TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Record of Proceedings | Regular Meeting | September 14, 2021

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the BOE conference room. Roll Call: **Members present:** Mmes. Susan Salina, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson. Mr. Jeff Tindall arrived at 6:40 p.m. **Members absent:** Mrs. Tara Willerup **Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Olivia Antidormi and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.	
RECOGNITION Mr. Curtis introduced special education teacher Kristina Nordell, Simsbury's 2022 Teacher of the Year. He stated that no one works harder, is more passionate and a better communicator than Ms. Nordell. Ms. Nordell has worked as a special education teacher in the district for 18 years. Mr. Curtis shared a piece of her Convocation message: (1) everyone needs a someone, (2) check your ego at the door, (3) always take time to pause and to observe what a student is communicating through their behavior, and (4) every single student has something to contribute; take the time to find it. Ms. Nordell thanked the board for their support. She stated that she is humbled and honored by the recognition.	Recognition
PUBLIC AUDIENCE ***Duane Royce***, 26 Harvest Hill Road, requested that Simsbury Public Schools provide gym space so that senior citizens can play pickleball indoors during the winter.	Public Audience
COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS Ms. Salina welcomed the BOE student representatives, Olivia Antidormi and Alex Picoult to the meeting. Ms. Tedone provided an update from CREC, CABE and NSBA. She noted the Conversations About Race And Place program offered by Leadership Greater Hartford. Mr. Sullivan thanked Salter's Express, noting that they are fully staffed for all bus routes.	Communications
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS A. Approval of Minutes of August 24, 2021 Special Meeting Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2021 special meeting.	Approval of Minutes of August 24, 2021

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.

B. Personnel

Personnel

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Laura Tinnirella, Jane Palmer, and Daniel Bergman effective June 30, 2021, and Dana Pescatello and Karli Heneghan effective August 5, 2021.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Bernadette Burns Sullivan effective June 30, 2021.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Sullivan reported that 30 new teachers were hired for the start of the school year. There are new teachers at all schools with the exception of Tariffville School.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. School Opening Report

School Opening Report

Ms. Lemke discussed the strategic plan priorities for the school year: student success and growth, compassionate and connected school culture, and premier workforce. As part of student success and growth, the focus will be on Vision of the Graduate, reducing the achievement gap, and addressing math performance. School culture will be addressed through social emotional learning and ensuring tiered intervention supports. Premier workforce will focus on prioritizing professional growth and teamwork, and placing a premium on high quality staff. Ms. Lemke discussed the professional development plans for the year.

Ms. Lemke addressed student learning data. She noted that the data was collected in an unprecedented year when students were in-person, hybrid and remote. Ms. Lemke stated that standardized testing was not administered in the spring of 2020 and given these factors the district is cautious about the weight placed on these results. She reviewed the DRG B ranking for the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) in grades 3-8 for ELA and math. She noted that the need to focus on math is not new. Mr. Curtis stated that the scores for in-person students and distance learning students were not that different. Ms. Lemke reviewed the DRG B ranking for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in grades 5, 8 and 11, as well as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores.

Ms. Batchelor asked about STAR reading and math performance. Ms. Lemke responded that the STAR assessments are formative and follow how a student is progressing. They provide a diagnostic look for teachers. Mr. Burrick asked what the district has been doing to improve math scores given that this is not a new issue. Ms. Lemke stated that the district is in its fourth year of Math in Focus at the elementary level. Coaches were not in play last year and this is why it is an area of focus in the strategic plan. Ms. Lemke noted that the full Teaching & Learning team will be reporting, with additional data analysis, at the September 28 board meeting.

Mr. Sullivan reported on new teacher orientation. He provided data on the level of experience for new certified staff hires and their level of academic preparation, noting that 50% of the new hires have already obtained their masters degree.

Mr. Sullivan addressed student enrollment as of September 3, 2021. Total enrollment is 4,041 an increase of 81 students over October 1, 2020. He noted that the change from last year is almost all at the elementary level and is 21 over projections. Squadron Line School is 27 over projection, Tariffville School is 19 over projection and Latimer Lane is 33 below projection. Four additional teachers were hired over budget due to enrollment and we were able to reduce 1 classroom teacher at the secondary level. The budget impact is a net increase of 3 teachers.

Ms. Thomas asked if there has been an increase in the number of students being homeschooled. Ms. Lemke responded that there are currently 35 students who are homeschooled and there are not a large number of students who moved from distance learning to homeschooling. Ms. Thomas asked if the district has a staff directory with pictures. Mr. Curtis responded that a staff directory is accessible on our website, but does not include pictures. Our badge system maintains employee photos.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed his priorities for the school year. As the COVID-19 liaison for the district he will continue to oversee safety protocols, as well as support principals and program leaders. Mr. Sullivan addressed the vaccine mandate, noting that the district has more than 1,000 employees who fall under the mandate. Those who are not vaccinated will need to submit to monthly testing beginning September 27. Mr. Sullivan discussed this year's protocols for responding to positive cases in school.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the Tecton Architects contract for the Latimer Lane School renovation project will be finalized soon and we are moving forward with the design review process and timelines. Space issues at Squadron Line School will need to be discussed this winter. Mr. Sullivan stated that the Human Resources Department has continued its emphasis on equity, will be returning to the administration of a comprehensive staff satisfaction survey, and will enter negotiations with the Custodial and Maintenance bargaining unit this year. Mr. Sullivan addressed safety and security, stating that locked vestibules have been added at Tootin' Hills School and this work is almost completed for all of the schools. He noted that the state has added more requirements for safety in schools.

Mr. Casey presented visuals of the capital improvement and maintenance projects completed over the summer. These include the Simsbury High School roof replacement and roof HVAC unit replacement; the addition of air conditioners on the third floor of the high school facing the courtyard; completion of the HJMS renovation project; upgrade of the fire panel at HJMS; the Tootin' Hills School vestibule upgrade; and LED lighting upgrades at HJMS, Tootin' Hills and Squadron Line schools. Mr. Casey addressed the projects that are "in the works". The Tariffville security vestibule is currently being designed. The Latimer Lane School boiler replacement will be completed within the next few weeks. This work could not wait until the renovation project and will be incorporated into the new design. The SHS bleacher project will begin with demolition this winter and replacement next summer.

Mr. Casey provided a technology update. The 1:1 device program has been completed K-12. Students in grades K-2 continue to utilize iPads, with grades 2-12

utilizing Chromebooks. 2,475 Chromebooks were distributed over the summer. K-2 Go Bags have been created in case there is a need to close school on short notice. Mr. Casey stated that the district is moving toward centralized printing and away from inkjet and classroom printers.

Ms. Batchelar asked the status of the Help Desk at SHS. Mr. Casey stated that the schedule has been revised and a new ticketing system is in place. Ms. Batchelar questioned the status of the SHS turf field. Mr. Curtis responded that the work will be completed in the next 1 ½ weeks.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Bobby Hensley, 20 Fox Den, expressed frustration and disappointment that entire grades are not being permitted to eat together in the cafeteria. He noted that parents have not been in the school buildings for 2 years and now only one parent is allowed to attend Open House. He questioned where these decisions are coming from.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary