

*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](http://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 13, 2022**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, January 13, 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 6:29 p.m.

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

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

#### **2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NIPSEU NEGOTIATION UPDATE AND STUDENT MATTERS**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Derynoski, second by Mr. Baczewski:

**“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing NIPSEU Negotiation Update and Student Matters, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

*Mrs. Clark ended Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.*

*The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 7:03 p.m.*

#### **3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION**

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

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance.

Student Representatives present were Ethan Solury and Angelina Micacci.

#### **4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – MOMENT OF SILENCE**

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

Mrs. Clark called for a moment of silence in memory of Regina “Reggie” Wolak who passed away on December 27, 2021. She worked as a paraprofessional at Thalberg Elementary School for 36 years from 1976 through 2012 when she retired.

##### **Board Recognition – Mr. Bob Brown:**

The Board recognized Mr. Bob Brown, former Board of Education member, who taught in the school district for 41 years starting at Kennedy Middle School and ending at the high school and served as a Board of Education member for six years. Mr. Brown continues to serve on the statewide taskforce on how to reduce the impact of poverty on students. Mr. Oshana noted that for Mr. Brown teaching and serving on the Board of Education was not a job, it was a passion, and that he served as the conscience of the Board and made a difference in the lives of students and the community. Mr. Brown had prepared a public statement (*Attachment #1*) that he planned to read during Public Communications to share information from a CACTPS meeting that is a state standards board for teachers to which he was appointed. Mr. Brown addressed social, emotional, and mental health of students, and the struggles and stress of the education staff, in addition to the administrators receiving the brunt of finger pointing, blame, and insults over the last two years since the pandemic began. He asked the Board members and administration to tell the public how the public could help them in these unprecedented times. Mrs. Clark presented a Certificate of Excellence to Mr. Brown for his unyielding service and dedication to students and the entire community as a devoted member of the Board of Education from 2015 to 2021.

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

**“Move to add Item 10.k ‘Student Expulsion 2021-2022-06’ to the agenda.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 9, 2021**

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

**“Move to approve the Regular Board of Education minutes of December 9, 2021, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried by voice vote with Mr. Oshana abstaining.**

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **a. Communications from Student Board Representatives**

Ethan Solury reported on the following:

- SHS Robotics Team “CyberKnights” started their 25<sup>th</sup> season on Saturday in the SHS auditorium. They hope to have an in-person season for the first time in two years and to travel to the World Championships in Houston, Texas in late April.
- Students experienced a smooth transition back to SHS after winter break.
- He reported on the SHS Boys and Girls Basketball teams seasons, and the Wrestling team to date.
- Athletic team home sporting events will be livestreamed on the SHS YouTube channel by the SHS Broadcasting Club this winter.

Angelina Micacci reported on the following:

- A virtual Course Fair would be held this year and would be posted to the SHS YouTube channel by January 28, 2022. Students in Grades 8-12 will have the opportunity to learn about the courses and electives offered at the high school.
- January 26 is the end of quarter two and semester one at SHS.
- She reported on the Boys Swimming & Diving Team, Girls and Boys Indoor Track team, and the middle school basketball teams seasons.

**b. Communications from Public**

There were a number of residents (*Attachment #2*) who came to the podium to voice their comments, recommendations, requests, and concerns regarding the following: Thanking administration for starting the process of uploading curriculum online, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) being part of the National Schools Boards Association that sent a letter to the Attorney General asking that people who speak at Board meetings across the country be pursued by federal agents as domestic terrorists, asking the Board members to reach out to CABE Executive Board members on what their position was on that letter, requesting how much Southington pays in dues to be a member of CABE, Board members responding to emails from public, ventilation and indoor air quality in classrooms, parent donating simple and quiet DIY air filtration units to their son’s classroom at Flanders that he and his young son built at a cost of less than \$100 per classroom, sending formal letter to Governor Lamont, Department of Public Health (DPH) and State Department of Education requesting that Governor Lamont’s Executive Powers lapse and to restore the authority to individual municipalities and school boards, asking BOE members to attend DPH and State BOE virtual Health & Safety meetings representing parent concerns regarding local control, mental health of children, school district should not be advertising a vaccination clinic for children which should be the responsibility of the health department, safety of staff and students and formulating a strong sense of community in schools, adding to the budget a Crisis Response Team, COVID vaccine should be pro-choice between individuals and their doctor, the treatment of unvaccinated individuals and students.

Please see the YouTube video link of the meeting and public communication below that also can be found on both the Town of Southington and Southington Board of Education websites: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/>

**c. Communications from Board Members**

Mr. Baczewski noted that he personally had an issue with his Southington Public Schools email address, which has since been rectified, and was not able to respond to emails from the public. Mr. Baczewski liked the idea of the DIY air filtration units presented Todd and Kristen

Ritchie; however, it needed further analysis such as energy efficiency, monitoring of filters, how many would be needed, fire safety compliant, and other factors to consider. He planned to continue discussion on these ventilation units.

Mrs. Clark explained that several years ago Board members adopted a school in the district and would attend PTO meetings so parents would have access to Board members. She planned to reinstitute the Adopt -A- School Program. She asked the Board members to inform her of what school that they wanted to adopt. She was adopting South End School.

#### **d. Communications from Administration**

Administration reported on the following:

1. UConn ECE Top 10: Mr. Madancy announced that he received news from UConn that the high school was ranked as a Top 10 high school in the state for the amount of students and courses enrolled in UConn ECE (Early College Experience) Programs, which is an opportunity for students to earn college credit. There are 169 districts that have high schools.
2. STEPS – Survey: Mr. Madancy explained that every other year the district provides the STEPS Survey (Southington Town-wide Effort to Promote Success) to students in Grades 7, 9 and 11, which is a requirement of the federal grant funds that Southington receives. STEPS was recently informed that they will be receiving an additional \$125,000 a year for the next four years from the federal government to continue with their initiatives.
3. Business Department – Chamber Meeting: Mr. Madancy attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting in December to partner with agencies, businesses, and organizations in the community. His goal is to build pathways for students to enter into internships for authentic experiences. He noted that Lillian Schena, SHS Business Department Chair, also attended to discuss the Business Advisory Council.

### **7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **a. Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting – December 9, 2021**

Mr. Baczewski reported that the committee discussed ongoing teacher professional development for the middle school World Language Department for alignment of Grade 7 curriculum and a proposed new high school course titled Classical Mythology ECE to provide Humanities credit. The committee also discussed a proposed English IV course to replace the current required courses of British Literature and Grammar and Composition. English IV focuses on the Common Core State Standards and the 4 C's (Critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication).

Mrs. Carmody thought it was very important that students were exposed to Shakespeare, Chaucer, and British Classic Literature and would like to see the classics remain in the curriculum. Mr. Pepe explained that English IV broadens what is currently taught now and that the students would still be exposed to British Literature, it would not be eliminated. The proposal is from teachers who teach British Lit. Mr. Derynoski questioned if this modification to the curriculum would affect college requirements. This was on the agenda as a first read.

Mr. Baczewski continued that the committee reviewed a plan that vertically aligns K-5 science instruction with comprehensive coverage of Next Generation State Standards (NGSS) while supporting the Vision of a Graduate. The committee received a presentation on a new textbook for AP Biology because every 10 years the College Board requires a new text. Also

discussed was the ongoing partnership between STEPS and the Southington Police Department developing curriculum to replace the DARE Program in the schools. The new program focuses on prevention and is held over the course of six weeks with 8-10 police officers to be trained by the end of January. Mrs. Megan Albanese, STEPS Director, will communicate with Grade 5 families prior to the start of the lessons.

Mr. Oshana was concerned with English IV replacing Composition and Grammar and thought that it was important and should be looked at closer as far as taking it away. Mr. Pepe stated that English IV is a comprehensive course addressing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills using a wide range of diverse text and not solely the British Literature text.

**b. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting – January 5, 2022**

Mr. Williams, Policy & Personnel Committee Chair, reported that the committee received a presentation from Ms. Discenza, Director of School Counseling, on Policy 6146.1, Grade Reporting, which would be a four year phase-in plan starting with freshmen. The committee discussed Regulation 6146.1(3) and the considerable number of students who qualify for Honors or High Honors. Proposed revisions for Policy 4118.8, Alcohol and Drug use, Policy 5131.6, Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Policy 9321, Time, Place, Notification of Meetings, were also discussed. Policy 4215 – Evaluation and Supervision for Classified Personnel was reviewed for information regarding revising the regulation for evaluating Technology Analysts and Assistants. The policies are on the agenda as a first read.

**8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Report**

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

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

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**9. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Town Government Communications**

Mrs. Clark reported that she would be meeting with Town Council Chairwoman, Rev. Vicky Triano, next week to discuss sending a letter to the state regarding issues with Town Regulations versus State Regulations. The Committee of the Chairs will be meeting on Tuesday, January 18 at 4:00 p.m. in Town Hall, which will be open to the public. Mrs. Carmody questioned what State Regulations would be addressed. Mrs. Clark stated they would be addressing Governor Lamont’s continued mandates and the plans moving forward.

**b. Elementary Facilities Project Update**

Mr. Madancy stated that he and Mr. Mark Sciota, Town Manager, have been attending each other’s meetings as a partnership between the Town and Board of Education to exchange information. Unfortunately, a lot of misinformation is being posted on social media. They gave a lengthy update on the pre-referendum work for the Elementary Facilities Project explaining the

problems and big shake-up at the state level that had delayed the Elementary Facilities Projects resulting in Southington losing three months of planning time that now would be rushed in order to meet deadlines to bring the project to referendum. They and other officials met with the state office of School Construction Grants (SCG) on Monday, January 20, 2022 and discussed new state requirements and other options moving forward.

Mr. Sciota welcomed the new Board of Education members and told them that their Town lapel pins would be delivered to them shortly. Mr. Sciota explained that he, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Madancy, Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, and representatives from Collier, and the State Office of School Construction Grants discussed moving forward with the Elementary Facilities Projects and based on what was necessary to get to the state by a certain time would not be feasible. They then talked about the Capital Plan and two major issues that were on the Capital Plan such as roofs and improving the athletic facilities at the high school. Discussed were referendums and moving forward November 2022 with roofs at SHS and Hatton and full-blown improvements of the athletic fields at the high school instead of the Elementary Facilities Project at this time. Mr. Madancy explained in detail the two Capital Improvement Plan major projects that included the high school athletic facilities and tennis courts and roofs at SHS and Hatton. Mr. Madancy explained what still needed to be completed for the Elementary Facilities Projects pre-referendum work for the community to be fully informed before bringing it to referendum in 2023. Mr. Madancy stated that the Board would need to take a consensus at their next meeting on January 27 because they adopted a Capital Improvement Plan that had those projects in different years, and it would need to be amended to be swapped around.

Mr. Carson questioned the lifespan on the roofs and athletic facilities when they were installed and if replacement was included in long-range planning. Mr. Sciota explained that the Board of Education and the Town have Five-Year Capital Plans that are merged together. Municipalities are not always able to address replacement until years after their life expectancy. Mr. Romano took the podium and stated that there was a chart for when every roof needs to be replaced and a Roof Maintenance Program was watched closely. If the roofs are maintained properly, then the lifespan can be extended. Mr. Sciota added that Capital Plans are complicated because it is handled differently if it is under \$1million. If it is over \$1million, it must be put in the queue for referendum. It is a living document.

Mr. Derynoski explained that when the Turf Field was put in at the high school nine years ago, a Turf Field Committee was formed along with a Turf Fund put into operation for the future replacement. The Turf Fund is funded by a line item in the budget of \$25,000 including football ticket sales and registration fees for town sports events using the fields.

**c. Proposed 2022-2023 School Calendar – Second Reading**

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

**“Move to approve the 2022-2023 School Calendar, as presented by the administration.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**d. Policy 9325 – Methods of Operation – Meeting Conduct – Second Reading**

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

**“Move to approve Policy 9325 - Methods of Operation – Meeting Conduct, as presented.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**e. SHS – GPA and Weighting Proposal – Second Reading**

Mrs. Clark noted that this agenda item was also under New Business as Agenda Item 10.i.

**f. Appointment of UPSEU Negotiating Committee**

Mrs. Clark appointed Board members Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Anastasio, Mr. Williams, and herself to serve on the UPSEU Negotiating Committee for Paraprofessional / ABA Therapists. The first meeting will be on February 8, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. with the location to be determined.

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. 2022-2023 Proposed Operating Budget Presentation**

Mr. Madancy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 2022-2023 proposed Superintendent's Operating Budget (*Attachment #3*). He started by explaining the budget process to the public and noted that this was the first budget that he and Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt had put together and he thanked the entire administrative team and others for their help. Two budget workshops are scheduled for Tuesday, January 18 and Thursday, January 20. On January 27, the Board of Education adopts the 2022-2023 budget then it is presented to the Town Board of Finance and Town Council for approval.

The Superintendent's proposed 2022-2023 budget request is for \$104,734,675, which is an increase of 4.12% over the current spending levels without adding any new staff. The projected increase would be \$4,142,049 over the current budget. Mr. Madancy broke down and highlighted the areas of the increase in the budget versus the current budget and discussed in detail the following areas:

- Regular Education and Special Education salaries (63.46%) and benefits (18.56%), which are contractual obligations.
- Regular Education is 72.75% of the budget and Special Education is 27.25%.
- Purchased Services – Transportation, energy costs, maintenance, etc., are 14%.
- Major Projects and Special Projects are not in the budget (0%).

Mr. Madancy discussed the following: Use of Non-Lapsing Account funds for projects and equipment, use of ARP (American Rescue Plan) ESSER (Elementary School & Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds for staff, potential for savings in various areas including transportation and the Elementary School Projects, future considerations, Summer School Credit Recovery possible funding, no new personnel, use of ESSER funds to address learning loss, reduced class sizes in grades 2 and 3 due to student/teacher ratio, Special Education savings and efficiencies through a no cost audit, Summer School Program, Special Education in-district programs, reductions in Special Education budget, four-year history of funding the operating budget and an updated projected enrollment will be available in February.

Mr. Carson questioned the sustainability of reduced class sizes in grades 2 and 3. Mr. Madancy stated that it could not be sustained permanently and that they are only able to do it for 2022-2023 because of the infusion of ARP ESSER funds.

Mr. Madancy stated that if the Board members had any questions prior to Workshop #1 on Tuesday to email either him or Mrs. Mellitt for answers. A document of questions and answers would be generated after the workshops and shared with the Board of Education members, Town Board of Finance, and Town Council.

Mrs. Clark pointed out that Budget Workshop #1 on Tuesday would be held at Hatton Elementary School and Budget Workshop #2 on Thursday would be held in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room and would be livestreamed. Mr. Oshana requested that Workshop #1 be videorecorded and put on the website.

- b. SHS World Language New Course Proposal – Classical Mythology ECE – First Reading**
- c. SHS English Course Proposal – English IV – First Reading**
- d. Science Grade 3 Unit - Migrating Monarchs – First Reading**
- e. Science Grade 4 Unit – Mimicking the Natural World – First Reading**
- f. SHS Textbook Proposal – AP Biology – First Reading**
- g. Policy 4118.8 Alcohol and Drug Use – Policy Revision – First Reading**
- h. Policy 5131.6 Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco – Policy Revision – First Reading**
- i. Policy 6146.1 Grade Reporting – Policy Revision – First Reading**
- j. Policy 9321 Time, Place Notification of Meetings – Policy Revision – First Reading**

All the above are first reads and will come before the Board at their next regular meeting for action.

- k. Student Expulsion – 2021-2022-06**

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

**“Move to expel Student 2021-2022-06 as stipulated by the Superintendent.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Blanchard*  
 Recording Secretary



## **ATTACHMENT #1 – PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Bob Brown public statement to BOE, January 13, 2022

My name is Bob Brown, 587 Burritt St in Plantsville. Taught 41 years in this wonderful town and served 6 years on this Board of Ed. My—our—two kids also benefitted from a Southington public school education and are now very successful. Much of the information I am sharing is from a CACTPS meeting two weeks ago, the state standards board for teachers that I have been appointed to.

It is important to analyze where our students are and then move forward from there, placing a high priority on social, emotional and mental health. I hope that parents will support this as well. Now is NOT the time to be comparing standardized tests scores to scores 3 years ago. With substance abuse, suicides and other mental health issues on the sharp rise, we need to listen to students and collaborate on ways to help all students, with compassion. Now is also NOT the time to be cutting our budgets and cutting vital support staff. I hope other elected officials hear that as well.

Our education staff has been struggling with trauma and stress now for ~~over~~ almost two years. We are on the brink of a disaster as people leave the profession. I would like to share some suggestions for how to support educators.

While better pay is always valuable, and is important now more than ever, low pay is not the only reason people are leaving this profession. Being respected and valued carry equal weight. Instead of blaming and harassing educators, especially over factors they have no choice in, we should try to support them, validate them, listen to them, and find ways to relieve some of their daily stress. Reducing the number of new initiatives helps. Finding ways to give them more time for preparation, for their mental health, and for individualizing instruction help. Thanking them and supporting them with positive messages helps. Coming up with positive suggestions instead of just pointing fingers and complaining helps. Valuing their suggestions is so important—now we need a new model of decision-making that more than ever listens and collaborates. I hope parents will embrace these suggestions as well.



We have incredible education staff—all of them— in Southington. These people have worked way beyond anything that could be expected of them. They have cared and nurtured our students. Administrators deserve some special mention—these people often receive the brunt of finger pointing, blame and insults. But the time and extra stress they have endured the last 18 months deserves special mention. Thank you to our building administrators and central office administrators and staff. I hear stories about principals, superintendent and assistant superintendent working Sundays, Saturday nights, evenings after whole days at work. We need to find ways to help and support them, to get them time to care for themselves and their own families, and to thank them.

In closing I would ask members of the public to help support our educators, thank them, understand them, listen to them, and find ways to help them. None of us are perfect, and nobody has handled our present situation perfectly. There have been mistakes made by everyone, but this town has done an extraordinary job of keeping our schools open, well-functioning and safe. Thank you, and please tell us how WE can help YOU!

## ATTACHMENT #2 – PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - SPEAKERS

Southington Board of Education

### PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

January 13, 2022

	NAME	ADDRESS	TOPIC
1	Steven Balshiki	191 Queen Street Apt A12	CARE
2	Todd Ritchie	270 Chesterwood Terr	Ventilation
3	Kristin Ritchie	↓	"
4	Dehunkay	Hunt Lake Rd	Safety
5	Michael Kryzacki	27 Hitting Post Dr.	Southington
6	Susan Zabatoski	98 Working St	
7	Patricia Tavalozzi	99 Westbrook Rd.	
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**ATTACHMENT #3 – POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**

**SUPERINTENDENTS 2022-2023 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET**

**[https://www.southingtonschools.org/uploaded/Purchasing\\_Department/Superintendent\\_Budget\\_PP\\_2022-23\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.southingtonschools.org/uploaded/Purchasing_Department/Superintendent_Budget_PP_2022-23_FINAL.pdf)**