

**MINUTES - BOARD OF EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
WHOLE MEETING HELD JANUARY 12, 2023 IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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Legislative Committee Members Present: Timothy White (6:37), Anne Harrigan, Faith Ham

Other Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini, Adam Grippo (6:40), Andrew Martelli (6:36), Samantha Rosenberg

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer, Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent

Others Present: Lezlye Zupkis, State Representative  
Rob Sampson, State Senator

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Perugini called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed Representative Lezlye Zupkis and Senator Rob Sampson and reported Representative Liz Linehan had planned to attend but had to cancel. Mr. Perugini said this is the first time they have had a joint Board of Education/Legislative Delegation meeting. He said there are legislative items affecting us, and they would like Hartford legislators to know our position.

**AUDIENCE**

Mr. Hap Jordan, 72 Broadview Road. Mr. Jordon spoke of recent events where a six-year-old shot a teacher in Virginia. He urged the Superintendent to write a letter to parents reminding them that Connecticut has a safe storage law.

Maura Esposito, 30 Holly Road. Ms. Esposito is the Director of Chesprocott. She reported that recently Chesprocott had collaborated with the Cheshire Police Department to buy-back guns from residents. She said it was a huge success where 96 guns were bought back. She said she is in full support of gun safety and offered Chesprocott's services to the Cheshire Public Schools. Ms. Silano added that in second grade, they introduce gun safety to children such as what do you do if you find a gun.

**DISCUSSION WITH CHESHIRE DELEGATION REGARDING LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

Superintendent Solan shared a list of legislative items from the Legislative Committee with Representative Zupkis and Senator Sampson.

Regarding the Right to Read Act, Representative Zupkis said it is not just Cheshire, her other districts also feel this will have a negative impact on their districts. She said she just put in a piece of legislation to benchmark. She said they should be looking at the schools and students who are below and help them, not mandate all schools use this program. She urged all Superintendents and Boards to speak up and testify at the State Capitol.

Senator Sampson thanked the Board for inviting them. He explained that if you look at the list of mandates, you could understand why legislators support them. Legislators are sometimes bullied

into supporting mandates because on the surface, they appear to be worthwhile causes for students and if they don't support them, it is used against them negatively in the press. He thinks that high achieving districts, like Cheshire, should be looked at as a model, not be told to follow a mandate. He asked the Board to stay involved and to be vocal.

Dr. Solan shared that Mr. White and the Legislative Committee would like to ask legislators to revisit mandates periodically to be sure that they are still necessary. When bills are adopted, set a time for the laws to be revisited.

Mr. Perugini asked that communities are invited to be involved in the talks before the legislation is written.

Dr. Solan reviewed the other pieces of legislation that the Committee wanted to share with the delegation, including Excess Cost Reimbursement, Teacher Shortages, Teacher Evaluation, Virtual Learning, Educational Cost Sharing, and Unfunded Mandates and HVAC legislative requirements. The cost of the HVAC assessment of the systems would be extreme.

Representative Zupkis again encouraged the local Boards and Superintendents to be vocal. She said the list that this Board shared, contains exactly the same concerns of their other districts.

Senator Sampson said that the State is very politically divided and currently they believe in centralized government. He said if you want to see change you have to be vocal. He feels that decisions should be made by local communities and Boards. Ms. Ham agreed with Mr. Sampson and volunteered to testify whenever needed.

Ms. Harrigan said that they are not asking for specific things. They are asking to be included in the conversations before decisions are made. She said her ask is that when decisions are being made, they remind people that to included others in the community. Representative Zupkis agreed and said that used to be the case where all were brought to the table but lately that does not happen. Senator Sampson said unfortunately, sometimes they are not even in the room when these bills are passed. He said there is great work done on the committee level but often that work is ignored when it gets to the Governor's office.

Ms. Rosenberg asked as they are going into this legislative session, the agenda items based off this list, that they are already considering or have already considering revising. Representative Zupkis said she has put in a bill on the Right to Read Act. Senator Sampson said he has put in bills on reducing mandates, not necessarily educational, but the mandates on town governments. He noted tomorrow is the deadline to put in bills.

Representative Zupkis said that in the future we should try to get these to them sooner, possibly November. Mr. Perugini agreed. Senator Sampson said they still have time to put a bill in to modify HVAC requirements or one of the other bills.

Mr. White said he is in favor of a shell bill for HVAC. Mr. Sampson said he would suggest that we find a related bill on mandates and that possibly a sentence could be added to the bill that could

make a difference. Representative Zupkis asked Superintendent Solan to send the information to her and she will forward it to the entire Cheshire Delegation.

Mr. Perugini said the Board does not have the ability to choose the legislation they follow and have to abide by all mandates. He said in the past, parents were told by Hartford to complain to their local Board of Education, even though the Board does not have a choice, bombarded them. He asked to send the message to Hartford that putting their legislative decisions on local Boards to enforce, when we do not have options to change their decisions, provides for a very contentious meeting.

Mr. Perugini, on behalf of the Board, thanked Representative Zupkis and Senator Sampson for attending this evening.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. White, which was seconded by Ms. Harrigan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

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Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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Carol Jesensky, Executive Assistant

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