

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

September 26, 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, Lydia Tedone and Susan Salina. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Tom Frank and Jeff Tindall.

**Members absent:** Messrs. Mike Goman 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.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Fitch updated board members on the Latimer Lane Run Back to School 5K and Fun Run; the Tootin’ Hills ongoing fundraiser to provide sandwiches for a shelter in Hartford; the HJMS fundraiser to help the southeastern states; and the successful elementary school lockdown drills. He noted the formation of the Hall of Fame at SHS.

Communications

Ms. Tedone reported on the issues with the state budget and suggested we should focus on the positive things we do in our district.

Ms. Lemke provided an antidote about a special education student in the STEP program at SHS.

Mr. Sullivan stated that this week is Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, noting the programs offered through Simsbury’s Adult Education Department. He stated that work is beginning to complete a capacity study at HJMS. The initial meeting included discussion on whether the middle school could accommodate a schedule for grades 6, 7 and 8. The next meeting will take place with the architect who designed the proposed renovation developed last year for HJMS.

Ms. Murray stated that tomorrow’s professional development time will be used for teachers to develop their Professional Growth Plans for this year. She reported that tomorrow evening the first meeting to discuss a possible change to school start times will be held.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of September 12, 2017 Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2017 meeting.

Approval of  
Minutes of  
September 12,  
2017 Meeting

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

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Simsbury High School Academic Report

SHS Academic Report

Mr. O'Brien, SHS Principal, reviewed the high school core values and beliefs. He noted statistics relative to academic excellence at the school. Ms. Murray stated that the academic indicators of success are utilized to monitor student progress. Mr. O'Brien presented data, compared to other districts, relative to CAPT and SAT school day test scores. He pointed out that for the second year in a row; SHS has the highest CAPT scores in the state. Mr. O'Brien provided information relative to Advanced Placement courses and exams.

Mr. O'Brien reviewed data on the achievement gap relative to SAT school day scores compared to other DRG B towns. He pointed out that relative to other DRG B towns the achievement gap in Simsbury is one of the lowest in the group, with performance being one of the highest in the group.

Mr. O'Brien reviewed post-secondary plans for the graduating class, noting that last year 23% of the graduating class was accepted at Tier 1 colleges and universities. He reviewed enrollment in engineering, world language and fine arts classes, all of which have increased.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the results of the school climate survey. He pointed out the areas of strength: Staff and students feel safe; respect for differences has risen; and students feel that they can access support if needed. Areas for growth include: Communication; sense of belonging; student to student respect; and evaluation and feedback for staff. Mr. Burrick noted that some of the survey scores have been dropping year to year. Mr. O'Brien stated that last year's survey did not have a large student participation rate and the administration is looking at how they administer the survey.

Mr. O'Brien addressed school culture at SHS. He noted the change of SHS Connect to an interest based approach. He pointed out the success of the Trojan Code "Pay it Forward" initiative. Mr. O'Brien reviewed some of the school improvement projects relative to culture: Main lobby trophy cases; the athletic Hall of Fame; the new spirited Trojan Mascot *Troy*; and use of the newly renovated courtyard. He noted the implementation of the digital citizenship "THINK" program which puts forward the concept of "think before you post".

Mr. Frank suggested that there should be a parallel initiative to the athletic Hall of Fame for those who excel academically. He noted that at CCSU they use flags to honor alumni who have reached high accomplishments. Mr. Curtis stated that once the Hall of Fame is fully launched with athletics we will consider expansion of the program. Ms. Salina noted that these types of recognitions were discussed by the SHS Leadership Team.

Mr. O'Brien provided a budget preview. He stated that implementation of the NEASC recommendations will be occurring. A districtwide project developing the Portrait of a Graduate will soon be underway. A review of the athletic facilities is needed as there are limited facilities and this causes issues for the high school sports' teams.

Mr. O'Brien addressed next steps at SHS. He stated that there will be continued focus on the achievement gap and looking at mid-year and end of year assessments for students. Mr. O'Brien noted that an expanded SHS Leadership Team will look at school start time.

Mr. Tindall expressed concern with the survey results indicating students do not feel connected at school. Mr. O'Brien responded that this is an area being worked on at the school, and again he expressed concern with the limited number of students represented in the survey.

Mr. Frank asked if there is any trend data relative to the SAT school day test scores and the achievement gap. Ms. Murray pointed out that last year was only the second year for this new assessment. Mr. Frank questioned whether the demographic achievement gap data is different from the regular ed versus special ed data. Mr. Curtis explained that the High-Needs label on the graph includes special ed, EL and free and reduced lunch students. Mr. Frank questioned the metric used to determine if we have highly effective teachers. Mr. Sullivan responded that through our current evaluation system, teachers are scored based on standards relative to performance. These scores are in the range of 1-4 and are reported to the state. The majority of our teachers receive a score of 4 which represents exemplary performance.

Mr. Curtis stated that the work ahead at SHS is exciting. Simsbury is fortunate to have a high school that provides so many pathways and choices for students which is one of the main reasons why SHS is as successful as it is. Mr. Curtis noted, that given the budget issues at the state level these are likely areas we will need to look at going forward.

#### B. Budget Update

Budget Update

Mr. Curtis stated that in September the state legislature approved the Republican budget. This budget does not require towns to pay into the teacher pension fund and assumes an ECS reduction offset with a new special education grant. The total impact of this budget is \$2.3 million more than budgeted and would cover the funds put aside in our contingency plan. The additional \$2.3 million would go into the town general fund.

Mr. Curtis provided information should the Governor's Executive Order be in effect October 1<sup>st</sup>. This would result in an ECS reduction of \$6,233,528, \$1.5 million of which would typically be received in October. It assumes no change to excess cost reimbursement for special education. The total impact is unclear, dependent on when a budget is adopted. Mr. Curtis stated that he met with school administrators and a spending freeze is in place for non-essential items.

#### PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

#### 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