

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

October 8, 2024

Ms. Jen Batchelar called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the BOE Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Jen Batchelar, Lydia Tedone and Jessica Parise. Messrs. Brian Watson and Josh Falco. Ms. Tara Willerup arrived at 6:33 p.m.

**Members absent:** Ms. Sharon Thomas and Mr. Jeff Tindall

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Macie Goetz and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Goetz reported on activities at the elementary schools and HJMS. She noted that at SHS PSAT day is tomorrow, and One Act plays start on October 19.

Mr. Falco reported on the Communications Committee meeting. He stated that a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at Latimer Lane School on November 12, 5:30-6:30 p.m. and an Open House for the community to take tours on November 16. The committee discussed the timing for the Vision of a Graduate videos and ideas for the winter edition of The Communicator.

Mr. Watson reported that the Finance Committee will hold their first meeting on Friday. Ms. Tedone reported that she attended a meeting of state associations across the eastern region and they discussed priorities in public education.

Mr. Curtis noted that the BOE held a workshop last week to discuss the strategic plan and a district level meeting was held yesterday. He stated the Finance Committee will review the quarterly financial report and discuss fixed costs for the upcoming budget.

Communications

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of  
Minutes of  
Sept. 24, 2024

B. Approval of Tootin' Hills Roof Education Specifications

Approval of  
Tootin' Hills

Mr. Casey stated that approval is necessary in order to receive state reimbursement.

Roof Specs

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the education specifications for the Tootin’ Hills Elementary School partial roof replacement project.

Ms. Parise: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. October 1 Enrollment Report/Magnet Schools

October 1 Enrollment Report

Mr. Sullivan stated the October 1, 2024 enrollment was 4,061 students. He pointed out the increase of 53 students at HJMS and the decrease of nearly 100 students at the elementary and high school levels. He stated that overall enrollment decreased by 43 students compared to last year. Mr. Sullivan provided a comparison of elementary school enrollment where there was a decrease of 32 students. He noted that Tariffville had a decrease of 27 students and Squadron had an increase of 13 students. The decrease of 14 students at Tootin’ Hills School resulted in the reduction from 3 kindergarten classes to 2.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the actual vs. projected enrollment. He noted that the largest discrepancy was at SHS where 31 fewer were enrolled than projected. Overall NESDEC projected 67 more students than are enrolled. Ms. Willerup asked if their projections are off in other districts as well. Mr. Sullivan responded that he plans to check with other districts. He also noted that we adjusted the original NESDEC kindergarten projection due to the change in legislation around the age of kindergarten students.

Mr. Sullivan provided the actual vs. projected enrollment by grade level. He stated that with full day kindergarten we no longer see an influx of students into 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. He noted that 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Squadron had an influx of students and the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class is one of the smallest. Mr. Sullivan presented a 12 year history of actual versus projected enrollment, stating that the projections were more accurate up until the last 2 years. He stated that flat enrollment is expected next year. In response to Ms. Batchelar, Mr. Sullivan stated he does have the name of another demographer.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the kindergarten waiver assessment process, including the number of inquiries, assessments conducted and student recommendations. He noted that the 25 students, with birthdays prior to January 1, who did enroll in kindergarten total 9.6% of the kindergarten population. In comparison, a 10 year average of students who enrolled at that age was 16% of the kindergarten population. Mr. Sullivan noted that these students will be assessed at the time of report cards. In response to Ms. Parise, Ms. Lemke stated that the waiver process will continue to be in effect until the legislation is changed. She noted that academic data relative to former ‘ber babies was shared with parents requesting a waiver. Mr. Falco asked that the data be shared with the board.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the five year historical enrollment trend, noting that 2020 was the Covid year. He discussed the twenty year elementary historical data, noting the decrease in enrollment over time. Mr. Sullivan stated the largest cohorts are in grades 8 and 12 and the smallest are in kindergarten and grade 9. He reviewed historical Open Choice enrollment, noting that fewer families are entering their

children in the Open Choice lottery. Mr. Falco asked if we have methods of recruitment. Mr. Sullivan responded there are recruitment fairs, but Simsbury is at 4% which is more than most communities in the program. He noted that the maximum reimbursement is received when you are at a level of 4% or higher.

Mr. Sullivan addressed attendance at magnet and out-of-district programs. There are 145 students at full time programs outside of Simsbury, and 7 students at part-time magnets and out-of-district programs. Mr. Sullivan reviewed trends in the number of homeschooled students. He provided information on the existing developments in town and the number of students they have generated. He also reviewed the proposed new developments. Mr. Sullivan provided longitudinal data with the number of students from new developments since 2017.

Mr. Sullivan addressed next steps. These include submitting data to NESDEC so they can determine projections, discussing Latimer Lane swing spaces in terms of district needs, continuing to monitor enrollment at Squadron Line and conducting an analysis of 6<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment if moved to HJMS in the future.

### B. Class Size Report

Mr. Sullivan addressed elementary class size, noting that there has been no change in the number of teachers. Elementary average class size has lowered a bit compared to last year and no classes exceed the guideline. He reviewed class size by school and grade level. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that there is a reduction of one kindergarten class each at Tariffville and Tootin' Hills. Squadron Line has an increase of one kindergarten and Latimer Lane has an increase of one first grade class.

Jacqueline Petrella, HJMS Assistant Principal, stated that the student population at HJMS increased by 53 students. She noted that there are now 3 full teams in each grade, and some shared staff with SHS. Ms. Petrella stated that 21 core classes are over guideline and the singleton classes offered have an effect. She noted that 20 more core classes are within the guideline at 25 students.

Ms. Petrella noted that the Connections classes remain small and students are placed with a teacher that they have a class with. She stated that HJMS will implement parent-teacher conferences this year. Ms. Petrella pointed out that the increase in individualized reading programs has affected class size.

Ken Pera, SHS Assistant Principal, addressed class size at SHS. He noted that these numbers are before the add/drop period ends and the number of classes exceeding guidelines has dropped from 7 to 4. Mr. Pera pointed out that scheduling is done knowing we will have changes. He stated that there were a lot of class changes over the summer, some related to the new credit requirements.

Mr. Falco asked why with the number of classes decreasing, the number of classes exceeding guidelines has increased. Mr. Pera responded that this is due to class offerings in specific areas. Mr. Falco asked if some classes are more popular. Ms. Batchelar asked about class enrollment trends. Mr. Sullivan responded that we are aware of the trends. Ms. Batchelar noted that the credit changes have allowed for the choice of more electives. Mr. Watson pointed out that teacher personality is a factor. Ms. Lemke noted that we want to provide students more flexibility in their

Class Size  
Report

schedule.

Mr. Sullivan addressed bus ridership. At SHS and HJMS ridership is around 50%, but more volatile with some students only taking the bus one way either to or from school. In response to Mr. Curtis, Mr. Sullivan stated that bus capacity is 50 students. Ms. Parise suggested that those students with parking spaces at SHS should be taken out of the equation for ridership. Mr. Falco questioned why consider just that group of students. Mr. Curtis suggested it may be best to determine the percentage of bus capacity.

Mr. Sullivan addressed bus ridership at the elementary schools. At Central, Latimer, Tariffville and Tootin' Hills bus ridership is 74%. At Squadron Line ridership is 70%. Mr. Sullivan shared a map which outlines each of the elementary school districts. He noted that ridership at the elementary level is consistent.

C. Policy First Reading

Mr. Sullivan noted that the revisions to the 5000 Personnel Series and the 4000 Student Series are a result of changes in federal regulations. He stated that the revisions are those recommended by Shipman & Goodwin.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Parise: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

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Sharon Thomas  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Policy First Reading

Public Audience

Adjournment