

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

April 23, 2024

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the gymnasium at Latimer Lane School.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Sharon Thomas and Jessica Parise.
Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco.

Members absent: Mmes. Tara Willerup and Lydia Tedone.

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

RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Lemke noted the highlights of the SHS culinary program led by Gianna Gurga. She introduced Scott Dolch, President of the CT Restaurants Association, to present the Pro-Start Educator of the Year award to Ms. Gurga. Mr. Dolch stated that Pro-Start is a high school based national accredited program that SHS is now involved in under the guidance of Ms. Gurga. There are 17 high schools in CT that participate in the program. He noted the 2 teams from SHS that participated in the state competition in culinary and restaurant management, taking 3rd and 4th place in the state. Mr. Dolch stated that on April 29 SHS will represent all of the CT ProStart schools at the CT Restaurant Association’s Night at the Capitol with 200-300 people in attendance. Ms. Gurga talked about her love of the culinary program and the connection to students who participate sharing a love of food and people.

Recognitions

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported on the multi-cultural celebration at Latimer Lane School. He noted the SHS Robotics team attended the World Championship in Houston, TX competing against 75 teams. The DECA club is participating in an event in Anaheim, CA. Mr. Picoult noted that the SHS spring play, Peter and the Starcatcher, will be performed this upcoming weekend. He stated that NGSS testing for grade 11 students will take place on Thursday.

Communications

Ms. Parise stated she is impressed with the renovation of Latimer Lane School, as board members toured it prior to the meeting. Ms. Thomas reported on the 50th anniversary of the Simsbury ABC House. She noted that you can still apply for FAFSA.

Ms. Batchelar reported on the Curriculum Committee meeting. She stated that the committee previewed the textbooks that will be coming before the board for approval. They reviewed the book, The Next Great Paulie Fink, for the One School, One Book initiative this summer at HJMS. The committee also discussed Vision of a Graduate

and assessments.

Ms. Lemke reported that students from HJMS walked to Hop Meadow Country Club to participate in Earth Day activities. Mr. Sullivan reported that the hiring season is underway. Ms. Meriwether reported that the BOS set the budget referendum date on June 10 at Town Hall.

Mr. Tindall expressed admiration for the culinary and robotics programs. He noted that the progress of the Latimer Lane School renovation is incredible and displays the use of sustainable and smart investments. He recognized Principal Mike Luzietti for his work on the project.

Mr. Curtis stated that staff recognition will be held on Thursday to honor staff reaching milestones and retirees. He thanked all of the board for their collective work on the budget.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of March 18, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2024 Meeting.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2024 meeting.

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

PERSONNEL

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Sharon Cabell and Kenneth Fischer effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

ADOPTION OF HEALTHY FOOD & BEVERAGE FOR 2024-25

Ms. Batchelar: Move that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Simsbury Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdictions, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school store, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of
Minutes of
March 18, 2024

Approval of
Minutes of
March 26, 2024

Personnel

Adoption of
Healthy Food &
Beverage 2024-
25

Ms. Parise: MOVE that pursuant to Sections **10-215f** of the C.G.S., the Simsbury Board of Education hereby will allow the sale to students of **food items** that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education will allow the sale to students of **beverages** not listed in Section **10-221q** of the C.G.S. provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Latimer Lane School Report

Mr. Luzietti reviewed the building renovation work to date. Phase IA and 1B are complete with the addition of 22,000 new square feet. These phases included the addition of new classrooms, the cafeteria, gym, bathrooms and kitchen. Phase IIA was turned over during April vacation and includes the renovation of 11 classrooms, bathrooms and offices. Mr. Luzietti noted that Phase IIA was original scheduled to be completed in June.

Mr. Luzietti stated that Phases IIB and IIIA have begun and include 6 primary classrooms, the media center, art room and instrumental music room. The remaining 6 classrooms in the front of the building, Phase IIIB, will be completed over the summer. The only outstanding items at the start of next school year will be the main office and nurse’s office.

Mr. Luzietti provided an update on the purchase of furnishings, equipment and technology. He stated that everything related to teaching and learning continues to move forward in the building.

Latimer Lane School Report

B. Teacher Evaluation Plan

Teacher Evaluation Plan

Ms. Lemke stated that CT general statutes require the annual evaluation of teachers. The legislature passed a bill making changes to the previous requirements from 2012. Individual district's Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDEC) will drive the recommended changes. Boards of Education must adopt the new teacher evaluation plan by September 1, 2024. In Simsbury the PDEC committee is comprised of 21 educators: 9 elementary, 4 middle school, 6 high school, and 2 central office.

Ms. Lemke reviewed the guiding principles for the creation of the evaluation plan. These include (1) role differentiation, (2) simplify and reduce burden, (3) focus on what matters, (4) connect to best practices for the whole child, (5) focus on educator growth and agency, (6) meaningful connections to professional learning, and (7) specific, actionable, relevant and timely feedback. There are 6 components that must be included in the plan: (1) standards and criteria, (2) a goal setting process, (3) professional practice and educator growth, (4) evaluator/observer/stakeholder feedback and engagement, (5) process elements and (6) dispute resolution.

Mr. Sullivan addressed the changes from the 2012 plan. He stated that the 2012 plan was very prescriptive and mathematical in nature. Teachers were rated on specific areas and were given a score. The new design moves away from a formulaic design and moves from control at the state level to control at the local level. Mr. Sullivan stated the new design shifts the decision making power to PDEC. The ratings are gone. A shift to continuous improvement, self-directed analysis/reflection, planning, implementation and collaboration will be part of the new plan. The narrowing of student improvement goals allows teachers to set mutually agreed upon multi-year goals, individual or as a group.

Mr. Sullivan stated that components of the plan that will stay in place are three check-ins per teacher per school year, mutually agreed upon goals, and standards that are connected to proven research. He provided a timeline of the process, stating that subcommittees have drafted sections of the plan, a smaller writing group is coming together to review the sections, and the plan will be brought to the BOE for approval. Mr. Sullivan noted that the teacher union co-presidents are on PDEC.

Ms. Thomas asked if the teachers are aware of these changes. Mr. Sullivan responded that there is a PDEC teacher representative at every school to keep educators informed. Mr. Falco asked if those at the high end in the performance/goal meeting are rewarded. Ms. Lemke responded that with the design shift, teachers get to focus on what they're passionate about. Mr. Tindall asked how we determine who needs to be on an improvement plan and how we maintain consistency in that area. Ms. Lemke responded that the plan will have a Single Point Competency expectation that teachers are either meeting or not, with next steps for improvement.

C. Quarterly Budget Report

Quarterly Budget Report

Ms. Meriwether reported that there are no major changes from the second quarter. She pointed out the special ed excess cost grant reimbursement rate was 68.1%, and last year's rate was 73.2% in an area where costs have gone up substantially. She stated the rate of spending is lower mainly due to a decrease in legal services

paid in the current year compared to the same time last year. The rate of spending is higher for pupil transportation due to an increased need for outside vendor transportation for special ed students. Operation of plant rate of spending is lower mainly due to electricity and natural gas savings. Out of district tuition has a higher rate of spending due to increased costs for out of district services and lower excess cost reimbursement.

Mr. Tindall asked if we will be able to cover this year's deficit. Ms. Meriwether responded that the \$700,000 deficit has been revised to \$500,000 and with grant reallocations, implementing a spending freeze and salary savings we are hoping to cover the majority of it. Mr. Watson asked about out of district transportation. Ms. Meriwether responded that there will be a deficit, but there is a surplus in regular ed transportation which will help to offset that deficit.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Public Audience

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Adjournment

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Sharon Thomas
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary