

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

May 14, 2024

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the BOE conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Sharon Thomas, Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone and Jessica Parise. Messrs. Jeff Tindall and Josh Falco.

Members absent: Mr. Brian Watson

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Sophia Luzietti and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Lemke introduced Shannon Gagne, Art Department Supervisor K-12. Ms. Gagne introduced senior Nyah Vazquez, recipient of the CT Association of Schools (CAS) Visual Arts Award. She spoke about Ms. Vazquez’s accomplishments and her plans for the future. Ms. Gagne noted that senior William Brockert is the recipient of the CAS Performing Arts Award.

BOE members individually presented certificates to those students whose artwork has been framed and will hang in the BOE conference room for 2 years. The following students were recognized: Ana Souza, Luccia Koob, Lua Pinheiro Vazquez, Adrieana Ganchequi, Christian Steward, Paitlyn Ofsuryk, Kaitlyn Watson, Jack Pinkham, Valentine Bompastore, Cedar Kulynych-Griffin, Samantha Fitzgerald, Molly Keleher, Evan Porter and Hannah Batch. Ms. Gagne presented a slideshow of the 2023-24 Scholastic Art Award winners.

Maggie Seidel, SHS Principal, introduced the BOE student representatives for the 2024-25 school year Macie Goetz and Rafaella Rosadio. She spoke about both girls and the activities they are involved in.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Luzietti reported on the HJMS and SHS art shows. She noted that it is the final week of AP testing, and shared the dates for upcoming events at SHS. Ms. Luzietti also noted spring events at the elementary schools.

Ms. Lydia reported that the CT legislative session has ended and she will be attending a legislative update tomorrow. She noted the RESC magnet school reduced tuition cost remains in place

Ms. Thomas reported that the Policy Committee has been meeting and brings forward revised policy for a first read this evening. She reported on the meeting of the district Wellness Committee stating that they reviewed nutrition programs in other

Recognitions

Public Audience

Committee Reports

school districts. Ms. Lemke stated that this is a rejuvenation of the committee and they will look at best practices and what improvements we can make to wellness in the district. Ms. Willerup reported that the Curriculum Committee met and discussed a re-evaluation of the assessment process.

Ms. Lemke stated that tomorrow is an early release day for students and building based professional development will take place for staff. Ms. Sullivan stated that in April staff recognition was held and culminated with a celebration of the honorees and retirees at HJMS. During the ceremony paraeducator Liz Mutch was recognized as the Paraeducator of the Year.

Mr. Tindall thanked Representative Osborne for her work to obtain an additional \$530,00 in state reimbursement for the Latimer Lane School renovation project. Mr. Curtis noted that the budget passed at referendum and he thanked those who supported the budget, including the boards in town.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of April 23, 2024 Meeting

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2024 meeting.

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

B. Personnel

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Leah Coe effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignation of Mackenzie Sullivan effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the notice of intent to retire of Scott Behringer and Karen Wescott effective June 30, 2027.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

C. Approval of Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement Between the Simsbury Board of Education and the Simsbury School Nurses Association

Mr. Sullivan provided a summary of the 3 year contract.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education ratify the proposed changes in the collective bargaining agreement between the Simsbury Board of Education and the Simsbury School Nurses Association for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of
Minutes of April
23, 2024

Personnel

Approval of
Collective
Bargaining
Agreement for
the Simsbury
School Nurses
Association

D. Acceptance of Gift to the Baseball Boosters Club

Mr. Falco: MOVE that the gift of \$2,500 from an anonymous donor be approved.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Equity Update

Tayarisha Batchelor, Director of Equity & Access, introduced Tenesha Grant, Open Choice Liaison for the district. Dr. Batchelor addressed the equity drivers in the district and pointed out how they support the strategic plan. She stated that equity for the district reflects the way we do business, looking at all of our students. Dr. Batchelor stated that equity in the district includes consistently evaluating systems, structures and practices through an equity lens. She told the story of how the climate survey data demonstrated that students want a greater voice and as a result the Taste of Simsbury came to be, with 76 participants representing different cultures and talking together when they wouldn't during a regular lunch wave. Dr. Batchelor stated that finding ways for all students to have an access point to a connected school culture and ensuring guaranteed experiences is an important piece of the equity work.

Dr. Batchelor stated she reviewed the recommendations of the Equity Council and the goals with regard to equity markers. She noted some of these goals: (1) increasing the percentage of student enrollment in honors and enrichment/advanced courses for black, Hispanic and EL students by 15% within 3 years, (2) reduce the percentage of student enrollment in basic/remedial course for black, Hispanic and EL students by 15% within 3 years, (3) reduce the disproportionality of suspensions between black and white students by 25%, within 3 years, and (4) reduce the disproportionality of suspensions between students receiving general education and specialized education services by 15% within 3 year. Dr. Batchelor provided data on the percentage of honors course enrollments for black, Hispanic and special education students, as well as the percentage of enrichment/advanced course enrollments for general and special ed students.

Dr. Batchelor addressed student discipline. Ms. Parise asked if the analysis is just for SHS or K-12. Dr. Batchelor responded that it is K-12 and issues of discipline and disrespect occur at the younger grade levels as well. Mr. Tindall asked if students with a history of discipline continue with this behavior in high school. Dr. Batchelor responded that there are trends and some students need multiple supports. She stated that they are looking at whether these students had enough support when they were younger and what we can do differently. Ms. Thomas asked if we look at who is sending students to the office. Dr. Batchelor responded that we are looking at that, as well as the way we have these conversations. She noted that we use this as a problem of practice that is worked on through PLCs. Ms. Thomas questioned whether we consider cultural competency in determining what is disrespectful. Dr. Batchelor responded that we address it as we are a community of all, not just your group. In response to Mr. Falco, Dr. Batchelor qualified data relative to the equity markers.

Acceptance of
Gift to the
Baseball
Boosters Club

Equity Update

Ms. Parise stated that if the goal is to move students into honor classes, and students get tracked as they move through the grades, are we pushing down into the elementary level to look at these students. Dr. Batchelor responded that we are looking at students who receive interventions to see if we can move them away from that to prepare them for taking higher level courses. She stated we are also looking at assessments and how we provide feedback.

Dr. Batchelor stated that our work with the Legacy Foundation mentoring program continued this year. The district is launching an Encouraging Words campaign in the fall. A committee of students, staff, and community members will be organized to plan activities that address the influence of language and the positive effect of words of encouragement on others. Parents have been asked if they are interested in becoming a part of this committee.

Dr. Batchelor addressed the "Glows" for the department. She noted the employee resource groups, mentoring programs, increasing educator diversity plans, reallocation and repurpose of existing choice grants, grant funding for a Summer Middle School Academy, and the K-12 EveryDay Speech curriculum that is taught during Connect periods. Dr. Batchelor addressed next steps relative to the strategic plan. This includes a reboot of the Equity Council as some of the student members graduating this year. Developing a framework that includes partnerships, feedback and communication. Implementation of the Encouraging Words campaign and continued student advocacy.

Mr. Curtis noted the coherence of the equity work with the strategic goals. He stated the board can quantify these goals further during next year's strategic plan development process.

Ms. Batchelar praised Dr. Batchelor for the work she has done. She asked if we are also looking at data by gender. Dr. Batchelor responded that principals look at this data at the school level. Mr. Falco confirmed that there has been 3% of this category of students in honor classes, and the goal is 15%. Dr. Batchelor stated that there are a lot of students with A's and B's who could have been in honors classes. She clarified that the goal is a 5% increase each year.

B. Proposed Fee Schedule for Use of Public Schools

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the categories of fees for building use. He noted that if a custodian is not already in the building, outside entities are charged for the custodial overtime. Ms. Batchelor asked if the fee will be higher for the new Latimer Lane School gym. Mr. Sullivan stated that he will need to come up with a new fee for the Latimer Lane gym next year. He noted that the fee schedule will be an action item at the next board meeting.

C. Proposed Textbooks for 2024-25

Ms. Lemke stated that the proposed textbooks were previewed by the Curriculum Committee. She reviewed each of the textbooks, noting that approval of the proposed textbooks will be an action item at the next board meeting.

D. Policy First Reading

Proposed Fee Schedule for Use of Public Schools

Proposed Textbooks for 2024-25

Policy First

Mr. Sullivan noted the updates to board policies that have been reviewed by the Policy Committee. He stated that these policies were either in need of updating or changed due to legislation. Mr. Sullivan stated the Policy Committee also reviewed the Administration Series 2000 which is centered on the role of the superintendent.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

Executive Session

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to enter executive session at 8:47 p.m.

Ms. Batchelor: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Mr. Falco: Seconded. So moved.

Sharon Thomas
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Reading

Public Audience

Executive Session

Adjournment