

The minutes presented within this document provide a summary of the discussion that took place at the Board of Education meeting. For the complete discussion of the agenda items, please view the video of the Board meeting on our website at www.southingtonschools.org. These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the following regular Board of Education meeting.

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 14, 2016

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m.

Present from the Board: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Juanita Champagne, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Patricia Queen and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Present from Administration: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Student Expulsions and Personnel, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS STUDENT EXPULSIONS AND PERSONNEL

Mr. Goralski declared Executive Session ended at 7:18 p.m. and the Board returned to public session.

3. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE ~ LISA CHRISTENSEN

At 7:23 p.m., in Celebration of Excellence, the Board of Education and administration recognized Lisa Christensen for receiving the SERC / CT PIRC 2015 Parental Involvement

Recognition Award after being nominated by Mrs. Marilyn Kahl, Principal of Kelley Elementary School.

Mr. Goralski declared a recess at 7:29 p.m.

4. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

The regular session was reconvened at 7:39 p.m. by Mr. Goralski, Chairperson. Board members present were: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Juanita Champagne, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from the administration were: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations; and Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Pupil Services.

Student Representatives present were Mr. Christopher Iverson, Miss Samantha Martins, and Mr. James Brino.

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited led by the Cub Scouts of Pack 33 from South End School who were in attendance.

Mr. Goralski called for a moment of silence in memory of Laura LeeAnn Porydzy who recently passed away and was employed by the Southington Public Schools for nine years as a Special Education Paraprofessional.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ December 10, 2015

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of December 10, 2015, as submitted.”

Motion carried by voice vote with Mr. Derynoski and Mrs. Carmody abstaining.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

Mr. Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue, addressed the importance of exercise and nutrition and the misinformation circulating about students not having recess. He also asked the Board members to be conservative in preparing the 2016-2017 education budget because the state cannot balance their own budget and will be making funding cuts.

b. Communication from Board Members

The Board members reported on the following:

- Mr. Brown discussed the Wall of Honor at the high school and had met with Michelle Zommer on how to market it better.
- Mr. Brown commended Superintendent Connellan on his comments regarding standardized testing in the Record-Journal newspaper. He requested that the following comments made by Mr. Connellan go on record:
 - *“High stakes testing is not the best way to measure student success.”*
 - *“Comparing different groups of students each year is not statistically sound.”*
 - *“The state and federal mandated tests are taking away from valuable instructional time. The science mandated tests are not even aligned with the new science standards.”*

MOTION: by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to add item 11.b ‘Student Expulsion 2015-2016-03’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski received the following correspondence:

- Mrs. Patricia Johnson thanked the Board for recognizing her at the last meeting.
- Mrs. Galati and Dr. Monti from the Southington Education Foundation thanked the Board for the opportunity to present at the last meeting.
- Thank you to Superintendent Connellan and the administrative team for the Legislative Breakfast on January 14, 2016 that was well received along with the document that they put together that was forwarded to the State Education Committee.

Mr. Goralski noted that the Polar Plunge was Saturday, January 16, 2016 at Camp Sloper’s with the school district represented by all schools except Derynoski and Flanders Schools.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

- Special Education Parent Survey: Ms. Meg Walsh noted that for the last 10 years the State Department of Special Education has sent out a parent survey looking at ongoing collaborative efforts between the Bureau of Special Education and the Connecticut Parent Work Group. The results of the 2014-2015 survey were sent to Southington’s parents. She noted that 30.1% of Southington parents responded to the survey and she discussed their responses to the school district’s strengths and areas of improvement. Ms. Walsh also addressed transition planning for students’ ages 18 through 21 and vocational training.
- SAT Administration at Southington High School: Mr. Madancy gave an update on the mandate of the SATs on March 2 and the challenges the high school administration is up against. Mr. Madancy thanked Mr. Romano for working

with the high school administration and New Britain Transportation for ironing out the logistics on how to add an additional bus run in the middle of a school day for approximately 1,500 students, which is something that was never done before in order to accommodate this new mandate.

- Every Student Succeeds Act: Mr. Connellan noted that this act is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was formerly called “No Child Left Behind.” He planned to forward an email of the digital version of a hand out to the Board members, which outlines the differences between the acts. Mr. Connellan pointed out that there is flexibility with the new act and that Southington needs to get out ahead of the new law and provide some guidance and input to the State Board of Education in terms of how to assess students and evaluate.

Mr. Connellan stated that he attended the Robotics Team 195 kick-off event on Saturday when the game for this year was revealed.

d. Communications from Student Representatives

Miss Martins reported on the following:

- The high school held a Course Fair for incoming freshmen.
- The second quarter ends Friday, January 15, 2016 with mid-terms starting on Tuesday, January 19 through Friday January 22 when first semester ends.

Mr. Iverson reported on the following:

- The winter sports at Southington High School are in full swing.
- He recognized Gabriella Bassi-Belanger and Nicky Belales who held a holiday seminar in the cafeteria where they discussed different cultures that celebrate religious holidays in the month of December.
- Over 200 wrapped gifts were donated by students and faculty to the Children’s Hospital in conjunction with Project-Lead-the-Way and the science department at the high school.

Mr. Brino reported on the following:

- A combined Chorus, Jazz and Music Concert was held for the first time on December 21, 2015.
- The Valentine’s Day Dance will be held on February 5, 2016 in the high school cafeteria.
- Mr. Stranieri, Principal of Southington High School, will be participating in the Polar Plunge.

The student representatives requested to move the Out of State Field Trip Approvals up on the agenda.

MOTION: by Mrs. Clark, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move Agenda Item 11.a ‘Out of State Field Trip Approvals’ to Agenda Item 7.e”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

e. Out of State Field Trip Approvals *(formerly Agenda Item 11.a)*

Mr. Brino explained to the Board members that the Southington High School FIRST Robotics Team 195 is already pre-qualified for the trip to St. Louis, Missouri this year after winning the prestigious Engineering Inspiration Award last year. Mrs. Marilyn Kahl introduced Ed Barry, who is the coach and one of the lead team mentors. She noted that the team will be traveling to UMass Dartmouth to a regional district event in March. Mrs. Kahl noted that one of the missions within Team 195 is to serve those who served first. They do as much as they can to honor the military and veterans. There will be a group from the SHS Robotics Team who will be leaving on Friday, January 15, 2016 for Washington, D.C. to lay a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Saturday morning. Mr. Barry explained that there are 53 students on the Robotics Team this year and their various roles including construction and scouting. He noted that the students are currently fund raising to offset the cost of expenses with 80 students and parents signed up for the World Championship in St. Louis.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mr. Brown:

“Move to approve the Out-of-State/Overnight field trips for the Southington High School Robotics Team to attend the district competition in Massachusetts and to attend the world Championship in Missouri.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

8. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

a. Personnel Report

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Queen:

“Move to approve the Personnel Report, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. COMMITTEE REPORT

a. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting ~ December 15, 2015

Mrs. Carmody reported that the Homework Policy was discussed because some parents had voiced their concerns that homework was becoming too overwhelming. Two elementary teachers attended and shared their current homework practice. The committee agreed that homework should be 1) reinforcement of instruction that takes place in the classroom, and 2) should be meaningful. The committee also addressed personalized learning for each student. Sometimes stress is being put on the students and families with the amount of homework that is given to the student. The committee will discuss at their next meeting doing a survey of parents, teachers and some students for their input. The committee also discussed the assigned prescriptive reading every night. The committee will report back to the Board on the survey. Mrs. Carmody noted that the committee does not want to create a society of children that are

overstressed. Teaching and learning should be meaningful and should not be stressful, which is their goal.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mrs. Queen reported that the Facility Advisory Committee Meeting met on January 6, 2016 and discussed moving forward with the plan to solicit advertising from the Chamber of Commerce businesses. She sent a draft letter to the Board of Education administration and Chairman Goralski for review and comments. She also sent a copy of the Board's Policy 1325 and Regulations on "Community Relations" to the Facility Advisory Chairperson, which the Board of Education approved and covers the Board's policy on advertising. Mrs. Queen noted that the Chair of the Facility Advisory Committee will review these forms with Attorney Mark Sciota. Mrs. Queen reported that the Band Backers Booster Club made an unsolicited donation of \$600 to the Turf Replacement Fund. She stated that the number of gate receipts and season passes for the past fall was \$5,594. Mr. Derynoski would like the balance in the Turf Replacement Fund reported to the Board of Education after the Facility Advisory Committee holds a meeting.

Mr. Goralski reported that administration submitted an appropriation request to the Board of Finance for rentals and tuitions that was passed at their meeting on January 13, 2016.

Mr. Goralski noted that the budget workshops will be held on January 19 and 21 with the Board adopting the Superintendent's budget on January 28, 2016. The Board of Education will be presenting their budget to the Board of Finance on February 10, 2016 with the Board of Finance adopting the budget on March 30 and the Town Council adopting the budget on May 9, 2016. Mr. Goralski will call the editor of The Observer because the paper stated in error that the Board of Education workshops will be held at Hatton School. Workshop #1 on January 19 will be held at Kennedy Middle School in the Library/Media Center at 7:00 p.m. and Workshop #2 on January 21 will be held in Municipal Center Public Assembly Room at 7:00 p.m.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Goralski noted that there was nothing to report at this time.

c. Proposed 2016-2017 School Calendar ~ Second Reading

MOTION: by Mrs. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Queen:

"Move to adopt Option #2 as the 2016-2017 School Calendar."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Out of State Field Trip Approvals *(moved to Agenda Item 7.e)*

b. Student Expulsion – 2015-2016-03

MOTION: by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to expel Student 2015-2016-03 as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary