

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

January 10, 2023

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar and Lydia Tedone. Messrs. Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson. Todd Burrick arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Members absent: Ms. Sharon Thomas.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, Director of Infrastructure and Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Emilie Carroll and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Carroll reported on midterms, winter sports and the SHS musical Matilda. She noted that the Trojan Wall now has a game of the week that they promote. Ms. Carroll commented on the lack of a classroom for the string's music teacher at Squadron Line.

Communications

Ms. Tedone thanked the Tariffville students for creating holiday cards for board members. She noted that the CT legislative session opened last week. Ms. Tedone reported on the Equity Symposium that is coming up in Washington D.C.

Ms. Willerup provided information on the MLK program that will be held at Eno Hall on Monday. Mr. Tindall thanked the registrar of voters for holding the Latimer Lane School referendum on Saturday.

Ms. Lemke noted that Friday is an early release day for professional development. She shared the news that Sue Beardsley, Director of Health Services, retired at the end of December after being with the district for more than 3 decades. The search for her replacement is underway.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2022 Meeting

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2022 meeting.

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

Approval of
Minutes of
December 13,
2022 Meeting

B. Personnel

Personnel

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignation of Erin Osterhoudt effective December 23, 2022.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

C. Approval of Central and Tariffville Roof Education Specs

Mr. Casey stated that both of these roofing projects are scheduled to be done next summer. Approval of the education specifications is required for state reimbursement of the projects.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the educational specifications for both the Tariffville Elementary School partial roof replacement project and the Central Elementary School partial roof replacement project.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Special Education Program Review and Budget

Katie Krasula, Director of Pupil Services, introduced her department supervisors who were present and reviewed the department mission statement. She stated the CT annual performance report, which evaluates the implementation of IDEA requirements, has not yet been released by the state.

Ms. Krasula addressed the work of teaching and learning in special education. She discussed special education as it relates to the strategic plan, in particular service delivery, professional development in the areas of behavior and dyslexia, the new state IEP system (CT SEDS), and the new supervisory structure. Ms. Krasula stated that the special education task force, comprised of 22 special education educators and administrators are focused on two areas this year: staffing and caseload/workload, and service delivery models and engagement. The task force is working as a think tank researching these areas to assist in bridging the achievement gap.

Ms. Krasula provided context to the department's budget requests. She reviewed the special education program cost for 2022-23. Ms. Krasula reviewed a 10 year student population comparison, noting that the number of students in the district has decreased by 530, but at the same time the number of special education students has increased by 114.

Ms. Krasula addressed the special education incidence rate. She noted that over a six year period the rate has increased from a rate of 13% to a projected rate of 17% by the end of this year. Ms. Salina asked if the increase is pandemic related. Ms. Krasula responded that students were not evaluated during the shutdown and the increase is partially related to mental health needs coming out of the pandemic. She noted that the rate is average for DRG B and the Farmington Valley. Ms. Krasula addressed referrals to special education, noting that an increase in referrals results in an increase in the incidence rate. She presented preschool data, stating that it is

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projected that 52 students will need special education supports by the end of the year.

Ms. Krasula reviewed out of district data, noting the growth over the past five years. She also noted the increase in out of district placement tuitions which have increased an average of \$15,000 over the past five years. Mr. Curtis pointed out that grants offset some of the out of district costs.

Ms. Krasula provided a caseload comparison for Simsbury and Farmington Valley districts. The caseload range in the Farmington Valley is 9-17 cases and in Simsbury is 16-23 cases per case manager. She noted that the role of the caseload manager may be different in each district. This is an area being addressed by the special education task force. Ms. Salina asked if we still use a co-teaching model. Ms. Krasula responded that the co-teaching model is still used and service delivery is an area the task force will address.

Ms. Krasula addressed her budget requests. Two elementary special education teachers are requested to decrease the caseload for case managers and the special education workload. The second budget request is an increase in out of district funding of \$490,000 in order to cover actual costs. Ms. Salina asked the number of special education teachers at each level. Ms. Krasula responded that there are 2-3 special education teachers at the elementary schools, except Squadron with 4.5. Mr. Curtis pointed out that out of district transportation costs have also increased and we need to rely more on outsourcing rather than Salters.

Ms. Batchelar asked if we have paraeducators specific to special education. Ms. Krasula responded that yes, special education paraeducators are utilized to implement IEP's and provide appropriate accommodations for students. Mr. Curtis noted that the district is looking at the service model, and compared to other districts Simsbury is not low on non-certified staff. Ms. Krasula provided a brief update on the relocation of the Farmington Valley Transition Academy.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE
None

ADJOURNMENT
Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Public Audience

Adjournment