

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
February 25, 2025
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 February 8, 2025 Workshop EXHIBIT I
 - B. Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2025 Meeting EXHIBIT II
 - C. Acceptance of Class of 2025 Gift EXHIBIT III
 - D. Acceptance of Sidney Hoffman Foundation Gift EXHIBIT IV
 - E. Acceptance of Gift to FIRST Robotics EXHIBIT V
 - E. Approval of SPTC Scholarship EXHIBIT VI
 - F. Adoption of 2025-26 Operating Budget EXHIBIT VII
- VI. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It is anticipated that the Board of Education will enter Executive Session to discuss the evaluation of the superintendent.
- VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS
 - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 11, 2025,
BOE Conference Room

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Budget Workshop

February 8, 2025

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Sharon Thomas and Jessica Parise (by phone). Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, Supervisor of Maintenance Kyle Loveland and Budget Director Melissa Appleby.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. 2025-26 Budget

2025-26 Budget

Mr. Curtis presented his proposed 2025-26 budget of \$89,560,117, an increase over last year's budget of \$3,753,749 or 4.37%. He provided budget context relative to balancing fiscal reality and educational need, historical budget data and comparative per pupil expenditure data. Mr. Curtis spoke about academic successes and positive school culture. He addressed the investments made at Latimer Lane School and Farmington Valley Transition Academy.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the major budget drivers that include fixed costs, operations and special education He also noted areas for possible reductions. Mr. Curtis pointed out the BOF budget guidance of 2.9%.

Ms. Lemke reviewed the major drivers and accounts for teaching and learning that include supplies, textbooks, professional development and curriculum development. Mr. Casey addressed the major technology drivers that include software licensing, equipment replacement and software subscriptions. Ms. Meriwether reviewed health insurance claims history and projections.

Mr. Casey and Mr. Loveland discussed facilities and maintenance needs. Mr. Casey addressed CNR and the 2 proposed capital projects approved by the board. Ms. Appleby addressed revenues and grants and provided an overview of grant funding.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Adjournment

Sharon Thomas
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

February 11, 2025

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Ms. Jen Batchelar. Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco. Ms. Sharon Thomas arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Members absent: Mmes. Lydia Tedone, Tara Willerup and Jessica Parise

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Rafaella Rosadio and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITION

Mr. Curtis introduced Central School Art teacher Tara Harrison who was honored with a prestigious art award in the fall, the CT Outstanding Art Educator Award by the CT Art Education Association. Ms. Lemke noted Ms. Harrison's content skill set and her connection with students. She stated that Ms. Harrison lifts the level of excellence in our art programming. Ms. Harrison's students' artwork is currently being utilized for an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.

Recognition

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Rosadio reported that the SHS production of Anastasia just concluded. SHS has been named a finalist for outstanding school spirit. She noted that information nights, regarding transitioning students who are moving up to a new school next year, are being held at the schools. Two Squadron Line 6th grade students were honored at the CAS Elementary Art Awards banquet.

Communications

Ms. Batchelar reported on the SHS Trojan Community Council Leadership Team meeting where they discussed different paths for students other than 4 year colleges. An individual from the Department of Labor spoke to the group about areas of employment people are going into. SHS plans to create a website with different information on topics and industries.

Ms. Lemke reported that Friday is a half day for students. Staff will spend the afternoon doing building based work. Ms. Lemke noted that there are 5 international trips taking place during the April vacation. These include trips to Costa Rica, Italy, Portugal, France and Taiwan.

Mr. Tindall stated his appreciation to board members for participating in Saturday's budget workshop. Mr. Curtis stated that Anastasia was a really great performance and it is always inspiring to see kids who are passionate about what they are doing.

directly to the BOE and not to the town. Additionally if you receive an increase of \$100,000 or more you must submit a plan to the state for the use of funds. Mr. Curtis noted that he is unsure if these funds are new or will supplant other funding. He stated that with these additional funds as an offset, the budget increase would lower to 2.92%.

Mr. Falco noted that our per pupil expenditures are in the middle of DRG B, yet we have high academic ratings. He stated that he wants the reductions to be best for the town, students, staff and parents. He suggested that capturing the 4 FTE through retirements should be looked at carefully as it is hard to add staffing down the road. Mr. Falco stated he would like to step up the plan for CNR.

Mr. Curtis stated the BOF Chair has requested a prioritized list for CNR. He noted that while we haven't prioritized staffing, we want to prioritize operating that we have been putting aside.

Mr. Watson stated he agrees that this is a maintenance budget year and he appreciates the creativity to rein in costs. He noted that taking care of operating items will pay off down the road. Mr. Watson stated that he trusts Mr. Curtis, Ms. Lemke and Mr. Sullivan to have a thoughtful plan.

Ms. Thomas stated that she appreciates that information continues to change. She suggested that we continue to look at the shared service model. Ms. Thomas stated that she feels pretty good about what has been presented, but she is still looking at things.

Ms. Batchelar suggested that in the next 5 years the district look at redistricting the schools so they are all sized properly. She noted that Tariffville would profit from students coming to the school.

Mr. Tindall stated he is more comfortable with a 3.9% increase than with a 4.3% increase. He noted that as information evolves we may be able to get down to a 2.9% increase

Mr. Curtis stated that the \$850,000 will help us in any case. He noted that special ed is an expenditure outlier and thereby the revenue becomes important. Mr. Curtis pointed out that the district is in the middle of our DRG with the percentage spent on special ed. He noted that we have healthy reserve levels.

Mr. Tindall noted that 2 Farms Village Road will help with the budget and there could possibly be additional reductions from the health insurance fund. In response to Mr. Watson, Mr. Curtis stated that special ed out-of-district tuition has been increasing by 10.3% for 5 years, totaling \$1.5 million. Mr. Curtis noted that Governor Lamont recently spoke about offering grants to districts who start in-house special ed programs.

Mr. Curtis addressed historical staffing additions over the past 4 years. He noted that we do not have an increase in enrollment this year. More than 25 positions have been added over the past 4 years, having a positive impact on the district. Mr. Curtis stated that many of these positions are special ed and the administration is reviewing growth data relative to the impact of these additions. Mr. Sullivan noted that 25 is a gross number, with a net number of 14 positions.

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: February 25, 2025
RE: Acceptance of Donation from the Class of 2025

In keeping with the Board of Education Policy 2311, Gifts from the Public, Board approval is required for any gift to the school system which exceeds \$1,500.

The administration is requesting Board of Education approval of a donation to Simsbury High School of a 26" Victory Bell to be hung outside of the athletic entrance at Simsbury High School valued at \$8,000. The purpose of the donation is to increase school spirit.

"MOVE that the proposed gift of a Victory Bell valued at \$8,000 to Simsbury High School by the Class of 2025 be approved."

EXHIBIT IV

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: February 25, 2025
RE: Gift to the Simsbury Public Schools / David Krakoff & Sydney Hoffmann

In keeping with the Board of Education Policy 2311, Gifts from the Public, Board approval is required for any gift to the school system which exceeds \$1,500.

The administration is requesting Board of Education approval of a gift to Simsbury High School from the David Krakoff & Sydney Hoffmann Charitable Fund of \$5,000 to be used for educational experiences for students in need of financial assistance. This donation is in honor of Greg Hoffmann, Class of 1970.

“MOVE that the proposed gift of \$5,000 from the David Krakoff & Sydney Hoffmann Charitable Fund be approved.”

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: February 25, 2025
RE: Gift to the Simsbury Public Schools / SHS Robotics Club

In keeping with the Board of Education Policy 2311, Gifts from the Public, Board approval is required for any gift to the school system which exceeds \$1,500.

The administration is requesting Board of Education approval of a gift to the Simsbury High School Robotics Team from the Gene Haas Foundation of \$2,750 to be used to purchase supplies and cover expenses incurred by the Robotics Club.

“MOVE that the proposed gift to the SHS Robotics Club at Simsbury High School from the Gene Haas Foundation totaling \$2,750 be approved.”

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: February 25, 2025
RE: The SHS SPTC Scholarship

The Board of Education approves all proposed scholarships available to Simsbury Public School students. Below are the guidelines for the SHS SPTC Scholarship. This has been reviewed by Maggie Seidel, Simsbury High School Principal, Greg Stillman, Director of School Counseling, and central office administrators. We recommend the approval of this scholarship.

The SHS SPTC believes in offering a scholarship to help students defray the cost of earning a post secondary education. This can be college, vocational/trade school, career and technical education programs, and apprenticeship programs.

AMOUNT: Four scholarships in the amount of \$500 awarded to graduating seniors starting with the Class of 2025.

CRITERIA: Open to all graduating seniors who have post-secondary education plans.

SELECTION: SHS Scholarship Committee

DISBURSEMENT: A check will be presented directly to the recipient on Awards Night by Jennifer Petillo.

CONTACT: Jennifer Petillo
34 Farms Village Rd Simsbury, CT 06070
Phone: 808-940-6747
Email address: shssptc@gmail.com

“MOVE that the Board of Education approve The SHS SPTC Scholarship, to be disbursed starting in 2025.”

MTC:da

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: February 25, 2025
RE: Adoption of 2025-26 Public School Budget

After reviewing the 2025-26 proposed budget with the board last week, no changes have been made to the budget as presented. The proposed budget includes an increase of 3.91%, based on the main budget drivers listed below.

Fixed Costs	\$1,381,716	1.61%
Operations	\$1,081,485	1.26%
Special Education	<u>\$ 890,459</u>	1.04%
Total	\$3,359,659	3.91%

The administration recommends the following motion for adoption:

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the 2025-26 Public School budget in the amount of \$89,160,028 which represents an increase of \$3,359,659 or 3.91%.”

MTC:kdw