

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE
REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER
April 24, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.**

2017-2018 Board of Education Goals

To engage in a cycle of continuous improvement to ensure all students are educated with high standards and achieve at the highest levels of learning in the Montville Public Schools

Item 1. Call to order

Board Chair Robert Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Montville High School Library/Media Center. Board members present were; James Wood, Sandra Berardy, Colleen Rix, Steven Loiler, Monica Pomazon, Daniel Boisvert, Joseph Aquitante, Colleen Rix and Dana Ladyga.

Also present were Assistant Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Administrators, Jason Daly, Mary Jane Dix, Denise Dunning, Amy Espinoza, William Klinefelter, Jill Mazzalupo, Heather Sangermano, Jennifer Russell, Rob Alves, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Jennifer LeMay and Student Board Representative G Chouhan and Joshua Archibald.

Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

Motion: To move item 7J to item 12 and item 12 to item 13.

Proposed by:	Colleen Rix
Seconded by:	Joe Aquitante
Vote:	Carried (8-0)

Presentation: A) Montville Marvels

It is recommended that the Board of Education acknowledge the following students, teachers, and community members in the areas noted:

Leonard J. Tyl Middle School: For her consistently outstanding academic work, her motivation to push herself beyond grade level expectations and her positive peer relations; Nina Wang.

For her high achievements as a student, consistently going beyond expectations in all of her work, she is an excellent researcher, her writing reflects the skills of a high school student; Addie Concascia.

The awards were presented by Principal M.J. Dix and board member Dana Ladyga.

Palmer Building: Michael Kutneski was absent and will be honored at the May board meeting.

Montville High School: For her continuous support and guidance of many non-English speaking students at Montville High School; Mrs. Vicky Clifford.

For his outstanding contributions and support of the students and programs at Montville High School; Rocky Stone.

For their outstanding performances throughout the year, culminating with a Connecticut State Championship; Montville High School Cheerleading Team.

For her outstanding academic achievement; Lily Wang.

The awards were presented by Acting Principal Heather Sangermano and Acting Athletic Director Rob Alves and Board Member Sandra Berardy.

Presentation: B) Readers Workshop; Mohegan Elementary School – Principal Will Klinefelter

Principal Klinefelter and Mrs. Zablonksi reported on the Readers Workshop initiative in the district. The district moved to Eureka Math a few years ago but the reading scores remained stagnant which led us to examine our reading program hopes of in improving comprehension. A committee was formed to look at different reading program options. The committee ultimately chose to pilot Teachers College Reading Workshop program. This program required the development of book rooms at each elementary school with a large number of books. The number of books required is great because the idea is to offer books at every reading level and a broad range of subjects to ensure the students have multiple choices which are of interest to them. The books are organized by reading level and entered into a database to allow for tracking by barcode system. The element of student choice makes a huge difference for the students, they are excited to read because they choose the books. We had a fifth grade student, previously a reluctant reader, point out symbolism in a book, it was so refreshing to see this level of excitement from a student who was previously intimidated by reading. Maggie Roberts has spent time at each school modeling lessons for the staff. Students are assessed three to four times per year in fluency, comprehension and ongoing analysis. One grade level has already seen a 20% increase to their reading levels.

Item 3. Hearing of delegates and citizens (regarding agenda items only).

Douglas Funk, 866 Chesterfield Road. Congratulations to the cheerleaders and to Rocky. June 25th graduation, I have an issue with this because many families have guests coming from out of town and they will need to travel home. Please consider changing this date.

Item 4: Letters and communications.

A letter was received from Robert Manfredi and read during the board meeting on Thursday, April 19.

Item 5. Approval of Consent Calendar.

Motion: That the Board approves the Consent Calendar.

Proposed by: Joe Aquitante
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

Item 6. Unfinished Business.

- a. Budget meetings
 - Public Hearing on Board of Education Budget, April 26, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Montville High School Auditorium.

Item 7. New business.

- a. **Consideration and action to schedule a reception to honor its retirees on May 15, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. and approve the writing of resolutions for retirees.**

Motion: That the Board approves the reception to honor its retirees and approves the writing of resolutions.

Proposed by: Colleen Rix
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga

- b. **Consideration and action to set tuition rates for 2018-2019 as follows:**

	<u>General Education</u>	<u>Special Education</u>
Elementary	\$10,238	\$27,260*
Middle School	\$10,721	\$26,110*
High School	\$11,183	\$25,005*
Pre-School		\$26,224*

Palmer Building	
PBL Program	\$36,096*
Pathways Program	\$50,970*
Other Services	Negotiable

****Additional costs may be assessed based on the student's individual educational program (IEP)**

Motion: That the Board approves the tuition rates for 2018-2019 as recommended.

Proposed by: Monica Pomazon
Seconded by: Steven Loiler
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

Monica; How were these increases to the rates established? The cost of living increase was used as is prior practice. Do these rates include transportation? No.

c. Consideration and action to authorize the superintendent to apply for inter district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

Motion: That the Board authorizes The Superintendent to apply for inter district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

Proposed by: Dan Boisvert
Seconded by: Colleen Rix
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

Monica Pomazon- Is this something new? No, this is done every year.

d. Consideration and action to change the 2017-18 school calendar, with June 22, 2018, as the last day of school for students.

Motion: That the board approves the change to the 2017-2018 school calendar, with June 22, 2018, as the last day of schools for students.

Proposed by: Joe Aquitante
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon
Vote: Carried 8-0

Laurie: as has been past practice, we would reduce to 180 student days. This will not change the graduation date of June 25th.

- e. Consideration and action to confirm the date of Monday, June 25, 2018, 6:00 p.m. for Montville High School graduation.**

Motion: That the Board confirms the date of Monday, June 25, 2018, 6:00 p.m. for Montville High School Graduation.

Proposed by: Monica Pomazon
Seconded by: Joseph Aquitante
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

- f. Consideration and action to cancel the Regular Board of Education meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 17, 2018.**

Motion: That the board approves the cancellation of the Regular Board of Education meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 17, 2018.

Proposed by: Jim Wood
Seconded by: Steven Loiler
Vote: Does not carry (vote 0-8)

- g. Discussion and action to set a date and time for the Board of Education Retreat.**

Motion: That the board tables the motion until the May 15, 2018 meeting.

Proposed by: Sandra Berardy
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga
Vote: Carried 8-0

- h. Appraisal, Montville High School Boys Soccer trip to Ludlow Vermont from August 31, 2018 to September 3, 2018; sixteen students.**
- i. Consideration and action to approve the motion that the contract of employment of John Batista, not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise this individual in writing of this action. (3 – Budget/Resources).**

Proposed by: Steven Loiler
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried 8-0

Acting Superintendent Pallin – This is a position that we were unable to save through retirements, it is with great regret that this position must be eliminated based on the budget decisions you had made regarding high school scheduling.

It is anticipated that the board will meet in executive session to discuss a personnel matter, including a discussion on appointing an acting superintendent.

Item 8. Committee and liaison reports.

a. Policy Committee (James Wood).

The Policy Committee meeting was cancelled.

b. Educational Evaluation Committee (Dan Boisvert)

The E&E meeting was cancelled for this evening.

c. Montville Education Foundation. (Colleen Rix)

I was unable to attend the meeting. Keith Urban tickets are still on sale.

d. LEARN

This committee remains vacant. If anyone is interested, please let Bob know.

e. CABE/NSBA (Robert Mitchell).

Attended the NSBA conference two weeks ago. Next year the conference will be in Philly and easily reachable by the board. There is lots of PD, 16-18 workshops and it is very worth while.

f. Atlantic Broadband Communications Advisory Council (Monica Pomazon).

There is no April meeting, the next meeting is in May.

g. Montville Youth Services Bureau (Daniel Boisvert).

Meeting took place on April 12. We are in the middle of a opioid prevention campaign which was funded by a \$5,000 grant, we held a presentation on the opioid crisis and will fund training for the Montville PD on the use on Narcan with the remaining funds. We are selling tickets to Thomas Rhett, who will be here in September. Tickets are for the Sky Box and include dinner.

h. Student Board Representatives.

G. Chouhan

The most recent event that affects about 1/4th of the student body at Montville High were the SATs. Today, the junior class took the SATs and I believe with all the effort and studying that the teachers and students have been showing in the past few months, a majority of the class did well on the SATs. Most juniors have been studying for a couple of months and even during their spring break. Other than studying for SATs over spring break, many students had become aware of the events occurring within our school system. These events were brought to light for not only the students but also many parents. How the student body is coping with these events is varying. Students' opinions have been significantly different but I think one of the major concerns is how the school system is being seen by the rest of the world. The students should focus on achieving great things and reestablishing the name and pride of the school system. In order to do this, the students need to understand that they can talk to an adult in the school system about any issue that they have witnessed or been a part of. It's important for the faculty also, to make the students comfortable with telling them anything and assuring that the students reach their full potential. Another concern for the students is the effect that the changes of administration would have on their school lives. I think the easiest way to overcome this concern is simply time. With time, the students will become more accustomed to any changes and to the new administrators. Our school system should stand together and stand as one to insure the strength of our schools.

Joshua Archibald

Student Report

In light of recent events, it may appear to some that a Montville High School education is of a lower caliber than previously believed. I'm not going to argue one way or the other about those events and their interpretations. Instead, I want to talk about the great things that have happened at MHS this school year.

This school year:

- Greg Clark represented MHS at the national level for indoor track.
- Alexis DeLucia was selected to attend nationals for lacrosse.
- I had the honor of being the second MHS student in three years to qualify for the All-National Honor Choir.
- Holly Richmond submitted an application to workshop her original play at two different festivals.
- Various sports and music programs have sent students to state-level competitions and festivals.
- The cheerleading team placed fourth-best in all of New England.
- Students planned a blood drive that yielded 17 pints of blood despite a power outage that sent them home early.
- Students demonstrated civic engagement at an unprecedented level, engaging in discussions about policy and the future of the world.

- The choir program won seven awards at a festival in Annapolis, Maryland, including the top choir score for the festival.

This August, Montville High School is sending one student to MIT, another to the University of Pennsylvania, another to Yale, and yet another to Harvard. Many students will be attending other postsecondary institutions as well, ranging from the University of Connecticut to Clemson University.

There is no shortage of positive activity occurring at Montville High School at any given time. There are many good teachers and mentors, and there are many students doing their best to make our nation and the world a better place.

So while it is important to correct errors and inform the public about the negative parts of our schools, we must always remember that there are many wonderful people doing their best every day at Montville High School. We cannot ignore the good and focus only on the bad when the good is so plentiful. Let the good carry us into the future and the bad be defeated by the tradition of justice. I believe we are on a course to do that, and better. Thank you.

i. Chair's Remarks.

I had planned remarks but I could not have said it better than our student board representatives.

j. Other.

Monica Pomazon – I had the privilege of attending Cozy Book Night at Mohegan Elementary School, it was a great event and the students were very excited to go from classroom to classroom to hear books being read. I commend Mohegan for putting on this event.

Item 9. Superintendent's Report.

a. Report from Director of Special Services – Mrs. Paula LaChance

We continue to have movement within the Special education department. As you know it is very fluid with new students coming into district and others moving within the district to special programs. To that end we have had several new students enroll which has taken me into the schools to observe, consult and work with staff and families. This month I also conducted observations of our intern students working at Mohegan Sun through our Transition Program. It is wonderful to see the progress these students have made since the beginning of the year. We have one student that will be graduating and will be offered a permanent position at Mohegan Sun.

Other tasks I have focused on this month include Handle with Care Training. We held a training in April and will have another one on May 11 during Professional Development. I also interviewed for district wide substitute nurses this month and have offered a position to one candidate. This will give us a total of three substitutes to cover should the need arise.

Last but certainly not least I continue to work on programming and staffing for ESY.

b. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Mrs. Pallin

I met with the staff at Tyl Middle School and both the staff and students at Montville High School on Monday. I have set up mandated reporter training which is required for all active employees including substitute teachers, as a refresher. This training must be completed before Friday and staff will not be eligible to work beyond Friday if it has not been completed. Substitutes throughout the district are required to complete the training. Administrator's will have school climate training and mandated reported training with legal counsel. The water project continues to move forward, the tank has been approved and the pipeline drawings came in on Friday and are currently being reviewed. The high school took the SAT's today and the A.P. exams begin next week.

I have receive an overwhelming number of emails from parents, teachers, students and the community members as well as offers of support from area districts, the State Department and former superintendents.

Item 10. Information Items.

None

Item 11. Citizens comments (non-agenda items only).

Kristen Forde, 559 Raymond Hill Road, Uncasville

I have been a substitute in Montville for twelve years, most recently a tutor. I am very proud of our schools. I have been working mostly in elementary schools. I would like to reassure parents that Montville substitutes are your neighbors. We are articulate, caring people who put the needs of the students above everything else. The first thing that I do when I enter a room is to ensure that I have the key to lock the door from the inside, I look for the corner where we will hide if we have a lockdown drill, and I also am aware of where the fire evacuation route is. In Montville, lesson plans are always provided. The teachers work together, they take care of each other, whether you are an associate, a principal an assistant superintendent, even the board. The board was welcoming. Not taking political sides, this is a human side. When your students are put on a bus and sent to school, rest assured these teachers care about your children. It is cool to live in the community where you work. Montville is a great community. I have to be honest I would lay down my life for your children if I had to. This is personal, the media has sensationalized us, I am not going to use those terms and feed into it. I never thought when I graduated college \$60,000 in debt that I would be a substitute teacher but it has

allowed me to stay at home with my kids and I can't imagine ever doing anything else. I want to say thank you to the board. Laurie, you have done such a great job. I am a Montville substitute teacher and I am really proud.

Alan Seals, 99 Cottonwood Lane

I have had a great experience at Murphy, we have a great principal. You mentioned the out of town students and the revenue, is there any way to move that money from the general funds to the schools? Murphy struggles financially, having no field trips takes away from students. You discussed the mandated reporter training, this training will not help with a lack of common sense.

Nola Waite – Bus Driver 4 Tory Drive

I had to complete mandated reporter training today. This has been a requirement since 2011, and I just learned I am a mandated reporter. Why wasn't I told this before, and why haven't we ever been trained?

Cindy Angell, 239 Connecticut Blvd., Oakdale

If we are mandated reporters to protect our children, parents are left in the dark? There has to be a better way to hear if your child is interviewed by administration than from your child. I expect to hear from Laurie Pallin tomorrow.

Ed Ricupero, 217 Massapeag Road, Uncasville

Read the following letter

To Whom it May Concern,

I respectfully submit this letter of support for Mr. Jeffrey Theodoss. I will not comment on the events that occurred in the fall, as I did not witness them personally, therefore it would be inappropriate for me to comment. I will, however, tell you about my personal interactions and communications with Mr. Theodoss.

I have gotten to know Mr. Theodoss in both a personal and professional manner over the last five years that my two children have attended Montville High School. I have served on the Governance Board for the last three years over which Mr. Theodoss presides. In these meetings, Mr. Theodoss presents issues and topics for the group to discuss and input our opinions as to how to solve the problem or work towards a resolution. These topics range from class rank, to supervised study hall, to how to prevent the loss of 20 teacher jobs and cut the school budget by \$1,000,000. There was no topic too small or too large to discuss, as Mr. Theodoss viewed ALL topics pertaining to his students as important. I grew to admire him greatly over the course of my time on the Board, both personally and professionally. Many times I came home and asked my daughters if they

were aware of just how lucky they were to have a principal who cared so passionately about ALL of the students at MHS. They shared my belief that Mr. Theodoss is hands-down one of the best school administrators that the school had ever had.

Mr. Theodoss is a kind and gentle leader and sets an example for both students and faculty to emulate. I admire the way that he would speak in the Board meetings about how he wanted to make sure that the school reached all of the student body to enable and facilitate their becoming not only the best student that they could be, but also the best person that they could be. He was acutely aware that not every student was an academic scholar, but he continually asked us, "What can we do for the kids to prepare them for life as an adult and to help them to become a productive member of society?" It was important to him that the courses offered at Montville High would benefit ALL types of students. Advanced Placement and ECE classes were just as important, in his eyes, as the computer, technology and cooking classes. He wanted the education that the students received at MHS to be topnotch. I firmly believe that he has succeeded.

As a Montville High School graduate myself, I can tell you that I received an excellent education that has allowed me to have a career that allows me to support my family and contribute to society in a positive way. But, the education that both of my children have received under the leadership of Mr. Theodoss has far exceeded my own education and has allowed for both of them to enroll in college feeling prepared and ready for success. They have received a well-rounded education and they have gained the skills to succeed in higher education and in life. I credit their teachers with teaching them those skills, but I am well aware that the trickledown effect of Mr. Theodoss's skillset as a leader of the teaching staff is equally responsible for their success. His philosophy of allowing the teachers to do what they do best and supporting their efforts without micromanaging has allowed for a staff that feels empowered and respected as professionals, and personally. Their positivity is reflected to the students on a daily basis. As a result, my children feel valued, supported and capable of success in whatever direction their future leads them. I have no doubt that every parent at Montville High School feels the same way.

If you have had the privilege to know Mr. Theodoss as I have, then you are aware that he is both an exceptional educator and exceptional person. I feel honored to have been able to serve on the Governance Board with Mr. Theodoss and I have learned first-hand about the challenges and difficulties in education today. I have also witnessed Mr. Theodoss work tirelessly to overcome these challenges, one at a time, in order to benefit the student body as a whole. Mr. Theodoss is an asset to the profession of teaching and to the town of Montville. My children and myself are better people because our lives have felt the impact of Jeffrey Theodoss.

Respectfully,
Amy Ricupero, PharmD, Med

Donna and David Swinburne, 256 Chesterfield Road, Oakdale

Sent two letters to the board. Try and highlight some of the issues we have had. Met with Brian Levesque on March 19th regarding unfair treatment and harassment by Mr. Orbe. Asked why other students (who we provided examples of) were not also punished twice, he said we are not here to discuss other instances and I will not answer those questions. We provided examples of other athletes we felt were not disciplined similarly to Chase. Son was never caught doing anything wrong. We explained to Mr. Levesque that we believed Mr. Orbe discriminated against our son. On 04/13/2018 Mr. Orbe sent a photo of our son to staff and said to watch out for him until further notice. Chase served all of his punishments. Our son has to have an escort to the restroom until further notice per Mr. Orbe. Mr. Orbe told us athletes are held to a higher standard. We have faith in the Board.

Beth Chateauf – 189 Chapel Hill Road, Oakdale, CT

If you are not reading Facebook, you should be. My son was bullied at Tyl and it was swept under the rug by Mr. Levesque, Mrs. Dix and Will Klinefelter. I had to have heavy proof before Mrs. Dix would take it seriously. At MHS, my son was tormented by a substitute. He was called in by Mrs. Patten and my son got an in school suspension, the teacher lied and he offered proof. Why wasn't I called? My son offered proof from every student which was in the classroom, when he asked Mrs. Patten if he could use that proof Mrs. Patten said no, we support our staff not our students. When I spoke with Mr. Theodoss, he said it was no longer an issue because the regular teacher is back on Monday. I am glad they are gone and I hope they do not return. There other people in administrative positions who do not deserve their jobs. They did nothing for the students. They took my daughter's phone. My kids should feel safe. I should not have to call the school every day.

Timothy Riordan, 35 Meadow Lane, Uncasville

The comments from students were excellent. It seems the transparency issue is serious, maybe there should be training on transparency because small issues could blow up and become larger issues. I am not sure of the screening process for substitute teachers, they often don't reflect the quality of the teacher they are replacing. How do we ensure subs do?

Brianne Messer, 168 Chapel Hill Road, Oakdale

Here on behalf of my daughter. At the beginning of the school year my daughter witnessed drugs sold in MHS. We spoke with Mrs. Patten, evidence was on camera and she was told the date, the time and the day. The parent of the student was not told and I was not even advised that my child had reported this. Mrs. Patten did absolutely nothing. My daughter went to an administrator the day before vacation and advised an administrator again, and again the parent was not advised. Right now everything is blown up way out of proportion, and THIS does require an investigation.

Emma Baxter, 40 Jerome Road, Uncasville

I am a senior at Montville School, I have attended Montville Schools since I was in second grade. I have had nothing but completely positive experiences here. I want to say that the work that our staff and our teachers put forth is amazing and we have great examples right here in front of us. I am sorry if you have had poor experiences but I have to ask that you do not allow that to reflect on your opinion or the way you feel about Montville High because the work that our adults (teachers) and our students do is truly amazing and I am very proud to say that I am from Montville High.

Ashley Boyer, 23 Pink Row Road, Uncasville

It struck a nerve when someone said Mrs. Pallin does not value students. Mrs. Pallin has made so much time to see me after school when I was struggling. She is a great teacher. *(It should be noted that the parent who spoke earlier inadvertently had used the name Pallin, when in fact she was referring to Mrs. Patten).*

Motion: That the Board enters executive session to discuss appointing an Acting Superintendent of schools at 7:19 p.m.

Proposed by: Joe Aquitante
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

Motion: That the Board exits executive session with no votes taken at 8:07 p.m.

Proposed by: Steven Loiler
Seconded by: Joe Aquitante
Vote: Carried (vote 8-0)

Item 12. Consideration and action to appoint an acting superintendent.

Motion: Consideration and action to appoint an acting superintendent and authorize Board Chair Robert Mitchell and our attorney to negotiate compensation and appoint Laurie Pallin as acting superintendent.

Proposed by: Colleen Rix
Seconded by: Joe Aquitante
Vote: Carried 8-0

Item 13. Adjournment.

Motion: That the meeting is adjourned.

Proposed by: Steven Loiler
Seconded by: Dan Boisvert
Vote: Carried unanimously (vote 8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Robert Mitchell, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Colleen Rix, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____