

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

May 10, 2022

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Tara Willerup, Jen Batchelar, Lydia Tedone and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson.

Members absent: Mrs. Susan Salina and Mr. Jeff Tindall.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Alex Picoult and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITIONS

Shannon Gagne, Art Department Supervisor K-12, introduced the recipient of the CT Association of Schools (CAS) Scholar Artist Paulina Ganych and the Scholar Performing Artist Alex Vargas. Ms. Gagne provided a presentation of the Scholastic Art Award winners from SHS and HJMS.

Board members recognized students with framed artwork in the conference room that will remain for a two year period. Students present who were recognized: Avery Payson, Madeline Griggs, Luke Ferreira, Elaine Reffie, Brielle Incillo, Grace Wollenberg, Emily Panaro and Benjamin Keller. Those not present: Brooke Duncan, Dara Casale, Gavin Roberts, Henry Pugliese and Keely Sullivan.

Mr. Picoult presented his AP Art exam submission and walked everyone through his processes for each project he submitted.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

April Smith, 44 Climax Road, suggested that critical race theory has infiltrated the school system. She expressed concern with the book Gender Queer being available in the SHS library, and suggested that it is pornographic material. Ms. Smith suggested that this book will further confuse students going through puberty.

Jennifer Wilson, 23 Worcester Road, suggested that recent events at SHS are symptoms of a bigger problem. She stated that safety at SHS is concerning, noting that school climate is the most important element of school. Ms. Wilson questioned the lack of adult support at the scene of these incidents and stated that voices from students, staff, board members and the administration need to be heard.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported that this is the second week of AP exams. He noted the upcoming events at SHS, as well as activities at HJMS and the elementary schools.

Ms. Tedone provided a summary of this year's legislative highlights affecting schools. Ms. Thomas suggested a climate and culture committee should come together and hear input from students.

Recognitions

Public Audience

Communications

Mr. Sullivan stated that since the April recess seven new teachers have been hired and more are coming in this week to sign contracts. He reported that the Board of Selectmen passed a resolution that the town will cover the deficit should bid estimates for the Latimer Lane renovation project come in over budget. The design drawings will be complete July 1 and then the project can go out to bid.

Ms. Willerup noted that the school district does send out climate surveys but going forward we need to make sure we are reaching all students. Mr. Curtis stated that over the past two years the district has sent a lot of push notifications due to Covid, and we need to now engage in receiving input from the community.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of April 26, 2022

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.

B. Acceptance of Donation from Central School PTO

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$2,500 to Central School by the Central School Parent-Teacher Organization be approved.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

C. Acceptance of Donation from Latimer Lane School PTO

Ms. Thomas: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$2,719 to Latimer Lane School Parent-Teacher Organization be approved.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. 2020-21 Audit Report

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE to table the 2020-21 audit report to the May 24, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

B. Policy First Reading

Mr. Sullivan stated this policy is part of the personnel series and relates to an alcohol and drug free workplace. Due to changes in the cannabis laws in Connecticut, the policy needs to be revised.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, stated there is more discussion in the public forum than in board meetings regarding curriculum concerns. She expressed concern about the assault at SHS and noted this is not a left or right issue. Ms. Boyko

Approval of
Minutes of April
26, 2022

Acceptance of
Donation from
Central School
PTO

Acceptance of
Donation from
Latimer Lane
School PTO

2020-21 Audit
Report

Policy First
Reading

Public Audience

referenced BOE policy stating that the display or possession of pornography is prohibited. She questioned why the same policy does not apply to the reading material in the school library.

Karen Meyers, 42 Woodside Circle, asked if parents are asked to participate when there is a climate survey. Mr. Curtis responded that parents have been included, as well as staff. Ms. Meyers suggested that the SHS sports contract should include consequences for sexual harassment and certain postings on social media.

Ms. Willerup stated that continuous improvement is the board's philosophy. Mr. Burrick noted that the BOE policies are continually reviewed on a loop.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to enter executive session to discuss student matters and include Superintendent Curtis at 7:29 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Executive Session

Adjournment