

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
September 28, 2021
SHS Auditorium

6:30 p.m.
AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
- IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
 - A. Approval of Minutes of September 14, 2021 Meeting EXHIBIT I
 - B. Acceptance of Completion of HJMS Project Phase I
and Squadron Line School Office Project EXHIBIT II
- V. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
 - A. Simsbury High School Report EXHIBIT III
 - B. Teaching & Learning Update EXHIBIT IV
 - C. BOE Committee Assignments EXHIBIT V
- VI. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VII. FUTURE BUSINESS
 - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, October 12, 2021,
BOE Conference Room

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

September 14, 2021

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the BOE conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson. Mr. Jeff Tindall arrived at 6:40 p.m.

Members absent: Mrs. Tara Willerup

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Olivia Antidormi and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITION

Mr. Curtis introduced special education teacher Kristina Nordell, Simsbury's 2022 Teacher of the Year. He stated that no one works harder, is more passionate and a better communicator than Ms. Nordell. Ms. Nordell has worked as a special education teacher in the district for 18 years. Mr. Curtis shared a piece of her Convocation message: (1) everyone needs a someone, (2) check your ego at the door, (3) always take time to pause and to observe what a student is communicating through their behavior, and (4) every single student has something to contribute; take the time to find it.

Ms. Nordell thanked the board for their support. She stated that she is humbled and honored by the recognition.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Duane Royce, 26 Harvest Hill Road, requested that Simsbury Public Schools provide gym space so that senior citizens can play pickleball indoors during the winter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Salina welcomed the BOE student representatives, Olivia Antidormi and Alex Picoult to the meeting. Ms. Tedone provided an update from CREC, CABA and NSBA. She noted the Conversations About Race And Place program offered by Leadership Greater Hartford. Mr. Sullivan thanked Salter's Express, noting that they are fully staffed for all bus routes.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of August 24, 2021 Special Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2021 special meeting.

Recognition

Public Audience

Communications

Approval of
Minutes of
August 24, 2021

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.

B. Personnel

Ms. Tedone: 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.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

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

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Sullivan reported that 30 new teachers were hired for the start of the school year. There are new teachers at all schools with the exception of Tariffville School.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. School Opening Report

Ms. Lemke discussed the strategic plan priorities for the school year: student success and growth, compassionate and connected school culture, and premier workforce. As part of student success and growth, the focus will be on Vision of the Graduate, reducing the achievement gap, and addressing math performance. School culture will be addressed through social emotional learning and ensuring tiered intervention supports. Premier workforce will focus on prioritizing professional growth and teamwork, and placing a premium on high quality staff. Ms. Lemke discussed the professional development plans for the year.

Ms. Lemke addressed student learning data. She noted that the data was collected in an unprecedented year when students were in-person, hybrid and remote. Ms. Lemke stated that standardized testing was not administered in the spring of 2020 and given these factors the district is cautious about the weight placed on these results. She reviewed the DRG B ranking for the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) in grades 3-8 for ELA and math. She noted that the need to focus on math is not new. Mr. Curtis stated that the scores for in-person students and distance learning students were not that different. Ms. Lemke reviewed the DRG B ranking for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in grades 5, 8 and 11, as well as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores.

Ms. Batchelor asked about STAR reading and math performance. Ms. Lemke responded that the STAR assessments are formative and follow how a student is progressing. They provide a diagnostic look for teachers. Mr. Burrick asked what the district has been doing to improve math scores given that this is not a new issue. Ms. Lemke stated that the district is in its fourth year of Math in Focus at the elementary level. Coaches were not in play last year and this is why it is an area of focus in the strategic plan. Ms. Lemke noted that the full Teaching & Learning team will be reporting, with additional data analysis, at the September 28 board meeting.

Mr. Sullivan reported on new teacher orientation. He provided data on the level of

Personnel

School Opening Report

experience for new certified staff hires and their level of academic preparation, noting that 50% of the new hires have already obtained their masters degree.

Mr. Sullivan addressed student enrollment as of September 3, 2021. Total enrollment is 4,041 an increase of 81 students over October 1, 2020. He noted that the change from last year is almost all at the elementary level and is 21 over projections. Squadron Line School is 27 over projection, Tariffville School is 19 over projection and Latimer Lane is 33 below projection. Four additional teachers were hired over budget due to enrollment and we were able to reduce 1 classroom teacher at the secondary level. The budget impact is a net increase of 3 teachers.

Ms. Thomas asked if there has been an increase in the number of students being homeschooled. Ms. Lemke responded that there are currently 35 students who are homeschooled and there are not a large number of students who moved from distance learning to homeschooling. Ms. Thomas asked if the district has a staff directory with pictures. Mr. Curtis responded that a staff directory is accessible on our website, but does not include pictures. Our badge system maintains employee photos.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed his priorities for the school year. As the COVID-19 liaison for the district he will continue to oversee safety protocols, as well as support principals and program leaders. Mr. Sullivan addressed the vaccine mandate, noting that the district has more than 1,000 employees who fall under the mandate. Those who are not vaccinated will need to submit to monthly testing beginning September 27. Mr. Sullivan discussed this year's protocols for responding to positive cases in school.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the Tecton Architects contract for the Latimer Lane School renovation project will be finalized soon and we are moving forward with the design review process and timelines. Space issues at Squadron Line School will need to be discussed this winter. Mr. Sullivan stated that the Human Resources Department has continued its emphasis on equity, will be returning to the administration of a comprehensive staff satisfaction survey, and will enter negotiations with the Custodial and Maintenance bargaining unit this year. Mr. Sullivan addressed safety and security, stating that locked vestibules have been added at Tootin' Hills School and this work is almost completed for all of the schools. He noted that the state has added more requirements for safety in schools.

Mr. Casey presented visuals of the capital improvement and maintenance projects completed over the summer. These include the Simsbury High School roof replacement and roof HVAC unit replacement; the addition of air conditioners on the third floor of the high school facing the courtyard; completion of the HJMS renovation project; upgrade of the fire panel at HJMS; the Tootin' Hills School vestibule upgrade; and LED lighting upgrades at HJMS, Tootin' Hills and Squadron Line schools. Mr. Casey addressed the projects that are "in the works". The Tariffville security vestibule is currently being designed. The Latimer Lane School boiler replacement will be completed within the next few weeks. This work could not wait until the renovation project and will be incorporated into the new design. The SHS bleacher project will begin with demolition this winter and replacement next summer.

Mr. Casey provided a technology update. The 1:1 device program has been completed K-12. Students in grades K-2 continue to utilize iPads, with grades 2-12 utilizing Chromebooks. 2,475 Chromebooks were distributed over the summer. K-2

Go Bags have been created in case there is a need to close school on short notice. Mr. Casey stated that the district is moving toward centralized printing and away from inkjet and classroom printers.

Ms. Batchelar asked the status of the Help Desk at SHS. Mr. Casey stated that the schedule has been revised and a new ticketing system is in place. Ms. Batchelar questioned the status of the SHS turf field. Mr. Curtis responded that the work will be completed in the next 1 ½ weeks.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Bobby Hensley, 20 Fox Den, expressed frustration and disappointment that entire grades are not being permitted to eat together in the cafeteria. He noted that parents have not been in the school buildings for 2 years and now only one parent is allowed to attend Open House. He questioned where these decisions are coming from.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Acceptance of Squadron Line Main Office and Henry James
Phase I Projects

DATE: September 28, 2021

The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, in cooperation with the Department of Education, requires that the local Board of Education formally accept a school construction project as complete as a component of the process of filing the final grant forms. Once the documentation is filed, the project undergoes a state audit review and final grant payment is issued to the town.

The Squadron Line School Main Office project (128-0105A) needs Board of Education approval. Additionally, the Henry James School has had three phases: Phase I, Phase II and Phase III for local funding approval. Henry James Phase I (128-0106A/CV) needs Board of Education approval. Henry James Phase II is currently in the audit phase at the state level. Henry James Phase III has been approved as complete by the Public Building Committee and the final grant application forms and documentation are in the process of being filed with the state.

To file for the applicable state construction grants, the administration requests adoption of the following motion:

“MOVED that the Simsbury Board of Education accepts as complete the Squadron Line School Main Office project (128-0105A) and the Henry James Phase I project (128-0106A/CV) and authorizes the acceptance of the school building grants.”

/kdw

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: September 28, 2021
RE: Simsbury High School Report

Simsbury High School continues to exemplify a tradition of excellence for both academics and character. Tonight's Simsbury High School's presentation includes an overview of their strategic goal focus, the high school's vision and priorities, 2020-2021 accomplishments, and our most recent data related to SAT results, Advanced Placement (AP) performance, and a summary of Simsbury High School's college acceptances.

As a result of our analysis of our data, we continue to have strong performance on the SAT, as compared to state and national results. As Mrs. Lemke noted on September 14, 2021, the high school ranked third and fourth in our demographic reference group (DRG) for English/Language Arts (ELA) and math respectively. More specifically, the average ELA score is 572 and math is 557, while State averages are 545 (ELA) and 527 (math).

Further, at Simsbury High School, 76% of students took at least one AP course and 72% of students earned a score of 3 or higher on at least one AP exam during this unprecedented year.

For the class of 2021, the following is noted relative to post secondary plans and college acceptances:

- Of a class of 324 students:
 - 79.6% have committed to Four-Year Colleges & Universities
 - 7.4% Two-Year Colleges
 - 1.9% Military
 - 6.8% Employment
 - 1.5% Transition Academies
 - 0.6% College Prep Schools
 - 1.5% Gap Year (Year Off)
 - 0.6% Other/Undecided
- Early decision/early action applications to colleges continue to be preferred by our students. For graduating seniors, 52.8% of the seniors completed early decision/early action applications.
- A continued strong percentage of students were accepted to the "most competitive colleges".

Tonight, Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Steve Patrina, Simsbury High School Principal, Greg Stillman, Director of School Counseling and Vanessa Massiah, Assistant Principal, will expand on these results, share priorities aligned with the strategic plan, and provide the board with a sense of passion, pride and personal growth which have become hallmarks at Simsbury High School both in word and action.

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: September 28, 2021

RE: Teaching and Learning Update

In January of 2021, the board supported a restructuring of our central office team, inclusive of the Office of Teaching and Learning led by Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke. This change resulted in general education and special education coming together under one umbrella in Simsbury, while four interconnected departments work collaboratively to provide access to rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all students.

At our last meeting, Mrs. Lemke discussed how the administrative team utilized data to prioritize strategic plan goals and consequently focus our direction for the coming school year to:

- 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.

This evening, Mrs. Lemke will be joined by the four directors who now report to this office. Mrs. Betsy Gunsalus (Director of Elementary Curriculum & Assessment), Mrs. Katie Krasula (Director of Pupil Services), Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor (Director of Equity & Access), and Mrs. Maggie Seidel (Director of Instructional Technology) will be providing the board with the specific ways they will each lead work relative to our district priorities by highlighting their contributions to the improvement plan for the Office of Teaching and Learning. They will focus on succinct leadership moves with respect to the three strategic goals of student growth and success, compassionate and connected school culture, and our premier workforce. Further, they will share any significant data that has helped to inform next steps with their teams.

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: September 28, 2021
RE: Review of 2021-22 Board Committees

The Board of Education Bylaws, adopted in November 2004, provide for the establishment of committees in order to facilitate the work of the Board on a wide range of issues and topics. The Bylaws identify four types of committees: Standing Committee, Temporary Committee, Committee of the Whole, and Advisory Committee. Through the Bylaws, the Board has established the following Standing Committees: Policy, Personnel & Negotiations, Curriculum and Communications.

This evening the board will have the opportunity to review the current committee member list, which will be included in board members folders.

MTC:kdw

**SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
2021-22**

Policy Charge: To develop policy upon the recommendation of the Board. To revise existing policy and eliminate, revise and /or develop new policies, as necessary.

Jen Batchelar, Chair Lydia Tedone
Todd Burrick Sharon Thomas

Personnel & Negotiations Charge: To oversee all contracts and negotiations and plan for future negotiations. To review and recommend to the Board salaries for non-bargaining group employees.

Todd Burrick, Chair Jeff Tindall
Brian Watson Lydia Tedone

Curriculum Charge: To review and consider recommending for approval new courses and/or major revisions to courses and programs; to review recommendations and monitor the implementation of recommendations presented by the Assistant Superintendent resulting from annual curriculum and program evaluation reports; to follow up on curriculum-related policy issues as identified by the Board of Education

Tara Willerup, Chair Lydia Tedone
Jen Batchelar Jeff Tindall

Communications Charge: To oversee district-wide communication plan. To review, recommend and provide input on enhancing district level communications.

Lydia Tedone, Chair Sharon Thomas
Tara Willerup Brian Watson

Temporary Committees:

Facilities & Enrollment Task Force – Jeff Tindall, Chair, Susan Salina and Tara Willerup

Equity Council – Sharon Thomas and Tara Willerup

Magowan Grants & Scholarships – Tara Willerup

Liaisons to Administrative/Town Committees:

SHS Leadership Team – Jen Batchelar and Jeff Tindall

Trojan Council – Jeff Tindall

Technology Advisory Council – Brian Watson

Retirement Plan Sub-Committee – Todd Burrick and Brian Watson

Sustainability Committee –