



Education Committee - Board of Representatives

Megan Cottrell, Chair

Committee Report

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Time: 6:30pm
Place: Meeting was held remotely

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Cottrell and Committee Member Reps. Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Graziosi, and Sandford. Excused was Rep. Stella. Also in attendance were Reps. Curtis and Zelinsky; Dr. Tamu Lucero, Amy Beldotti, Michael Fernandes, and Olympia Della-Flora, Superintendent's Office; Rebecca Hammon, Fritz Chery, Andy George, Jenienne Burke, Jackie Heftman, BOE; Amy Livolsi, Law Dept.; Lou Casolo, Engineering; Kevin McCarthy, Facilities Manager; Craig Baker, Michael Duggan, Julie Degennaro, Alison Black, Michael Hyman and Bianca Shinn-Desras, Domus; Diane Phanos, SEA; Paulette DeLeo, POSA; Jill Walsh, OLA; and members of the public.

Chair Cottrell called the meeting to order at 6:31pm

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
¹ 1. E30.054	REVIEW; Request for Accommodations due to COVID-19 by Teachers And Para-Educators. 09/04/20 – Submitted by Rep. Zelinsky	Report Made

Ms. Phanos and Ms. DeLeo explained the concerns regarding safety of teachers and para-educators, and there was discussion on this item.

- Many teachers were concerned about full classrooms, bathrooms, crowded hallways, and underlying health issues.
- Teachers who requested accommodations were contacted by Human Resources to get information from their health care provider.
- Those who have received accommodations in school can work in an empty classroom remotely, with the students and an adult supervisor in another room.
- Most para-educators cannot work remotely due to the nature of their jobs consisting of working one-on-one with a student.
- For teachers who have decided they do not want to work at school, those cases are still open and they can continue working remotely from home while waiting on a formal determination on the accommodations.
- Dr. Lucero stated that reasonable accommodations will be granted whenever possible.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:02:50

- | | | | |
|----|---------|--|---|
| 2. | E30.055 | REVIEW; Update on School Re-entry during Coronavirus.
09/09/20 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell | Report Made |
| 3. | E30.056 | REVIEW; Handling of Budget Challenges during Coronavirus.
09/09/20 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell | Report Made
& Held 5-0-0 |

Items E30.055 and E30.056 were taken up together. Dr. Lucero, Ms. Beldotti and Ms. Della-Flora reviewed the information and there was discussion.

- There are approximately 17,000 students in district and approximately 3,800 (25%) are participating in the Distance Teaching and Learning Academy.
- The hybrid model consists of students rotating every other day in school, and every other day working at home.
- The process of returning to school began with committees formed in the Spring. Health and safety was the main concern. There was guidance from Stamford Hospital and the Health Department about the return.
- Parents can still move their children from one model to the other, but those changes are expected to decrease.
- Students and teachers are returning with increased stressors compared to pre-COVID days. Staff has receive training regarding this.
- Stamford was approved for a state waiver to continue “grab and go” meals. Students in the hybrid option can pick up their breakfast and lunch after school for the next day for home. Pick up stations are available within the City for students doing all distance learning.
- Elementary students eat in their classrooms, middle/high school students eat in the cafeteria that is set up with individual desks.
- Contact tracing is overseen by the Health Department.
- The district is making sure every student has access to all the technology they need. Elementary and middle schools have Chromebooks, and high schools have laptops. There was a backlog on getting the laptops due to country-wide supply chain issues, but all students should have everything by Oct. 1, 2020.
- There are opportunities for 1,500 students to have free broadband service from a local company due to a state initiative.
- The Education budget was reduced this year. No teachers, para-educators or administration were laid off, but programs were cut. Dr. Lucero will get that list of programs to the BOR.
- Funds were received from the federal government for COVID relief, but this funding will not exist going into the next fiscal year for the Education budget.

A motion to hold Item E30.056 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Cottrell, Aquila, Di Costanzo, Graziosi, and Sandford in favor).

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|---|--------------------|
| 34. | E30.052 | REVIEW; Status of Mold Remediation and Repairs in Stamford Public Schools and Westover School Project.
08/06/20 – Submitted by Reps. Curtis and Zelinsky | Report Made |
|-----|---------|---|--------------------|

² Video Time Stamp: 00:16:02

Chair Cottrell explained the reason for this item on the agenda is because of recent negative updates on the Westover remediation. Mr. Casolo, Ms. Walsh, and Ms. Grafstein addressed this item address this and there was discussion.

- Students were moved out in October 2018 and construction completed in August of this year. This was not a complete demolition/new construction.
- The building received a brand new roof, new flashing, new gutters, new door and window caulking, new chiller water pumps, and the entire slab of building was sealed with water sealer.
- A new building management system (BMS) was installed.
- The main issue with the recent reports involve the chiller. The chiller controls everything related to the air conditioning. It was not properly generating the temperature of water that was needed.
- The chiller was not in the scope of the project because it was only eight years old, and the average life span is 25 years.
- The Engineering Dept will continue to monitor the chiller operation, however, it will go off in late October and cannot be tested again until late Spring.
- A hygienist monitors the building on a bi-weekly basis.
- Above ceiling humidity sensors and in-classrooms temperature/humidity sensors have been installed.
- There is a Google form for staff to report any concerns about the building to the Engineering Dept.
- The new building management system (BMS) is an integral part of a building and requires very qualified resources to manage. City staff is needed to be trained to monitor the BMS once the Engineering Dept. and outside engineering firm leave the project.
- BMS oversight is needed across the district, not school by school.
- There should be more aggressive funding for the operation of schools,
- Mr. Casolo will get a breakdown of funding of the Westover project to the BOR.
- Mr. McCarthy checks every building every two weeks for any operation problems.

⁴5. E30.053 REVIEW; Bright Lights on Sign Behind Strawberry Hill School Remaining on and Disturbing Residents. **Report Made**
09/03/20 – Submitted by Rep. Zelinsky

There was brief discussion on this item. There were residents near the school who had reported lights being left on both in the school and on the lighted welcome signs 24/7 and affecting their quality of life. Principal Rodriguez explained that he adjusted the timing of the lights on the welcome signs so they will not be on all the time. Inside of the school, the hallway and stairwell lights remain on a sensor system, and these go on if someone is in the building at night. To his knowledge every school building has this system. Rep. Zelinsky stated while he is happy the issues has been resolved, he was disappointed it took so long to be addressed by the school administration.

⁵6. E30.057 REVIEW; Domus Knights Program. **Report Made**
09/10/20 – Submitted by Rep. Zelinsky

³ Video Time Stamp: 00:59:34

⁴ Video Time Stamp: 01:39:00

⁵ Video Time Stamp: 01:55:32

Representatives from Domus discussed the value of this program, and there was discussion.

- This program works towards re-engaging disengaged students by removing obstacles to achievement. This is done in many ways, including rides to school, collecting homework during absences, mediation between students and teachers, field trips, and goal-setting.
- It started at Stamford High and this year is expanding to Westhill High.
- The program works towards the goal of on-time grade level promotion.
- Family advocates are trained in various areas – coaching, de-escalation techniques, and anti-racists curriculums. This school year will include training to help students to deal with emotional issues.
- Data collection and review is important to assist in the program achieving the goals. Data is pulled from PowerSchool, and there is no protected health information on PowerSchool.
- The program is free to students and is supported by multiple private funders and investors.
- The BOE concerns about the program have been resolved.

Chair Cottrell adjourned the meeting at 8:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Cottrell, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).