

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 on the video recording of the Board meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools. These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the following regular Board of Education meeting.

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 10, 2020

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held as a Zoom video and teleconference on Thursday, December 10, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. with an Executive Session held prior as a Zoom video meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the Executive Session to order at 6:02 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 administrators present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent.

Also present was Mr. Christopher Luise of AdNet.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – School Security, Contract Negotiations for Food Service and Transportation, and Unaffiliated Compensation

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

“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and press, to discuss School Security, Contract Negotiations for Food Service and Transportation, and Unaffiliated Compensation, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session. Mr. Christopher Luise is invited to join us for the first portion.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody recessed Executive Session at 7:00 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the Regular Session to order at 7:07 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 administrators present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business & Finance.

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

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Student Representative, Brett Sheldrick, led in reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE – Blue Knights Girls Swim & Dive Team, Girls Soccer Team, Girls Cross Country Team

For the Celebration of Excellence, the Board members recognized the Southington Blue Knight interscholastic sports teams who each won the Fall 2020 CCC Region B Championship in their respective sports (*Attachment #1*). Mr. Steven Risser, Athletic Director, introduced the coaches for each team: Mr. Evan Tuttle, SHS Girls Swimming & Diving Head Coach, Mr. Mike Linehan, SHS Girls Soccer Head Coach (undefeated season), and Mr. Dan Dachelet, SHS Girls Cross Country Head Coach. They spoke about the challenges, accomplishments, experiences, perseverance, successes, and statistics of their teams during these unprecedented times of a pandemic and congratulated the student-athletes and seniors on their teams. The All the coaches thanked Mr. Risser for his outstanding support and for going above and beyond to ensure that their teams had a fall season.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 12, 2020 – Regular Meeting

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of November 12, 2020, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

a. Communications from Public

Mrs. Clark read an email into public record that the Board received from Mrs. Jillian Echard (*Attachment #2*) expressing her gratitude to the Board, Mr. Connellan and Mr. Madancy for listening to the science and health officials and keeping the elementary students in school even though receiving pressure from the teacher’s union to do otherwise. She thanked the Board members, principals and teachers for the safety measures put into place for the safety of the children and noted that her children were thriving in elementary school instead of remote

learning. She noted that the spread of Covid-19 was by the actions of the community outside the school building.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mr. Brown commented on the recent exchanges of communications between some of the teachers, union leaders, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education and noted that the pandemic was unique, stressful, and difficult situation for everyone with tough decisions having to be made (*Attachment #3*). He noted that there was no one-size fits all solution and believed that students and teachers were better off with in-person education and that nobody was happy with the present situations due to the pandemic. Mr. Brown believed that people were being exposed and/or getting sick outside of school with few traced to the schools. He acknowledged that statements and emails sent by some people included personal attacks, pointing fingers and snarky words, that does not advance the common cause of educating students the best and safest way possible. He asked that moving forward all parties listen to each other, show respect for each other, acknowledge that mistakes were made by all involved, and work on the best solutions for these complex issues during this difficult time. Mr. Brown requested that the Board seriously consider the requests to go virtual through the holiday break and possibly the week afterward and consider input from all parties involved.

Mrs. Clark reported that CUBE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) has been offering webinars that she attended. She noted that there was a webinar on the role and responsibilities of the Board that addressed the virtual versus the in-person meetings. CUBE recommended treating a virtual meeting as an in-person meeting with an audience and for Board members to stay engaged and on camera as if they were together. For a webinar on the Board's role on the budget, CUBE recommended that plain and simple language be used in discussing the budget and once the budget was passed for all the Board members to learn the priorities and share the same message with the public. Mrs. Clark shared a quote that impressed her during a webinar, "*The biggest communication problem is that we do not listen to understand, we listen to respond.*"

Mr. David Falvo expressed his feelings regarding the Superintendent's email response to Mr. Daniel Hart, President of the teacher's union (Southington Education Association), which he thought was condescending and disheartening. He noted that many teachers emailed the Board members with the displeasure of Mr. Connellan's response. As a Board member and a teacher in another school district, he felt obligated to bring this subject up. He read into public record (*Attachment #4*) an email from Mr. Dan Hart addressed to Mr. Connellan and Mr. Madancy, which the Board members also received, regarding a coalition of state teachers' unions advocating for implementing the remote learning model through the holidays to mid-January and the associated risk of Covid-19 exposure for both staff and students, which was continuing to rise. He shared the survey results that the union conducted on November 24, 2020 regarding full remote learning through mid-January. Mr. Falvo started to read Mr. Connellan's response to Mr. Hart's email but was stopped by Mrs. Carmody who did not believe that it was appropriate to be reading something that was going to be derogatory against a member of the administration or of a staff member. Mr. Falvo stated that he agreed with Mr. Connellan's response that keeping in-person learning was the best educational and health decision for the students, but he thought the superintendent missed the opportunity to have a polite and open dialog with the hardworking

teachers of the district. He wanted to make sure that the teachers who emailed the Board members were heard.

Mr. Baczewski acknowledged that over the past two weeks many emails were going back and forth and noted an email that the Board members received from fifth graders who stated how important it was that snow days, stay as snow days, and do not change to the virtual learning model. Mr. Baczewski understood Mr. Falvo's comments and also "heard" the teachers concerns. He thought that emotions were running high due to the pandemic and that it was not productive to be angry with each other. Everybody was under a different set of stressors and frustrations but should be kind to one another in their disagreements. He acknowledged that both he and Mr. Connellan have had their differences, but that Mr. Connellan was a respectable person and that he was proud Mr. Connellan was the district leader and to be working with him.

Mrs. Cipriano recognized the STEPS students who were working hard during the pandemic to get to know each other on a different level through Zoom meetings and to be cohesive instead of breaking off into groups. She works with the STELLAR program and this year it was difficult trying to find placements and work study for the students due to the pandemic. Mrs. Cipriano reported that there were 11 students at Southington High School participating in the Southington Police Cadet Academy who were learning about and identifying stressors during the pandemic. She thanked the Southington Police Department for their partnership.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

Mr. Madancy explained that he met with the Technology Department this week who praised the Maintenance Department for being very responsive and diligent about moving devices from school to school, for the teachers and students to have what they need each day.

Mr. Madancy announced that the school district received a \$10,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain that he applied for on behalf of the Coalition for Social Justice regarding a COVID-19 community support network. The goal of the grant is to connect with all the cultural brokers in the community that families in-need may have a relationship, so they could connect them to the Coalition for Social Justice to provide assistance.

1. Adult Education Merger: Mr. Madancy explained that the district's Adult Education program was losing revenue because people could learn enrichment courses online and the GED course numbers were low because of a high graduation rate. The state requires the district to offer Adult Education and contacted him about partnering with another district such as Plainville or Bristol. It was financially lucrative to partner with the Bristol Public Schools. There would be no additional expense to the Southington Board of Education and the Adult Education budget would remain the same. He explained the Adult Education program partnership opportunities and operation in detail.

2. Remote Academy: Mr. Madancy gave an update on the Remote Academy and the difficulties of teaching full remote with students that teachers have never met other than online and trying to develop a relationship with those students and families, and transferring things normally done in a classroom to a digital format, which takes longer. He noted that the Remote Academy was almost at capacity and spoke at length of the challenges.

3. Early Childhood Education Forum: Mr. Madancy attended the forum sponsored by the Connecticut Children's Collective, Middlesex Coalition for Children, CSEA & SIEU Childcare Unions, Connecticut Association for Human Services, and the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance. The participants watched a documentary prior to the forum titled "No Small Matters". He shared information and statistics from the documentary noting how childcare and society has changed over the years.

d. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Miss Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- She congratulated the student/athletes on the sports teams who were recognized this evening.
- The class officers were planning Spirit Week for December 14-18 and December 21-23.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- The National Honor Society was trying to organize a virtual tutoring program with Mrs. Riccio as advisor.
- The Board of Education Student Representatives started an Instagram page over the summer last year and took a poll a couple of weeks ago regarding online learning.

Mr. Brett Sheldrick reported the following:

- Each department selects one student every month as a "Make My Day" recipient that Mr. Pepe, SHS Principal, would call to his office to make a phone call to the his/her family. In 2021, the recipient information will be posted on the high school webpage.
- The Interact Club was organizing a toy fundraiser.
- On December 9, 2020, the Guidance Department held a virtual 8th and 9th grade transition event titled "High School Basics 101" with 189 virtual participants.

The student representatives addressed in-person, hybrid, and remote learning. Mr. Sheldrick shared that distance learning was becoming increasingly difficult for him and that earlier in the school year he stated that it was manageable. He was now retracting that statement because his biggest issue was teacher accessibility and the pace at which he comprehends new material as it becomes increasingly more challenging. He believed that the student body would agree with him that it was difficult. He takes three AP classes, Project Lead-the-Way and honors classes and when he was attending in-person classes he could ask questions, which would be directly answered. With the teachers teaching hybrid classes (in-person and online) it makes it difficult to have his questions answered on a timely basis. He noted that the pace of the classes had slowed down as well. Miss Kaur shared that most of the student body would agree with Mr. Sheldrick's assessment and commented on the student poll that was taken regarding online learning. They received 70 responses with 65 stating that teachers were giving a lot of work online. She felt that she was working at her laptop 24/7. She noted that some students suffer from anxiety and have mental health issues and that teachers complain that students do not talk in online classes because of social anxiety. Miss Vincent stated that she had been fully remote since the beginning of the school year and felt stressed taking very rigorous classes and was constantly on her laptop. She thought that it was more beneficial to learn in-person versus online

in order to retain the information. Mr. Sheldrick agreed and did not want the Board and administration to think that they were criticizing decisions. The student representatives wanted to give their perspective for the Board to understand what students were experiencing.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting - November 17, 2020

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee reviewed and discussed five job descriptions (Director of Digital Learning, Information Systems Manager, Executive Assistant-Superintendent, Executive Assistant/District Registrar and Secretary to the Director of Operations) that would come before the Board for action later in the meeting. The committee reviewed policies in Series 1000, 4000, and 5000 that were coming before the Board later in the meeting as first readings. She thanked Mr. Madancy for the work involved in updating the job descriptions and five policies.

b. Elementary School Facilities Committee Meeting – November 30, 2020

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee met with representatives from Collier & Associates and reviewed the facilities situations at Kelley, Flanders, and Derynoski Elementary Schools. They reviewed GIS mapping of sites for potential new school locations. They discussed square footage, expenses, reimbursements, state requirements and renovating versus new construction. The committee was in the early stages and needed to determine next steps.

c. Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting – December 4, 2020

Mr. Brown reported that the committee discussed and reviewed the following:

- New - SHS Ag-Sci UConn Floral Art Textbooks that supported both in-person and remote learning, which needs approval this evening by the full Board for use in the second semester. It would not cost the Board money because the purchase would be from the Ag-Sci grant. Mr. Madancy added that normally this would be a first reading; however, it was time sensitive.
- SHS Science Department Conceptual Chemistry I & II textbook that would be changed from one course into two courses, each being half credit, which does not require Board action as there was no cost.
- SHS Science Department Biology-2020 Miller and Levine textbook because the Biology curriculum was being re-written. The Board will take action on this as a second read in January 2021.
- The SHS administration recommended opening a Forensic Science II course for grades 11 and 12 next year as a continuation of the Forensic Science I course.
- New - SHS World Language French V was proposed as a course that would study the cultures of French speaking countries in Africa.
- SHS Computer Science Independent Study Proposal for meeting the Capstone graduation requirement.
- A year-long, one credit full-year elective for next year was discussed named “SHS African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course. This course is the outcome of state legislation passed last year and is required to be offered in all school districts. The state wrote the curriculum. No action needed.

- No action was needed on changing the name of courses from MS Office I and MS Office 2 to Computer Essentials and Business Computer Essentials.
- Collapsing Levels and Co-teaching: Mr. Pepe gave the committee a PowerPoint presentation on phasing out co-taught classes in science and social studies so special education students with IEP’s would be in compliance with state requirements. It was a complicated issue. Mrs. Cipriano added that it was for the equity of all students to thrive.
- The 10% weighting of each midterm and final exam would be redistributed among the four quarters totaling 25% each quarter.

d. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting – December 8, 2020

Mr. Clark reported the committee reviewed and updated two job descriptions: 1) Assistant Superintendent of Schools (addition of supervision of the Technology Department) and 2) Director of Teacher and Learning for Secondary Education (new job description), which the Board would take action on tonight.

9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Capital Improvement Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26 – Second Reading

Mr. Baczewski questioned some elementary projects on the plan and how they would be affected by moving forward with Collier & Associates to either renovate-to-new or build new. Mrs. Clark explained that air conditioning would be included in the new schools and would need to be looked at long term to include all elementary schools. The high school and two middle schools already have air conditioning. Mr. Connellan added that in discussion with the Collier group anything moving forward needed to be in context of a larger vision that was why items were added as TBD (to be determined) that need to be addressed as part of the overall plan. Mr. Brown added that another consideration is what the state would or would not reimburse the district for because he was surprised that new construction was less costly versus renovating-to-new. Mrs. DiNello thanked Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Accounting Manager, for putting together the Capital Improvement Plan with assistance from Mr. Steve Risser, Athletic Director, and Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations.

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

“Move to approve the Capital Improvement Plan for 2021-22 to 2025-26, as presented by administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Town Government Communications

There was no Town Government Communication.

c. School Calendar 2020-2021 Proposal to Modify

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

“Move to approve a modification to the 2020-2021 school calendar that includes Wednesday early release days for Southington High School and Tuesday early release days for both DePaolo and Kennedy Middle Schools as proposed by the administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Energy Management System Upgrade

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

“Move to rescind the motion from the November 12, 2020 Board of Education that reads as follows: Move to waive the bid process to upgrade the energy management systems at South End, Oshana and the ASTE building and allow Connecticut Temperature Controls (CTC) to perform the work as the proprietary vendor.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to waive the bid process to upgrade the energy management systems at South End, Oshana and the ASTE building and allow Automated Logic to perform the work as the proprietary vendor.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Proposed 2021-2022 School Calendar – First Reading

Mr. Connellan explained that this calendar was a hybrid of last year’s calendar of putting all the teacher professional development and workdays upfront and starting students on a Thursday for two days and then have the Labor Day weekend to ease the students in. Everything is the same as in the past. This will be voted on at the January Board meeting. Mr. Derynoski asked if the calendar would be shared with the PTO’s and unions for feedback prior to the next Board meeting. Mr. Connellan acknowledged that it would be shared.

b. Approval of Job Descriptions – Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Director of Teaching and Learning for Secondary Education, Digital Learning

Coordinator, Information Systems Manager, Executive Assistant to Superintendent; Executive Assistant/District Registrar; Secretary to Director of Operations

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

“Move to approve the draft job descriptions for Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Director of Teaching and Learning for Secondary Education, Digital Learning Coordinator, Information Systems Manager, Executive Assistant to Superintendent; Executive Assistant/District Registrar; Secretary to Director of Operations, as recommended by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- c. **Policy 1316 – Relations between Public and School Personnel – First Reading**
- d. **Policy 4118.11 – Non-Discrimination - Personnel – First Reading**
- e. **Policy 5130 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy – First Reading**
- f. **Policy 5141-6 – Wellness Policy – First Reading**
- g. **Policy 5150 – Non-Discrimination - Students – First Reading**

There was no discussion on the first readings.

- h. **SHS Textbook Adoption: Agriculture Science and Technology Textbooks: Miller and Levin – Biology – First Reading**

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

“Move to approve the two Agriculture Science and Technology textbooks: Floriculture Designing and Merchandising and Agricultural Mechanics Fundamentals and Applications, as recommended by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

The Biology textbook: Miller and Levine, 2020 will be on the January 14, 2021 meeting agenda as a second reading.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Madancy explained that a waiver needed to be added to the agenda because he was informed late this afternoon about the arrival of a large Chromebook delivery and the timelines associated with it. Per the vendor, the shipment should arrive the last week of December, which falls around the holiday break and effects the logistics of preparation, distribution, and physical distancing due to COVID-19.

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

“Move to add agenda item 11.j to Waive Bid Process for White Glove Service.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

(Agenda item taken out of order)

j. Waiver Bid Process – White Glove Service

Mr. Madancy explained the White Glove Service and that for \$10 a device the Chromebooks could be shipped to a company who would unbox, asset tag, assign them all to our network, crate them and deliver all the Chromebooks in PC carts, which would get them up and running faster than the district could with the technology staff. For 3,000-3,400 devices, it would not cost more than \$34,000 and this would come from grant funds. He learned about this service after the state device order arrived. The White Glove Service guarantees a 1-2 week turnaround time on all devices.

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

“Move to waive the bid process in order to allow the district to pursue White Glove Process for upcoming Chromebook order.”

Mr. Derynoski questioned if the \$34,000 would come from the operating funds or the grant. Mrs. DiNello explained that they have the option to pay for it through the Choice grant or the non-lapsing account and opted for the Choice grant.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

i. Renaming a Program – ALTA to become The Karen Smith Academy

Mr. Connellan explained that many people in the district had the privilege of working with Mrs. Karen L. Smith, former teacher, principal, assistant superintendent and acting superintendent for the district who was dedicated to children. After retiring, she returned in a volunteer capacity working with the students and staff at ALTA. Through conversations with Mr. Madancy, Mr. Jess Levin, ALTA Director, and ALTA staff and students they talked about renaming the ALTA program after Mrs. Smith. Because of COVID-19, they could not do a big dedication at this time. He explained that Mr. Levin and his staff designed a new sign for the building to rename the program, which would honor her memory.

Mr. Levin explained that Karen Smith started volunteering with ALTA after she retired due to illness and then felt better. She volunteered 3-4 days a week for four years, which changed the culture of the school and the outlook of the program. When she passed away, the staff and students wanted to honor her by renaming the program in her honor.

Mr. Madancy stated that Mrs. Smith was a mentor to him and to everybody in one shape or form. She made everyone feel like she was their best friend. She was the best listener around and very supportive.

Mrs. Marilyn Kahl, principal of Kelley School, stated that she grew up in Cheshire and that her father was the Chairman of the Cheshire Board of Education and worked with Mrs. Smith for many years as a fellow Cheshire Board of Education member. When Mrs. Kahl started her career as a school administrator working as Assistant Principal at Derynoski Elementary

School where Mrs. Smith was principal, her father told her that she could not work with a better person than Karen Smith, which was very true.

Mrs. Clark read an email (*Attachment #5*) that she received from Nancy Swanson, Karen Smith's sister, and family thanking the school district for renaming ALTA the Karen Smith Academy.

Mrs. Carmody recessed the Regular Session to return to Executive Session at 8:57 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1

SHS Girls' Soccer 2020

Head Coach: Mike Linehan
Assistant Coach: Courtney Laudati
Volunteer Coach: Mike Dagata

Kaitlyn	Asido
Allie	Baldwin
Julia	Baldwin
Chloe	Bauman
Avia	Burns
Jessica	Carr
Allison	Carr
Emily	Eigo
Abbie	Flanigan
Morgan	Hubert
Lauren	Humphrey
Marisa	Imme
Lily	Kenefick
Savannah	Krom
Monika	Kryzanski
Brianna	Linehan
Shannon	Litchfield
Allison	Mikosz
Nina	Muir
Erin	O'Neill
Natalie	Possidento
Micaela	Potamis
Riley	Prozzo
Talie	Richardson
Sofia	Scalise
Kaitlin	Siedel
Abby	Sowa
Lauren	Verrilli
Riley	Wolf
Maya	Wroblewski

SHS Girls Swimming & Diving 2020

Head Coach: Evan Tuttle
Assistant Coach: Tammi Haynes
Diving Coach: Jan Zagorski

Sephora Aktas
Ruth Alejandro
Juliana Aulbach
Lizy Beaulieu
Madison Beidler
Alex Bialko
Marina Chaplinsky
Jillian Christensen
Bella Criscitello
Julianne Darling
Amela Dishnica
Rachel Dubios
Olivia Donis
Gerza Elezi
Jenna Famiglietti
Sara Flynn
Antonia Gibbons
Rita Gocllari
Skyler Gravel
Avery Halloran
Meghan Hammarlund
Tori Harrington
Emma Jekubovich
Victoria Korczak
Jason Krane
Julia Laszewski
Sophia Leone
Alex Lowczyk
Sadie McPartland
Andie Nadeau
Ella Nadeau
Kayla Nguyen
Kyra Nguyen
Kendall Noonan
Adessa Noyes
Veronica Okurowski
Kelly Perotti
Bogna Prusak
Jenna Puskas
Mackenzie Robinson
Kelsie Salerno
Samantha Seneca
Alexis Strong
Maddie Symecko
Thuy Tran

SHS Girls' Cross Country 2020

Head Coach: Dan Dachelet
Assistant Coach: Connor Green
Assistant Coach: Heather Pierce

Sera Altomari
Megan Bissoni
Ava Egan
Jacqueline Izzo
Faith Kozior
Jessica Lombardo
Grace Michaud
Jenna Moran
Emily Moskal
Diane Pillsbury
Frenchie Riccio

ATTACHMENT #2

From: Jillian Echard <jillian.echard@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 5:59 PM

To: TIMOTHY CONNELLAN <tconnellan@southingtonschools.org>; STEVEN MADANCY <smadancy@southingtonschools.org>; SBOE <SBOE@southingtonschools.org>

Subject: Statement for tonight's Board of Education Meeting

CAUTION: This message has originated from an External Source. Please use proper judgment and caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email.

Good evening, I hope this letter finds you all well. Please read this statement into the public record at tonight's Board of Education meeting. Thank you very much.

To Mr. Connellan, Mr. Madancy, and all of the board members,

You may recall I wrote you a letter before the school year started. This one has a slightly different tone, and is meant to express my deepest gratitude for all that you have done, and continue to do, to keep our children, especially at the elementary level, fully in school. You have withstood, I am sure, immense pressure from the teacher's union, and have stood your ground by listening to science and health professionals. You have realized that the spread of COVID-19 is not happening within the school walls, and in that realization, understand that switching to full remote learning models will not lessen the spread of the disease through our community. You know that attending school, whether you're a teacher or a student, if following the protocols set in place, is one of the safer places to be.

My children are thriving in the elementary schools. I thank you, I thank their teachers, and their principal for all of the safety measures they have put into place and have strictly adhered to all this time to keep our children safe. The children are resilient, and have thrived even through adversity, showing their adaptivity and willingness to adjust to whatever situation is handed to them.

In these next few months, I hope you all stay safe, and healthy. I hope we as a community realize that it is our actions outside of the school building that will impact the spread of this disease the most. And I wish you all a wonderful New Year.

Jillian Echard

ATTACHMENT #3

BOE Comments 12/10/2020 from Board Member Mr. Bob Brown

I struggled to compose this because, frankly, my heart has been broken by the most recent exchanges of communications between some of our education community. We are all in this together and need to support each other and work together.

I want to say a few things about our recent flurry of e-mails, phone calls and communications between teachers, their union, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education.

First, this is a unique and difficult situation for everyone, the toughest educational conditions public schools have ever faced. Everywhere.

Second, everyone is so stressed. We should all acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our teachers and in fact all staff, who are going far beyond what has ever been asked of them and done their very best amidst nearly impossible circumstances. And we should also realize the extreme stress our administration has been under and their dedicated hard work.

Third, there is virtually NO agreement on many of these issues between “experts”—are students better off totally at home, totally in school or a combination? I would say there is no one-size-fits-all solution, not from town to town, and not even from school to school. And one solution that may please one group very well could harm or jeopardize another group. I do believe students and teachers are much better off doing in person education, but it must be safe.

Fourth, I honestly believe, talking with teachers and parents in other towns as well as many in Southington, that we have done the very best under these trying circumstances. The facts are that no teacher is teaching at their very best, students are not learning as much as they did before all this Covid stuff, and virtually nobody is happy with the present situation anywhere.

Fifth, I believe there have been mistakes or poorly worded responses made by many parties involved. I made the mistake of calling for a delay in sending students back to live school back in August—when I subsequently visited schools, I learned that being in school, safely, was the best thing for students, teachers and parents. However, based on recent communications to us and me, I am no longer sure that that is still true. I do believe, as the superintendent’s letters constantly remind us, there have been few if any cases traced to schools—people are being exposed and or getting sick outside of school in social gatherings, etc. Our schools have been extremely careful and safe. And I want to also say, and this is hard for me to say, there have been statements made and e-mails sent by some people that include personal attacks, snarky wording and more, and that never advances our common cause, which is to educate our students in the best and safest ways possible, and to maintain the most safety we can for all of our staff. Sometimes simple apologies can help us move forward. I am sorry for the mistakes I have made.

Lastly, I want to ask all of us to move forward, to look at how we can listen to each other and work on the best solutions for these complex issues, and not go back and point fingers at who said what, who did what, who made a mistake. We all have. We need more kind, loving respect for each other as everyone struggles with these difficult times.

I would also ask that we seriously consider the requests to go virtual at least through the holiday break, and perhaps a week afterwards, but consider input from all parties involved, look at viable alternatives, make the safety of students and staff the first priority, and especially listen to the health experts locally. As the numbers rise, I am worried we will not be able to maintain the best and safest learning conditions in schools. I also implore all parents and students to be careful and considerate of others this coming holiday season and take the safety precautions medical and scientific experts tell us, including attending gatherings of anyone outside our present living situations. Thank you.

ATTACHMENT #4

From: DANIEL HART <dhart@southingtonschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:06 PM
To: TIMOTHY CONNELLAN <tconnellan@southingtonschools.org>; STEVEN MADANCY <smadancy@southingtonschools.org>
Cc: BETHANY SOLURY <bsolury@southingtonschools.org>; JASON GHIDINI <jghidini@southingtonschools.org>
Subject: Remote Learning Model - post holidays

Tim & Steve:

I'm sure you are aware of [today's headlines](#) regarding a coalition of CT unions who have issued statements and reports advocating for a remote learning model through mid-January due to the holidays and the associated risk of COVID-19 exposure for both staff and students.

We asked you a couple of weeks ago to consider implementing the district's remote learning model due to these circumstances.

We hope you will consider moving forward with this model.

Many local associations have made this request of their school administration and Board of Education. We also understand that the state (Gov Lamont and CSDE) has reinforced keeping schools open. Many teachers in Southington once shared this view as well, but since COVID cases have risen, they no longer do.

Survey results of Southington teachers (conducted Tues 11/24/20)

As a teacher, do you prefer that the Southington Public School system implements a full remote learning model to mitigate the spread of coronavirus around the holiday breaks? (Yes/No)

72.4% YES

27.6% No

High school

77 yes

26 no

Middle

61 yes

11 no

Elementary

116 yes

67 no

We'd like to hear your views on this request and any plans that you may have. We would also like to communicate this request and survey results to the Board of Education as well, but will await your response.

Thank you,
Dan

ATTACHMENT #5

From: Nancy <nswan2@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 2:34 PM
To: COLLEEN W. CLARK <cwclark@southingtonschools.org>
Subject: Karen Smith Academy

CAUTION: This message has originated from an External Source. Please use proper judgment and caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email.

Good afternoon, I see on the agenda for tonight's Board of Education meeting is the renaming of ALTA to the Karen Smith Academy.

I am her sister, Nancy, and on behalf of the family, we would like to thank you so much for this incredible honor. During this pandemic, so many people have lost loved ones and have not been able to hold a proper funeral/memorial for their loved one. By Southington Schools renaming the ALTA program after Karen certainly helps us honor her memory forever and we thank you all so very much! We are so proud.

With much appreciation, Nancy Swanson (sister), Don Smith (husband), Donny Smith (son), Kristin Rice (daughter) and Eric Caracuzzi (nephew).

P.S. If possible, would you be so kind as to share this tonight? Thank you again.