

*LEARN Vision: To ensure that every child has access to high quality public education through systems of education, support, and service.*

**LEARN BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR/BUSINESS MEETING  
44 Hatchetts Hill Road  
Old Lyme, CT 06371  
Minutes  
March 12, 2020**

Present: Groton; Rita Volkmann, LEARN; Kate Ericson, Montville; Robert Mitchell, Norwich; Al Daniels, Region # 17; Jen Favalora, Region # 18; Diane Linderman, Stonington; Craig Esposito, Waterford; Christopher Jones

Representatives not attending: Chester; Dale Bernardoni, Clinton; Michael Hornyak, Deep River; Lenore Grunko, East Haddam; Patricia Stricker, East Hampton; Amy Ordonez, East Lyme; Tim Hagen, Essex; Carolyn Rotella, Guilford; Kristen Peck, Ledyard; Naomi Rodriguez, Madison; Diane Infantine-Vyce, New London; Jefferey Hart, North Stonington; Phil Mendolia, Old Saybrook; Jan Furman, Preston; Cindy Luty, Region #17; Suzanne Sack, Salem; Sean Reith

Not Attending and Not Represented: Westbrook

Presenters, Staff and Other Guests: Andrea Simmons, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Jack Cross, Michael Belden, Nat Brown, Donna Worst, Heather Doughty

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m.

**Public Comment:** No public comment

**Reading Review of Correspondence by the Executive Director:** No correspondence read

**Superintendent's Perspective:** The Friendship School's Principal, Andrea Simmons, presented an overview of the school's NEASC & NAEYC\* accreditations including the processes and criteria to achieve these certifications (\*New England Association of Schools & Colleges, National Association of Education of Young Children)

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Minutes- February 13, 2020

Approval of 2019-2020 budget

Approval of grant applications-no grant applications

**Motion to approve the consent agenda by Daniels second by Mitchell**

**Motion passed: unanimously**

**Information from the Executive Director**

The following Information from the Executive Director was included in the packet.

**Hiring update:** A three-year snapshot of monthly hiring and resignation data for the following job classifications; teachers, administrative staff, non-certified school-based staff, and non-certified twelve- month staff. In addition to the traditional format, the intent of the trending data is to provide additional insight to assist in staff retention and areas of need.

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Executive Committee - Minutes February 28, 2020

Legislative update: Mrs. Ericson reviewed the bills most impacting the districts, especially HB 5433, HB5433, An Act Concerning The Creation of a Special Education Excess Cost Cooperative. She distributed copies of Commissioner of Education, Miguel Cardona's testimony as presented to the CT General Assembly Education Committee on March 9, 2020 regarding a series of important education-related proposals on the agenda.

Agency updates:

- In January, 2020, the Executive Committee was informed that LEARN's Dual Language and Arts Magnet Middle School (DLAMMS) could no longer remain at the 51 Daniels Avenue, Waterford location and must close due to the deteriorating building condition. The school also was unable to fill the 150 lottery seats set by the State for the past two years. The decision to close the program was made after an 8-year search to find another suitable building location. In addition, there are many new magnet school choice options in the region. In order to decide next steps, the Executive Director surveyed staff and families and hosted three focus group sessions to determine if there was a large interest in continuing to attend the middle school @ the Goodwin University campus. The feedback from the majority of families was that the East Hartford location was not viable. The Executive Director announced to the board in February and again in March that after 8 years of searching unsuccessfully for a building to house the school, DLAMMS will be closing its doors permanently at the end of the 2019-2020 school year
- Marine Science Magnet High School principal search update. There are 30 applicants and the review process next steps are ongoing.
- COVID 19 updates: As events unfold, communications are distributed to staff and families throughout LEARN schools. The Student Support Services 4th Annual Disability Summit at the Mohegan Sun Convention Center will be rescheduled to a future date. HR is reviewing policies for hourly employees should schools close. LEARN schools will close according to the decisions made by the towns in which they reside. The RESC Alliance is looking at distance learning to assist towns if/when schools are closed-The Commissioner of Education stated that towns are legally liable to provided EQUITY. LEARN Associate Executive Director, Dr. Ryan Donlon, hosted an Alternative Learning Forum with the districts' Curriculum Directors and Assistant Principals to collaborate on pre-k through 12th grade level packets to send home in case of school closure. Superintendents will meet tomorrow, Friday, March 13, 2020, to discuss their Regional Pandemic Planning

Old Business: While the LEARN Board is not required to vote to close a LEARN program, the Executive Director, brought it before the board for a vote.

**Motion: To approve the closure of the Dual Language & Arts Magnet Middle Schools at the end of the 2019-2020 school year made by Daniels, second by Volkmann.**

**Abstained: Christopher Jones**

**Motion Passed**

New Business: National School Lunch Program-Healthy Food Certification Statement for 2020-2021- *To participate in the program, the Connecticut State Department of Education requires all district governing boards to vote "yes or no" on the following 2 motions as written by the State:*

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**9.1a Motion 1: For Healthy Food Option-Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.**

**Motion made by Esposito, second by Jones**

**Vote: yes**

**Passed unanimously**

**9.1b Motion 2: For Food Exemptions-The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1.) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2). The sale is at the location of the event; and 3). the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.**

**Motion made by Jones, second by Linderman**

**Vote: yes**

**Passed unanimously**

**9.1c Approval for Executive Director, Katherine Ericson, to sign the Healthy Foods Certification Statement 2020-2021**

**Motion to approve Executive Director, Katherine Ericson, to sign the Healthy Foods Certification Statement 2020-2021 made by Esposito, second by Mitchell**

**Passed unanimously**

**9.2 Non-renewals of Non-tenured Certified Staff-**

**Move that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 10-151, the LEARN Board of Directors non-renew the teaching contract of those named below at the end of the 2019-2020 school year as recommended by the Executive Director; and ratify, adopt and accept the Executive Director’s determination that the contract be non-renewed. Further move that the Executive Director be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to those named below, and that the Executive Director be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Directors to any requests for a hearing or for other data which may be**

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**forthcoming from those named below and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions of Connecticut General Statutes 10-151; and further move that the Executive Director be directed that any response to a request for a hearing, if a hearing is required by law, indicate that such hearing is to be before the Board of Directors.**

**Catherine Sadlak  
Jose Feliciano  
Kayla Dandelski  
Numan Senman  
Jacob Battipaglia  
Melissa Gomez  
Ana Kyrzcz**

**Motion to adopt as presented by Esposito, second by Daniels  
Passed unanimously**

9.3 Grant application for renovation of the upper level the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy requires the following resolutions by the Dept. of Administrative Services (DAS) Office of School Construction Grants & Review.

9.3a *First Motion to Authorize Grant Application, Building Committee and Preparation of Educational Specifications:*

**MOTION 1: WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Sections 10-66a, 10-66b and 10-66c, LEARN is a Regional Educational Service Center and the LEARN Board of Directors is the legislative body authorized to issue bonds, notes or other obligations;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:**

**RESOLVED, that the LEARN Board of Directors (LEARN's Governing Board) authorizes LEARN's Executive Director to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Student Support Services Building Project at the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy.**

**and**

**RESOLVED, that the LEARN Building Committee is hereby established as the building committee with regard to the Student Support Services Building Project at the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy.**

**and**

**RESOLVED, that the LEARN Board of Directors hereby authorizes the preparation of schematic drawings and educational specifications for the Student Support Services Building Project at the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy.**

**Move to approve MOTION 1 as presented by Daniels, second by Jones  
Passed unanimously**

9.3b *Second Motion to Authorize Project Renovation Amount:*

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**MOTION 2: WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Sections 10-66a, 10-66b and 10-66c, LEARN is a Regional Educational Service Center and the LEARN Board of Directors is the legislative body authorized to issue bonds, notes or other obligations; and WHEREAS, pursuant to the LEARN BYLAWS, The LEARN Board of Directors is the legislative body authorized to issue bonds, notes or other obligations; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:**

**RESOLVED, that the LEARN Board of Directors authorizes the renovation of The Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy, a property located at 582/660 Ocean Avenue, New London, Connecticut, to support the STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES outplacement programs for special education students;**

**and**

**RESOLVED, that the LEARN Board of Directors authorizes the project costs for the renovation of the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy, a property located at 582/660 Ocean Avenue, New London, Connecticut, to support the STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES outplacement programs for special education students in the amount of \$9,708,052 .**

**Move to approve MOTION 2 as presented by Daniels, second by Volkmann  
Passed unanimously**

*9.3c Third Motion to Authorize Educational Specifications*

**MOTION 3: RESOLVED, That the LEARN Board of Directors approve the Educational Specifications as presented for the development of the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy.**

**Move to approve MOTION 3 as presented by Daniels, second by Mitchell  
Passed unanimously**

10. Educational Perspective: Special Education Survey/School Finance Project. Director of Innovation & Development, Jack Cross, presented on the School Finance Project regarding the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy renovation project and Deputy Executive Director, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, shared the results of the Special Education Survey as well as the current program statistics to support the growing need within the districts for services.

11. Round Table/Future Agenda Items:

12. Adjournment: **Motion to adjourn @ 11:05am by Volkmann, second by Mitchell  
Passed unanimously**

**LEARN** is a Regional Educational Service Center working with, and for, its member districts to improve the quality of public education for all learners. We provide leadership for teaching and learning; We provide high quality, innovative schools and programs; We identify and deliver customized and cost effective programs and services; and, We promote collaborative partnerships and regional cooperation.

Submitted by  
Donna S. Worst  
Executive Office Coordinator/Scribe  
March 12, 2020