TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Record of Proceedings | Regular Meeting | May 24, 2022

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Latimer Lane School cafeteria.

Roll Call:
Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall, and Brian Watson. Ms. Lydia Tedone joined the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Members absent: Mrs. Sharon Thomas and Mrs. Tara Willerup.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, Principal Mike Luzietti, Student Representative Olivia Antidormi and Recording Secretary Cindi Freilinger.

Superintendent Curtis opened the meeting acknowledging the tragedy in Uvalde, Texas and sharing thoughts and prayers.

Recognitions

RECOGNITIONS
Principal Steve Patrina recognized two Simsbury High School students who received the CABE Leadership Award -- Alanys Rivera and Keenan Willison. Principal Scott Baker recognized two Henry James students who received the CABE Leadership Award -- Fiona Gallo and Jonah Lipar. Mrs. Salina presented the students with certificates from CABE and extended her congratulations and gratitude on behalf of the Board of Education.

Director of Athletics, Jeff Pinney recognized two Simsbury High School students as recipients of the Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar Athlete awards – Olivia Birney and Keenan Willison.

Principal Patrina introduced and congratulated the 2022-23 Student Representatives for the Board of Education – Grace Meyers and Emilie Carroll.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE
Lindsy Tkacz, 17 Lawton Drive, spoke representing parents of the 2022-23 Grade 3 class at Latimer Lane and the large class size. She acknowledged class size policy, but asked for consideration of other circumstances in that grade level, such as the high need and behavioral issues of students.

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, shared her concern that controversial issues raised at Board of Education meetings are not discussed publicly asking for clarification on the protocols for how the Board of Education makes decisions.

Tim Schofield, 22 Castlewood, shared his concerns for his daughter entering 3rd grade next year into larger class size classrooms stating that she lost her spark midway through the year due in part to the lack of control of some of the students in the classroom.

Katie Timm, 12 Westborough Drive, shared her concerns about the projections for larger class size classrooms for next year's Grade 3 class. Her concerns are related to the challenging students that disrupt the learning environment.

Allison Violette, 60 Simsbury Manor Drive, shared that her child is one of the disruptive students in the class going into 3rd Grade next year, and she expressed her concern for the teachers if they had to deal with even more students alongside the challenging students. She also shared her appreciation for Deb Driscoll, as her son has made significant strides this year.

Jacquelyn Carlson, 70 Simsbury Manor Drive, shared her appreciation for the hard work of the teachers at Latimer Lane, and specifically those in the Grade 2 class moving into Grade 3. She asked that the Board of Education consider how larger class sizes will make it more burdensome on those teachers when making the decision about possibly adding another class.

David Humpherys, 78 Simsbury Manor Drive, echoed the concerns of the previous speakers regarding the upcoming Grade 3 class size. He asked why the Grade 2 class is being chosen to be reduced, and whether the Media Center that is being split into two classrooms would be a smaller environment with more students.

Mr. Casey shared that the library was formerly two classrooms and is the exact footprint as the other classrooms in the building.

Mrs. Salina stated that the Board of Education adopted Classroom Size Guidelines that are administered district-wide, and are not Latimer Lane specific. The guidelines are up to 22 for Grades K-2 and up to 25 for Grades 3-6. She added that the budget is processed with these guidelines in mind, and that during the summer months, class size is monitored district-wide being mindful of possible necessary additions. She acknowledged the challenges shared by parents this evening stating that the Board and administration would keep a close eye on this grade level as well as others in the district. Mr. Curtis added that Mr. Luzietti is the biggest advocate for Latimer Lane and shared that he cannot provide a date when a decision would be made regarding the Grade 3. Mr. Luzietti shared the class assignments are sent in August, adding that Grade 3 letters could be delayed if the decision is still pending.

Mrs. Salina addressed Mrs. Boyko's remarks stating that while not all items are discussed at the full Board of Education meetings, there is a committee structure where some issues are reviewed. She added that the Board of Education does listen and take under consideration issues raised at meetings and does not disregard them.

Communications

<u>COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS</u>

Ms. Tedone provided a summary of this year's legislative highlights affecting schools.

Olivia Antdormi shared that the Art Show at Simsbury High School is up through Thursday, adding that BOE Student Rep, Alex Picoult's exhibit is on display. She shared that Capstone presentations began today, the Choral Review is Thursday, and the Senior Prom is on June 3. At Henry James, they have 8th Grade Day on June 7. At Squadron Line, they wrapped up Random Acts of Kindness Week last

week. Tariffville School had their Empty Bowls event was last Friday, and the Tootin' Hills Duck Race will be by the Flower Bridge on Friday.

Jen Batchelar shared that the Spring Spree was this week at SHS led by Mr. Berthiaume fostering positive school community.

Ms. Homrok-Lemke shared that she and Superintendent Curtis had observed some outstanding Capstone presentations today congratulating the students and Coordinator, Liz McKay. Mr. Burrick asked how the students felt after completion of a Capstone presentation, and Ms. Homrok-Lemke stated that there are some sighs of relief, but that overall, the students felt a huge sense of accomplishment. Mr. Tindall asked if they reflected on what might make it better next year, and Ms. Homrok-Lemke stated that feedback was great from students and staff, and felt they were in a good place moving forward. Ms. Salina asked if it was all juniors presenting, and Ms. Homrok-Lemke answered that it was predominantly juniors this year, with a few seniors.

Ms. Homrok-Lemke also shared that four Simsbury High School Digital Video Production students have been nominated in the FOX61 News contest, and the results will be announced at a ceremony on June 1. Lastly, Ms. Homrok-Lemke shared that the Torch Run for Unified Basketball took place today from SHS to Jersey Mike's, a huge supporter of the Special Olympics. The team leaves on June 4 to compete in the national event.

<u>RECOMMENDED ACTIONS</u>

Approval of Minutes of May 10, 2022

A. Approval of Minutes of May 10, 2022

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Salina abstained.

Personnel

B. Personnel

Mr. Tindall: MOVE that Board of Education accept the resignations of Mikayla Alicandro and Kevin Snyder effective June 30, 2022.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the notice of intent to retire of Lori Martensen effective June 30, 2025.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved

Unaffiliated Salaries

C. Approval of Unaffiliated Salary Adjustments

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the salary range for the unaffiliated Board of Education employees and salaries for the Central Office Administrators be increased by 2.50% for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved

Approval of Non-Lapsing Account Expenditures

D. Approval of Non-Lapsing Account Expenditures

Mr. Burrick: MOVE, effective May 24, 2022 to authorize the use of the Board of Education Non-Lapsing fund up to the amount of the FY 2021-22-year end deficit not to exceed $651,308.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So Moved.

Latimer Lane School Report

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Latimer Lane School Report

Mr. Luzietti presented an update on the Latimer Lane expansion and renovation project. He shared that the weekly design review meetings have involved key staff members in the building and have proved to be very helpful in the design of the various areas of the school, including the media center, kitchen, security, technology infrastructure, and interior design.

Mr. Luzietti discussed that the team has been involved in the budget reconciliation, which has resulted in a $1.3 million overrun of expenses. The additional expenses were recently passed by the Boards of Selectmen and Finance allowing the project to go out to bid July 1.

Mr. Luzietti reviewed the floor plan development sharing that it will be a State-of-the-Art building with a good flow as you navigate through the grade levels, two courtyards allowing for outdoor instructional space, and a full-size middle school basketball court. The new gymnasium and cafeteria will eventually be open for community use. The design includes the ability to block off the rest of the building from these community areas.

Mr. Luzietti stated that there were originally 7-9 phases of construction that have been reduced to 3, adding that this will result in much less disruption to students and staff. During the 3 phases, no classroom teacher will have to move more than twice.

During Phase 1 the north and south ends of the building will be under construction, and the current gym will be utilized as intervention space. The media center will be utilized as two classrooms, and the library will operate similarly to how it did during COVID, without the physical library space.

During Phase 2, some students will rotate into new classrooms, and the middle section of the building will be under construction, including the gym, cafeteria, art and special education classrooms, and upper hallway. The gym stage will serve as an overflow classroom for art, music, and physical education as needed. He shared that the building can function as a school throughout the process, and moves will be targeted to take place during school breaks to allow for less stress.

Phase 3 will include the front of the building, including the main office. The main office will move into the cafeteria during this phase, and K, 1, and 2 classrooms will move so that those classrooms in front can be completed. The media center will be completed at this point, but it likely will be used to host interventions.

Mr. Tindall complemented Mr. Luzietti on the presentation and leadership and asked what is keeping him up at night about the project? Mr. Luzietti shared that when the costs started escalating, that kept him up, but as a whole, the project is so very positive that the only thing he is awaiting is breaking ground.

Mr. Watson asked if Mr. Luzietti had reached out to Scott Baker, Principal of Henry James School, to get any pointers on educating students while under construction. Mr. Luzietti shared that he had, and that Mr. Baker has been extremely helpful in providing guidance from his experience during the construction at Henry James.

Mrs. Salina asked about the referendum pertaining to the additional cost after the bid process. Ms. Meriwether stated that we would have to have a referendum for the overage, and Mrs. Salina encouraged the Latimer community to come out and vote at that time.

B. Proposed 2022-23 Textbooks

Proposed 22-23 Textbooks

Ms. Homrok-Lemke shared that each spring, the Board of Education reviews and adopts new textbooks for the following year. She shared that there are six texts included in the exhibit that have been vetted by department chairs, principals, her office, and the Curriculum Committee. She encouraged Board of Education members to contact her office if they would like to review the textbooks, and stated that the adoption would be on the June 14 Board of Education agenda as an action item.

Mr. Burrick asked if the adoption includes instructional tools as well. Ms. Homrok-Lemke answered that the adoption would include related supplementary materials and teacher resource kits.

Ms. Batchelar inquired as to whether the text for the AP course was one that was used statewide in all public schools. Ms. Homrok-Lemke stated that she couldn't be 100% sure of that, but that it does correspond with the College Board curriculum

C. 2020-21 Audit Report

2020-21 Audit Report

Ms. Meriwether reviewed the 2020-21 audit report as completed by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, sharing that there is an excess of $991,647 in the Town's General Fund, which is attributed mainly to additional town building permits as a result of the building boom. She added that the Town's excess of revenues over expenditures (GAAP basis), which is a bond rating utilized by agencies as a review for financial position, is $4,348,445. Ms. Meriwether shared that the recommendations of the audit report are the development of an Accounting Procedures Manual, which is a priority in 2023 after the full implementation of the MUNIS financial software. An additional recommendation is a Fraud Risk Assessment, and this is included in year three (FY24) of the 6-year capital plan for the Town of Simsbury.

D. Policy Second Reading

Policy First Reading

Ms. Homrok-Lemke stated that following tonight's meeting Policy 4500 Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Free Workplace will be brought forward for adoption at the June

14 Board of Education meeting. Ms. Salina stated that if anyone has any questions, they can reach out to Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, expressed her tremendous appreciation for Lori Martensen, currently a Math Coach, who previously was a teacher at Latimer Lane stating that she was the best teacher her son had.

Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to enter executive session to discuss the evaluation of the superintendent at 8:13 p.m. and include Superintendent Matt Curtis.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Cindi Freilinger
Recording Secretary