

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

March 27, 2018

Mrs. Willerup called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone, Susan Salina and Jennifer Batchelar. Messrs. Mike Goman, Tom Frank and Jeff Tindall.

**Members absent:** Mr. Todd Burrick

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Business Manager Burke LaClair, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, Student Representative Isabelle Dorman and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

Ms. Dorman reported on activities at each of the elementary schools and the middle school. She noted that students at SHS and HJMS participated in the national school walkout on March 14<sup>th</sup> to remember the students who died in Parkland, FL. Ms. Dorman stated that the SHS student council will be hosting a Trivia Night and invites teams to participate.

Ms. Tedone reported on CAFE Day on the Hill. She noted that 45 bills are coming before the legislature. Ms. Tedone stated that the Executive Director of CREC has been holding local meetings, including one in Simsbury, to discuss magnet school funding going forward.

Ms. Batchelar stated that the PTO meeting at HJMS discussing the role of the School Resource Officers (SRO) included a fabulous presentation by the SRO's. Mr. Goman reported that the Personnel & Negotiations Committee met to discuss negotiations with the nurse's bargaining unit. Ms. Salina reported that the Curriculum Committee met in the SHS Guidance Department to discuss participation in the mindfulness program at SHS.

Mr. Sullivan reported on the Townwide Band Festival that included musicians from all 7 schools, the University of Hartford and Simsbury's Community Band. He stated that a tentative agreement has been reached with the nurse's bargaining unit and the union will vote on the contract in April.

Ms. Murray stated that six students are participating in the state level Invention Convention. She noted that more than 85 teachers taught classes to fellow teachers during the Technology Conference held on the March 26<sup>th</sup> professional development day.

Mr. LaClair stated that the Board of Finance will meet tomorrow evening and will forward the budgets to the Public Hearing. Mr. Curtis circled back to Ms. Tedone's remarks relative to CREC magnet school funding. He pointed out that Simsbury

spends less than \$250,000 on CREC magnet school tuition and therefore is not a major player in the magnet school issue.

Ms. Willerup noted that Ray Dry passed away recently. Mr. Dry served as a BOE member for 27 years.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2018 Meeting

Mr. Frank: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone and Mr. Goman abstained.

B. Personnel

Ms. Salina: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Helen Tabaka and Jan Ferrier Sands, with regret, effective June 30, 2018.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

C. Acceptance of Gift to Central School

Ms. Salina: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$3,400 to Central School by the Central School PTO be approved.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

D. Acceptance of Gift to Tariffville School

Mr. Goman: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$5,775 to Tariffville School from the Tariffville PTO be approved.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

E. Cancellation of the April 10, 2018 Regular Meeting

Ms. Salina: MOVE to cancel the Board of Education meeting scheduled on April 10, 2018.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Next Generation Accountability Report

Ms. Murray stated that the district has had access to the state testing results since August, but the state only released the report the last week in February. She reviewed the purpose of the CT Next Generation Accountability System. (1) It provides a more complete picture of a school or district. (2) It guards against narrowing of the curriculum in tested subjects. (3) It expands ownership of accountability to all staff. (4) It allows schools to demonstrate progress on "outcome pre-cursors". (5) It encourages leaders to view accountability results not as a

Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2018 Meeting

Personnel

Gift to Central School

Gift to Tariffville School

Cancellation of April 10, 2018 Meeting

Next Generation Accountability Report

“gotcha” but as a tool to guide and track improvement efforts at the district and state level.

Ms. Murray provided an overview of the 2016-17 accountability index for each of the 7 schools. She noted that Central School, Latimer Lane School and Tariffville School have all been named Schools of Distinction. SHS had the third highest rating in the state, but was bumped down due to the achievement gap. Ms. Murray reported on DRG A and DRG B comparisons.

Ms. Murray reviewed the 12 indicators that establish the accountability index for each school. They include academic achievement, academic growth, assessment participation rate, chronic absenteeism, coursework and exams for postsecondary and career readiness, graduation rates, postsecondary entrance rate, physical fitness and arts access. Ms. Murray reviewed the district index rating for each of these indicators. She also provided a comparison of the results between 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Ms. Murray addressed the district’s areas of focus going forward. These include the ELA average percent of students’ growth target, the Math achievement gap at HJMS, and chronic absenteeism for all student and high needs students. Ms. Murray pointed out that the physical fitness scores for those students who take physical education in the summer were not submitted to the state, but will be in the future. Additionally, we have now aligned our course numbers with those of the state in the area of Arts access which will improve our scores. Ms. Murray pointed out that next spring the Next Generation Science Standards assessment will be taken.

Ms. Murray addressed the achievement gap in Simsbury. She explained that a district/school is identified as having an “achievement gap” if its gap size is substantially different from the average statewide gap in any subject area. Ms. Murray reviewed the achievement gap data, explaining that if the size of the gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation then the gap is an outlier.

Ms. Murray briefly reviewed the annual District Profile and Performance Report compiled by the state. The 2016-17 district and school reports are posted on the state and district websites.

**B. SHS Fuel Cell Proposal**

Mr. LaClair introduced Ryan Bird and Steve Kowalski from Doosan Fuel Cell America, Inc. Mr. LaClair explained that a fuel cell is a self-contained unit that uses natural gas to generate electricity without combustion. Doosan Fuel Cell America is located in South Windsor and all monitoring and maintenance of the proposed fuel cell will be handled from South Windsor.

Mr. LaClair explained the fuel cell proposal. Doosan would finance, own and operate the fuel cell to be located approximately 550’ behind the new gymnasium at SHS. There are no capital or upfront costs to Simsbury. The BOE would enter into a 20 year power purchase agreement for electricity to be used at SHS. Mr. LaClair explained the benefits as a 1.5 Cent/kWh saving below our electricity supply cost which provides an estimated savings of \$30,000 annually. The savings on our heating and hot water costs from the use of the waste heat generated by the fuel cell is estimated at more than an additional \$30,000 per year. The total estimated savings is \$60,000 per year depending on usage.

SHS Fuel Cell Proposal

Mr. Goman asked about insurance coverage for the fuel cell. Mr. LaClair responded that our attorney is currently reviewing the agreement and those types of questions are being vetted. Mr. Tindall questioned the length of the 20 year agreement. Mr. Bird responded that this is the amount of time needed to pay off the fuel cell. Mr. Goman asked the price to purchase the fuel cell outright. Mr. Bird responded that the outright price is \$2.3-\$3 million, maintenance cost is \$60,000 and the cost of natural gas to run it is \$60,000. Mr. Goman suggested looking into purchasing options.

Mr. LaClair reviewed next steps and the approval process. He stated that the BOE would give final approval once our counsel has completed their review. Ms. Salina asked how the unit will be protected. Mr. LaClair replied that it will be fenced in. Mr. Bird said they only need to access the unit once per year to change out the filters.

Ms. Willerup pointed out that this is another opportunity where we have found a way to save money. Mr. Bird pointed out that the fuel cell provides the equivalent of 5 acres of solar panels.

#### PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Ms. Tedone noted that March is National School Board Member month and she thanked her fellow board members for all of the work that they do.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Goman: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

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Todd Burrick  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment

