

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

OCTOBER 14, 2021

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, October 14, 2021, 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 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 P.M.

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Missy Cipriano, Mrs. Colleen Clark (Secretary), Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mr. James Chrzanowski and Mr. David Falvo.

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

Also present was Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Negotiations Consultant.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 P.M.

- a. SEA (Teachers) Contract Negotiations Update**
- b. Unaffiliated Compensation**

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 SEA Contract Negotiations and Unaffiliated Compensation, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Executive Session ended at 7:05 p.m.

The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 7:12 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING – 7:12 P.M.

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski (*arrived at 7:20 p.m.*), Mrs. Missy Cipriano, Mrs. Colleen Clark (Secretary), Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Absent was Mr. David Falvo.

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

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.

Mrs. Carmody called for a moment of silence in memory of Dennis Sikoski who passed away on September 26, 2021. He served as a security officer at Southington High School from 2012 until retiring in 2020.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ September 23, 2021

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education meeting minutes of September 23, 2021, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communication from Student Representatives

Angelina Micacci reported the following:

- On October 13, Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors took the PSAT with Freshmen using the new online format.
- She gave a season update on SHS athletic teams for the Girls Volleyball and the Girls Swim & Dive Team.

Ethan Solury reported on the following:

- He reported on the SHS Football team season to date.
- Senior Night Recognition for the fall sports teams take place the end of October and in early November.
- On Saturday, October 23, the Blue Knights Marching Band will host the annual Music of the Knight band competition on Fontana Field.
- SHS Homecoming is scheduled for November 19 with a cap of 300 students in the cafeteria. The students must show a vaccination card or recent negative COVID test and wear a mask.

Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- SHS Green Knights restarted the Recycling Program. Volunteers from Green Knights National Honor Society and Key Club are collecting bottles, cans and other recycle items from classrooms and sorting them outside in the Greenhouse.
- The Student Representatives agreed that they should represent other schools in the district as well as the high school.
- DePaolo Middle School performed at the Apple Harvest Parade last Sunday and won an award for the best middle school band playing All Star.
- DePaolo students raised \$9,888 for Pediatric Cancer Research.
- At South End Elementary School, the September Charter Champions from each class promoted Emotional Intelligence.
- Oshana Elementary School student are building their STEPS Assets for September and October and plan to hold a pajama/outdoor reading event to support the October asset of Reading for Pleasure. They are also building their skills around Emotional Intelligence and have completed class, staff, and school charters for the new year.
- Derynoski Elementary School student leaders are creating videos of “Read Alouds” and “Book Buzzes” recommendations by students for students to align with the Reading for Pleasure Asset. The Read-a-thon started on Monday.
- Thalberg Elementary School celebrated all the reading the students completed over the summer by holding an outdoor event.

Board members thanked the student representatives for reporting on the elementary and middle schools as well as the high school.

b. Communications from Public

Mrs. Carmody asked that residents who speak at the podium to complete a sign-in sheet with their name and address (*Attachment #1*) and that they were allotted only three-minutes to speak.

There were numerous residents who came to the podium and voiced their opinions, concerns, and recommendations about unmasking and masking, quarantining, vaccinations, the Board not inviting Governor Lamont to attend a Board of Education (BOE) meeting to discuss mandates; segregation, personal healthcare choices in Communist Russia less restrictive, level of media propaganda instilling fear and discrimination against the unmasked and unvaccinated, COVID natural immunity, CDC data/information constantly changing, COVID variants, Governor attending large events without a mask but requiring children to wear in schools; BOE adding an agenda item at the next meeting to address parents’ concerns, CCMC seeing an increase in children with psychological / mental health / anxiety issues, parents right to choose what is right for their child(ren), BOE prioritizing and advocating at the state level for parents’ choice to unmask/mask students and stand up against the mandates, parents concerns/questions not being addressed, classroom livestreaming, how pandemic has affected students learning abilities, testing statistics and lowered standards for equity, funds from the CARES Act, vaccination clinics in schools, clarification of Robert’s Rules of Order, effectiveness of masks, appropriate type of medical mask, following the science and guidance of the experts, questioning the need for police presence at BOE meeting to intimidate parents, student representatives informing what is happening in the schools instead of being sports announcers, students in speech therapy need to see how to enunciate words that wearing masks prevent, majority of

people and children at the Apple Harvest Festival were not wearing masks but on Monday the children would have to put on their masks, transparency, requesting BOE members and administrators to join parents and attend State Board of Education meeting in Hartford the day after election to speak out against state mandates.

Other topics of discussion were addressing the loud noise level of the air condition unit at Kennedy Middle School running all day and at full blast at 10:00 p.m. affecting the quality of life for the neighbors; Critical Race Theory (CRT) being taught in classrooms, prohibiting CRT indoctrination, posting the official curriculum / class plans online for parents to view, President Biden's administration labeling parents who speak out at school board meetings as "Domestic Terrorists", the book All American Boys about racism and police brutality being taught in a classroom, Manchester School District's Equity Curriculum and the resignation of a teacher opposed to teaching CRT, Marxism, LGBTQ+ ally video/discussion and the disciplining of two teachers who showed the video. Mrs. Clark read into the record emails that were received addressing support for the SHS Black and Latino Curriculum. Some participants yielded their 3-minutes to people already speaking so they could finish their speech.

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/UC59RScd50ReAqz-PnbXUSSQ/playlists>

c. Communications from Board Members

Mr. Baczewski thanked the residents for doing their due diligence and speaking and stated that he did not feel attacked. He addressed the teaching of history, the scientific method, and the modification of hypotheses. He has to NIH (National Institutes of Health) studies and the data that stated improvement of mask wearing was negligible, but he believed in parental choice and being respectful to parents who want their children to wear masks. He thought the group of residents who spoke at the BOE meetings were reasonable and respectful and that a police presence of two armed officers was not warranted.

Mrs. Cipriano appreciated the residents speaking and having their voices heard. She agreed that she did not feel attacked and applauded everyone who spoke their convictions. She addressed the police officers at the meeting, the book All American Boys that her son also read when he was in 10th grade as a person of color, the student representatives reporting on all schools and challenged the student representatives to bring to the BOE meetings issues at schools that need to be improved upon.

Mr. Brown thanked the residents for their input and noted that the Board members also receive a lot of communication via emails, letters, and phone calls, which is difficult because there is not a consensus on what parents want the Board to do. The Board cannot please everyone, and some decisions are not easy or theirs to make. He spoke to people at the state level on some of the issues that the parents were questioning and stated that he was not ignoring the parents. He noted that there was a lot of parental disagreement and difference of opinions on how to address issues and make the best decision for students and their safety. He addressed mandates and if the Board did not obey the Governor's mandate about masks, they would jeopardize losing millions of dollars of state aid, taxes would go up, and penalties would have to be paid by individuals and employees as well as personal liability. Because of that, there was no Board of Education in the state of Connecticut who would do what the speakers at the meeting were asking them to do.

Mr. Brown addressed Critical Race Theory as the Chairperson of the Curriculum Committee. He stated that the teachers were being polled on what was being taught in their classrooms about race. A Curriculum & Instruction Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 18 at 1:00 p.m. in the Municipal Center, which is open to the public, but the public cannot speak. The results of the polling would be discussed at that meeting. He remarked that the Board's job is to set curriculum, and they do not go into the classrooms to address lesson plans. He stated no one should be teaching that children or white people are all racists. The results of the meeting on October 18 will be shared with the public at the next BOE meeting.

Mr. Oshana agreed that there were differences of opinion and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting to speak. He did not feel personally attacked either. If the speakers did not voice their opinions, comments, and recommendations there would be no need for the Board members to listen, debate, and come up with what they think are the right answers. Mr. Oshana addressed CRT and read an article that he found online on "*What does Critical Race Theory Teach?*" The article stated that "*CRT teaches that America is an irredeemable racist country, all white people are racists, whites are oppressors and non-whites are victims, American ideals like free speech and hard work are racist, capitalism is racist, and the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination.*" Mr. Oshana emphasized that if those tenets are what CRT is about then it had no place in Southington or any school district. He believed that teaching history was important.

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

“Move to move Agenda Item 10.b ‘Southington Library Board Presentation’ to Agenda Item 6.d ‘Communications from Administration’ and change Agenda Item 6.d to Agenda Item 6.e.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Southington Library Presentation (formerly Agenda Item 10.b)

Mr. Todd Chaplinsky, a member of the Library Board and Mrs. Mary Baker, Chair of the Southington Library Board, gave a presentation on the Southington Library New Building Project that will go to referendum on November 2, 2021. They had planned to give an in-depth PowerPoint presentation at the meeting, but due to the length of time taken in Public Communication, they decided to modify the presentation to the Quick Fact Sheet handout that they distributed (*Attachment #2*). They spoke at length giving a brief history of the Southington Library, the library size, who uses the library, increase in Southington population, how libraries have changed and grown over the years since the current library opened in 1974. They gave a summary of statistics on card holders, visitors, services provided in collaboration with the school system, technology use, documents notarized, materials borrowed, physical collection, and library programs held virtually. They spoke about the building project that included project priorities, cost (approximately \$17million), funding that includes a grant, fundraising and bonding, what it would mean to vote yes or no, and that the current Southington Library does not meet building or fire code, is not ADA accessible, and has failing building systems with the basement in disrepair. Mrs. Baker recommended that the public go to the Southington Library website for more information about the building project and to view the plan.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Baczewski stated that they supported the Library Project.

e. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. Department of Public Health (DPH) / State Department of Education (SDE) COVID-19 – Health & Safety Meetings : Mr. Madancy reported that he submitted to the DPH / SDE a question about quarantining that he received from the public and that he has yet to receive a response. He equates quarantining to suspending students who have done nothing wrong and shares parents' concerns over quarantining. He thought that if the students were masked, distanced in the classroom, and with schools ventilated then they should not be excluded from the classroom. He asked the state to look at the prevalence rate and practice. He told the public that he heard what they were saying and was advocating for their concerns at the state level.
2. Barnes Memorial Grant: Mr. Madancy thanked Rebecca Cavallaro, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and the Emotional Intelligence Committee, who have submitted a grant to the Main Street Foundation on Emotional Intelligence that is pending approval.
3. College Workshop Highlights: Mr. Madancy reported that the College Workshops were virtual this year and the attendance has doubled in the number of students participating in these workshops including the College Financial Aid Workshop.
4. Red Ribbon Rally: Mr. Pepe reported that the 30th Red Ribbon Rally, in collaboration with STEPS and the Southington Drug Task Force, was held on the Town Green on October 13 addressing alcohol and drug use. Students pledged what positive activities they were willing to do instead of engaging in alcohol and drug use. He was impressed by the number of adults in attendance supporting the students.
5. 9/11 Flag: Mr. Madancy received communication from John DeMello, Jr. who is in active military service overseas. He had flown an American flag in Afghanistan on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 that he had planned on donating to Southington High School. Mr. Madancy stated that it would be an honor to fly that flag at Southington High School.

Mrs. Cipriano questioned a comment a parent made about whether a teacher desired to turn their screen on to livestream for a student remote distance learning. She wanted to know if it was up to the discretion of the teacher to do that. Mr. Madancy replied that they defined with the teacher's union (SEA) when teachers would and would not be turning their classroom cameras on and livestreaming. He would need the details to address the situation that she and the parent were talking about and that it depended on the type of course. He welcomed the parent to contact him.

Mrs. Cipriano wanted to make it clear that the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent have not requested that vaccination clinics to be brought to any of the school sites. Mr. Madancy responded that was correct.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting – September 28, 2021

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee met and discussed the revision of Policy 5130, Bullying Prevention and Intervention that is on the BOE agenda as a first read, the new Capstone Advisor job description that will continue to be analyzed as the Capstone Project evolves, and legal updates to be addressed.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mrs. Cipriano reported that a dedication and presentation was recently held for the large mural painted on the side of the building downtown on High Street that depicted inclusion and diversity. Southington was one of 39 towns in the state of Connecticut selected by the RiseUP arts group for a mural.

b. SHS Citizenship in Action Course – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the SHS Citizenship in Action Course, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. SHS Black and Latino Curriculum – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the SHS Black and Latino Curriculum Course, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Mrs. Clark asked for more detail on Unit 1 of the curriculum, “How has the concept of race been socially constructed over time and what impact did the people of Ancient Africa have on early and modern civilizations?”. Mr. Pepe stated that the course was broken into two semesters. The first units of compelling courses and objectives in this unit are to examine the impact of various aspects of African culture and world civilizations in the past and present; to analyze the factors that have contributed to racialized global conflict and change in the modern world; and to develop a positive and accurate identity, including an awareness of and comfort with one’s membership in multiple groups in society. The associated lessons are about discovering racial identities of students within the class and provides a safe place for the students to be able to discover and discuss and to identify.

Mrs. Carmody noted that this was a state mandated curriculum and that during Public Communications someone mentioned that the Board did not have to follow the state mandate. Mr. Pepe clarified that on June 23, 2021, Connecticut Public Act 21-2 identified SERC (State Education Resource Center) as the lead organization to coordinate the provision and professional learning implementation to support the course. Southington’s role in the pilot of this course was to proactively be able to engage the teachers because along with the pilot, the teachers are involved in a cyclical curriculum feedback loop that occurs throughout the year. Mr. Pepe learned today that the units are being revised based on the feedback that continues from the

professional development for the teachers. Unit 1 will be coming out Friday, October 15th with a revised unit. SERC is opening a portal for parents, teachers, and the public to allow feedback based on the initial pilot curriculum. Mrs. Cipriano stated that after the pilot year, teachers could make adaptations to the curriculum. Mrs. Clark noted that this is a year-long elective course. Mr. Pepe added that there was also a state mandated course for Native American Culture that is coming forward in 2023. Mr. Baczewski added that it was important to learn from history, so the mistakes made in the past were not repeated.

Mrs. Cipriano stated that this curriculum gives the students the opportunity to have a healthy civil discourse and if something taught in the classroom was out of line then she hoped that parents would be contacting administration or the Board members. She asked if this needed to be voted on as an action item because this curriculum was a state mandated requirement. Mr. Madancy stated that it was on the agenda for the discussion of what is in it and allowing people to ask questions. He stated that she was correct that it was not an action item because it is state mandated. Any discussion on revisions would have to be through feedback to SERC because Southington did not write the curriculum.

Mrs. Carmody added that the teaching of history includes the good, bad, and ugly of the past and allows the students to use their critical thinking skills to determine how they feel about the past because what has happened in the past cannot be ignored.

No action vote was needed on the motion.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. **Policy 5130 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy – Revision – First Reading**

This was a first read and would be voted on at the next BOE meeting.

b. **Southington Library Board Presentation** (Moved to Agenda Item 6.d)

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1 – PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - SPEAKERS

Southington Board of Education
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
October 14, 2021

	NAME	ADDRESS	TOPIC
1	Valerie K...	102 West St Mansville	Multicultural
2	R. ...	25 Pine Street	...
3	Angela F...	550
4	...	48
5	...	22
6	...	28
7	...	171
8	...	48
9	...	650
10
11	...	650
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14	...	165
15	...	28
16	...	303
17	...	20
18	...	11
19	...	77
20	...	107
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ATTACHMENT #2 – SOUTHINGTON LIBRARY BUILDING PROJECT

https://www.southingtonlibrary.org/uploads/2/8/6/7/28674071/southington_library_building_project_-_library_presentation_6-24-21.pdf

THE SOUTHINGTON LIBRARY NEW BUILDING PROJECT WILL GO TO REFERENDUM ON NOVEMBER 2, 2021.

ABOUT THE PROJECT
 The Board of Directors for the Library have selected architect ARCHITECTS to develop a new library building project encompassing years of research and designed for the future of Southington. More information can be found here at: www.southingtonlibrary.org/buildingproject2021



PROJECT PRIORITIES

- Expanded Space for Children and Teens
- Meeting and Multipurpose for Individuals and Groups
- Architectural Separation of Study and Quiet Spaces
- Accessibility and Code Compliance
- Efficient Building Systems

WHAT DOES YOUR VOTE MEAN?

Voting Yes Means

- A library that is up-to-code and expands space for patrons, while addressing additional community needs
- Multiple programming spaces for educational events
- Architectural Separation
- ADA compliant access
- Larger fronts of Library Storefront
- Space designed especially to the needs of children and teens

Voting No Means

- Millions will need to be spent to reach code and upgrade infrastructure
- Space for people, programs, and education will be lost or under for those upgrades and compliance to code
- Architectural concerns and lack of meeting space will remain

COST
 The Council has set the project at referendum at the amount of \$14,400,000.

- A professional cost estimate was being taken into consideration the construction start time and the impact of the pandemic.
- The Library will be applying for a grant up to \$1,000,000 from the Connecticut State Library
- The Library Board and Friends of the Library may contribute additional funding.

THE CURRENT SOUTHINGTON LIBRARY...

Does Not Meet Building or Fire Code  Is Not ADA Accessible  Has Failing Building Systems

VOTE
 IN THE REFERENDUM
 NOV. 2, 2021

SCAN ME   

Paid for by the Friends of the Southington Public Library

THE SOUTHINGTON LIBRARY QUICK FACTS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOUTHINGTON LIBRARY

The Southington Public Library has been an integral part of the community for well over a century. Opening in 1882, the library was originally located just across the street from the current building and once housed the Southington Historical Society.

When the library building that stands in 1974, a new building was erected at 235 Main Street where the library remains today. At the time of construction, an addition was planned that would be completed that would enable the library to meet the needs of the community until the year 2000.

LIBRARY SIZE

The Southington library is smaller than nearby towns with half the population, and even smaller than nearby towns with the same population.

Town	Pop	Sqft
Southington	42,761	20,000
Plymouth	17,294	30,000
Wallingford	46,864	40,000

WHO USES THE LIBRARY

Nearly 200,000 visitors pass through the library doors each year. These from all age groups and with varied interests are among daily users and a purchase is not required for entry. Computers, printing, and WiFi are available to those who do not have access, and are also heavily used by job seekers. Researcher receive help from reference librarians. Educational, recreational, and programming programs and events are held. Daily readers come in to study or work in groups, with, alone, or content in a public space. Kids have access to early literacy programs while parents and caregivers have time to socialize. Resources such as books, DVD, magazines, games, and more are shared with neighbors, saving individual money.

POPULATION INCREASE

Since the library was built, Southington's population has increased by 50%.

LIBRARIES HAVE CHANGED...

Since opening its doors in 1974, library services have expanded to include community meeting space, special programs and events, and many new collections. Musical instruments, VR goggles, board games, puzzles, and more puns are among the more unique items you can borrow. One of our most popular collections is the nearly 16,000 movies and TV shows on DVD and BluRay.

...AND GROWN

	1974	2018	% increase
Open Resources	117,246	240,000	104%
Collection Size	55,700	104,101	100%
Program Attendance	2,111	10,801	40%

SOUTHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

235 Main Street, Southington, CT 06088
 860-435-2607
SouthingtonLibrary.org
SouthingtonPublicLibrary@southington.org

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

as of June 2021 / for those that ending June 2021

- 16,285 card holders
- 15,294 households with cards
- 47,604 visitors
- 1,837 hours open over 267 days
- 4,726 one-hour sessions on library computers
- 254 wireless printing jobs
- 111 pages copied & 206 faxes sent
- 4,888 units of digital materials
- 24,777 reference questions asked and answered
- 118 documents scanned
- 287,447 materials borrowed
- 55,571 physical materials in the collection
- 498 library programs held annually

*This is based on the library's use with half of the town covered in 2017 year, with other usage, including our own.