



Hampton Board of Education  
380 Main Street  
Hampton, CT 06247

January 24, 2024  
7:00 pm  
HES Library Media Center

1. Call to order  
Chair Bisson called the meeting to order at 7:05. Present were board members Juan Arriola, Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon, David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Dennis Timberman. Also present were Principal Patrice Merendina, Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux and EASTCONN Executive Director Eric Protulis.
2. Audience for Citizens and Staff  
Juan Arriola commented on the salary of the last superintendent and questioned approval by the Board of Education. Chair Bisson said that his concern would be added to the next board meeting.
3. Correspondence to the Board  
The resignation email from Dr. Sarli is an addendum to the minutes.
4. Approval of Minutes from 12/20/23 Board Meeting  
**Motion:** Mark Becker moved to approve the minutes of December 20, 2023. Maryellen Donnelly seconded the motion. Voting yes were Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon, David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Dennis Timberman. Voting no was Juan Arriola. The motion passed.
5. Principal's Report  
Principal Merendina reviewed items in her written report. She added that kindergarten students have not yet completed their iReady assessments and that midyear data will be presented to the board at their regular February meeting. Principal Merendina and Eric Protulis answered questions about the teacher evaluation plan. Work with Kerry Lord who is the Director of Programs for the Partners for Educational Leadership was scheduled to begin during the January Board meeting. The goal of the work is to recognize and respond to bias as a barrier to belonging for students and adults in the Hampton School District. It is postponed pending authorization and participation by a superintendent.
6. Business Coordinator's Report  
Business Coordinator Lehoux asked for questions on her written report. In answer to a question, she stated that payment for work with Kerry Lord was made and work will be provided when requested.



7. Committee and Liaison Reports

Finance and Operations

Chair Becker reported that heat pump information is being updated and that generator and sunroom repair costs are being sought. Sally Lehoux stated that a draft budget would be ready to discuss at a special meeting.

EASTCONN

Maryellen Donnelly reported that John Russell also attended the EASTCONN Board of Directors meeting on January 23. The EASTCONN board requests that alternate representatives be appointed by the districts. Maryellen attended an excellent free EASTCONN grant writing workshop. Early Childhood Initiatives is continuing to support the districts in the region to consider a regional approach for an assessment process to determine if a child is developmentally ready for kindergarten as it relates to legislation passed in June. They will also help with ways to communicate to families. Superintendents will be meeting to discuss district reporting to the State Department of Education on their plans for increasing educator diversity. There will be a 3% increase in tuition for the Eastconn special education schools but no increase at this time for magnet school tuition. There is no impact to the Hampton district because it does not have students in these programs.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on Hiring an Interim Superintendent of School

**Motion:** Maryellen Donnelly moved to hire Andrew Skarzynski for the remainder of the school year. Diane Gagnon seconded the motion. Salary had not been discussed.

**Motion:** Dennis Timberman moved to table the motion. Maryellen Donnelly seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Discussion of Process to Hire Permanent Superintendent

Chair Bisson stated that the search for and interview of superintendent candidates had been done by the board in the past and asked if members preferred hiring an agency to do a search for a permanent superintendent. The consensus was not to use an agency.

Among the suggestions for the process are that

- a committee help Chair Bisson to organize the process
- the process be similar to the last search, wide advertisement, screening of applicants, multiple interviews including administrators, teachers, community members, board members and full board
- the list of places that the position is advertised be posted
- feedback about what the school and town communities seek in a superintendent be collected and that a page on the process be kept on the website

10. Discussion of Draft 2024-2025 School Calendar

Discussion of the draft calendar will continue during the February board meeting. It was noted that the start date is two weeks before the end of August. The RD 11 Board had not finalized a calendar.



11. Discussion of Exploring the Possibility of Joining a Central Office Compact  
Chair Bisson will report to other board chairs that Hampton board members expressed strong opinions, five being interested in exploring the possibility, three not being interested, and one board member being absent.
12. Additions to the Agenda  
**Motion:** Mark Becker moved to add discussion of a special meeting as 12a, and an executive session for discussion of superintendent's salary to 14a. Dave Halbach seconded the motion. Voting yes were Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon, David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Dennis Timberman. Voting no was Juan Arriola. The motion passed.
- 12a. Discussion of a Special Meeting  
The board set a date of February 7 at 7 PM as a special meeting. Discussion of a draft budget will be an item on the agenda.
13. Next Agenda Planning  
Board hiring/salary of previous superintendent. Additions can be made by contacting Chair Bisson.
14. Audience for Citizens and Staff  
Danielle McIver commented on the draft school calendar that if heat pumps are not installed a consideration might be that August days are typically hotter than early June days. She asked if PTO events already approved by a superintendent will need approval by a new superintendent (they will not). And, she suggested that the board seek town input regarding consolidation.  
Kathy Donahue asked about the candidate for the interim superintendent. She requested the balance of the ESSR account. She suggested that the board review the issues at the time of withdrawal from the central office compact. She requested Dr. Sarli's resignation letter.
- 14a. Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussion of Superintendent Salary.  
**Motion:** Diane Gagnon moved to enter executive session for the purpose of discussion of superintendent's salary. Mark Becker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The board entered executive session at 8:22. The board left executive session at 8:34.  
**Motion:** Maryellen Donnelly moved to offer the position to Andrew Skarzynski at \$650 per day for two days per week until June 30, 2024. Diane Gagnon seconded the motion. Voting yes were Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon, David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Dennis Timberman. Voting no was Juan Arriola. The motion passed.
15. Adjournment  
**Motion:** Diane Gagnon moved to adjourn. Juan Arriola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:43.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maryellen Donnelly



Addendum:

On Mon, Jan 15, 2024 at 2:29 PM Samantha Sarli <[ssarli@hamptonschool.org](mailto:ssarli@hamptonschool.org)> wrote:

Dear Hampton Board Members,

In my time as HES's Superintendent, we were able to make great gains while strengthening and improving existing practices. We were accepted as just 1 of 5 districts in the State of Connecticut to be part of the Science of Reading Network Improvement Community which accelerated our teachers' technique on how to teach reading and selected our new reading curriculum for grades K-6 ensuring continuity. In full collaboration and support of the Board, we were able to strengthen the security of our building and have a plan in place for continued improvements to ensure the safety of every child and adult at HES. I applied and we became a recipient for the multi-media security grant which afforded us the ability to make necessary upgrades to our security systems. Additionally, I created a collaborative interview process for our new principal which included stakeholders in every stage of the 4 step process. Most recently, I have collaborated with the Partners for Educational Leadership in establishing a plan and goal of capacity building related to belonging and equity training to our board, school administration and staff. While there are many more accomplishments that were made, it is of no surprise that HES is moving in an upward trajectory and ready to continue increasing student achievement and prepare our students to collaborate and contribute in our global society. Hampton is a special community and with always putting students at the forefront of decisions, I know it will become a model district for multi age learning. This resignation is effective immediately and I wish you all the best in the coming years.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Sarli