

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

October 12, 2021

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

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

Members absent: Mmes. Lydia Tedone and Sharon Thomas. Mr. Jeff Tindall.

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

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Antidormi reported on activities at the elementary school and the parents self-guided tour at HJMS. She pointed out that at SHS all of the varsity athletic teams have winning records.

Ms. Willerup stated that a state representative is promoting a STEM contest for students. Ms. Batchelar complimented HJMS for their virtual open house which was done in real time with teachers.

Ms. Lemke reported that October 20th is a half day of schools as faculty will participate in professional development at the building and department level. Mr. Sullivan stated that the Policy Committee will meet on Thursday to review policy changes based on last spring's legislation.

Mr. Curtis stated he attended a meeting with the Commissioner of Education and other Hartford area superintendents. The discussion was relative to the many state requirements being put in place relative to teaching and learning. Mr. Curtis stated that the COVID rate in the state continues to trend downward for positive cases and the Farmington Valley rate is half of that of the state.

Ms. Salina noted that the CABA/CAPSS Convention in November is closed to new registrants, but they are maintaining a waiting list. The event is capped at 200 participants.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A. Approval of Minutes of September 28, 2021 Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2021 meeting.

Approval of
September 28,
2021 Minutes

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

B. Acceptance of Completion of HJMS Project Phase III

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education accepts as complete the Henry James Phase III project (128-0109EA) and authorizes the acceptance of the school building grants.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

C. Approval of SHS Graduation Date

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Simsbury High School graduation date be established on June 10, 2022.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. October 1 Enrollment Report/Magnet School Enrollment

Mr. Sullivan provided a comparison of 10/1/21 enrollment compared with 10/1/20 enrollment, noting the increase of 69 students which includes an increase of 59 students at Squadron Line School. He reviewed actual versus projected enrollment, noting that the actual enrollment is 9 students above projected. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that this year's Kindergarten class of 303 students is the largest we have had in 15 years and 13 students over projection. Enrollment at the elementary level is increasing while enrollment at the secondary level is decreasing. Overall enrollment over the past 5 years has declined by 10 students.

Mr. Sullivan provided an enrollment analysis. This year there are 99 Pre-K students; there are 4,128 students in the school system; the largest cohorts are 7th and 12th grade; the smallest cohorts are 1st and 6th grade. There are currently 165 Open Choice students enrolled in Simsbury. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the Open Choice historical enrollment. He noted that this year there was a lower number of applicants in the Open Choice lottery and there is a concern that we will be able to maintain a 4% rate going forward.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed attendance at magnet schools and out-of-district programs. As of October 1st we have 125 students at full-time programs outside of Simsbury. 75 of these students attend Pre-K or Kindergarten programs. 7 students attend part-time and out-of-district programs. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the number of homeschooled students. Of the 28 students who started homeschooling in 2020-21, 8 students remained in homeschooling this year and 20 returned to in-person school.

Mr. Sullivan discussed the new housing developments in town, noting that the number of new students resulting from these developments has increased from 57 to 172 students over the past 5 years. Mr. Sullivan reviewed next steps for his department. Submit October 1 data to demographer; manage Latimer Lane enrollment and space utilization through end of construction; and study Squadron Line capacity and program needs.

Acceptance of
Completion of
HJMS Project
Phase III

Approval of SHS
Graduation Date

October 1
Enrollment
Report/Magnet
School
Enrollment

B. Class Size Report

Mr. Sullivan reviewed elementary class sizes. He pointed out that class size and classroom FTE were affecting last year due to the number of students in distance learning and COVID protocols. He stated that currently there is one class over guideline by one student. This is a second grade class at Squadron Line School with 23 students. Mr. Sullivan noted that there are 12 elementary classes below the guideline range.

Jacqueline Petrella, HJMS Assistant Principal, noted that HJMS had 39 new registrants late in the summer. She stated that teams are split relatively evenly across grades. The teams are no longer cohorted for specials as they were last year. Ms. Petrella pointed out the Wellness class is now 5 days per week. The current schedule is three 8 period days and two block days. Ms. Petrella noted that the Connections class was brought back this year with 12-15 students in each class. She addressed class size. There are 9 core classes over-enrolled by 1 student, 9 Wellness classes over-enrolled and one group of 6 students who equate to 6 over-enrolled classes in Art, Family & Consumer Science, and Tech Ed. The 19 under-enrolled classes are mostly under-enrolled by 1.

Ken Pera, SHS Assistant Principal, addressed class size at SHS. He stated that of the 542 classes this year there is an increase of 1 class exceeding class size guidelines for a total of 12 classes. Mr. Pera noted that the 110 classes below the class size guideline are mostly classes that are offered as singletons or doubletons and is unavoidable. There are also classes with a larger number of sections that may have classes 1 student below the guideline. Mr. Pera stated that SHS also had a number of late registrants this year.

Mr. Sullivan stated that once the NESDEC projections come in they will be shared at a future board meeting as we move into the budget season.

C. Year End Budget Analysis

Ms. Meriwether stated that there was no change to the district's revenues. The spending freeze helped to alleviate the overall expenditures. Ms. Meriwether reviewed the expenditure categories. In General Control there was a budget surplus of \$80,226 due to the retirements of the Business Manager and an Assistant Superintendent. Instruction had a budget deficit of \$55,713 due to COVID expenditures that were in excess of grant funds. Health services had a surplus of \$17,422 related to savings due a decrease in the number of substitutes and overtime costs. Transportation had a surplus of \$175,550 related to a decrease in Athletics transportation and the cancellation of summer school programs due to COVID. Operation of Plant had a deficit of \$77,063 due to COVID expenditures in excess of grant funds and increased custodial overtime due to COVID. Insurance/Pension had a deficit of \$273,707 due to an increase in the number of employees who took health insurance, increased social security costs related to overtime, as well as an increased insurance premium related to the completion of the HJMS project. Student Body Activities/Community Services had a surplus of \$48,411 due to the cancellation of activities due to COVID. Equipment – New/Replace had a deficit of \$35,717 due to COVID expenses in excess of grant funds, in particular the purchase of technology. Out-of-District tuition had a surplus of \$66,900 due to an unanticipated

Class Size
Report

Year End
Budget Analysis

increase in the excess cost reimbursement rate.

Ms. Meriwether addressed Food Services. There was a deficit of \$300,000 due to the free meal program for all students. This loss was offset with subsidies of \$100,000 and a \$60,000 fund balance in the account. The loss between March 2020 and June 2020 of \$30,000 remains as a deficit in the account in case additional funding becomes available to replenish the account.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, stated that a large population of parents continues to be concerned with students still wearing masks. She stated that students are not at risk, are missing visual cues, and are experiencing increased anxiety and fear. She noted that CT has the lowest COVID rate in the country, yet we continue to wear masks.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment