

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

June 11, 2024

Mr. Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in room D172 at Simsbury High School.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Brian Watson and Josh Falco. Ms. Jessica Parise arrived at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Sharon Thomas arrived at 6:43 p.m.

**Members absent:** Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Tara Willerup and Lydia Tedone.

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

RECOGNITIONS

Maggie Seidel, SHS Principal, introduced the SHS yearbook editors Ella Cenviva and Paige Mahoney. Ms. Cenviva and Ms. Mahoney spoke about the theme for the yearbook and thanked all who worked to put it together. Yearbooks were distributed to board members.

Mr. Curtis introduced the Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year, Darla Strand, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at Squadron Line School. He spoke about her excellence in the classroom, making connections with students, holding students to high standards and her ability to problem solve.

Ms. Lemke introduced the Kathleen Magowan Scholarship awardees from the graduating class of 2024: Charles Steniger, Parker Golden-Jarrell, Rachel Cota, Ruby Scudder and Ashwina Yoganandan. These students represent the 5 elementary schools and will continue their studies in education or a related field.

Jeff Pinney, Director of Athletics & Student Activities, introduced the state champion SHS girls rugby team. The team finished the season 11-1, with the highest margin of victory average of any team. They were also featured on ESPN Sports Center. He recognized first year coach, Ryan Bond.

Mr. Pinney introduced the state champion boys volleyball team who had a 23-0 undefeated season, only dropping 5 sets all season. He noted the many awards the team received and their dominance over the course of the season. Mr. Curtis recognized volleyball coach, Matt Leblanc, who also coaches girls volleyball in the fall.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

**Diana Yiesley**, 78 County Road, spoke on behalf of the Board of Selectmen stating that the town is celebrating Pride month and Alzheimer’s Awareness month in June.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Watson, Ms. Parise and Mr. Tindall commented on the wonderful graduation

Recognitions

Public Audience

Communications

ceremony that took place on Friday. Ms. Lemke noted the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotions at the elementary and middle schools. Mr. Curtis reflected on the year end celebrations and their importance as an educator. He thanked the board members for their work over the past year.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### A. Approval of Minutes of May 21, 2024 Workshop

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2024 workshop.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

#### B. Approval of Minutes of May 28, 2024

Ms. Parise: MOVE to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

#### C. Personnel

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Maureen Billings, Peter Evans, and Audrey Lesieur effective June 30, 2024.

Mr. Falco: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the notices of intent to retire of MarieLine Bruhl, Marie Cichocki, and Dawn Medve effective June 30, 2027 and of Denise Temperilli effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

#### D. Approval of Superintendent's Contract

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's contract for 2024-27 with a salary increase of 2.9% for 2024-25.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

#### E. Approval of Policy Revisions

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised Bylaw 304 Standing Committees, effective June 11, 2024.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised Bylaw 412 Participation in Meetings by Telephone, effective June 11, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy, 4210 - Minority Teacher

Approval of  
Minutes of  
May 21, 2024

Approval of  
Minutes of  
May 28, 2024

Personnel

Approval of  
Superintendent's  
Contract

Approval of  
Policy Revisions

Recruitment, effective June 11, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy, 5112.1 – Age of Entering Kindergarten, effective June 11, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy, 5113 – Required Attendance, effective June 11, 2024.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy, 5146.3 – Suicide Prevention and Intervention, effective June 11, 2024.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy, 6116 – Diplomas and Certificates, effective June 11, 2024.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Falco: MOVE to adopt the revised policy Series 2000 – Administration, effective June 11, 2024.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

F. End of Year Fiscal Authorizations

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to act as the Board’s agent in renewing applications for state and federally funded programs.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to transfer funds from those accounts in which a surplus is anticipated into those accounts in which a deficit is anticipated.

Mr. Falco: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Parise: MOVE that the Superintendent, with the approval of the Board Chairman, be authorized to hire staff for the 2024-25 school year during the period of July and August when the Board is not in session.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved

G. BOE Summer Meeting Schedule

End of Year  
Fiscal  
Authorizations

BOE Summer  
Meeting

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board of Education cancel regular board meetings scheduled on June 24, July 9, July 23, August 13 and August 27, 2024.

Schedule

Mr. Falco: Seconded. So moved.

H. Acceptance of Gift to FIRST Robotics

Gift to FIRST Robotics

Ms. Thomas: MOVE that the proposed gift to the FIRST Robotics Team at Simsbury High School from the EB Aerospace & Defense Company totaling \$5,000 be approved.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

I. Approval of Educator Evaluation Plan

Approval of Education Evaluation Plan

Ms. Lemke noted that the plan was shared with the board in April as a result of new guidelines from the state that include development by the district's Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC). She noted the plan at a glance document.

Ms. Thomas asked what platform we are using. Ms. Lemke responded that SIMS is a customized platform that we developed in 2012 and will continue to use. She noted that other data is also housed on this platform.

Ms. Parise asked about the difference in evaluation for tenured vs. non-tenured teachers. Ms. Lemke responded that non-tenured teachers will have more formal observations with a deeper dive into content. Tenured teachers may not require as deep a dive, but observations are still important.

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board accept the Simsbury Educator Evaluation Plan as presented by the administration.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Instructional Technology Update

Instructional Technology Update

Ms. Lemke introduced Dave Prinstein who is completing his first year as the Director of Instructional Technology. She stated that Mr. Prinstein works with the media specialists and technicians in the district.

Mr. Prinstein outlined the instructional technology priorities. These include data management, artificial intelligence (AI), marketing/messaging, and ensuring the Vision of a Graduate lives K-12. Mr. Prinstein stated that an AI Task Force was formed this year with 5 goals. (1) To explore and evaluate AI technologies for educational purposes. (2) To develop strategies for integrating AI into all areas of SPS teaching and learning. (3) To promote ethical considerations and responsible use of AI in education. (4) To foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. (5) To stay informed about emerging AI trends and developments. The outcome of the task force is a document that includes knowledge and skill recommendations for 3 sets of stakeholders: students, teachers and families. Mr.

Prinstein stated that these recommendations will influence the work next year.

Mr. Prinstein discussed the work to connect further with the community. He noted the Vision of a Graduate videos that have been produced and the effort to expand our reach into the broader community.

Mr. Prinstein reported on his work with the library media specialists. During their weekly PLC meetings they discuss the Library Media Center (LMC) as the core of each school's teaching and learning. They work to ensure that each LMC has current materials and resources representative of their school. Additionally they work to establish technology skills and knowledge as the connections across grade levels and subject areas. Mr. Prinstein noted the library media specialists continue to work on flexible scheduling.

Mr. Prinstein addressed the work of the six districtwide technicians. The team supports all 7 schools through a rotating schedule, and takes care of installations, repairs and troubleshooting. Mr. Prinstein noted the importance of customer service and getting to know the staff who they work with. The team also provides onsite support for larger scale initiatives such as assemblies and student testing.

Mr. Prinstein discussed upcoming challenges. He noted that the elimination of the Instructional Technology Resource Teacher creates the need to redistribute that work. He pointed out the quickly changing instructional technology landscape, including AI, as well as the need to find ways to consistently engage the community. Mr. Prinstein stated that costs related to software, applications and subscriptions continue to rise. Subscriptions for the coming year have increased 10-15%.

Ms. Thomas asked how often we evaluate the technology that we use. Mr. Prinstein responded that this occurs twice per year and teacher/student usage is a big part of the equation.

Mr. Prinstein stated that in the 2024-25 school year, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders will receive new Chromebooks. Additionally 40 Newline panels will be installed throughout the district this summer to bring the total number of classrooms with these panels to 45%, not including all new panels at Latimer Lane School as part of the renovation project.

Ms. Thomas questioned what we do with the Chromebooks after they reach their sunset date. Mr. Prinstein stated that we repurpose them in LMCs and classrooms, not assigned to individual students. He noted that senior year students have the option to keep their Chromebook or donate it back to the district.

Mr. Watson asked why the panels are the better way to go. Mr. Prinstein responded that the panels have all of the outputs with picture, sound and connectivity much improved. He noted that apps are built directly into the operating system. Mr. Tindall asked the lifetime of a panel. Mr. Prinstein responded 5-10 years.

Mr. Prinstein addressed how the board can assist with his department. He stated he would like to provide feedback to the board on the elimination of the Instructional Technology Resource Teacher. He would like the board to have an understanding of the fluctuating instructional technology market, as well as a belief in the importance of integrating technology into classrooms to build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and thinking,

which impacts all departments

Ms. Thomas asked if there are parents on the AI Task Force. Mr. Prinstein responded that it is planned for next year. Mr. Watson stated it is great we are embracing AI in education, especially since kids are going to use it regardless. Mr. Prinstein stated that the district wants students learning AI in classrooms with adults and provide our students with an advantage moving forward Ms. Parise asked if AI will be integrated in all subject areas. Mr. Prinstein responded that it will. Mr. Watson asked how we compare with other districts with IT. Mr. Prinstein stated that Simsbury is on track or ahead of the game. He noted that it is always a consideration in how we do things, and technology ties all of the departments together.

Mr. Falco asked if we have thoughts on the topic for the next Vision of a Graduate video, and suggested the Communications Committee meet in September. He also suggested that the board be made aware of the budgetary effects from the increase in technology costs.

B. Policy First Reading

Mr. Sullivan noted that during the board workshop the formation of a new standing committee, specifically a Finance Committee, was discussed. The addition of this committee into the bylaws is coming forward so that it can be approved in the fall and the committee can get up and running.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Parise: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

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Sharon Thomas  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Policy First Reading

Public Audience

Adjournment