

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

October 8, 2019

Ms. Tara Willerup called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Tara Willerup, Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson.

**Members absent:** Mrs. Lydia Tedone and Mr. Jeff Tindall.

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

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

RECOGNITIONS

Representative John Hampton presented SHS senior and BOE student representative Josh Picoult with a citation in honor of his winning the U.S. Constitution Award in Connecticut and placing 9th in the nation. The topic was: *Where Do We Draw the Line? How the Triumph of District-Based Representative Government Devolved into a Tragic Distortion of American Democratic Ideal.*

Recognitions

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Huie reported on events and activities at the elementary schools and high school. Ms. Lemke reported that the next Equity Council meeting will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup> and the Spirit Council meeting will be held on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Sullivan reported that Tecton Architects presented the potential options for the scope of schools moving forward to the Facilities & Enrollment Task Force. The task force will meet again on October 30<sup>th</sup> and then will bring their recommendations forward to the board in November.

Communications

Ms. Murray reported on the November 5<sup>th</sup> professional development day. She stated that the CT Commissioner of Education will be the keynote speaker. His remarks will focus on our district priority of equity, as well as the Vision of a Graduate as it relates to global citizenship. Mr. Curtis urged the public to view our School Facilities page on the district website.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A. Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2019 Meeting

Ms. Salina: MOVE to approve the minutes of September 24, 2019 meeting.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

Minutes of  
September 24,  
2019

- B. Personnel

Personnel

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Meredith Jacob effective June 30, 2020.

Ms. Salina: Seconded. So moved.

## INFORMATION AND REPORTS

### A. HJMS Academic Report

Scott Baker, HJMS Principal, reviewed some of the highlights from the last school year. He addressed the ELA SBAC scores, noting that performance has been consistent and Simsbury's scores are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in DRG B. Mr. Baker discussed the SBAC math results. Although Simsbury has not improved their rank, we are closing the percentage gap between us and the top district. Mr. Baker stated that we are in year 3 of the Math In Focus implementation and students are coming into 7<sup>th</sup> grade with a solid understanding of math.

Mr. Baker addressed how the first BOE goal, student growth and success, is being implemented at the middle school. Mr. Baker noted the implementation of the 1:1 Chromebook program at the middle school. He stated that this year the faculty is involved in a homework study and along with input from parents, will develop guidelines going forward. Student centered goals are being created for students who are performing below goal. The use of Chromebooks is being incorporated into instruction. Mr. Baker stated that more student centered, inquiry based, learning is taking place in the classroom. He stated that the construction project has been a great learning experience for students and is being used as a teaching tool in tech ed, art and family and consumer science classes.

Anjanette Belmonte, HJMS Assistant Principal, addressed the school's work on BOE goal 2, a compassionate and connected school culture. She noted what is taking place to promote a positive school climate: ADL assembly for students, formation of a Diversity Club, faculty participation in the Choice Leadership Summit, team based community service projects, and implementation of Say Something. Ms. Belmonte stated that their equity work includes looking at the curriculum and making sure that students can identify with the curriculum from different perspectives.

Ms. Belmonte addressed BOE goal 3, premier workforce. She noted that teachers are able to choose their own professional development this year, HJMS teachers have received grant funding for travel and projects, and accommodations are being made for teachers as they may need to change classrooms multiple times over the course of the year due to the construction.

Mr. Baker addressed BOE goal 4, sustainable and strategic investments. He stated that long lasting choices are being made through the construction project, and the Facilities Master Plan and Reconfiguration study includes changes to HJMS in most of the options.

### B. SHS Academic Report

Steve Patrino, SHS Interim Principal, provided background on himself and his life in Simsbury. He reported on SAT scores, Advanced Placement, and college success

HJMS Academic Report

SHS Academic Report

rates for students attending SHS. He noted that SHS students' SAT scores are ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> in DRG B. Mr. Patrino spoke about what occurred over the course of last year and its effect on the social and emotional well-being of SHS students and staff. He stated that in May the school began work with the Re-Center to engage in an entire school conversation around race and equity. That work continues to move forward.

Mr. Patrino spoke about the plan the high school leadership proposed when Mr. O'Brien took a new role in the district. One of the results is that the school feels different than it did last year. The year began with a clear perspective focused on passion and pride. The administration promoted working collaboratively for the greater good of the school community. They asked teachers to change their lens and focus on how they are teaching the curriculum and if all students have an understanding of the coursework. Mr. Patrino noted that the Vision of a Graduate provides faculty with a common language.

Mr. Patrino reviewed how the school priorities fit in with the BOE goals. This year SHS will put an emphasis on global citizenship and equity, struggling learners, safe and positive school climate, and promoting meaningful and relevant professional development opportunities for staff.

Georgia Robert, SHS Assistant Principal, discussed the high school's focus on global citizenship and the Vision of a Graduate. Work with the Re-Center provided the ability to collect data and provide a report on major themes with regard to equity at the school. This information was used to decide on action plans for this year. Over the summer, curriculum audits and revisions were done in order to diversify the perspectives in what we teach. In addition, draft rubrics were created to measure Vision of a Graduate skills. Ms. Robert noted that the Re-Center works lends itself to creating global citizens. This work also ties into staff professional growth plans.

Ms. Robert stated that with the class of 2023 there will be a credit requirement for a capstone project. Currently there are courses offered at SHS that culminate with a capstone project. School staff is reviewing what capstone projects are offered in other districts. Ms. Robert noted that it may make sense to have capstone projects related to the learning clusters.

Ms. Robert reported on the high school's work with struggling students. She explained that teachers have access to data on each of the students in their classes. This year teachers and department chairs were provided with a list of students in their classes who have been identified as struggling learners so that teachers can start the year providing support for these students. Student progress is a focal point for student learning opportunities in faculty professional growth plans. Ms. Robert spoke about the successful summer programming that is now offered to students who may need assistance.

Ms. Robert addressed positive and safe school climate with the focus on relationships. Teacher duty now includes having a presence in public areas, particularly the hallways. Ms. Robert discussed professional development improvements and the focus on equity this year. Teachers are being taught about implicit bias; how to have difficult conversations around race; and improving their capacity to intervene. Mr. Patrino stated that this is continuing the work from last year and it is being done in a positive spirit.

In response to Ms. Salina, Mr. Patrino stated that guidance counselors are involved in the equity work. Ms. Thomas asked if coaches are involved in the work as well. Mr. Patrino responded that they are not, although the Athletic Director ran a CIAC module entitled Cultural Sensitivity & School Athletic Programs for coaches. Ms. Thomas noted the amount of changes that have been made in a short period of time, and the need for metrics year to year.

### C. Review of BOE Committee Assignments

Ms. Willerup stated that Ms. Thomas has agreed to fill the committee assignments that were held by Mr. Frank.

### PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar:Seconded. So moved.

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Todd Burrick  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

BOE Committee  
Assignments

Public Audience

Adjournment