

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 23, 2024  
Latimer Lane School  
Gymnasium  
6:30 p.m.  
AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. RECOGNITION
- IV. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- V. COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
- VI. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
  - A. Approval of Minutes of March 18, 2024 Meeting EXHIBIT I
  - B. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2024 Meeting EXHIBIT II
  - C. Personnel EXHIBIT III
  - D. Adoption of Healthy Food & Beverage for 2024-25 EXHIBIT IV
- VII. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
  - A. Latimer Lane School Report EXHIBIT V
  - B. Teacher Evaluation Plan EXHIBIT VI
  - C. Quarterly Budget Analysis EXHIBIT VII
- VIII. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- IX. FUTURE BUSINESS
  - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, May 14, 2024,  
BOE Conference Room

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

March 18, 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. Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Sharon Thomas and Jessica Parise. Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco.

**Members absent:** Ms. Jen Batchelar

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

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported on the SpongeBob Musical at HJMS. He noted the girls basketball team won the CIAC state championship, the SHS Robotics team had a top 10 finish, full year engineering students participated in the SeaPerch competition, the National Honor Society sponsored a Pi Run, juniors will take the SAT in school on Wednesday, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Week will be held 4/1-4/5, and Peter and the Star Catcher is the SHS spring play.

Communications

Mr. Falco congratulated the girls basketball team and boys hockey team. He stated his appreciation for the older students who worked with the youth lacrosse program last weekend. Ms. Parise congratulated the winning sports teams, and noted that wrestling did well with a freshman receiving All State and New England recognition.;

Ms. Tedone reported on CABA Day on the Hill which she attended with BOE student representative Sophia Luziatti. She noted some of the bills before the legislature which include removal of the prohibition for BOE member compensation, paraeducator pay, and how much funding comes from the towns versus the state. Ms. Tedone stated that the Mandate Relief Committee will receive more than 300 proposals.

Ms. Willerup noted that SeaPerch is an underwater robotics program.

Ms. Lemke reported on our first year membership in the District Education Clubs of America (DECA), noting that 12 of our students qualified for the national competition in Anaheim. She stated the Gertrude Banks Gospel Choir performed at the American Choral Directors Association. Family & Consumer Science teacher Gianna Gurga was named the CT ProStart Culinary Educator of the Year. Ms. Lemke provided photos of some of the items purchased with the Donors Choose CSDE Grants, and noted that the SHS Robotics team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in their competition and received the creativity award.

Mr. Tindall shared congratulations for all of the accomplishments. Mr. Curtis spoke about the amazing environment at the girls basketball final at Mohegan Sun. He noted that one of our players sang the national anthem and our unified basketball team played during halftime.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2024 Special Meeting

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2024 Special Meeting.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2024

B. Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2024 Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2024 meeting

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2024

C. Personnel

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Elaine Kotler and Paula Garza effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

Personnel

D. Approval of Simsbury Community Media Scholarship

Ms. Thomas: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Simsbury Community Media Scholarship, to be disbursed in 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved

Approval of Simsbury Community Media Scholarship

E. Adoption of Educator Diversity Plan

Mr. Sullivan stated that Human Resources has been working toward a more diverse workforce. Last year legislation was passed stating that school districts need to have a diversity policy, accompanied by a plan. Mr. Sullivan stated that a team of six (Tayarisha Batchelor, Cindi Freilinger, Meg Evans, Katie Krasula and Vanessa Massiah and himself) began developing documents regarding recruiting, hiring, selection strategies and post hire retention last spring. He noted that the state has required that a particular template be used and, after approval by the board and submission to the state, the state will provide feedback after 2 months.

Ms. Batchelar stated a rubric was supplied through WestEd with whom we also had conversations about what they were looking for in the plan. Ms. Thomas asked if the state approves the plan are we ready to collect the data and provide metrics? Ms. Batchelar responded by providing data on our hiring and retention of diverse individuals over the past few years. She noted that the focus is on retention, providing a feeling of belonging, as the best strategy for recruitment. Ms. Batchelar

Adoption of Educator Diversity Plan

stated that currently the district has a BIPOC affinity group, Legitimate Intentional and Tenacious (LIT) and Employee Resource Groups (ERG) are offered to any group looking for a feeling of belonging.

Mr. Curtis stated that during the Strategic Plan reboot we will look at how it dovetails with this plan. Mr. Sullivan noted that the state is working with higher education to increase the pool of diverse candidates.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

F. Adoption of Revised 2024-25 Public School Budget

Mr. Curtis stated that he presented the BOE approved budget to the BOF on March 5 with a budget increase of 4.97%. With the financial challenges the town is facing, the BOF requested the BOE relook at their budget with a target of 4.3%. Mr. Curtis stated he will present a recommended budget increase of 4.4%.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the reductions and reallocations that brought the original budget down from 6.93% to 4.97%. These include utilization of the internal service fund, reallocation of one of the new special ed positions to the IDEA grant, reallocation of a reading position for HJMS due to a retirement, reduction of a position at SHS due to course enrollment offset by a retirement, reduction of a PreK-6 special ed department supervisor to be replaced with the ILN coordinator, reduction of a language arts consultant moving to an elementary teaching position and reallocation of the technology resource teacher to a teaching position.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the reductions from 4.97%. (1) The requested increase of \$10,000 in textbooks will not be granted and the current budget of \$168,000 will remain in place. (2) A reduction of \$50,000 in library media books and supplies reducing the \$100,000 currently budgeted. This will lessen the number of new books purchased but will allow for the replacement of books and subscriptions we maintain. (3) A \$200,000 reduction in the grant used to purchase equipment. The increase of \$400,000 in the Choice grant 7-8 years ago allowed us to allocate \$400,000 for equipment. We also use the grant to allow flexibility in the budget. (4) Instructional supplies are a \$825,000 line item and the budget increase request was for an additional \$54,000. The increase will not be granted and the line item will be reduced \$26,000. (5) The strings teacher will remain as it is at .8 FTE and not increased to 1.0 FTE. (6) We currently have 110 elementary sections that Mr. Sullivan monitors regularly. As of today we could go with one less section and keep within the class size guidelines. Mr. Curtis stated that these recommended reductions total \$461,322 and any further reductions would impact programming.

Mr. Tindall thanked the BOF for the conversation after the BOE budget presentation, noting that the BOF is faced with limitations. Mr. Curtis noted that the BOF also reduced the BOS budget.

Ms. Parise asked what the budget percentage change would be if we kept the .2 strings teacher in the budget. Ms. Meriwether responded 4.44%. Ms. Parise asked if enrollment has increased in the strings program since the dip during COVID. Mr.

Adoption of Revised 2024-25 Public School Budget

Tindall responded that this is not a must have item. Mr. Sullivan stated we have hired a new person at .8.

Mr. Falco stated that 4.3% is just a number and he questioned how bigger classes affects kids and if a .8 strings teacher is what Simsbury wants. Ms. Parise asked if a full time strings teacher would provide more flexibility for kids. Ms. Lemke responded that she cannot say definitively as the elementary schedule is packed every day.

Ms. Parise questioned the reduction in the equipment line item through the grant. Mr. Curtis stated that equipment requests are prioritized and sometimes we do not fund a full \$400,000 in equipment. Ms. Parise expressed concern with creating a cliff. Mr. Curtis responded that this is a line item we will need to revisit in the future. Ms. Parise stated that she appreciates the work that was done to not affect students with the reductions.

Mr. Falco noted that reducing a tech resource impacts the school. He stated the board's charge is what's reasonable and at what point are you hitting bone. Mr. Falco questioned the reduction in instructional supplies, when costs have risen, and whether the budget increase should be more than 4.4%. The board discussed the continued purchase of books with the reduction in library media books and supplies.

Mr. Curtis stated the challenge is that there are not many places to go for reductions outside of people in the organization. He stated the administration did an analysis and he pointed out the fiscal number is decided by the BOF.

Ms. Tedone stated we don't want to offend anyone by not doing our due diligence. She noted that salaries and benefits take most of the budget and other reductions will affect special ed. Ms. Thomas noted that not everyone in the community has children and increases in taxes do affect residents. She stated that schools help property values but there's a question as to how long people can afford to stay in the community.

Mr. Falco questioned whether it is his role as a board member to solve everything or to make sure that our top notch school district doesn't slide back. He noted that you cannot solve issues by creating other issues. Mr. Falco stated that 4.97% was an honest and fair number and he expressed concern that we have hit bone and how sustainable that is over time. Ms. Parise expressed her agreement with Mr. Falco and questioned if next year we are in the same position, with increased special ed and enrollment, are we going to cut more non-student facing numbers.

Mr. Tindall stated that he thinks everyone shares these concerns, but the board has been given an assignment and the BOF has the ultimate decision. Mr. Curtis stated the tenor of the BOF was different this year, noting the original request was for a 1.75% budget increase. He stated we are funding special ed to a more accurate level and expressed his appreciation for the dialogue of the board.

Mr. Falco asked where we landed with CNR. Ms. Meriwether stated that the BOF is open to the proposal to add \$700,000 on the BOE side and \$300,000 on the BOS side.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the revised 2024-25 Public School budget in the amount of \$85,809,346 which represents an

increase of \$3,627,211 or 4.41%.

Mr. Watson: Seconded.

Ms. Willerup thanked the administration for keeping the reductions away from students. Ms. Parise stated she will vote for the budget reductions reluctantly. She stated this is not a sustainable process when you are not getting the budget you feel is adequate. She noted the many legal obligations put on the district by the state.

So moved. The motion carried, Ms. Thomas abstained.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Next Generation Accountability Report

Ms. Lemke stated that the CT accountability systems have measures to track progress and preparation of students for career and college success. She noted that these reports have not been available since before COVID. Ms. Lemke stated the purpose of the accountability system is to track student progress, help schools and districts make improvements, show where support is needed most, recognize successes, promote transparency, and satisfy federal and state requirements.

Ms. Lemke addressed the District Performance Index (DPI). Schools and districts earn points on a broad set of 12 indicators. These include achievement and growth, with growth weighted more heavily. Ms. Lemke stated the intent is to give a more holistic view of performance and includes measures as to whether gaps exist or not between high needs and non-high needs students. She listed the 12 DPI indicators: (1) academic achievement (performance index), (2) academic growth, (3) assessment participation rate, (4) chronic absenteeism, (5) preparation for postsecondary and career readiness – coursework, (6) preparation for postsecondary and career readiness – exams, (7) graduation – on track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, (8) graduation – 4 year adjusted cohort, (9) graduation – 6 year adjusted cohort, (10) postsecondary entrance rate, (11) physical fitness, and (12) arts access.

Ms. Lemke provided ratings for each of our schools and the district. She noted the achievement gap at SHS in ELA/Math, stating that we have high level achievement at SHS and the gap is primarily due to special ed. Ms. Lemke pointed out the category assigned to each school. She stated that Squadron Line, Tariffville and Tootin' Hills School have been designated as Schools of Distinction. These schools are in the top 10% for overall performance, growth and have no gaps nor a participation rate lower than 95%. All of the elementary schools received a category 2 assignment. SHS received a 3 due to the achievement gap and HJMS received a 3 based around some achievement that we are addressing this year.

Ms. Lemke addressed the steps taken since these reports were released in December. Results were shared with principals both individually and collectively. Results are being used to inform building based adjustments. The accountability system results were shared with department supervisors. Ms. Lemke stated that areas of focus have been determined. These areas include physical fitness, chronic absenteeism and ELA/Math gaps at SHS. Ms. Lemke outlined the work to date in these areas.

Next Generation  
Accountability  
Report

Ms. Parise asked if we have a DRG comparison of the accountability report. Mr. Curtis pointed out that across the state there are differently configured elementary and middle schools so it is difficult to compare equally.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Watson: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

Public Audience

Adjournment

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Sharon Thomas  
Secretary

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

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

March 26, 2024

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the gymnasium at Central School.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Lydia Tedone, and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Jeff Tindall and Josh Falco.

**Members absent:** Mmes. Tara Willerup and Jessica Parise. Mr. Brian Watson.

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

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Curtis recognized the SHS Girls Basketball Team for their 1<sup>st</sup> ever win of the state championship. He noted the team's best 4 year winning percentage in school history, winning 77-15 or 84%. This was also the first team in school history to be ranked in the polls for the entire season. Mr. Curtis noted that both Amanda Gallagher and Olivia Jarvis are 1,000 point scorers. He pointed out how the level of teamwork, commitment to each other and their philosophy allowed them to produce at a high level. Girls Basketball Coach Sam Zullo stated he lets the girls be themselves and for the first time we had 2 players receive All State honors. Mr. Curtis noted that Mr. Zullo became the all-time winningest coach this year and is committed to the basketball youth in the community.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported that DEIB week will be held next week at SHS. On Monday a Spirit Rally will be held and include a steel drum performance, the Gertrude Banks Gospel Choir, and a celebration of winter sports teams. Mr. Picoult noted that the girls fencing team made it to the state tournament for the first time and the Robotics Team is competing in the New England Championship this weekend.

Ms. Tedone reported on the NSBA conference she will attend next week, stating that she will be involved in two presentations along with CREC. She stated the CT Education Committee of the legislature is done with their final bills. The deadline for bill submission is April 15.

Mr. Tindall thanked the board members for their budget discussion at last week's meeting. He noted that the budget public hearing will be held on April 3.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Central School Roof Plans & Project Manual

Recognitions

Public Audience

Communications

Approval of



Mr. Sullivan stated that the Central School and Tariffville roofs are summer projects and the process for state reimbursement requires a board vote.

Central School  
Roof Plans &  
Project Manual

Mr. Falco: MOVE to approve the final plans and project manual, dated March 4, 2024, prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC for the Central School reroofing and related work project.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to approve the Central School reroofing Project Budget Cost Estimate, dated March 15, 2024, prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC in the amount of \$369,983.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to approve the Superintendent, Matthew T. Curtis and Board Chair, Jeff Tindall to sign the Department of Administrative Services from SCG-042 to request a review of the final plans and project manual prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC for the Central School reroofing and related work project.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Tariffville School Roof Plans & Project Manual

Approval of  
Tariffville School  
Roof Plans &  
Project Manual

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the final plans and project manual, dated November 10, 2023, prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC for the Tariffville School reroofing and related work project.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the Tariffville School reroofing Project Budget Cost Estimate, dated June 26, 2023, prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC in the amount of \$975,736.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the Superintendent, Matthew T. Curtis and Board Chair, Jeff Tindall to sign the Department of Administrative Services from SCG-042 to request a review of the final plans and project manual prepared by Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC for the Tariffville School reroofing and related work project.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

C. Cancellation of April 9, 2024 Regular Meeting

Cancellation of  
April 9, 2024  
Meeting

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to cancel the Board of Education meeting scheduled on April 9, 2024.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

## INFORMATION AND REPORTS

### A. Fine Arts Program Report

Fine Arts  
Program Report

Ms. Lemke introduced Shannon Gagne, Visual Art K-12 Department Supervisor, and noted there are many things to celebrate as a result of the robust and rigorous K-12 art curriculum.

Ms. Gagne addressed her leadership priorities. (1) K-12: Vision of the Graduate/ Capstone. She stated that capstone projects are possible in all 2-D, 3-D, or technology strands with 10 choices of media and processes. Ms. Gagne noted that next year 48 students are enrolled in the AP/Capstone Mastery Based Credit program. (2) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. DEIB week sessions being presented by 7 art teachers and 10 art students, with teachers supporting student led sessions. (3) Continuous Improvement. Student developed digital portfolios take you through the process and product, and allows students to share their art portfolios with others through the Artsonia digital gallery.

Ms. Gagne discussed staff achievements. Simsbury art teachers participated in the CAEA conference. Central School art teacher Tara Harrison is a committee member of Adding Voices. Megan Lavoie, Shannon Gagne and student Hannah Granger led professional development for administrators across the state on mastery-based learning in the arts. SHS unified art teacher, Kristie Arbesman received the 2023 CT Outstanding Special Needs Educator of the Year award. Stephanie Lauretano was accepted to participate in a 2 week assistant training residency this summer with renowned glass artist Rose Hawley. Many of the art teachers have exhibited their work.

Ms. Gagne noted student achievements. 9 SHS and 4 HJMS student were recognized for their achievements during the annual CT Regional Scholastic Art Awards, garnering a total of 18 awards. Three students received 4 year Scholastic Art Award Scholarships from the University of Hartford ranging between \$92,000 and \$124,000. 5 art students' artwork was selected for awards during the Simsbury Public Library and Simsbury Cameral Club Teen Photo contest. Ms. Gagne noted the students who were CT Association of Schools (CAS) art award recipients. She pointed out the national recognition received by Nana-Poku Boakye whose photo "Silenced" hangs in the halls of the U.S. Capitol. Ms. Gagne noted the teachers and students who are exhibiting together at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual National Arts Program at Artspace Gallery in Hartford during the month of March.

Ms. Gagne addressed the challenges for her department. She expressed concern with the SHS schedule, such that students are able to get into the classes they want so they can be in a mastery class senior year. She noted that currently there are 51 students enrolled in 10 different media strands next year at SHS. Ms. Gagne also addressed the challenges with elementary scheduling and giving teachers enough prep time to teach 7 different grade levels.

With regard to financial implications for the department, Ms. Gagne noted that art is a project based discipline and costs have increased for materials and shipping. She stated their commitment to offering choice and voice, fostering innovation, and designing student-centered lessons. Ms. Lemke stated that the art department takes

a student's passion and makes it work broadly and deeply so that students have the ability to compete at the state and federal level. Ms. Gagne noted that the art department staff are lifelong learners along with the students.

Ms. Gagne discussed the support needed for the department. This includes retention of the top talent we have in place, sustained administrative support, dedicated professional development (PD) time and preserving Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). She noted the art shows held at each of the schools.

Ms. Thomas asked how often the department has PD and holds PLCs. Ms. Gagne responded that PLCs are held once per week and PD is throughout the year. Ms. Batchelar asked if the department needs help with board support at the elementary level. Ms. Gagne stated that it is a challenge and hard work due to the amount of preps and sequence of preps with so many age groups. Ms. Lemke noted that teachers work with principals regarding scheduling.

Ms. Batchelar asked if elementary and secondary teachers meet vertically. Ms. Gagne responded that they have the opportunity to meet vertically through EduPlanet, shared artifacts and shared Google docs. Ms. Lemke noted that they also work vertically on PD days.

Ms. Thomas questioned how the art shows are publicized. Ms. Gagne stated they publicize via social media, principals' listserv, posting on the website and posters at local businesses.

Mr. Tindall asked if the administration would like to share anything relative to communications. Ms. Lemke noted that April 2 is a full day of PD. Mr. Sullivan reported on Latimer Lane School, stating that 11 classrooms will be returned to the school over April vacation and 6 rooms will be given to the contractor for completion through June. Ms. Meriwether reported that she presented the BOF with various scenarios to reduce taxes. She stated that the CNR proposal was taken favorably by the BOF.

**B. Central School Report**

Beth Hennessy, Central School Principal, reviewed the schools vision statement that was 2 years in the making. It focuses on student growth and success, a compassionate and connected school culture, and our premier workforce. She noted that the vision statement guides the school community and is based on the board's strategic plan.

Ms. Hennessy addressed student growth and success. She noted that PLCs were pushed aside as a result of the pandemic, but are now up and running with one grade level meeting per week as well as special ed and specials PLCs. Ms. Hennessy stated that collaboration with the special ed department has put systems and structures together, noting the addition of a third special ed teacher resulted in smaller caseloads.

Ms. Hennessy addressed professional learning at Central School. The faculty did some reading on best practices for small group instruction in reading. As a school community they set the expectations and created charts so they have a common understanding around the standards for reading and small group instruction. This

Central School Report

strategy has been shared will all of the elementary schools so we have a common practice about what the expectations are for small group instructions. This has been a game changer for special ed students in the classroom. Ms. Hennessy noted that at the beginning of the year the reading data was at 75% and mid-year went up to 81%.

Ms. Hennessy stated that the Think! Math program is being piloted in grades 1 and 3 this year at Central School. These teachers are creating the guide for implementation next year. Ms. Hennessy noted that there is an increased level of engagement with this math program.

Ms. Hennessy addressed a compassionate and connected school culture at Central School. She stated that feedback was collected after the pandemic and parents wanted more time to be in school, students wanted more activities, and teachers were missing connections with kids. Ms. Hennessy provided examples of how the feedback is being addressed.

Ms. Hennessy discussed the concept of "Buildership" which encompasses enlisting the support of teachers, students and families as key players in the school improvement process. She stated that last year she worked with faculty to build the practices for the school. Ms. Hennessy reviewed the student leadership opportunities at the school. She noted the importance of the professional learning opportunities and the value of the ELA and math coaches as we continue to keep a premier workforce in place.

Ms. Hennessy addressed current and future challenges. She noted that the special education service delivery model is constantly being tweaked. Building teacher capacity to respond to student needs is being addressed through PD days. The new SEL curriculum and the Think! Math program will both be implemented next year. Ms. Hennessy thanked the board for investing in Central School by adding social workers, a Special Ed department supervisor and a Special Ed teacher. She noted that many parts of the building are outdated which presents challenges.

Mr. Tindall asked if space is an issue at the school. Ms. Hennessy responded that they have enough space, but would not be able to add another classroom. Ms. Thomas stated that it is nice to hear that decisions by the board have had an impact on the school.

**B. 2022-23 Audit Report**

Ms. Meriwether reported that the final budget for 2022-23 ended with a \$3,189 surplus. This was after transfers out. The general fund balance is at 16%, which is within the policy of 15%-17% to stay inline with AAA rated communities. Any overage goes into the capital fund. Ms. Meriwether stated that again this year the auditor has recommended the development of a comprehensive accounting procedures manual for the town and BOE finance offices. It is anticipated that this manual will be completed by the end of the year. Ms. Meriwether stated the auditor has also recommended that the town and BOE have a Fraud Risk Assessment performed. The plan is to send out a request for proposals post budget season in May or June. Ms. Meriwether noted that the auditors also audit our grants.

Mr. Falco asked if the town has ever had any fraud issues. Ms. Meriwether

2022-23 Audit Report

responded that there have been no issues during her tenure. She noted that the auditors do fraud procedures in areas unknown to us during their audit.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

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Sharon Thomas  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis  
DATE: April 23, 2024  
RE: Personnel Recommendations

**I. Retirements**

**Sharon Cabell**

Experience 23 years  
Assignment Reading Intervention Teacher, Squadron Line  
Effective June 30, 2024

**Kenneth Fischer**

Experience 19 years  
Assignment Music Teacher, Simsbury High School  
Effective June 30, 2024

**BOARD MOTION:**

“MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Sharon Cabell and Kenneth Fischer effective June 30, 2024.”

MTC:cdf

Exhibit IV

TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
RE: Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools (Public Act 06-63)  
DATE: April 23, 2024

Public Act 06-63, An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools, directs the Connecticut State Department of Education to develop and publish nutrition standards for food items offered for sale to students at schools. The Act further provides funding to National School Lunch Program participants including each local and regional board of education that annually certifies compliance with these nutrition standards. In order to receive additional funding, the local board of education must certify that all food items sold to students separately from a reimbursable breakfast or lunch will meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. These items include food offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and from all sources, including, but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises.

The Connecticut Nutrition Standards focus on limiting fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars and sodium, moderating portion sizes, and promoting increased intake of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. They were developed by a committee representing a broad range of stakeholders, including a pediatrician, dieticians; food service directors and state health organizations and associations.

The district's participation in the Healthy Foods Certification program must be approved by the Board of Education and executed documents sent to the Connecticut Department of Education by July 1, 2024.

The administration is recommending the Board of Education adopt the following motions:

"Move that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Simsbury Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdictions, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school store, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups. "

"MOVE that pursuant to Sections 10-215f of the C.G.S., the Simsbury Board of Education hereby will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales."

"MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221g of the C.G.S. provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales."

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: April 23, 2024  
RE: Latimer Lane School Report

It is exciting to watch the Latimer Lane construction project come to fruition - earlier than expected! Initially slated for completion in December 2024, tonight Principal Mike Luzietti will provide an update on the developments.

Mr. Luzietti will provide an overview of regular occurrences associated with the project, inclusive of bi-weekly owner-architect-construction (OAC) meetings, security and technology discussions, monthly Public Building Committee meetings, and a large amount of construction. Mr. Luzietti will also review work completed to date. There is much to celebrate!

Last year, Mr. Luzietti broke the project down into the three main phases of development:

- Phase I (December 2022-December 2023): New southside classrooms as well as the new gymnasium and cafeteria area
- Phase II (December 2023-July 2024): Refurbishing of existing space in current 4th-6th grade classrooms
- Phase III (July 2024-December 2024): Refurbishing of existing space in lower elementary classrooms

We are *well ahead* of this schedule and are currently in the first portion of Phase III.

MTC:kdw



MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: April 23, 2024  
RE: Teacher Evaluation Plan

Connecticut General Statutes 10-151b requires that “the superintendent of each local or regional board of education shall annually evaluate or cause to be evaluated each teacher.” In this case, teachers are defined as “each certified professional employee below the rank of superintendent employed by a board of education who holds a certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Education” (SBE).

Legislation in April 2023 resulted in changes to Connecticut’s teacher evaluation system that has been in place since 2012. Consequently, districts are required to align their current evaluation system with the newly minted State evaluation guidelines. Additionally, the guidelines call for the district’s Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDEC) to become more significant decision makers in this process. Guiding beliefs surrounding the revised evaluation plans include:

- Role differentiation
- Simplify & reduce burden
- Focus on what matters
- Connect to best practices for the whole child
- Focus on educator growth and agency
- Meaningful connections to professional learning
- Specific, actionable, relevant, timely feedback

Further, the legislative changes call for the removal of the previous teaching rating system, and more flexibility in the goal setting process for educators.

Tonight, Assistant Superintendents Sue Homrok-Lemke and Neil Sullivan will provide more details of these changes and provide the board a timeline of this process in Simsbury. Boards of Education must adopt a revised evaluation system by September 1, 2024.

TO: Members of the Board of Education  
 FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
 RE: Financial Report/Quarterly Budget Analysis  
 DATE: April 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 current year award is 2,513,303. The prior year award totaled \$2,334,718.
- **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. Simsbury was awarded \$2,858 in the current fiscal year. 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	1,666,593	1,710,973	67.98%	79.33%
Instruction	50,003,729	33,172,294	31,497,357	66.34%	65.89%
Health Services	742,608	567,747	550,456	76.45%	70.18%
Pupil Transportation	3,057,488	2,521,560	2,466,645	82.47%	84.23%
Operation of Plant	5,495,325	3,920,288	3,799,214	71.34%	73.70%
Maint of Plant/Equipment	1,392,472	1,137,921	1,115,864	81.72%	88.92%
Insurance/Pension	15,502,856	11,073,028	10,115,764	71.43%	71.93%
Food Services	8,896	8,896	8,896	100.00%	100.00%
Student Body Activities	832,785	508,395	448,541	61.05%	59.07%
Community Services	32,563	37,042	37,132	113.75%	114.03%
Equipment-New/Replace	139,218	78,597	78,000	56.46%	86.22%
Out of District Tuition	1,917,000	831,501	355,661	43.38%	25.10%
<b>Total Public Budget</b>	<b>81,576,438</b>	<b>55,523,860</b>	<b>52,184,504</b>	<b>68.06%</b>	<b>68.25%</b>

General Control – The rate of spending is lower mainly due to a decrease in legal services paid in the current year compared to the same time in the prior year.

Pupil Transportation – The rate of spending is higher mainly due to an increased need for outside vendor transportation for Special Education students.

Operation of Plant – The rate of spending is lower mainly to due electricity and natural gas savings.

Student Body Activities – The rate of spending is higher mainly due to the timing of the coaching stipend payouts.

Out of District Tuition – Rate of spending is higher mainly due to increased costs for out of district services and a lower excess cost reimbursement.

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

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

**Staffing Comparison (FTE)**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Certified</b>	391.29	388.59	+2.7
<b>Non-Certified</b>	255.61	252.87	+2.74
<b>Administrative</b>	<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**

<b>Non-Lapsing Fund Summary</b>	
Beginning Balance as of 6/30/2022	651,308
FY24 Use of Non-Lapsing	(353,700)
FY25 Use of Non-Lapsing	<u>(297,608)</u>
Ending Balance as of 6/30/2023	-