



## ***Education Committee - Board of Representatives***

Megan Cottrell, Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021  
**Time:** 8:00pm  
**Place:** Meeting was held remotely

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Cottrell, Vice Chair Aquila, and Committee Member Reps. de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Graziosi, and Sandford. Excused was Rep. Stella. Also in attendance was Dr. Tamu Lucero, BOE Superintendent; Ryan Fealey, BOE Director of Finance; Rebecca Hammon, Fritz Chery, Andy George, Jackie Heftman, Jenienne Burke, BOE; Kevin McCarthy, Facilities Manager; Cindy Grafstein, Mayor's Office; and David Woods, Deputy Director of Planning.

Chair Cottrell called the meeting to order at 8:00pm

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
<sup>1</sup> 1. <a href="#">E30.046</a>	REVIEW; Discussion of Long-Term Plan for Stamford Public School Facilities. 11/12/19 – Submitted by President Quinones 11/20/19 – Report Made & Held by Committee 12/09/19 – Held at Steering 01/22/20 – Report Made & Held 6-0-0	<b>Report Made &amp; Held 6-0-0</b>

Dr. Lucero, Ms. Grafstein and Mr. Woods reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- It was decided that the previous long term plan was not heading in the right direction. The SPS and the City collaborated to form a committee of representatives from many departments so that everyone would be on the same page from the beginning. Things have gone well.
- Over 40 people participated in a pre-proposal meeting. All RFP responses are due by February 11, 2021. The entire process should take 12-18 months.
- This process will not allow for applying for State grant money for the next coming fiscal year. Therefore, while working on an RFP to assess all buildings, a parallel path has been taken. The Westhill campus will likely remain as a high school, and Lockwood Avenue (Former Rogers and Domsus site) will likely remain as similar usage. Mr. Casolo from the Engineering Dept. sent out a letter of interest for those two sites, with the goal of submitting to the State for reimbursement in June 2021.
- There are three components of the long term plan: 1) assessment of buildings; 2) data analysis including projections of enrollment needs; and 3) a long term

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:00:55

- master plan, with projections of needs for 2-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11-20 years. This is all being done in parallel with an affordable family housing study.
- A robust civic engagement element is very important.
  - The timeline is:
    - Have a draft Master Plan in Fall of 2021
    - Community engagement between Fall 2021 and Spring 2022
    - Seek state funding for June 2022
  - No one firm can do all of this. It will require a primary consultant working with a team of experts.
  - The RFP does not specifically address water intrusion and mold. BOE facilities department checks daily on water intrusion. There is still some mold remediation ongoing for 4-6 months, but nothing compared to where things were two years ago. The long term plan includes a pathway to scheduling long term capital upgrades and maintenance.
  - The plan will address traffic implications and studies.
  - It is very important that the BOE communicates with the BOR regarding planning and community engagement, so that representatives can be involved in their district schools.
  - Committee members agreed that the current long term plan is much better than the previous plan, and is heading in the right direction for the City.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to hold this item by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Cottrell, Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Graziosi, and Sandford in favor).

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|-------------|--|--------------------|
| 25. E30.048 | REVIEW; How SPS has worked to Improve its Maintenance Procedures and Status of Hiring a Facilities Director.<br>02/04/20 – Submitted by Reps. Cottrell, Pratt, Curtis, Coleman | <b>Report Made</b> |
|-------------|--|--------------------|

A motion was made, seconded and approved to take up this item out of order per request of Ms. Grafstein by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Cottrell, Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Graziosi, and Sandford in favor).

Ms. Grafstein, Dr. Lucero, and Mr. McCarthy reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- There were over 50 applicants. A decision was made by the BOE to hire two facility directors: Kevin McCarthy will focus on the day-to-day operations of the schools, and David Patenaude will oversee school capital projects. These positions will begin February 8, 2021.
- A custodial manager position will also be filled this year.
- There are two aspects to daily operations of the schools: routine maintenance of mechanical systems and building envelopes; and cleaning of the buildings.
- There are three million square feet of buildings and 310 acres of land. A new vendor is working with the district to assess how the buildings are cleaned and how to do it more efficiently.
- Custodial overtime is very costly, and Mr. McCarthy has to approve all of it.

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<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:56:00

- The district is in the process of converting to a new work order system, which is more of an asset management system.
- The district is in the process of setting up preventative maintenance for all systems. The operational systems are linked to software programs. Mr. McCarthy is working with the IT Department so that all systems can be linked remotely. Alarms are being set up for when large equipment fails. (“Critical Alarming”).
- Mr. McCarthy and his team are much more confident now with the automation of systems.
- Manufacturers come out to the schools twice per year to assess equipment.
- The reporting of problems in school buildings should be consistent with every school, and staff should feel comfortable reporting problems and not fear any backlash.

- <sup>3</sup>2. [E30.056](#)      REVIEW; Handling of Budget Challenges during      **Report Made**  
 Coronavirus.  
 09/09/20 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell  
 09/22/20 – Report Made & Held in Committee, 5-0-0  
 10/13/20 – Held at Steering  
 11/10/20 – Held at Steering  
 12/14/20 – Moved to Pending
3. [E30.059](#)      REVIEW: Budget Overview for FY2021-22      **Report Made**  
 01/05/21 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell

Items E30.056 and E30.059 were taken up together. Mr. Fealey reviewed the District Objectives and Systems Data presentation and there was discussion.

- The district has not experienced any financial strain so far this year due to COVID and this was due to receiving approximately \$8 million in CARES money. Some of this money the SPS is able to carry into the next budget year to take care of COVID expenses.
- The 2021-2022 budget includes an increase of 6.34%. If that becomes the final budget number, the five year compounded annual growth rate of the budget would be 2.7%.
- Health insurance premiums will increase approximately 11.5%, (\$4-5 million) and hopefully this is a high estimate.
- There will be an increase in Student Support Services needed as school transitions back after COVID. Both staff and families have requested this. These services will be crucial to students.
- A curriculum audit will be performed. The curriculum has not been updated in at least 10 years
- There needs to be retention of positions that were created or restored this year with CARES funds.
- Stamford is a 1:1 device district. Additional technology support is needed to manage almost 17,000 devices. High speed internet access is needed for all families post COVID.
- The Special Education out-of-district budget is projected to increase approximately 5%, which is not as high as in past years.

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<sup>3</sup> Video Time Stamp: 01:27:45

- If there are no federal funds coming in the next school year, this could be a big problem, because if school returns to full time in-person, there will not be the savings of transportation and school trips as this year.
- The large BOE budget cut cannot be repeated this year, as it had a huge impact on SPS.

<sup>4</sup>4. E30.058      REVIEW: How Stamford Public Schools is Handling      **Report Made**  
the Ongoing Pandemic.  
01/05/21 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell

Dr. Lucero reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- There was a pause in December to in-person learning. This was due to many families that kept switching back and forth between the hybrid model and distance learning model, and this caused a strain on staffing. Families were asked to make a decision on one model by January 8, 2021.
- Surveys went out to families in December, giving the BOE areas to continue to work on within each school building. One big concern is disengaged students. An RFP passed that will allow for community based organizations to go out to homes and support students who are struggling with school at this time.
- Classes might have to be smaller in the Fall to deal with bringing students up to speed with reading and math.
- The Health Department is currently working on vaccines for the 75 and older population, then 65 and older, and then teachers and school staff are next. This should relax concerns with the staff about in-person learning.
- The BOE has received 14 letters of concerns from school staff and Dr. Lucero and team are addressing all of the concerns.
- Every Tuesday morning all CT superintendents have access to the State Dept. of Health to ask any questions.
- Mayor Martin, Dr. Lucero, Dr. Calder, and Mr. Jankowski talk almost daily to discuss COVID safety issues in the school.
- The three key elements of safety are staying six feet apart, wearing masks, and using hand sanitizer.
- In-person learning is the best model of learning for most students.

Chair Cottrell adjourned the meeting at 9:57pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Cottrell, Chair

*This meeting is on [video](#).*

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<sup>4</sup> Video Time Stamp: 01:46:35