

Board of Education Regular Meeting
October 21, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center.

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Jamie Drzyzga, James Mol, Brian Fry, Matt Service, Maureen Sattan (via phone), Michael Sepko, and Debra Dudack; Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, Business Manager Bill Hoff

Also in attendance: Jim Blain, SHS Principal; Karen Carpenter-Snow, McAlister Principal; Roxanne Pangallo, Spaulding Principal; Ken Smith, SMS Principal; Diana Kelly, Director of Special Services; Tom Kieselback, School Resource Officer; Nikki Lengyel, Town Youth Services Coordinator; Lori O'Neil, School Social Worker; Patrick Brintle, Counseling Coordinator; Heather Goldstein, Teacher; Brittany Popeleski, Teacher; Bari DeMichele, School Psychologist; and Brittney Easter, School Psychologist

Absent: John Richter

Social Emotional Learning Workshop

Ms. Zawawi and Ms. Kelley presented information on social emotional learning and the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Education. Ms. Zawawi reviewed the presentation format and reviewed the five key components of social emotional learning: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-management, (3) responsible decision-making, (4) relationship skills, and (5) social awareness. The benefits of social emotional learning for students are increased student academic performance, improved classroom behavior, increased ability to manage stress and depression, better attitudes about themselves, others and school, lower drug use, and less emotional stress. These abilities and skills will prepare students for college and career readiness. Ms. Kelley explained the tiered intervention model for both academic and behavioral supports. She reviewed strategies to identify students at risk and resources used to support students. Building principals shared the curriculum and programs they are utilizing in each of their schools as it relates to social emotional learning. Ms. Zawawi shared the support that is being given to teachers to establish clear behavior and academic expectations for students. Ms. Kelley explained the data being used to identify and support students, and the partnerships that have been formed with community organizations. Mr. Van Tassel reviewed future planning, including proposing adding a school counselor at the middle school and high school and an additional social worker at the secondary level next year, training opportunities for staff, continued partnership with the Town Youth Services department, developing a self-contained emotional disturbance program, and expanding counseling services available through Community Health Resources into the elementary schools. A discussion among Board members and staff revolved around additional staffing needs and staff retention, types of screenings and evaluation of students at risk, professional development for staff and communicating the priority of social emotional learning to teachers, alignment of social emotional learning district-wide, specifics related to Responsive Classroom and training done in-house by Ms. Popeleski and Ms. Goldstein, data on 211 calls in the district over the last year, and the role of the Youth Services Coordinator and School Resource Officer in providing social emotional support for students.

Adjournment

Mol moved, Dudack seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of November 4, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary