

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 10, 2019

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held on Thursday, January 10, 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 6:36 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Robert Brown, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, 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.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ STUDENT MATTERS AND UNAFFILIATED EMPLOYEES

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 Unaffiliated Employees, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski declared Executive Session recessed at 7:13 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Goralski reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:20 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; 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 Trevor Messina, Bianca Spataro and Nicholas Mangene.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Student Representatives led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Goralski called for a moment of silence in memory of Salvatore Perfetto, who served as a custodian in the school district for 25 years.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ December 13, 2018

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of December 13, 2018, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Public

1. Donation for Southington Public Schools from American Heart Association

Mr. Goralski invited Mrs. Leigh Pechillo to the podium. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Heart Association of Central Connecticut and a Southington resident. She explained that in 2015 Connecticut became one of 38 states that requires all students to learn CPR before graduation. Students in Grade 10 at Southington High School have been taught CPR resulting in 7,500 students, to date, graduating knowing how to save a life. She is a proponent for everyone to learn CPR because her heart stopped at 44 years old, and she was saved by her husband who was home and knew CPR. On behalf of the American Heart Association, Mrs. Pechillo presented the Southington Public Schools with an American Heart Association CPR Kit for training up to 20 people at one time.

Mr. Goralski addressed and read a public statement that he and Mr. Christopher Palmieri, Town Council Chair, co-wrote addressing a racial/hateful video created by a high school student and posted on social media in early December that targeted children of color (*Attachment #1*).

The following people came to the podium to address the Board:

Abigail Grullon DiBenedetto, 271 Wedgewood Road
Tim Robinson, Diane Lane (student)
Vivian Sheen, 95 Nunzio Drive
Kaija Purvis, Wheeler Village Road (student)
Lauren Johns, 388 Pondview Drive
Kaila DiBenedetto, Wedgewood Road (student)
Isabelle Crowley, Thistle Lane (student)

Jehvanni Morgan, Thomaston Street (student)
 Heaven Fraser, Darling Street (student)
 Alyssa Bossie, Marcia Drive (student)
 Susan Guarino, 191 Jubilee Drive
 Dorie Conlon Perugini, 174 Summer Street
 Johanna Wiggins, formerly of 86 Wheeler Village
 Eduardo Almeida, 24 Rejean Road
 Cheryl Hilton, 31 Birmingham Drive

They spoke of their personal experiences with racism, prejudice, discrimination, unequal student disciplinary action, name-calling and bullying, lack of diversity in staff and on the Board, and acceptance within Southington schools (particularly the secondary schools) and the Southington community in general. Many of the students of color who spoke said they felt targeted and unsafe; the adults shared that these issues have been ongoing for years and asked that the Board, administration, and the community have an open dialogue. They offered numerous suggestions for addressing these issues. A statement by Mrs. Perugini (*Attachment #2*) was read into the public record. The entire Board meeting, including these public communications, can be viewed on the Southington Public Schools website: www.southingtonschools.org

b. Communications from Board of Education

Mr. Goralski and the Board members thanked the speakers for their candor and encouraged the students to continue to speak up and promote this dialog. The Board members all agreed that they need to do more but could not do it alone and that these problems were larger than the school district and community. Mr. Goralski stated that discussion on a student's discipline and punishment could not be addressed due to state and federal privacy laws.

Mr. Goralski explained that the Board of Education policies and regulations regarding discipline could be found online at www.southingtonschools.org.

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

“Move to add to the agenda “Student Expulsion 2018-2019-07” as Agenda Item 10.b.”
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to add to the agenda “Student Expulsion 2018-2019-08” as Agenda Item 10.c.”
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Board members thanked the audience speakers for bringing these issues to them and were horrified at what students had encountered. School is where students should feel safe and unconditionally accepted. The Board members discussed this at length and felt that the speakers brought forward some terrific ideas for change that the Board would address. The Board encouraged adults in attendance to run for elected offices to bring diversity to the town officials and offered to mentor and help anyone interested. Board members acknowledged that the “tipping point” had been reached. The Board felt that change could start when anyone (such as the students) witnesses something bad happening they speak out to shut it down and let it be known it would not be tolerated.

Mr. Goralski stated that STEPS would be moving a proposal forward through the Ordinance Committee named “Tobacco 21”, which raises the age from 18 to 21 to buy tobacco and nicotine-based products. This proposal focuses on sale, not possession.

Mr. Goralski appointed the following Board members to the Paraeducator Negotiating Team: Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, Ms. Cammuso and Mr. Brown.

Mr. Goralski asked that every school be involved in the Camp Sloper Polar Plunge sponsored by the Southington YMCA, which benefits the students of Southington. Representing the Board of Education in the plunge would be Mr. Goralski and Mr. Baczewski.

c. Communication from Students Representatives

Miss Bianca Spataro thanked the students’ for sharing their truths that everyone needed to hear. She agreed with what the students were saying because she has heard such disgusting comments in the hallways, on the bus, and everywhere in the school, and has created a toxic culture. She thought it was a great idea of forming a program called “Culture Competence” to educate and teach understanding other’s viewpoints. She was willing to help the students who are forming this program and to bring back to the Board of Education their concerns and ideas. It is often hard to change someone later in life and that is why the conversation should start in kindergarten in the elementary schools. Education has the power to change minds at a younger, impressionable age.

Mr. Trevor Messina stated that he has also seen and felt the prejudice at the high school by students. He had witnessed and personally experienced hate in the community. It is a huge issue no matter what minority group people are in and it hurts.

Mr. Nick Mangene had seen the swastikas drawn on desks and heard people called terrible names, which he stated was unacceptable and shameful. He acknowledged that the three student representatives were available to hear and discuss these issues with the minority students. He recognized that a diverse culture is what makes Southington High School amazing. Mr. Mangene noted that the SHS National Honor Society had started a Cultural Competence Committee. He was ashamed that the people of color are shamed more than the person doing the name calling.

Mr. Goralski asked the students in the audience to tell their peers to share concerns or ideas with the student representatives who will then share them with the Board.

Miss Bianca Spataro reported on the following:

- College Basics 101 was held on Wednesday, January 9, where graduated students attended and talked about their experiences.

Mr. Trevor Messina reported on the following:

- On December 19, the Winter Concert was held with the orchestra, concert band, wind ensemble, symphonic band and chorus performing.
- On Saturday, January 5, the Robotics Team kicked off the 2019 season and learned that the name of the new game is called “Deep Space” with Channel 61 doing a live broadcast of the Robotics Team. The Robotics Team is ranked 4th in the world.

Mr. Nick Mangene reported on the following:

- The Course Fair was held on January 9th for the incoming 9th grade students. He personally was a representative for the Latin department. DePaolo students attended at 6:00 p.m. and Kennedy student attended at 6:45 p.m.
- Friday, January 18th is the last day of first semester with midterms starting January 22, 2019 ending on Friday, January 25.

Mr. Goralski stated that the Marching Band Banquet was held with Trevor Messina receiving many recognitions many times. The Marching Band finished second in the nation at the Meadowlands competition.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. NEASC Survey Online - SHS: Mr. Connellan reported that the NEASC Survey was online and took place at Southington High School, which was a vast improvement to the wireless connectivity with over 2000 students on devices.
2. Building Committee - SHS Roof: Mr. Connellan reported that the Building Committee had been working on the high school roof and that reports would be provided to the Board by Mr. Romano, Director of Operations.
3. Elevator Repair - SHS: Mr. Connellan reported that this was ongoing and that the recent rain had not been helpful because there is water where the casing needed to go. It is a work in progress. At this point in time, Mr. Romano wanted to postpone contractor recommendations on the project.
4. New Lead Teacher – EL Program: Mr. Connellan reported that a new Lead Teacher had been hired for the English Language Program and would attend a Board meeting for introduction.
5. STELLAR Program Relocation: Mr. Connellan reported that the STELLAR Program was previously housed at Lincoln College and through the work of Ms. Walsh was relocated to Branford Hall, which is downtown. He thanked Mr. Matt Florian for his help with this program.

Mr. Connellan addressed the students and parents in the audience stating that he has lived in Southington for over 40 years and was incredibly disheartened at the content of their comments. The students' comments disturbed him because his only goal is to make sure that the right thing happens for students. He stated that he and Mr. Madancy had been working with the Board since before June on bringing people onboard to address cultural competency and that administration had been remiss in sharing some of the things that they had been doing.

Mr. Madancy explained some of the work that had been occurring since last year. For the first-time last year, the district awarded grant funded scholarships to Hartford Open Choice students and provided transportation to students who were interested in attending Camp Sloper with their Southington classmates.

Mr. Madancy stated that since last spring Mr. Paul Vivian and Mr. Audley Donaldson had been coming to Southington conducting cultural awareness presentations with elementary and middle school students to develop their cultural competence. In the near future, Mr. Vivian would attend a Board of Education workshop meeting to present the work that he has been doing with the students. Mr. Madancy extended an invitation for the audience to attend the workshop meeting to hear the message that the students are receiving. Mr. Madancy explained that there had also been diversity training for the paraeducators and staff and that more training would be

offered. He stated that administration would continue to listen and to work with students. Mr. Connellan, Mr. Stranieri, Ms. Walsh and Mr. Madancy recently met to begin a conversation about an Equity and Diversity Committee. The committee will meet regularly and will be comprised of students, parents, staff, community agencies, CREC, SERC, law enforcement, and clergy to continue moving forward with this conversation. Mr. Madancy also discussed recently attending the Community Conversation event held at the YMCA and felt it was a wonderful evening with great conversation.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting ~ December 17, 2018

1. Transfer of Funds

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

“Move to approve the Transfer of Funds, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. Vehicle Lease – Maintenance Department

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

“Move to enter into a four-year lease to purchase a 2019 Ford Transit Cargo Van for the Maintenance Department as recommended by the Board of Education Finance Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. Unexpended Education Funds

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

“Move to discuss with the Board of Finance establishing an Unexpended Education Funds Account based on State Statute Section 10-248a.

Mr. Goralski stated that he would send a letter to the other elected Boards. Mr. Connellan has begun having this conversation with the Town Manager and the next step would be to bring it before the Town Board of Finance. Mr. Goralski stated that with the Board’s approval, he would start the conversation at the Committee of the Chairs meeting first; however, the February meeting has been postponed until March. Mrs. Queen noted that this state statute was not new. Mrs. DiNello stated that administration felt it was a good time to create this account.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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. Proposed 2019-2020 School Calendar ~ Second Reading

Mr. Connellan stated that there were some minor adjustments around the PSAT and SAT dates.

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

“Move to approve the 2019-2020 School Calendar, as presented by administration.”

Mr. Goralski addressed the naming of days, specifically the Columbus Holiday, on the calendar and acknowledged that the Board had heard their voice. However, the Board follows the state and federal government. Mr. Brown questioned if they could just say there was no school on a certain day and not identify the name of the day. Mrs. Queen liked the suggestion of “neutralizing naming of holidays and breaks” and proposed to continue the discussion for the next calendar.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Policy 1212, School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees – Second Reading

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

“Move that the Board of Education adopt Policy 1212, School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Policy 1250, Visitors and Observations in Schools – Second Reading

Mrs. Queen stated that there was a minor change to Principal, which should be a lowercase “p” and corrected.

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

“Move to adopt Policy 1250, Visitors and Observations in Schools, as adjusted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Policy 1313, Non-Discrimination (Community) – Second Reading

Mrs. Queen checked that the protected groups were consistent throughout the policy. She noted that in the Regulation labeled A-1313 on page 4 of 8, the word “ancestry” was included,

which was not included in the policy language and it should be deleted. On page 8 of 8, “ancestry” is listed on the Discrimination Complaint form. On page 44, where it is referencing other policies with the non-discrimination language in them, the committee will ensure that in Series 4000, 5000 and 6000 the language mirrors Policy 1313.

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

“Move to adopt Policy 1313, Non-Discrimination (Community) as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

e. Policy 1350, Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms – Second Reading

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

“Move to adopt Policy 1350, Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

f. Policy 3516, School Security and Safety – Second Reading

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

“Move to adopt Policy 3516, School Security and Safety, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

g. Policy 3518, Policy Regarding Green Cleaning Programs – Second Reading

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

“Move to adopt Policy 3518, Policy Regarding Green Cleaning Programs, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

h. Policy 3519, Policy Regarding Automatic External Defibrillators – Second Reading

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

“Move to adopt Policy 3519, Policy Regarding Automatic External Defibrillators, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

i. Policy 6146, Graduation Requirements – Second Reading

Mrs. Queen stated that there was a minor correction on page 3 where there is an erroneous period on the policy page.

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

“Move to adopt Policy 6146, Graduation Requirements, as adjusted.”

Mr. Goralski thanked Mr. Madancy and Mrs. Teresa Colegrove, Executive Assistant, and Mrs. Queen for all their work on putting these policies together.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

j. Science Curriculum, Grade 5 – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the Science Curriculum, Grade 5 unit, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

k. Town Government Communications

Mr. Oshana reported that the Self Insurance Committee was doing an Request for Proposal (RFP) on the Self Insurance medical program for the Town and Board of Education employees. There will be an executive session presentation on January 30, 2019 by the finalists followed by a vote. Mrs. DiNello stated that after an interview with the three finalists, the Self Insurance Committee would make a recommendation to the Town Council to take action on the recommendation.

Mr. Goralski announced the following Superintendent budget workshops and public hearings:

- BOE Workshop #1: Tuesday, January 15, 2019, 7:00 p.m. at Hatton Elementary School
- BOE Workshop #2: Thursday, January 17, 2019, 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center
- BOE Meeting: Thursday, January 24, 2019, 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center, the BOE will adopt the 2019-2020 budget.
- February 13, 2019, the BOE will present their 2019-2020 budget to the Town Finance Committee at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Policy 1331, Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol on School Property – First Reading

Mrs. Queen stated that the second reading would be on the next Board agenda and voted on at that time.

b. Student Expulsion #18-19-07:

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

“Move to expel Student #18-19-07, as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Student Expulsion #18-19-08:

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

“Move to expel Student #18-19-08, as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski called for a recess at 9:20 p.m. before returning to Executive Session.

The Board returned to Executive Session at 9:38 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary



December 20, 2018

As your elected officials, we are writing to share our thoughts with all members of our community regarding the incident that occurred last week in which an individual created and released a horrendous video filled with hatred targeted at some of our friends and neighbors. That incident garnered a great deal of negative media attention and cast a shadow on our wonderful caring community. We are especially concerned for our children and families who were the targets of hate in this incident.

The Southington Police Department completed its investigation and took action today. In addition, there has been an increased police presence at schools within the Southington Community. The presence could be viewed as increased security, however, the presence is also designed to reduce the anxiety surrounding the recent events and help support the educational environment. By working together, we are sending a strong message that any form of hatred, violence, or bigotry will not be tolerated in the Southington Community.

While we will never be able to control the words, beliefs or actions of others, we can applaud the reactions of the many members of our community who have contacted officials to express their horror and condemnation of this event. We echo those sentiments. The response by our students, parents, members of our police department, and school officials should be applauded and is the true representation of the values of this community.

The Southington Town Council, Southington Board of Education, and all duly elected and appointed officials denounce the ideology represented in the video that was circulated on social media. We will never condone, support, or tolerate behavior or beliefs that espouse hatred, violence and bigotry. In collaboration with our public service agencies, we will continue to do our utmost to protect our students, physically and emotionally, and to teach a message of kindness, caring, and respect for all. We support the efforts, both short and long term, of elected officials and public-school officials to address the issues brought out by this event.

The strong partnership between the Southington Police Department and the Board of Education has been validated over the recent weeks. The Board of Education continues to share concerns from parents, community members, and students as they are received. This information is then reviewed and investigated, and the outcome shared to the extent possible. The Board of Education then provides updates to parents, staff, and students.

There are no easy solutions to the problems brought to the surface by this issue. In that respect, Southington is no different than any other community in this country that is wrestling with how to cope with the recent increase in these types of incidents nation-wide. However, we will band together as a community and continue to support the efforts of those individuals and agencies who seek to promote those values of caring, compassion and respect that we all hold as central to our beliefs.

Respectfully on behalf of the Town Council and Board of Education,

Christopher Palmieri, Chairman
Southington Town Council

Brian Goralski, Chairman
Southington Board of Education

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address the Board. My name is Dorie Conlon Perugini. I am a mother, elementary school teacher and full time PhD student at UConn conducting research in the development of intercultural competence within the public school setting. But tonight I speak not only for myself but also for those who have joined me in the audience and those who could not make it tonight.

I am here to ask the board to consider putting equity at the center of Southington's educational experience. This Board has adopted a commendable vision of a graduate. I'm sure you're familiar with it, but for those in the audience who are not:

A graduate of the Southington Public Schools will be college or career ready and prepared for life beyond by mastering the knowledge and demonstrating the skills to communicate effectively, think creatively and critically, and contribute to the global community.

This vision, which guides the decisions this board makes, is the very heart of education, but I am afraid — and the evidence we have encountered — shows the way this vision is carried out does not serve all students equally.

Looking at the data for our elementary schools, which will soon include my son, students in Southington public schools are now more diverse than ever before. While fewer than 10% of town residents identify as non-White, 15% of our high school students do, and almost 19% of our elementary school students are non-White.

With these demographic shifts that are happening across the country, Southington is not unique in having to reexamine its schooling practices and ask ourselves "What does schooling mean in a culturally and racially diverse society? And how do we support the needs of all of our students, not just those who fit in the majority?"

As many of us have emailed, called, and had meetings with Mr. Connellan, members of the Board, administrators, teachers, and students, we have come to understand the steps the district has already taken in this regard such as small group conversations in the upper elementary school grades and middle schools with Paul Vivian and Audley Donaldson, and preliminary discussions about convening a diversity and equity council. While these are great first steps, we cannot stop here.

The most recent incident was a horrific event, but we also see it as a tipping point that can inspire permanent change in our community. The only way for that to happen on a systemic level is to first admit there is a problem. Many of the statements made have called this an isolated incident that doesn't represent the town or the schools. However, stories that we have heard, stretching back decades and continuing into today, including those of the students we heard from tonight, tell a different story. In order for healing to begin, the truth must be named. Along with many others, I am asking Mr. Connellan to make a public statement that acknowledges the need for Southington Public Schools to embrace the challenge of

transforming our school system, living into the Vision of a Graduate, and providing equitable educational experiences for all.

As such, members of this community, have emailed, called and met to request 5 ways in which we see Southington Public Schools can grow. I am here tonight to read these asks into public record. These asks are:

1. Put equity at the center of Southington Public Schools, including an equity audit to be performed by a third party.
2. Ongoing professional development for teachers about equity and intercultural competence. While we acknowledge the district has provided some PD in this area already, this PD needs to be ongoing in order to fully equip teachers to handle the conversations and experiences that happen daily in the classroom, so that we are supporting students who are not afraid of communicating across differences and using critical thinking skills.
3. Design a diverse curriculum. As it stands, the current curriculum is Euro-centric. As curricula come up for review, actively create a racial, ethnic, and gender balance by seeking to include primary source materials by African American, Latinx, Native American, immigrant and other minoritized voices and authors.
4. Increase racial diversity among faculty and administration. According to the Connecticut Department of Education District Profile and Performance for 2016-2017, Southington Public Schools employs only 4 black educators, a mere .7% of educators. This is far below the state percentage of 3.6% and certainly does not match the demographics of our town. Looking at the other reported demographics like Latinx and Asian paints a similar picture. When looking at the schools individually, 6 schools reported an entirely white teaching staff. As a personal example, my son of Latinx heritage will be attending Plantsville Elementary School. As of the 2016-2017 school year, 22.5% of students identified as non-White, while 100% of educators are White. Looking at these numbers in light of recent research which reports minority students having at least one educator of their same heritage drastically improves their schooling experience, it's no wonder our minority students are overrepresented in disciplinary measures and underrepresented in our AP courses.
5. Implement K-12 developmental lessons for students from guidance counselors to help students develop skills to act with empathy towards one another. This should begin with guidance counselors receiving training on current best counseling practices for cultural and ethnic diversity.

With these five asks put into place, we are confident Southington Public Schools will produce the graduates described in its vision.

In closing, we ask for transparency and accountability. We look forward to the district communicating its progress, including its success and struggles, openly and often. As many of us have mentioned in our communications, we are here to support your efforts and partner with you.

As such we invite the Board of Education to join us at our upcoming Community Conversation on Colorblindness. I will pass an invitation to each of you along additional information used to prepare these remarks as well as a copy of my remarks for the record.