

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

October 23, 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: Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Business Manager Burke LaClair, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Katie Galt and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Galt noted the walk/bike to school events at the elementary schools. She reviewed activities at HJMS that included a 7th grade outing at Winding Trails and National Union Day. Ms. Galt stated that at SHS a pep rally and homecoming events were held last weekend.

Communications

Mr. Frank commented on how well organized and executed the strategic planning workshop was last week. He stated that the school system is in good administrative hands. Ms. Tedone discussed the CREC workgroup working to sustain state funding for the magnet schools. Mr. Goman announced that he is resigning from the BOE effective November 30th. He stated that it has been a great honor and pleasure to serve alongside BOE members and the administration during his tenure. Ms. Salina noted that the SHS Leadership Team met last week and a presentation on the SHS schedule will be made to the board in November.

Ms. Lemke stated that Lynn Lyons will host a parent forum on Reducing Anxiety. She will also be the keynote speaker for faculty at the start of the November 6th professional development day. Ms. Murray noted the professional development work that will be done during tomorrow's early release day. She pointed out the District Annual Report that was distributed to board members, noting that it will be posted on the district website and available in hard copy at the schools and in various town buildings.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of October 9, 2018 Meeting

Mr. Frank: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2018 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Mr. Goman abstained.

Approval of
Minutes of
October 9, 2018
Meeting

B. Approval of Minutes of October 16, 2018 Workshop

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2018 workshop.

Mr. Frank: Seconded. So moved. Mr. Goman abstained.

C. School Nutrition Program Agreement

Mr. LaClair explained that the state, in concert with the National School Lunch Program, is updating their agreements with school districts to further outline the responsibilities of the CSDE and the School Fund Authorities. There are no significant changes relative to our responsibilities for these programs.

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to authorize Matt Curtis, Superintendent of School and Burke LaClair, Business Manager as the designated representatives to sign the Child Nutrition Program Agreement with the Connecticut State Board of Education and the Simsbury Public Schools in order to effectuate the programs of the National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751) and the Child Nutrition Act, as amended (42USC1771).

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. HJMS Academic Report

Ms. Murray introduced Rachel Zhang who designed the new HJMS lion logo. Rachel felt the lion exemplifies HJMS because “lions are loyal animals and they have respect. They show responsibility by taking care of and protecting their families. They are trustworthy by finding food for their family every day.”

Ms. Murray provided an overview of the HJMS academic report presentation. Scott Baker, Principal, addressed the HJMS mission and reviewed the indicators of student achievement. He discussed the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) for the 8th grade cohort, noting the increase in the percentage of students at goal over time. Mr. Baker provided 7th and 8th grade ELA/Literacy SBAC data for the past 4 years. He pointed out that last year’s 8th graders showed improvement over their scores when they were in 7th grade. There has also been a gradual improvement in 7th grade scores. Mr. Baker noted that instructional work through Teacher’s College Workshop is being done with 7th grade teachers.

Mr. Baker provided 7th and 8th grade Math SBAC data. Mr. Baker pointed out the 3 years of steady improvement in 7th grade. He noted that last year’s 7th grade students had one year of Math in Focus in 6th grade. Mr. Frank asked if the high school’s math performance is similar or if it is unique to the middle school. Ms. Murray responded that it is unique to the middle school.

Mr. Baker shared DRG B comparison data for ELA and Math SBAC student performance. He noted that in 2018 Simsbury was 2nd in DRG B and 5th in CT for ELA. Mr. Baker pointed out that although Math scores continue to lag behind other districts, there has been steady growth as to where we stand compared to our peers.

Mr. Baker reviewed the difference in SBAC scores between high needs and non-high needs students. In 7th grade Simsbury’s ELA achievement gap is average compared

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with other DRG B districts. In 8th grade Simsbury’s ELA achievement gap is lower than most DRG B towns. With regard to Math, Simsbury has work to do on the achievement gap. Ms. Murray stated that teachers are looking at particular growth for each student over the course of the year, noting that not all students have the same goals for the year. This is a model that Mr. Baker has brought to the middle school that is used in the elementary schools. Mr. Baker reviewed the school wide instructional supports at HJMS.

Anjanette Belmonte, Assistant Principal, discussed school culture and themes that resonated in the school climate survey administered last spring. Areas of strength include: (1) students and staff feel safe, (2) faculty and staff maintain high academic standards, and (3) the school is welcoming to students of all backgrounds. Areas of growth include: (1) providing a sense of connectedness, (2) student to student respect, and (3) professional development choices. Ms. Belmonte explained how these areas are being addressed. She also noted that 68.6% of students at HJMS participate in extracurricular activities. Mr. Baker talked about how school pride is demonstrated throughout the building.

Mr. Tindall noted that respect was also an issue at SHS. Mr. Baker stated that during the November 6th professional development there will be sessions on how to create positive activities for students to build upon, and this type of professional development will continue throughout the year. At HJMS students are encouraged to look up and say “good morning” at the start of each day. Teachers have reported that this has created a positive vibe at the start of the school day.

Mr. Baker addressed his 2018-19 budget priorities for HJMS. He noted that a lot of work will continue to be done on the HJMS Project Phase III. Mr. Baker stated that he would like to offer more professional learning opportunities for teachers to participate in outside of the district. HJMS will lose Title 1 support next year which currently funds a Math tutor. Mr. Baker will request a Math tutor in next year’s budget. With the move to 1:1 Chromebooks for students, a full time technical support person dedicated to Chromebooks will be necessary. Mr. Baker stated that he would like to increase the amount of time that the new Wellness program is offered next year. This would require a full time Wellness teacher. Mr. Baker discussed his areas of focus for 2018-19 and shared his Open House video with the board.

B. 2018-19 Capital Improvement Plan

2018-19 CIP

Mr. LaClair noted that funding for district security improvements has been added to the plan. He stated that \$850,000 remains from last year’s security funding. Mr. LaClair explained that the main offices and vestibules will be addressed next so that all schools have a similar setup to HJMS and Squadron Line School where visitors have to go through the main office to enter the school. He stated that we are waiting on cost estimates for these upgrades. Mr. LaClair pointed out that there is likely going to be an ongoing need for security improvements in the district.

Mr. LaClair addressed climate control in the school buildings. He stated that in two sets of capital funding the district made progress at the K-6 schools. With the existing capital funding we should be able to have all elementary classrooms air conditioned. Mr. LaClair pointed out that improvements still need to be made at SHS and HJMS. Estimates that were received in 2016 quoted \$3.5 million to air condition the third floor at SHS and \$1 million to air condition the second floor at HJMS. Mr. LaClair noted that in the HJMS Phase III project air conditioning is included for the

auditorium and library media center.

C. Safety Update

Mr. Sullivan noted the areas where capital funding has been utilized. These include (1) upgrades to the FOB system at 6 schools, (2) window enhancements, (3) architectural design work on double entry vestibules, (4) camera additions and improvements, and (5) the addition of bollards/planters. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the work of Security Consultant Don Shomette. The remaining schools to be assessed are Central, Tariffville and Tootin Hills. These assessments will occur in mid-November. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Sandy Hook Promise program has been introduced to principals

Mr. Sullivan discussed the plan for an active threat exercise with first responders at SHS on October 24th. He reviewed additional areas being considered relative to school security. Mr. Frank expressed concern that security has not been discussed as part of the new strategic plan. Mr. Sullivan responded that security falls under the categories of operations and school climate in the strategic plan.

D. Quarterly Budget Analysis

Mr. LaClair noted that after the state election more will be known about the state budget. He stated that the pace of BOE spending is .5% slower than last year. Our Choice Attendance Grant will be based on meeting the 4% enrollment target on 10/1/18 as projected. Our primary known federal grant award is IDEA. The new award amount is \$1,006,993 which is up \$8,310 from the 2017-18 awards.

Mr. LaClair pointed out that 31 more Kindergarten students enrolled than was projected. As a result, 3 additional classroom teachers were hired to meet our class size guidelines. Mr. Frank asked how we funded 3 new teachers whose positions were not included in the budget. Mr. Sullivan explained that the savings on teacher retirements was higher than anticipated and as a result funding was available for these new teacher hires.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Tim Prugar, 101 Hedgehog Lane, commended Mr. Sullivan for last month's presentation on this year's new hires. He suggested that when providing academic benchmarks we also consider the results of DRG's other than A and B, as well as private schools. He noted that all of the districts in CT are competing for college admission, athletics and families moving to town. Mr. Prugar pointed out that other DRG districts may be excelling in certain areas with fewer resources than us.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Todd Burrick
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Safety Update

Quarterly
Budget Analysis

Public Audience

Adjournment