



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

New Britain Board of Education Regular Meeting

September 6, 2022 - 6:00 PM | New Britain Educational Administration Center

Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order

Ms. Gayle Sanders-Connolly, President of the New Britain Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Board Members Present

Ms. Monica Dawkins, Mr. Merrill Gay, Mr. Anthony Kane, Mr. Joseph Listro, Mr. Matthew Marino, Ms. Annie Parker, Ms. Diana Reyes, Ms. Gayle Sanders-Connolly, Ms. Tina Santana

Board Members Absent

Mr. Anthony Cane

Student Representatives Present

Mr. Yousef Alwan, Mr. Tomas Portillo, Ms. Olivia Rutkowski

Reports

Superintendent Gasper began his report by welcoming the student representatives to their first Board meeting and thanking them for doing their civic duty and serving the community of New Britain. The Superintendent's Report is attached.

Student Representatives Report

Mr. Tomas Portillo presented a report on behalf of the Board of Education Student Representatives.

Executive Session

Ms. Santana motioned to go into executive session at 6:16 PM to discuss Item 3A (Discussion on Collective Bargaining Topics Regarding the Paraeducators Contract Renewal), seconded by Ms. Reyes. Superintendent Gasper, Attorney Christopher Engler, and Chief of Staff, Relations and Accountability Maryellen Manning were invited into executive session to discuss this item with the Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Continuation of Meeting

The meeting resumed in open session at 6:31 PM.

New Business

Personnel: Ratify Contract between the New Britain Board of Education and the New Britain Federation of Paraeducators, Local 2407, AFT-CT, AFL-CIO from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025

Submitted by Ms. Maryellen Manning

Ms. Santana motioned to approve Contract between the New Britain Board of Education and the New Britain Federation of

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Paraeducators, Local 2407, AFT-CT, AFL-CIO from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025, seconded by Mr. Listro. Ms. Sanders-Connolly abstained from voting. Motion carried by 8-0 vote.

Executive Session

Ms. Santana motioned to go into executive session at 6:33 PM to discuss Item 3C (Discussion on Documents Protected Under Attorney/Client Privilege), seconded by Ms. Reyes. Superintendent Gasper, Attorney David Bigger, Attorney Deanna McWeeney, Chief Finance Officer Kevin Kane, Director of Talent and Equity Nicole Sanders, and Chief of Staff, Relations and Accountability Maryellen Manning were invited into executive session to discuss this item with the Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Continuation of Meeting

The meeting resumed in open session at 7:04 PM.

Consent Agenda

(There were no objections and/or requests from Board members to pull the following items off the Consent Agenda. Therefore, these items were approved):

Operations: Approve Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting on August 15, 2022

Submitted by Ms. Kristin Salerno | No Committee Review

Operations: Approve Minutes from the Special Board of Education Meeting on August 27, 2022

Submitted by Ms. Kristin Salerno | No Committee Review

Operations: Approve Minutes from the Special Board of Education Meeting on August 29, 2022

Submitted by Ms. Kristin Salerno | No Committee Review

Operations: Accept Enrollment Report

Submitted by Ms. Maryellen Manning | No Committee Review

Personnel: Accept Report of Personnel Transactions and Extracurricular Appointments

Submitted by Ms. Maryellen Manning | No Committee Review

New Business

Partnerships: Approve Contract to Support Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative (\$90,000.00)

Submitted by Ms. Sondra Sanford | No Committee Review | Funding Source: CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE PARTNERS (CWP)

As part of the long-term plan to build the best in class manufacturing lab at New Britain High School, CSDNB continues to partner with CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE PARTNERS (CWP) via the Apprenticeship Initiative (ACI). Although this is a long-term initiative, we requested an annual contract to modify when and if necessary. The 2022-2023-year changes include a longer term of agreement and update course offerings and adding of credentials for students.

The MET at NBHS is an approved pre-apprenticeships program as identified by the Department of Labor. Students can earn up to 450 hours of training towards the apprenticeship. CWP has agreed, for the second year, to provide NBHS with funding to support this work.

The total is Up to \$90,000 based on students enrolled and the funding source is CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE PARTNERS N/A

Mr. Listro motioned to approve the contract to support Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative in the amount of \$90,000.00, seconded by Ms. Santana. Motion carried unanimously.

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Partnerships: Approve MOU between Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA) and Consolidated School District of New Britain for SMART Recovery Groups for Teens, Friends, and Families at NBHS

Submitted by Ms. Sondra Sanford | No Committee Review | Funding Source: Community Mental Health Affiliates, Inc. (CMHA)

The purpose of this MOU is to outline and define expectations for the SMART Recovery Groups for Teens, Friends & Family facilitated by Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA) at New Britain High School after school hours. CMHA will provide resources and support to students and families at least 1 time per week. This program was piloted last year, CMHA is requesting to add another staff member to this program due to the increase in need.

There is no cost to CSDNB.

The total is \$0.00 and the funding source is Community Mental Health Affiliates, Inc. (CMHA, Inc.) N/A.

Ms. Reyes motioned to approve MOU between Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA) and Consolidated School District of New Britain for SMART Recovery Groups for Teens, Friends, and Families at NBHS, seconded by Mr. Gay. Ms. Santana abstained from voting. Motion carried by 8-0 vote.

Academics: Approve Purchase Order and Bid Waiver for Instructional Coaching Group Training by Instructional Coaching Group for Building Administrators and Instructional Coaches (\$22,900.00)

Submitted by Ms. Lara Bohlke | No Committee Review | Funding Source: Local Academics-Software/Tech 10109622004-53320

Instructional Coaching Group Training

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future.

The Consultants at Instructional Coaching Group will provide 3 days of high-quality training for our Instructional Coaches and Building Administrators throughout the course of the year, in addition to 2 ½ days of virtual ‘embedded coaching’ in which coaches set the agenda and engage in a deep dive to address common areas for growth. The in-person sessions (titled, ‘Better Leaders’) have been bundled to save on transportation costs so that two sessions are presented in one two-day visit. The second day of a visit is less expensive than the first day since the transportation costs are incorporated into the first day. (The sessions will be delivered in person in the newly renovated media center at New Britain High School.)

CSDNB has committed to instructional coaching as a high leverage strategy to improve instruction across the district. Our partnership with Instructional Coaching Group has brought a wealth of resources, backed by over 40 years of research and practice into what moves the needle in instructional coaching. We are requesting to extend our partnership into a second year. In the 2021-22 school year, we increased our instructional coaching staff significantly. The training the coaches received last year was also by Instructional Coaching Group and was more extensive, equipping them for coaching. Thanks to this partnership, the Department of Academics was able to bring new coaches hired for 2022-23 up to speed by sending them individually to foundational workshops and accessing virtual modules on how to facilitate coaching cycles. Year two training was decided upon collaboratively with the Talent department to ensure building administrators have the foundational understanding to support and leverage instructional coaching in their buildings to lead to better student outcomes. Training will focus on A deeper understanding of leadership, Actions coaches can take to partner with teachers to set and hit goals, Specific actions administrators can take to support coaches effectively

Per Board Policy 3324, the bid procedure was waived for the following reason: Services requiring specific expertise (consultants, specialist, clinicians) where there are not several providers offering similar services. Instructional Coaching Group is the only provider who offers training in the specific coaching model used by CSDNB, which is focused on student-facing goals and outcomes. This group was also recommended by Irene Parisi with the CSDE as a high leverage instructional coaching model. The total cost of this purchase is \$22,900.00.

The specific descriptions of the chosen workshops are in the contract linked below. It will be paid through Local, Academics, In

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Service (10109622004 53320).

The total is \$22,900.00 and the funding source is Local Academics-Software/Tech 10109622004 53320.

Mr. Listro motioned to approve purchase order and bid waiver for instructional coaching group training by Instructional Coaching Group for Building Administrators and Instructional Coaches in the amount of \$22,900.00, seconded by Ms. Reyes. Motion carried unanimously.

Academics: Approve Purchase Order for Learning Ally Subscription (\$22,229.60)

Submitted by Ms. Lara Bohlke | No Committee Review | Funding Source: Local Academics-Software/Tech 101096110001-57350

Per Board Policy 3324, the bid procedure was waived for the following reason: Textbook purchases or other curricular materials used in place of traditional textbooks (such as electronic programs, online resources.) Learning Ally is the only platform that offers human-read audio for schools.

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future. Over the course of the past 3 years, we have renewed curriculum in English Language Arts across K-12. The K-8 ELA curriculum was reviewed and approved by the Board in May. As part of the implementation of these renewed units, support texts and resources that support students' understanding of the standards through a culturally responsive lens (using mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors) is essential. Small group reading is foundational to literacy instruction at the K-5 level. Both novel studies and book clubs are included in our renewed curriculum at the upper levels. In order to provide these readers, novels and book clubs, we purchased texts for each building that enable students to read to, read silently, read collectively (novel studies) and to read in small groups, choosing a text of interest (book clubs). Making these texts accessible in a variety of ways is one way we try to ensure equity and inclusion. This resource provides all K-12 students with access to books, both fiction and nonfiction to increase their reading stamina, vocabulary understanding and comprehension, all skills that are critical to literacy proficiency.

To ensure usage to lead to better student outcomes, we have an implementation plan that will be managed in partnership with Pupil Services. Our coaching staff will provide support for teachers in their classrooms to get students enrolled and ready to read. We will monitor student usage throughout the year and gather student feedback on the platform as well. It will be interesting to potentially seek correlation with Learning Ally usage and iReady reading scores at the time of each benchmark.

This quote is for 1 year access to Learning Ally for all students K-12. 'The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a multi-sensory reading accommodation that levels the playing field for students who struggle to read due to a reading deficit, providing them the opportunity to achieve in school and in life. Gaining access to the books they want to read—and the books they need to read—in an easy-to-absorb format can be a game changer.' Learning Ally uses 'human-read audio' to engage readers and provides text in written form for readers to follow along. While we utilized Learning Ally this past year in grades 6-12 (and used Epic in grades K-5), expanding our offering of Learning Ally to Grades K-5 allows for equity, especially for students who require human-read audio as an accommodation. Offering options for exposure to text is good for all students. Some students may prefer to have the support provided by the audio and highlighting features available in Learning Ally, while other students require the aforementioned supports due to below grade-level reading proficiency. By making this tool available for all students, we reduce the likelihood that any students feel uncomfortable taking advantage of the support available to them, normalizing the access to support. New features added for school year 2022-2023 include:

- *Teachers can add books to their own bookshelf to preview before teaching
- *Students can read offline while using the web app, read.learningally.org
- *Library Managers, a new role within the program, can manage the books available in students' libraries
- *Readers can easily search, browse, and add new books directly in the app

A 1-year subscription to Learning Ally is \$22,229.60.

The total cost of this purchase is \$22,229.60 for a 1-year license and it will be paid through Local, Academics, Software-Tech

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Related. It will be paid through Local, Academics, Software/Tech (101096110001 57350). The Pupil Services Department may be doing some cost-sharing with us as well (between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year - TBD). In the meantime, Academics has accounted for the full amount in their budget.

The total is \$22,229.60 for a 1 year license and the funding source is Local Academics-Software/Tech 101096110001 57350.

Ms. Parker motioned to approve purchase order for Learning Ally Subscription in the amount of \$22,229.60, seconded by Ms. Santana. Motion carried unanimously.

Academics: Approve Purchase Order for ExploreLearning Gizmos Subscription (\$16,988.00)

Submitted by Ms. Lara Bohlke | No Committee Review | Funding Source: Local Academics-Software/Tech 101096110001-57350

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future.

Gizmos (by ExploreLearning) contains the world's largest library of science virtual labs and simulations. These interactive science virtual labs and simulations are applicable across grades 3-12 with over 400 Gizmos aligned to the latest standards. Gizmos help educators bring powerful new STEM learning experiences to the classroom by using an inquiry-based approach to learning that has been validated by extensive research as a highly effective way to build conceptual understanding. When teachers effectively integrate Gizmos into instruction they can take learning to new levels. Students are provided the opportunity to graph, measure, compare, predict and prove. That's hundreds of opportunities where students don't just act like scientists, they are.

CSDNB began our implementation of Gizmos after the start of the year last year at the 6-12 level in science after most professional development had been planned and scheduled. Usage was very high at the high school level and lighter at the middle school level. To address this, we provided professional development at the start of this year for the middle school science teachers, ensuring each teacher had a Gizmos account and understood how to access it. We also have included direct links to Gizmos in our middle school curriculum documents this year to increase ease of access. Our subscription expires on 9.30.22 so we are hoping to renew now to ensure continuity. We are requesting a 1 year license so we can reassess our usage at that time. If, as we anticipate, with increased training and accountability for use in the curriculum, our usage increases, we will look to renew again. If that is not the case, we will not. While multi-year renewals are available (3 year subscription saves \$16347.50 and 5 year subscription saves \$4942.50), they must be paid up front, so from a sustainability standpoint, it makes sense to budget the one year cost from our Local budget so we know we can keep it and not try to fund a large bill in the future.

Per Board Policy 3324, the bid procedure was waived without Board approval for the following reason: Textbook purchases or other curricular materials used in place of traditional textbooks (such as electronic programs, online resources.) The total cost of this purchase is \$16,988.00. It will be paid through Local, Academics, Software/Tech (101096110001 57350).

The total is \$16,988.00 and the funding source is Local Academics-Software/Tech 101096110001 57350.

Ms. Dawkins motioned to approve purchase order for ExploreLearning Gizmos Subscription in the amount of \$16,988.00, seconded by Ms. Santana. Motion carried unanimously.

Operations: Approve Budget Transfers – Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Submitted by Mr. Kevin Kane | No Committee Review

Below are budget transfers for Board consideration and approval:

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Budget Unit	Account	Department	Description	From	To
101096122004	56410	ACAD	Textbooks	\$223,000.00	
101096122004	56430	ACAD	Periodicals	2,000.00	
101096122004	53320	ACAD	In-Service		\$40,000.00
101096110001	55302	ACAD	Licenses & Fees		21,000.00
101096122004	56110	ACAD	Instructional Supplies		156,000.00
101096110001	58100	ACAD	Dues & Fees		8,000.00
Total				\$225,000.00	\$225,000.00

Re-allocation of funds to meet current estimates for 2022-2023

Budget Unit	Account	Department	Description	From	To
101096122004	53321	ACAD	Testing Services	\$6,000.00	
101096122004	54400	ACAD	Rentals	3,000.00	
101096122004	55100	ACAD	Transportation	1,000.00	
101096122004	55800	ACAD	Travel Reimbursement	3,000.00	
101096110001	57350	ACAD	Software/Tech		\$13,000.00
Total				\$13,000.00	\$13,000.00

Re-allocation of funds to meet current estimates for 2022-2023

Mr. Listro motioned to approve budget transfers for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, seconded by Ms. Santana. Motion carried unanimously.

Operations: Accept FINAL Financial Report and Approve Budget Transfers – June 30, 2022

Submitted by Mr. Kevin Kane | No Committee Review

The final Financial Report and budget transfers ending June 30, 2022 were presented.

Ms. Santana motioned to accept the final Financial Report of June 30, 2022 and approve final budget transfer as of June 30, 2022, seconded by Ms. Reyes. Motion carried unanimously.

Closing and Adjournment

Ms. Parker motioned to adjourn at 7:09 PM, seconded by Ms. Reyes. Motion carried unanimously.

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Superintendent's Report

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Superintendent's Office

In the first two days of school, I was able to visit sixteen sites and nineteen schools. I'd like to thank our parents for being so cooperative with the return of the Board's uniform policy. As I visited the schools, my estimate is that compliance with the uniform policy is well over 95% in these first two days.

I'd like to thank all of the members of our staff, elected officials, Mayor Stewart, Chief Ortiz, Chief Chute, members of the New Britain Police and Fire Departments, representatives from CCSU, and many others who came out to support our students on their first day. As a newcomer to this tradition, I found it heartwarming and a wonderful way for our kids to get off to a great start.

Our facilities and operations departments continue to finish important projects like classroom projectors and ADA upgrades at New Britain High School.

I'd like to thank Board President Sanders-Connolly, Mayor Stewart, Commissioner Russell-Tucker, and Secretary Cardona for their contributions to our convocation ceremonies. We are a great team and we will collaborate to benefit New Britain's kids.

I'd like to thank the Board for your trust and support in approving my recommended changes to our central office organizational chart and job descriptions. Everyone has already begun to transition to their new roles.

Personnel and Talent Development

- Talent office is scheduling a fall Para-educator recruitment fair in September. Last year's fair resulted in well over a dozen para hires.
- The office will also be communicating a Dine and Discuss Series for teachers as a strategy for retention, arming them with tools within a PLC structure.
- Affinity Groups have been scheduled for this year's DEI book study which will continue to enhance district leadership's inclusive practices throughout our schools and across the district.
- Recruitment and Placement Specialists will be supporting admins with teacher recruitment, including setting up interviews to support hiring practices at the start of the school year.
- Teaching Assistants are supporting classrooms for periods of time where certified teachers are not yet hired as we begin the school year.



Superintendent's Report

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Facilities Department

- **Schools were ready for first day of class**
 - water fountains and hand dryers operational
 - summer projects and cleaning completed
 - grounds work happening as we speak
- **NBHS ADA Project:**
 - We are at 95% completion as the permanent doors and millwork are in.
 - Newfield is cleaning the areas they've renovated
- **Chamberlain Project:**
 - We are at 70% completion and on target to complete the project end of Dec, early January 2023

Finance Department

- All required year-end financial reporting for fiscal year 21-22 has been completed and submitted to the State Department of Education

IT Department

- Projector Installations Continuing (shifting to second shift once more when school starts) to complete work at Smith, Vance, and Slade. We are following up on rooms with installation issues with the company.
- PowerSchool has been migrated to cloud hosting. Most services are back online. We are working with PowerSchool and any other services still not working correctly since the migration. (My School Bucks Portal through PowerSchool is still not working correctly)



Superintendent's Report

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Pupil Services

- **Para-Educators:**

On August 25th, Para Educators received training and information on the following topics:

- The new Paraeducator evaluation process.
- Rights and Responsibilities under Connecticut law.
- Restorative Practices
- Nursing and Physical Therapy: Supporting Students with special needs.

- **Certified Staff Pupil Services:**

August 25th & 29th: 260 staff persons participated in two days of training on IEP quality development.

August 29th: 21 staff persons participated on the new CTSED's 504 platform and information session.

August 30th: All special education staff trained on the new CTSEDs IEP platform.

- **Building Administration:**

August 23rd: All building leaders received PD on the following topics:

- Department and legislative updates
- Manifestation Determinations PPTs.
- Restraints & Seclusions
- Expulsion timeline.
- CTSEDs.