

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
JUNE 9, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, June 9, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with an Executive Session preceding at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Board members present were Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Sean Carson, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mr. Jasper Williams. Absent was Mr. James Chrzanowski.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – UNAFFILIATED COMPENSATION AND STUDENT MATTERS

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 Unaffiliated Compensation and Student Matters, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

*Mrs. Clark ended Executive Session at 7:02 p.m.
The regular Board meeting was reconvened at 7:06 p.m.*

3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION

Board members present were Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Sean Carson, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mr. Jasper Williams. Absent was Mr. James Chrzanowski.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of School; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance; and Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro, Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Student Representatives present were, Jhalissa Vincent, Ethan Solury, and Angelina Micacci.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The student representatives led in reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

For the Celebration of Excellence, Mr. Michael Crocco, Principal of Southington High School, and the Board of Education recognized the Class of 2022 Valedictorian, Amber Kohl; Salutatorian, Matthew Morgan; and Essayist, Daniel Semmel. All three students planned to attend UConn in the fall. The students were presented with a plaque and standing ovation as the top three students out of a class of 500.

Mrs. Clark presented the graduating Board of Education Student Representatives Ethan Solury and Jhalissa Vincent with a plaque and gift from the Board members and thanked them for serving on the Board with distinction.

Student Representative Angelina Micacci introduced the two (2) new BOE (Board of Education) Student Representatives starting in the 2022-2023 school year: Ryan Ogren from the Class of 2023, and Uptej Singh from the Class of 2024. They were selected out of 20 applicants to serve on the BOE. The students gave a brief background of their academic accomplishments and extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Clark called for a short recess 7:22 - 7:38 p.m.

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

“Move to add Agenda Item #6.a ‘Approval of Out of State/Overnight Field Trip - Cheerleading’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to add Agenda Item #11.e ‘Student Expulsion 2021-22-24’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 26, 2022

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

“Move to approve the Regular Board of Education Minutes of May 26, 2022, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice.

- a. **Approval of Out of State/Overnight Field Trip - Cheerleading**

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

“Move to approve the field trip, as presented by the administration.”

Ms. Ashley Clemens, SHS Cheerleading Coach, gave a brief explanation of the Summer Camp to take place at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, Rhode Island, August 2022.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Angelina Micacci reported on the following:

- She gave an update on the spring sports teams that qualified for the CIAC State Championships: SHS Softball defends its Class LL title in the CIAC Championship game vs. Bristol Central on Friday, June 10. If they win the State Championship, it would be their third consecutive title since 2019 and their 20th overall State Championship in the program’s history, which would be a new national record. The Blue Knights Baseball Team is playing Fairfield Warde in the CIAC Class LL State Championship on June 11 at Palmer Field in Middletown.
- She announced the winners of the Drama Club HALO Awards.
- Kennedy Middle School became the recipient of the statewide Veteran’s Recognition Program Award for 2022. A plaque from the State Board of Education and Veteran’s Commissioners will be presented to teacher Amy Perry on June 10 at Kennedy.

Ethan Solury reported on the following:

- Class Night was Thursday, June 2, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and had to be moved from the SHS athletic fields into the school due to rain.
- Class Day was Friday, June 3 at Six Flags in Agawam, Massachusetts.
- Ethan thanked the Board for the once in a lifetime opportunity to serve on the Board.

Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- A senior motorcade parade will take place this year starting at SHS and ending at Kennedy Middle School.
- The SHS Graduation Ceremony will take place on Friday, June 17 with a rain date of Saturday, June 18.
- She spoke about the highlights of serving on the BOE and responsibilities as student representatives, thanked the Board members for their support, and wished the new student representatives’ good luck.

b. Communications from Board Members

Board members thanked the graduating student representatives, Ethan and Jhalissa, for their service on the Board and welcomed the new student representatives.

c. Communications from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. EOY Wrap Up and Summer Work: Mr. Madancy reported that there was plenty of work at this time of year with limited time to accomplish lots of tasks. His office will send the Board members the details of the graduation ceremony. He noted that there were many projects that would be completed this summer and he will give an update to the Board in August on what was accomplished by the Operations Department.

2. STEPS Update: Mrs. Meghan Albanese, Youth Prevention Coordinator, introduced Christina McKirryher, Oshana Elementary School Math Specialist and STEPS district-wide Asset Building Classroom Coordinator, who highlighted activities, awards, resources, successes, and recognitions of the ABC Classrooms throughout the school year at all the schools and thanked the Board for their support. Mr. Steve Nyerick, member of STEPS and former School Counselor at DePaolo, handed out “Warm Fuzzy’s” and thanked the BOE for their support of the STEPS Coalition.

3. Athletic Facilities: Mr. Madancy reported the goal of administration was to continue to build out information to inform the community of the scope of the SHS Athletic Facilities project before the November 2022 referendum.

4. Elementary Facilities Project: Mr. Madancy explained that the Elementary Facilities Project was shifted to a referendum in November 2023. The work during the summer would be to complete the pre-referendum work to begin to engage the community in conversations around the different scenarios being considered. He will give the Board an update in September.

5. Veterans Recognition Program Award 2022 – JFK: Mr. Madancy announced that Ms. Amy Perry, Team 6A teacher at J. F. Kennedy Middle School, received the Veterans Recognition Program Award for 2022 from the state of Connecticut. The presentation is scheduled for June 10 at noon in the JFK Lobby.

Mr. Madancy commented on the recent passing of Charlie Lembo, SHS Varsity Baseball Coach, and the impact that he had on his players. He announced that there would be a Celebration of Life Memorial Program in memory of Coach Lembo that will be held on Sunday, June 12, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. on the SHS Varsity Baseball field.

d. Communication from Public

Mr. Richard Cooper, 79 Barbara Lane, was worried about the state of education in Southington and preparing the students for the 21st century. He addressed divergent thinking, independent accomplishments, being a good citizen, embracing of diversity, and that every student as something to contribute to their school.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee Report – June 2, 2022

Mr. Williams reported that the committee met and discussed reorganizing two job descriptions. The first titled “Pre-Kindergarten Facilitator” (.4 FTE) and the second titled “Out of District PPT Facilitator Stipend”. He explained in detail the associated responsibilities of these positions and how these positions would be funded. These job descriptions are on the agenda for action later in the meeting.

9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was nothing to report.

b. Policy 4118.7 – Social Networking – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Policy 4118.7 – Social Networking revision, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Policy 6173 – Enrollment in Advanced Course/Program and Challenging Curriculum – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Policy 6173 – Enrollment in Advanced Course/Program and Challenging Curriculum, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Mrs. Clark questioned the Student Success Plan. Mr. Pepe stated that, per state legislation, the plan is to meet with students to discuss the potential pathways that students might take through interest surveys. Southington uses Naviance and guidance counselors meet with every student.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Grade 7 Science Curriculum – Unit 1: Chemical Reaction – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Grade 7 Science Curriculum – Unit 1: Chemical Reaction, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

e. SHS Sociology Curriculum – Units 1-5 – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the SHS Sociology Curriculum – Unit 1-5, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Baczewski stated that with the country currently polarized between conservatives and liberals without any gray area anymore he hoped that this was a jumpstart for students in critical thinking and to be better citizens in the community.

f. K-2 Curriculum – Library Media Units – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the K-2 Curriculum – Library Media Units, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Ratification of UPSEU Local 424, Unit 50, Southington Paraeducators/ABA Therapists/EL Tutors Contract

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

“Move to approve the contract agreement between the Southington Board of Education and the Southington Paraeducators/ABA Therapists/EL Tutors Union (UPSEU Local 424, Unit 50.”

Mr. Derynoski stated that the Negotiating Committee did an excellent job that was fair and equitable for both sides.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Approval of Job Descriptions

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

“Move to approve the Job Descriptions for Out of District PPT Facilitator and Pre-Kindergarten Facilitator, as recommended by the administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Review and Discussion of Southington High School Special Education Programing

Mr. Madancy stated that this was placed on the agenda because administration was working on consideration of a potential program move or change that currently exists at SHS. After talking to different parties, administration decided to withdraw that consideration at this time and to remove this as an agenda item.

d. ARP ESSER and Student Support Services

Mr. Madancy stated that students have been struggling after returning to school from the pandemic. Their mental health struggles were also indicated by the data that was collected on the STEPS Survey. After tracking DCF referrals, 211 calls, suspensions, expulsions, disciplinary referrals, and other types of mental health needs relative to the student population, Mr. Madancy was requesting student support services for mental health purposes. The June 23 BOE meeting had been cancelled; therefore, the issue of timeliness to post the needed requested positions, if approved, was of importance to hire throughout the summer. The positions would not be funded by the operating budget because they would use the ARP ESSER (*American Rescue Plan – Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief*) funds. He was confident from the last legislative session that legislators targeted mental health of students and funding would be coming to local communities to address that issue. However, the amount of funding is currently unknown. Administration was requesting a range of professional services that would serve different functions for when a student may need crisis intervention. The professional personnel that administration was requesting were geared for success in an educational setting and trained for it.

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

“Move to approve the posting and hiring of the following student support staff as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools using ARP ESSER (*American Rescue Plan – Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief*) funds for the 2022-2023 school year: three (3) Social Workers, one (1) School Psychologist, two (2) BCBA’s (*Board Certified Behavior Analysts*), one (1) Special Education Teacher, and one (1) Program Behaviorist, as recommended by the Superintendent.”

The Program Behaviorist would not be hired until a job description is developed and approved given its unique role.

The administration and Board members discussed at length the shortage area of mental health and student support service professionals and the need for timeliness to post for these positions, if approved. Discussed were the various student support services needed and the rationale behind the request. Mr. Madancy noted that there has been a medical advisor doctor on staff for consultation, when needed. A goal this year is to build a Behavioral Consultation Team for students at risk. Board members thought that it was critical to have these resources at the schools for the students’ and family’s needs. Discussed was the role of the Social Workers and their location. It was noted that the requested professionals would work regularly with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and the Special Education Coordinators in looking at caseloads and staffing needs, best practices, protocols, and continuum of services. The Board addressed what the ARP ESSER funds are supposed to be used for and the state funding levels for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond. Board members did not want to be forced to use the ARP ESSER funds for normal operational budget items. The Board discussed future budgeting. Mrs. Clark was concerned about ARP ESSER funding from the state beyond the 2022-2023 school year for mental health and it was proposed to have a conversation on this with the Town Committee of the Chairs.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Anastasio, Mr. Baczewski, Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Carson, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Williams, Mrs. Clark.

Motion carried unanimously 8-0.

e. **Student Expulsion – Student #2021-22-24**

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

“Move to Expel Student #2021-22-24, as stipulated by the Superintendent.”

Motion carried (7-1) with seven in favor and Mr. Oshana opposed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary