TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Record of Proceedings	Regular Meeting	October 13, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the virtual regular meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Roll Call:
Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Lydia Tedone, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

Members absent: Mrs. Tara Willerup

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, Assistant Principal Ken Pera, Assistant Principal Anjanette Belmonte, BOE Student Representatives Katherine Bonnell and Shannon Zeilman, and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE — Public Audience
None

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS — Communications
Ms. Tedone reported on work at CREC and NSBA. She participated in the Center for School Change webinar related to anti-racism, as did Ms. Lemke.

Mr. Sullivan reported that negotiations with the Simsbury Federation of Educational Personnel, which includes secretaries and paraprofessionals, has been completed. Once the bargaining unit ratifies the agreement it will be brought forward to the BOE for approval. Ms. Lemke reported that all special education students have transitioned to full time in-person learning. She noted the work of the town's Spirit Council.

Ms. Bonnell reported on activities at Latimer Lane School and Tariffville School. She stated that things are running smoothly at HJMS and SHS. Everyone at SHS is following COVID protocols.

Mr. Curtis reported on the most recent Farmington Valley Health District metrics. He stated that the October 2nd data includes 5 COVID cases in schools, none in Simsbury. The current data supports in-person learning. Mr. Curtis noted that grades 7 and 8 returned to 4 day in-person learning this week. The target to return SHS students to 4 day in-person learning is October 27.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of September 22, 2020 Meeting — Approval of Minutes of September 22, 2020 Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

B. Personnel — Personnel

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Wendy Darasz effective October 9, 2020.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the hiring of a Family & Consumer Science teacher and a Music teacher. He noted that 3 additional teachers were hired for the year to provide distance learning.

C. Renewal of Superintendent's Contract

Renewal of Superintendent's Contract

Mr. Burrick stated that annually the board reviews the superintendent based on the past year and the goals for next year. He noted that it has been a difficult year and the board is very pleased with the leadership of Superintendent Matt Curtis, who has worked above and beyond. Mr. Burrick stated that Mr. Curtis works well with the board and is always open to communication.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's contract for 2020-21 with a salary increase of 3.0%.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Salina thanked Mr. Curtis for his leadership. Mr. Curtis stated he appreciates the support of the board and the work of his team.

D. Adoption of Face Mask Policy

Adoption of Face Mask Policy

Ms. Salina asked if the forms, included in the regulations, will be added to the student handbooks. Mr. Sullivan responded that the forms will be maintained in the nurse's office and will be rarely used. Ms. Salina asked if the policy will be added to the student handbooks. Mr. Sullivan stated that a version referencing the full policy will be included.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to adopt the Board of Education Use of Face Coverings in School policies effective October 13, 2020.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

<u>INFORMATION AND REPORTS</u>

A. October 1 Enrollment Report/Magnet School Enrollment

Oct. 1 Enrollment/Magnet School Report

Mr. Sullivan provided a comparison of K-12 and elementary enrollment between 10/1/19 and 10/1/20. Overall enrollment has decreased by 65 students. Mr. Sullivan reviewed a comparison of the actual and projected 10/1/20 enrollment. There are 3,960 students K-12 and the projection was for 4,025 students. The projection was off by 77 at the elementary level. Latimer Lane School has 26 fewer students than last year. Kindergarten has 42 fewer students than projected. Mr. Sullivan noted that parents not sending their Kindergarten eligible students this year will have implications next year. He reviewed enrollment history over the past 10 years.

Ms. Tedone asked if there has been any talk about Kindergarteners coming to school in January. Mr. Sullivan responded that he is not aware of any talk in the community. Ms. Salina asked if students can go directly into 1st grade next year. Mr. Sullivan responded that they can go directly to 1st grade.

Mr. Sullivan stated that there are 76 students in pre-school. Class size is limited to 13 which has resulted in a waiting list. Mr. Sullivan noted that the largest cohorts are in 11th and 12th grade; the smallest in Kindergarten and 5th grade. Mr. Sullivan reviewed historical enrollment for Open Choice students. He stated that this year the district has 7 fewer Choice students and we remain over the 4% threshold.

Mr. Sullivan reported on magnet school students. There are 141 students at full-time programs outside of Simsbury. This is 16 more students than last year, the majority of whom attend Pre-K and Kindergarten programs. There are 4 students attending part-time magnet and out-of-school programs. This number is 5 less than last year.

Mr. Sullivan discussed the new housing developments in town and the corresponding increase in the number of students. Ms. Thomas asked about the districting for Dorset Crossing. Mr. Sullivan noted that when constructed, the population at Tariffville School was 280 students in 14 classrooms, and the Dorset Crossing students were sent to Squadron Line School. Ms. Salina noted that we may need to reconsider this as Dorset Crossing continues to grow.

B. Class Size Report

Class Size Report

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the elementary class sizes. He noted that none of the in-person learning classes are above the class size guideline. This is due to the need to social distance, resulting in an average class size of 15. Mr. Sullivan stated that the distance learning class sizes are now all within the guidelines. On October 1st there were 2 classes exceeding the guidelines, but that is no longer the case.

Mr. Sullivan addressed the increase in classroom teachers. Four teachers needed to be added in grades 4-6 for the distance learning cohort. The average distance learning class size at the primary grade level is 20.7 and the upper elementary level is 21.3. In order to accomplish this, the district had to devote 19 teachers to distance learning. Mr. Sullivan explained the increase of 23 FTE over last year. Seven new FTE were added, two of whom had been budgeted for. Five other positions came post budget to address class size. The other 16 positions are reassigned teachers within the district.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the number of elementary distance learning students by grade level and by school. The total number of elementary distance learning students is 399, down from 410 in September. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the number of secondary distance learning students, 96 at HJMS and 192 at SHS. Additionally, he pointed out that the number of homeschooled students increased by 26 this year to 46, which has impacted the projections for this year.

Anjanette Belmonte, Assistant Principal at HJMS, provided the middle school class size report. She discussed the need to balance cohort size class size, teams and distance learners remotely accessing the classrooms. Ms. Belmonte stated that in

order to maintain social distancing, and keep teams intact, an additional 16 core class sections were added. She noted that the Unified Arts program for 8th graders, pull out music lessons, and the Connections class were removed from the schedule this year. The changes allowed the school to offer Wellness every day for students and ensured every student received their first choice in World Language.

Ms. Belmonte noted that the number of classes exceeding the guideline was reduced by 50% to 2 classes, one Science and one Social Studies class. The number of classes below the guideline increased by one core subject area class.

Ken Pera, Assistant Principal at SHS, provided the high school class size report. He noted that the proposed schedule and move to hybrid learning resulted in changes to the schedule over the summer. Once the decision was made to start in the hybrid model, classes needed to be developed taking into account the two alphabetical cohorts. Mr. Pera stated that he is pleased with the resulting class size report. The number of classes exceeding the guideline has dropped from 20 to 11, with the number of classes below the guideline increased from 106 to 117.

Ms. Batchelar asked if the block schedule is less stressful for students. Mr. Pera noted that the block schedule homework policy has helped. Ms. Batchelar asked if the block schedule has impacted lunches. Mr. Pera responded that there are only two lunch waves now, but once we return to full in-person learning there will be four lunch waves. Ms. Bonnell stated that she feels block days are less stressful as you don't have as much homework, but noted that it differs among students.

C. COVID Expenditures

COVID Expenditures

Ms. Meriwether stated that the amount of COVID expenditures has decreased since the last meeting from $920,000 to $800,000. There was a slight increase of $30,000 in technology, but the personnel line item has decreased to $120,000. Ms. Meriwether stated that with the use of non-lapsing funds, the CARES Act reimbursement funds and the general fund, there is $280,000 remaining in the non-lapsing account. Mr. Curtis stated that this is good news. Given the addition of 23 classes, and the remaining balance in the non-lapsing account, we are in a good position now.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE
None

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT
Ms. Batchelar:MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary