

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
DECEMBER 8, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, December 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 following the regular session.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Sean Carson, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski.

Absent were Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mr. Jasper Williams.

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

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

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Student Matters

Prior to the Regular meeting, there were not enough Board members in attendance for a quorum to conduct an Executive Session until following the regular meeting.

3. REGULAR SESSION

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The student representatives led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Clark called for a moment of silence in memory of Elaine Rich who passed away on November 6, 2022. Mrs. Rich worked for the Southington Public Schools from October, 1971 until retiring in September, 2004. During that time, she was a teacher's assistant/paraprofessional at Milldale Elementary School and Derynoski Elementary School.

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

“Move to move Agenda Item 10.a ‘Approval of Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trips’ to Agenda Item 6.e and Agenda Item 10.c ‘2021-2022 School Resource Officer Report’ to Agenda Item 6.f.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 10, 2022

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

“Move to approve the Regular Board of Education Minutes of November 10, 2022, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Ryan Ogren reported that the three Student Board Representatives, Mrs. Clark, and Mr. Madancy attended the CABE and CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Board of Education’s and Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents) Conference held on Saturday, November 19, 2022 in Groton. He gave a brief report on the Keynote Speaker and reported that the Student Reps participated in a seminar with other Student Board of Education Representatives throughout the state led by Eileen Baker, a member of the Old Saybrook Board of Education and CABE Board of Directors. In 1995, Ms. Baker spearheaded Old Saybrook’s Board policy to have high school students serving as non-voting members on the Board of Education, which was adopted by other school districts. Student Representatives at the seminar shared and compared their experiences and their functions on the various Boards of Education throughout the state.

Ryan reported on the following: J. A. DePaolo Middle School (JAD) students, in the leadership program, volunteered to ring the bell for the Salvation Army at Walmart and raised over \$800. He gave detailed information on the JAD holiday concerts, JAD Builders Club Toy Drive for Southington Community Services, and the annual Pajama Day fundraiser to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC).

Angelina Micacci reported that the Board Reps learned at the CABE/CAPSS Conference that they were allowed to add agenda items to the Board agenda. The Student Reps requested to have an official Board of Education Student Representative Policy written and included in the Board Policies. They learned that they have a greater purpose than giving sports reports. Angelina reported on the following: Homecoming Dance & Pep Rally was held November 18; World Language Culture Night was held on November 8 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.; December 21 two concerts will be held at the high school at 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Southington High School Drama Club production of the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee was successful. Auditions for the spring musical Legally Blond are currently taking place. DECA and FBLA held a Toy Drive for the CCMC.

Uptej Singh gave an updated report on the Fall athletic team tournaments and noted that it was the most successful fall season in the history at SHS and that all the teams took part in their respective CIAC post-season Tournaments. He gave detailed reports on Girls Volleyball, Field Hockey, Girls and Boys Soccer, Football, Girls Swimming, Girls and Boys Cross Country, and Golf Team. The winter athletic teams start their competitions next week. The middle school basketball teams start their competition the first week of January.

Uptej reported that Derynoski Elementary School held Toy and Food Drives, a Peer Drive for CCMC and Tree of Warmth Drive with active participation from the students. He reported on the J. F. Kennedy (JFK) Middle School 1st Lego League Team Competition, JFK holiday concerts, new JFK Middle School Police Resource Officer Kristin Muir who started November 28, 2022 and that two teachers at JFK (Amy Perry, Sarah Brown) were awarded Southington Education Foundation Grants.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mrs. Clark stated that the three Southington Student Representatives made a big impression at the CABA/CAPSS Conference and received compliments from other district Board members stating that the Southington Student Reps did a wonderful job. She pointed out that Mr. Carson also attended the CABA/CAPSS Conference.

Mrs. Clark explained that Board Members Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Jasper Williams and Mr. Zaya Oshana were absent due to illness or work obligations.

Mrs. Clark reported that she attended the Southington Education Foundation (SEF) grant award presentations to the teachers (Amy Perry, Sarah Brown, Beth Griffin, Jessica Fletcher, and Gina Krar), who spoke about their work. A grant was given to Hatton Elementary School for their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) room.

c. Communications from Administration

1. Free Lunch Program: Mr. Madancy reported that the state-sponsored Free Lunch Program in Southington had officially ended and was back to the former pre-COVID routine of Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch Meals in which families must complete an application to qualify for eligibility. He credited Ms. Nya Welinsky, Food Service Director, and Mrs. Mellitt for all their efforts the past couple of years to ensure all students were fed.

2. Karen Smith Academy: Mr. Madancy reported that he attended a meeting with the student body at the Karen Smith Academy and congratulated the staff in front of the students for their achievement of the Youth Development Award through the YMCA. The faculty will be recognized on February 15 at the YMCA Annual Meeting.

3. Mental Health Grant: Mr. Madancy stated that state legislation was passed in the June regarding Mental Health Grants for school districts. The maximum amount that Southington was able to apply for was \$120,000 and administration is awaiting the status of the application. The funds would be allocated to the additional mental health staff that the district hired to extend into next year. He will keep the Board advised on the status of the grant.

4. Excess Cost: Mr. Madancy reported on the Pupil Personnel Office pursuing Excess Costs for In-District specialized programs. Southington always pursued Excess Costs for students outplaced but not for In-District services for students with significant specialized services and support. Administration applied for a reimbursement of \$265,000 from the state for In-District Excess Costs for the first time. Administration will know in January if they will receive reimbursement and report to the Board. Those funds would help to offset the reduction in the Title I Grant.

Mrs. Clark questioned if there was a timeline for the Mental Health grant. Mrs. Mellitt noted that it was a competitive grant, and she would keep the Board up to date.

d. Communication from Public

There was no Public Communication.

e. Approval of Out of State/Overnight Field Trips (*formerly Agenda Item 10.a*)

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

“Move to approve the Out of State/Overnight Field Trips for SHS Wrestling.”

Mrs. Clark questioned how many students would be attending the Lowell, Massachusetts competition. Coach Dion stated that 14 student athletes would be going out of 56 on the team.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

f. 2021-2022 School Resource Officer Report (*formerly Agenda Item 10.c*)

Southington Police Lieutenant Brian Leppard introduced SHS School Resource Officer James Valentine (SRO for 4 years), and newly appointed Middle School Resource Officer Kristin Muir. Lt. Leppard explained in detail that the SRO assignment has multiple roles within the community and school environment providing a safe environment for students, staff, parents, visitors, and building positive lasting relationships for everyone. Discussed were the duties and responsibilities of a Resource Officer including providing law enforcement services, acting as an information resource, liaison, friend, and mentor, providing conflict resolution, intervention, and presenting training classes and lock-down drills, fire drills, and active aggressor training to name a few. They problem-solve, educate, and/or reevaluate the best safety practices in the school and around the school district. Statistics for 2021-2022 issues and complaints at the high school were provided. Lt. Leppard pointed out that the most serious complaints were going down.

Mrs. Anastasio questioned how many actual arrests were made out of the 74 issues and complaints versus being handled by school administration. Lt. Leppard explained that there were two arrests last year and that they try to divert out of the court system and re-direct when they can. Mrs. Anastasio requested that Officer Valentine walk the Board through a typical day. Officer Valentine replied that there was no typical day and gave a brief scenario. Mr. Derynoski noted that the high school students had a lot of respect for Officer Valentine. Mr. Pepe noted that there was a constant stream of students who seek out Officer Valentine’s advice and counsel every single day. Mrs. Clark thanked Officer Valentine for making sure that no student falls through the cracks.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee – November 16, 2022

Mr. Pepe reported that the committee met and discussed Policy 9325 that was revised last year and increased the potential allotted time to each speaker during public communication from three to five minutes. The committee considered two separate public comment sections at each meeting. Mr. Pepe was directed to draft a revision of Policy 9325 to reflect these parameters and present to the committee at their next meeting. The committee also reviewed the proposal to restructure curricular stipend positions. There are numerous stipend positions that remain unfilled. Mr. Pepe spoke in detail about the vacant positions and the proposal to restructure curricular stipend positions, proposal to reorganize and reinstate stipends including costs, grant

funding, and rationale. With approval, stipend job descriptions would be created and presented at a future meeting. The total new request costs combined would be \$20,824.

Mr. Derynoski and Mr. Carson questioned if a motion was needed to approve the funding and if the positions were contingent on grant funding. Mr. Carson asked about the grant process and where the grant funds would be coming from. Mr. Pepe explained grant applications and funding and whether they can provide the positions through grants versus the operating budget. Mr. Madancy addressed the Title II entitlement grant received every year; however, they do not know currently what that amount would be. The entitlement also specifies how the funds are to be used. The only use for Title II funds is for curriculum development, professional development, and conferences, which aligns with the purpose to use those funds. All this is contingent on the funds being available. Mr. Derynoski summarized that administration needed the Board's approval to go forward to re-write the job descriptions and questioned if it could be done by consensus instead of a formal vote. Mr. Madancy explained it would be a consensus because the Board would vote on the job descriptions when done and the funding was already in place.

CONSENSUS: To authorize the administration to re-write the job descriptions. The consensus of the Board was unanimously to move forward and re-write the job descriptions.

Mrs. Clark questioned how many other school districts offer the public two separate comment sections on their Board of Education meeting agendas. Mr. Pepe noted that there were extreme variations of how public speaking is handled in other districts. The committee did not want to limit comments and wanted to strike a balance giving priority to what was on the agenda but not limiting comments to only agenda items.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Mr. Derynoski commented that he was sorry to see Ms. Marion Stannard, SHS Agricultural-Science Department Leader, on the Personnel Report retiring on June 30, 2023 after 35 years. He was happy for her and noted that she has done a remarkable job with the Ag-Sci Program for so many years.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was no Town Government Communications to report.

b. Policy 5143 Revised and Adopted as Policy 4118.31 – School Employee Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Reports of Sexual Assault of Children – Revised – Second Reading

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

“Move to adopt Policy 5143 Revised and Adopted as Policy 4118.31 – School Employee Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Reports of Sexual Assault of Children.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- c. Policy 5127 – Completion Rates of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – *New* – Second Reading**

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

“Move to adopt Policy 5127 – Completion Rates of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – *New*.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- d. Policy 5144 – Physical Activity – Undirected Play – *Revised* – Second Reading**

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

“Move to adopt Policy 5144 – Physical Activity – Undirected Play – *Revised*.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- e. SHS – Introduction to Psychology Course Curriculum – Second Reading**

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

“Move to approve SHS – Introduction to Psychology Course Curriculum.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- f. SHS – Classical Mythology New Course Curriculum – Second Reading**

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

“Move to approve SHS – Classical Mythology New Course Curriculum.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- g. SHS General Chemistry Unit/Bundle 2: Bonding and Intermolecular Forces – Second Reading**

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

“Move to approve SHS General Chemistry Unit/Bundle 2: Bonding and Intermolecular Forces.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- h. SHS Accelerated Physics Unit 2: Forces and Motion – Second Reading**

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

“Move to approve SHS Accelerated Physics Unit 2: Forces and Motion.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

i. SHS Accelerated Biology Unit 1: The Chemistry of Life – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve SHS Accelerated Biology Unit 1: The Chemistry of Life.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

j. Science Grade 3 Unit 2: Grand Canyon Seashells – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Science Grade 3 Unit 2: Grand Canyon Seashells.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

k. Science Grade 4 Unit 3: Energizing Everything – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Science Grade 4 Unit 3: Energizing Everything.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

l. Science Grade 5 Unit 1A/1: Spectacular Sights in the Sky – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Science Grade 5 Unit 1A/1: Spectacular Sights in the Sky.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

m. Science Grade 7 Unit 3: Ecosystem Dynamics – Second Reading

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

“Move to approve Science Grade 7 Unit 3: Ecosystem Dynamics.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Out of State/Overnight Field Trips (Moved to Agenda 6.e)

b. Proposed 2023-2024 School Calendar – First Reading

Mr. Madancy stated that this is a first read. He thanked Mrs. Colegrove, his Executive Assistant, who worked hard on the calendar with the layout, information, and changes. The draft calendar will be shared with the school community for feedback with adoption at the next Board meeting.

c. 2021-2022 School Resource Officer Report (Moved to Agenda Item 6.f)

d. Winchester Estates Development – District Attendance Designation

Mr. Madancy explained that Winchester Estates is a new housing development north of Churchill Street that the Board must designate a school for the purpose of school attendance. Central office was receiving phone calls from families questioning the designated elementary school for that development. This neighborhood currently falls in an area designated as Thalberg Elementary School that has student enrollment of 436 students, which is at capacity. The Enrollment Study currently in progress may lead to considering town-wide redistricting. At this time, the administration recommends designating this development for attendance at Kelley Elementary School due to current enrollment projections at both schools.

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

“Move to approve the recommendation by the administration to designate the Winchester Estates Development for attendance at Kelley Elementary School.”

Mrs. Clark questioned bus transportation. Mr. Derynoski remarked that in 3-4 years there might be a need for a redistricting plan for the whole district to level enrollment out because it has been a number of years since it was last done and there are pockets of new neighborhoods. Mr. Carson added that community engagement would be needed in the process of redistricting the whole school district. Mr. Madancy explained that the two items moving forward in the district was the Athletic Complex in 2022 and in 2023 the Elementary Facilities Plan. The Elementary Facilities sub-committee would need to address the cost of escalation and the cost of construction against the debt service to the Town. There would be a correlation between the Elementary Facilities (whatever is decided) and redistricting and the extra transportation costs. Mr. Madancy agreed that the community would be engaged in that conversation.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

e. Capital Improvement Plan 2023-24 to 2027-28 – First Reading (Tabled from 11-10-22 meeting)

Mr. Madancy thanked the Board for tabling this agenda item because the last Board meeting was shortly after the Referendum. Time was needed for updated pricing and to cost out an itemized Athletic Complex project list and to span out over time the cost that would now fall within the Capital Improvement Plan prioritizing Title IX and the safety and liability concerns. Purposely, there is nothing in 2023-2024 for the Athletic Complex because the Board would be going to the Town requesting the Elementary Facilities Construction Project for referendum. Mr. Madancy planned to attend the January 9, 2023 Town Council meeting to discuss the current Capital Improvement Plan and bring it back to the Board of Education to amend as appropriate prior to formal adoption at the January 12 Board meeting. Ultimately, the Board of Education Capital Plan becomes part of the Town Manager’s prioritized Capital Plan and debt service.

f. Superintendent’s Proposed Goals for 2022-2023

Mr. Madancy noted that the Board members had these goals to review since October but were not able to vote on them due to a cancelled Board meeting and tabling. As they approach his mid-term evaluation, Mr. Madancy was prepared to update them and to discuss progress on these goals.

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

“Move to approve the Superintendent’s Proposed Goals for 2022-2023.”

Mr. Derynoski thought the goals were tough, but doable and realistic. Mrs. Clark thought they were reasonable; however, things have changed since October.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Student Matters, and upon conclusion reconvene to open session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

*Mrs. Clark recessed the Regular Session at 8:04 p.m.
Executive Session convened at 8:07 p.m. and ended at 8:27 p.m.
Mrs. Clark reconvened the Regular Session at 8:28 p.m.*

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

“Move to add Agenda Items 10.g and 10.h ‘Student Expulsions’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

g. Student Expulsion 2022-23-8

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

“Move to expel Student 2022-23-8, as recommended by administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

h. Student Expulsion 2022-23-10

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

“Move to expel Student 2022-23-10, as recommended by administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary