

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut
Meeting Agenda
November 5, 2020
7:00 pm

Electronic Meeting via Zoom (see instructions below)

1. Call To Order
2. Communications
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Approval of Minutes: 06/18/20, 10/15/20, 10/29/20
5. Administrative Reports
 - a. Departmental Reports (Maintenance, Technology)
6. Committee Break Out Sessions (Building & Grounds, Personnel)
7. Old Business
 - a. Audit Update
 - b. FY 20 Budget Update
 - c. FY 21 Budget Planning
8. New Business
 - a. Request for Leave of Absence (Certified Staff)
 - b. Certified Staff Resignation
 - c. Certified Staff Appointment
9. Opportunity for Public Comment
10. Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items
11. Adjournment

Ashford Board of Education Goals

Curriculum – Ensure a Kindergarten to 8th grade curriculum that challenges students to use methods of inquiry to solve problems, think critically, and to express themselves creatively and effectively.

Financial - Develop a budget that ensures the best possible education while being fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

Culture - Foster an environment of physical and emotional health and wellness for all. Support a community that recognizes professional expertise and provides diverse opportunities that enhance teaching and learning.

Community Relations and Facilities - Provide opportunities for enhanced community engagement and serve as a leader for Ashford in enhancing energy efficiency, developing a maintenance and restoration plan that extends the school's useful life and demonstrates environmental responsibility.

All meetings, conferences, programs and activities at Ashford School are available, without discrimination, to individuals with disabilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the American with Disabilities Act. Individuals with disabilities requesting relocation of this meeting should call the Superintendent at 429-1927 or e-mail a request to jplongo@ashfordct.org not later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired individuals may communicate their request for accommodations by using the e-mail address above, or calling the State of CT TDD relay service (800) 842-2880 or the national relay service number (800) 855-2880.

encl: minutes; Supt. report; LOA, resignation, recommendation

Ashford Board of Ed is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Ashford Board of Ed Meeting by Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4899084032?pwd=VjNjTjM5ZlIPTVJqOXJXUGZlVUU0T09>

Meeting ID: 489 908 4032

Passcode: 2FBGiM

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,4899084032#,,,,,0#,,538100# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,4899084032#,,,,,0#,,538100# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 489 908 4032

Passcode: 538100

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4899084032?pwd=QURwO6>

Enrollment Summary: Scheduling/Reporting Ethnicity as of 11/02/2020 (D4)

Ashford School

View:

Scheduling/Reporting Ethnicity

Students:

- All Active Enrollments
- Current Selection

Date:

11/2/2020

Grade Level	Total in Grade	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	White	Hispanic/Latino	Unclassified
-2	3 2 / 1	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	2 1 / 1	0 0 / 0	1 1 / 0
-1	29 15 / 14	0 0 / 0	2 0 / 2	0 0 / 0	6 1 / 5	2 2 / 0	19 12 / 7
0	34 16 / 18	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	15 7 / 8	1 0 / 1	18 9 / 9
1	42 20 / 22	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	1 1 / 0	29 12 / 17	0 0 / 0	12 7 / 5
2	41 25 / 16	0 0 / 0	2 2 / 0	0 0 / 0	31 18 / 13	2 1 / 1	6 4 / 2
3	38 25 / 13	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	33 22 / 11	0 0 / 0	5 3 / 2
4	30 16 / 14	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	1 0 / 1	26 15 / 11	1 0 / 1	2 1 / 1
5	41 20 / 21	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	2 2 / 0	32 15 / 17	0 0 / 0	7 3 / 4
6	39 22 / 17	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	3 2 / 1	24 13 / 11	3 2 / 1	9 5 / 4
7	42 22 / 20	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	32 18 / 14	3 1 / 2	7 3 / 4
8	35 20 / 15	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	2 2 / 0	19 11 / 8	4 1 / 3	10 6 / 4
Total	374 203 / 171	0 0 / 0	4 2 / 2	9 7 / 2	249 133 / 116	16 7 / 9	96 54 / 42

The Scheduling/Reporting Ethnicity view displays student ethnicity data that is used in scheduling and preconfigured reporting. See the help for more information.

Legend

Icons  - Date Entry

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – June 18, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held Via Zoom

Note: Per CGS 10-218, Board of Education Meeting Minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exceptions of motions and votes recorded, the minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote by the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call to Order

- Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.
- Present were members Marian Matthews, Tess Grous, Al Maccarone, and Shannon Gamache.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevich, Acting Business Manager Karen Munroe, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell as well as other members of the school staff and the public.
- Absent were members Tina Fradette and Jane Urban.

Communications

- Dr. Longo mentioned email from Kimberly Johnson dated 6/4/20.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rebecca Haeger thanked the administration, board, and staff for an amazing 8th grade graduation. She said it was very well done and helped the kids. The drive thru parade was very emotional. She asked if the 8th graders would have continued access to the school's websites and links such as Duolingo and iCivics so they can retain or improve skills throughout the summer? Dr. Longo said he has no objection. Troy Hopkins noted that if it is the school website, that it shouldn't be a problem. If it is the teachers' Google classrooms, we are going to have to check with them and see if they can keep the links up. Dr. Longo recommended Troy to get an answer from staff and put it in K12.

Approval of Minutes

- ***MOTION by Marian Matthews to approve minutes from 6/4/20. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***

MOTION by John Lippert to add item 6f to the agenda: 2019-2020 budget update. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent Dr. James Longo:

- Dr. Longo mentioned article he wrote for the Ashford Citizen, which addressed 2019-2020 budget, COVID-19, and graduation. He thanked all the staff members and administrators for organizing end-of-year activities. They worked really hard and deserve to be commended. This has not been an exciting time or business as usual. It has been very unusual.
- John Lippert thanked Dr. Longo for writing the Ashford Citizen article and his idea of looking beyond the pandemic.

Principal Troy Hopkins:

- The reverse parade went very well. Five members of Ashford Department of Public Works were there helping with the flow of traffic, which was really helpful. Some people had such a good time going through that they came back a second time. There were a lot of tears shed, a lot of smiles, and many touching moments. It was nice to have board members involved. It felt like a whole school community celebration.
- Tess Grous, Dr. Longo, and all the kids were thanked for their involvement in the virtual commencement. Everybody had to prepare ahead of time and send it in. Dory Moore, Jessica Bernardi, and Stephanie Noheimer were involved in coordinating all the end-of-year activities. The video yearbook will be a nice memory, really well done.
- The administrative team talked about some potential summer work for teachers to make sure that we are fully prepared instructionally for the kids, not just academically, but socially and emotionally ready to support them. A

reading specialist may be working with some teachers on some updated research in reading instruction. Polly Borysevich may work with some teachers, school psychologists, and counselors on some social emotional plans to coordinate our efforts. We do a really good job, but we can always improve. There may be an EASTCONN workshop on math that maybe we will send a few people to, to help identify some priority standards of math at each grade level and also discuss what didn't really get done well the last part of the year, and how we are going to deal with that, and come up with a plan for that. He mentioned summer work for kids. We do not want to overtax anybody. Everybody is ready for a break, but we do still want kids to be active with their minds. People could send in photos of them doing some activity (examples: read a book, measuring a blanket at the beach) that are fun but still practicing skills and learning. Hopefully, it will be contagious and other people will want to be in it.

- We now have a Little Free Library, a box that one of the teachers made near the greenhouse. They got donations of free, new books. We are going to let families know that they can take one and never have to return it. They are going to restock it throughout the summer. Kathryn Craven, Carly Imhoff, and Dory Moore are involved directly in that, an example of how dedicated our teachers are.
- The survey is still up. At the time of the meeting, there were 55 responses. The majority said overall learning from home was going very well, well, or okay. The majority said their children were spending 3 or more hours a day on schoolwork. Kids and families were pretty dedicated to the challenge. Most people agreed that assigned work was clear and easy to follow. Tess Grous asked what age groups responded to the survey? Troy Hopkins said there was a good representation of mostly parents that spanned all the grades. The majority were satisfied or very satisfied with communication with teachers. These survey responses will help if we have to plan a situation like this again.
- Marian Matthews asked, after the protests that are going on, will we address antiracism and social justice things in the classroom. Would someone be willing to give a report on that at the retreat? What is in the curriculum? If we have not been doing enough, what are we planning? Troy Hopkins mentioned he just finished a book, *The Dreamkeepers*, about teachers who do a good job with teaching African American students. We are already doing many things, but he thinks we can do more. We should examine that to see if we have a good balance in our curriculum so that all kids can identify with curriculum. He mentioned NCCJ (National Conference for Community and Justice) for teachers and paraprofessionals and learning about implicit bias. All of us have certain privilege for different things. It is a great agenda item for the retreat. Marian Matthews said it is not just that we want to include everybody, but that our white students need to know about antiracism and the true history of the United States, not just the glorified history of the United States. Troy Hopkins said the State of Connecticut may come out with some mandate for this. There was a recent mandate that we must teach about the Holocaust.

Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford:

- Cindy Ford spoke about communicating and creating plans directly with families. According to data, 100% of the students were contacted every week starting on March 16. The plans were very individualized, which ties into ESY services. Some families opted out due to it being online. For some families, if the kids were not successful online, then we have offered a couple people going out to homes to provide services to help bridge the gap. There were a couple families that wanted either continuing something one-on-one or in-person, setting up a tutoring situation for the student. We are really trying to individualize everything we were doing, finding out what families were interested, and who had had enough. We surveyed staff. Some were a little uncomfortable but trusted that administration would come up with a plan to keep them safe and that the plan would be something they could take part in. ESY services will not be in house. With feedback from the state, we decided that doing it virtual is the way to go. Cindy has been selected to be part of a learning institute for the PBT process. As we roll out a new IEP, the paperwork will look very different, so she is going to be a part of a class to learn about that and best practices. She is looking forward to Emotional Poverty PD and is keeping up to date with state regulations and best practices.
- Shannon Gamache thanked Troy Hopkins for the survey, stated it was important for parents to be able to fill out.
- John Lippert said it will be years before we can look back and say if this time was okay for our children or a terrible disaster, but we can say confidently that the people at the school did the best they could, the best possible for our kids.

- Dr. Longo stated the administrative team meets on a regular basis and has a good sense of teamwork, which has had an impact on the teachers. They do the same and do a very good job meeting as teams. Ashford School is such a good school because everybody is involved in team activities and everybody's knowledge base is integrated into solutions.

Old Business

a. Second Reading of Policies

- This was not attached to agenda. John Lippert was comfortable accepting changes to the policies. Jen Barsaleau stated we are not allowed to change the words as they are copyrighted.
- ***MOTION by Al Maccarone to accept the Series 1000, Series 3000, Series 4000, and Series 5000 policy revisions suggested by Shipman & Goodwin. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***
- Jen suspects there will probably be some policy revisions with the current circumstances.

b. COVID-19 Update

- Dr. Longo – The governor says within the next few weeks there will be a plan. By the first week or so of July, they will let us know what their guidance is. They may do something regionally.
- Shannon Gamache – Have you decided on a deadline to discuss what the plan will be? Some people need a really goods heads up to figure things out.
- Dr. Longo – We do not know if we will have options or not. When we meet in July, we should have the guidelines from the state and should be able to discuss at the next board meeting (July 16).
- Al Maccarone brought up possibility of in-person board meetings since the governor has allowed meetings of up to 25 people in this second phase. Different options discussed, but decision made to wait and see how things go. We will raise this issue again at the next meeting.

c. Reverse Parade and Class of 2020 Commencement

- John Lippert expressed appreciation, on behalf of the board, for how nice the events were. Thank you, Tess Grous, for representing the board and delivering a very nice speech.

d. Website Update

- This is a long, ongoing project. Committee is to start as of July 1st when we can meet together in the building. We are cleaning things up. There will be links to E.O. Smith and tech schools from the district site. Website will continue to be available while it is being overhauled.

e. Superintendent Evaluation

- Last year's evaluation has been delivered.
- It is now time for the next evaluation, due in October. Board members will conduct interviews to get a sense of Dr. Longo's performance for the past year. Board members to have their evaluation forms completed by August board meeting.

f. 2019-2020 Budget Update

- Dr. Longo – We do have enough money left over so that we can do some purchasing ahead. It is too soon to ask for a specific number. This year, because of the COVID closure, we have a lot more unemployment claims because of substitute teachers unable to work. That is still coming in, and the auditors have requested that we keep our books open for a while. We are in very good shape.
- ***MOTION by Marian Matthews to authorize Acting Business Manager Karen Munroe, to make appropriate budget transfers to balance the budget lines and report the transfers made to the Board of Education at the July 16 meeting. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.***

New Business

a. Strategic Planning Meeting

- Discussion about where and when the meeting will be. Decided it would be August 6 at 3 p.m. at the school. Dr. Longo will provide dinner.
- Board members would like to focus on curriculum.
- John Lippert stated the list of topics will include curriculum, building, regionalization, superintendent, budget, and dreams within a 5-year plan.
- A bond will have to come up soon for the building.

- Transition from Garrett Dukette to Polly Borysevich – Troy Hopkins and Polly Borysevich to report on things to keep the same and things to change.

b. Staff Appointment

- Troy Hopkins – We interviewed Nora Alpers-Leon. She did a sample lesson for us with some 5th grade students participating over Zoom. We were impressed. She is going to teach some Spanish and possibly French. Cindy Ford, Polly Borysevich, Jessica Bernardi, school counselor, and Julia Rhubin were on the interview committee. There were other candidates. She was the clear favorite from the initial interview and the sample lesson. Her resume will be forwarded to the board by Dr. Longo.
- ***MOTION by Shannon Gamache to accept the recommendation of the interview committee to hire Nora Alpers-Leon as Spanish teacher. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.***

Marian Matthews exited the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rebecca Haeger – I would like to strongly encourage you to continue the Zoom meeting format in some way, whether joining the meeting live or having the recording available. It does add to the accessibility for parents and taxpayers to see what is being discussed and also see the passion of the board.
- Al Maccarone mentioned possible hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting in future.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- The next board meeting is scheduled for July 16th. John Lippert will send an email to members with the evaluation template.
- Shannon Gamache asked the members to consider, if this turns into distance learning for the next year, what we will do about staff in that regard. John Lippert said it would be an important conversation to have in mid July. Al Maccarone said if we are going to have a discussion of that sort, we should have the union representatives present and possibly one of our lawyers. Shannon Gamache said she is not necessarily talking about teachers but perhaps some of the paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and such. John Lippert stated this would be a painful discussion and hopefully we will not need to discuss it.
- Shannon Gamache mentioned she sent a website link to board members about scientists against 5G. She encouraged members to check out the website and research 5G. Scott Waddell said we use a wired system. The internal network is wi-fi, but we do not use cellular service. Shannon Gamache said it is more of a town issue but again encouraged members to research.

Adjournment

MOTION by Al Maccarone to adjourn the meeting (9:05 p.m.). Motion seconded by Sharon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held Via Zoom

Note: Per CGS 10-218, Board of Education Meeting Minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exceptions of motions and votes recorded, the minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote by the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call to Order

- Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
- Present were members Marian Matthews, Tess Grous, Tina Fradette, Kim Kouatly, Jane Urban, and Al Maccarone (joined at 7:17 p.m.).
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Business Manager Martha Guidry, Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell as well as approximately 12 other members of the school staff and the public.

Communications – No communications.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Kim Kouatly asked, as a parent, when will specials change from PE? Troy Hopkins addressed this in his administrative report.

Approval of Minutes

- ***MOTION by Jane Urban to approve minutes from 09/14/20 (special). Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly. Motion carried with one abstention (M. Matthews).***

Al Maccarone joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

- ***MOTION by Marian Matthews to approve minutes from 10/01/20. Motion seconded by Jane Urban.*** John Lippert would like further discussion of minutes to indicate who was speaking. John also mentioned missing period in 3rd bullet point of Old Business as well as "prior report" in 3rd bullet point of Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items should be "Friar report." ***Motion carried as amended with one abstention (T. Grous).***

Administrative Reports

Superintendent Dr. James Longo:

- Kim Kouatly asked why does the curriculum goal for the Board of Education specify Kindergarten to 8th grade and not mention Pre-K? Dr. Longo said preschool is just the first 48 that are able to get in, including all students with special needs. Jane Urban mentioned Pre-K is kind of a separate thing that we do. Troy Hopkins said there are ELDS standards specific to Pre-K, recommended by NAEYC, and their curriculum is pretty much spelled out, though they do have some flexibility and are doing project-based learning.
- Jane Urban asked Dr. Longo if he knew when we would have responses on these grants. Many are entitlement grants, meaning we will get the money, we just have to fill out the paperwork. Some are semi-entitlement grants related to the pandemic. He is not expecting any long-term waits. He stated that we have been pretty cautious and should be in good shape.
- Dr. Longo suggested revision/addition to BOE goals. Given past discussions, he feels it might be time to put in a goal in regard to renovations to the building and energy saving, so that when we go to seek funding, it is stated in our goals. Building and Grounds Committee will work at splitting the last goal, Community Relations and Facilities. Al Maccarone thinks it is a good idea to have a very clear, strong goal on that. It will help the Board of Finance see what we value and where we want to go with things.
- Dr. Longo has asked Principal Troy Hopkins, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, and Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz to give more details about school-related things in future reports. John Lippert mentioned he appreciates that Dr. Longo encourages the other administrators to interact with us.

Business Manager Martha Guidry:

- John Lippert said he was shocked at how much time is involved in training for the new financial system. Dr. Longo said that is why it was initiated mid-year. He stated Martha Guidry is being hit with a "double whammy",

being new to the position and in training and implementation of the new system. The objective is to convert over in January. All the accounts have to be renumbered.

- Jane Urban mentioned the Board of Finance has regularly been unhappy about coding of things when we present our budget to them and asked if we have a plan for this.
- John Lippert mentioned right now we are paying for two business managers. Martha Guidry stated Karen Munroe is still cleaning up last year. She mentioned we have not concluded our audit yet, and there is a ton of clean up that needs to be done. Martha could not be doing what she is doing getting ready for the new system if Karen was not working on the past. Karen has stepped back her time, she is not putting in 40 hours a week, maybe about 20 hours per week.
- John Lippert asked the Board what would they like Martha Guidry to present on a monthly basis? Jane Urban said we used to get a spreadsheet (four pages) with the bigger categories and a separate sheet with the budget transfers. Martha said budget transfers have been reported four times a year. Those reports are all done manually right now. The more reports requested, the less they can be focusing on getting things fixed. With the new system, they will have beautiful reports. Finance Committee can come up with a recommendation for what kind of a report they would like to see.
- Dr. Longo will be going over with Martha Guidry and Karen Munroe what the Board of Finance wants, based on previous years' requests. Martha said they are tightening processes and will reap the benefits a year from now.
- Tess Grous stated she is really encouraged. This is going to be one of the first times we see and experience the actual Business Manager. The new board members have not seen this yet.

Director of Pupil Services Cindy Ford:

- Cindy Ford said it is awesome to have been handed their budget, awesome to have real numbers to be able to function and know where money is.
- Jane Urban mentioned there being fewer distance learners in October and asked if they left the district or came back into school. Cindy Ford said those kids came back into school.
- Jane Urban asked if the Community Mental Health Partnership was getting much attention. Cindy Ford said it would take a good month in order to get their feet on the ground and start running. They have had one referral and another parent asking questions.
- Cindy Ford would like to present to the Board in future on a therapy dog program. She has been researching it. She would like to survey staff and community to see if people feel like it would be a benefit. Jane Urban stated she loves this idea and hopes part of it will include the library with kids reading to the dog. John Lippert said the second meeting in November would be the natural time for this presentation.
- Tess Grous expressed appreciation for Cindy Ford always ready to listen to a concern or an idea.
- John Lippert said he thinks the partnership with UCONN students is great but questioned if it was okay for those students to attend PPTs. Cindy Ford answered that she has to get parent permission for that.

Principal Troy Hopkins:

- Troy Hopkins said he is proud of teachers and school staff putting forth huge efforts that are required to teach during a pandemic and doing it with a smile on their face. Sometimes it does not feel sustainable. Parents have been great also.
- There is an Open House collection of videos.
- In the second specials rotation, grades 5-8 will continue with physical education. Students through grade 6 have recess and some have more than one recess. Because the weather is good, they are continuing PE for 5-8.
- Marian Matthews asked if teachers are having issues with Zoom while they are teaching? Troy Hopkins said it is a challenge. The teachers are working on solutions for that. Speakers have been ordered for classrooms. The Board of Finance approved that. He said they are looking at combining all the distance learners into one section so that teachers are not juggling in person and distance at the same time. He stated this is a year of experimentation, a working draft. It is not perfect, but everybody has been really patient. Marian said she had read the best thing for students at home is to read, write, and do special projects. Troy said they are trying to keep them engaged. There are learning gaps, and the need to differentiate instruction is greater now than ever.
- Dr. Longo stated many communities are requiring students to come back. In November, they will begin to survey the parents and look at the numbers. Maybe by January or February, they will end the distance learning and have students come back. There are many variables – state of the pandemic, results of the survey, overall curriculum,

and readiness to resume classes. Jane Urban expressed concern about numbers of kids in classrooms. She is grateful that her kids get to go to school and appreciates what everyone is doing to make it work. John Lippert asked if the ratio of students in the classroom has changed from the beginning of the school year. Troy Hopkins said there are currently 116 distance learners (32%). More have come back to school than have gone to distance learning. Several new students have moved to town.

- Al Maccarone asked about the timeline for coming back to school and waiting until new trimester. Troy Hopkins said if things are going okay, waiting until new trimester is preferable, but they want to do what is best for the kid. If the kid is struggling and they need to be back in school, then they get them in.
- Marian Matthews asked if they have connected to all kids? Troy Hopkins said they have, but there are some situations where kids could be more connected. They are doing what they can to help.
- Project Oceanography: The two field trips were hugely successful. The students are working on local projects now, so the learning continues. A grant paid for the trip. Buses and bus drivers were supplied for both trips. They were distantly spread on the bus. Tess Grous was glad to hear it was a huge success.
- Tess Grous asked if the tent was being used. Troy Hopkins said the tent is up, and people have used it. Because of wind, custodians have to go out, sometimes multiple times a day, and put a pole back up.
- Jane Urban said her 7th grader has never once eaten lunch anywhere other than in the classroom. She also talked to another 8th grader who has been eating in the classroom every day. She asked what the roadblocks are to eating outside. Troy Hopkins said he would try to find out and encouraged Jane to email her child's teacher about that.

Assistant Principal Polly Borysevicz:

- Polly Borysevicz is spending a lot of time in classes. Restorative practices are going very well. This month, the focus is self-control. There is never a shortage of teachable moments. Teachers have really embraced SEL curriculum. It is easy for them to maneuver, and they have been doing a great job with it.
- SEL for distance learners: Jessica Bernardi has been instrumental in assisting with reaching out to distance learners to see if anybody would like to set up a Zoom with any of the students in school. Possibly, she may be extending it to lunches. A lot of students are feeling like they are socializing fairly well. Jessica is setting up Zooms with kids who are struggling academically, to touch base and see how they can be helped. SEL for the younger students is a little easier since it is handled by the classroom teachers. All homeroom teachers completed a SEL assessment on their homeroom. Over the course of the year, she is expecting to see growth and improvement. Kim Kouatly thanked Polly Borysevicz for the SEL efforts. Jane Urban asked how the assessments were done. Polly said the teachers were assessing how their classroom is functioning and gave an example (teacher rating their classroom from 1-5 on the statement, my students demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning.)
- John Lippert asked Polly Borysevicz to give a sample of a restorative circle at the second meeting November.

Report from Food Service Manager Karen Samperi:

- Marian Matthews stated she would like to see a little bit more in the report. Could we see some sample menus to see what kids are eating now? Karen Samperi will attend the second meeting in November.
- Kim Kouatly mentioned menus are on the school website.
- Jane Urban expressed guilt that her children are getting free lunch and asked is there a way to pay? Dr. Longo mentioned two options, either donating to the Ashford Food Bank or to the school. Martha Guidry said there is a food donation fund in student activities, so parents could write a check to Ashford School with the memo food donation.
- Kim Kouatly mentioned they are extending USDA free lunches through the end of the school year.
- Tess Grous mentioned Living Proof Church runs a food bank that ministers to Ashford, Willington, and Eastford. This is an option for donating food or money. Martha Guidry said often the food banks could source food for less.

Report from Transportation Coordinator Joan Celotti:

- Jane Urban asked Dr. Longo if we have been having trouble finding drivers. Dr. Longo said it has been difficult, but Joan Celotti has been successful in filling the positions. The training course for a driver costs over \$3000.
- Kim Kouatly asked how often the buses are being cleaned. Dr. Longo said they do a light cleaning between the runs, but the thorough disinfecting happens once a day. The guides from the CDC say the virus does not live on

bus surfaces. It is an issue of confidence for the families. Dr. Longo said the kids have been great at wearing their masks.

- Jane Urban asked about the addition of a sports shuttle in the afternoon. Dr. Longo said E.O. Smith has a contract with us. Bus drivers are not getting hours on Wednesday, but they are making up the hours doing the sports shuttle.

Old Business – No old business.

New Business

a. Bicknell Scholarship Program Management

- Email indicated that they were not able to find a replacement for the company that was previously managing the process. It may be the case that it will fall to the Board to actually evaluate the submissions and choose the scholarship recipients. Dr. Longo said normally a company would recommend another company. Martha Guidry said our program was just too small for them. John Lippert said we should think about how we think we should handle it. Dr. Longo said there are other boards of education that do this, and he will inquire with Atty. Anne Littlefield.

b. First Reading of Policies as Provided by Counsel

- There are two Appendix A's included in the packet. One is Series 5000 Students, and the other is Series 4000 Personnel. Board members were asked to look through them. The next time they are brought up, they will be on the agenda for approval.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Tess Grous was asked by someone where we are with substitute teachers. Troy Hopkins said we have two but would like more. Teachers are covering for other teachers. Because of the pandemic, they do not want people who would be subbing for other schools. Dr. Longo said many of the subs are collecting unemployment and talked about sending a letter with conditions. If they refuse to come back, they can no longer collect unemployment. Troy and Dr. Longo will discuss this further. Tess said she is a little bit surprised and disappointed that we have not looked at this yet and we could have been saving money. Dr. Longo said this is a relatively new thing for us. Al Maccarone asked if we have an active sub list? Troy said they have a short list, and only two of those people said they would come in.
- Tess Grous asked if volunteering is an option. Dr. Longo said regular volunteers are not being allowed at this point because of cohorting and social distancing requirements.
- Jennifer Leszczynski, a parent with 3rd and 7th graders distance learners, said teachers are doing incredible and her kids are flourishing in distance learning. Last week they were dissecting a squid. In regard to all students returning to school, since a third of the students are currently distance learning, she says class size is a large consideration. Eating lunch in the classrooms without masks is a concern. She stated there have been breakout sessions, her daughter has been super excited, and said thank you so much for taking that on. She wondered if information could be sent to parents about where they could donate money they would be spending on lunches and also mentioned Melissa McDonough, Director of Youth and Social Services, as a resource regarding donations.
- John Lippert said it was good to hear from a distance-learning parent about their experience.
- Al Maccarone has a grandson (6th grader) who is distance learning. He is doing well, and Al is very pleased with what is happening.
- Kim Kouatly mentioned that the last two board meetings have not been announced on K12. Dr. Longo will remind Jen.
- Kim Kouatly asked if rec basketball would be happening. Dr. Longo said no one is using the building until the pandemic is over.
- Jane Urban said, with all the challenges this year, there may be elements of the curriculum that will be skipped over. She asked if there is a way to provide a little bit of that information to parents so they can work on it on their own time. Dr. Longo said it was a good question and that they would put on the agenda for future board report.
- Marian Matthews said she cannot read the lunch menu online and would still like some sample menus.

- Marian Matthews said we are still calling it Columbus Day instead of Indigenous Peoples Day. Dr. Longo replied that that was never decided on and is a politically charged subject. It will be put on the agenda for the second meeting in November, and then a committee can be formed if necessary. Tess Grous asked if there is anything else on the calendar that should be addressed at the same time.
- John Lippert would like to acknowledge the AEA representative by name in each board meeting. No one identified himself or herself as an AEA representative. Dr. Longo said they volunteer, but things are going so wonderfully that they don't feel the need to. Ginger Lusa said sometimes there is a calendar set up for people to sign up, but that has not been done this year.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- Committee breakouts: John Lippert will work on organizing this. Tess Grous asked John to send who is on what committee to the board members.

Superintendent Evaluation

- Board members are not ready to move to the next step yet. John Lippert has received 3 evaluation forms so far. Tess Grous, Tina Fradette, and Marian Matthews will send theirs in.

Adjournment

MOTION by Marian Matthews to adjourn the meeting (9:06 p.m.). Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held Via Zoom

Note: Per CGS 10-218, Board of Education Meeting Minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exceptions of motions and votes recorded, the minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote by the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call to Order

- Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.
- Present were members Marian Matthews, Tess Grous, Tina Fradette, Kim Kouatly, Al Maccarone, and Jane Urban.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Ex Officio/First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith, Atty. Anne Littlefield, Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell as well as approximately 15 other members of the school staff and the public.
- Tess Grous asked Cathryn Silver-Smith for definition of ex officio. Cathryn said ex officio is a nonvoting member of a board. As First Selectman, she is Ex Officio on all town boards.
- John Lippert stated he wanted the discussion and criticisms of his performance to be in open session, rather than executive session. He also said whatever happens during this meeting, the board members will need to continue to work together. He asked Marian Matthews to facilitate the meeting.

Discussion Concerning Written Attorney Client Privileged Memorandum (legal advice regarding procedures for discussion of board member performance)

- Atty. Anne Littlefield said FOIA permits the board to go into executive session to discuss the document that reflects attorney client privilege and receive legal advice.
- ***MOTION by Jane Urban to enter executive session to discuss written attorney client privileged memorandum and invite Atty. Anne Littlefield to join. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone. Motion carried unanimously at 7:17 p.m.***
- The board and Atty. Anne Littlefield exited executive session at 7:54 p.m.

Discussion Concerning Performance of Board Chair

- Tess Grous shared her concerns about John Lippert's leadership performance in regard to voting in their new board member (Kim Kouatly) as well as conflict of interest.
- Marian Matthews said those concerns have been met and asked Tess Grous, "What is the issue now?"
- Tess Grous stated she feels like there is a pattern of things going wrong. They voted on the new member in executive session and not publicly. She mentioned a conflict of interest, with Kim Kouatly being seen with a class at Ashford School. She stated John Lippert did not communicate all the information that could have been given regarding what Kim was doing at the school (substitute, volunteer, or student teacher?).
- Jane Urban said they took a tally in executive session to gauge interest and acknowledged they did fail to make a motion outside of executive session to appoint Kim Kouatly. She stated every board member was there, that it was not all on John Lippert's shoulders. She mentioned Atty. Anne Littlefield saying, in regard to the mistake during the emergency meeting, the worst-case scenario would be a letter in the board's file since it was not done intentionally or maliciously. Jane said we keep rehashing this one mistake and questioned devoting so much time and energy to it. She said board members should be team members, working harmoniously. She stated she fully supports John and trusts his decision-making ability.
- Al Maccarone said John Lippert is a man of integrity and that he may make a mistake, but there is no malice.
- Kim Kouatly explained her presence at the school. She was a student doing an observation, which ended on 10/20/20. She was not paid. She has modified her student teaching application so that it does not include Ashford School. We learn from mistakes and move forward. We are here with the same goal, here for the kids, the school, and the town.
- Tina Fradette said it is sad that it has come to this and expressed her disappointment. She understands the concerns Tess Grous has. Kim Kouatly could have told the board prior. She said she is on the fence about the leadership of John Lippert and said they need more communication.
- Al Maccarone stated he does not understand the conflict of interest.

- John Lippert said Kim Kouatly described the situation prior to the call to order at the 09/03/20 meeting. On 09/30/20, when John was at the school with Sara Wilson, Jen Barsaleau mentioned something about Kim student teaching. The lawyer said student teaching does not violate the statutes but would not be recommended. John said he failed to follow up with Jen to clarify what Kim was doing and he failed to present the information to the board.
- Tess Grous stated that she values John Lippert, but there have been mistakes along the way. She wants the attorney to train them on board procedures. She expressed frustration in John as the leader in charge of communication. She is bringing her concerns forward and made the request for John to either resign from his position or get proper training. She said the board needs to move forward as a unit.
- Jane Urban mentioned the letters received by the board in support of John Lippert, one from Ashford Education Association and one from Jen Lindsay.
- Cathryn Silver-Smith stated she was Chair on the Board of Finance for 18 years and that it is a lonely place at the top. She said every member is accountable, not just the chair. She commended Tess Grous for trying to ensure proper procedure is followed. She said it would have been better for Kim Kouatly to mention her observation at the school during the formal meeting. She said the chair is a facilitator. She expressed support for John Lippert and said not once has she seen him get ruffled or riled. She encouraged the board members to get CABA training, to look at procedures, and to be open to hearing from each other.
- Marian Matthews said she has attended CABA trainings and a conference, which were very helpful. She said John Lippert has tried to address the issues.

Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Performance of Board Chair

- Tess Grous suggested that John Lippert stay chair and go through training as well as all of the board members. She said there was no malicious intent but rather a lack of knowledge.
- Jane Urban said we are heading into budget season and perhaps we could review and discuss one section of bylaws in each meeting.
- Kim Kouatly said she does not have the book. Marian Matthews will make sure she gets one.
- ***MOTION by Tess Grous that Chair John Lippert and entire board as a whole review and discuss as a board the rules and responsibilities presented at this special meeting (10/29/20) beginning no later than 11/19/20 board meeting. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone. Motion carried with one abstention (J. Lippert).***

Adjournment

MOTION by Al Maccarone to adjourn the meeting (8:42 p.m.). Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

Ashford School District
Board of Education Meeting
November 5, 2020
Superintendent's Report

Capital Projects

It is time to update our four-year capital projects request plan. This is the first step to community action to remediate the problems with Ashford's aging school building. Most of our conversations have been put off while we await a bonding issue to cover the major projects, but we have a few issues that have surfaced since our last capital proposal that need to be discussed.

- Heating systems upgrade
- Scheduling work on our expiring underground fuel tank (UST)
- Upgrading sprinkler system and replacement of fire alarm system
- Our Maintenance Department head will be reporting to you tonight, and will review our professional contractor's assessment of the Energy Audit provided last year as a guide to our plan update
- Updating the existing proposals

Three Board Meeting

We have had an annual three-Board meeting to ensure we are all on the same page with the coming budget proposal design and schedule. I was wondering if this is scheduled or if the BOF has published its budget development schedule

Our First Steps in Development of the FY 2021-2022 Budget

By the time this Board meets, I will have met with department heads and administrators to begin discussions regarding our needs and ideas for the coming year. We have a lot going on, and are just completing our 2020-2021 budget status so we can build next year on it reliably. The steps I plan are as follows:

- Cindy and Troy are currently surveying staff to determine those needs that can be anticipated.
- The business office staff will be working on the current year budget and the already negotiated projections for next year.
- I will be scheduling two parent/community (Zoom) meetings to collect ideas and answer questions much as we have done over the past few years.
- Our Technology Coordinator and I are currently updating our Technology plan, specifically to be responsive to changes in our use of technology in the building. He will be reporting to you tonight during our committee meetings.

Once we have a schedule and commitment from the Board regarding the format, we will be ready to proceed.

Board Goals

I suggested an additional goal be added to the BOE goals to recognize the commitment to investing in our facility, both building and grounds. Do you have any further thoughts on this?

Meeting with the Commissioner

On Monday, the Regional Superintendent's group met with our Education Commissioner, Dr. Miguel Cardona. I will report to you if any surprises or new policies emerge following that meeting.

Dear Dr. Longo,

It is with great excitement that I share with you the news that I am pregnant and expecting in March. My anticipated last day will be March 9, 2021. If this date changes, I will let you know as soon as possible. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Jessica Bernardi

School Counselor 5-8



Jennifer Barsaleau <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>

News

Alicia Marceau <amarceau@ashfordct.org>

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 8:56 AM

To: Staff <staff@ashfordct.org>, teachers@ashfordct.org

Good morning Ashford Staff,

I wanted to personally reach out and share with you some big news that I recently received. As many of you know, I started my school psychology career 2.5 years ago here at Ashford and it has been such an amazing experience and one that I will cherish deeply. I have made many wonderful connections with you all and I have learned so much about myself personally and professionally and I have you guys to thank for that! With that said, I have recently accepted a job position that will be closer to my family and my last day here at Ashford will be November 13. This is a bittersweet moment for me and was not an easy decision, but I am looking forward to seeing where this next chapter will bring for me.

I kindly ask that this news not be discussed in front of students as many of them do not know yet and I will be having that discussion with them next week.

Again, thank you all so much and I look forward to spending my last few days here with you all 😊

--

Alicia Marceau, M.S.
Grades 4-8 School Psychologist
Sixth Year Certificate
Phone Number: 860-429-6419 x359



Ashford Public Schools

Respect, Responsibility and Pride

Office of the Superintendent



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Dr. James P. Longo
Superintendent of Schools

Cynthia A. Ford
Director of Pupil Services

Troy Hopkins
Principal/Asst. Super.

Polly Borysevicz
Asst. Principal

October 30, 2020

Dear Dr. James Longo:

Regarding the vacancy of the School Psychologist Alicia Marceau it is my pleasure to recommend the hiring of Alissa Tatro. Mrs. Tatro comes to us with experience in all facets of the mental health field. She has been a Social Worker in both the schools and private placements. I believe this experience will give Ashford School a comprehensive mental health team to assist this community during these challenging times.

Thank you,
Cynthia A. Ford, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Alissa Tatro, LCSW

CORE STRENGTHS

Diagnostic Assessments
Behavioral Intervention Plans
Clinical Interviewing
Safety/Crisis Planning
Crisis Intervention
Treatment Plans
Trauma-Informed Care
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
Solution-Focused Therapy
Case Management
Identifying Supportive Resources
Facilitating Group Therapy

CERTIFICATIONS

CT School Social Worker (071)
April 2014 – April 2017
**Pending Recertification*

Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
October 2014 – Present

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
(CPI)
June 2017

ADHD – Certified Clinical
Services Provider- CCSP
December 2018

Certified Clinical Trauma
Professional – CCTP
October 2020

Trauma Informed Crisis
Intervention (TICI)
May 2014

Trauma Focused Cognitive
Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
December 2012

PERSONAL SUMMARY

A conscientious, enthusiastic, and self-motivated social worker with experience in delivering high-quality care to individuals facing difficulties in their daily lives as a result of underlying mental health conditions. Easy going by nature, Alissa is able to work well with both clients and colleagues, manage a challenging caseload, and implement effective treatment strategies to maximize client growth and overall health and wellness

CAREER HISTORY

Community Health Center (CHC), Stafford Springs/East Windsor
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN II September 2013-Present

Diagnose and treat mental health disorders among 40+ students through various therapeutic modalities including 1:1 sessions, group therapy, integration of family members and school contacts into student's treatment plan, as well as collaborate with other professionals in the community to ensure comprehensive and effective clinical treatment.

Duties:

- Provide individual, group and family therapy to caseload of students in a school setting
- Collaborate with school staff, medical providers, psychiatric providers, families, DCF and other local providers to ensure students are receiving the proper care and support they need
- Work within a team environment providing clinical support and guidance to other team member
- Participated in Project ECHO to help improve overall treatment outcomes by gaining knowledge and support through a teleconferencing case-based learning approach
- Provided verbal testimony to Connecticut General Assembly in support of funding preventative programs for at-risk students (2015, 2017)
- Presented at the CT School-Based Health Center Conference (2017)

Natchaug Hospital, Inpatient Child/Adolescent Psychiatric Unit -Mansfield, CT
PRIMARY THERAPIST May 2011 – September 2013

Served as a member of a multidisciplinary team on the inpatient unit focused on the stabilization of pediatric patients ranging from ages 5-18. Responsible for developing and implementing treatment plans for a caseload of 5-6 patients.

Duties:

- Complete bio-psychosocial assessments for all incoming child/adolescent patients
- Develop clinical formulations to present to multidisciplinary team including psychiatrists, nurses, creative rehabilitation specialists and therapists.
- Daily review and assessment of presenting symptoms while coordinating discharge plans simultaneously
- Provide individual therapy to children and adolescents using Solution-Focused Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
- Conduct family sessions and provider meetings to offer psycho-education, brief strategic family therapy and draft safety/crisis plans for patient to use in home/community environments
- Lead therapeutic groups covering a variety of topics including stress management, social skills, coping skills, anger management, grounding skills, etc.
- Consult with community providers such as DCF, CT Behavioral Health Partnership and DDS to share recommendations and mutually determine outpatient treatment plans for patient post hospitalization
- Prepare extensive documentation regularly through electronic and manual medical records
- Participate in training, supervision and team meetings

PERSONAL SKILLS

Clear Communicator

Active Listener

Excellent Interpersonal Skills

Organizational and Time Management Skills

Ability to Adapt to Change

Empathic and Supportive

Demonstrates Integrity

Maintains Confidentiality

Team Player

RELATED COURSEWORK

School Behavior: How to Design & Implement a Positive and Effective Behavior Plan (2020)

Suicide and Self-Harm in Our Youth: Assessment Tools and Treatment Approaches that Help Clients Heal (2020)

Mass Violence: Risk Identification and Intervention Strategies for Potentially Violent Clients and Effective Treatment Techniques for Survivors (2018)

LGBTQ Youth: Clinical Strategies to Support Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2017)

Autism, ADHD and Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Cutting-Edge Sensory Strategies for Mental Health Treatment (2017)

Smart But Scattered: Executive Dysfunction at Home and at School (2017)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alissa Piascik
52 Knowlton Hill Rd
Ashford, CT 06278

T: (203)-815-5903
E: TatroLCSW@gmail.com

Northeast Center for Youth/Families-Residential Group Home -Lebanon, CT

PROGRAM CLINICIAN

September 2012 – July 2013

Worked collaboratively with the Program Director of a DCF-contracted group home to deliver therapeutic interventions to 5 adolescent females who presented with histories of extensive trauma and engaged in high-risk behaviors in their community environments. Therapeutic interventions provided to the clients focused on maximizing their independence, well-being and safety in order to reach their potential goals and improve their lives.

Duties:

- Provide clinical residential services for assigned caseload including individual, group, and family therapy and maintain progress notes accordingly
- Develop comprehensive treatment plans and summaries to present to multidisciplinary team in medical/psychiatric review meetings
- Participate and facilitate staff trainings pertaining to psychoeducation and client care
- Assist the Program Director in the development of clinical policies/procedures
- Participate in weekly roundtable discussion with administration regarding group home dynamics, clinical curricula and supervisory topics to enhance program to meet clients' needs
- Update group home staff, school staff and caseworkers on therapeutic progress regularly and provide clinical consultation as needed
- Manage referrals to outside service providers including: mentoring, discharge services, and community activities
- Provide on-call coverage to all NCYF Residential Programs on rotating schedule to serve as a support and make recommendations during clinical crises.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Windham Middle School, Windham CT

SOCIAL WORK INTERN

September 2010 – May 2011

Duties:

- Counsel 10-15 students individually and/or in groups presenting with emotional/behavioral and academic concerns
- Maintain meticulous documentation and timely follow-up with students and supervisor
- Participate in district-wide professional development for school Social Workers and Psychologists including School Climate Committee meetings
- Attend PPTs, parent/teacher conferences, administrative meetings and assist school Social Worker on development of IEP goals and evaluate progress throughout school year
- Partner with teachers and other faculty members to provide consultation and construct ideas on ways to meet the social/emotional needs of students to increase academic success
- Work with outside local agencies to identify support services for students outside of the school environment in order to maximize educational benefits

Windham Center Elementary School, Windham CT

SOCIAL WORK INTERN

September 2009 – April 2010

- *Responsibilities as listed above (Windham Middle School Social Work Intern)*

Windham High School – Early Intervention Program

COUNSELING MENTOR

September 2006- June 2008

- Identify “at-risk” youths to engage in social and age appropriate activities to improve self-esteem through goal setting and utilization of positive behavior reinforcement
- Assist in connecting students to community programs to further encourage pro-social behaviors (i.e., universities, park and recreational facilities, volunteer services)

**Program received recognition in 2007 for dramatic decrease in overall truancy rate and disciplinary referrals*