

**CHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
CHESTER ELEMENTARY MEDIA CENTER
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 7:00pm**

F.O.I. Compliance – Subject to BOE approval at a future meeting

Chester BOE

David Fitzgibbons
Jan Taigen
Dale Bernardoni
Stuart Johnson
Maria Scherber
Rebecca Greenberg-Ellis
Ken Rice
Lorraine Connelly
Other Attendees: Kelley Frazier, Clerk

Administration

Brian White
Bob Grissom
Sarah Brzozowy
Tyson Stoddard

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fitzgibbons at 7:00p.m.

VERBAL ROLL CALL FOR BOE MEMBERS

Mr. Fitzgibbons did a verbal roll call of members.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the Chester Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of May 25, 2023 and the Accounts Payable report as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comment

REPORTS AND OTHER ITEMS:

Superintendent's Report

District Update – Information and Communication

Mr. White noted that the new year started out very positive.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

General Update

Ms. Brzozowy held her report until her presentation.

Financial Status Updates

End of Year Financial Status Update

The expended budget was 97.7%. The year has ended positively.

Current Year to Date Financial Status Update

All financial obligations are expected to be met. This is very early in the year.
The committed balance is 90.2% of the budget.

Cafeteria Fund Update

Discussion regarding the lunch and breakfast program. Revenue received was from the state grants and the Smart Funds from the state.

Medical Reserve Tracking

The reserve fund has increased and is in a healthy position. The insurance consultant will present at the next Finance Committee Meeting.

Grants Update

No update

Cafeteria Equipment Update

A needs assessment by building was done. Equipment for Chester Elementary was purchased from the reserve. Mr. Grissom gave an update on the new equipment purchased.

Principal's Report

Mr. Stoddard gave a brief update of the events and staffing at the school. Members also viewed a recording of the morning announcements by students. All sixth grade students participate for the first half of the year and fifth graders participate in the second half of the year. Discussion held regarding sending students to school in Kindergarten and the new age requirements.

Other Items

Early Grade Literacy

Ms. Brzozowy discussed the K-3 Literacy Program update. She discussed the Science of Reading and what it means to our students. Our district decided not to implement this program due to our success in literacy. The continued plan was discussed and how to support students to be successful. There are costs that will result in a state curriculum initiative. Paperwork has been submitted for a grant to help with costs. This is a nation wide movement.

Discussion and possible VOTE to accept a donation of \$100 from Brenda Smith to be used at the discretion of administration to help offset outstanding student lunch balances for families in need.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the Chester Elementary Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to accept a donation of \$100 from Brenda Smith to be used at the discretion of administration to help offset outstanding student lunch balances for families in need.

Discussion and possible VOTE to accept a donation of a used bell kit valued at \$300 from Dean Demond to be used at the discretion of administration to benefit the music program at CES.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the Chester Elementary Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to accept a donation of a used bell kit valued at \$300 from Dean Demond to be used at the discretion of administration to benefit the music program at CES.

Discussion and possible VOTE to accept a donation of \$4,000 from Tri-Town Sustainability Team to be used at the discretion of administration to support a pilot food scraps program at Chester Elementary for up to two years.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the Chester Elementary Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to accept a donation of \$4,000 from Tri-Town Sustainability Team to be used at the discretion of administration to support a pilot food scraps program at Chester Elementary for up to two years.

Committee Reports

Curriculum

No Update.

Finance

No Update.

Policy

No Update.

Supervision District Committee Updates

The Superintendent's contract was approved.

LEARN Committee Update

Staffing needs were discussed. Discussion held regarding para professionals and the training process they go through before being able to teach independently. There are now 45 teachers who are now teaching independently after going through this program. A new school will be built. The site will need much work until it is ready. This school will be for students from birth to second grade.

Other Committee Reports

Discussion Regarding any Pending Policy for all BOE's

No Action taken. The policies will be reviewed and voted on at the next Joint Board of Education meeting.

The municipal elects take place before the next regular meeting. There are three members on the ballot. There will be one opening.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comment

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Joint BOE Meeting October 5, 2023 @ 7:00pm VRHS Media Center Library
- Chester BOE Regular Meeting November 20, 2023 @7:00pm

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 8:18p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Frazier Clerk



K-3 Literacy Programmatic Update

Chester, Deep River, and Essex Boards of Education
Dr. Sarah Brzozowy
Fall 2023

Right to Read Legislation

- Implement a coordinated statewide reading plan for K-3.
- Research and develop a birth-to-12 reading success strategy, in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood.
- All districts are required to implement early literacy reading curricula that are evidence-based and approved by state Literacy Center
- Support local boards of education and district leadership in improving reading outcomes for K-3 students.
- In June 2021, the Connecticut legislature passed the “Right to Read” legislation in Sections 394-404 of the Budget Implementer Bill, [Public Act No. 21-2](#).

Why the Science of Reading and What it means for:

Boards of Education:

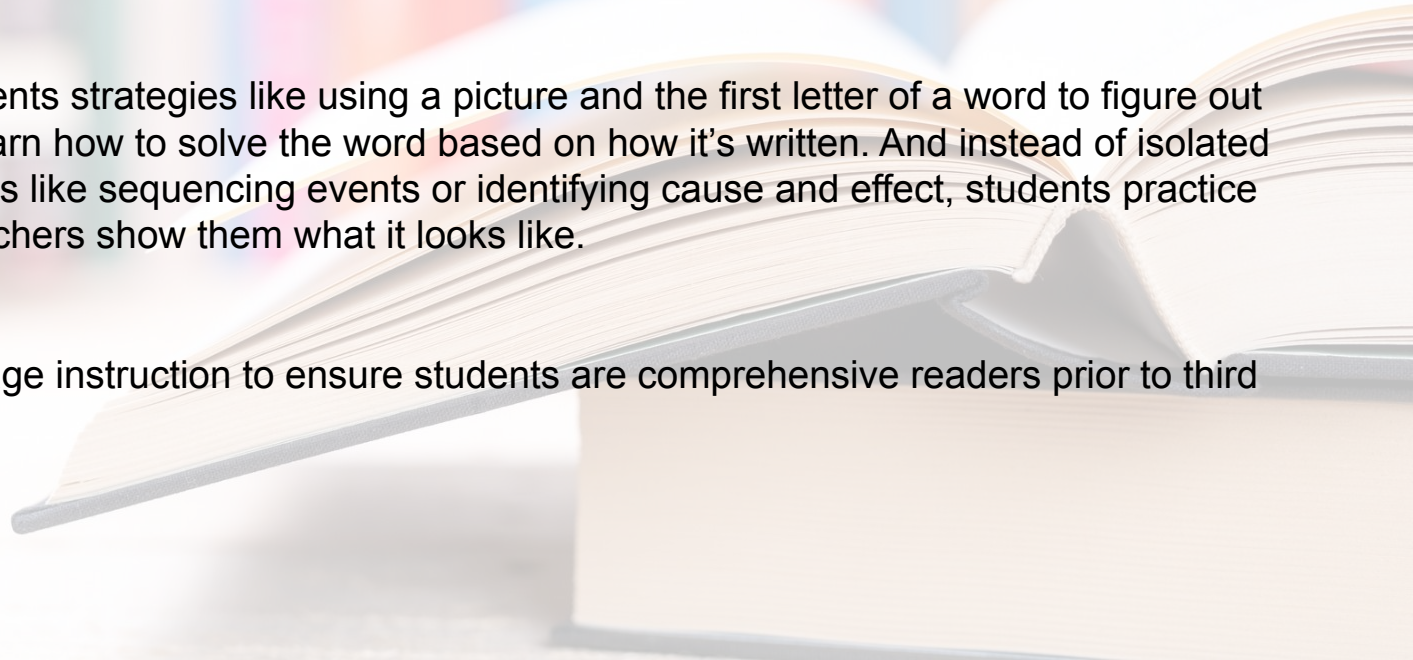
Updating texts, approving new materials, and supporting shifts in reading practices in alignment with new research and information to promote success for all learners.

Teachers:

Instead of teaching students strategies like using a picture and the first letter of a word to figure out what it says, students learn how to solve the word based on how it's written. And instead of isolated comprehension strategies like sequencing events or identifying cause and effect, students practice mindful reading, and teachers show them what it looks like.

Students:

Receiving explicit language instruction to ensure students are comprehensive readers prior to third grade.



To Implement a new program would require

- An Assessment Audit and Potential Shift
- All new curriculum, materials, and programs
(Bridges implementation took time, Professional Development, coach support, and materials)
- Professional development prior to implementation
- Ability to pilot programs ahead of time
- Multi-year implementation with significant training implications
- Upfront costs, hidden costs, ongoing costs
- Coordination across three towns, three schools, three boards

Challenges

- Canned “one size fits all” approach
 - American Reading Company – ARC Core (K-3), (2020);
 - Amplify Education Inc. – Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA, 2022);
 - Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Into Reading;
 - Imagine Learning – EL Education Grades K-3, (2017);
 - McGraw Hill Education – Wonders, (2020);
 - Open Up Resources – EL Education, (2017); and
 - Savvas Learning Company – myView Literacy, (2020).

Waiver Application

Sent on February 24, 2023 from the Assistant Superintendent's Office to CSDE.

Opted for the waiver because:

- Implementation of a new program would require: financial commitment, training, professional development, curricular materials
- The extension requires districts to choose a program by July 1, 2024 to implement
- Allows the district to review practices and make incremental changes

Next Steps:

If we get the waiver?

We will continue to analyze our practices to ensure we are providing the best opportunities for all learners to be readers prior to grade 3

If we don't?

We will continue to review our practices

- Time for exploration of potential new programs
- Additional Training (***ALL elementary staff received SoR training on 3/8/23***)
- Financial Implications

2023-2024 Plan:

- Still awaiting response from the State of Connecticut
- Proceeding for this year (business as usual)
 - Engaging with EastConn Staff Developer to determine the best practices regarding literacy instruction aligned with the Science of Reading
 - Added the Universal Screener iReady to all grades K (beginning in January) through grade 9
 - Conducting an Assessment Audit
 - Developing a curriculum to incorporate strong practices and revise instructional approaches
- If we don't get the waiver:
 - Budgetary implications for training and materials
 - 1-3 Year broad implementation

2023-2024 Continued Plan:

- All students K-3 receive Foundations as a priority program. District pacing and Unit assessments for K-3 are outlined in the Foundations Pacing Calendar and are followed with fidelity.
- All students in K-3 receive benchmark DIBELS 8 assessment screener as needed to best target instruction.
- All students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 receive the Heggerty assessment screener. This screener is conducted at the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year.
- Intentional planning for intervention and targeted

Thank
you