

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

MARCH 28, 2019

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Instruction) was held on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut and an Executive Session was held at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Robert Brown, Mr. Joseph Baczewski (*arrived 6:38 p.m.*), Ms. Lisa Cammuso, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance (*left 6:40 p.m.*).

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ STUDENT MATTERS AND UPSEU PARAEDUCATORS, ABA THERAPISTS, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TUTORS NEGOTIATIONS

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

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Student Matters and UPSEU Paraeducators, ABA Therapists and EL Tutors Negotiations, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski declared Executive Session ended at 6:50 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Goralski reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:02 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Ms. Lisa Cammuso, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent.

Student representatives present were Bianca Spataro, Nicholas Mangene and Trevor Messina.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The student representatives led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Goralski called for a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Robert Logan who recently passed away. He was employed in the Maintenance Department for 15 years until his retirement on November 9, 1990.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ MARCH 14, 2019

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of March 14, 2019, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Recipient

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

“Move to approve the student recipient of the Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship as recommended by the Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Sub-Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Appointment of Ad Hoc School Naming Committee.

Mr. Goralski announced that he appointed the following people to serve on the School Renaming Committee in honor of Mr. Zaya A. Oshana, a former 36-year Board of Education member. The sub-committee members are Dr. Angelo Coppola, retired Southington Public Schools Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Beecher Lajoie, retired principal, and current Board members Mrs. Patricia Queen, Ms. Lisa Cammuso and Mrs. Terri Carmody, who will serve as the sub-committee chairperson. Mr. Goralski explained that the Board had a policy on the procedures to follow for the naming of school facilities and that he also contacted Town Attorney Carolyn Futtner regarding the Town Ordinance on this matter.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Public

There was no public communication.

b. Communications from Board of Education

Board members discussed the following:

- Mr. Brown attended the CAFE Day on the Hill on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 and spoke against the legislation of transferring the burden of paying for teacher retirement from the state to the local towns. He also spoke against unfunded mandates by the state. He stated that the regionalization bill appears to have died in the house and senate. He had a list of all the legislation to share with the Board.
- The Wall of Honor Ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the high school with four living people to be honored and seven Southington World War II casualties to be honored posthumously.
- The Invention Convention will take place at Southington High School on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. Diversity Training:

Mr. Madancy reported that he attended the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) Minority Teacher Recruitment Fair with 100 districts represented and 190 candidates attending. He spoke to some amazing potential candidates for the Southington school district and encouraged them to apply for teaching positions in Southington.

Mr. Madancy invited Mr. Paul Vivian to the podium to report on the work that he and Rev. Audley Donaldson (who was unable to attend) were doing regarding Diversity Training for the school district that started in the spring of 2018 as part of a grant from CREC for the Hartford Open Choice program regarding retaining the Hartford students. Mr. Madancy distributed letters to the Board members from students addressing the training that they received and how it effected them.

Mr. Paul Vivian, a Southington resident for 40 years, and Reverend Audley Donaldson, who was born in Jamaica, is a minister, and lives in Brooklyn, New York, developed the curriculum and started the Diversity Training program in Bristol 26 years ago. Mr. Vivian explained that he is a white man and his friend Rev. Donaldson is a black man. He explained the multifaceted issues that they address in the Diversity Training program and their philosophy. The Diversity Training is more than just about race and is about the differences in each other, e.g., gender, age, body image, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. They try to use humor and demonstrate that even though they have completely different backgrounds, experiences, and look different, they are friends and get along.

In Southington, they present their training in Grades 3-7. Mr. Vivian explained at length the Diversity program offered. In Grade 3, they emphasize how differences are good. They discuss the differences in food, ethnicity, families, and what comprises a family unit.

In Grade 5, they talk about stereotyping and how it could be inaccurate and hurtful. Discrimination is also discussed, which is when a person treats someone differently based on a stereotype. They use activities and films to demonstrate. They like to see students over a sequence of time as reinforcement and visit Grade 5 students three times in a school year. On the third visit, they talk about immigration, immigrants, refugees and how the United States is a nation of immigrants. They talk about why people want to come to the USA. Many students think of immigration as illegal because of the current national news.

In middle school, they ask the students to find out their family's history because America is a nation of immigrants. They discuss bullying and the role of the bystander. There are the bullies, the victim, and the bystanders, and they address how the "bystanders" could become "upstanders" to speak up to bullying. In Grades 6 & 7, they discuss that no student should have to hide or be ashamed of their parents/families because they are afraid of being bullied if they have two mothers or two fathers, etc. No one should be uncomfortable about who they are. They show students techniques on how to be an "upstander" to stop bullying.

This is the second year that they are conducting Diversity Training in Southington with the younger students at an impressionable age. The Board members had many questions, praise for the program and presenters, and planned to continue and to reinforce the Diversity Training. The student representatives hoped that the Board would make Diversity Training permanent in the school district.

Mr. Goralski pointed out that the Diversity Training message ties into the Grade 5 curriculum about immigration. He encouraged the public to watch this meeting, which is video recorded live and can be found archived on the Board of Education and Town websites.

2. Learning Management System - Canvas:

Mr. Madancy introduced Mrs. Rebecca Savelkoul, Instructional Technology Coordinator, and Mr. Jason Ghidini, Grade 6 teacher at Kennedy Middle School, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Canvas Learning Management System. They started the presentation by linking the Board members iPads to the Canvas URL to give them a quiz.

Mrs. Savelkoul spoke about the status on the implementation of Canvas in the schools, introduced the Board to the environment of the platform, how it connects to district work, ongoing support and took the Board through the features of the learning management system that the district has been using this year. They spoke about how Canvas standardizes the student online experience because they learned that the students at the high school level had to manage several different online platforms. As they get more teachers and classrooms onto the Canvas system it would standardize that process for them. The implementation started in August 2018 and was connected to PowerSchool. Mrs. Savelkoul explained that, by design, there were currently 18 active course content areas and currently 12 teachers using Canvas across the district.

Mr. Jason Ghidini actively uses Canvas in his classroom with the students and explained to the Board how he uses the platform. Canvas provides real time analytic data. They also have analytic data on the students, such as when they logged in to do their homework, how long they were on, page hits, etc. He stated that Canvas has dramatically improved his teaching and was a powerful teaching tool.

Mr. Brown addressed recent legislation on student data privacy and asked if it had any impact on this platform. He also addressed copyright laws. Mr. Madancy explained that it was compliant with the Student Data Privacy law. Student representative, Nick Mangene, questioned what would prevent a student from cheating and going into a different browser and opening a separate window to look up answers to a quiz. Mr. Ghidini replied that when students are taking a quiz he is monitoring and walking around the classroom to make sure they are on the correct site.

Mr. Brown questioned if there were enough devices for the students to use. Mr. Connellan explained that they have been focusing on increasing the devices available at the high school. Unfortunately, the budget has been underfunded and it is a struggle. Mrs. Savelkoul addressed teacher readiness for a number of devices in the classroom and student usage. It will be a phase-in process as they build teacher readiness around the Canvas platform. Discussed was Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and acceptable use. Mr. Madancy addressed a hybrid approach where some districts provide devices and allow other students to bring their own.

After much discussion on the Canvas platform, Mrs. Savelkoul created a three-question quiz for the Board members to take. Once the Board members submitted their answers, they received instant feedback on the device explaining which questions were answered correctly and which were wrong along with the reason. Based on the score that the student receives, the program will generate different assignments. Also, the teacher can embed video comments to students. Both Google Drive and One Drive are fully integrated into Canvas.

There will be a one-week Summer Technology Camp on Canvas offered to teachers once the school year ends, which would be repeated a week before the next school year starts.

Also discussed was the cost of the Canvas platform, the life expectancy of the software, upgrades to the software and how many hardware devices that the district needed.

d. Communication from Students Representatives

Trevor Messina reported on the following:

- The SHS Drama Club production of “Grease” was held on Friday, March 15, and Saturday, March 16 with three shows presented.
- On, Saturday, March 16 in Utica, New York, the Robotics Team won the Central New York Regional FIRST Robotics competition, which qualified them for the World Championship in Detroit, Michigan at the end of April.
- On Wednesday, March 20, the Navigating College presentation was held at 6:15 p.m. and at 7:30 p.m. there was a NCAA presentation, which was an assembly for parents and students who were interested in playing sports in college.
- On Thursday, March 21, there was a World Language Honor Society induction.

Bianca Spataro reported on the following:

- On Friday, March 22, the Unified Theater show “Once Upon a Night” was held.
- On Sunday, March 24, the Robotics Team won the Western New England District Championship at Western New England University out of 30 teams represented.
- On Wednesday, March 27, the World Language Movie Night was held in the auditorium.
- The third marking period ends on Friday, March 29, 2019.

Nicholas Mangene reported on the following:

- The fourth marking period starts on Monday, April 1.
- On Wednesday, April 3, the Mr. Southington Show will be held hosted by the National Honor Society.
- The Junior Prom is on Saturday, April 6 at La Bella Vista.
- April vacation is the week of April 14-19.
- The SATs for juniors will be held on April 9.
- The Rugby Team's first game is Friday, March 29 against Staples.

Mr. Goralski reported that on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, the Board of Finance took action and a \$1,191,917 reduction was taken to the Board of Education proposed budget for 2019-2020, which is significant. The Board of Education did get an increase over last year, but it is less than what the Board of Education had requested. On April 22, 2019, the Town Council public hearing on the budget will be held in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room at 7:00 p.m. with the Town Council voting to adopt the 2019-2020 budget on May 13, 2019.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary