

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
August 20, 2020
BOE Conference Room
6:30 p.m.
AMENDED AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- III. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS
- IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
 - A. Approval of Minutes of July 21, 2020 Special Meeting EXHIBIT I
 - B. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2020 Special Meeting EXHIBIT II
 - C. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2020 Meeting EXHIBIT III
 - D. Personnel EXHIBIT IV
 - E. Approval of Gift from HJMS PTO EXHIBIT V
- V. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
 - A. Reopening Plan Update EXHIBIT VI
 - B. COVID Expenditures EXHIBIT VII
- VI. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VII. FUTURE BUSINESS
 - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 8, 2020,
Board of Education Conference Room

Watch Board of Education meetings LIVE and rebroadcast on Comcast Channels 95 or 1070 and on Frontier Channel 6070 as well as LIVE and on-demand at www.simsburytv.org.

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

July 21, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the virtual meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde. Director of Finance Amy Meriwether joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Tedone reported that CABE and CREC are meeting twice a week, in addition to holding webinars. NSBA continues to advocate for legislation, and funding for the return of school. NSBA has begun an initiative, DIRE – Dismantling Institutional Racism in Education, which will be shared with all districts. Ms. Willerup reported on activities in town associated with For All Ages and with the Simsbury Free Public Library.

Communications

Ms. Lemke reported that on July 6th Extended School Year (ESY) training for staff began. Additionally, training videos were sent to families and students to prepare them for re-entering school. ESY programs began July 8th and are being held at SHS and Squadron Line School. Ms. Murray reported on the Teaching & Learning Team Task Force. Secondary meetings continued last week, and elementary groups continue to meet.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of June 23, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of June 30, 2020 Special Meeting

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 30 Special Meeting

Approval of
Minutes of June
23, 2020

Approval of
Minutes of June
30, 2020

A. School Reopening Plan Update

Mr. Curtis stated that the Simsbury Public Schools reopening plan is grounded in four guiding principles: (1) Health and safety of students and staff, (2) high quality, engaging instruction for all students, (3) social and emotional health and support, and (4) access and equity. He stated that the State of CT released a fall reopening model such that schools return to full time in-person instruction in the fall, while still offering a distance learning model for those students whose families do not choose to return. Plans for each district's full time in-person model, hybrid model and full time distance learning model must be provided to the state by July 24th. Mr. Curtis noted that this is a fluid situation, and the full time return to school is dependent on whether public health continues to support this model.

Mr. Curtis briefly reviewed the July parent survey results. He noted that the administrative team and assistants reached out to families who responded "unsure" or "no". He stated that a second survey will be sent to parents in early August.

Mr. Sullivan addressed the first guiding principle, health and safety of students and staff. He reviewed the mitigation strategies being put in place. Cohorting in Grades K-6 will have students remaining with their homeroom teacher throughout the day. Specials teachers will go to each classroom, rather than having the students move. Cohorting in Grades 7-8 will have students contained within their team. The team is the student's cohort and they will move with your team. Traffic patterns will be created to minimize teams from crossing paths.

Mr. Sullivan noted that SHS is more challenging due to the number of courses and schedules. In order for students to move less during the day, every day will utilize a block schedule alternating each day between periods 1, 3, 5, 7 and periods 2, 4, 6, 8, so that students only cross in the hallway three times per day. We plan to extend times for arrival and dismissal to avoid students congregating.

Mr. Burrick asked if we have enough equipment for specials to move from classroom to classroom. Mr. Sullivan responded that we will need to purchase additional materials, as we also want to limit the sharing of materials among students. We also want to stress the need for handwashing throughout the day.

Ms. Thomas asked if there be cleaning between teachers in the classroom. Mr. Sullivan stated that we do not have the capacity to clean surfaces in every location throughout the course of the day, and this is not an expectation of the Farmington Valley Health District. In response to Ms.

School
Reopening Plan
Update

Salina, Mr. Sullivan stated that teachers will have an instruction area in each classroom. He pointed out that social distancing, face coverings and handwashing all together provide the best mitigation strategy.

Ms. Tedone asked how lunch will be handled. Mr. Sullivan responded that Grade K-6 students will eat lunch in their classroom or outside. At HJMS and SHS the cafeterias will be utilized for multiple lunch waves, and students will be encouraged to eat outside. In response to Ms. Batchelar, Mr. Sullivan stated that school principals will develop a plan for their students with food allergies.

Mr. Sullivan addressed social distancing. He stated that seating arrangements have been designed to maximize social distancing in the classrooms, with desks five feet apart. At the elementary level, classes will be limited to 18 students. If cohorts are too large they will be moved to larger spaces in the school. Larger spaces will be used at HJMS and SHS as needed. Hallway transitions will be minimized at all levels and will have arrows defining the direction to walk. Individual lunch and recess plans are in development at each building.

Mr. Sullivan addressed face coverings, noting that the state is requiring that all students and staff wear a face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth, unless there is a prohibitive medical reason. Protocols for "mask breaks" during the day are under development. We are asking that students and staff use their own face mask, but we will supply disposable masks as needed. Face shields may be worn in addition, but not in place of masks. Mr. Sullivan stated that Governor Lamont's guidelines indicate that teachers can remove their mask during instruction, as long as full social distancing can be achieved.

Mr. Watson asked how younger elementary students, without lockers, will store their belongings. Mr. Sullivan responded that the desks we have purchased have a storage area. We do not plan to have students using lockers at the beginning of the year, and we will have to tweak how student belongings are stored as the year progresses.

Mr. Burrick asked about students with a hearing disability. Mr. Sullivan responded that we would advise the use of face shields so the student can see the mouth. He noted that many rooms are equipped with a sound system. Mr. Burrick asked if we will develop non-compliance policy with regard to mitigation strategies. Mr. Sullivan stated that these instances would be handled by the school administration for follow-up with students and families.

Ms. Thomas asked about the use of masks for special education students. Mr. Sullivan stated that students in the ESY program are wearing masks.

Ms. Lemke stated that the younger students are taking more mask breaks and building stamina for wearing the masks. We have been working with and training these students on wearing a mask.

Mr. Sullivan addressed health practices and protocols. He stated that hand washing routines will be explicitly taught at the elementary level. Hand sanitizer has already been purchased in bulk. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout the schools, including main entrances. Plexiglass partitions and shields are being installed in frequently visited locations. Portable partitions have been purchased as well.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed cleaning procedures. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of classrooms will take place on a daily basis. We have purchased electrostatic spraying machines that will increase efficiency in disinfecting surfaces. Senior custodians are developing plans for overtime, and added manpower, so more cleaning can occur over the course of the day. Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily, based on guidance from the state. Cleaning logs will be maintained so that occupants know when the space has been cleaned.

Mr. Sullivan discussed air ventilation. He stated that both the CT State Department of Education and the CT Department of Public Health have provided guidance to school districts. Simsbury is working with commissioned engineers to evaluate, adjust and balance HVAC systems. The goal is to maximize fresh air intake. Where supported we will install high quality air filters. Based on state guidance, air conditioners are to be set to low speed and direct flow away from students. Box fans can be used to draw air out of the classroom through the windows. Ceiling fans will be set to draw air up.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed screening protocols for staff and students. Staff members and parents are being asked to screen themselves and children prior to leaving for school. Temperature must be below 100 degrees Fahrenheit with no COVID-19 symptoms.

Mr. Sullivan addressed the protocol if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school building. (1) The administration will assess the risk with local health officials. (2) Communicate to parents/guardians and school community accordingly. (3) Plan for short-term closure (2-5 days is the CDC recommendation) to clean and contact trace. (4) In consultation with local health district officials, determine appropriate next steps, including decision on an extended closure. Mr. Sullivan noted that it is the responsibility of families to quarantine should a family member be exposed to COVID-19. Mr. Curtis stated that local superintendents have been collaborating with Farmington Valley Health District officials, and will meet next week including nurse supervisors. The Farmington Valley superintendents want to ensure

consistency with protocols across districts.

Ms. Thomas asked how the attendance policy will be implemented if we are encouraging students to stay home if they feel sick. Mr. Sullivan responded that the state guidance allows schools to relax their attendance policy. Mr. Burrick asked if the district will screen visitors to the schools. Mr. Sullivan stated that visitors to the schools will be very limited. Ms. Thomas suggested that school staff take the temperature of visitors.

Mr. Curtis introduced the teaching and learning component of the reopen plan. He stated that the SPS continuum for teaching and learning includes three paths: in-person learning, hybrid learning and full distance learning. These learning models relate to the rate of community transmission.

Ms. Murray reviewed the three learning models developed for the fall. In-person learning will include clearly articulated grade level schedules K-6, with Grades 5-6 departmentalization of content area with content teachers moving among classrooms. Specials teachers will also move among classrooms. A block schedule will be followed Grades 7-12. Parents may choose virtual learning instead of in-person learning. In that case, K-6 students from throughout the district will be grouped by grade level. Grade 7-12 students will access courses/classes virtually.

Ms. Murray described the hybrid learning model which is 50% in-person and 50% distance learning. Students would be grouped alphabetically. In this model in-person instruction will resemble the in-person model above. The distance learning portion may include some real time teaching, with the majority of learning to be independent. This will include the purposeful use of technology to enhance instructional practices.

Ms. Murray reviewed the full distance learning model. All K-6 and 7-12 content area teachers will remain with students. Virtual learning will feature significantly more live, teacher-led instruction, offering some opportunities for small groups and flexible learning time. There will be ongoing planned opportunities for student interaction, connections and collaboration. Students will utilize items from *Grab & Go* Resources. The K-6 content and special areas schedule will be defined and provided, as well as the 7-12 block schedule.

In all models ongoing assessment of understanding and feedback will be provided to students. The grading system will include the K-6 standards-based report card, Grades 7-8 trimester grading, and Grades 9-12 quarter grading. Ms. Murray reviewed the reopening calendar for staff and students.

Mr. Burrick asked if students will be permitted to move from distance

learning to in-person learning. Ms. Murray responded that students can make that change, but the school will need time to make that adjustment, possibly 2 weeks. Ms. Thomas asked about those parents who choose to homeschool. Ms. Murray explained that there is a policy for homeschooling in which parents withdraw their child and re-enroll if they decide to return to school. Ms. Salina asked if full distance learning is available in the hybrid model. Mr. Curtis responded that it is.

Ms. Lemke addressed social and emotional health and support. She stated the four prioritized practices that will be utilized: (1) time for relationships/partnerships, (2) adult connectivity, healing and strategy-building, (3) safe and equitable learning environments, and (4) utilization of data to inform and improve our practices. The focus will be on 5 competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Ms. Lemke reviewed access and equity for the start of school. She stated that the Equity Statement adopted by the board outlines what we mean by equity and practices in all learning models, and guarantees access for all students. Ms. Murray reviewed the technology plan for devices and applications, as well as the areas of focus.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the current state guidance for students riding the bus. This includes providing back-up masks if students do not have one, developing clear expectations for drivers, loading buses back to front, no changing of seats during the route, increased cleaning and sanitizing of vehicles, and the possible use of bus monitors.

Mr. Curtis addressed next steps. The requirement is that districts submit plans to the state on Friday. We will distribute a community reopening report on July 29. Mr. Curtis noted the importance of communication, stating that a second survey the first week in August. Building principals will communicate to parents their specific plans for their building. Design of professional development sessions for staff and students are ongoing. The reopening task forces will continue to meet. Mr. Curtis stated that he is in regular communication with the Simsbury Education Association (SEA) co-presidents so they can share staff concerns.

B. COVID Expenditures

Ms. Meriwether reported on COVID expenditures as of June 30, 2020. She stated that a net savings is anticipated for the 2020 fiscal year, but the fiscal year has not yet closed. The savings are anticipated to be approximately \$200,000, without the use of the non-lapsing account funds. Ms. Meriwether stated that the district has incurred additional costs in July in order to be in compliance with state guidance. As of July 13, 2020 the

COVID
Expenditures

district has incurred \$140,000 in COVID related expenditures.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Jen Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Adjournment

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

July 28, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the virtual meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis and Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan,

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Thomas: MOVE that the Board of Education enter executive session to interview an administrative candidate.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Executive
Session

Adjournment

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

July 28, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the virtual meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

Mr. Curtis stated that the school reopening plan will be send to families and staff tomorrow. It will be an expanded version of the BOE presentation and the plan submitted to the state. Mr. Curtis noted that at Governor Lamont’s press conference on Monday he changed his stance and is giving more flexibility for hybrid learning and local decision making. He stated that some of the information was unclear and we are seeking more clarification on that front. Mr. Curtis stated that following tomorrow’s communication, building principals will communicate with their families on Friday, and the second survey will be sent to families next week.

A. Appointment of SHS Assistant Principal

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the hiring process for this position, noting that there were more than 135 applicants. He spoke about the qualifications of the chosen candidate. Steve Patrino, SHS Principals, spoke about the positive attributes of the candidate.

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education appoint Vanessa Massiah to the position of Simsbury High School Assistant Principal effective at an exact date to be determined in August 2020.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

B. Acceptance of Gift from Central School PTO

Ms. Murray stated that the PTO would like to donate funds for the purchase of classroom library books, to support students and limit screen time, and funds to go toward outdoor recess resources.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$10,000 from the Central

Appointment of
SHS Assistant
Principal

Acceptance of
Gift from
Central School
PTO

School PTO be approved.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Adjournment

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis
DATE: August 20, 2020
RE: Personnel Recommendations

I. Resignations

Jennifer Clark

Assignment Special Education Teacher, Squadron Line
Simsbury Exp 7 years
Effective August 7, 2020

Heather Tanis

Assignment Special Education Department Supervisor, Henry James
Simsbury Exp 7 years
Effective August 21, 2020

BOARD MOTION:

“MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Jennifer Clark effective August 7, 2020 and Heather Tanis effective August 21, 2020.”

II. Leave of Absence – Policy 4260.3

Rebecca Rosenthal has requested a non-salaried guaranteed leave of absence commencing August 24, 2020 through June 30, 2021 in accordance with the Board of Education Policy 4260.3.

Rebecca Rosenthal

Assignment Math Teacher, Henry James Memorial School
Simsbury Exp 12 years
Commencing August 24, 2020

BOARD MOTION:

“MOVE that the Board of Education approve a non-salaried leave of absence for Rebecca Rosenthal for the period of August 24, 2020 – June 30, 2021 with a guaranteed position upon her return.”

MTC:cdf

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: August 20, 2020

RE: Gift to the Simsbury Public Schools / Henry James Memorial School

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 Henry James Memorial School from its PTO of \$8,900 to be used for purchasing 12 Resin coated picnic tables which will increase seating capacity for outdoor lunches & instruction.

“MOVE that the proposed gift of \$8,900 from the Henry James Memorial School PTO be approved.”

/cm

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: August 20, 2020

RE: COVID Expenditures

Below is the most recent breakdown of unbudgeted expenditures, anticipated revenue losses and savings estimates associated with COVID-19:

Board of Education - COVID-19 Impact					
	Actual @ 6/30/20 (1)	FY21 To Date	FY21 Estimated	Fund Impacted	
Athletics Programs Revenue Loss (Pay to Play)	\$ (110,270.47)	\$ -	\$ -	General Fund	
Food Services Program Loss	(100,000.00)	-	-	General Fund	
Desks	* (55,750.00)	(5,915.00)	-	General Fund	
Desk Shields	-	* (77,300.32)	-	General Fund	
PPE (Gloves, Masks, sanitizer, plexiglass)	* (55,146.55)	* (3,000.90)	-	General Fund	
Cleaning Supplies	* (39,537.01)	* (27,559.33)	-	General Fund	
Laptops	* (16,904.63)	-	-	General Fund	
Chromebooks/IPADS and Cases	* (8,324.81)	* (102,249.60)	(43,800.00)	General Fund	
Distance Learning Software	(7,924.92)	* (36,217.20)	(70,768.00)	Grant Fund/General Fund	
Signage	* (2,427.06)	* (708.99)	-	General Fund	
Staff Overtime for Cleaning	* (1,768.81)	* (2,303.67)	-	General Fund	
Hot Spots	* (992.32)	-	-	General Fund	
Internet Upgrade	-	* (18,600.00)	-	General Fund	
Report Card Software	-	* (3,000.00)	-	General Fund	
Portable Sinks	-	* (20,058.00)	-	General Fund	
Tents	-	* (25,172.00)	-	General Fund	
USB Charging Stations	-	* (9,104.15)	-	General Fund	
Instructional Supplies (Outdoor Learning)	-	* (2,407.94)	(5,000.00)	General Fund	
Ventilation Study	-	* (60,000.00)	-	Capital Project Fund	
Personnel (Teachers)	-	-	(275,000.00)	General Fund	
Total Expenses & Loss in Revenues	(399,046.58)	(393,597.10)	(394,568.00)		
Transportation Savings	476,356.84	-	-	General Fund	
Substitute Teacher Savings	162,378.32	-	-	General Fund	
Instructional Supply Savings	113,690.24	-	-	General Fund	
Conference & Education Savings	53,642.30	-	-	General Fund	
Utilities Savings	126,842.23	-	-	General Fund	
Total Savings	932,909.93	-	-		
Net Savings (Loss) to the Board of Education	\$ 533,863.35	\$ (393,597.10)	\$ (394,568.00)		
(1) The Board of Education has not closed the fiscal year as of the date of this meeting and these balances are subject to change					
* Submitting for Reimbursement					