

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
September 14, 2021
BOE Conference Room

6:30 p.m.
AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. RECOGNITION
- III. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
- V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
 - A. Approval of Minutes of August 24, 2021 Special Meeting EXHIBIT I
 - B. Personnel EXHIBIT II
- VI. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
 - A. School Opening Report EXHIBIT III
- VII. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS
 - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 28, 2021,
SHS Auditorium

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

August 24, 2021

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Program Room at the Simsbury Public Library.

Roll Call:

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

Members absent: Mrs. Lydia Tedone.

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

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Shannon McLean, 2 Hayes Road, expressed her concern with the mask mandate for children in school. She stated that this is a virus and not a pandemic. Ms. McLean stated that staff should wear masks, not children. She stated that the school district is not responsible for making health decisions; it is the decision of the parents. She asked who will maintain responsibility if her children gets sick from wearing a mask. Ms. McLean stated that masks are not effective in stopping the spread and they affect the emotional and social wellbeing of children. She demanded that masks be optional.

Monica Madrid, 1 Neal Drive, stated that the mask mandate should be the decision of parents. She noted that 90% of the population in Simsbury is vaccinated. Ms. Madrid stated that she hopes after September 30 the district will pull the mask mandate as it is not fair to children.

Micky Kopel, 9 Pinecrest Drive, stated that the system is failing our children. Masks don't work, they are not worn properly and they hold bacteria. Ms. Kopel stated that 99.97% of children under age 18 have survived COVID. Adults can protect children by getting vaccinated. Children were out all summer without masks. Ms. Kopel noted that the flu kills people even with vaccines in place, and we don't wear masks for the flu. She stated that teachers have the option to be vaccinated. Masks should be optional, not mandatory.

Margie Jakubowski, 26 Quorn Hunt, applauded what the school district accomplished last year. She implored the district to continue to make forward progress and do better for our children. Ms. Jakubowski stated that a school should not be able to tell parents they cannot pickup other children if it is for social reasons. She noted that school is an important social environment.

Michele Paige, 7 Hampshire Lane, expressed concern with the mental health of children and cited articles relative to how masks affect mental health. She stated that no one wants sick kids, but no kids are dying from COVID. Ms. Paige provided data on the number of kids who die from suicide, stating that kids die and they are not

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dying from COVID.

Mike Park, 12 Alder Drive, thanked board members for all of their good work. He stated 3 requests: (1) make masks optional when you have the power for local control, (2) do not mandate vaccines for kids, and (3) no mass testing of healthy kids. Mr. Park stated that COVID will become endemic. He compared suicide numbers to the number of children who die due to COVID. He stated that in Simsbury, we are leaders.

Robert Hensley, 20 Fox Den, urged the school district to normalize mask wearing. He stated that masks don't work and vaccination rates are high in Simsbury. He questioned the end goal, at what number or date will mask wearing change?

Temra Pelletier, 5 Birch Road, stated that her family moved to Simsbury for the school system. She stated that here is where we draw the line. Kids are not super spreaders. Parents should be given the choice about mask wearing. Ms. Pelletier pointed out that masks get dirty, fall on the floor, and children are being exposed to more germs when they wear masks.

Ms. Batchelar read a letter submitted by **Megan Myers**, 425 Bushy Hill Road, expressing concern with the social-emotional risk to our children of mask mandates. Ms. Myers noted that children have been out doing things all summer without masks. She stated her belief that parents deserve to make medical decisions on behalf of their children.

Mr. Curtis thanked the audience for attending the meeting and presenting in a civil manner. He noted that at the close of the last school year we thought we could make masks optional. Mr. Curtis stated the importance of decisions being aligned with our health district. He agreed that decisions need to be made based on metrics and the markers used to change decisions need to be defined. Mr. Curtis stated that the district recognizes the stress of these decisions for those who have opposing views. For the continuity of school, the district has regulations we have to follow.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Thomas reported on the CAFE Leadership conference held earlier in the month. She stated that during the conference board members were asked if their districts have an equity policy. She suggested that the Simsbury BOE adopt an equity policy. Ms. Thomas questioned the status of renaming Columbus Day on the school calendar. Ms. Salina responded that the renaming of Columbus Day will be addressed by the Equity Council in order to hear from a larger voice and to garner community input.

Ms. Willerup thanked the audience for their thoughtful and kind comments during a very difficult time for everyone. Ms. Batchelar noted the student ambassadors assigned to new students at SHS. Mr. Burrick stated his appreciation for the civility and passion of town residents and their willingness to talk directly to the board.

Mr. Sullivan reported that new teacher orientation started today with more than 30 new certified staff. Ms. Salina thanked the audience for their kindness and civility.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Communications

A. Approval of Minutes of June 8, 2021 Regular Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 regular meeting.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of June 23, 2021 Special Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2021 special meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

C. Approval of Minutes of June 23, 2021 Special Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2021 special meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

D. Child Nutrition Program Authorized Signature Change

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education authorizes the following signatory changes associated with the Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs: (1) maintain signing authority for the Superintendent, Matthew Curtis, (2) eliminate signing authority for the School Business Manager, Burke LaClair, and (3) add signing authority for the Finance Director, Amy Meriwether.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Back to School Report

Mr. Sullivan discussed enrollment totals versus projections as of August 20, 2021. Enrollment is currently 36 above projections. Mr. Tindall asked whether there are any space concerns at Squadron Line School given the increase of 28 students. Mr. Sullivan responded that a minor redistricting or moving of some programming will need to be planned for as this is not a one year problem. Ms. Batchelar asked if all distance learning students are coming back to school this year. Mr. Sullivan responded that of the 24 students who switched to homeschooling for the first time last year, approximately half of those are returning to in-school instruction.

Mr. Sullivan addressed the effect of summer enrollment on elementary classes. He provided a comparison of certain school grade levels where classes have been added and one where a class has been eliminated. Five new teachers were hired to accommodate these changes. Class enrollment at SHS allowed for the reduction of one teacher so the net increase is four teachers.

Mr. Sullivan provided data on historical kindergarten enrollments, noting the significant increase this year of 57 students. He presented the elementary class size report. Mr. Watson questioned class size as compared to last year during COVID. Mr. Sullivan responded that classes are within class size guidelines and supports will

Minutes of June 8, 2021 Meeting

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Child Nutrition Program Authorized Signature

Back to School Report

be added if a class goes over the guideline. He noted that there are space limitations at Squadron Line School.

Mr. Sullivan addressed COVID mitigation strategies for the coming school year. Masks in schools will be required regardless of vaccination status. Students do not need to wear masks when outdoors. The FVHD plans to hold a vaccination clinic in September. We are awaiting guidance on Governor Lamont's executive order relative to vaccinations for those working in schools. Mr. Sullivan noted that hand hygiene; cleaning, spacing and contact tracing will all be in place for the coming school year. Social distancing protocols have changed to three feet when masked. Should there be a positive COVID case, there should not be a need to send the entire class home and there is a shorter quarantine period, and the ability to test and return to school sooner, if you are a close contact.

Ms. Lemke stated that the district will be asking staff and students to share vaccination cards with the administration. This information will help with the parameters for contact tracing. Ms. Lemke addressed COVID testing in schools. The state testing program requires parental consent. The intention of the testing is to target low vaccination/high case count communities. The district does not see a value to in-school testing at this time.

Ms. Lemke noted that distance learning is no longer an option for families except for in cases of quarantine. Remote learning during quarantine will be based on targeted plans for K-2, 3-6 and 7-12. The state will no longer permit remote snow dates. Ms. Lemke stated that the district has once again obtained a waiver and USDA funding to provide meals at no cost to all students. Additionally, popular a la carte items will be sold again.

Ms. Lemke reviewed summer programming. She stated that more than 200 students participated in summer programs K-12. These programs were funded through grant monies.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

John Grossman, 17 Hop Hollow, stated that he is a rising junior at SHS and involved in numerous clubs. He spoke in favor of mask wearing, noting that masks are saving lives. He stated that wearing a mask is protecting him as well as those in his home. Mr. Grossman supported wearing masks now as they won't be needed in the future.

Robert Hensley, 20 Fox Den, asked if classes will be permitted to comingle during recess. Mr. Sullivan responded that in the cafeteria students will sit with members of their class and once outside will be permitted to comingle with other classes.

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, stated that she is not in favor of everyone wearing masks. She stated her concern that children will become afraid to not wear a mask. She cited CDC statistics for those aged 0-17 for the period January 2020 to August 2021. 361 children have died with COVID, not necessarily because of COVID. 792 have died with pneumonia without COVID. She asked the district to teach critically and follow the evidence.

Micky Kopel, 9 Pinecrest Drive, stated we have the vaccine to protect ourselves so masks should be a choice. She asked if a child is vaccinated and in close contact to

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a COVID cased will the parents still be notified. Mr. Sullivan responded that all parents of a child who is a close contact will be notified. Ms. Kopel noted that last year her daughter was sent home twice because of symptoms related to allergies. She questioned the guidelines for sending a child home sick. Ms. Salina responded that these decisions are at the discretion of the school nurse.

Ms. Thomas asked when the SHS roofing project will be completed. Mr. Sullivan noted that the weather has been an issue, but we expect substantial completion by this weekend. Ms. Thomas asked when the bleacher project will be completed. Mr. Sullivan responded that the bleacher project will occur next summer.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Adjournment

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education
 FROM: Matthew T. Curtis
 DATE: September 14, 2021
 RE: Personnel Recommendations

I. Resignation

Laura Tinnirella

Experience 16 years
 Assignment World Languages, Grades 7-12
 Effective June 30, 2021

E. Jane Palmer

Experience 15 years
 Assignment Wellness, Simsbury High School
 Effective June 30, 2021

Daniel Bergman

Experience 18 years
 Assignment Special Education, Simsbury High School
 Effective June 30, 2021

Dana Pescatello

Experience 9 years
 Assignment English Teacher, Henry James Memorial School
 Effective August 5, 2021

Karli Heneghan

Experience 2 years
 Assignment Grade 4, Central School
 Effective August 5, 2021

BOARD MOTION:

"MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Laura Tinnirella, Jane Palmer, and Daniel Bergman effective June 30, 2021, and Dana Pescatello and Karli Heneghan effective August 5, 2021."

II. Retirement

Bernadette Burns Sullivan

Experience 12 years
 Assignment Math Teacher, Simsbury High School
 Effective June 30, 2021

BOARD MOTION:

"MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Bernadette Burns Sullivan effective June 30, 2021."

II. Appointments

Central School

Anna Connolly

Education BA, University of Connecticut

Experience MA, University of Connecticut
0
Salary Schedule MA, Step 1
Assignment Grade 1
Effective August 30, 2021

Anna Harris

Education BA, Randolph-Macon Woman's College
MA, University of Hartford
6th year, University of Connecticut

Experience 13 years
Salary Schedule 6th year, Step 9
Assignment Grade 6
Effective August 30, 2021

Mackensie Mulvihill

Education BA, State University of New York – Cortland
Experience 3 years
Salary Schedule BA, Step 4
Assignment Grade 3
Effective August 30, 2021

Tara Pagliaro

Education BA, UMASS – Amherst
MA, UMASS – Amherst
EdS, Simmons College

Experience 11 years
Salary Schedule 6th Year, Step 9
Assignment Grade 3
Effective August 30, 2021

Morgan Pierce

Education BA, Salve Regina
Experience 0
Salary Schedule BA, Step 1
Assignment Kindergarten
Effective August 30, 2021

Kristin Pomeroy

Education BA, Rochester Institute of Technology
MA, University of Hartford

Experience 2 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 3
Assignment Grade 4
Effective August 30, 2021

Latimer Lane

Ashley Mast

Education BA, Marist College
Experience 5 years
Salary Schedule BA, Step 5
Assignment Kindergarten
Effective August 30, 2021

Squadron Line School

Katie Augelli

Education BA, Boston University
MA, Southern Connecticut State University
Experience 11 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 9
Assignment Math Coach
Effective August 30, 2021

Briana Clough

Education BA, University of Connecticut
MA, Southern Connecticut State University
Experience 8 years
Salary Schedule 6th year, Step 8
Assignment Special Education Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Justin Farrell

Education BA, Rider University
Experience 2 years
Salary Schedule BA, Step 3
Assignment Music Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Megan Laponese

Education BA, Springfield College
Experience 0
Salary Schedule BA, Step 1
Assignment Physical Education Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Agnieszka Petlik

Education BA, Central Connecticut State University
MA, University of St. Joseph
6th year, University of Connecticut
Experience 8 years
Salary Schedule 7th year, Step 8
Assignment Kindergarten Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Erin Szymanski

Education BA, University of Connecticut
MA, Southern Connecticut State University
Experience 1 year
Salary Schedule 6th year, Step 2
Assignment Speech & Language Pathologist
Effective August 30, 2021

Tootin' Hills School

Mikayla Alicandro

Education BA, Roger Williams
MA, University of Hartford
6th year, University of Hartford
Experience 0
Salary Schedule 6th year, Step 1
Assignment School Psychologist
Effective August 30, 2021

Silvie Fluckiger

Education BA, Central Connecticut State University
Experience 1 year
Salary Schedule BA, Step 2
Assignment Grade 2
Effective August 30, 2021

Kimberly Zisa

Education BA, Boston University
MA, Boston College
Experience 4 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 5
Assignment Kindergarten
Effective August 30, 2021

Henry James Memorial School

Julia Cohen

Education BA, University of North Carolina
Experience 2 years
Salary Schedule BA, Step 3
Assignment English Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Kathryn Fausel

Education BA, University of Connecticut
MA, University of Hartford
Experience 18 years
Salary Schedule 6th Year, Step 9
Assignment Music Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Greg Gallo

Education BA, Central Connecticut State University
MA, Wilkes University
Experience 15 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 9
Assignment Art Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Samantha Grobard

Education BA, Westfield State University
MA, University of St. Joseph
Experience 1 year
Salary Schedule MA, Step 2
Assignment Special Education Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Andrew Mullen

Education BA, Springfield College
MA, Boston University
Experience 16 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 9
Assignment Art Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Jacqueline Santiago

Education BA and MA, University of Rochester
Experience 5 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 5
Assignment School Counselor
Effective August 30, 2021

Nathan Trier

Education BA, University of Delaware
MA, Vermont College of Final Arts
Experience 11 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 9
Assignment Music Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Simsbury High School**Sarah Blair**

Education BA, University of Connecticut
MA, University of St. Joseph
Experience 0
Salary Schedule MA, Step 1
Assignment School Counselor
Effective August 30, 2021

Adam Colagrossi

Education BA, Central Connecticut State University
Experience 1 year
Salary Schedule BA, Step 2
Assignment Math Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Jeffrey DiLeone

Education BA and MA, University of Connecticut
Experience 0

Salary Schedule MA, Step 1
Assignment Science Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Timothy O'Rourke

Education BA, Marist College
MA, University of St. Joseph
Experience 2 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 3
Assignment Special Education Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

Matthew Saccoman

Education BA and MA, University of Connecticut
Experience 20 years
Salary Schedule MA, Step 9
Assignment Special Education Teacher
Effective August 30, 2021

MTC:cdf

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: September 14, 2021

RE: School Opening Report - Part II

We successfully kicked off the 2021-2022 school year on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. The Central Office team will be providing the board with information relative to school opening that were not addressed in our initial report on August 24, 2021.

Mrs. Lemke will start by providing a brief update of curricular work that was completed during the summer months. At the elementary level, the work was centered on development of the social emotional learning focus for the coming school year. Staff also worked to enhance intervention models in both literacy and math, with attention placed on a supplemental elementary math block that will be instituted this year. At the secondary level, various units across content were updated to best align with standards in those specific areas.

Mrs. Lemke will then discuss how the administrative team utilized data to prioritize strategic plan goals and consequently focus our direction for the coming school year. She will share the specific areas of note and from which all building improvement plans are aligned:

- Ensure that our Vision of the Graduate (VoG) remains the driving force of our priorities, inclusive of a culminating capstone experience at the high school.
- Sharpen our focus on the social and emotional wellbeing of our students and staff.
- Refine our K-12 instruction and intervention processes to ensure all students achieve expected academic and/or behavioral success.
- Explore the multi-year, district discrepancy between our students' math and literacy performance, and determine how we should respond.
- Utilize professional development time to address these priorities in order to do better for students and each other, placing a premium on high-quality staff.

Mrs. Lemke will also give a broad overview of our student performance results from our standardized tests administered during Spring 2021: Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the SAT. The board may recall that these tests were not given since Spring 2019 due to the pandemic. Therefore, we must show discretion when putting too much emphasis on this data. That aside, our students' results indicate continued strong performance as compared to districts in our demographic reference group (DRG).

Smarter Balance Assessment (SBA)

Subject Area	DRG B Ranking 18 districts
ELA	2
Math	6

Her office will provide a more detailed report on September 28, 2021 that will include the goals and priorities from each Director in the Office of Teaching and Learning.

Mr. Sullivan will share highlights from our Simsbury New Teacher Orientation, inclusive of sessions offered, as well as teaching experience and academic preparation of our new faculty members.

After providing an extensive enrollment update on August 24, 2021, Mr. Sullivan will update the board on developments since that presentation.

Finally, Mr. Sullivan will outline the 2021-2022 priorities from the Office of Human Resources.

The School Opening Report will conclude with Mr. Jason Casey, Director of Infrastructure and Technology. Mr. Casey will review capital improvement and maintenance projects completed during the summer months. He will also share any pertinent technology infrastructure information with you.