

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

DECEMBER 12, 2019

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held on Thursday, December 12, 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

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board members present: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. David Falvo (*left Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. due to contract discussion*), and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mr. Joseph Baczewski and Mrs. Missy Cipriano.

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

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ STUDENT MATTERS, TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT, UPSEU WAGES

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, Transportation Contract, and UPSEU Wages, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody declared Executive Session ended at 7:10 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:15 p.m.

Board members present: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mr. Joseph Baczewski and Mrs. Missy Cipriano.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance, and Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Special Services.

Student representatives present were Mr. Trevor Messina and Miss Amrit Kaur.

Mrs. Carmody called for a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Richard Gineo who recently passed away and was a former social studies teacher DePaolo Middle School for 35 years; also, for the victims and families in the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Carmody called upon Kelly Bergland and Caleb Richert in the audience to lead in reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

In Celebration of Excellence, the Board of Education recognized the following people, who were presented with a Certificate of Excellence:

- a. Kelly Bergland and Caleb Richert, seniors at Southington High School, who were selected as the 2019-2020 recipients of the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS) 2019-2020 Student Recognition Award. Mr. Frank Pepe, Principal of Southington High School, gave a summary of their leadership, service to the school, exceptional academic accomplishments, and service to others in the community.
- b. Ms. Lisa Cammuso, former Board member, for outstanding leadership and dedication to the Southington Board of Education from November 2017 through November 2019.
- c. Mr. Brian Goralski, former Board chairperson, who was selected by the Southington YMCA as the Person of the Year.

Mrs. Carmody called for a recess at 7:25 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ November 14, 2019

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

a. Communications from Public

Mrs. Patricia Queen, 81 Windward Place, former Board of Education member, praised Ms. Lisa Cammuso as a role-model for how new Board members should approach the work. She stated that Ms. Cammuso was always prepared, read everything, asked questions, participated and energetically volunteered for committees, attended events and participated in contract

negotiations. Ms. Cammuso approached everything with an open mind and strived to be as well informed as possible to make decisions for what was best for students. Mrs. Queen thanked Ms. Cammuso for her service.

Mr. Brian Goralski, 80 Buckland Street, spoke as the co-captain of the Board of Education team for the YMCA Polar Plunge at Camp Sloper. He challenged the new Board members Mr. Falvo and Mr. Chrzanowski to jump in the frozen pond with him to raise funds to help students go to camp during the summer. He noted that last year Mr. Connellan challenged the Cheshire football coach/team to jump.

b. Communications from Board Members

Board members discussed the following:

- Mr. Brown attended the November 20th CREC meeting where he met the new state Teacher of the year. He shared information on the new legislation that was being discussed at the state level. He discussed his CEA (Connecticut Education Association) Child Poverty Project at the CREC meeting. Mr. Brown will be attending conferences on how to teach students who live in poverty. He addressed the Wall of Honor and attended the Southington Education Foundation event on December 3rd. Mr. Brown thanked Alta for the Thanksgiving Lunch that they hosted.
- Mr. Derynoski spoke about the football field lights at the high school and that there were a number of bulbs that were out or very dim, he hoped that this item would be addressed in the budget.
- Mrs. Clark addressed the latest Shipman & Goodwin recommendations for policy revisions or additions based on the last legislative session and the number of changes needed to be made for the school district to be in compliance.
- Board members took turns commending Ms. Lisa Cammuso for her leadership and dedication as a former Board member.
- Mr. Falvo stated that he also attended the ALTA Thanksgiving luncheon. He announced that he just was hired as a history teacher at Windham High School.
- Mr. Chrzanowski responded to Mr. Goralski's challenge to participate in the Polar Plunge and stated that he would be out of the country that day in warm weather but would donate to see Mr. Falvo jump on his behalf. He attended the Southington vs. Cheshire football game that Southington won in double overtime.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. STELLAR Collaboration with Paul Gregory's: Ms. Walsh reported that Mrs. Tuttle, a parent, wrote an article about employment opportunities in Southington for young adults with disabilities. She stated that Theresa and Ashley Malloy, who own Paul Gregory's restaurant on Center Street, offered to hire young adults with disabilities to work on Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays from 1:00-5:00 p.m. starting in January 2020 with the tips going to the students. The STELLAR program, which is a vocational transition program for students ages 18-21 and is housed downtown in Abby Park, has placed students to work at Paul Gregory's in the past. She noted that Mrs. Cipriano was also involved in this program.
2. Chamber of Commerce Collaboration: Mr. Madancy explained that the "Train for Tomorrow Program" a learning opportunity for students to pursue career paths either by

job shadowing or an internship that once existed between the Chamber and the Southington Public Schools is being reactivated. Well-paying career opportunities are available for students right out of high school. He addressed a “Pathways” workshop that CREC would be hosting in January that would pair students in an area of interest with a local business organization.

3. SPS Coalition for Social Justice Update: Mr. Madancy reported that he was asked to speak to the State of Education Resource Center (SERC) Board of Directors to share the work being done in Southington in partnership with SERC around the Coalition for Social Justice. His goal is to make sure that their Board of Directors were aware of how supportive SERC has been in providing technical support and guidance.

4. SPS Collaboration – Community Foundation of Greater New Britain Mr. Madancy reported that he now serves on this committee and highlighted some of the work that the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain did in Southington.

d. Communication from Students Representatives

Mr. Trevor Messina reported on the following:

- The high school students had been decorating the hallways for the holidays with STEPS hosting the decorating competition. Judging will take place on December 20th to announce the winners of the hot chocolate and cookie party.
- The Jazz Ensemble, Chorus, Symphonic and Concert Bands and Orchestra will hold a concert on Wednesday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium.
- The Holiday Band (Marching Band students) will play holiday music in different sections of the school on Friday, December 20.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- Southington won the Thanksgiving football game and had a good season.
- Winter Recess would be in a couple of weeks.
- On January 8, 2020, College Basics 101 and Course Fair Night would take place.

Mrs. Carmody explained that Brett Sheldrick, student representative, was unable to attend the meeting due to a swimming competition in Boston.

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Capital Improvement Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 ~ Second Reading

Mr. Derynoski addressed the Retrofitting Turf Stadium Lights to LED in the 2021-2022 Capital Plan. He requested the cost for replacing the existing lights, which are currently out, instead of waiting for the LED retrofitting in 2021-22. Mr. Romano, Director of Operations, explained that changing the lights was not an easy task and would be addressed in early spring before spring sports start. It is costly because they have to rent a lift and bring in sheets of plywood to protect the track/field and they try to do it only once a year or once every two years. Mrs. Clark questioned the parking lot at the high school and the expected lifespan of the existing parking lot. Mr. Romano explained they need to do seal cracking but, to the best of his knowledge, it was the original parking lot and there would be no economy of scale in waiting to do the entire parking lot. Mr. Connellan addressed the parking lot expansion and that he had a discussion with Mr. Sciota that if there was money left in the unexpended fund account after the projects were completed, they might be able to complete the project using a combination of dollars. Mr. Oshana addressed the parking lot expansion for 95 cars at the high school as opposed to on-street parking, which he thought was a safety issue. Mr. Connellan explained that notices had been sent home about students being more courteous when they are parking on the street and not blocking driveways, trash cans on trash day, and mailboxes.

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

“Move to approve the Capital Improvement Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 as presented by administration.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Connellan thanked Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Accounting Manager; Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations; and Mrs. DiNello for their work on the Capital Plan. He and the Board members found the color coding very helpful.

b. ELA – Grades 7 & 8 Curriculum ~ Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the English Language Arts Grades 7 and 8 Curriculum Units, as presented.”

Mr. Brown stated that letters would be going home to parents explaining that students would have choices about what they read.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Town Government Communications

Mrs. Clark and Mr. Oshana received a letter from the town about committee assignments, and they were appointed to serve on the town Self Insurance Committee for a two-year term. Mrs. Carmody received a letter also that she was appointed to serve on the Committee of the Chairs.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Special Education Continuum of Services Presentation

Elementary Special Education Coordinators, Cathy Goralski and Sonya Kunkel, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Special Education Continuum of Services. They highlighted the least restrictive environment to the more restrictive environment to meet the unique needs for teaching students with disabilities. They gave a detailed overview of the district's programs that included Integrated Preschool classes housed at Hatton and Strong Elementary Schools, LAUNCH (Language, Autism support, Unique programming, Nurturing environment, Community building, High Expectations) for students in grades K-5 and housed at Hatton School, LIDS (Learn, Improve, Develop, Skills), LIDS Primary is housed at Kelley School and LIDS Secondary is housed at Hatton School, EASE (Education Adaptive Social Experiences) provides individualized programming for students in grades 6-8 housed at Kennedy Middle School;, TEAM (Therapeutic, Education Alternative Model) is located at DePaolo Middle School for grades 6-8; ACHIEVE (Adult daily living skills, Community Awareness, Health & safety training, Instruction in social skills, Education in Vocational Experiences) is for students in grades 9-12 and located at the high school; CLP (Collaborative Learning Program) is housed at the high school for grades 9-12; STELLAR (Southington Transition and Education in Life-Learning Adult Responsibilities) for young adults who have met graduation requirements but require continued services to build skills towards independence. They also addressed meeting the future needs of students with disabilities through data collection. There had been an increase in the number of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which increased 36.6% between 2013-2019 in Southington. Ms. Walsh stated that the ASD trend increase is national.

The Board members noted that the special education program needs are growing and that they need the money in the budget to support those needs. They questioned if they had the resources to support the increase in number of children on the Autism spectrum with complex issues. It was explained that there were students with the Autism Spectrum Disorder that were high achievers and then there were students with ASD who could not speak. Mrs. Walsh clarified that the BCBA acronym was "Board Certified Behavior Analyst" who work with students on the Autism Spectrum. Mr. Oshana recommended that this presentation of the special education services and costs should be presented to the Board of Finance and Town Council workshops during the budget discussions. Trevor Messina thanked Ms. Walsh and the special education coordinators for the programs offered and everything that they do for the special education students.

b. Technology Presentation

Mr. Jamie Olander, Technology Director, gave an Informational Technology PowerPoint presentation on the changes and improvements to the district technology infrastructure and network and to the growth of instructional technology at the school and classroom level. Mr. Olander highlighted the challenges of technology including keeping up with new technology, security and firewalls, increasing the number of devices in the district, expanding WiFi at the high school, and budget limitations. He also explained the Apple Lease Financing and purchases giving a breakdown of leases over the last three years for Chromebooks, desktops, iPads, Laptops, Projectors, Smart TV, storage and miscellaneous equipment. Mr. Olander addressed the equipment lifecycle/replacement schedule for the district noting that the equipment had an asset tag and that he could run a report indicating what staff member owns the equipment and the purchase date for the next replacement phase. He explained the current WiFi projects at Southington High School noting that when the current wireless solution (Aerohive) was installed it was with minimal configuration and when combined with the growth of wireless dependency, the network was unable to deliver appropriate capacity resulting in a wireless audit being

performed to indicate areas of weak signal and interference. He noted that more Access Points (AP) were added, which increased connectivity.

Mr. Derynoski requested the quantity of laptops and Chromebooks packages that were purchased during the three-year lease periods.

Instructional Technology

Mrs. Rebecca Savelkoul, Instructional Technology, gave a PowerPoint presentation update on Instructional Technology that highlighted goals, increasing capacity and use through professional development in targeted areas such as: Canvas, Google Drive, STAR reporting, Student Data Warehouse, presentation options, and student data privacy law. Professional Development sessions in Summer Tech Camps were offered to teachers looking to increase their technology use in their classrooms.

Mrs. Savelkoul explained that the Instructional Technology Committee, a group of volunteer teachers and staff, met in grade band groups to discuss the training needs of classrooms and staff and sharing best practices.

Mrs. Savelkoul spoke at length about the instructional technology programs including the increased usage in Canvas in the middle schools and high school. The course numbers offered were up from 12 last year to currently 104 active courses. She explained that the elementary classroom desktops had been replaced with Chromebooks Tech Tubs, which allowed flexibility and increased access to Splash Math, RAZ Kids, Google Apps for Education, Typing Club and Google Classroom. The elementary students were learning how to navigate their Google Account in classrooms as young as kindergarten. She addressed at length future planning and technology needs in Canvas and the two obstacles effecting technology use: 1) student devices available in classrooms and, 2) professional development in the area of technology.

The Board members had many questions including having an adequate number of classroom devices for students. Mrs. DiNello explained that the lease renewal program was working in getting additional technology into the district. They were not replacing the same things all the time, they were looking at what was needed when the lease was renewed. Mr. Connellan noted that the leases were for new and replacement devices and that the district was still playing “catch up” in a lot of places with technology devices and meeting classroom needs. Mrs. Carmody noted that there were only three technology analysts at the high school, which was not enough. Mr. Chrzanowski questioned if the WiFi 50 access points at the high school were for current requirements or to support future capacity. He questioned best practices in place for teachers working with Canvas and what worked for them and what did not work for them. He also questioned the feedback received from the teachers on the use of Canvas. Mr. Falvo questioned why Canvas was selected over other learning platforms and the subscription cost, which was \$30,000 annually in grades 6-12. Mr. Chrzanowski questioned if there was any outdated technology within the school system that needed to be addressed such as old hardware or software.

c. Proposed 2020-2021 School Calendar ~ First Reading

Mr. Connellan stated that the calendar was essentially the same model that they had been using. He noted that Labor Day was September 7, which was late, and would be approved at the January 9 Board of Education meeting. Mr. Derynoski asked if the calendar would be sent to PTOs, schools, etc. for feedback before it was approved.

d. Related Services Assistant Positions Proposed

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

“Move to approve the addition of one full-time Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant position and one full-time Physical Therapy Assistant position, as recommended by administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary