

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
SEPTEMBER 8, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, September 8, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with an Executive Session preceding at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

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

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

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Student Matters, SAA Contract Negotiations, Bargaining Unit Reclassification, SBOE Nurses Local 1303-140 of Council #4 AFSCME, School Security and Superintendent’s Evaluation

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 Student Matters, SAA Contract Negotiations, Bargaining Unit Reclassification, SBOE Nurses Local 1303-140 of Council #4 AFSCME, School Security and Superintendent’s Evaluation, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

*Mrs. Clark recessed Executive Session at 7:03 p.m.
The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 7:08 p.m.*

3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION

Board members present were Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Sean Carson (*arrived at 7:47 p.m.*), Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mr. Jasper Williams.

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

Student Representatives present were Angelina Micacci, Uptej Singh, and Ryan Ogren.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The student representatives led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 11, 2022

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

“Move to approve the Regular Board of Education Minutes of August 11, 2022, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to add Agenda Item 10.d ‘Student Expulsion’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Ryan Ogren reported that the transition from the summer to back to school finally felt normal again because the COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted. Students were excited to see their friends and teachers and looked forward to a successful year. Senior Sunrise was held on Tuesday, August 30 on the SHS Turf field at 5:45 a.m. In June, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) travelled to Chicago for the National Leadership Conference. For the summer of 2023, the FBLA National Conference will be held in Atlanta. The Robotics Team 195 CyberKnights attended the Robotics Invitational in Indiana in July for the first time since 2019 and placed fifth place out of 48 teams and made it to the Quarter Finals.

Uptej Singh reported on the SHS Fall Sports season activities that started for Football, Field Hockey, Girls Volleyball, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, and Golf. JFK and JAD Middle School sports teams held try-outs and will start competition on September 19. He thanked the Board for their support of athletics.

Angelina Micacci reported on the start of school activities at Derynoski, Hatton, Kennedy, and DePaolo Middle Schools.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mrs. Clark read the following statement into the record. *“Early today, the Board of Education and central office administration were made aware that there were worksheets used*

within a class at Southington High School that may not have been part of the course's approved curriculum. The administration is currently investigating this incident and, as is our practice with all personnel matters, we cannot comment any further at this time other than to ensure that if materials utilized were not part of our approved curriculum, progressive discipline will be applied. As we have indicated in the past, expectation of this Board and the administration is that our teachers teach the adopted curriculum as approved by this Board. If there is ever a question as to whether a particular lesson or topic falls within the approved curriculum, interested parties may visit the Curriculum portion of the Southington Public Schools website. The district has built out this section of the website and has begun posting all curriculum online for full transparency. While there is a lot of information already uploaded this process is ongoing until complete. As always, if you do have a question, you are free to contact any one of the Board members or the administration. All our phone numbers and email addresses are listed on the town website. If teaching of controversial issues or topics do occur, they must be done as part of an approved or adopted curriculum and within the confines of Policy 6144, 'Controversial Issues'. If a community member takes exception with a particular lesson or portion of the curriculum, please know that you can always contact us. Policy 1312, 'Public Complaints' clearly outlines the process that will occur for any materials that a community member wishes to challenge with our approved curriculum. We have a talented and dedicated staff, and this should in no way reflect upon all the great work that occurs in our classrooms every day. We remain committed to partnering with our families and insist that students are not pressured or coerced into personal or political views of individual staff members at any time."

The Board members addressed the start of a normal school opening and visiting various schools on opening day. They were impressed with the great conditions of the schools and engagement of teachers and students. Especially noted was the 'Red Carpet' welcoming of students by Mr. Robert Garry, Principal of Hatton School. Proposed was that Board members "Adopt a School" now that PTOs were meeting in person again, as was done years ago before COVID. The superintendent's office will coordinate.

Mr. Baczewski, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, addressed the controversial vocabulary list, which he found offensive, and was discouraged that parents' do not reach out to the Board directly and instead turn to social media when there is a complaint or problem so that the negative actions of one teacher could be addressed and not reflect negatively on all teachers. He noted that a TV station was at the meeting.

c. Communications from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. **Opening of School Report:** Mr. Madancy thanked all staff for a smooth opening of schools and all their work behind the scenes and throughout the summer.
2. **Bread for Life:** Mr. Madancy reported that with three and one-half weeks remaining, there were 3,892 meals provided to students this summer by Bread for Life, which also provides snacks for high school and middle school students.
3. **CREC Transportation:** Mr. Madancy reported that through the diligence of a special education secretary, \$156,380 was saved this summer through ride share arrangements with other school districts in specialized transportation costs. He thanked the special education secretary for thinking outside of the box and saving the district a substantial amount of money.
4. **Summer Work Update:** Mr. Madancy reported that he had a PowerPoint presentation that he decided not to present. He acknowledged that the maintenance and grounds employees did a tremendous amount of work this summer and thanked them.

5. Athletic Facilities Update: Mr. Steve Risser, Athletic Director, addressed the 2022 Capital Improvements at the SHS Sports Complex, the Title IX improvements and the major work done on the varsity girls' softball field this summer. He also addressed the work done and to be completed on the high school track, varsity baseball field, tennis courts, railings on a section of bleachers, safety fencing around bleachers, dugouts, new pitcher bullpen, and handicap walkway. Mr. Madancy clarified that these projects were part of the Capital Plan Projects outside of the Athletic Facilities Project and were related to immediate safety concerns and Title IX timeline compliance and not something that would go to referendum.

Mr. Madancy acknowledged that a parent volunteer, who is part of the ESPN Community Outreach Team and a Thalberg parent, and with other parents and ESPN volunteers repainted the outside recess blacktop area at Thalberg School for typical games such as hopscotch, etc.

Board members complimented Mr. Madancy and Mr. Pepe on a well-done and received Convocation video presentation.

Mr. Carson arrived at 7:47 p.m.

d. Communication from Public

Mrs. Clark stated that each public speaker was allotted five (5) minutes to speak and, per Board policy, could not mention employee names or make oral complaints or charges against any employee or references that could identify the employee. All complaints and charges should be submitted to the Board of Education under provision of Board of Education policy. No boisterous conduct would be allowed. Mrs. Clark explained that anyone who wanted to speak had to sign-in on the provided laptop.

Six (6) residents/students (Patricia Tavalozzi, Ella Perillo, Travis Riccio, Michael Kryzanski, Susan Zabahonski, Jenny Cinquemani) came to the podium and addressed a worksheet from the University of Arizona on "*Vocabulary for Conversations about Race, Gender, Equality and Inclusivity*" that was distributed to students in a high school English classroom the first day of school, which was not part of the curriculum and considered controversial and political. Some speakers addressed the divisive vocabulary and definitions on the document regarding racial, gender, white privilege, and social justice issues. Addressed was Critical Race Theory (CRT), policing rogue teachers, indoctrination of students, students who were offended and afraid to speak out in classrooms. Addressed was how the situation was managed by administration this year and last year. Requested was transparency between the Board of Education, superintendent, and community on how these situations are being resolved. Mentioned was that teachers should keep to teaching the basics and not their political views and the need for policies for teachers on how to engage in classroom discussions on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance Committee Meeting – September 1, 2022

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the committee met and discussed awarding Bid 2023-06 for snow removal and sanding services for four (4) schools (SHS, Derynoski, JFK and Kelley) to two vendors totaling \$161,500 based on price and past performance.

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

“Move to award Bid 2023-06, Snow Removal and Sanding Services, as recommended by the administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the committee also discussed the following:

- An RFP (Request for Proposal) for engineering services for a facility study at five elementary schools.
- The 2021-2022 Financial Close-out of the operating budget with an unexpended balance of \$495,848 with a request to the town to deposit these funds into the FY’22 Unexpended Funds Account, which was approved. T
- The school year 2022-2023 had an additional pay period, which happens every 14 years, with the unbudgeted impact approximately \$239,000 in FY’22-23.
- An update on the Non-lapsing Funds for fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- The committee received the Food Services financial report for Fiscal Year End 2022 with \$337,000 for a la carte items. The revenues from government receivables and grants resulted in a net income for the school year Food Service Program of \$1,055,268. Government reimbursements for free meals for all students will be ending soon.
- The committee discussed state contracts used to award painting services at three schools (\$45,600), carpet replacement at the high school (\$78,745), and removal and replacement of underground tanks at Strong School using the ezIQC Construction Cooperative pricing platform (\$215,425). Mrs. Mellitt explained that ezIQC is a platform used by municipalities and Boards of Education for construction-type projects.

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody noted the lengthy personnel report and thanked the Human Resources Department for their arduous work over the summer.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was no Town Government Communications to report.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. J. F. Kennedy Middle School Chiller Sound Proposal

Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, stated that a neighbor that abuts J. F. Kennedy Middle School has been expressing his frustration and concern about the noise level from the chiller unit since the 2015 renovation. In 2015, the architect, engineer and building committee discussed the noise level and the option for a product designed specifically for the Trane Chiller Unit that would not void the warranty. The cost for that product in 2015 was more than \$240,000 each for JFK and JAD Middle Schools. At that time, the average decibel level was 60 decibels and the Middle School Building Committee opted not to take action. Recently, the Town Council requested that the Town Engineer and BOE find a remedy to the issue. A contractor, Vibrasciences LLC, reviewed the issue and took decibel readings. The contractor was confident that installing sound attenuating blankets would reduce the sound by 60-70% costing approximately \$30,093 to reduce the decibel level by 6 or 7 decibels. Mr. Romano agreed that it was an annoying sound and was concerned about overheating the unit with blankets not designed specifically for the chiller. He would get a guarantee from the vendor for the 6 or 7 decibel reduction if the BOE wanted to move forward. Mr. Oshana agreed that it was an obnoxious, whining sound and not fair to quality of life for the neighbors of JFK. Mr. Romano stated that the best scenario would be to buy the package offered by the manufacturer of the chiller, which is Trane. The Town requested that the BOE absorb the cost. Board members questioned the blankets, warranty, EMS system monitoring, a trial run with the Vibrasciences blankets and concluded that the expensive, customized Trane unit product would solve the issues. Mr. Romano stated that he would go back to Trane for an updated quote and noted that it could go on the Capital Plan. After a lengthy conversation, the Board members agreed that something needed to be done. A concern was that the residents near DePaolo Middle School could request the same consideration although there have not been any complaints and there are natural buffers at that JAD compared to JFK.

Mr. Madancy recommended that Mr. Romano continue to work with the Town Engineer to find a viable solution to find a resolution for the neighbor and that the BOE agrees with the town to find an alternative.

b. Summer School Update – 2022

Mr. Tom Hinman, Director of Summer Programming K-12 and SHS Math Department Leader, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Southington Summer Academy for 2022. He highlighted in detail the following: Addition of two Associate Directors, transportation offered for all students in K-8 programs and Open Choice, 18 high school National Honor Society students volunteered to assist, four new middle school enrichment courses, high school counseling offered by Mr. Bugnacki who met with every student more than once, high school credit opportunities for 14 different courses, and college essay writing enrichment. Mr. Hinman addressed an invitation by CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents) to give an overview of the Southington Summer School Program at DePaolo Middle School. He spoke at length about the 2022 Session Dates and Times, transportation, the 2022 Elementary Academy housed at DePaolo Middle School, Middle School Academy housed at Kennedy Middle School, and High School Academy enrollments, offerings, and changes compared to 2021, High School Credit Recovery compared to 2019, and planning for the Summer of 2023 including organizational items and budgetary implications.

Mrs. Carmody addressed the Credit Recovery and intervention and noted that there were less students than in the past. She congratulated Mr. Hinman for a great job for his first year as

Summer School Director. Mr. Carson questioned students falling behind the learning curve as portrayed in the media and where Southington stood. Mr. Hinman noted that as a classroom teacher, there are noticeable skill deficits and that classroom teachers are working to catch up with closing those gaps and meet the needs of those students throughout the school year. Mr. Carson questioned Credit Recovery classes and enrollment. Mr. Derynoski questioned the success rate of the students who took the Credit Recovery classes and middle school enrollment figures that did not appear to add up. Mr. Baczewski questioned the cost of the Summer School Program and offering life skill enrichment courses.

At 9:04 p.m., Mrs. Clark called for a recess of the regular meeting and reconvened Executive Session at 9:15 p.m.

Mr. Pepe left the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

The Board members returned to Regular Session at 10:22 p.m.

c. Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools 2021-2022 and Compensation 2022-2023 (After Executive Session)

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

“Move to approve Steven G. Madancy’s new three-year contract commencing July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025, at an annual salary of \$200,510.00.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Anastasio, Mr. Baczewski, Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Carson, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Williams, Mrs. Clark.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Student Expulsion

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

“Move to expel Student #2022-13, as recommended by administration.”

Motion carried by voice vote with eight in in favor and Mr. Carson abstaining.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary