

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings	Regular Meeting	June 14, 2022
Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the BOE Conference Room. <u>Roll Call:</u> <u>Members present:</u> Mmes. Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar, and Lydia Tedone. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Brian Watson. <u>Members absent:</u> Mmes. Tara Willerup and Sharon Thomas. Mr. Jeff Tindall <u>Also present:</u> Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde. <u>RECOGNITIONS</u> Mr. Curtis introduced the Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year, Jan Hanlon. He noted her work as a school psychologist at Tariffville and that she will be missed as she retires this year. Ms. Lemke introduced the recent SHS graduates who received the Kathleen Magowan Memorial Scholarship and are continuing their studies in education or a related field. The recipients present are Meena Rajesh, Alex Vargas, Mykayla Fluster and Olivia Antidormi. Madison Rivera was unable to attend. Two of the SHS yearbook editors presented the 2022 yearbook to the board. Olivia Creighton and Madeline Pennell spoke about the theme for the book and distributed them to board members. SHS yearbook editor Charlotte Berliner was unable to attend. <u>PUBLIC AUDIENCE</u> <u>Lori Boyko</u>, 15 Oakhurst Road, suggested the board should consider meeting over the summer. She questioned what input the board provides as voting members of CAFE, and whether the board is aligned with CAFE's legislative priorities. Ms. Boyko asked if ancillary materials used in health class are approved by the board. She expressed concern that these materials are provided by non-profit organizations and are not based on science. <u>COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS</u> Mr. Watson stated that graduation was fantastic, and he noted the number of students who will be attending universities in the fall. Ms. Tedone reported on activities at CAFE and the Collective Bargaining Workshop she attended. Ms. Lemke spoke about the teachers who received Kathleen Magowan grants for the coming year which totaled \$23,000. She reported on the HJMS Family & Consumer Science project creating teddy bears give to the police to share with children who may be in need during a police call. Ms. Lemke stated that the Tech Ed Department		Recognitions Public Audience Communications

received a 2022 Citizenship Award from FOX News for their Penathon. Mr. Sullivan noted the retirement of the Tootin' Hills main office secretary Lori Blomberg.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of May 23, 2022 Special Meeting

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2022 special meeting.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

B. Approval of Minutes of May 24, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

C. Personnel

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Licia Krier and Morgan Pierce effective June 30, 2022.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the notice of intent to retire of Chris Medve effective June 30, 2025.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Pamela Sickinger effective June 30, 2022.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

D. Approval of Superintendent's Contract

Mr. Burrick, Chair of Personnel & Negotiations Committee, spoke about the collaborative process the board shares with the superintendent and their work toward the district goals. He stated the community and board are fortunate to have a superintendent who provides leadership and is open with board and community members.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's contract for 2022-23 with a salary increased of 2.5% for 2023.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

E. Approval of 2022-23 Textbooks

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board approve the textbook adoption for the 2022-23 school year as submitted by the administration.

Approval of
Minutes of May
23, 2022 Mtg.

Approval of
Minutes of May
24, 2022 Mtg.

Personnel

Approval of
2022-23
Textbooks

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

F. Approval of Policy Revisions

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE to adopt the revised Board of Education policies, as noted, effective June 14, 2022.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved

G. End of Year Fiscal Authorizations

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to act as the Board's agent in renewing applications for state and federally funded programs.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Simsbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to transfer funds from those accounts in which a surplus is anticipated into those accounts in which a deficit is anticipated.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Superintendent, with the approval of the Board Chairman, be authorized to hire staff for the 2022-23 school year during the period of July and August when the Board is not in session.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

H. BOE Summer Meeting Schedule

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education cancel regular board meetings scheduled on July 12, July 26, August 9 and August 23, 2022.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Equity Update

Mr. Curtis stated that the equity update will focus on 3 goal areas as part of the district strategic plan. Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor, Director of Equity and Access, noted the strategies under district goals 1, 2 and 3 that have been the focus of her work. She discussed the four main buckets where equity work is in progress: Teaching and Learning, Professional Development, Climate and Culture, and Equity Indicators. Dr. Batchelor outlined how equity and access work aligns with the BOE 5 year goals: Student Growth and Success; Compassionate and Connected School Culture; Premiere Workforce; and Sustainable and Strategic Investments. She stated her work is focused on root causes and she noted two books about equity that she recommends.

Approval of
Policy Revisions

End of Year
Fiscal
Authorizations

BOE Summer
Meeting
Schedule

Equity Update

Dr. Batchelor discussed her role as a member of the Teaching & Learning team, as well as her work with the Social Studies Vertical Team and the Math Vertical Team reviewing and providing recommendations for units of study. She pointed out her work with professional learning and her role as a thought partner for staff and parents, as well as a mentor for students. Dr. Batchelor's professional learning includes restorative practices, culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, equity indicators and social emotional learning.

Dr. Batchelor reviewed the key data points provided from the SHS Equity Week survey. She noted that 71 sessions were held and 714 students responded to the survey. 87% of students stated they believe they learned something new from at least one session and the majority of students believe we should offer Equity Week in future years.

Dr. Batchelor discussed climate and culture. She stated that forums were held to gain insight on engagement, how students are doing. Separate forums were held with parents, staff and SHS/HJMS students who chose to participate. Dr. Batchelor stated that engagement in the Simsbury Public Schools is defined as completion of tasks and participation, and a sense of belonging in the school community. Additional forums to gain insight on climate and culture included SHS mediation groups, HJMS mentorship, student survey, Choice parent meetings and follow-up with forums, focus groups and listening tours.

Dr. Batchelor addressed professional development and efforts to think outside of the box. Minority affinity groups have been formed, as well as a minority recruitment team. Meriden Public Schools and Farmington Public Schools are being utilized as models for these groups. Dr. Batchelor discussed her involvement in recruiting efforts and her involvement with the state Diversity Equity Inclusions (DEI) team relative to the CT teacher shortage.

Dr. Batchelor reviewed the work of the Teaching and Learning Recommendation Review Committee. The committee has worked to review policy and practice in order to provide recommendations and overrides for school counselors. Dr. Batchelor reviewed changes in AP enrollment between the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2023, noting the slight increase. The goal is that the percentage of students of each ethnicity has an equal percentage of students enrolled in AP courses.

Dr. Batchelor discussed the work of the Equity Council. Their three prioritized areas of focus for measuring progress are: (1) Create systems and structure for continual and ongoing analysis of data for discrepancies within placements and achievements. (2) Provide implicit bias training for all teachers and staff members with fidelity. (3) Provide culturally responsive training for all staff members in order to aid in developing cultural competence in educating all children.

Dr. Batchelor reviewed the year ahead. Plans include identifying equity indicators that address student engagement across groups. Utilizing existing research on the connection between student engagement and achievement. Organizing existing SEL components into a cohesive districtwide structure. Using 2022-23 referral data as a baseline to identify trends. Creating community calendars with school PTOs. Additionally, a review of baseline data for suspensions and referrals, guiding the curriculum review committee, providing more opportunities to increase engagement by all stakeholders, sustaining the work of the Equity Council, and sharing life stories

and experiences in Simsbury. Dr. Batchelor stated that she feels a sense of belonging in the district and as a member of the Teaching & Learning team.

Mr. Curtis stated that the key is engagement as the district looks to establish more pull communications after the large number of push communications as a result of Covid.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, recommended that parents look at the CLEP exam list to obtain credits for college. She stated that why we have differences, we all are the same. Ms. Boyko asked what changed such that we now emphasize differences rather than commonalities. She voiced her concern that we need to stop dividing everyone into groups and viewing everything through a racial lens. Ms. Boyko stated she has heard more about race and equity than math. She questioned whether we are looking at students as individuals.

April Smith, 44 Climax Road, asked what went on during Equity Week. She suggested that some of the books at SHS are racist. Ms. Smith expressed concern that there is no transparency and the equity presentation didn't tell us what's going on.

Evan Arsenault, 47 Notch Road, suggested the district is focused on the wrong things and missing the basics. He questioned why during a teacher shortage we are looking for candidates of color rather than the best candidates. Mr. Arsenault suggested that parents feel they are not being heard. He stated that education needs to be redesigned to focus on writing, math and creativity. He noted that when you look for problems you find problems.

Stacy Walczak, 35 Banks Road, stated that the equity work being done is good but questioned whether we are over-correcting. She suggested that students of color may not have support at home that would enable them to take AP courses. She noted that parent commitment is huge.

Mike Smith, 44 Climax Road, questioned how we judge success. He stated there is a lot of focus on race rather than individuals. Mr. Smith stated that mentoring is the best start and if it is a success, minorities will take more AP classes.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment