+

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY**
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings | Regular Meeting | October 26, 2021

Mr. Todd Burrick called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m. in the Henry James Memorial School Library Media Center.

Roll Call:
**Members present:** Mmes. Tara Willerup and Jen Batchelar. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

**Members absent:** Mmes. Susan Salina, Lydia Tedone and Sharon Thomas.

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, BOE Student Representative Olivia Antidormi and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE
***Lori Boyko***, 15 Oakhurst Road, stated there a lot of highly qualified individuals who do not agree that masks benefit students in schools. There are arbitrary mask mandates in buildings, but all children have to wear them in school. She noted the curriculum is being worked around social and emotional health. Ms. Boyko stated that the cure cannot be worse than the disease. She pointed out that COVID is no longer an emergency in Connecticut.

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
Ms. Antidormi reported on activities at the elementary and middle schools. She noted that One Act shows were performed last weekend and 88 students will be inducted into the National Honor Society at SHS on Thursday.

Ms. Lemke reported that the Curriculum Committee will meet on Thursday. She briefly discussed the professional development planned for Election Day next Tuesday. Mr. Sullivan noted the retirement of Webmaster and Communications Coordinator Martha Hogan. He discussed her role in the district over the past 15 years and stated that the job has been posted.

Mr. Curtis noted the polling locations for next Tuesday's election. He stated that the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) reports status quo levels of COVID as we remain in the yellow area. The FVHD is planning for vaccinations for the 5-11 age group. They will hold clinics in Simsbury, Granby and Farmington.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of October 12, 2021 Meeting

Approval of Minutes of October 12, 2021

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Personnel

B. Personnel

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignation of Alexa Morawski effective October 14, 2021.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. HJMS Report

HJMS Report

Scott Baker, HJMS Principal, provided highlights of the past year. Last year COVID protocols in school were successfully implemented with full day in-person learning in effect October 13, 2020. This was accomplished by reducing class size, adjusting schedules for in-person and distance learners, implementing revised arrival and dismissal procedures, allowing students to eat lunch outside, and effective contact tracing. Last year every HJMS staff member completed an online course offered by Yale: SEL Strategies in times of Stress and Uncertainty.

Mr. Baker noted celebrations at HJMS that include school nurse Patti Warner being named Educator of the Year and Simsbury Teacher of the year Kristina Nordell. He stated that last year the school was able to start offering the Wellness course every day. In addition, the construction project was completed. Mr. Baker outlined the benefits of each of the new spaces.

Mr. Baker addressed the academic indicators of success at HJMS. He noted that the state has encouraged the district not to compare district data this year. Mr. Baker stated SBAC results were mixed: 81% ELA, 57% Math and 74% Science. He noted that the score in Math is not typical. Mr. Baker provided an example of how each student's scores are analyzed and how the data is used to drive instruction and daily teaching.

Mr. Baker noted the BOE goals and the Vision of the Graduate attributes, and the HJMS priorities for 2021-22. The HJMS priorities include: health and safety, SEL/relationships, homework, instruction/inquiry and student growth. Mr. Baker and Jacqueline Petrella, HJMS Assistant Principal, reviewed how each of the BOE goals ties into the work at HJMS. Goal 1 (Student Growth & Success): (1) transition back to pre-Covid schedule, (2) intervention redesign, (3) continued work with inquiry/student centered learning/Vision of the Graduate, (4) restart homework study, (5) continue to prioritize content standards, and (6) create student learning goals that are responsive to the impact of COVID. Goal 2 (Compassionate and Connected School Culture): (1) re-energized SEL and climate committees, (2) redesigned Connections period, (3) integration of SEL into content areas, (4) HJMS Team Pride, and (5) extracurricular life at HJMS. Goal 3 (Premier Workforce): (1) being attentive to the mental health and wellbeing of staff, (2) Wellness teachers integrated into teams and team meetings, (3) Department Supervisors returning to full supervisory roles, (4) streamlined COVID protocols/roles/procedures, and (5) goal for teachers to share passions with students through clubs and Connections. Goal 4 (Strategic and Sustainable Investments): (1) redesigned intervention department, (2) completed the renovation – reimagining how the building is used with new spaces, (3) having a building substitute, and (4) continued participation with the Facilities & Enrollment Study – Grade 6.

Mr. Baker stated that HJMS energy is back. He noted that all students and staff have attended back to school assemblies and "treat people with kindness" bracelets were distributed. Mr. Tindall stated that student growth is critical in middle school, and he commended the teachers and administration for everything they are doing for students.

Quarterly Budget Analysis

B. Quarterly Budget Analysis

Ms. Meriwether noted specific areas of revenue in the quarterly report. She stated that the Open Choice Academic and Social Support grant funding award was increased by $10,275 compared to the previous year. The IDEA Part B and Pre-School grant funding increased by $33,035 compared to the prior fiscal year. The American Rescue Plan IDEA preliminary award is $223,887 for the 2 year grant period. Ms. Meriwether noted that the district received Emergency Connectivity Funding in the amount of $262,667 which will be used to fund 820 Chromebooks and 12 Hot Spot connections.

Ms. Meriwether noted some of the expenditure areas of the quarterly report. There is a decrease in the General Control account due to the implementation of shared services in the prior year with the retirement of the Business Manager. Decreased expenditures in Transportation are a result of regular transportation payments in the current year compared to the prior year when the contract with Salter's was renegotiated due to COVID. Ms. Meriwether noted that decreased equipment purchases in the current year are related to less instructional technology needed compared to the prior year when classes were held remote/hybrid.

Policy First Reading

C. Policy First Reading

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the four policies forwarded from the Policy Committee. These changes are all the result of state legislation. Policy revisions include the addition of mental health days; a new definition for the term Bullying; change to the student immunization religious exemption; and setting of the Graduation date. Mr. Sullivan also reviewed the vaccination regulations, based on the Governor's executive order that will be added to the policy book.

Public Audience

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

***Chris Martinez*** expressed concern with the cartoon posted by the CT Democratic party and the letter sent to President Biden stating that members of the public attending school board meetings are domestic terrorists. He asked if anyone from Simsbury has reached out to the CT Board of Education to say we in Simsbury do not agree with these statements. Mr. Curtis stated that we have not reached out to the state on this matter.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

_____ _____

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary