

# **SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT**

### **REGULAR MEETING**

**OCTOBER 24, 2013**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, October 24, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

**1. CALL TO ORDER ~ 7:00 P.M.**

**2. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS STUDENT MATTERS AND  
SOUTHINGTON ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION NEGOTIATIONS**

An Executive Session meeting was held from 7:02 p.m. through 7:26 p.m. in the Municipal Center Technology Training Room.

Board members present were Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent.

**3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION ~ 7:30 P.M.**

The regular session was reconvened at 7:30 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Brian Goralski. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from the administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations and Finance; and Dr. Perri Murdica, Director of Pupil Services.

Student representatives present were Miss Gabrielle Baker and Miss Abigail Harris.

There were approximately 25 people in the audience.

**4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ October 10, 2013**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

**“Move to approve the Board of Education minutes of October 10, 2013, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **a. Communications from Audience**

Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue, stated that this was an election year and that he hoped all the Board members returned because there was still an unresolved issue. He attended the Candidate Forums and acknowledged that all the Board of Education members answered the questions presented to them very well. He noted that communications between the Boards have improved in the last four years and also since Dr. Erardi, Superintendent of Schools, and Garry Brumback, Town Manager, came to town there has been better communication. He noted that Southington was a great town with a great school system.

### **b. Communications from Board Members and Administration**

#### **Communication from the Board Members:**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

**“Move to add Agenda Item 9.c ‘Compensation for Music Specialist Position’ to the agenda.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

**“Move to add Agenda Item 9.d ‘Student Expulsions’ to the agenda.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that she and Mrs. Lombardi attended the Connecticut Association of Schools event last week honoring the 2013 Distinguished Administrators in a ceremony at Saint Clements Castle in Portland. She congratulated Mr. Christopher Palmieri [DePaolo Middle School Assistant Principal] who was recognized as the 2013 Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco attended the Plantsville School PTO meeting last week and noted that fourth grade teachers Mrs. Colite and Mrs. Nadeau explained to the parents certain elements of the fourth grade curriculum in Common Core, specifically, multiplication and division. She noted that there was a certain amount of angst among the parents; however, the presentation by these two teachers was enormously helpful in guiding the parents.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that the CREC Council met last week and discussed that the RESCs, which CREC is one of six, are charged with developing a uniform, common calendar. She explained that CREC would be putting together a committee to look at the commonalities of districts regarding the start of school and end of school dates, spring and holiday vacations, and early dismissal days to find common ground on providing a common calendar for the region. She noted that at the CREC Council meeting there was discussion about the many obstacles to the common calendar. She stated that the CREC Committee and the state would be trying to figure out how to mitigate some of these obstacles.

Mrs. Carmody reported that she was a substitute teacher last week in a fourth grade class and that she was able to see and participate in some of the policies that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee and the Board of Education has implemented.

Mr. Derynoski acknowledged that this was the last Board of Education meeting for this term and added that the Board accomplished many things, overcame obstacles and pitfalls, worked well as a team, and had two successful years. He hoped to see everyone back on November 14, 2013.

Mrs. Lombardi felt the same way as Mr. Derynoski. She reported on the Connecticut Education Computer Conference that took place on Monday, October 21, 2013, which she attended along with Karen Veilleux, Linda Lackner, and Beth Hosmer. She acknowledged that the integration of technology into curriculum is the way that everyone is going and needs to go. She was happy that Southington had a three-year plan in place. She noted that first they need access, which is included in the three-year plan. In terms of integration, they need to put funding and time in professional development of the teachers in the area of technology. In terms of Vision 2020, a futurist at the conference stated that 71% of college graduate jobs would be in the area of technology to solve daily problems. She learned that the state is developing free resources that they will need to pursue.

Mrs. Johnson concurred with Mr. Derynoski about the wonderful things the current Board members have done. At the Southington Education Association Candidate Forum, she stated that one of the reasons Southington has such a good school system with an underfunded budget was because of the enormous contributions of town community organizations, such as the PTOs and sport support groups. She reported that she was the liaison for Derynoski School and attended the PTO meeting last week after the tragic passing of a student. She noted that the entire school community rallied around the family. In the memory of the student who recently died, the PTO will be offering two \$500 scholarships in the spring to seniors who have attended Derynoski School. Mrs. Johnson announced that the Derynoski School float in the Apple Harvest Festival Parade won the Chairman's Theme Award.

Mr. Goralski thanked his colleagues for working as a team the past two years, which made the school system so great. He was privileged to serve with them because it was never about political party; it was about the children. He hoped that all nine of the Board members were re-elected. He was not happy that this has to happen every two years until it is changed back to four-year terms.

#### **Communication from Administration:**

Dr. Erardi reported on the following:

1. Update – Virtual STEM University: Dr. Erardi reported that the Southington Education Foundation recently took action to launch their Virtual STEM University with funding of \$13,000. They will be looking for teacher leaders in every grade level to lead the Virtual STEM.
2. K-12 Science Coordinator Update: Dr. Erardi stated that Friday morning he and Mrs. Smith would be calling the successful candidate. They were very impressed with the candidate pool and will be bringing the K-12 Science Coordinator forward at the next Board of Education meeting.
3. Bread for Life - Update: Dr. Erardi explained that the Bread for Life Partnership Committee met and is working to bring a new proposed site to the Planning and Zoning Committee.
4. Collaborative Services: Dr. Erardi reported that after the elections they are ready to bring forward the work that has taken place to date to the Board of Education, Town Council and Board of Finance.

Mr. Goralski announced that he and other Board members received thank-you notes from retired staff that will be shared electronically.

**c. Communications from Student Representative**

Miss Harris reported on the following:

- College deadlines are coming up for early action.
- This year, the Common Application has been having a lot of issues. She too had issues sending information when she finished the final page and received an error message. She recommended that seniors complete the application early.
- SAT scores were available today. She was told by Dr. Semmel that Southington has a history of having good scores.

Miss Baker reported on the following:

- The Girls and Boys Soccer teams and Girls Field Hockey team recently had their Senior Nights. Girls Volleyball and Girls Swim and Dive will celebrate their Senior Nights on Friday.
- The Music of the Knight was held at Southington High School with 22 bands attending.
- The Band competition for States will be held on October 26 at Bridgeport and the Nationals on November 2 at MetLife Stadium.
- Taking the PSATs was a good experience for the juniors in preparation for the SATs.
- Seniors spoke to freshmen about their high school experience and setting their priorities in preparing for college.

Mr. Goralski thanked Mr. Oshana for representing the Board at the Band Awards presentation.

**7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting ~ October 15, 2013**

Mrs. Carmody reported that, at the last meeting, middle school administrators presented information about the current Unified Arts program at DePaolo and Kennedy Middle Schools. Unified Arts includes art, family and consumer science, physical education, and technology. The middle school building projects will provide opportunity to restructure these programs, and new curriculum has to be developed. The committee will have an update on the curriculum changes associated with these programs.

Mrs. Carmody reported that the Kindergarten teachers at Hatton Elementary School created a 10-minute iMovie that showed the life in the day of a Kindergarten student.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Town Government Communications**

There was no report.

### **b. Construction Update**

Mr. Cox reported that the structure of the building addition to the middle schools was starting to take form, with the steel going into place. The construction company started pouring the slab on the classroom wing second floor at DePaolo Middle School this morning. The gyms are scheduled to be turned back on November 1, 2013 with brand new floors, backboards, and wall pads; however, no bleachers yet. The middle schools are on schedule.

### **c. Administrator Evaluation Plan Update**

There was no report.

### **d. Teacher Evaluation Plan Update**

Mrs. Smith reported that they are continuing with the Teacher Evaluation Plan and everyone is very busy. It is taking approximately three hours for one formal evaluation for one teacher from start to finish. It is being calibrated in all the buildings, at all the levels, to do the job that is required with pre-conferencing, post-conferencing, etc., and goal setting. Three hours is the average period of time. It is being documented and the report will be given to the Board at the end of the year.

Mrs. Smith updated the Board on the end-of-year rating system that was developed under the Teacher Evaluation Plan. It will have to be slightly altered as the result of Southington making the decision, along with most other Connecticut communities, to use the assessment called "Smarter Balanced Assessment Field Test" next year. For the end-of-year Teacher Evaluation rating, 45% of it was going to be based on a combination of data from different student scores. She noted that 22.5% was coming from local criteria and 22.5% from state data. Since state data will not be available with Smarter Balanced Field Testing, Southington will be able to use all local data to form that 45% of student achievement. The baseline data collected in the fall is local baseline data and will be comparing apples to apples but they will not be using state data from the Legacy Tests. Mrs. Smith pointed out that the Board will be hearing the term "Legacy Tests," which are synonymous with CMT and CAPT. Once the waiver is officially received from the State of Connecticut that allows the school system to field test "Smarter

Balanced” instead of the “Legacy Tests,” she will be coming back to the Board with a motion to amend the Teacher Evaluation Plan as she just described.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked what would constitute the local data. Mrs. Smith replied that Southington has math benchmarks that have been done routinely. There are CFAs at the high school and middle schools. We have Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessments, DRA and DRP and those are benchmark data systems that are currently in place and will continue to be used.

Mr. Goralski asked if the students would be taking more tests this year because of the transition to Smarter Balanced. Mrs. Smith replied that they would not, and it was only science that would be assessed using CMT or CAPT because there were no Smarter Balanced field tests for science.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Rugby Update**

Dr. Erardi explained that, three years ago, Matthew Golchin, with the support of the principal and athletic director, asked to bring a handful of students together who were interested in the sport of Rugby. Since that time, the program has grown with the commitment and support of coaches, parents and students.

Mr. Golchin, Southington High School English teacher for six years, came to the podium to explain the sport of Rugby and the evolution of the program. He identified some common misconceptions about Rugby and some indicators of success, which is evidence that the program was working for students.

#### The Rugby Program Evolution:

- Mr. Golchin brought the idea of Rugby to the attention of Mr. Swallow and Dr. Erardi. Ms. Kathy McGrath was the SHS Principal at that time and suggested trying it out as a pilot.
- The program started with 20 players the first year. The next year they added a girls' Rugby program, which brought the number to 60 players the second year. The third year they had 70 players, and this past season 80 players. He forecasted close to 100 players for the upcoming season.
- Mr. Golchin noted that Coach Carvalho and Coach Vargas and the addition of the girl players have helped to make this program a success.

#### Misconceptions:

- Rugby is football without protective padding.
- More concussions are in Rugby because there are no helmets.
- Because you played football means you are prepared to play Rugby.
- If you are strong and tough, then you are qualified to play Rugby.
- Rugby is reckless with no regard for safety.
- If you played Rugby, you are qualified to coach.
- The game is only an excuse to party.
- Rugby is not a recognized sport.

Mr. Golchin would like to have the opportunity to address and defend all these misconceptions to Board members.

Indicators of Success:

- Rachel Wrinn, a former sophomore English student of Mr. Golchin's, was upset that he was starting a boys' team and not a girls' team. When he pitched the program to Dr. Semmel, he was told that he had to welcome all students, not just the boys. Mr. Golchin told Rachel Wrinn to gather up some girls and attend the meeting. When he walked in the meeting, there were over 50 girls. Rachel Wrinn now has a Rugby scholarship at Quinnipiac University.
- Four Southington girls' Rugby players are now being recruited by Quinnipiac, Norwich, and St. Michael's, with scholarship offers.
- A Southington boys' Rugby player is a starter at CCSU, and another at Quinnipiac.
- Ryan Perez, former Southington Rugby captain who accepted a military scholarship [ROTC-University of Washington], has been pushing for a Rugby team there.
- The boys' Rugby team went 13-5 for the season and received two consecutive conference championships.
- The girls' Rugby team won their conference this year, and came in second in the state.
- 75% of the 80 players had never played a sport. This fits into their goal of getting the students connected, and helping the students on the fringes.

Elizabeth Raggazino, senior at Southington High School and the Forward's Captain of the 2013-2014 girls' Rugby Team, explained that, as a freshman, she joined the team and did not know anything about the sport. She developed a passion and love of the game and now, as a senior, it is very much a part of her life. It has changed her both physically and mentally and is a part of who she is. She is currently looking for colleges offering both her major and Rugby. She plans to continue her love and dedication for the sport throughout her college career. Four years ago, she would have never visualized this for herself. She is proud to be amongst the first group of girls to be on the Southington High School girls' Rugby team.

Joanna Windesheim, senior at Southington High School and one of two Captains on the girls' Rugby team explained that she joined the team as a freshman and it has become a very important part of her life. She has become friends with so many girls that she would have never met otherwise. She has learned leadership and team skills and how to work hard both physically and mentally to achieve the common goal of winning and accepting a loss. The girls respect each other, have fun, and have learned many life lessons.

Mrs. Carmody stated that she did not know much about Rugby. She asked how many other high schools in our conference offer Rugby. Mr. Golchin compared Rugby to where Lacrosse was about 30 years ago, and stated that the sport is starting to grow rapidly. It will be an Olympic sport in 2016. There are about 20-23 programs in the state offered through Town Park and Recreation Departments and schools. The future goal is to become a CIAC Varsity sport. Within five schools, which are Greenwich, Fairfield Prep, Staples, Simsbury, and Darien, Rugby is a varsity sport; however, it is an in-house label because they are not CIAC sanctioned. There are another 15-18 schools at the youth level. Mr. Golchin thought that it was important to get Rugby into the middle schools and youth level.

Mrs. Carmody asked if the players had to try-out to be on the team. Mr. Golchin replied that they did not have to try out and that everyone is welcomed in their club. They never cut anybody, and it is a very physical sport.

Mrs. Carmody asked how many players are on the field. Mr. Golchin replied that there were three versions of Rugby. The most common number played at the high school level is 15. There are eight forwards (the big players) and seven backs (the fast players). Mrs. Carmody stated that she planned to attend a game to understand how it is played.

Mrs. Queen heard many great things about Rugby and that the players are having a great experience. She thanked Coach Golchin for sharing his passion for Rugby with the students. She understands that the sport allows different body types and different types of athletes being able to play. Mr. Golchin replied that they need the big, hulky players for the scrum and the fast, smaller players on the outside. All body types are welcome in the sport.

Mr. Oshana noted that 75% of the players have never played a sport before. He asked what the draw was to play Rugby. Mr. Golchin replied that some of the students stop growing at a certain age and they realize that they would not be able to play Southington Football or Lacrosse or they do not have the skill set. It is a unique, but tough, sport and not everyone can play it.

Mrs. Clark stated that her son played Rugby and that after watching the games and attending the practices, she still does not understand the sport. There are players of every shape and size playing on the same team, and they were all safe. What impressed her most was that after the game the two teams eat together, with the home team cooking a meal for everyone. The opposing coach names the player of the game for the other team and vice versa. There is always concern for safety, rules, and to make sure that no one is being overly aggressive. She felt that it was a great sport because all students can play.

Mr. Derynoski noted that currently Rugby is in a club form. He asked if they were looking for varsity recognition. Dr. Erardi replied that it cannot be a varsity sport because Rugby is not yet sanctioned by the CIAC, which runs high school sports. This summer, he met with the coaches and parent supporters. It was an opportunity for him to better understand their program. The program right now is supported solely by the parents and willing coaches. The National Guard sponsored a number of buses for away matches. Tonight's presentation was to recognize and celebrate the hard work of the coaches, parents and students. He noted that the Board would talk about the financial piece during the 2014-2015 budget discussions.

Mrs. Johnson asked Coach Golchin how he recruited players. Mr. Golchin replied that no experience was necessary. It was open to students in Grades 9-12. The veteran players recruit new players by word of mouth.

Mrs. Lombardi asked if everyone on the team plays. Mr. Golchin replied that everyone plays at every game. They are able to field an A Team and a B Team, like a varsity and JV team. Mrs. Lombardi asked if there was a parent Booster Club. Coach Golchin replied that there was a fantastic parent booster club. Mrs. Lombardi asked when their next fundraiser would be held. Mr. Golchin replied that they do the typical fundraisers, such as car washes and selling Keurig coffee, in the spring. Mrs. Lombardi asked him to send information to the Board of when these fundraisers would be held.



Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that, when Dr. Erardi comes before the Board with the cost of the program, she would like to have the safety piece explained in a more elaborate format. She also would like to receive information of when the Rugby practices and games are held.

Mr. Goralski advised Coach Golchin to look at the other sports teams that started out as clubs at Southington High School, such as hockey. Typically, as the club grows and the students and parents become more involved, the cost is born by them. At the some point, it comes before the Board. He advised Coach Golchin to look at the past and replicate what was successful.

**b. Special Education Outplacements: June 2011 – June 2013**

Dr. Murdica reviewed the number of Southington students who are receiving their education in a private special education facility that is approved by the State of Connecticut. She compared data from June 2011 through June 2013 of students who were outplaced through a PPT, agency placed, such as through DCF, and parent placed, such as a magnet school. The overall numbers of outplaced students has decreased. The biggest change has been in the agency placed and parent placed students, which have increased. Dr. Murdica addressed the regulations that they have to follow when making these placements and that have not changed since June 2011.

Mrs. Johnson noted that there were approximately 30 students who were outplaced this year by agency or parent. She asked if there was a trend in the kinds of facilities and programs that these students are in that could be replicated in Southington. Dr. Murdica noted that there were variations, such as students who are medically complex or multiply handicapped, students who have significant cognitive disabilities, and students who have significant behavioral challenges. There are some programs that are easier to replicate than other ones. These programs require a lot of staffing, training, space, and an understanding from administrators and teachers on how to incorporate those students and still meet their needs. Special education law does allow them to say that, as a school district, they cannot best meet a child's needs and have to find a placement outside of the district. Dr. Murdica noted Southington's goal is to keep the students in their own district with their peers. She noted that space is an issue. She pointed out that they need to continue a district program review of special education across the continuum.

Mrs. Carmody hoped that they continue to speak to representatives at the state level on burden of proof because it would save them a lot of money in many instances. She appreciated all the work that was being done to keep our students in Southington.

Mrs. Queen questioned parent placement and the involvement of the special education department. Dr. Murdica replied that parent placement occurs when a parent selects to send their child to a magnet school, which has been increasing. It is also on the increase for those students who also have special education identification. Southington has to pay per pupil costs plus any special education costs. She noted that Southington is responsible for all of these students and participates in their planning including for the magnet schools. Our staff becomes the special education representative in the PPT process even at the magnet schools.

Mr. Goralski stated that, as agency placements continue to rise, he wanted to continue to make it an agenda item for the Legislative Breakfast. He stated that, with DCF being the primary agency doing these placements, in his opinion and from experience of working there for 21 years, they are the most incompetent agency under state jurisdiction. Since they cannot fix

their own house, he was very uncomfortable with that agency deciding what is best for Southington students' education. He asked Dr. Murdica to keep having the Board make that an agenda item every year within the Legislative Breakfast until they fix DCF. Mrs. Queen stated that she heard good things that DCF was improving under the new director with positive impact.

**c. Compensation for the Music Specialist Position**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

**“Move to increase the Music Specialist position stipend from \$4,940 to \$6,957 within the Southington Education Association (SEA) contract for the 2013-2014 school year.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**d. Student Expulsions**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

**“Move to approve student expulsion 2013-14-03, as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

**“Move to approve student expulsion 2013-14-04, as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Goralski asked for a moment of silence in memory of the Derynoski Elementary School student who recently passed away. He noted that the Southington school system was available to help the family in any way that they can. He commended the Derynoski community for their handling of the situation.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Blanchard*  
Recording Secretary