

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 14, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, September 14, 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 with an Executive Session preceding at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:27 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Sean Carson (*arrived 6:36 p.m.*), Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mr. Jasper Williams.

Absent: Mr. James Chrzanowski

Cabinet administrators present: Mr. Steve Madancy, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – UNAFFILIATED COMPENSATION: TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT STAFF, DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES, SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

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 Unaffiliated Compensation for Technology Department Staff, Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Substitute Teacher, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Clark ended the Executive Session at 6:50 p.m.

The Regular Board meeting was reconvened at 7:02 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION

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

Cabinet administrators present: Mr. Steven 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: Uptej Singh, Chelsey Arduini, Akari Win

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 Priscilla Kolpak who passed away on August 22, 2023. She began her career as a school aide in 1978 and worked for the Southington Public Schools until her retirement in December of 2009.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 8, 2023

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2023, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. June 29, 2023 Special Meeting

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

“Move to approve the Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes of June 29, 2023, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. August 17, 2023 Special Meeting

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

“Move to approve the Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2023, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Uptej Singh reported on the following high school events: Student survey to be conducted by the Student Representatives later in the year on the positive and negatives of the new Block Scheduling; Senior year kicked off with Senior Sunrise at 5:45 a.m. on August 29; Robotics; College Fair will be held September 19 from 6:15-7:45 p.m.; Unified Arts Program; FBLA National Convention competition during summer of 2023.

Chelsey Arduini gave the fall sports report to date for opening week for the high school Varsity Football, Field Hockey, Boys & Girls Cross Country, Girls Swim & Drive Team. The middle schools were holding fall sport team tryouts during the week. Many events during opening week were postponed due to the weather.

Akari Win reported on the other schools in the district including South End Elementary participating in the One Book, One School Program. JFK Middle School held their open house, and a kickoff assembly, the fall sports season tryouts and practices were underway along with afterschool clubs, and other activities that could be found on the JFK website. JAD Middle School held their open house; the Sixth Grade Blue Team and Silver Teams attended a field trip to Camp Sloper for team building skills; over 200 students signed up for the JAD Leadership Program with training at Camp Sloper on Saturday. JAD held their Open House and was getting ready for their Alex's Lemonade Stand at the Apple Harvest Festival.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Derynoski were looking forward to feedback on the Block Scheduling and requested to have Block Scheduling as an agenda item for follow-up as a mid-year or quarterly update.

Mr. Baczewski addressed the College Fair at the high school and questioned if any trades people were invited to do presentations. Mr. Madancy stated that the Career Fair was a separate event, which was highly successful in the past.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mr. Williams commented on the positive feedback that he received from parents on the start of school kick-off. Mr. Derynoski received questions regarding the effect of the Meriden New Britain Transportation bus strike on Southington. Mr. Madancy explained that there was no impact on Southington due to Meriden being a different bargaining unit. However, on the first day of school there are new bus drivers, new routes, parents taking photos that always cause delays. Mr. Derynoski received a complaint about the traffic jam at JAD Middle School in the morning at drop-off. Mrs. Clark thought that as time went on the traffic patterns would improve. Mr. Baczewski addressed the JAD Middle School open house that was well attended and always well organized and that as a Board member he was very proud.

c. Communications from Administration

1. Opening of School: Mr. Madancy stated that it was a smooth opening day this year and that he received 99% positive feedback. The only problem was due to the weather with the high heat and humidity index in the elementary schools resulting in weather-related closures.
2. Summer Work Update: Mr. Madancy reported that Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, Custodians, and the Maintenance Department worked hard all summer getting the schools ready for opening day. He noted that the schools were immaculate for the first day and thanked them for their efforts. Mr. Madancy will provide a comprehensive list of the school projects completed during the summer for the next meeting.
3. Redistricting: Mr. Madancy explained that in November of 2023 they were not going to referendum on building/renovating Kelley, Flanders, Derynoski Elementary Schools and were pausing on redistricting. He noted that birth rates were higher in Southington than expected from the previous Enrollment Study. In

addition, State Legislation passed changing the start age of a Kindergartner beginning in 2025. Mr. Madancy stated that this all needed to be factored into a new Enrollment Study for class size and building utilization.

4. Plantsville Center 9/11 Memorial Service: Mr. Madancy stated that a Memorial Service and tribute to the heroes and the victims of 9/11 was held on September 11 as a community event. He noted that many of the current students were not born on 9/11/2001 and did not understand the impact of that day.

d. Communication from Public – Agenda Items Only

There was no communication from the public.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance Committee Meeting – September 11, 2023

Mrs. Mellitt reported that the Finance Committee met and reviewed the Fiscal Year 2023 Financial update that included total expenditures of \$105,487,401 with an unexpended balance of \$103,708. There was an expected encumbered unemployment liability of \$17,342 for a former employee to be paid using the unexpended funds, which would bring the 2023 non-lapsing account balance to \$86,366 (.08% of the budget per Mr. Oshana). It was pointed out that in the past, the non-lapsing account had a significant amount more funds than \$86,366 and that is with a budget freeze put on supplies in December. Mrs. Mellitt reported that the committee discussed the FY'23 financial update for the Food Service Program. Revenues were generated through grant funding for the National School Lunch Program and the SMART fund provided for the 2022-23 school year. Meals were provided free to all students this year until SMART funds ran out in early December. The SMART funds 2.0 iteration began March 1st. There was a net profit of \$684,603 for FY'2022-2023. The Committee received an update on the Mobile Device Management 5-year Agreement and that Mr. Savage, Network Manager, was able to reduce the number of devices covered with the new five-year agreement resulting in a savings of \$14,612 from the original \$24,452. Mrs. Mellitt announced that Mr. Kyle Fickel is the new Accounting Manager recently hired and is a Southington resident. Due to the retirement of Ms. Nya Welinsky, who was the Food Service Director for the district for many years, Ms. Nicole LeFebvre was hired as the new School Lunch Director. Mrs. Mellitt stated that she and Ms. Nicole Lefebvre were currently participating in a review of the School Lunch Program with state auditors who audit school districts every three years, which was postponed due to the pandemic. Mrs. Mellitt and Ms. Lefebvre have been attending workshops provided by the State School Nutrition Department to prepare for the review.

Mrs. Clark questioned the number of families signing up for the Free & Reduced Lunch. Mrs. Mellitt explained the new program called STABLE and that the district received funding for the School Lunch Program for all students to receive Free Breakfast. Students who apply for Free or Reduced Lunches will receive both breakfast and lunch accordingly. Discussed was the MyPaymentsPlus software for families to pay for Lunches online, as well as by check.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

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

Mr. Derynoski noted that Mr. Rit Campbell, AV Technology Analyst for the Southington Public Schools for 25 years, was on the Personnel Report under retirements.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was no Town Government Communication.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Summer School Update

Mr. Tom Hinman, Director of Summer School Programming K-12, gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Southington Summer Academy. He recognized the teams of teachers along with Mrs. Zappone and Mrs. Lawlor who made it successful. He addressed streamlining the program registration process, IEPs and 504s, timesheets, and tuition payments utilizing software programs. He highlighted the 2023 session dates and times for the K-5 Summer Academy, grades 6-8 Summer Academy, High School Credit Recovery and Enrichment programs. Mr. Hinman noted that the planning process starts in January/February and that grants were applied for but were denied. The sessions dates were July 3 through July 27, 2023.

The Elementary K-5 Reading & Math Intervention classes for 103 Tier III students were held at DePaolo Middle School with eight teachers. The Elementary Enrichment classes had 27 families participating. The middle school Grades 6-8 Reading & Math Intervention and Course Recovery for 19 students was held at Kennedy Middle School with four teachers. Mr. Hinman discussed the focus at length on Tier III students who needed intervention. The High School Academy for Grades 9-12 was held in collaboration and partnership with the Karen Smith Academy (KSA) 11 students for a total of 85 students enrolled in Credit Recovery with an 88% success rate. Mr. Hinman noted that the 11% failure rate was due to attendance. He addressed the courses offered with 11 teachers and other staff.

In planning for the 2024 Summer School Academy, Mr. Hinman plans to address the enrollment timeline and get the information out for Enrichment & Remediation Programs before the other Summer Camps do. He addressed at length the ESSER (Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds from the pandemic that had ended, tuition costs, support for families in need, teacher compensation, structural redesign, digital payment platform with MyPaymentPlus, adding more enrichment classes, and staff time and attendance.

Mr. Carson questioned the ESSER pandemic stipends being removed for Summer School Academy teachers, recruiting teachers, contractual rates, tuition-based costs prior to COVID and staffing. Mr. Pepe explained that the original rate was back to the contractual rate, which was lower post-pandemic, and that an agreement was entered into last year at a mid-point between the pandemic (higher rate) and the contractual rates (lower) in order to attract quality teachers. Discussed were stipends for 2024 Summer School teachers and cost factors. Mr. Madancy stated that this would need continued review and discussion.

Mr. Carson also questioned the focus on Tier II and Tier III students, more insight on increasing elementary enrichment programs. Mr. Hinman explained in detail the intervention focus and his plans for improving the offering of Enrichment courses such as sending an email to staff who were interested in offering an enrichment program and the timing component. He explained that he was late in addressing the Enrichment programs for the 2023 Summer School. Mr. Williams questioned what the pre-COVID tuition rates were, which Mr. Hinman believed was over \$200 per course but needed to confirm that. Mr. Baczewski questioned tuition costs and the difference between Tier II and Tier III (more intense intervention) students and offering to other students who could benefit from summer school programs, which was done in 2022, not 2023. Mr. Madancy, in his budget process, will address Summer School Academy tuitions for 2024.

11. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

There was no public communication.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary