



"The mission of the Suffield Public Schools is to prepare all students with the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for success in a rapidly changing world."

SUFFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

October 2, 2020

BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

I hope this letter finds you in good health having enjoyed a wonderful and safe summer. We are finally able to say "welcome back"! No one could have imagined that in March of 2020 when we closed Suffield Public Schools to in-person learning that we would not be able to return until the following August. In the intervening months, the Board of Education, the Administrative team, the teachers and the staff have worked tirelessly to provide the best possible level of learning and care for our students remotely. I believe we had many successes, but it is equally clear that our students need to be back in school.

The Board of Education understands and appreciates the many sacrifices that you, the families, have had to endure during this unprecedented time in education and our society. Despite our sincerest hopes, the 2020-2021 school year is also looking to be unprecedented as well. We are living through very strange times, addressing issues never before known to educators. These issues are new, uncomfortable and untested in many ways. Through all of the challenges, we as a school district must remain focused on our primary mission, which is to provide the best quality education while maintaining a safe environment in our schools for all of our students.

The Board of Education would like to thank the administration, the faculty and staff and the members of the community who have contributed to the creation of our reopening plan. The plan is not a perfect solution. The perfect solution would be to return to pre-COVID Suffield, but that is not to be at this moment. We believe the plan is a series of thoughtful compromises to get as many students possible back to in-person instruction within the parameters of state regulations that we must comply. School, regardless of grade level is, for now, going to look and feel quite different. However, in the short time we have been back in our school buildings, what isn't different is the teachers love for teaching, the students love for learning and the community's love for our schools.

Finally, on behalf of Suffield's Board of Education, I would like to thank our community, our families and our students for their unwavering support and patience during this turbulent time in our schools and our country. I hope each and every one of your children have a safe return to school. If at any point you have questions, concerns or thoughts, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the other Board of Education members.

Respectfully,

Susan Mercik Davis
Suffield Board of Education, Chair



2020-2021 BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

Board of Education Unanimously Votes to Add Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Goal to its 2020-2021 Board Goals

On the evening of June 22, 2020, the Board of Education met with Superintendent Tim Van Tasel to

discuss its 2020-2021 Board goals. The Board revisits these goals each year, as they direct the planning and action of district administration. At that time, the Board discussed the possibility of adding a goal to enhance the diversity and inclusion initiatives in the district.

On August 17, 2020, the Board voted unanimously to add a goal to “Promote diversity, equity and inclusion for students, faculty and staff by fostering acceptance, mutual respect, civility and non-discrimination, per BOE Policies [4118.11](#) and [5145.4](#), across all areas of our District including employment, policy, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and the working and learning environment.” Both Board policies that are noted in the goal state the Board’s commitment to non-discrimination for students and personnel.

The Board is committed to action, directing the district administration to take concrete steps to advance non-discrimination across all aspects of the Suffield educational system. The Board recognizes and values all that wish to cultivate a positive school community.

In the words of the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

Board of Education Goals

- Establish healthy channels of outreach, communication, engagement, and collaboration with town government and the community.
- Systematically use meaningful data to drive, improve and track student success and instructional practices.
- Continue to design and implement an integrated plan for professional learning aligned with district needs.
- Revise curriculum and programming with an emphasis on alignment and fidelity of implementation.
- Engage in a process to develop a five-year Strategic Plan.
- Promote diversity, equity and inclusion for students, faculty and staff by fostering acceptance, mutual respect, civility and non-discrimination, per BOE Policies 4118.11 and 5145.4, across all areas of our District including employment, policy, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and the working and learning environment.

WHAT'S NEW

Suffield Public Schools now has a mobile app to help you stay up to date on all our latest news and information. [Click here for more details.](#)

THE SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MOBILE APP IS NOW AVAILABLE!

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

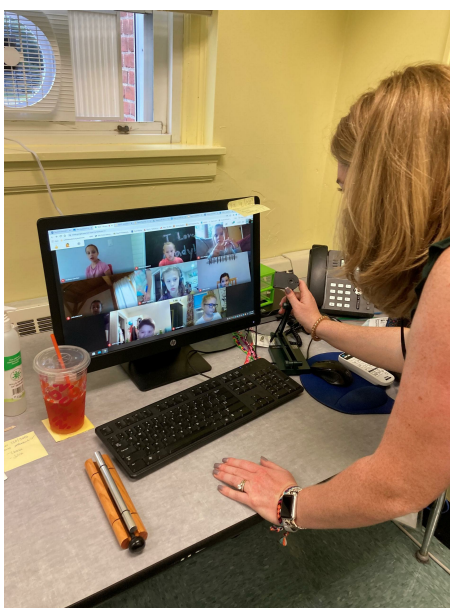
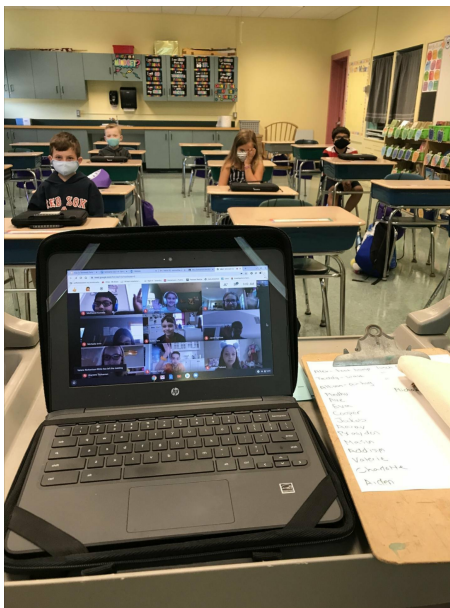


- October 5 - BOE Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- October 8 - BOE Special Meeting - 6:30pm
- October 14 - BOE Special Meeting - 6:30pm
- October 15 - Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- October 19 - Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - 5:00pm
- October 19 - BOE Workshop - 6:30pm
- October 29 - Finance & Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm

- November 2 - BOE Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- November 16 - BOE Workshop - 6:30pm
- December 3 - Finance & Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- December 7 - BOE Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- December 10 - Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- December 21 - Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - 5:00pm
- December 21 - BOE Workshop - 6:30 pm

BOE Calendar

BOARD SPOTLIGHT



Distance Learning

Contribution provided by Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi

The Suffield Public Schools teaching schedule may look a little different this fall but teaching and learning continues to be our main focus. Teachers have worked very hard to deliver a more equitable curriculum with new instructional tools through new mediums in order to engage students in a variety of learning experiences all while establishing a safe learning environment.

To assist with our transition to a hybrid schedule our technology department successfully delivered 2,475

Chromebooks and 9 hotspots to students/families before the first day of school for a smooth transition to remote learning. 210 document cameras were delivered within the first two weeks of school to allow teachers to connect with our at home learners via Google Classroom and Google Meets. Google Classroom and Google Meets has enabled teachers and students to collaborate, communicate, and learn with each other while apart or together. As an added measure, to ensure connectivity for our remote learners the technology department established a “Hotline” for families to report any technical difficulties, instructional platform issues or forgotten passwords.

There are many new and exciting programs and courses for students to engage in this year. At Spaulding and McAlister: STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) classes were added. At Suffield High School we have added three new courses: Anatomy and Physiology, Computer Aided Drafting and Design, and a new culinary class called Farm to Whisk, which allows students to learn about healthy habits of food from farm to table. We also included several new on-line instructional programs (Dreambox Math, Lexia and Raz Kids Reading) to allow students to practice new skills. These programs are adaptive and students are able to practice at their own level providing enrichment and review.

This year Suffield Public Schools is continuing their partnership with Columbia Teachers College. Staff Developers with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) are working with teachers K-8 to hone teachers’ skills instructing with the reading and writing workshop approach. Teachers will engage in lesson studies and learn ways to innovate in the classroom with cutting-edge, research-based instructional strategies.

SPS continues to strive for excellence in teaching and learning. Our teachers, support staff and administrators are dedicated to ensuring all students are safe, healthy and supported academically as well as with social-emotional learning throughout this year.

SUFFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

[Susan Mercik Davis](#) - Chair

[Michael Sepko](#) - Vice Chair

[Maureen Sattan](#)- Secretary

[Jamie Drzyzga](#) - Member

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