

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

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. as a Zoom and teleconference meeting with an Executive Session held prior as a Zoom video meeting at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Missy Cipriano (*arrived at 6:38 p.m.*), Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Cabinet members present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance (*left at 6:47 p.m.*).

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

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 Contract Negotiations, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody declared Executive Session ended at 7:08 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:13 p.m.

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

Cabinet members present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance

Student representatives present were Mr. Brett Sheldrick, Miss Amrit Kaur and Miss Jhalissa Vincent.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

5. APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mrs. Carmody explained that she formed a Search Committee of the entire Board of Education when Mr. Connellan announced that he was retiring, and that the Board was very happy to make an appointment tonight.

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

“In accordance with Section 10-157 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Education appoints Mr. Steven Madancy as Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2021 at an annual base pay of \$196,095 and that the Board Chairperson is authorized to execute the proposed contract on behalf of the Board with respect to Mr. Madancy’s employment as Superintendent of Schools.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES: Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Brown, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Carmody and Mrs. Cipriano.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Carmody stated that the unanimous vote was indicative of the Board’s confidence and appreciation for the leadership that Mr. Madancy demonstrated for the last six year’s as Southington’s Assistant Superintendent. He brought many innovative ideas and policies to the school system. She was very happy and proud that Mr. Madancy would be the next Superintendent of Schools. All the Board members congratulated Mr. Madancy and spoke highly of his impressive accomplishments, outstanding leadership, enthusiasm, passion for education and dedication in his different roles as principal at John F. Kennedy Middle School and then as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Oshana stated that a solid succession plan is a sign of a very well managed team and thanked Mr. Connellan.

Mrs. Marilyn Kahl, Principal of Kelley Elementary School, thanked Mr. Connellan for his continued leadership over the years and spoke on behalf of the elementary principals stating that they were thrilled that Mr. Madancy would continue with the district’s goals and achievements. Mr. Mark Pooler, Executive Director of the YMCA, was very pleased and thankful to continue the partnership between the school district and YMCA working with Mr. Madancy. Ms. Valerie DePaolo, Town Councilor, Mrs. Michelle Passamano, Human Resource Manager, Mr. Madancy’s sister, Lorraine, and his mother-in-law, Sue Economopoulos, all spoke and congratulated Steve.

Mr. Madancy thanked the Board, his family members, and Mr. Connellan for their support. He noted that he did not take the responsibility lightly and did a lot of thinking and reflecting especially when he moved to central office because he enjoyed the daily interaction

with students. He stated that he had been blessed to work alongside Mr. Connellan who was a great mentor and demonstrated the traits and characteristics that he admired and subscribes to. Mr. Madancy acknowledged that the administrative team was talented, the staff works tirelessly and go above and beyond expectations, he loved the town, and that was what helped him make the decision to take advantage of the timing and opportunity to be the next Superintendent of the Southington Public Schools. He was humbled and a little embarrassed by all the compliments and was grateful for the opportunity.

6. STEPS PRESENTATION

Mrs. Meghan Albanese, STEPS Prevention Coordinator, and Mrs. Christina Simms, Director of Youth Services, introduced students Sophia LeBlanc and Soph Sciascia, Youth Council Executive Committee members, who gave the STEPS (Southington's Town-wide Effort to Promote Success) presentation on the success of the STEPS Substance Misuse Prevention Coalition.

Miss LeBlanc explained that STEPS started in 2009 focusing on underage drinking, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drug prevention and follow the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Asset Model. The more assets that that a student had, the more likely they will grow up to be caring, competent and successful individuals. She spoke in detail on the STEPS current initiatives/prevention efforts that are: Misuse prevention of alcohol, tobacco/vaping, prescriptions, marijuana, and Asset Building. Miss LeBlanc explained that they get their data from the Search Institute's Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, Southington specific student survey questions, and survey demographics. Every two years students in grades seven, nine and 11 take the survey at SHS, DePaolo and Kennedy Middle Schools. The survey data compared 2009 to 2020 results. She addressed in detail External and Internal Assets such as support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. The more assets a student had the more successful and less likely the student would engage in risky behaviors.

Miss Sciascia stated that the STEPS Coalition had made prevention a priority with Southington youth making healthier choices and that most risk-taking behaviors were decreasing. She spoke in detail on the survey results. Students who reported having a trusted adult, felt that they could go to a parent for help, succeeded in school, had low to moderate stress levels around academics and that their parents disapproved of substance abuse had low past 30-day substance use rates. Students with higher 30-day use rates identified as bisexual, gay, or lesbian, Hispanic or Latino/Latina and reported feeling sad, depressed, attempting suicide, did not have a trusted adult in their life, had an eating disorder, gamble, ditched schools, stole, had sex, or vandalized. She addressed vaping devices and use and its popularity. Miss Sciascia addressed survey results on students perceived risk of harm, which is lower around marijuana use. The survey data indicated academics caused the most day-to-day stress among students, and that 56% of Southington youth reported having a trusted adult in their life with 44% reporting that they did not have a trusted adult. Alcohol is still the main substance of abuse among youth. The STEPS trademark Liquor Stickers had been a successful method aiding with youth alcohol prevention and is used by many other districts in the state.

Mrs. Cipriano was very proud of the STEPS youth team and their growing leadership abilities working for change now and planning for the advancement for the future. She applauded Sophia LeBlanc and Soph Sciascia for their presentation.

Mr. Oshana pointed out that the state was leaning toward legalizing recreational marijuana and questioned the impact that it would have going forward with substance abuse prevention. Sophia LeBlanc stated that it was a different story medically but was concerned for her peer's health if it was made legal for recreational use. She thought that it could easily get out of hand with the perceived risk of harm. She would worry for the health of her peers. Soph Sciascia agreed and added that it could be dangerous if used while driving when students are high. Mrs. Albanese explained from the STEPS prevention perspective it was a substance and a danger to the underdeveloped brain and the longer that any substance is kept away from youth, the better the chance of never developing a substance use disorder. It was going to be a challenge. Mr. Oshana stated that it was unfortunate that tax dollars were more important than the protection and safety of the Connecticut citizens.

Mr. Brown thought the students did a terrific job with their presentation. He announced that Mrs. Albanese was inducted as a member of the Rotary Club Wednesday night. He stated that the presentation showed how important the Assets were from the factual survey statistics in preventing or reducing the abuse of different substances. He questioned if Heroin use was on the decline in Southington because it was not on the list of substances. Mrs. Albanese explained that when STEPS looks at their prevention methods, they focus mainly on prescription drugs. Heroin was not on the survey. However, it is known that heroin is an abused substance. They are seeing a small decline in overdose rates for ages 18 and under, but a huge increase in ages 21 to 41. STEPS has an amazing partnership with the Southington Police Department, which helps them focus on substance abuse. If a student is abusing heroin, then the problem started sooner than that, which STEPS was trying to prevent before it got that far.

Mr. Mark Pooler stated that he was the chairperson of the STEPS Coalition and was proud of the work that the Megan Albanese and Kelly Leppard, former STEPS Coordinator, had done for 11 years working with students on substance abuse prevention. He stated that other communities across the state and country look at Southington as a leader in substance abuse prevention.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ January 28, 2021

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of January 28, 2021, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

8. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

a. Communications from Public

Mrs. Clark received an email (*Attachment #1*) from Kevin Guy of 485 Berlin Street that she read regarding sidewalk snow clearing and the path to Hatton Elementary School. He was concerned for the safety of walkers because the sidewalks were not being maintained this year after 32 years of snow removal and safe passage. On behalf of the families on Butternut Lane, Stonegate Road, and Berlin Streets and surrounding neighborhoods, he requested that the path to Hatton School continue to be maintained. He thanked the Board for their time. Mr. Connellan explained that he spoke to Mr. Guy and pointed out that the snow removal on the school access

sidewalks was not under the umbrella of the Board of Education, which Mr. Guy understood. Also, the path that runs from Berlin Street to the back of Hatton School was not an access walkway and fell into disrepair years ago. At that time, there were many complaints about the decision made at a meeting of the “Town Committee of the Chairs” to remove the path. The path is town property and years ago the decision was to allow the path to return to its natural state. Mr. Connellan stated that he spoke to Mr. Guy about the safety of his children and that a crossing guard could not be added to the area of Arlington Drive because of the slope of Berlin Street and the sight line was not conducive for pedestrians and cars for a crosswalk there. The police department was consulted and stated a crosswalk could not be put there. There is a crosswalk farther down the street with a crossing guard. However, the sidewalks were not under the Southington Public Schools or Board of Education authority. He acknowledged that Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, suggested that the students in that area could hop on a bus to Hatton School.

b. Communications from Board Members

Board members discussed the following:

- Mrs. Cipriano thanked all the administrators for the care given to families during the pandemic. She noted that there were many families that have been struggling and the schools have stepped up to take care of these families in different ways in their time of need. She stated that she had heard from very happy parents and students that sports were opening for the student-athletes. Mrs. Cipriano reported that Oshana Elementary School held a competition regarding Super Bowl that raised over \$900 for Bread for Life in one day. She thanked them for their efforts. Mrs. Cipriano reported that Steven, a student at Strong School, made fudge for 192 people and packaged it with a disclaimer that it was not made in a professional kitchen for Bread for Life to distribute.
- Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Connellan for his leadership during the pandemic. He was happy to virtually see Mr. Brian Goralski, former Board of Education Chairman and his wife Cathy, at the Zoom Board meeting during the appointment of Mr. Madancy.

c. Communication from Administration

Mr. Connellan announced that Mr. Brett Sheldrick, student representative and a member of the Southington Boy’s Swim and Dive Team, was back in the pool and doing very well this season along with the success of entire team. All the meets were virtual.

Administration reported on the following:

1. Blue Knights Marching Band: Mr. Connellan reported that the Blue Knights Marching Band was nominated by the Lincoln Memorial Centennial Committee to represent Connecticut at their celebration, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Lincoln Memorial. The program is scheduled for dates in March, April, and November of 2022 depending on the pandemic situation.
2. Southington DECA: Mr. Connellan reported that DECA was recognized for Outstanding School-based Enterprise and achieving Gold-level Certification for an entrepreneurial operation in a school that provides goods and services to meet the needs of the market.
3. District-base Vaccine Distribution: Mr. Connellan announced that information was released from the Governor’s Office on Monday regarding the policy change of

vaccine eligibility for educators starting March 1, 2021, along with those aged 55 and over. The district, with the help of the Health Director, Mr. Shane Lockwood, and Mrs. Cathy O'Hara, Nurse Supervisor, were working 24/7 on the way to hold a clinic for the district. Hartford HealthCare offered to partnership with the Southington Public Schools and to set aside times after work hours and on Saturdays for educational staff members to participate in dedicated clinics so appointment times could be set aside for educational staff. Hartford HealthCare will send a link to Mrs. Passamano, Human Resource Manager, who will distribute it to staff members to be able to schedule a date and time. Bus drivers, bus monitors, and people engaged in the childcare programs in the schools will be included. It will encompass about 1,400 individuals and the Vaccine Clinic will take place at this time at the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford.

Mrs. Clark questioned if the Early Childhood Educators in town would be included in the vaccinations because the information was constantly changing regarding it. Mr. Connellan stated that it would fall under the responsibility of the Health Director or a third-party agency to arrange. The Health Director was still working on that scenario.

4. Polar Plunge: Mr. Madancy was relieved that he did not have to jump in the Sloper's Polar Plunge this year because he would be jumping as the Superintendent in the next several years. Mr. Connellan stated that Mr. Bob Lasbury, Assistant Principal at DePaolo Middle School, had done a tremendous job over the years attaining support and with his efforts as cheerleader to get jumpers involved with currently 40 jumpers from the school district.

d. Communication from Students Representatives

Miss Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- She congratulated Mr. Madancy and looked forward to work with him next year as a student representative serving on the Board of Education.
- Lisa, Incorporated donated 40 student Mindfulness Bags in collaboration with STEPS and would be distributed through the SHS Student Support Center. The Mindfulness Bags include items such as Mindfulness Teen book, journal, fidget toys, prevention materials, gum and Chapstick. She thanked STEPS and Lisa, Inc.
- She was in the final stages of presenting a student-led podcast "You can Sit with Me" at SHS the beginning of March.
- The CIAC Class L State Open Champion Girl's Gymnastics team had an undefeated 3-0 start with the Senior Day meet scheduled on Saturday, February 27 at 4:30 p.m. at American Gymnastics. The meet versus Wethersfield will be live streamed on the SHS YouTube channel.
- Girls' Basketball had a 4-1 record going into a game against Farmington on Friday, February 26 at 6:00 p.m. that will be live streamed on the SHS YouTube channel.

Mr. Brett Sheldrick reported on the following:

- He thanked Mr. Connellan for the shout out for his success on the Boy's Swim and Dive team. He thanked Mr. Steve Risser, Athletic Director, on behalf of all the SHS student-athletes for the opportunity to compete this year with the burden of the pandemic. Competing was a stress reliever and something he loved to do. He gave a shout out to Coach Tuttle for an amazing Swim and Dive year.
- The Boys Basketball team has an undefeated home record this season including a 42-38 victory over Avon on Tuesday night. The team will play at Farmington on Friday, February 26 at 6:45 p.m.

- The Blue Knight Cheerleading team provided plenty of enthusiasm at both the Girls and Boys Basketball games.
- SHS Dance Team will have their first performance of the season Friday evening during half-time of the Girls Basketball game vs. Farmington.
- The Boy’s Swim and Dive team was undefeated 3-0 after defeating the Platt and Maloney High School Co-op team last night 97-79 in Meriden.
- The Boy’s Hall-Southington Co-op team in ice hockey had a record of 3-1-1 on the season with senior night on Monday at the Veterans Memorial Rink in West Hartford at 7:00 p.m.
- The SHS club sport of Girl’s Ice Hockey and the Co-ed Ski team were enjoying successful seasons.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- SHS has a YouTube page that live streams all sports events. The basketball games have been viewed about 340-400 times on average with 500 subscribers. They hope to live stream multiple sporting events and other school activities in the spring. They are also partnering with Mrs. Brooks Sports Entertainment Marketing class to look for ways to expand the offerings for the students and community to watch SHS sports.
- During second period on Friday, February 26, there will be a student survey for all students at SHS to obtain data on the emotional status of the student body at the current time. Wednesdays are half-day’s for SHS students for a digital break and to get any help that they need.

Mr. Oshana asked what some of the questions were on the student survey. Mr. Frank Pepe, SHS Principal, stated that the survey was based around Dr. Mark Bracket’s work from Yale University and references the Mood Meter about school, the workload, number of hours on the computer, and if what students overall were feeling was due to the amount of work or due to their current condition and context surrounding the pandemic. He would share the survey with the Board members and the next action steps to be taken based on the survey data.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Elementary Facilities Committee ~ Collier’s Presentation

Mr. Connellan reported that on March 11, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. there would be a Special Board meeting via Zoom with representatives from the Collier’s group to talk about the information that they shared with the committee on the financial aspects and costs involved.

10. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mrs. Carmody stated that the Town Council held a public hearing on the Southington Country Club on Monday with a wonderful presentation regarding the town purchasing the land. The Town Council will be holding a referendum on May 4 at Derynoski Elementary School only. She told the Town Council of the Board of Education's consensus to support the purchase. Mr. Christopher Palmieri, Principal of DePaolo Middle School, and a Town Councilor, thanked the Board of Education and Mr. Connellan for supporting this important asset for the community.

Mrs. Carmody asked if the PTOs at the schools were meeting. Mr. Connellan replied that they were meeting virtually.

Mr. Connellan stated that the Board of Finance was meeting on Monday, March 1 and holding a public hearing on the total budget that will be virtual. The link to access could be found on the town website community calendar. The Board of Finance invited the Board of Education to have a virtual workshop discussion on Thursday, March 4 on the budget.

12. NEW BUSINESS

a. Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Committee Appointment

Mrs. Carmody appointed Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo and Mrs. Cipriano to the Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Committee and would be contacted by Mrs. Teresa Colegrove, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1

From: kevin guy <krgy1661@yahoo.com>

Date: February 25, 2021 at 7:00:33 PM EST

To: "COLLEEN W. CLARK" <CWCLARK@southingtonschools.org>

Subject: Sidewalk snow clearing and path to Hatton elementary

Good evening, my name is Kevin Guy and I live at 485 Berlin Street. As of this year the snow removal that has been done for the past 32 YEARS, that allows for safe passage on a main road through town, for students of Hatton Elementary School is not being done. The sidewalk is from the corner of Butternut Street to Stonegate Road.

Along with the Berlin Street cut through not being maintained anymore to save around \$40,000 on the high end for a "replacement". The use of the Berlin Street cut through had kids walking LESS than 1/4 of a mile in the snowy conditions but are now forced to walk close to 3/4 of a mile. All to save around \$40,000 and yet raise the budget over 3 Million dollars!

Please keep in mind that this is a MAIN road used through the town of Southington "Route 364", the entire street of Berlin Street has had snow removal until now. Also, all the cars that are now being funneled down Arlington Drive to Berlin Street to save time at drop off for Hatton and all the cars that use this neighborhood as a cut through during pick up has increased the danger of this road significantly.

The higher rate of speed in which the vehicles travel on Berlin Street, the Berlin Street cut through not being maintained/replaced to save money, an already busy street with the added cars from drop off and pick up, snow removal from sidewalks NOT being done after 32 years, crossing guard complaining about unsafe conditions, and EVERY study shows walkers are the most likely to be injured.

I have now spoken with people from butternut ln, Berlin st. And Stonegate rd. and discovered that no one was notified of this change until a police officer told them to clear the snow or be fined. I have also talked to even more of the people in these neighborhoods and everyone is in an agreement to have the path from Berlin street to Hatton redone and maintained.

Kevin Guy

485 Berlin street

Southington, CT 06489

Cell - 860-777-8406

Email - krgy1661@yahoo.com