

WYNANTSKILL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

April 14, 2022 @ 7:00 PM

Gardner Dickinson School

Option to View Via Zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87082600652?pwd=QnZXTW84eWpUei9OZFZ4MFJ5T3d2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 870 8260 0652

Passcode: 717964

One tap mobile

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1.0 Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called order at 7:01 PM by Mr. Lanesey

1.1 Record of Attendance

Mrs. Castle	Present
Mr. Hirokawa	Absent
Mr. Lanesey	Present
Mrs. Mack	Present
Mr. Strang	Absent

1.2 Review of Agenda/Additions to Agenda

Dr. Yodis reviewed the agenda welcoming QUESTAR III guest speaker- Deputy Superintendent, Harry Hadjioannou and District Superintendent, Dr. Gladys I. Cruz. Mr. Lanesey recognized Dr. Cruz for her recent CASDA award for Excellence in District Administrative Leadership.

1.3 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. March 17, 2022

Mrs. Castle made a motion to approve the March 17, 2022 meeting minutes.

Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3/0.

1.4 Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Internal Claims Auditor's Report (March 2022)

b. Monthly Treasurer's Report with Budget Transfers

c. Extra Classroom Report

Mrs. Castle made a motion to approve the March 17, 2022 meeting minutes.

Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3/0.

1.5 Visitors and Communication

a. Communications to the Board of Education

There was no communication to the Board of Education.

b. Dr. Gladys Cruz, QUESTAR III BOCES

Dr. Cruz presented on the Questar III and HVCC STEM High School. Students receive a high school diploma while earning college credits toward an AS or AAS degree. Coursework is taught using "Project-Based Learning" in a cross-curricular model. She highlighted the key benefits of the program, she then compared the program to the Tech Valley High School program. Mrs. Mack had an opportunity to attend the open house at HVCC last month and is in support of the program. Dr. Yodis was also impressed with a recent visit to the program. She was especially pleased with the progress of the Wynantskill students enrolled in the program.

Mr. Hadjioannou reviewed the services that Wynantskill purchased from QUESTAR last year. He reported that last year (2020-21) Wynantskill purchased \$563,000 of services, of which approximately \$10,000 were special education services. Last year BOCES aidable services were approximately \$553,000 with a net cost of \$239,000 or 43%. Wynantskill UFSD gets back an average of 57 cents for every dollar spent on BOCES aidable services. Wynantskill UFSD's BOCES aid ratio is 67.6% aid payable in 2021-22. Mr. Hadjioannou then reviewed additional services available to Wynantskill, followed by an update of the QUESTAR Rensselaer Educational Center (REC) Modernization Plan. Lastly, he went over the Questar III Administrative Budget.

The Administrative Budget is the only part of the BOCES budget that district boards vote on every April. For all BOCES services participation is voluntary on a year-by-year basis. Component districts purchase what they need and as much as they need each year. This overall budget is increasing by 3.96%. OPEB is 5.66% and General Operations is 1.96%. Wynantskill UFSD absorbs about 1.543% (2022/23) of QIII's Administrative Budget of \$6,976,593 (2021/22 \$6,710,997 at 1.509%). QIII is able to reduce the administrative charge by 18.22% due to other revenues. The Net Administrative Aid plus a surplus refund for Wynantskill UFSD is approximately 71%. They estimate the net administrative cost to be \$25,525. (29% of \$88,017)

c. PublicComment

One member of the community signed up for public comment. Jessica Saulpaugh signed up to speak during the second public comment opportunity.

2.0 Reports to the Board of Education

2.1 Board of Education Reports & Updates

Mr. Lanese provided an update that the Board of Education meetings would no longer be transmitted via ZOOM video conferencing. ZOOM served its purpose during the height of the pandemic, without a designated ZOOM room the district has experienced ongoing technical difficulties using the platform and feels it is time to transition away from using the video conferencing platform. Mrs. Mack would like to return to recording the meetings as was done in the past and make the audio available on the district website. Dr. Yodis stated that next year's budget includes the purchase of a Board Docs software/subscription which will streamline the presentation and housing of Board materials. The Board will conduct the QUESTAR Budget Vote via ZOOM and then no longer offer the platform; offering an audio recording of the meetings instead. Mr. Lanese asked that notice of the change in format be placed on the District website and also asked that updated Policy 2130 regarding public participation in meetings be displayed on the Board of Education webpage for the public to reference.

2.2 District / Superintendent Program Report

Dr. Yodis welcomed Athletic Coordinator, Dan Disotto to give an update on extracurricular sports activities. Mr. Disotto reported that the district was looking into bringing back the bowling club. The local lanes have closed so they have been in contact with Uncle Sam's Lanes, which may present a challenge to the already taxed transportation department. Parent transport will likely be necessary if there is enough interest from students to run a bowling program. Mr. Disotto gave an update on the renovations to the ball field. He was appreciative of all the help given by the coaches, team, building and grounds, the Yodis family, and the families who came out to help improve the field. He also offered appreciation for the assistance given by Dave Willett of DW Masonry for the field renovations. Weather permitting he anticipates the field being ready for use after the Spring Break. Dr. Yodis thanked Mr. Disotto for finding a more cost-effective short-term fix to the issues with the ball field. She is hoping the renovations will last a couple of seasons while the district plans and budgets for a long-term solution for the ballfield.

Dr. Yodis presented some slides of the new Buddy Benches that were recently installed on the playground. She offered appreciation to the PTA for their generous upgrades to the playground which include the installation of the Buddy Benches and the new picnic table and pads, and some replacement ground cover.

a. Budget Presentation

Dr. Yodis reflected on the past year with pride for the way the district was able to navigate through the ongoing pandemic by overcoming obstacles together as a community. She contrasted how we planned for uncertainty in past, now we are able to plan with hope as we move away from challenges created by during a pandemic. Moving forward we hope to see less strain on the budget in the areas of remote instruction, less need for physical distancing, more typical student supervision patterns, limited quarantining, less expense on PPE, and substitute teachers. She broke down the student/staffing projections by grade level. An anticipated area of change would be the addition of a section of Pre-K to accommodate the increased number of families interested in Pre-K. This is made possible by new legislation that now offers funding that would allow the district to support additional staff at the PR-K level. The tax levy growth factor for the 2022-23 school budget is 2.00%. Comparatively, last year's rate was 1.23%. This is the highest percentage in years, and also the maximum allowable percentage. This is then coupled with the 2022-23 tax base growth factor, set by the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services, which is .10% (lower than last year's at .48%). After running the formula calculations, the district can raise the tax levy \$119,037 this year which is a 2.10% increase on the tax levy. Last year we were only able to raise it by \$95,533, so this is an increase. She reviewed the State 2022-2023 Executive Budget Proposal, 2021-2022 Estimated Actual Aids per Executive Proposal, 2022-2023 Estimated Aids per Executive Proposal. By Maximizing State and Federal Aid/Grants the 2022-23 Proposed Budget will maintain current levels of staffing and programming along with the following provisions:

- Expanding PreK Opportunities (2nd classroom)
- Middle School After School Tutoring
- Increase Special Education Supports
- Increase Social Worker to 3 full days
- Professional Development and Supports for our New ELA Program
- Technology UpKeep and Ongoing Training
- Transportation Increases (longevity incentives, fuel, maintenance & repairs)
- Buildings & Grounds Improvements (new flooring, painting, paving)

She followed with a break down of the budget into the projected administrative, program, and capital expenditures for a proposed budget of \$10,380,611 during the school year 2022-2023. An

additional \$179,165.00 proposition to acquire up to 2 school busses will be on the ballot. Dr. Yodis thanked District Treasurer Mary Ellen Angisano for all of her assistance with the preparation of the budget, and the entire Gardener Dickinson community for their continued support. (See slide presentation in Documentation portion of Board Agenda and Minutes Chart on District Web Page at www.wynantskillufsd.org/district/board-of-education/meetings/)

2.3 Principal's Report

Principal Cornell gave a presentation on the NWEA results further explaining and clarifying the slides that were shared last month. She explained that the NWEA exams are just one of the multiple data points used to drive student programming and placement. Mrs. Cornell reviewed the current scores pointing to the grade levels where the data indicates a need for focused instruction. The power of using NWEA as a tool is that it identifies the specific skills to drive planning for targeted instruction for the individual needs of each student when looking to give additional support. She provided a link to the NWEA- *A family guide to MAP Growth*, which further explains how the scores can be interpreted:

<https://cdn.nwea.org/docs/Family+Guide+to+MAP+Growth.pdf>
2.4 Buildings and Grounds Report

Mrs. Cornell provided a breakdown of the number of students receiving academic interventions by grade level, of the 341 students currently enrolled at Gardner Dickinson, there are about 16% currently receiving supplemental instruction. She noted that with intervention services and several data points in place the district is able to move students in and out of AIS based on their individual needs. She also noted that the highest number of students needing support (grade 3) corresponds with our highest cohort of students. These higher numbers also likely correspond with the timing of the pandemic and their developmental stage as readers.

Mrs. Cornell shared the *Questar III 3-8 Proficiency Rates* for area schools as an indicator of how Gardner-Dickinson students are doing compared to neighboring districts for New York State Math and ELA standards. NWEA helps inform target individual student needs within the building, the NYS ELA and Math proficiency is a data point that informs how our students are performing within the region. (See slide presentation in Documentation portion of Board Agenda and Minutes Chart on District Web Page at:

www.wynantskillufsd.org/district/board-of-education/meetings/)

Mrs. Castle asked for peer tutoring to be considered again as an additional resource for students in need of support as it is beneficial to both the student tutoring and the student receiving assistance.

Parent Meagan Armstrong expressed concern regarding any decrease in the additional staffing that was added to support the grades with larger cohorts and higher numbers of students identified as needing support this year. She encouraged the Board of Education and administration to plan for increased support to improve proficiency.

2.4 Building and Grounds Report

Building and Grounds Supervisor, Rocco Mazzarello was present for an update on the building and grounds. He began by thanking Mr. Disotto for his leadership on the upgrades to the ballfields and echoed Mr. Disotto's appreciation for the team involved in the work. He reported on the sale of surplus equipment and the application of the recuperated funds to converting more environmentally friendly options, like electric-powered equipment for maintenance equipment for the grounds. Current projects include continued removal of surplus equipment, floor improvements in the nurse's office, repair and painting of door frames, improvement of playground drainage, and repair to sidewalks and steps. He is working with Dr. Yodis and the business office to prioritize spending for next year and budget for long term projects. Mr.

Mazzarello recognized the excellent performance of the students and staff during a recent lockdown drill with local law enforcement. Appreciation was offered to our school safety partner, the North Greenbush Police Department, for coordinating with the New York State Troopers, East Greenbush Police Department, and Troy Police Department to run the drill with QUESTAR III Consultant, Sam Beardsley, and building administration and staff.

2.5 PTA / SEPTA Update

Dr. Yodis shared a slide show highlighting the new buddy benches on the playground earlier in the meeting. The district is appreciative of the continued support of the PTA. The community is enjoying all of the playground improvements that would not have been possible without the support of the PTA. There was recently a food truck fundraiser organized by teacher Keli Pautler with freezer meals provided by the Food Florist, a Grafton Lake Family night has been planned, and the Boosterathon is in the works. Mrs. Mack recognized the students' participation in the recent poster contest. Posters are on display in the cafeteria. Mrs. Mack also recognized the great work of the elementary student writers under the supervision of teacher, Jaime O'Brien for the Royal Rumble student newspaper. We anticipate a middle school publication, with the assistance of teacher Matha Ryan, to publish soon.

Mrs. Mack reported that SEPTA had a nice visit to the IOKA Farm on March 26th to learn about maple syrup production. A highlight for the students was the opportunity to enjoy pancakes during their visit. On April 7th they had an event at Bring on the Spectrum Gym, this is a new resource in the Capital Region located on Fuller Road in Albany. Parents were able to learn about services offered while the children enjoyed playing. On April 10th, SEPTA visited the baby animals during their 2nd Annual Farm Day at 4 J's Farm.

3.0 Appointments and Authorizations

Consent agenda 3.1 – 3.7,

3.1 Approve CSE/CPSE Recommendations as per attached.

3.2 Accept a \$500 check from Utica National for the School Safety Excellence Award.

3.3 Consideration for approval to adopt for presentation to the voters of the district, as PROPOSITION #1, the 2022-2023 Budget as recommended by the Administration as follows: Shall the Board of Education of the Wynantskill Union Free School District, Rensselaer County, New York be authorized to expend the total amount of \$10,380,611.00 during the school year 2022-2023 and to levy the necessary tax, therefore.

3.4 Consideration for approval to adopt for presentation to the voters of the district, as

PROPOSITION #2, the 2022-23 Bus Proposal as recommended by the Administration as follows: Shall the Board of Education of the Wynantskill Union Free School District, Rensselaer County, New York be authorized to (1) up to two SCHOOL BUSES, at a maximum aggregate cost of \$179,165.00 (2) expend such sum, or so much thereof as shall be necessary; and (3) shall be paid from the current appropriation.

3.5 Approval of 2022-2023 Non-Public Transportation Requests

1 Student - Emma Willard, Troy

2 Students- Academy of Holy Names, Albany
11 Students-LaSalle, Troy
1 Student- Loudonville Christian, Loudonville
1 Student- Mt. Moriah Academy, Glenmont
1 Student - Our Savior Christian, Colonie
10 Students - HVCC PTECH, Troy
1 Student-Robin Sobel Academy, Troy
1 Student -St. Ambrose, Latham
4 Students - St. Judes, Wynantskill
2 Students-St. Pius, Loudonville
1 Student-Susan O'Dell Taylor, Troy
5 Students-Tech Valley HS, Albany

3.6 Approval of Extracurricular Appointment-Baseball Coach

Brian Law, Jr.

3.7 Surplus Building and Grounds Equipment

Front Bucket for VENTRAC KH500 -Tag # F00352
Power Broom for VENTRAC HB580 Tag-# A00226

Items 3.1-3.7 were voted on as a consent agenda.

Discussion:

3.2 Dr. Yodis offered appreciation to QUESTER III Safety Consultant, Sam Beardsley for his work in securing the Utica National Safety Award this year.

3.5 Mr. Lanese asked for clarification on the transportation of students to non-public schools. Dr. Yodis clarified that the approval was specifically for the non-public school requests and does not reflect the additional transportation the district provides to public schools for our high school students. The transportation department continues to look for ways to consolidate routes as we face a national school bus driver shortage and a high number of transportation requests. We anticipate the need to transport to 21 schools total next year.

3.7 Mr. Mazzarello was recognized for his diligent work in identifying areas for improvement in the building and grounds and looking so in a way that is cost-effective to the district. His work on the removal surplus of obsolete equipment continues.

Mrs. Mack motioned to approve the Consent Agenda Items 3.1-3.7.
Mrs. Castle seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

3.8 Motion to rescind the designation of Nancy Ruffinen as Chief Election Inspector for the Annual School Board Election and Budget Vote.

Mrs. Castle made a motion to approve Item 3.8.
Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

3.9 WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Wynantskill Union Free School District, Rensselaer County, New York, has called an Annual School Board Election and Budget Vote of the qualified voters of said School District to be held on the 17th day of May 2022, and WHEREAS, it is now desired to provide for the appointment of inspectors for said Annual School Board Election and Budget Vote; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Education of Wynantskill Union Free School District, Rensselaer County, New York, as follows:

Section 3. Karen Martin is hereby designated as Chief Election Inspector.

Mrs. Castle made a motion to approve Item 3.9.
Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

3.10 RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby accepts the resignation of Nancy Ruffinen effective April 26, 2022, and authorizes the settlement agreement by and between the district and Ms. Ruffinen. The Superintendent is authorized to sign the agreement.

Mrs. Castle made a motion to approve Item 3.10.
Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

3.11 Policy Update First Reading

2160 School District Officer and Employee Code of Ethics
8130 School Safety Plans And Teams

(First Readings are informational and available in the Documentation portion of Board Agenda and Minutes Chart on District Web Page at: www.wynantskillufsd.org/district/board-of-education/meetings/)

4.0 Informational

- 4.1 Candidate Petitions Due April 18, 2022, by 5:00 pm
- 4.2 Candidate Position Ballot Draw April 19, 2022, @ 9:30 am
- 4.3 Questar III Budget Vote April 26, 2022, @ 9:00 am via Zoom
- 4.4 Budget Hearing May 5, 2022, @ 7:00 pm
- 4.5 Budget Vote May 17, 2022, 12:00-9:00 pm
- 4.6 Regular Board of Education Meeting May 19, 2022, 7:00 pm
- 4.7 Public Comment

Parent Jessica Saulpaugh requested to address the Board of Education. She raised concerns about the social-emotional needs of her children and the district's response to her concerns. She posed the following questions for the district:

- What are the next steps when my child's needs stated in her 504 educational plan aren't being met? Who is my next contact? Do I take my child from a school that is denying her needs and look at alternative schools? How will 7th grade be different in meeting the needs of my child?
- How are all of the students' social-emotional needs being met? Where is the visible support or evidence of social-emotional learning? These students are struggling with knowing appropriate personal interactions and they are being yelled at instead of taught how to positively solve conflicts.
- How can 3 classes with struggling students be combined back into 2 classrooms and still meet the needs of all students, those who struggle and those who need enrichment?
- Where is the increased communication between teachers and parents that was discussed at the board meeting just prior to the start of the school year?

Ms. Saulpaugh was recognized for bringing forward her concerns during the public comment. The Board will take her questions into consideration.

5.0 Request for Executive Session

Mrs. Mack made motioned to enter into Executive Session for recommended action #6 at 8:46 pm.

Mrs. Castle seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3/0.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Education adjourns into Executive Session, if needed, for the purpose of discussing one or more of the following subjects:

1. _____ Matters that will imperil the public safety if disclosed.
2. _____ Any matter that may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer.
3. _____ Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed.
4. _____ Discussion involving proposed, pending, or current litigation.
5. _____ Collective negotiations pursuant to article 14 of the Civil Service Law.
6. The medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation.
7. _____ The preparation, grading, or administration of exams.
8. _____ The proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale, or exchange of securities, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value of these things (Pub. Off.

Law § 105(a-h)).

6.0 Return to Open Session

Mrs. Mack motioned to return to open session at 10:29 pm. Mrs. Castle seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

7.0 Adjournment

Mrs. Castle motioned to adjourn at 10:30 pm.
Mrs. Mack seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3/0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Heidi Hallock

Clerk of the Board

For BOE Approved 5/19/22

The mission of our community-based school is to create a safe, compassionate, progressive learning environment that recognizes individual needs and encourages all students to strive for personal and educational excellence.
As a small, suburban school district, rich with pride, we believe that by working together we can: create a dynamic program based on character, tolerance and diversity; provide opportunities for all to reach their fullest potential; empower all to achieve personal excellence and encourage a life-long love of learning.