

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
January 23, 2024  
BOE Conference Room  
6:30 p.m.  
AMENDED AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
- V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
  - A. Approval of Minutes of January 9, 2024 Meeting EXHIBIT I
- VI. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
  - A. 2024-25 Budget
    - Enrollment and Staffing EXHIBIT II
  - B. Capital Improvement Plan EXHIBIT III
  - C. Quarterly Budget Analysis EXHIBIT IV
- VII. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS
  - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 13, 2024,  
BOE Conference Room

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

January 9, 2024

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Jen Batchelar and Jessica Parise. Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco. Ms. Thomas arrived at 6:38 p.m.

**Members absent:** Mmes. Tara Willerup and Lydia Tedone.

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, BOE Student Representative Matthew Picoult and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported on the HJMS career fairs and SpongeBob rehearsals. He stated that Tariffville is close to moving into their modular classrooms. SHS midterms are this week and preparations for the musical are underway.

Ms. Lemke reported that Friday is an early release day during which professional development will be held on various topics. Mr. Curtis stated that the 2022-23 Annual Report is now available on our website and in print. He noted it includes a data dashboard aligned with the board's four goals.

Communications

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of December 12, 2023

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of  
Minutes of  
December 12,  
2023

B. Personnel

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Nicole Cormier effective December 31, 2023 and Megan Laponese effective January 19, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Personnel

C. Acceptance of Gift from Ensign Bickford

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$12,500 to STEM K-12 from the Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense Company be accepted.

Acceptance of  
Gift from Ensign  
Bickford

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

## INFORMATION AND REPORTS

### A. 2024-25 Budget: Special Education Program Review

Special Ed  
Program  
Review/Budget

Katie Krasula, Director of Pupil Services, provided a review of the work of Pupil Services along with informative data relative to the 2024-25 budget. She stated that the department met the requirements in the state Annual Performance Report for 2022 and the results for 2023 are pending.

Ms. Krasula addressed the focus areas for special education this year. These include a refocus on service delivery, the Intensive Learning Needs program, professional development regarding behavior, service delivery, high quality IEP's and for paraeducators, CT SEDS, the increasing incident rate and complexity of needs of our students. Ms. Krasula thanked the board members for their support in the current budget that added special ed teachers at the elementary schools to address caseload needs.

Ms. Krasula provided context to current programming and budget requests. She stated the two major focus points are increased enrollment and the incidence rate; and the increased complexity of needs. Ms. Krasula presented a 5 year comparison of enrollment increases. In the past 5 years district enrollment increased by 79 students, and enrollment in special ed increased by 90 students. Ms. Krasula addressed the incidence rate, pointing out the increase in Simsbury which is now commiserate with the state. She noted the increase in needs for students in preschool and the number of move-ins with special ed needs.

Ms. Krasula stated the funding sources for special ed are the operational budget, Excess Cost Grant and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant. She explained that for the Excess Cost Grant the per pupil expenditure must exceed 4.5 times the per pupil expenditure for the district. The threshold for Simsbury is \$87,824. In 2022-23 the district received a 73.1% reimbursement for the expenditures over the threshold. The expected reimbursement rate for 2023-24 is 68%. Mr. Curtis noted that the excess cost grant is supposed to be funded at a rate of 85%. He stated that last year the district was told that we would be reimbursed at a rate of 81% and the reduction creates challenges for how we plan.

Ms. Krasula reviewed out of district data. She stated that last year we had 49 outplacements and this year we have 48 outplacements. She noted that the cost of these tuitions averaged \$81,342 in 2022-23 and now average \$92,887 in 2023-24. Mr. Curtis stated that last year the BOF covered a \$500,000 deficit in special ed.

Mr. Tindall asked why students are outplaced. Ms. Krasula responded that it depends on the scope of the disability. It ranges from significant learning disabilities to significant behavioral disabilities. The Planning & Placement Team discusses whether the student's environment is meeting the needs of their severity. Ms. Thomas asked if outplaced students ever return to the district. Ms. Krasula responded that the goal is to have these students return and a few each year are able to return to their less restrictive school environment.

Ms. Thomas asked about the transportation costs. Ms. Krasula responded that there hasn't been a great change from the past. She stated that transportation will be included in her budget, but it is not a major driver for her budget requests. Mr. Curtis noted that post-COVID Salters can no longer field the number of drivers they had in the past and third party vendors have to be used whose prices have greatly increased. Ms. Lemke stated that we share rides with other districts when we can.

Ms. Krasula addressed the Intensive Learning Needs (ILN) program. She stated that students in this program require a multitude of services and team members. She noted this program takes a lot of collaboration and communication as these students are unable to tell their parents how their day went. Ms. Krasula provided a 3 year comparison of move-ins to the program. In 2021-22 there was 1 move-in. In 2022-23 there were 5 move-ins. In 2023-24 there have been 11 move-ins. Mr. Tindall asked how these caseloads have been affected. Ms. Krasula responded that caseloads are around 10 students, which is large for this program.

Ms. Krasula reviewed high school comparative caseload data. In the Farmington Valley the range for caseloads is 15-23. At SHS the caseload range is 24-32. Ms. Krasula addressed middle school reading needs. She stated we have an increase in the number of students requiring structured literacy instruction. Working with these students is time intensive and has specific teacher training requirements. Currently we have 21 students whose needs are being addressed through contracted services. Next year we anticipate 31 students will require this instruction.

Ms. Krasula reviewed preschool data. Over the past 6 years preschool students who require specialized instruction has increased from 21 students to a projected 58 students at year end. Ms. Krasula stated that the district is required to evaluate all students in the Birth to 3 program and determine if they meet the public school criteria for special ed services.

Ms. Krasula reviewed the department's budget requests for 2024-25, based on the data that has been presented. The special ed budget requests include 2 ILN certified special ed teachers, 1 ILN program coordinator, 1 SHS special ed teacher, 1 reading specialist at HJMS, and 1 preschool special ed teacher. Ms. Lemke noted that we had an ILN coordinator previously, but when she retired we eliminated the position and spread out the responsibilities but that is not working out. Ms. Batchelar asked how many students are in the ILN program. Ms. Krasula responded that there are currently 40 students and we project 43 students next year based on our preschool enrollment.

Ms. Krasula stated that additional budget concerns include related service staffing and out of district tuition funding. Ms. Parise asked if there are commonalities among the out of district schools. Ms. Krasula responded that there are multiple buckets and we continue to look at whether we should change our program offerings with regard to autism and mental health behavior.

B. Committee Assignments

Mr. Tindall reviewed the board members' committee assignments.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Committee Assignments

Public Audience

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Watson: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Adjournment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Thomas  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: January 23, 2024  
RE: Budget Review 2024-25

This evening, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Neil Sullivan, will present an overview of staffing and enrollment considerations which will impact the Board of Education's 2024-25 budget. Rationale for each of the staffing requests will be provided in your folder at the meeting. The presentation will include information regarding

- Historical enrollment
- Program enhancements
- Staffing proposals at the elementary and secondary level
- Fixed contractual costs
- Enrollment related reductions

This presentation is included in your budget development notebooks that were distributed this evening.

MC:kdw

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: January 23, 2024

RE: Capital Improvement Project Plan – Review

Attached you will find an updated draft of the Board of Education Projects for the 2024/25 fiscal year. The plan “rolls forward” the projects from last year’s plan. This budget demonstrates the immediate needs of our schools and the importance of continuing our renovation discussions.

The budget addresses the following 4 areas:

Roof Replacement – Sections of the Roof at Tootin’ Hills Elementary school have reached the end of their 20 year life expectancies.

SHS Auditorium & Amphitheater Improvements – The amphitheater needs its worn-out carpet and seating replaced. This carpet replacement will require asbestos abatement. The auditorium’s theater lighting and sound systems need to be replaced. Most of the theater lighting is the original incandescent equipment from 1968. It is very inefficient and operates at extremely hot temperatures by today’s standards.

Flooring Improvements – Many of the schools have areas where the flooring is beyond its life expectancy and visibly worn-out. Flooring replacements are a common request from the school principals every year. Addressing these needs on an individual basis with CNR funds has proven to be a failing strategy. We would like to implement a recurring biennial capital fund to catch up and get onto a regular replacement schedule.

District Network Infrastructure – This is a recurring biennial capital fund which provides for upgrades and improvements to the district’s network infrastructure. This year the server that controls fob access to all the schools will be consolidated into a single system. Currently there are 3 separate systems in use.

**Simsbury Board of Education  
Capital Improvement Program  
Fiscal Year 2024/25**

	<u>FY24/25</u>
<b>Tootin Hills School</b>	
Replace Roof (V3, V4)	1,120,000
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Total Tootin Hills School	1,120,000
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<b>Simsbury High School</b>	
Aud/Amp Improvements	400,000
<hr/>	
Total Simsbury High School	400,000
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<b>District Wide</b>	
District Network Infrastructure	350,000
District flooring Improvements	250,000
<hr/>	
Total District Wide	600,000
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<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>	<b><u>2,120,000</u></b>
<b>FUNDING:</b>	
Bonding	1,728,000
Grants & Reimbursements	392,000
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b><u>2,120,000</u></b>



TO: Members of the Board of Education  
 FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
 RE: Financial Report/Quarterly Budget Analysis  
 DATE: January 23, 2024

Below is the first quarter budget analysis of the Simsbury Public Schools for the fiscal year 2023-24.

### Revenues

Below is a summary of the District's State grant awards:

- **Open Choice Academic and Social Support** – Funding is used to promote academic and social success for students participating in the Hartford Region Choice program. Simsbury was awarded \$194,617 in the current fiscal year, a decrease of \$2,958 compared to the prior fiscal year.
- **Open Choice Attendance & Early Learning** - Funding is used to support salaries and benefits for 7 FTE certified staff, tutors, magnet school tuitions, additional Choice student supports, equipment and preschool development. Simsbury's current year entitlement, based on the district's 10/1/23 enrollment, the grant funding is anticipated to total \$1,770,000.
- **Special Education Placements & Excess Cost** – Funding is provided to reimburse the District for special education costs in excess of 4.5 times the cost of educating a regular education student. Simsbury's preliminary award is anticipated to be released in January.
- **Adult Education** – Funding to support Connecticut mandated adult education programs is administered through a cooperative program with the Farmington Continuing Education Department. Simsbury was awarded \$5,242 in the current fiscal year. The prior year award totaled \$6,213.
- **Talent Development (TEAM)** – Funding provides partial reimbursement for TEAM mentor stipends. The current year award has not yet been determined. The prior year award totaled \$2,483.
- **Private School Health Services** – Funding to support private school health services provided by the District's health services staff as required by Connecticut statute. The current year award is \$20,438, a \$219 increase compared to the prior year.

Below is a summary of the District's Federal grant awards:

- **Title I – Improving Basic Programs** – Funding is used to pay for tutor costs as well as instructional materials and equipment. Simsbury has received an award of \$124,776 in the current fiscal year, an increase of \$3,654 compared to the prior fiscal year.
- **Title II Part A – Teacher Quality** – Funding is used to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and provide professional development to teachers and principals. Simsbury has received an award of \$59,419 in the current fiscal year, a decrease of \$575 compared to the prior fiscal year.
- **Title III Part A – English Language Acquisition** - Funding is used to assist students whose native language is other than English in order to obtain English proficiency and literacy. Simsbury has received an award of \$10,781 in the current fiscal year, an increase of \$644 compared to the prior fiscal year.
- **Title IV, Part A – Student Support & Academic Enrichment** – Funding is used to (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, (2) improve school conditions for student learning and (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Simsbury has received an award of \$10,000 in the current fiscal year. No change from prior year funding.
- **IDEA – Part B and Pre-School** - Funding is used to support the education of identified students; salaries for teaching and support staff, professional development, outside consulting, tutoring services, instructional supplies and equipment, and technology licensing. Simsbury has received a final award of \$1,176,082 in the current fiscal year, an increase of \$56,197 compared to the prior fiscal year.

- **Carl Perkins** – Funding is used to develop the academic, career and technical skills of secondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. Specific expenditures supported by the grant include substitute coverage for professional development, student transportation and equipment. The current year Perkins award is not, as yet, determined. The prior year award was \$34,280. Simsbury was awarded \$48,425 in the current fiscal year for the supplemental award, which is an increase of \$7,329 compared to the prior fiscal year.
- **Medicaid School Based Child Health Program** – Section 51 of PA17-2 mandates the district's participation in the Medicaid School Based Child Health Program. Net reimbursements are approximately \$20,000 annually.
- **National School Lunch Program – Equipment Assistance Grant** - Funding is provided through this program for the purchase of equipment needed to serve healthier meals and improve food safety. Nutrition Services received \$3,833.80 through this competitive grant process to replace a refrigerator at Tootin' Hills.

#### Expenditures

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>2023-24</u>		<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
	<u>Original Budget</u>	<u>YTD Expenditures</u>	<u>YTD Expenditures</u>	<u>% Spent</u>	<u>% Spent</u>
General Control	2,451,498	1,180,577	1,209,806	48.16%	56.09%
Instruction	50,003,729	20,877,391	19,731,337	41.75%	41.27%
Health Services	742,608	347,247	340,730	46.76%	43.44%
Pupil Transportation	3,057,488	1,489,037	1,393,575	48.70%	47.58%
Operation of Plant	5,495,325	2,437,064	2,482,141	44.35%	48.15%
Maint of Plant/Equipment	1,392,472	406,629	392,428	29.20%	31.27%
Insurance/Pension	15,502,856	5,383,453	5,953,017	34.73%	42.33%
Food Services	8,896	-	-	0.00%	0.00%
Student Body Activities	832,785	299,817	234,866	36.00%	30.93%
Community Services	32,563	19,527	17,641	59.97%	54.17%
Equipment-New/Replace	139,218	415,665	335,581	298.57%	370.94%
Out of District Tuition	1,917,000	1,456,691	1,516,089	75.99%	106.99%
<b>Total Public Budget</b>	<b>81,576,438</b>	<b>34,313,099</b>	<b>33,607,212</b>	<b>42.06%</b>	<b>43.96%</b>

General Control – The rate of spending is lower in the second quarter of the current year compared to the prior year due to the timing of the payroll schedule. There were thirteen payrolls in the first quarter of FY23/24 compared to fourteen payrolls in the first quarter of FY22/23.

Health Services – The rate of spending is higher in the second quarter of the current year due to increased overtime compared to the same period in the prior year.

Transportation – The rate of spending is higher in the second quarter of the current year compared to the prior year due to an increased need for outside vendor transportation for Special Education students.

Insurance/Pension – The rate of spending is lower in the second quarter of the current year compared to the prior year due to the timing of the pension ARC payment. This will correct in the third quarter.

Student Body Activities – The rate of spending is higher in the second quarter of the current year compared to the prior year due to coaching payments and athletic trainer payments made in the first quarter of the current year that were not made in the first/second quarters of the prior year.

Equipment-New/Replace – Increased spending in the current year relates to timing of purchases.

Out of District Tuition – Increased spending in the current year relates to timing of when vendor tuition payments were made in the current year compared to the prior year.

**Enrollment Comparison 2023-24 to 2023-22**

Grade	Actual 10/1/2023	Actual 10/1/2022	Differential
K-6	2177	2176	+1
7-8	634	627	+7
9-12	1293	1261	+32
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4104</b>	<b>4064</b>	<b>+40</b>

**Staffing Comparison (FTE)**

	2023-24	2022-23	Difference
Certified	391.29	388.59	+2.7
Non-Certified	255.61	252.87	+2.74
Administrative	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>-1.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>666.9</b>	<b>662.46</b>	<b>+4.44</b>

**Non-Lapsing Fund Summary**

Beginning Balance as of 6/30/2022	651,308
Capstone Coordinator	(93,242)
FY24 Use of Non-Lapsing	(353,700)
FY25 Use of Non-Lapsing	(138,700)
Ending Balance as of 6/30/2025	65,666