

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

December 13, 2022

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar and Lydia Tedone. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson. Sharon Thomas arrived at 6:38 p.m.

**Members absent:** Mrs. Tara Willerup and Mr. Jeff Tindall.

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Infrastructure and Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Emilie Carroll and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOGNITION

The board recognized Central School Kindergartener Tim Ryan whose artwork is being used for the superintendent's holiday card this year.

Recognition

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Carroll reported that December is a busy month at SHS. She stated that Capstone presentations are occurring, it is concert season, and charity and fundraisers have been happening at the school. She noted that the SHS choir performed prior to a Rockettes show at Radio City Music Hall last week.

Communications

Ms. Batchelar reported on the Screenager viewing and discussion at HJMS. She stated that there were a lot of attendees and the student panel was fantastic. Mr. Burrick reported that the Personnel & Negotiations Committee met prior to the board meeting regarding upcoming negotiations.

Ms. Tedone reported on CREC Council, the Council of Urban Education National Conference and the CABA/CAPSS Conference. She noted that the board received a CABA Leadership Award that was presented during the conference.

Ms. Lemke reported that last week high school students returned to their elementary schools for an Hour of Code. She noted the activities that took place. Ms. Lemke stated that SHS sent out a survey to families to collect information around math tutors. Mr. Sullivan noted the retirement of two central office employees, Terri Heintz, Benefits/Payroll Coordinator and Kyra Sheehan, Accountant/Budget Analyst.

Mr. Curtis stated that budget meetings have begun with principals and directors. He noted that ground has been broken for the Latimer Lane building project. Ms. Salina thanked the administration, Jeff Tindall, and the work of the Facilities & Enrollment Task Force to bring this project to fruition. Mr. Curtis thanked the BOS and BOE for

their collaboration on the project.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2022

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022 meeting as amended.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of November 15, 2022

Mr. Watson: MOVE to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved

C. Acceptance of Gift from Ensign Bickford

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$12,500 to STEM K-12 from the Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense Company be accepted.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

D. Acceptance of Gift to SHS First Robotics

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the proposed gift to the FIRST Robotics Team at Simsbury High School from the Estate of Shirley Johnson totaling \$5,000 be approved.

Ms. Thomas Seconded. So moved.

E. Acceptance of Gift from SHS Class of 1970

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the proposed gift to the Student Activity Fun at Simsbury High School from the Class of 1970 totaling \$4,000 be approved.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved

F. Acceptance of Gift to Cultural Enrichment Committee

Ms. Thomas: 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. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

G. Approval of 2023 BOE Meeting Schedule

Ms. Thomas: MOVE that the Board of Education set their 2023 meeting schedule as outlined in the December 13, 2022 board exhibit.

Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2022

Approval of Minutes of November 15, 2022

Acceptance of Gift from Ensign Bickford

Acceptance of Gift to SHS First Robotics

Acceptance of Gift from SHS Class of 1970

Acceptance of Gift to Cultural Enrichment Committee

Approval of 2023 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

## INFORMATION AND REPORTS

### A. Open Choice Update

Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor, Director of Equity & Access, noted that Simsbury was one of the first districts to introduce Project Choice. The district was part of the 50 year celebration of the program. Dr. Batchelor reviewed the historical background of the program, noting that Simsbury was one of the first districts to implement a preschool program in conjunction with Open Choice in 2012. She discussed the enrollment strategies utilized to encourage students to attend school in Simsbury

Dr. Batchelor addressed the Open Choice acceptance rate for Simsbury. She noted that Simsbury has a high acceptance rate, but the rate has dropped off as students are going to more magnet schools. Dr. Batchelor stated that the district currently has 166 Choice students, and she broke down the number by school.

Dr. Batchelor provided an overview of the student supports provided to Choice students as well as the role of Gertrude Banks, School Liaison, for the program. She described the mentoring programs at HJMS. Dr. Batchelor reviewed the program funding through the state. The attendance grant and academic and social support grants total over \$1.3 million for Simsbury.

Dr. Batchelor discussed student engagement in extra-curricular areas for Choice students, noting that this is a focus area for the district. She reviewed the academic success for Choice students, noting that 82% are in college prep courses. Dr. Batchelor provided information on academic assessments relative to Choice, black, Hispanic and white students. She outlined next steps to support these students and families.

Ms. Thomas asked how we manage siblings. Mr. Sullivan stated that we work hard to place siblings. Ms. Thomas suggested that we provide an opportunity for these students to look at HBCU schools. Dr. Batchelor replied that the district could partner with another school district to arrange for tours.

### B. NESDEC Enrollment Projections

Mr. Sullivan noted that enrollment has been flat over the past 5 years, but the projection is for a potential increase of 500 students over the next 5 years. He provided a breakdown by grade configuration, noting the largest increase would be in grades K-6. Mr. Sullivan reviewed projections for each elementary school. He pointed out that the Latimer Lane renovation will accommodate the projection for 2027-28. Mr. Sullivan stated that Squadron Line School is the biggest pressure point and programs would need to be moved to recapture rooms. He noted that based on projections, a kindergarten class will need to be added at Latimer Lane and Squadron Line schools next year.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the HJMS projections which do not present any concerns. Mr. Watson asked if there is currently room to add sixth grade at HJMS. Mr. Sullivan stated that sixth grade could not be added as currently constructed. He noted the projection for SHS in also not a concern.

Open Choice  
Update

NESDEC  
Enrollment  
Projections

Mr. Sullivan discussed the births to enrollment comparison. He noted that for every birth the projection is for 1.54 kindergarteners 5 years later. He pointed out the projection for 354 kindergarteners next year, an increase of 60 students.

Mr. Sullivan concluded that the NESDEC projections suggest that K-12 student enrollment will increase by an average of approximately 113.6 students per year for the next five years. He pointed out that the Latimer Lane projection, scheduled to be completed during 2023-25 will address enrollment concerns in that area of town, and some Latimer Lane classrooms could be available to relocate programming from other schools.

Ms. Salina suggested that looking at town-wide redistricting would make sense. Mr. Curtis stated that this would probably happen in phases and the administration is looking into a preschool location off campus.

C. Six Year Capital Improvement Plan

6 Year CIP

Mr. Curtis stated that this evening the first year of the plan will be reviewed. Mr. Casey stated there are 3 items in the plan for next year, 2 of which are enrollment related. He stated that modular classrooms were previously estimated at \$350,000. There is now a need for modulators at Tariffville School to replace the existing modulators that have been there since 1984. The additional cost is \$500,000 to provide 2 modulators and office space in that location. Mr. Casey noted that there are issues with placing new modulators in the same location as the current modulators since they were put in place prior to the renovation of the cafeteria.

Mr. Casey addressed the need to construct modulators at Central School. He stated that the addition of 3 large classrooms would allow for the preschool to be split between Squadron Line and Central School. The cost for the modular is \$1,350,000. Ms. Thomas suggested we look into leasing the modulators, or a lease with the option to buy, rather than purchasing them now. Mr. Curtis stated that this information can be put together for the budget workshop. Ms. Salina suggested that maybe the Facilities & Enrollment Task Force should get involved, which can also be discussed at the workshop.

Mr. Casey addressed district security improvements in the amount of \$250,000. He noted that this is a recurring biennial capital fund which provides for upgrades and improvements to the district's security infrastructure. This year, analog security cameras, first installed in 2006, will be replaced with digital cameras.

D. 2023-24 Budget Calendar

2023-24 Budget Calendar

Mr. Curtis reviewed the calendar, noting that the BOS/BOF/BOE meeting to discuss the budget guideline has been moved to January.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

ADJOURNMENT

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

Adjournment

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary