

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

October 24, 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.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Fitch updated board members on the Growth Mindset traits being taught at the elementary schools. He reported on additional activities at the elementary schools and intramurals at the middle school. Mr. Fitch noted that a pep rally was held at SHS honoring Unified Sports, with ESPN participation. Thirteen One Act Plays were performed last weekend.

Communications

Ms. Lemke noted that the celebration for the high school's designation of Special Olympics Unified Champion School is a wonderful national honor. She stated that this is a district-wide recognition of inclusion practices.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Communications Committee reviewed the results of the climate survey and information has been shared with the board. Ms. Willerup stated that it is critical that parents, students and staff respond to surveys as the results are utilized to make decisions going forward.

Ms. Murray stated that the school start time district team is creating surveys for parents, teachers and students. She noted that on November 7th there will be a full day of professional development (PD) that will include building based PD, Choice workshops, Math in Focus PD in grades K-8, and PD with SHS science teachers in the new STEM lab.

Mr. LaClair briefly discussed the savings in utilities costs resulting from energy efficiency projects that have been completed throughout the district. Mr. Frank pointed out the savings of almost \$250,000.

Mr. Curtis stated that the tri-board meeting is set for November 21st at 5:45 p.m. in the program room at the Simsbury Public Library. He noted that the early numbers released, relative to the most recent state budget proposal, are well within the contingency plan and budget for this year.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of October 10, 2017

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2017 regular meeting.

Mr. Frank: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of Minutes of October 10, 2017

B. Personnel

Mr. Frank: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignation of Nilda Irizarry effective November 10, 2017.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Sullivan explained the plan for filling this position.

Personnel

C. Gift from Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense Company

Mr. LaClair stated that this is year 2 of a renewable gift from the Ensign Bickford Foundation. Joncia Lytwynec, Director of Instructional Technology, stated that Ensign Bickford has collaborated with SHS on Project Lead The Way, the Robotics Team, and a co-op program where 2 juniors participate in a 6 week internship, and now the STEM lab. She thanked members of her team for their contributions in this collaborative work.

Ms. Salina: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$10,000 to Simsbury High School from the Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense Company be accepted.

Mr. Tindal: Seconded. So moved.

Gift from Ensign Bickford

D. Gift to the Simsbury Public Schools / Henry James Memorial School

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the proposed gift to Henry James Memorial School from the Henry James Parent-Teacher Organization be approved.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

Gift to HJMS

E. Gift to the Simsbury Public Schools / Cultural Enrichment Committee

Ms. Salina: MOVE that the proposed gift of funds from all the elementary school parent-teacher organizations to provide cultural programming to elementary school students be accepted.

Mr. Frank: Seconded. So moved.

Gift to Cultural Enrichment Committee

F. Acceptance of BOE Member Resignation

Ms. Salina: MOVE to accept the resignation of Tom Doran from the Board of Education.

Mr. Goman: Seconded. So moved.

Acceptance of Tom Doran Resignation

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. HJMS Academic Report

HJMS Academic Report

Brian White, HJMS Principal, stated that HJMS is in the third year of their mission statement. He reviewed the building improvements that occurred in 2016-17 which include the Phase II construction and the second floor hallway renovation.

Mr. White reviewed what is new in 2017-18. This includes the change to a block schedule, the addition of the Connections period, the addition of two year-long Unified Arts electives for 8th graders, and the change to the PE/Health & Wellness curriculum.

Mr. White addressed student achievement in 2016-17. He stated that the PSAT 8/9 performance by 8th graders was well above state and national averages. Ms. Murray noted that this test was moved to 9th grade this year. Mr. White discussed the positive Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) scores for 7th and 8th graders. He noted that 83.5% of 8th graders scored in the goal and advanced bands on the Science CMT. Mr. White presented a three year comparison of the ELA/Literacy SBAC scores for both 7th and 8th graders. He noted that a lot of work has been done on this curriculum and in grade 8 measures put into place have been successful. Mr. White presented data on the difference in SBAC scores between high-needs and non-high needs students.

Mr. Frank questioned the declining academic numbers in the HJMS Annual Report. Mr. White pointed out that the year to year comparison is for different cohorts of students. He noted that on SBAC Math there has been growth with cohorts of students, but the overall performance needs to improve. Mr. White confirmed that he expects the new math curriculum, Math in Focus, will address the concerns relative to the scores in math. Mr. Frank questioned the math scores for special education students. Mr. White stated that a co-teaching approach is being used to support those students.

Mr. White addressed the ELA SBAC results, noting that Simsbury grade 7-8 students continue to score well in the DRG B rankings. He noted that although the SBAC Math DRG B ranking has dropped, the performance in 2017 is higher than in 2015. Mr. White pointed out that data points such as these were part of the decision to move to Math in Focus. Mr. Frank asked who else in DRG B uses Math in Focus. Ms. Murray responded that Farmington and Glastonbury use it, as well as districts in Fairfield County. Mr. White stated that Title I funds are being utilized to provide math supports.

Ms. Murray addressed Next Generation State Standards (NGSS) for Science. She noted that the state has received a waiver from the federal government which will allow them to field test the new NGSS assessment in 2018 and implement the assessment in 2019.

Mr. White reviewed the climate survey themes for HJMS. He noted that students and staff feel safe; faculty and staff maintain high academic standards; and school/home communication is good. Areas for growth include providing a sense of connectedness; student to student respect; and evaluation and feedback for staff.

Anjanette Belmonte, HJMS Assistant Principal, discussed school culture. She stated

that there are five committees who have a role in promoting a positive school culture.

This year the administration began meeting with representatives from the Student Council monthly in order to work together to promote positive energy and students “showing their awesome” at school. Ms. Belmonte stated that “The HJ Way” is at the heart of everything HJMS.

Mr. Burrick questioned how the administration knows if the tenets addressing school culture are working. Mr. White responded that you can feel a positive vibe in the building this year and students are making good decisions. He noted that internally the school administration surveys all students every year. Ms. Willerup asked how they address students who are not excited to come to school every day. Mr. White noted that the support services team will work with students and the team structure creates smaller learning environments. He stated that the social/emotional piece is at the heart of what we do in middle school.

Ms. Belmonte discussed the multitude of extracurricular activities offered at HJMS in which 71.2% of the student body participates. She noted that participation is an indicator of positive school culture. Ms. Belmonte stated that the Connections class, which is new this year, allows teachers to connect with students and hear how they are feeling.

Mr. White provided a preview of his 2018-19 budget. He expressed strong support for Phase III of the facility improvements at HJMS. Mr. White stated that instructional supports for Math will be a budget priority. Additionally, professional development supporting instructional practices will be included in his budget request.

Mr. White addressed the areas of focus in 2017-18. These include the implementation of Math in Focus; the promotion of connectedness in the school based on the survey results; implementation of the new block schedule; the addition of the Connections period; and continued peer visitations and instructional rounds.

Mr. Frank pointed out that so many positive things are happening at HJMS, he would hate for the state budget issue to result in continued delay of the Phase III renovation project.

B. Quarterly Budget Analysis

Mr. LaClair noted that with the lack of a state budget we do not know the amount of our education related revenues and grants from the state. He pointed out the \$400,000 increase in the Open Choice Attendance Grant now that we have reached the 4% threshold and the \$998,683 IDEA federal grant, which is an increase of \$8,452 over last year. Mr. LaClair stated that expenditures are virtually at the same rate as last year. He noted that enrollment is down 71 students from last year and the corresponding drop in staff is 12.5 FTE.

Mr. LaClair briefly reviewed the experience and trends for the major expenditure groups. He pointed out the equipment category is fully expended because the additional \$400,000 in Choice grant funds will be spent on equipment, as planned during the budget process. The initial equipment expenditure is mostly due to the Chromebooks purchased this summer as part of the 1:1 take home initiative at SHS. Mr. LaClair stated that the out-of-district expenditures are down by \$145,000 and any additional costs in that line item will be offset by non-lapsing account funds.

Quarterly Budget Analysis

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mr. Sullivan stated that SHS has once again received the Michael's Cup from the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), recognizing SHS as one of the top athletics programs in the state.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Goman: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Mr. Frank: Seconded. So moved.

Todd Burrick
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment