

**LEARN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR/BUSINESS MEETING**

Remote meeting via Zoom

Minutes

November 12, 2020

Present: Chester; Dale Bernardoni, East Hampton; Amy Ordonez, East Lyme; Tim Hagen, Groton; Rita Volkmann, LEARN; Kate Ericson, Ledyard; Naomi Rodriguez, Montville; Robert Mitchell, Norwich; Al Daniels, Preston; Cindy Luty, Region# 17; Jen Favalora, Region # 18; Diane Linderman, Stonington; Craig Esposito

Representatives not attending: Clinton; Michael Hornyak, Deep River; Lenore Grunko, East Haddam; Nicole Hendry, Essex; Carolyn Rotella, Guilford; Kristen Peck, Madison; Diane Infantine-Vyce, New London; Jefferey Hart, North Stonington; Phil Mendolia, Old Saybrook; Jan Furman, Salem; Sean Reith, Waterford; Craig Merriman

Guests: Dr. Stringfellow, Mike Belden, Joanne Lund, Jack Cross, Nat Brown, Donna Worst, Nikoleta McTigue, Alaina Clausen,

Not Attending and Not Represented: Westbrook

1. Call to order: 9:04 am
2. Inform members that in compliance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order No.7B and 9H, an audio recording of LEARN's monthly virtual board meetings will be posted on the LEARN website until further notice. Members are asked to identify themselves by name and district prior to speaking. Introduction of board members and guests.
3. Public comment: no public comment
4. Read/ Review of Correspondence: Letter from Maryam Elahi, Chair of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, presenting LEARN with a grant award of \$12,000 from the Neighbors for Neighbors fund.
5. Norwich Public School Superintendent, Dr. Kristen Stringfellow, shared "A Window into the Norwich Public Schools".
6. Consent Agenda Items:
 - 6.1 Approval of the Minutes – regular business meeting- October 8, 2020
 - 6.2 Budget – An update is included.
 - 6.3 Grant Applications – State Bilingual (Education) Program Grant, funded by the CT State Dept. of Education (\$13,020); Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement, *LEARN District Title III Grant*, funded by CSDE (\$32,649); Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement, *LEARN Region Title III Grant*, funded by CSDE, (\$90,750); Title III, Immigrant Children & Youth Education Grant, *LEARN District Title III Immigrant Youth Grant*, funded by CSDE (\$2,466); *Connecting through Technology*, funded by Neighbors for Neighbors, funding agency Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, awarded ((\$12,000)

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda by Daniels, second by Luty
Motion passed unanimously

7. Information from the Executive Director:

- 7.1 Hiring – New Hires’ & Resignations’ Data and Trend Reports are included in packet.
- 7.2 Distributions – June 2020 Financial Statements and correspondence from accounting firm, Blum Shapiro were provided electronically and via US mail
- 7.3 Executive Committee meeting minutes – October 23, 2020 (included in packet).
- 7.4 Student Support Services (SSS) Building Committee special meeting minutes – October 23, 2020 (included in packet).
- 7.5 Legislative update –
- 7.6 Agency update –
 - The CT Department of Administrative Services agreed to include 80% of the combined 2nd floor renovation and roof cost for the Ocean Ave LEARN^{ing} Academy grant application (to be submitted in December for consideration) to increase capacity for additional students
 - Nat Brown will be leaving as HR Director December 31, 2020. Christine Pemberton was approved by the Executive Committee as the new HR Director and will begin the transition on November 23, 2020.
 - The Friendship School Assistant Principal, Luz Rivera, has resigned to accept a Bilingual Director position with the Norwich Public School district. Retired RMMS principal, Paul Carolan, is serving as the Interim Assistant Principal. The process to fill the position is ongoing with the first round of interviews with parents and teachers taking place by the end of November.
 - Exploring new partnerships with National Regional Educational Laboratory, Corwin Press- professional learning, another partnership- Executive Director Ericson met with Mitchell College president, Dr. Espy, discussing potential work together. In discussions with Child and Family Agency in New London- goal to create an Integrated Health Program to support families whose children attend Ocean Avenue LEARN^{ing} Academy.
 - All Hazards School Security & Plan being compiled and ready for submission to DEMHS on Dec 1, 2020
 - RESC Alliance Directors have met with Commissioner of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, to discuss Early Childhood and Special Education and continue to explore ways the RESC Alliance can support the Department of Education on a state level.
 - LEARN has purchased a new software tool, “*Thought Exchange*” to assist districts with focus group work for engaging communities in shaping programs and learning of their concerns and priorities. LEARN can offer this tool at a reduced cost to our districts. Fee includes trained support staff to assist in creating questions to engage their communities.
 - Teacher Residency Program-. Dr. Donlon reached out to LEARN districts to assess participation interest in the Teacher Residency Program for the region. Program is a new innovative program to diversify the teaching staff across the region. Superintendents from Groton, Norwich, New London, East Lyme, Guilford, Ledyard, and Waterford have voiced interest. LEARN will be asking that the Governor to provide some funding support to assist with the approximate \$65,000 per candidate cost. LEARN will be investing \$45,000 to bring the program to the LEARN region.
 - LEARN’s new Online Learning Coordinator provided a Family Engagement Program, our first family night tech time, to 30 families in multiple languages, including Chinese, Haitian Creole and Spanish.

8. Old Business:
- 8.1 New policy # 9314.1: By Laws of the Board, “Remote Meetings”, Second Read comments- none will be submitted for vote in Nov- (Executive order to be retired Nov 9, 2020 but CABA Atty. Patrice McCarthy believes the order will continue)

Motion to approve new policy #9314.1: By Laws of the Board, “Remote Meetings”, by Mitchell, second by Linderman

Motion passed unanimously

- 8.2 New policy regarding “Face Masks/Face Coverings” will be applicable to the following sections within the LEARN Policy Manual (*procedures are included for your information*)
- 8.2a Policy # 4118.237: Certified Personnel, “Face Masks/Face Coverings”, Second Read
- 8.2b Policy # 4218.237: Non-Certified Personnel, “Face Masks/ Face Coverings”, Second Read
- 8.2c Policy # 5141.8; Students, Face Masks/Face Coverings, Second Read

Motion to approve new policies “Face Masks/Face Coverings” - #4118.237, #4218.237 and #5141.8 to be included in the certified/uncertified personnel and student sections of the LEARN Policy Manual by Volkmann, second by Luty

Motion passed unanimously

9. New Business:
- 9.1 Revised Policy, # 5005; “Students, Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment” (*changes in Title IX regulations/procedures are included*), First Read
- 9.2 Draft of Audit - Blum Shapiro CPA, Nikoleta McTigue and Alaina Clausen presented a summary of the June 2020 financial statements. Summary of audit: clean audit with the following recommendations: to move the capital improvement information from an excel spreadsheet to accounting software platform; Adopt a policy regarding EDiscovery for the IT Department which has been created and reviewed by Blum Shapiro. The policy will be brought before the board for a vote.

Motion to approve draft audit as presented by Mitchell second by Daniels
Motion passed unanimously

- 9.3 Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy Resolution Amended Grant Application (*for the renovation of and alterations to the upper level of the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy including site work, playgrounds, and roof*) requires 3 amended resolutions by the Dept. of Administrative Services (DAS) Office of School Construction Grants & Review (*project cost summary attachment included with agenda packet distribution*)

9.3a *First Motion to authorize the amended 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 Hagen
Motion approved unanimously**

9.3b Second Motion to Authorize Project Renovation Amount:

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 and alterations to the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy, a property located at 582/660 Ocean Avenue, New London, Connecticut, including site work, playgrounds, and roof 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 \$9,851,000

**Move to approve motion 2 as presented by Esposito, second by Daniels
Motion 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 Volkmann, second by Luty
Motion passed unanimously**

11. Roundtable/Future Agenda Items: District Updates; challenges & opportunities regarding pandemic
12. Adjournment: **Motion to adjourn** by Mitchell, second by Linderman
Motioned adjourned at 11:04am

Submitted by
Donna Worst
Executive Office Coordinator
November 12, 2020

MISSION STATEMENT: **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.