

The minutes presented within this document provide a summary of the discussion that took place at the Board of Education meeting. For the complete discussion of the agenda items, please view the video of the Board meeting on our website at www.southingtonschools.org. These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the following regular Board of Education meeting.

**SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT**

**REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 8, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

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

Cabinet administrators present: Mr. Steve Madancy, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance; Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Student Representatives present: Angelina Miacci, Uptej Singh, and Ryan Ogren

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Student Representatives led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

- a. The Board of Education recognized the Class of 2023 Salutatorian, Ethan Giordano, who will be attending UConn in the fall majoring in Mechanical Engineering, and the Essayist, Sophia LeBlanc, who will be attending Harvard University. The Class of 2023 Valedictorian, Noah Richert, was absent and will be recognized at the June 22 Board of Education meeting. Both Ethan and Sophia were presented with a Certificate of Excellence.
- b. Student Representative Uptej Singh introduced the two new Student Representatives selected out of 23 applicants who will serve on the Board of Education starting in the fall. Chelsey Arduini (rising senior) and Akary Win (rising junior) spoke briefly. The Board recognized the graduating Board of Education Student Representatives Ryan Ogren and Angelina Miacci with a Certificate of Excellence.
- c. The Board of Education recognized the Tunxis Community College CNA (Certified Nurse Aide) Program in partnership with Southington High School. Ms. Jennifer Discenza, Director of School Counseling, and three representatives from Tunxis Community College (Shannon Burr, Instructor; Shaina Hamel, Erin Moll) explained the eight-week rigorous program that included Clinical Rounds at Southington Care

Center and presented a Certificate of Excellence and small gift from SHS administration to the eight (8) high school students who completed the program. Board member, Mr. Baczewski, a Registered Nurse, had advocated for health care programs at the high school for students to launch careers in the medical field and was happy to see it come to fruition.

Mrs. Clark called for a brief recess at 7:28 p.m.

Mrs. Clark reconvened the regular meeting at 7:43 p.m.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 25, 2023

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education Minutes of May 25, 2023, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Angelina Miacci reported on the following SHS events: May 31 Seven Angels Theatre hosted the 20th Annual Halo Awards at the Palace Theater with the Southington High School Drama Club receiving numerous awards; Class Night on June 1; Class Day on June 2 at High Meadows; the Class of 2023 would not recommend High Meadows to the Class of 2024 and would have preferred Six Flags Theme Park like the Class of 2022; Top 25 Dinner on June 6; Final Exams would take place over the next three school days; Graduation to take place on June 14 at 5:30 p.m.; the Robotics off-season events have started.

Ryan Ogren stated that at a previous BOE meeting he reported on the results of a high school survey taken by students. After that meeting, the Student Reps analyzed the results and noted a recurring pattern of student complaints surrounding BCAP (Capstone Program). A follow-up “Citizen in Action Survey” was then sent out to students in April. The responses by 1,100 students included that students were confused on the requirements for their e-portfolio, frustrated by the inconsistencies throughout the past couple of years, and felt that their time was not well spent. Although students were told that having an accumulative Capstone Project by graduation was a state requirement, students thought the legislation was vague in its wording and that districts were given freedom with the program they set forth. The Student Representatives recommendation to administration is to create a ‘Passion Project’ where students could choose a field, occupation, or activity that they were interested in pursuing in the future and curate their research, expertise, and dedication into an accumulative end-of-year project. Ryan explained that the Student Representatives created a By-law to add to the district’s policies that would ensure future Student Representatives were made a required, necessary function of the Southington Board of Education. The By-law explains that the Student Reps can add items to the meeting agenda (with the Superintendent’s permission) and outline the selection process by which new BOE Student Reps are chosen for the following year. He explained that the three current Student Reps dedicated a lot of time outlining a By-law Series 9000 for the BOE and hoped it would be passed at a future BOE meeting after Mr. Pepe reviews it and it goes before the Policy & Personnel Committee at their next meeting for approval.

Uptej Singh reported on the high school athletic season to date: Girls Softball plays for the National record of 21 State Championships at Connecticut's 50th Anniversary Softball Tournament at UConn on June 10 against Fairfield Ludlow; the Girls Softball Team won the Conference Championship for the third consecutive year; Boys Volleyball advanced to the State Class LL Semi-finals; Baseball reached the Quarterfinals of the Class LL Tournament; Girls Lacrosse won the CCC Tournament Championship; Boys Lacrosse qualified for the CCC Post-season Tournament; both Boys & Girls Tennis Teams qualified for the State Tournaments; Girls Outdoor Track Team finished second and the Boys Track Team placed third in the CCC Championships. All Blue Knights spring sports teams competed for CIAC Post-season play. Flanders: PTO held their first Annual Flanders Flash Boulder Dash Fundraiser. Kennedy Middle School (JFK): Grade 7 student, Ryan Titsworth, was recognized by SIFMA (Securities Industry Financial Markets Association) as a Connecticut state winner of the InvestWrite Challenge in the Stock Market Game. The JFK PTO sponsored an Eighth Grade Carnival event. The JFK Annual Awards Night was recently held. DePaolo Middle School (JAD): Grade 5 students visited JAD on June 2 for Orientation; students from JFK and JAD will be participating in the SHS Class of 2027 Class Day at Holiday Hill; SHS hosted Transition Day for Grade 8 students of both middle schools; 73 Grade 8 students at JAD were recognized at the Annual Awards Night; Flamingo Dancers will be at JAD to teach about Spanish art and culture; JAD Garden Club (Food for Thought) had their first meeting today and will have a Farm Stand this summer.

Board members took turns thanking all three Student Representatives for their representation on behalf of the entire student body (SHS, middle and elementary schools), their initiative in conducting a survey and reporting the results to the Board, creating a By-law regarding student representation on the Board that will be presented to the Policy & Personnel Committee to be considered a BOE policy, and asked them to come back to a future Board meeting to give an update on their future endeavors. Mr. Carson questioned the locations of the Robotics off-season events.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mr. Derynoski questioned the time for the Board to meet on Wednesday, June 14 for the graduation ceremony (high school atrium at 4:30 p.m.). A rain date would be scheduled for the next day Thursday, June 15.

c. Communications from Administration

1. District Teacher of the Year: Mr. Madancy announced that Meg Evans from Strong Elementary School was selected the District Teacher of the Year and was presented an award on Monday. She will speak at a Board meeting in the fall.
2. SHS Teacher of the Year: Mr. Madancy announced that Meghan Scam was selected as the Southington High School Teacher of the Year and was presented an award on Monday.
3. UNICO Top 25: Mr. Madancy congratulated the Top 25 Southington High School students who were recognized by UNICO at their annual ceremony on Wednesday, June 7, at the Aqua Turf. He noted that all three Student Representatives were recognized as the Top 25 students.

d. Communication from Public – Agenda Items Only (Attachment #1)

Traci Ianni, 46 Alpine Trail, a Paraeducator at Kennedy Middle School, spoke against eliminating Grade 6 teams at both middle schools from the 2023-2024 budget in reallocation, which would result in the elimination of six teaching positions to very vulnerable sixth grade students making the transition to the middle school. She noted that once something is cut from the budget, it never returns. She was concerned with the ripple effect that it would create. She urged the Board to take every possible step before eliminating these positions.

Susan Walsh, 146 Old Cider Mill Road, a sixth-grade teacher, spoke against eliminating the sixth grade teams at both middle schools and addressed the stressful impact on both students and teachers. It is a time when the students need more, and they will be receiving less. She noted that special education students and students requiring interventions and counseling were at an all-time high and larger class sizes would prevent the much-needed individualized education they require.

Cristi Duprey, 164 Foley Drive, a teacher and parent, addressed the elimination of split teams at both middle schools at a major transition phase for students. She stressed the anxiety and fear level of 11-year-olds entering a new school year and that not all students thrive after leaving a one-classroom environment in elementary school. Larger class sizes are not conducive to learning. She wanted fifth grade parents to know that the current sixth grade teachers tried to do right by them.

Amy Perry, 268 Hitchcock Road, a sixth-grade teacher at Kennedy Middle School, addressed that the elimination of sixth grade split teams would be a disservice to children especially the 6.C Teams that have special needs which need to be met including more support. Some of these children have a hard time making friends. She urged the Board to vote to keep these teachers for the benefit of the children.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee Report – June 1, 2023

Mr. Williams reported that the committee met and reviewed Policy 3641 - *Transportation* and Policy 6161 – *Equipment, Books, & Materials*, and decided that no changes to either policy were necessary except for edits to Regulations, which do not require Board approval. The committee also received an update on the Special Education Audit Review with nearly one-third of the overall BOE budget comprised of Special Education and a number of certified and uncertified staff within the Special Education budget for appropriate staffing levels as compared to like districts. The committee reviewed suggested edits for the Human Resource Manager, which is on the agenda for approval by the full Board.

7. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

“Move that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Report, as submitted by the Human Resource Department.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was no Town Government Communication to report.

b. 2023-2024 Operating Budget Reallocation / Adoption

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

“Move that the Board of Education adopt the 2023-2024 Operating Budget in the amount of \$110,460,653.”

Mrs. Carmody thanked the administration for all they did to answer all the questions that the Board members had. She stated that the budget that was presented to the Board was a level services budget, and she believed her charge as a member of the Board was to provide the students with the same level of services that they deserve. She stated that this budget did not do that. She appreciated the Board tabling voting on the adoption of the budget at their last meeting to see if they would receive more funding from the state. Unfortunately, they did not get enough funding from the state to reinstate the proposed elimination of six sixth-grade teachers, three at each middle school. She stated that she could not support this budget.

Mr. Oshana thanked the full Board for postponing the vote from the last meeting in order to see if they would receive additional funding from the state, which they did not receive enough to cover the deficit. He pointed out the cuts from the Superintendent’s budget by the Board of approximately \$622,000 before it even went to the Town Board of Finance, which in all his years serving on the Board of Education he had never seen the Board cut their own budget before. He noted that would have been enough to keep these teachers in place. He pointed out that in theory they cut teachers, school safety, and school security before they even sent the budget to the Town Board of Finance. He feared that once something is cut from the budget it never comes back. Therefore, he could not support the budget and would vote no.

Mr. Derynoski stated that he agreed with Mrs. Carmody and Mr. Oshana and addressed that by cutting programming they were not supporting the needs of the students. His understanding was there was still a remote outside opportunity of some additional funding coming from the state that they will not know about for several weeks. As it presently stands, he could not support the budget because he thought they were doing a disservice to the students. He noted that it was a funding issue and that the Board had to rely on state grants as well as the Town Board of Finance and Town Council. He requested that any non-lapsing monies that become available be used to support the sixth-grade classrooms. Mrs. Clark stated that it could be added to the agenda and addressed at the next meeting. Mr. Baczewski questioned if there was a dollar amount that might be added in the near future. Mr. Madancy stated that there was a possibility of \$235,000 or less from the Municipal Employees Retirement system, which is less than the \$505,000 needed to reinstate the six teachers.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mr. Baczewski, Mrs. Anastasio, Mr. Carson, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mr. Williams, Mrs. Clark. NO – Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana

Motion passed with six in favor and three opposed.

c. Policy 1316 – Relations between Public and School Personnel – Second Reading

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

“Move that the Board of Education approves Policy 1316 – Relations between Public and School Personnel, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- d. SHS – Accelerated Biology – Unit 2 – Cell Structure and Function – Second Reading**

MOTION: by Mrs. Anastasio, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the SHS – Accelerated Biology – Unit 2 – Cell Structure and Function, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- e. SHS – Accelerated Biology – Unit 4 – Cell Cycle and Communication – Second Reading**

MOTION: by Mrs. Anastasio, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the SHS Accelerated Biology – Unit 4 – Cell Cycle and Communication, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- f. SHS Forensic Science II – Second Reading**

MOTION: by Mrs. Anastasio, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the SHS Forensic Science II, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- g. K-5 Math Curriculum – Bridges Math Intervention – Second Reading**

MOTION: by Mrs. Anastasio, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the K-5 Math Curriculum – Bridges Math Intervention, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Policy 3542 – Transportation – First Reading**
- b. Policy 6161 – Equipment, Books and Materials – First Reading**

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

c. Approval of Job Description - Human Resources Manager - Revised

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

“Move that the Board of Education approve the Job Description for Human Resource Manager, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Public on Non-Agenda Items

Some Public Speakers did not sign up to speak on the provided laptop.

Amrit Krar, 47 Teakwood Drive, a former Board Student Representative, addressed the ripple effect that would occur with the elimination of the middle school teams resulting in larger class sizes. Through her school years and now at college, she found smaller class sizes to be more beneficial to her learning. She hoped that the students would still get the individualized attention that they already were receiving.

Michael Kryzanski, 27 Hitching Post Drive, addressed a video recently shown at Kennedy Middle School in homeroom that addressed PRIDE Month that he viewed and found hyper-sexualized. He questioned why PRIDE Month was based on sexuality and not on accomplishments as opposed to who they are sexually attracted to. He questioned why there was only one Memorial Day and one whole PRIDE Month. He questioned who made the decisions on which groups are celebrated in school and which are not. He thought schools should be focusing on academics and that sexuality should be taught at home and not at school. He thought that teachers seemed to be pushing agendas not in the curriculum without parents notified. He hoped that the Board would investigate the showing of this video.

Susan Zabohonski, Werking Street, addressed the video shown at Kennedy Middle School to middle school students. She viewed the video and had spoken to many upset parents who were too afraid to come to the BOE meeting to address the issue. She thought that the principal should have reviewed this highly sensitive topic video and was upset there was no parental notification of its showing. She noted that it was PRIDE Month and had no problem with the LGBTQ+ community celebrating PRIDE but did not think it belonged in the school. With Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, she thought there should also be diversity in religion, faith and inclusion for people who had different opinions about sexuality. She thought that children should be taught academics, not who they have relationships with. She addressed that the video was shown in homeroom and addressed sensitive issues, against one's faith in some instances, and was singling out one group. These sensitive issues may go against someone's faith and religion.

Annie Wellington, Ed.D, 125 Vernondale Drive, graduated from SHS and felt very prepared for higher education. She holds a doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction from Northeastern University and is a Curriculum Writer for Hartford Public Schools. She thought that the focus should be on the global community and that everyone should be celebrated. She thought all learners should be embraced, be seen, accepted, recognized, and celebrated. In Hartford, they have an Inclusivity Statement, which they do not have in Southington. She

addressed the budget should be maintaining level services and thought that they should be looking to grow and build and that the Board and community needed to do better for students.

Effie Moutogiannis, 53 Rustic Oak Drive, thought the video was a great celebration for students and thought the Board should listen to the students and teachers who were doing a great job. She was disappointed in the cuts of six teachers. She thought that they needed to support the students and teachers and give them a great education to go out in the world. She noted that students have a lot to deal with in the world other than reading, writing and arithmetic to make them ready to go out into the world. She was in favor of the Student Representatives proposed By-laws and looked forward to their reporting at the Board meetings.

Katie Wade, 39 Madelyn Lane, parent of a sixth grader at Kennedy Middle School. She addressed the video shown at Kennedy Middle School and thought the majority of parents were not upset because it did teach sexuality, it addressed the history of PRIDE Month, which she thought was benign. She thought the community should be inclusive and that just a few parents were upset and wanted to be notified and were finding problems that did not really exist.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Unaffiliated Compensation (Attachment #2)

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

“Move to enter Executive Session, excluding the public and press, for the purpose of discussing unaffiliated compensation, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

At 8:45 p.m., all Board members entered Executive Session along with Superintendent Madancy.

At 9:35 p.m., all Board members reconvened to Public Session including Superintendent Madancy and Assistant Superintendent Pepe.

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

“Move to approve the contract for the Superintendent of Schools, as discussed by the Board of Education.”

Roll Call Vote was taken and approved unanimously.

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

“Move to approve the contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, as discussed by the Board of Education.”

Roll Call Vote was taken with eight voting in favor and Mr. Carson voting No.

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

“Move to approve the contract for the Director of Operations, as discussed by the Board of Education.”

Roll Call Vote was taken and approved unanimously.

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

“Move to approve the Unaffiliated Compensation Plan, as presented by the Superintendent of Schools.”

Roll Call Vote was taken and approved unanimously.

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

From: FRANK PEPE <fpepe@southingtonschools.org>
Sent: Friday, June 9, 2023 3:37:28 PM
To: LINDA BLANCHARD <lblanchard@southingtonschools.org>; LISA RIZZO <LRIZZO@southingtonschools.org>
Subject: Re: Public Speakers

5/25/2023 18:50:52	Traci Ianni	46 Alpine Trail	6th grade team cut
6/8/2023 18:46:26	Amy Perry	268 Hitchcock Road	Closure of the 6th grade split team.
6/8/2023 18:55:55	Susan Walsh	146 Old Cider Mill Road	Closure of split teams
6/8/2023 18:56:28	Cristi Duprey	164 Foley Drive	Elimination of split teams
6/8/2023 18:58:50	cynthia herron	408 main st, souhington	pride video
6/8/2023 19:40:49	Traci Ianni	46 Alpine Trail	middle school team elimination
6/8/2023 19:43:39	jessica demello	48 trotters lane	teacher reductions

A couple did not sign in and I do not remember Cynthia Herron speaking.

ATTACHMENT #2
2023-2024 UNAFFILIATED COMPENSATION



Unaffiliated Approved - 6-8-23.pdf
