

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
NEWINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
NEWINGTON, CT 06111**

Newington Town Hall  
Wednesday, July 22, 2020 (Virtual)  
6:00 p.m.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Paul Vessella, Michael Branda, Dr. Bruce Fletcher, Emily Guion, Beth Manke Hutvagner, Steven Silvia, Cindy Stamm, Robert Tofeldt, Jessica Weaver

**ADMINISTRATION:** Dr. Maureen Brummett, Lou Jachimowicz, Wendy Crouse, Stephen Foresi, Kristen Freeman, Kimberly Davis

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Paul Vessella called the Regular Meeting of the Newington Board of Education to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Michael Branda: Here  
Dr. Bruce Fletcher: Here  
Emily Guion: Here  
Beth Manke Hutvagner: Here  
Steven Silvia: Absent  
Cindy Stamm: Here  
Robert Tofeldt: Here  
Paul Vessella: Here  
Jessica Weaver: Here

B. Public Participation

C. New Business

1. Discussion and Possible Action School Calendar 2020-2021

**MOTION:** Robert Tofeldt moved the Board of Education amend the 2020-2021 school calendar as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Beth Manke Hutvagner seconded.

Michael Branda voted yes  
Dr. Bruce Fletcher voted yes  
Emily Guion voted yes  
Beth Manke Hutvagner voted yes  
Steven Silvia voted yes  
Cindy Stamm voted yes  
Robert Tofeldt voted yes  
Paul Vessella voted yes  
Jessica Weaver voted yes

Motion passed 9-0.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on Graduation Requirements

MOTION: Jessica Weaver moved the Board of Education approve that the required credits for graduation for the Class of 2021 and 2022 be reduced from twenty-five (25) to twenty-one (21) to align with the current state statutes and mirror the requirements for all classes graduating in 2020 and earlier. Robert Tofeldt seconded.

Michael Branda voted yes  
Dr. Bruce Fletcher voted yes  
Emily Guion voted yes  
Beth Manke Hutvagner voted yes  
Steven Silvia voted yes  
Cindy Stamm voted yes  
Robert Tofeldt voted yes  
Paul Vessella voted yes  
Jessica Weaver voted yes

Motion passed 9-0.

3. Discussion and Possible Action Reopen Plan

No Action was taken.

4. Other

D. Public Participation

E. Remarks by Board Members

I. Adjournment

MOTION: Michael Branda moved to adjourn. Emily Guion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Silvia, Secretary

Debra O. Craig, Board Clerk

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Jason Sikorski  
11 Roberts Street

Mr. Sikorski felt the Parent Return to School Survey was hard to answer. He would like to see the school virtual meetings referred to at this meeting happen before the next survey. He also had a few questions regarding the wearing of masks in school.

Dana Havens  
113 Stoddard Avenue

Ms. Havens would like to see a picture of the masks and shields that will be provided for the students on their return to school. She also had concerns regarding her children's' allergy symptoms presenting at school. She does like the clear backpacks for high school. Ms. Havens also questioned why some classes could not be livestreamed.

Melissa Cook  
35 Amidon Avenue

Ms. Cook is a parent proud to be in this town, but she has concerns with the tonight's presentation. She is disappointed with the virtual learning presentation and feels the administration could provide a better plan. She also mentioned that no Special Education services were discussed.

Forrest Helvie  
282 Lamp Lighter Lane

Mr. Helvie had a few questions regarding the tonight's presentation. He had questions regarding Special Education, students working with staff new to them, and how IEPs and 504's would work with distance learning. He would like to know if there will be a way to reconcile the different times younger students will need to check in if parents are unable to assist them due to a conflict. He also questioned if quarantined students provided proof of a negative test, could they return.

Karen Peterson  
144 Forest Drive

Ms. Peterson would like more information as to what STEM classes would be like this year, i.e. Biomedical Academy example; and how the innovations classes would be integrated into the general curriculum. She also would like to know if a student is distance learning would they be able to participate in school events, i.e., school photo day. Her last question was regarding teachers teaching without a mask if they participated in routine testing.

Eileen Francolino  
116 Lydall Road

Ms. Francolino is in the para and learning teachers group and has concerns as they are at higher risk due to their responsibilities and are not paid for sick time. How would this work? Would they be paid for sick time?

Jen Rodriguez  
71 Northwood Road

Ms. Rodriguez is a Newington teacher as well as a parent. She has made a decision not to send her child to the academy program due to the large number of students he would come in contact with. She was questioning the air quality in schools and the use of air conditioners. Ms. Rodriguez also spoke of her appreciation for all the work done on the reopening plan.