiencies with modular construction as it is built much more quickly in a factory, whereas traditional construction can have many delays due to weather and materials.
- The big cost savings come in the speed of the construction.
- The quality of modular construction is very good because it is done in factory conditions in a controlled environment so the delivered product is of very good quality.
- Stamford building codes do not distinguish between the two construction types. The codes are the same, it is only the building technique that is different.
- Mr. Gami recommended that for a school to be built this way, that an RFP should be put out for both the architectural contract and construction contract, with both RFP’s being clear that this is a modular building which will be used as a school.
- Students and teachers should not feel any different in a modular school.
- There is no significant disadvantage to modular construction. A big reason it is not more widely used is that it does not conform to the current unionized construction labor structure, and the industry is resistant to it. A different type of skill set needed. It involves highly mechanized based construction.
- Modular construction can cost approximately 20-25 percent less than traditional construction.
- The systems in modular construction are similar to traditionally built buildings and are built to last approximately 30 years.
- Mr. Gami will research if there are any significant differences with maintenance.
- Mr. Gami will research cities that have used modular school buildings long-term.
- The Committee will look into the possibility of having SAMG re-run the models previously discussed in the [attached](#) Long-Term Facilities Plan presentation and do a cost comparison against modular construction.

- ³3. [E30.043](#) REVIEW; SPED Budget Update. **Report Made and Held**
09/10/19 – Submitted by Dr. Lucero
10/23/19 – Report Made and Held by Committee
6-0-0

Dr. Lucero reviewed the [attached](#) Special Education programs and figures.

² Video Time stamp: 00:12:55 Part 2

³ Video Time stamp: 00:40:08 Part 2

- It is important to keep students in district so they have a sense of community. It is often discussed that out of district students should be brought back. That can be very difficult, so programs have been created so students will not need to leave the district in the first place. Dr. Lucero is focusing on starting these special education programs from the Pre-K level and up, so that moving forward, more students can stay in district.
- Out of district placements are not being eliminated altogether. The BOE is budgeted for 158 students and there are currently 154 students.
- BOE is \$1.2 million over budget for Special Education. When Dr. Lucero became Superintendent, she discussed that the Special Education BOE was under-budgeted. BOE is obligated to provide needed supports for families.
- There were 411 new student enrollments this year that were not predicted during the budget process. These were due to:
 - The Trailblazer program closing with no advance notice.
 - An unpredicted increase of students from the Harbor Point area.
 - Double the amount of students new to the country than in past few years.
 - Students enrolling from private schools such as Trinity Catholic High School and Bi-Cultural Day School K-12.
- Dr. Lucero does not want to cut into any programs for this increase in enrollment, so that Stamford can continue to compete with the neighboring school districts. She stated she will continue to be fiscally responsible and keep the BOR updated.

As a Secondary Committee – November 25, 2019

4. [F30.263](#) REVIEW; Update on All Expenses Paid to Date and **Report Made**
 to be Incurred For Mold Repairs In Schools.
 10/10/19 – Submitted by Rep. Zelinsky
 10/28/19 – Held by Committee
 11/25/19 – To be Considered by Fiscal Committee

Chair Lutz explained that the Education Committee is Secondary on this item. Fiscal Committee Chair Di Costanzo has requested that any questions on this item be forwarded to her before the Fiscal Committee Meeting on November 25th, 2019.

Chair Lutz adjourned the meeting at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Diane Lutz, Chair

This meeting is on video ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), and [Part 3](#))

⁴ Video Time stamp: 00:00:00: Part 3