

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Media Center &
Remotely via Zoom
November 2, 2020

Call to Order

Board Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:31p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Jamie Drzyzga (attended remotely), Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry (attended remotely), Glenn Gazdik (attended remotely), Scott Lingenfelter (attended remotely), Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Michael Sepko (attended remotely); and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi (attended remotely), and Business Manager Bill Hoff (attended remotely)

Absent: None

MOTION #21-20: Sattan moved to add item X. E. 1. to the Discussion/Action items on the agenda for acceptance of a donation. Dudack seconded the motion and all member voted in favor. The motion carried **9-0-0**.

Recognition

The Board of Education recognized Andrew Van Cott for being selected as the nominee to represent Suffield for Kid Governor, a national civics education program. Ms. Todd introduced the teachers present tonight, Ms. Stiles, Ms. Janssen and Ms. Baril, who were involved in bringing this program to McAlister. Ms. Janssen, his teacher, introduced Andrew and he read his speech that he submitted as part of the process for Kid Governor which addressed ways to end racial discrimination. McAlister is holding a Kid Governor rally on Thursday and will be livestreamed for remote learners to view.

SHS Student Representative

No report

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board member Sepko, Fry, Gazdik and Drzyzga thanked the families who sent the flowers to Board members. Board member Drzyzga, Gazdik and Fry congratulated Andrew Van Cott. Board member Fry encouraged everyone to vote tomorrow.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report
 - Mr. Van Tassel thanked the families who sent flowers to him and BOE members.
 - He congratulated Andrew Van Cott for his recognition as well as Denise Raymond, McAlister PE teacher, who was selected to receive the Professional Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching from CTAPHERD.

- Mr. Van Tassel thanked Gingko Bioworks who provided free COVID-19 testing to employees in the district.
- Over the next several months he and the Board will be working with Isobel Stevenson of Connecticut Centers for School Change in developing the Portrait of a Graduate. Stakeholder meetings will be held from November through the spring.
- Board Chair's Report
 - Board Chair Mercik Davis thanked the town of Suffield for the Spooktacular event as well as the Suffield Public Schools employees who worked the event.
 - She forwarded an invitation to all Board members for this year's National Honor Society induction ceremony via Zoom on November 10.
 - Board Chair Mercik Davis encouraged all to vote tomorrow.
 - She thanked the families who sent flowers to all BOE members and Superintendent.
- Business Manager's Report
 - Mr. Hoff said breakfast and lunch is free for all children under 18 through the end of the school year, and he encouraged all families to participate. The meals are supported by a federal grant and does not come at a cost to the district. He and the Food Service Director are working to make meal pick-ups easier for families.
- -Board of Selectmen's Report
 - None
- Board of Finance Liaison's Report
 - None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #21-21: Finnigan moved to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of October 5, 2020, October 19, 2020, and October 26, 2020. Dudack seconded the motion. Board member Lingenfelter said Board members' names should be included in the minutes when their comments are noted. Policy Subcommittee Chair Dudack stated that this policy had been reviewed, Board members do have the option to make a motion to add their name to the minutes, and meeting recordings are available. Board member Lingenfelter said the subcommittee discussed not using verbatim minutes, not that the minutes wouldn't reflect names. Board member Sattan stated that there was already a request to re-review this policy in the policy subcommittee based upon feedback from the last regular Board meeting, so it could be discussed again at that time. All members voted in favor of approving the minutes listed in the Motion. The motion passed unanimously **9-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- COVID-19 Update

Mr. Van Tassel said the county metrics will be added to district website for the 14-day rolling average. He noted a sizeable donation of Kinsa thermometers has been given to the district and we are coordinating distribution to families. Superintendent Van Tassel said he is working closely with the NCDHD to try to reduce the number of students and staff needing to be quarantined. At the secondary level, seating arrangements have been instituted. With class seating charts, we can identify those in close proximity to avoid quarantining a whole classroom. The elementary classrooms are more difficult to arrange to not have teachers and students in close proximity to one another. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Van Tassel said he hopes these added measures will encourage more students, specifically at the high school, to attend in person. Many students, especially athletes, have been choosing to attend remotely to avoid the risk of quarantine.

Board member Sepko left the meeting at 7:15 pm.

- **2019-2020 Assessment Results Presentation**
Assistant Superintendent Zawawi presented the 2019-2020 assessment results. She shared the NGSS results for grades 5, 8, 11 taken in the spring of 2019. The eleventh graders ranked eighth in the state in meeting or exceeding the goal. She shared the high level PSAT results for grade 9 and the PSAT/NMSQT results for grades 10 and 11. She also displayed the PSAT cohort data over time for the class of 2020, 2021 and 2022. Mr. Blain highlighted the AP testing and said 19 different courses are offered from freshman through senior year. He said even though there was an opt-out option for testing offered last spring due to the pandemic, 389 out of 423 (92%) students took the online AP tests. He noted that overall scores of 3 or higher increased from past years. Ms. Kelley shared the special education annual performance report (APR). The targets are established by the state, and she reviewed these indicators. She was pleased to report that Suffield meets the target requirements. Ms. Zawawi reviewed next steps in using this assessment data to improve teaching and learning. Board members requested that AP results include an exhibit showing students scoring four or greater, as many schools use this guideline to give credit. Board members had questions on how the data is analyzed and how it informs decision making. They requested more specific future assessment data be shared with the Board as well as specific special education student assessment results.
- **2020-2021 Class Size and Staffing Report**
Mr. Van Tassel pointed out some highlights in the report. The 25 classes at Spaulding include three special education preschool classes. The smaller class sizes at the middle school is due to the teaming concept. He said to remove a team would require no more than 90 students per grade to keep a favorable teacher to student ratio. At the high school, a world language teacher was reduced and a math teacher was added to address and balance class sizes. Superintendent Van Tassel reviewed the number of non-certified staff and future needs of the district. The Board discussed the co-teaching model and case management loads and how this information will help in the budget process. Board members confirmed the value of the report.
- **September Financial Report**
Mr. Hoff said the projected year-end net surplus is \$133,542. There is a surplus in salaries, benefits, and insurance compared to the budgeted amount. Substitutes are projected at 10% of the remaining budget due to the low fill rate by Kelly Services. Equipment Repair and Custodial Supplies are over budget due to repairs to HVAC systems throughout the district and additional cleaning costs due to COVID-19, respectively. The food service subsidy was increased by \$100,000 because of a significant reduction in sales due to the hybrid model and remote learners.
- **Discussion and Possible Action on CSDE Weather Related Closures Correspondence**
Mr. Van Tassel explained the State is permitting districts to substitute snow days as remote learning days. He said if we have a snow day and it is used as a remote learning day, that day counts as a teacher/staff work day. Because this is a calendar issue, the decision rests with the Board. Mr. Van Tassel recommends keeping snow days and adding the days to the end of the school calendar with the hopes that we will be in a full in-person model by then. He added that this topic could be revisited in January or February. By consensus, Board members agreed to revisit this issue later in the winter and keep the current practice of canceling school due to inclement weather when warranted.

- Donation of Piano to Suffield Middle School
Mr. Hoff said the piano donation to Suffield Middle School is from Suffield resident, Fran Kochman. The piano was previously owned by Astrid Hanzalek, a former state representative for Suffield, and the piano is being donated in her memory. Ms. Kochman said she was Ms. Hanzalek's neighbor for many years and Ms. Hanzalek would appreciate the piano being used by Suffield students.
MOTION #21-22: Dudack moved to accept the donation of the piano made by Fran Kochman in memory of Astrid Hanzalek. Finnigan seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried **9-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- October 15, 2020 Policy Subcommittee meeting – Board member Dudack said the following are being placed on a 30-day read: Policy #0200 – Goals and Objectives; Policy #4118.112/4218.112 – Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment; Policy #5145.5 – Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment; Temporary COVID-19 policy regarding use of face masks; Bylaw #9311 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment and Suspension of Policies, Bylaws and Regulations; Bylaw #9312 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Bylaws (Proposed for dissolution); and Bylaw #9314 – Suspension of Policies, Bylaws, Regulations (Proposed for dissolution).
- October 29, 2020 Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting – Board Chair Mercik Davis said the committee reviewed the financial report, and discussed capital walkthroughs, the long-range facilities study and the middle school band room.
- November 2, 2020 – Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting – Board member Drzyzga said the committee heard a CTE career presentation relative to STEM at the elementary and middle schools, and how it connects to career pathways at the high school in engineering, manufacturing and design, and early childhood education.

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – nothing to report
- Agriscience – nothing to report
- CABA – nothing to report

Future Business

- Board member Sattan requested a discussion item regarding measurable COVID-19 impacts as it relates to student engagement including attendance, cameras-on statistics, assignment completion, and anything that can help inform decisions. Sattan also requested SHS/SMS first quarter student performance analysis year over year, with drill downs by department, honors/academic splits, hybrid/distance choice and anything else that may help decision-making.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board member Finnigan noted that districts who are in full in-person models are now finding they have to move to the hybrid model and are struggling with technology as it relates to teaching and learning. Because Suffield has been in the hybrid model, our district has a good mastery of instructional technology.

Board member Fry said he was excited to hear about the CTE presentation and he would like the Board to see a presentation on the STEM program.

Adjournment

Sattan moved, Dudack seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of December 7, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Secretary