

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 8, 2020  
BOE Conference Room  
6:30 p.m.  
AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- III. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS
- IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
  - A. Administrative Appointments EXHIBIT I
  - B. Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2020 Meeting EXHIBIT II
  - C. Approval of Minutes of November 24, 2020 Special Mtg. EXHIBIT III
- V. INFORMATION AND REPORTS
  - A. Enrollment Projections EXHIBIT IV
  - B. 2021-22 Budget EXHIBIT V
  - C. Capital Improvement Plan EXHIBIT VI
  - D. Humanities Elective EXHIBIT VII
- VI. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VII. FUTURE BUSINESS
  - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, January 12, 2021,  
Simsbury Public Library Program Room

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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

November 10, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the regular meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Susan Salina, Tara Willerup and Jen Batchelar.  
Messrs. Todd Burrick and Jeff Tindall. Sharon Thomas called into the meeting.

**Members absent:** Mrs. Lydia Tedone and Mr. Brian Watson.

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

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Bonnell reported on events at the elementary schools. She stated that there have been four runs of PSAT/SAT testing at SHS and nine students have been recognized as National Merit Commended Students.

Ms. Willerup provided an update on the activities scheduled for this year's Simsbury Celebrates event. Ms. Batchelar praised the virtual elementary character awards that allow students to see each other and receive their awards.

Ms. Murray reported on Veteran's Day activities in the schools, noting that they will be shared on individual school websites. She stated that this year SHS students will perform in a virtual spring musical that is currently being written by students. The theme of the musical is "Teenager Experiences During COVID". Ms. Murray noted that HJMS is planning for their spring performance as well.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the enrollment projection report was just received and the board will receive a presentation at their next meeting. Ms. Lemke stated that the Spirit Council is sponsoring a Symbol of Unity event with woman arias on December 6. She said the Equity Council work continues, and the district administrative team is reading and discussing the book Unconscious Bias In Schools by Tracey Benson and Sarah Fiarman.

Mr. Curtis addressed the most recent Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) metrics related to COVID and the FVHD Learning Model Indicator chart. He noted that the new state template is less delineated and provides more flexibility at the local level. Mr. Curtis stated the positivity rate in the Farmington Valley is 8.2 cases, which is an increase, but comparatively we are doing well. He noted that some school districts are making decisions around the holidays that are not supported by the CT Department of Public Health.

Communications

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Appointment of Director of Instructional Technology

Mr. Curtis stated he is very excited to present Maggie Seidel, Tootin' Hills Principal, as the next Director of Instructional Technology K-12. She will fill the position left vacant with the retirement of Joncia Lytwynec. Mr. Curtis stated the importance of filling this position with a visionary leader and Ms. Seidel's interest in a position with a K-12 scope.

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education appoint Margaret Seidel to the position of Director of Instructional Technology with an effective date of November 30, 2020.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of October 27, 2020 Executive Session

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 Executive Session.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Willerup and Ms. Thomas abstained.

C. Approval of Minutes of October 27, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

D. Personnel

Mr. Curtis announced that Ms. Murray, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, is retiring at the end of December. He spoke about Ms. Murray's time in the district, her work in teaching and learning, serving as a mentor to young administrators, and her return to work after a serious illness.

Mr. Tindall: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Erin Murray effective December 31, 2020.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

Board members spoke about Ms. Murray's work in the district and her immeasurable depth of knowledge. Ms. Murray reminisced about her time in Simsbury as both HJMS Principal and Assistant Superintendent. She communicated her future plans and thanked board members for their support.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Susan Gesualdi effective January 20, 2021.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

E. Cancellation of November 24, 2020 Meeting

Appointment of Director of Instructional Technology

Approval of Minutes of October 27, 2020 Executive Session

Approval of Minutes of October 27, 2020 Meeting

Personnel

Cancellation of

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to cancel the Board of Education meeting scheduled on November 24, 2020.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

### INFORMATION AND REPORTS

#### A. Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Curtis stated that the Tecton Facilities Master Plan recommendations will be discussed at the tri-board meeting relative to maintenance and long term needs. Jason Casey, Interim Director of Special Projects/Director of Systems Technology, presented the fiscal year 2020 capital plan. He stated the plan is centered on 3 areas: district security improvements, SHS bleacher and press box, and school improvements based on the recommendations from Tecton.

The district security improvements are a continuation of the existing plan. The request is \$250,000 and includes projects such as reconfiguring vestibules to control the flow of visitors into the schools and the addition of alarm systems to locations that lack them. The SHS bleacher and press box project is the project that was not funded in last year's plan. The current bleachers were constructed in 1968 and are higher and steeper than modern bleachers, the capacity no longer reflects the size of the student population, and the storage beneath the bleachers is leaking and in poor condition. The inspecting engineer does not recommend renovation of the bleachers, as making them ADA compliant would cost upwards of \$400,000. The request to replace the home side bleachers and press box at Holden Field is \$850,000.

Mr. Tindall asked if the bleachers are a safety issue. Mr. Casey responded that a few years ago there were safety concerns and the bleachers were repaired. When the inspector certified them last year the recommendation was to replace them. Ms. Salina pointed out that community members also use the field for youth sports.

Mr. Casey stated that \$2,705,000 is requested for elementary school improvements as recommended in the Tecton study. These are areas of immediate need as identified in the study. The estimate for Tootin' Hills School is \$850,000 and includes replacement of exterior doors and windows, security glazing and asbestos abatement. The estimate for Squadron Line School is \$850,000 and includes replacement of exterior doors and windows, security glazing and asbestos abatement. The estimate for Latimer Lane School is \$1,005,000 and includes replacement of exterior windows, security glazing, asbestos abatement and a new fire protection system. These items would all be needed if Latimer Lane School does not undergo a renovation. Mr. Curtis stated that after the tri-board meeting the administration will present the multiyear plan.

#### B. 2021-22 Budget Calendar

Mr. Curtis reviewed the calendar for the upcoming budget cycle. He pointed out that the calendar includes a Saturday budget workshop in February. All other dates are similar to those in past budget cycles. In response to Mr. Tindall, Ms.

November 24,  
2020 Meeting

Capital  
Improvement  
Plan

2021-22 Budget  
Calendar

Meriwether stated that the Board of Finance is waiting to receive the town facilities master plan and will look at it in conjunction with the school facilities master plan.

C. COVID Expenditures

Ms. Meriwether reported that there has been approximately a \$20,000 increase in COVID expenditures since the last board meeting. Additional PPE at a cost of \$5,000, the extended rental of tents at the secondary level at a cost of \$7,000 and the closing out of some technology purchases. The remaining balance in the non-lapsing account is \$265,000

D. BOE Committees

Ms. Salina stated that the committees for the current year are set and have been reviewed with board members.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Ms. Salina thanked SCTV for the purchase and installation of the new wireless microphones in the BOE conference room.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Batchelar:MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

COVID  
Expenditures

BOE  
Committees

Public Audience

Adjournment

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

November 24, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. in the HJMS Library Media Center.

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 Sue Homrok-Lemke and Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education enter executive session to interview administrative candidates and include Mr. Curtis, Ms. Lemke and Mr. Sullivan.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Executive  
Session

Adjournment

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matt Curtis  
Superintendent

DATE: December 8, 2020

RE: Enrollment Projections

### Overview

The following enrollment projections have been developed by Milone & MacBroom and cover the period of 2020-21 through 2025-26.

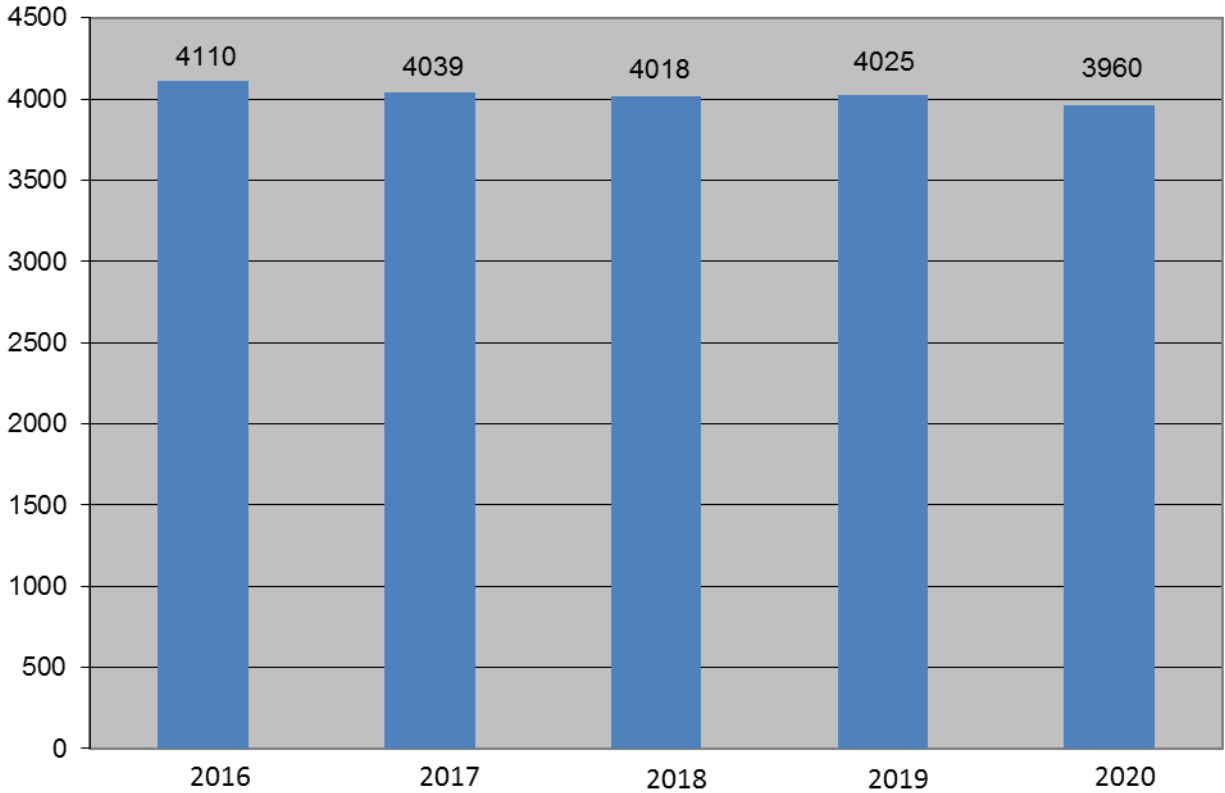
Milone & MacBroom employs a modified cohort-survival method in developing these projections. This procedure involves the calculation of ratios, based upon historical enrollment data, to determine a reliable percentage of increase or decrease in enrollment between any two grades.

After study and analysis of the historical ratios and based upon the assumptions above and those regarding births, migration rates, and retention rates, ratios most indicative of future growth patterns are determined for each pair of grades. Each ratio represents the cumulative effect of the following factors:

- Real estate turnover.
- New residential construction (NOTE: For this projection, we provided Milone & MacBroom with a new development worksheet compiled by our Enrollment Coordinator. A copy of this analysis is attached.)
- Migration, in or out, of the schools.
- Drop-outs, transfers, etc.
- Births to residents.
- Retention in the same grade.

In addition, this year's enrollment projections need to factor in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report will show that patterns in grade K and 1 have been most impacted by a downward enrollment trend; it is expected that the numbers will "correct" themselves moving forward, but staffing decisions at these grade levels will need to be flexible.

### **I. Table I--October 1 Enrollment History: 2016-17 through 2020-21**



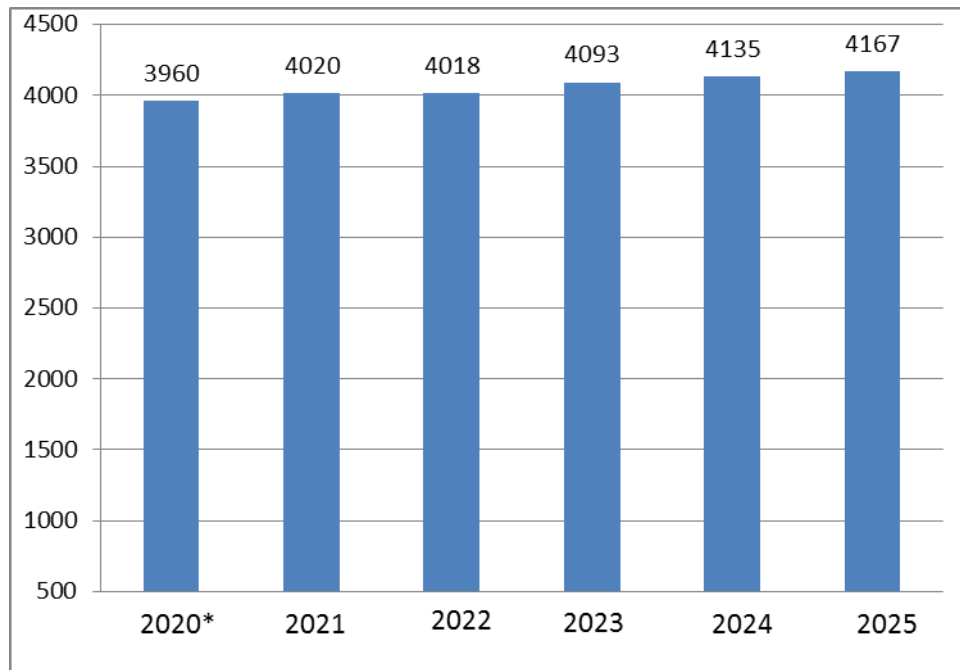
Comments:

- Table I illustrates that K-12 enrollment has declined from 4110 students in 2016 to 3960 students in 2020; this represents a total of 150 students or 3.6%.
- In grades K-6 there were 1976 students in 2016 and 2018 students in 2020. This marks as increase of 42 students or 2.1%.
- In grades 7-8 there were 690 students in 2016 and 633 students in 2020. This marks a decline of 57 students or 8.3%.
- In grades 9-12 there were 1444 students in 2016 and 1309 students in 2020. This marks a decrease of 135 students or 9.3%.

**II. Table II -- 5-year Projected Enrollments K-12: 2020-21 through 2025-26**

*Note: 2020-21 enrollment numbers are actual October 1, 2020 data*



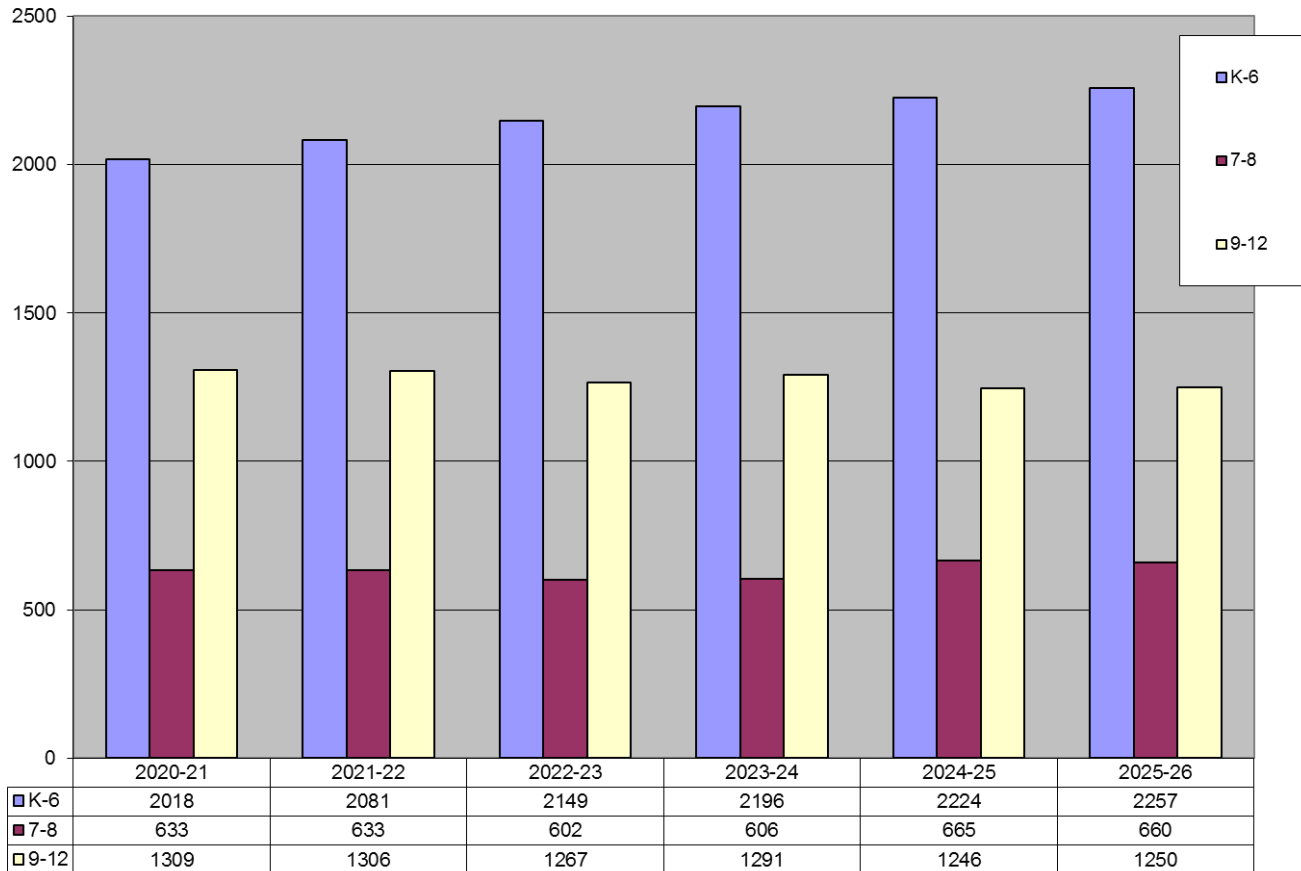


**Comments:**

Table II suggests that enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12 is expected to increase by 60 students for school year 2021-22. Over the next five years, K-12 enrollment is expected to increase by 207 students. The present enrollment of 3960 students is expected to increase to 4167 students by 2025-26, an overall increase of 5.2% in the student population.

**III. Table III -- 5-year Projected Enrollments by Grade Configuration: 2020-21 through 2025-26**

*Note: 2020-21 enrollment numbers are actual October 1, 2020 data*

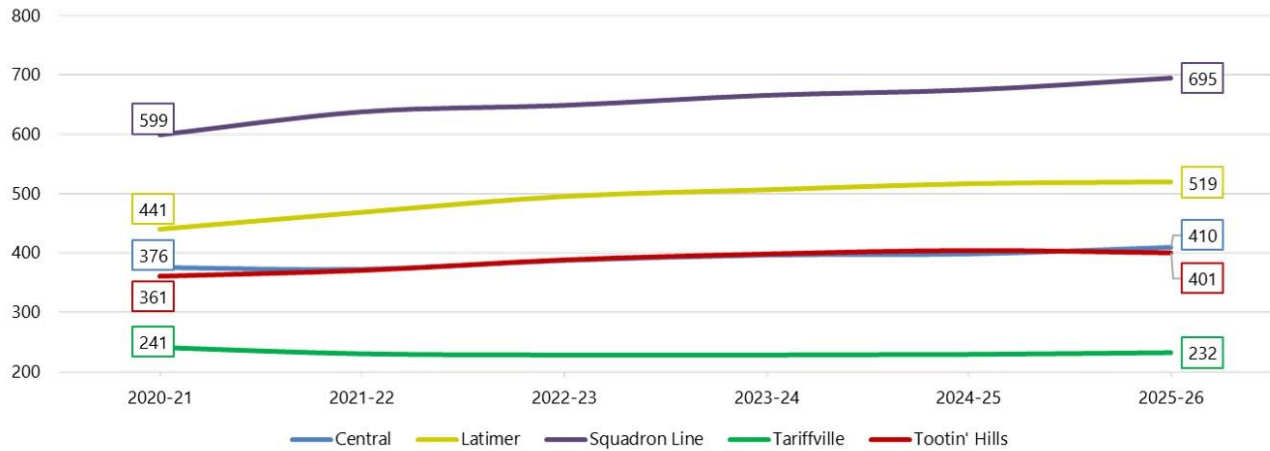


**Comments:**

- As illustrated in Table III, enrollment in grades K-6 is projected to increase by 63 students by school year 2020-21. Over the next five years, K-6 enrollment is expected to increase by 239 students. The present K-6 enrollment of 2018 is expected to increase to 2224 by 2025-26, an overall increase of 11.8% in the student population.
- Table III suggests that enrollment of Henry James Memorial School will stay the same in 2021-22. Over the next five years, 7-8 enrollment is expected to increase by 27. The present 7-8 enrollment of 633 is expected to increase to 660 by 2025-26, an increase of 4.3%.
- Table III suggests that enrollment at Simsbury High School is expected to decrease by 3 students in 2020-21. Over the next five years, 9-12 enrollment is expected to decrease by 59 students, a decline of 4.5%.

**IV. Elementary Enrollment Projections**

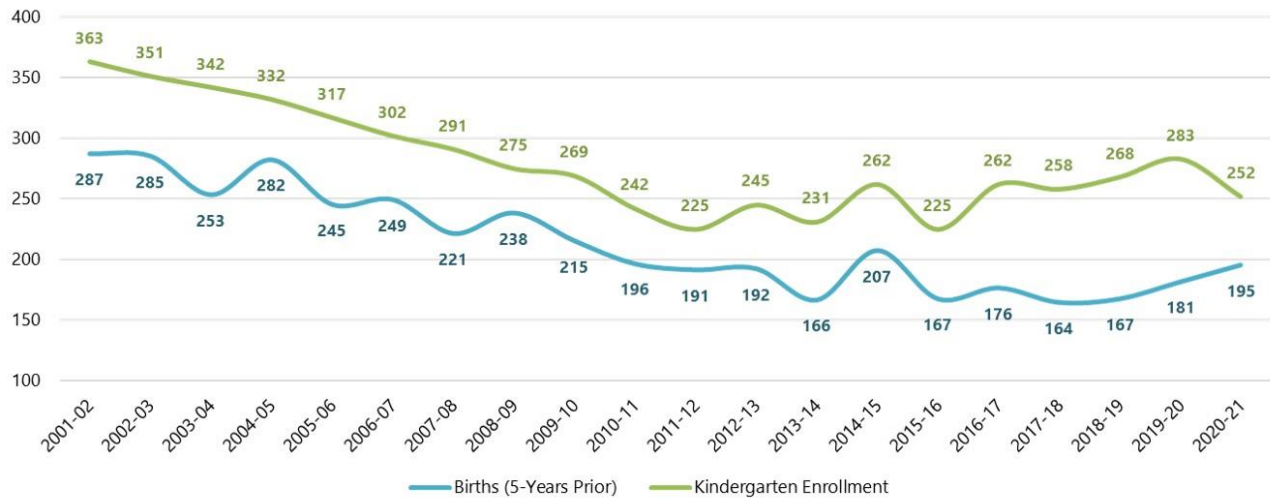
## Elementary School Projections (K-6): 2020-21 to 2025-26



- Elementary enrollments are projected to rebound next year as homeschool students, delayed entry students, and private kindergarten students return.
- Projections show a steady increase in elementary enrollment over the next five years as larger birth cohorts enter kindergarten.

### V. Births/Enrollment Comparison

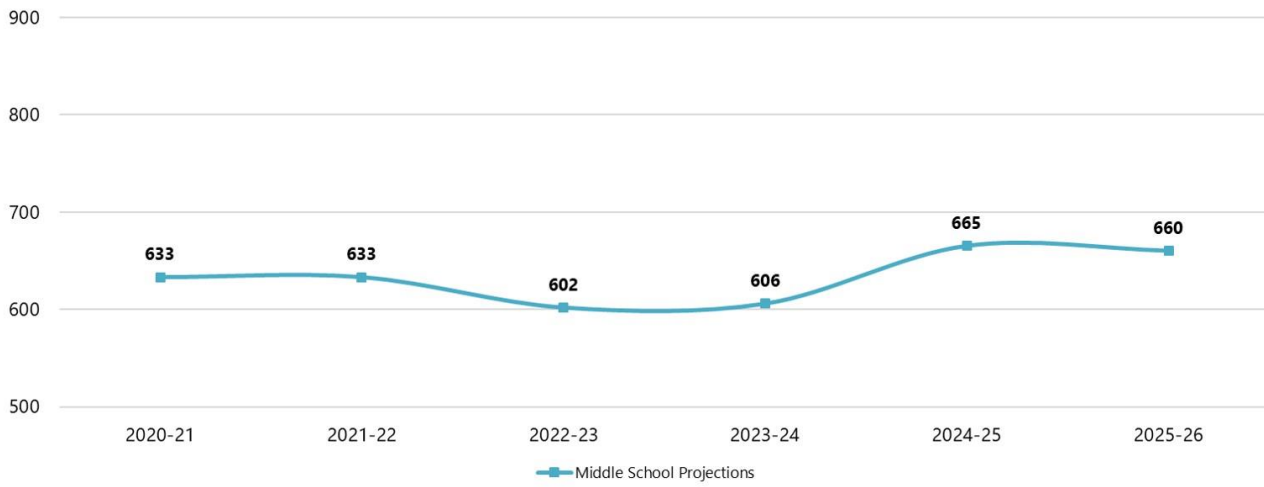
#### Birth and Kindergarten Trends



- Since full-day kindergarten began in 2012-13, the Birth-K persistency ratio has averaged 1.42 (142 kindergarteners for every 100 births 5 years prior)
- The Birth-K persistency ratio has decreased to 1.29 in 2020-21 which is similar to trends observed across the state due to homeschooling, private kindergartens, and delayed entry.

### VI. Henry James Projections

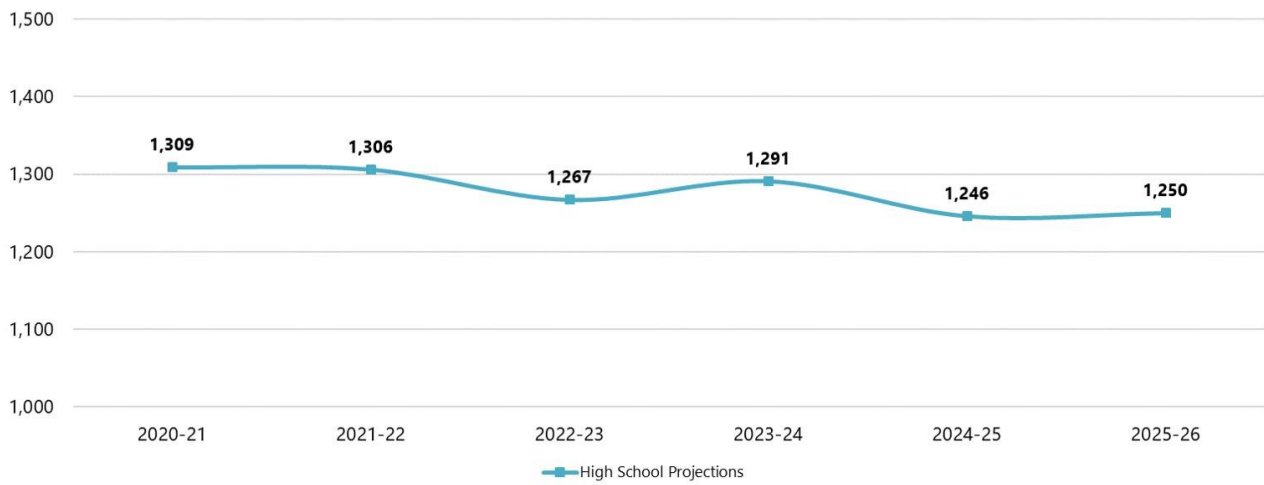
**Simsbury Public Schools Actual and Projected 7-8 Enrollment: 2020-21 to 2025-26**



- Middle School enrollment is projected to decline over the next two years but rebound in 2023-24 as larger elementary cohorts matriculate into 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**VII. Simsbury High School Projections**

**Simsbury Public Schools Actual and Projected 9-12 Enrollment: 2020-21 to 2025-26**



- High School enrollment is projected to remain steady over the 5-year projection period. The next rebound for high school enrollment is projected to begin in 2028-29 as larger middle school classes begin moving up to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

**VIII. Conclusions:**

- The 2020 Milone & MacBroom projections suggest that K-12 student enrollment in the Simsbury Public Schools will increase by an average of approximately 41 students per year for the next five years. The present enrollment of 3960 students is projected to increase to 4167 students in the year 2025-26. Enrollment in Simsbury has been declining since 2004-05 (the historical high point of 5,017.)

- Enrollment numbers for Grades K and 1 will need to be closely monitored for 2021-22. With fewer families choosing to send students to kindergarten during the pandemic, it is expected that there should be notable increases in enrollment at both grade levels. Staffing decisions will need to be flexible.
- Enrollment projections are very useful when planning for areas such as staffing and its associated budget implications; however, projections are merely a forecast, not a certainty or guarantee. Although the historical data are accurate, many of the variables influencing the movement of families to and from Simsbury are not predictable and do have the potential of impacting future enrollment numbers. In addition, it is important to note that projections are most reliable for the immediate future, i.e., into the following school year. Projections become increasingly less reliable the further they extend into the future, specifically after a 5-year period.

MTC:cdf

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 8, 2020

RE: Budget Context 2021-22 Major Drivers

This evening, the administration will present an overview of pertinent financial and contractual information that will impact the 2021-22 budget development process and provide a recap of the November 30<sup>th</sup> tri-board meeting:

1. Enrollment
2. Known major drivers
  - a. Staffing
  - b. Insurance

In future presentations, the administration will review these areas in more detail as we look to control costs and improve programming.

MTC:kdw

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 8, 2020

RE: Capital Improvement Project Plan – Review

Attached you will find an updated draft of the Board of Education Projects for the 2021/22 fiscal year which was first presented at the November 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting. This draft reflects the guidance expressed at the 11/30 Tri-Board meeting. It “rolls forward” the projects from last year’s plan and additionally incorporates the findings from the Tecton study. This budget demonstrates the immediate needs of our aging schools and the importance of continuing our renovation discussions.

The budget addresses the following 3 areas:

District Security Improvements – This is a continuation of the work that began last year. It includes projects such as reconfiguring vestibules to control the flow of visitors into the schools, and the addition of alarm systems to locations that lack them.

SHS Bleachers and Press Box – This is a resubmittal of the request that was not funded last year. The bleachers were built in 1968, and now present both safety and functionality concerns. A new architectural report has been commissioned to provide greater detail on the costs associated with this project.

School Improvements – These recommendations are items from the Tecton study described as “immediate needs”. The study allows us to consider the long-term savings associated with renovating or replacing structures versus the ongoing and mounting costs of maintaining those that are beyond their life expectancy.

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: December 8, 2020  
RE: Humanities Elective

In June 2019, Connecticut Public Act 19-12 mandated an African American/Black History and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies course to be offered to high school students as a full year elective. The State Education Resource Center (SERC) was written into legislation as the organization to create an Advisory Group to develop the first, integrated model, statewide curriculum. In addition, an Expert Review Panel was established to oversee the development of the curriculum outlined in the legislation. SERC has also established a professional learning plan for districts to participate in so they can learn more about the written course and to receive a complete reference list of books, articles, materials, websites, speakers, etc. used in the design and development of the curriculum. Schools may offer the course to students in the 2021-2022 school year as a pilot course, but must offer the elective in the 2022-2023 school year. This course addresses our Vision of a Graduate with a focus on equity in the curriculum.

Tonight Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Georgia Robert, Assistant Principal at Simsbury High School and Sue Lemke, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services will provide highlights around the course topics and the importance of equity in this elective course.

MTC:kdw