



MINUTES
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Thomaston High School Auditorium
Monday, June 14, 2021
7:00 p.m.

This meeting can be viewed live on [Board of Education YouTube Channel](#)

Mission Statement:

In a partnership of family, school and community, our mission is to **educate**, **challenge** and **inspire** each individual to excel and become a contributing member of society.

Board of Education Goals:

- 1) Spotlight on one staff member each Regular meeting (September - June)
 - 2) Conduct meetings that are efficient using hybrid meeting technology
 - 3) Provide relevant research and data prior to the formal presentation of that information to the Board.
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Members:

Beth Campbell, Chairperson
David Colavecchio, Vice Chairperson
Heather Patchell, Secretary
Roxy Fainer, Treasurer
Francine Coss, Superintendent

Nicole Rinaldi
Jennifer Nolan
Matthew VanOrmer
Sarah Ethier
Steven Carr

Student Representatives 2021 - 2022

Cesar Velez
Delaney Jose

1. Establishment of a Quorum and Call to Order (*Bylaws of the Board 9325.1 – Quorum*)

- 1.1. **Chairperson Beth Campbell** called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
 - 1.2. Board Members in Attendance In-person: **Chairperson Beth Campbell, Secretary Heather Patchell, Treasurer Roxy Fainer, Steven Carr, Matthew VanOrmer, Sarah Ethier, Nicole Rinaldi, Jennifer Nolan, Superintendent Francine Coss**
 - 1.3. Board Member Absent: **Vice Chairperson David Colavecchio**
 - 1.4. Student Representative In Attendance In-person: **Delaney Jose**
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1.5. Student Representative Absent : **Cesar Velez**

1.6. Others in Attendance In-person: Jessica Bedosky, Ashley Edwards, Michael Edwards

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda ▲▲▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9325.2 – Order of Business and Policy 1205 Community Relations – Participation by the Public – Agenda Format/Preparation and Dissemination)

Roxy Fainer motioned and Jennifer Nolan seconded to accept/approve the agenda of the Board of Education dated June 14, 2021 as presented.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

4. Public Participation ▲▲▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9325 – Meeting Conduct)

The Board welcomes public participation in accordance with Thomaston Board of Education Policy 9325 – Bylaws of the Board Meeting Conduct. Specifically, provision for permitting any individual/group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction shall be as follows:

- *After Connecticut Executive Order 7, the Thomaston Board of Education meetings are held virtually. Public participation for virtual meetings is permitted through written comment. Those who wish to make public comments during a virtual meeting of the Thomaston Board of Education shall:*
 - *Submit public comments at least one (1) hour before the scheduled start of the virtual meeting*
 - *Submit public comments via the Thomaston Board of Education Public Comment Google Form at <https://forms.gle/WtQ7LkbUdpWrsCwJ6>.*

NOTE: Written public comments that meet the criteria above shall be read aloud by a Board member during the Board of Education meeting.

4.1. Michael Edwards, 475 Hickory Hill Road, Thomaston

4.1.1. Mr. Edwards spoke to the Board members in regards to making face masks optional for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Edwards provided the Board with a copy of his public comment. A copy of Mr. Edwards' speech has been attached to the end of these minutes.

5. Approval of Minutes ▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9326 – Minutes)

5.1. Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes dated June 3, 2021

Roxy Fainer motioned and Jennifer Nolan seconded to accept/approve the Special Meeting Minutes of the Board of Education dated June 3, 2021 as presented.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

6. Recognitions ▲▲▲ (Policy 1170 – Community Relations/Recognitions of Students, Citizens, Staff Members, and Members of the Board of Education and Bylaws of the Board 9420 – Recognition of Accomplishments by Citizens, Students, Staff Members or Member of the Board)

6.1. Spring 2021 Board of Education Distinction Award - Thomaston Board of Education

6.2. Although this item was not on the agenda, **Chairperson Beth Campbell** recognized the Project Graduation committee members for their time and effort to ensure that the graduating Class of 2021 had a fun-filled evening following graduation. An immeasurable amount of time and effort was put in to ensure the graduates had a memorable and safe evening at Healthrax in Bristol.

7. Presentations ▲▲▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9410 – Public Announcement of Accomplishments) - None

8. Student Representatives Report ▲▲▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9160 – Student Representation on the Board of Education) - No report due to summer recess

9. Chairperson's Report ▲▲▲ (Bylaws of the Board 9121 – Office of the Chairperson

10. Superintendent's Report ▲▲▲ (Policy 2131 – Administration – Superintendent of Schools)

10.1. Correspondence

10.1.1. Superintendent

- 10.1.1.1. Letter to Beth Campbell, Board of Education Chairperson - Waive Policy 3323 to Purchase 159 Chromebooks for the 2021 - 2022 School Year
- 10.1.1.2. Effective School Solutions - Insights & Solutions - June 2021
- 10.1.1.3. Effective School Solutions - MINDBEAT - June 2, 2021
- 10.1.1.4. Request for Hearing in regards to the residency determination letter sent to the parents of student H -The residency determination letter for Student H was listed on the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education agenda
- 10.1.1.5. Response Letter to Parent of Student H regarding a request for hearing
- 10.1.1.6. Result of residency determination - student H will attend school in the new town of residence in the 2021 - 2022 school year
- 10.1.1.7. Thank you letter to Jessica Bedosky, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Assessment for her presentation at the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education regarding Rigorous Coursework Letter from Commission of Education and the pilot program for the Learning Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP)
- 10.1.1.8. Thank you letter to Susan Larson, Reading Interventionist, Thomaston Center School for her presentation at the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education regarding the Learning Enrichment Academic program (LEAP)
- 10.1.1.9. Thank you letter to Susan Dalka, Math Coach, grades K-6 for her presentation at the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education regarding the Learning Enrichment Academic program (LEAP)
- 10.1.1.10. Thank you letters to students for their presentation at the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education regarding the LEAP program.
 - 10.1.1.10.1. Matthew Johnson
 - 10.1.1.10.2. Leila Wiles
 - 10.1.1.10.3. Kaitlyn Bellemare
 - 10.1.1.10.4. Briana Belanger

10.1.2. Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)

- 10.1.2.1. Advocacy Highlights - May 28, 2021
- 10.1.2.2. Policy Highlights - May 28, 2021

10.1.3. Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS) - None

10.1.4. United States Department of Education (USDE) - None

10.1.5. Department of Public Health (DPH) - None

10.1.6. Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

- 10.1.6.1. Update: Summer Enrichment and After-School Funding Opportunities
- 10.1.6.2. Summer Fun for Children of All Abilities - June 2021
- 10.1.6.3. Connecticut's American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER) Guidance: Reimagining Schools to Transform Student's Lives
- 10.1.6.4. Guidance Regarding Special Education Recovery for Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 10.1.6.5. Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) School COVID-19 Screening Testing Program - Summer 2021

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- 10.1.6.6. Summer School Screening Testing Request Form
 - 10.1.6.7. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan Template
 - 10.1.6.8. 2021 Summer Learning Challenges
 - 10.1.6.9. 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Application 2021
 - 10.1.6.10. Letter to Board of Education Chairperson Beth Campbell regarding the balance of Superintendent Coss' vacation days.
- 10.2. Reports, Contracts, and General Information
- 10.2.1. Reports
 - 10.2.1.1. Administrators - June Reports were presented during the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting
 - 10.2.1.2. Enrollment
 - 10.2.1.2.1. 2020-2021 New England School Development Council (NESDEC) " Second Semester/Spring Enrollment Projection Checkup
 - 10.2.2. Contracts - None
 - 10.2.3. Grants - None
 - 10.2.4. General Information
 - 10.2.4.1. Fund-Raisers
 - 10.2.5. Personnel (*Policy 4112/4212 - Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified Appointment and Conditions of Employment*)
 - 10.2.5.1. New Hires - None
 - 10.2.5.2. Transfers/New Assignment
 - 10.2.5.2.1. Marissa Mendoza, Extended School Year (ESY) Special Educational Paraprofessional (temporary, part time) - Pupil Services - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.2. Sarah Ryan, Summer School Teacher - Enrichment Program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.3. Megan Fitzgerald, Extended School Year (ESY) Special Education Teacher (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.4. Diana Martinik, Extended School Year (ESY) Special Education Paraprofessional (temporary, part time) - Pupil Services - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.5. Crystal Longhi, Extended School Year (ESY) Special Education Paraprofessional (temporary, part time) - Pupils Services - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.6. Jessica LeClerc, Summer School Teacher - Enrichment Program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.7. Julia Kunic, Summer School Teacher - Enrichment Program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.8. Cheyenne Clark - Summer School Teacher - Enrichment program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.9. Erica Polanco - Summer School Teacher - Enrichment Program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.2.10. Sarah DeMatteis - Summer School Teacher - Enrichment Program (temporary, part time) - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 14, 2021
 - 10.2.5.3. Resignations
 - 10.2.5.3.1. Susan Dalka, Math Coach, Grades K-6 - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective

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- August 3, 2021
 - 10.2.5.3.2. Bryan Holmes, Science Teacher - Thomaston High School - Effective June 30, 2021
 - 10.2.5.4. Retirement
 - 10.2.5.4.1. Nanette Maturi, Teacher - Thomaston Public Schools - Effective June 30, 2021
 - 10.2.5.4.2. Diana Jonas, Grade 1 Teacher - Black Rock School - Effective June 10, 2021
 - 10.2.5.5. Renewals - None
 - 10.2.5.6. Stipends - 2021-2022 - None

Roxy Fainer motioned and Jennifer Nolan seconded to acknowledge the Superintendent's notification of Personnel, specifically, New Hires/Transfers/Retirements/ Resignations/Renewals/Stipends per Policy 4112/4212 Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Appointment and Conditions of Employment as presented.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

- 10.2.5.7. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (*Policy 4152.6/4252.6 – Personnel-- Certified/Non-Certified Personal Leaves Family and Medical Leave Act* - None
- 10.2.5.8. Interns and Student Teachers (*Policy 1212 – Community Relations – School Volunteers*) - None
- 10.2.5.9. Field Trips (out of state) (*Policy 6153 - Instruction Field Trips - Secondary Schools*) - None
- 10.2.5.10. Policy 3260 Business/Non-Instructional Operations Sales & Disposal of Books, Equipment & Supplies - None

11. Committee Reports ▲ (*Bylaws of the Board 9132 – Standing Committees and Bylaws of the Board 9133 - Special Committees/Advisory Committees*)

11.1. Business Manager Report

- 11.1.1. May Business Report - Report provided at the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education

11.2. Policy Committee (*Policy 2231 – Administration/Policy and Regulation Systems*)

11.2.1. Presentations

- 11.2.1.1. Raymond Rabuska - Teacher and Chemical Hygiene Officer - Thomaston High School - Chemical Hygiene Plan

11.2.2. Discussion

- 11.2.2.1. Policy 6172.1 Instruction - Gifted Children Program - Jessica Bedosky, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Steven Carr motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to fast track policy 6172.1 - Instruction - Gifted Children Program. Policy 6172.1 will be considered a first read tonight, a second read at the August 16, 2021 meeting, and an action item at the September 13, 2021 meeting so that the updated policy will be in place for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

Discussion: [Discussion Link](#)

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

- 11.2.2.2. Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols for Thomaston Public Schools

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- 11.2.2.2.1. Connecticut Department of Public Health Protocol Currently in Use in Thomaston Public School
 - 11.2.2.2.1.1. Connecticut Department of Public Health Protocol Currently in Use in Thomaston Public Schools
 - 11.2.2.2.1.1.1. Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) Guidance for the Cleaning and Disinfection of Schools during the COVID-19 (as of June 22, 2020)
 - 11.2.2.2.1.2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Protocols Currently in Use Elsewhere:
 - 11.2.2.2.1.2.1. Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility - Every Day and When Someone is Sick (as of April 5, 2021)
 - 11.2.2.2.1.2.2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene in Schools - A Toolkit for School Administrators (as of April 16, 2021)

[Superintendent Francine Coss' summary statement on the protocol for cleaning and disinfecting.](#)

First Read Items - None

11.2.3. Second Read Items

- 11.2.3.1. Policy 5132 - Students - Dress and Grooming
 - 11.2.3.1.1. Current Policy
 - 11.2.3.1.2. Proposed Changes (post-pandemic)
 - 11.2.3.1.3. Clean Copy

[Superintendent Francine Coss' comments regarding Policy 5132.](#)

11.2.4. Action Item

- 11.2.4.1. Policy 3524.31 - Participation in the National School Program
 - 11.2.4.1.1. Current Policy - Thomaston Public Schools
 - 11.2.4.1.2. Marked Up Copy
 - 11.2.4.1.3. Clean Copy
- 11.2.4.2. Policy 3542.34 - Nutrition Program
 - 11.2.4.2.1. Current Policy - Thomaston Public Schools
 - 11.2.4.2.2. Marked Up Copy
 - 11.2.4.2.3. Clean Copy
- 11.2.4.3. Policy 6142.101 - Student Wellness Policy
 - 11.2.4.3.1. Current Policy - Thomaston Public Schools
 - 11.2.4.3.2. Marked Up Copy
 - 11.2.4.3.3. Clean Copy

Steven Carr motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to accept/approve Policy 3524.31, Policy 3542.34, and Policy 6142.101 as presented.

Discussion: [Discussion Link](#)

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

- 11.2.4.4. Policy 6154 - Homework - Thomaston Public Schools
 - 11.2.4.4.1. Current Policy

11.2.4.4.2. Proposed Changes

11.2.4.4.3. Clean Copy

Steven Carr motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to accept/approve Policy 6154 as presented.

Discussion: [Discussion Link](#)

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

12. Enter Executive Session for the purpose of evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools and for the purpose of negotiation of the contract for the Superintendent of Schools ([Bylaws of the Board 9322 - Public and Executive Sessions](#))

12.1. Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

12.1.1. Policy 2400 Administration - Evaluation of the Superintendent

12.1.2. *Appendix B - Superintendent's Leadership Performance Areas and Specific Areas of Responsibility*

12.1.3. *Form 2 - Superintendent's Performance Evaluation Worksheets*

12.1.4. *Form #1 - Thomaston Public Schools Superintendent Evaluation*

12.1.5. *Form #2 - Thomaston Public Schools Superintendent Competency Standards*

12.2. Negotiation of the Contract for the Superintendent of Schools

Roxy Fainer motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to enter into Executive Session at 7:23pm. for the purpose of evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools and for the purpose of negotiation of the contract for the Superintendent of Schools.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

13. Exit Executive Session/Enter into Regular Session - Exit Executive Session at 8:42pm.

Roxy Fainer motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to extend Superintendent Francine Coss' contract for the 20232024 school year as discussed in executive session.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motion Carried: 8-0-0

14. Adjournment

Roxy Fainer motioned and Matthew VanOrmer seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Beth Campbell adjourned the meeting at 8:43pm.

Thomaston Board of Education Meeting

Monday, 06/14/21 7:00 P.M.

Public Comment from Michael Edwards of 475 Hickory Hin Road, THOMASTON :

Thank you for time, for your attention and for serving on the board.

"We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in any society, a life free from violence and **FEAR**"-Nelson Mandela

I am here on behalf of school aged children, some as young as 3 and up to about 18 years of **age**, who cannot defend themselves from the ongoing psychological from forced masking. This is my formal request to the Thomaston Board of Ed. And Thomaston Superintendent to make face masks for students **OPTIONAL** for the 2021-2022 school year.

In Spring 2020 Thomaston schools closed for in person for the remainder of the school year. Then in Fall 2020 they re-opened with In person (masks required) or distance learning for those parents who made the CHOICE to do so. Now In Fall 2021 the distance learning option is no longer available and parents still do not have a CHOICE on their child being masked or not?

I need the Board of Education to explain to me, without citing CDC Guidance or the CT Governor's emergency order, what data validates a mask mandate on school children moving forward? Rhetorical question because there is not an answer.

Show a Covid-19 Daily Infection Graph since start of spring 2020?

Can somebody explain to me how the same emergency orders that mandated face masks during Spring 2020 are still considered an **EMERGENCY** order today? What is the criteria for when public health is no longer in an emergency status? Do we need to ease the burden on hospital capacity? CHECK. Do we need to dramatically lower deaths related to the WUHAN LAB COVID-19 virus? CHECK. Do we need to wait for vaccines to become available to the most at risk population which is the elderly? CHECK. Do we need to wait until any adult can receive a vaccine should they want one? CHECK. Do we need to dramatically lower daily infection rates? CHECK. Achieve multiple weeks of sub 1% daily infection rate? Check. This is the longest standing **EMERGENCY** and 14 days to slow the spread I have ever heard of. In fact if you look at the map I believe we have "flattened the curve". As of today, CT, a state with a population of 3.565 million people, has 50 Covid-19 patients in the hospital and about 35 new positive cases daily. What is the goal line before children are unmasked?

School aged children have an extremely low risk of serious side effects from a Covid-19 infection. By the grace of GOD, their immune systems have allowed for them to have an extremely low risk of serious symptoms and death. The treatment of children by forcing masks in school is worse than the virus impact on children itself. Children should not fear this virus. Children should not fear giving other people

this virus. Children should not be in fear of being yelled out by school staff for taking their mask off. Its time to stop having our children live in **FEAR**.

I cannot wrap my head around how society is willing to allow large groups of older adults (such as a G7 summit), even though vaccinated. But children, whose natural immune defense which may be stronger than a seniors with vaccination, must remained masked.

We have several examples In human history to understand that any time people were treated for who they are or what they look like it can have horrible consequences. That is what is happening to our youth today. Because they have not been vaccinated, regardless of whether they are symptom free, they are being unilaterally treated like disease ridden persons in an infirmary. Unacceptable. Sickening.

What is the motivation for the continued masking? Is mandated masking a requirement to receive additional federal funding under the Covid-19 grants? Are we forcing masks on children solely for money? If that is the case then everyone involved in that decision to walk **away**. The data does not support that the continued masking is due to risk aversion. Is the plan that children will be masked until the vaccine are cleared all the way down to elementary age? What is the plan after that, only vaccinated children get to take off masks?

Also, 17 states have lifted mask mandates allowing local districts to set their own policies and six states have banned masking requirements out right. That's 23 states essentially with mask choice. Do the children in these states have superior genetics and immune systems then our children? How can they afford to drop the mask but we can not in CT. Is our state and town unable to provide healthy school environments on the level as these states? Or would you consider these states to be acting with "Neanderthal thinking".

Lastly, I do not expect any of you to fight for unmasking children on the basis of health issues as you are not medical professionals. However, have any educators, counselors, or administrators found that the quality of education or educational environment has been negatively impacted by masks. If this is the feeling of some educators, has this been communicated to the CT Department of Education? Two years in a row of forced masking for students will have long standing consequences.

Come fall I will have a 5 year old, 3 year old and 2 year old. Prior to this year I would have placed my children into Thomaston Public schools without thought. Now, just a couple months **away** from my oldest child starting kindergarten, I still have serious reservations about putting my children into the school system. I may home school and if that decision is made the district loses three future students, this is an absolute failure on the part of the state of CT and the Thomaston school system. Your asking me to take my 4 year old and increase his weekly mask time from pre school 3 days a week for 3 hours a day to 5 days a week to 7 hours with bus time added in. Your asking me to do something that as a parent, I feel is abusive to my child's development.

MAKE MASKS OPTIONAL. Do not be on the **wrong side** of history.

"Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future. Those who abuse them tear at the fabric of our society and weaken our nation."- Nelson Mandela

"The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children."-Nelson Mandela