

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

September 12, 2017

Mrs. Willerup called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Tara Willerup and Susan Salina. Messrs. Mike Goman, Todd Burrick, Tom Frank and Jeff Tindall.

**Members absent:** Mrs. Lydia Tedone and Mr. Tom Doran

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Business Manager Burke LaClair, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, Student Representative Dylan Fitch and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Curtis introduced Music Teacher Colleen Thompson, the Kathleen Magowan 2017 Teacher of the Year. He spoke about her speech and performance at Convocation, noting that Ms. Thompson exemplifies excellence and is entirely student centered. In her Convocation speech, Ms. Thompson spoke about inclusion, teamwork and the character of our students.

Ms. Lemke introduced District Inclusion Consulting Teacher, Deb Cervas. Ms. Cervas is the recipient of the Farmington Valley Directors Thomas DiCorleto Memorial Outstanding Service Award for 2017. Ms. Lemke spoke about Ms. Cervas' role over the past 31 years in the school district

Mr. Curtis introduced Paula Atherton, Simsbury's Paraeducator of the Year. Ms. Lemke spoke about Ms. Atherton's work at Tariffville School and her move into taking on behavior coach responsibilities.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Willerup introduced SHS senior Dylan Fitch, the BOE Student Representative to the BOE for the first half of the year.

Mr. Fitch updated board members on activities at the elementary schools, including open houses and curriculum nights. He stated that Phase II of the HJMS project is almost completed and he sees many Chromebooks being used at SHS.

Mr. Frank reported on Convocation and the remarks made by Ms. Thompson and Mr. Curtis. Ms. Salina spoke about her four children going through the Simsbury school system and how well they were served by the school district.

Ms. Lemke reported that Community for Care is holding a panel discussion regarding student stress. She stated that SHS has been recognized as a National Special Olympics Unified Champion School. Ms. Lemke pointed out that SHS serves as an

Recognitions

Public Audience

Communications

exemplar for inclusion practices and student leadership.

Ms. Murray reported on last year's CT Writing Project and noted all of the Simsbury students' work that is in the project publication.

Mr. Curtis discussed the state budget scenarios and the fact that there may be a budget vote this week. He pointed out the crucial date to have a state budget in place is October 1<sup>st</sup>. That is the date that the Governor's Executive Order will go into effect if a state budget is not in place. Under the Executive Order, Simsbury would lose all education funding totaling \$6 million.

Mr. Curtis noted that the Governor's September budget is not as damaging as the Executive Order. The Governor's September budget for Simsbury (1) assumes teacher pension expenses of \$819,097 pushed down from the state, (2) assumes an Education Cost Sharing grant reduction of \$2,916,792, and (3) assumes no change to the excess cost reimbursement for special education. Under this budget the total impact to Simsbury would be within the range of the towns' adopted 2017-18 fiscal year budget contingency. Mr. Curtis stated that the BOF may hold a three board meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the budget.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### A. Approval of Minutes of June 20, 2017 Special Meeting

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2017 special meeting.

Ms. Salina: Seconded. So moved.

#### B. Personnel

Mr. Frank: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the notice of intent to retire of Patti D'Onofrio, Janet Haley, and Susanne Riggins effective June 30, 2020.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Tindall: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Alexis Carter effective July 19, 2017, Christine Antidormi effective July 20, 2017, Christopher Barcelos effective July 26, 2017, Laura Carlisle effective July 30, 2017, and Patrick Hubeny effective August 23, 2017.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the qualifications of the fifteen new teachers hired over the summer.

### INFORMATION AND REPORTS

#### A. School Opening Report

Ms. Murray reported on professional development and curriculum work that was completed over the summer, in particular work related to Math in Focus. She reviewed what took place at the Summer Academies and the Simsbury Arts

Approval of  
Minutes of June  
20, 2017 Special  
Meeting

Personnel

School Opening  
Report

Academy. Ms. Murray provided an overview of the expansion of iPad access, the growing number of STEM/Makerspaces, and the 1:1 Chromebook program for students at SHS. She noted that an Innovative Technology Team has been formed with a teacher in each department, and at each grade level, who can provide technical support for other teachers.

Ms. Murray stated that moving forward the focus will continue on Math in Focus and closing the achievement gap. Achievement gap data is being reviewed so that strategies to address the gap can be developed. Also this year, a team of educators from around the district is being formed to map out how students move through the school system. The result will be a document identifying the Profile of a Graduate. Ms. Murray noted that the SHS Leadership Team, in conjunction with HJMS, will look at school start times.

Mr. Frank asked that when strategies are determined for addressing the achievement gap they be shared in a report that includes specificity with regard to the measures that will be taken. Mr. Frank asked if changing the school start times would have an implication on the BOE budget. Mr. Curtis responded that costs related to transportation will be analyzed by Mr. Sullivan and himself. This will be an element in the overall analysis of a change in school start times. Ms. Murray noted that we will work with other districts that are looking at the same information, such as West Hartford.

Mr. Sullivan provided an overview of New Teacher Orientation which occurred late in August. He noted the 24 teachers who attained tenure. Mr. Sullivan addressed student enrollment, stating the projected number of students was 4,036 and we began the school year with 4,034 students. He noted that he anticipates this number will rise as of the October 1<sup>st</sup> reporting date. Enrollment in the elementary schools remained flat with decreases at HJMS and SHS totaling 76 students.

Mr. Sullivan discussed elementary class size. He noted that at Latimer Lane School there are classes in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade that are over the guideline. There are a total of 10 classes over the guideline throughout the district at the elementary level. Mr. Sullivan noted that this was a result of late move-ins to town. He stated that at Latimer Lane School retired Simsbury teachers are working as tutors during the math and literacy blocks to assist with small group instruction in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes.

Mr. Sullivan pointed out that there was a number of move-ins from the condominiums on Rt. 10 just over the Avon town line. Other new condominium complexes in town have not yielded a lot of students. Mr. Curtis stated that in prior years we would add a class section if one grade at a school had 24/25 students in an elementary class, but given the \$1 million reduction in our budget prior to the referendum there are no funds available to add teachers. He noted that there have been multiple conversations with parents of students in some of these larger classes.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed historical K-6 class size. He pointed out that in 2010-11 there were also 10 classes exceeding the guideline, at a time when there was a large reduction made to the superintendent's budget. In 2008-09 there were 7 classes over the guideline.

Mr. Sullivan stated that moving forward the Personnel Office will be entering Nurse negotiations, working on a capacity study relative to HJMS as a possible grade 6/7/8

school, sharing the school climate survey data, and implementing SafeSchools web-based training to employees beginning in October. He provided a brief overview of the new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all employees in the district.

Ms. Lemke provided a synopsis of the Extended School Year (ESY) program provided for 162 special education students. This program provides skill maintenance at a variety of sites over the summer. Ms. Lemke reviewed the professional development provided to special education certified staff and paraeducators prior to the start of the school year.

Ms. Lemke outlined the department themes moving forward. These include looking at the achievement gap through the Math in Focus lens and seeing what manifests in the MIF program. The department continues to receive training on dyslexia. Ms. Lemke stated that transitions for special education students as they move into college, the work force, or the adult world is always an area of focus for the department. In the area of mental health supports the department will look at school avoidance. Ms. Lemke stated that her department will continue to look at delivery of their services and costs related to outplacements and out-of-district transportation.

Mr. LaClair stated that his office filed the ED001 financial report to the CSDE early in September. He reviewed pictures of work done over the summer relative to maintenance and capital projects. These projects include: new tennis courts at SHS, the addition of solar panels at SHS, Phase II of the HJMS renovation project, Central School cafeteria renovations and the addition of air conditioned cooling areas. Air conditioned areas were also added at Latimer Lane, Squadron Line and Tootin' Hills schools. Mulch was added at all playgrounds and crosswalks were painted at all schools. Energy efficiency work is ongoing at Tariffville, Latimer Lane and Central schools. A new upper elementary playground was installed at Tootin' Hills School, funded by their PTO.

Mr. LaClair addressed the year ahead for his department. He stated that implementation of climate control projects at SHS in the cafeteria and gym will be completed. Planning for the HJMS Phase III renovation and other 6 year capital improvement plan projects is underway. Collective bargaining with the nurse's group will occur over the course of the school year.

Mr. Frank asked when the HJMS Phase III renovation will be brought back for a vote. Mr. Curtis responded that he expects to bring the project back this year after an analysis of capacity at HJMS, and other options, are considered. The administration will define the process going forward at the next board meeting.

#### PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

Mr. Tindall thanked Mr. Curtis for keeping board members updated over the course of the summer.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Frank: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

Adjournment

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Todd Burrick  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary