

"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

February 5, 2021

### BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

It is with great excitement that I get to inform you of the transformational work that the district and the Board of Education are engaging in which is the development of Suffield Public Schools (SPS) Portrait of a Graduate. One of the Suffield Board of Education's goals for 2020-2021 is to engage in a process to develop a five-year strategic plan which includes work on the development of the "Portrait of a Graduate." A Portrait of a Graduate represents a school district's vision for the 21st century skills, character traits, and social-emotional competencies that students need to excel in college, career, and life.

The Portrait of a Graduate is a great way to align school operations, instruction and programming around a cooperative vision for student success. This vision allows our community and school district to design and determine what it means for our students to be college, career, and life ready. This work reinforces the Board of Education's commitment to supporting the whole child. The process of constructing and implementing a Portrait of a Graduate is a community effort. SPS will engage all stakeholders in this process. Students, staff, teachers, community leaders, and school administrators will be essential contributors to this work. The district has been collaborating with Isobel Stevenson, Ph.D. from the Connecticut Center for School Change (Center) to engage in this important work for our district. Dr. Stevenson has a Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems from Fielding Graduate University. Her work at the Center includes equity, leadership coaching and training coaches, strategic planning and improvement, and supporting instructional improvement.

We are excited to start this important process which will lead to a unified vision (a north star if you will) for our school district and improved outcomes for our students. The Portrait of a Graduate will promote and improve our students' academic achievements. It will also focus and concentrate our students on their life



skills and social-emotional learning in order to encapsulate the entire student throughout their years within SPS. This is an exciting time in our district and we look forward to partnering with you on creating a comprehensive and inclusive Portrait of a Graduate.

Sincerely,

Susan Mercik Davis  
Suffield Board of Education, Chair



## SCHOOL OPERATIONAL STATUS

We are now at the midpoint of our academic year and the Board of Education is enthusiastic and optimistic about the new option for students to attend in-school learning five days a week. The pandemic has presented unique challenges for all of our students and families. We anticipate that the option of five days in-person will improve the educational and social-emotional well-being of many of our students.

Families that choose full-remote learning will receive streaming instruction from their own teachers as well as ongoing technology support. “Wellness Wednesday” afternoons will provide time for additional support for those remote students.

This change in operational status is supported by local health officials including our school medical advisor, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Fortunately, there appears to be virtually no intra-school transmission of the virus and many of our neighboring school districts are having excellent success with this model. We anticipate that school staff and faculty will have access to the COVID-19 vaccine soon. We encourage all eligible individuals to get this safe, effective, and life-saving vaccine as soon as possible.

## 2021-2022 BUDGET INFORMATION

The Board of Education has been hard at work in reviewing the proposed budget from Superintendent Timothy Van Tasel, Ed.D., which totals \$36,887,270 and represents a 2.75% increase over this year’s budget.

- Board members have conducted three workshops reviewing Dr. Van Tasel’s proposed budget to date.
- During February, Board members will review all areas of the budget and may make modifications as part of a collaborative review process.
- The adopted budget, known as the Board of Education’s Budget, must be provided to the Board of Finance by the last Monday in March. The Board of Education will present its budget to the Board of Finance at the end of March or early April.

Additional Budget Information

# TOWN LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLAN STUDY

The Board of Education, along with Dr. Van Tasel and Business Manager Bill Hoff, has partnered with First Selectwoman Melissa Mack, Director of Planning and Development Bill Hawkins, and varying other town representatives to participate in a town-wide study of all facilities. This project was approved as part of the capital plan for the town for 2020-2021. The project includes an assessment of school, fire, police, and other facilities to recommend a long range plan for all town facilities for the Town of Suffield. The assessment will include both space utilization and mechanical condition of the facilities.

- To date, the committee has completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) process resulting in the selection of Tecton Architects as the vendor that will lead this work.
- Last week, the committee conducted a kickoff meeting and over the next several months, the Board of Education will support the work to finalize the long-term study and make recommendations.
- The completion of this study is targeted for August or September 2021.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Newly Appointed A. Ward Spaulding Principal and  
McAlister Intermediate School Principal



Mrs. Gina Olearczyk  
A. Ward Spaulding Elementary School Principal

When asked to share my hopes and dreams for Spaulding in my role as principal, I decided to create this acrostic poem.

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There is no way to truly express the excitement I feel each day as the leader and member of A. Ward Spaulding Elementary School. The ability to create and build a foundation for learning that extends well beyond the walls of our school is an honor and privilege.





Mrs. Kris Pryce  
McAlister Intermediate School Principal

My hope is that we can create a culture of learning for all learners and teachers. We all have talents and gifts and can learn from each other. We must create and live a common vision for the McAlister community as a team. This is what our students need from us and we must provide them with the highest caliber of education.

My hope is that we can build resilience in our students to persevere and want to be lifelong learners. We want students and staff to be respected and supported as we all work together. The well being of our students must be at the forefront of everything we do. We strive for our students to engage in positive discovery and laughter.

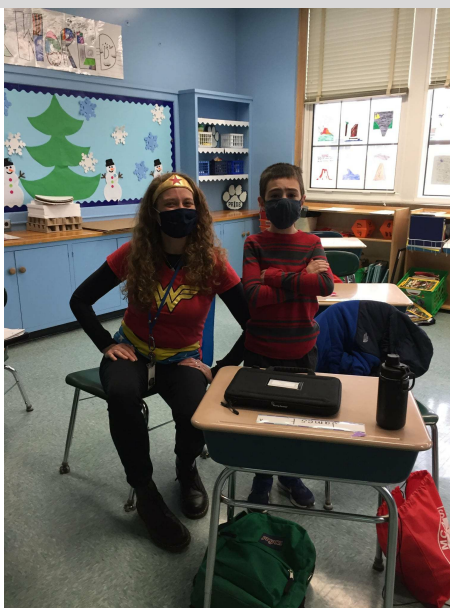
My hope is that we develop a strong SRBI process and refine our special education programming to meet the needs of our students.

My dream is that all students will engage in academic excellence to their fullest potential. Our focus begins with developing a strong math foundation through fact fluency and critical thinkers as strategic readers. Our commitment to professional development in literacy and numeracy will provide the foundations in best instructional practices for teachers.

My dream is that we will foster a strong partnership with families and the larger Suffield community to create a school with open lines of communication and a welcoming environment.

My dream is that we return to full in-person school for all while keeping the safety and health of everyone at the forefront of our daily operations.

## UPCOMING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS



- February 8 - Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - 5:00pm
- February 11 - Secondary Parent Focus Group Meeting (Strategic Plan/Portrait of a Graduate) - 6:30pm
- February 17 - Board of Education Retreat - 6:30pm
- February 22 - Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm

- February 25 - Finance & Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- March 1 - Board of Education Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- March 15 - Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - 5:00pm
- March 15 - Board of Education Workshop - 6:30pm
- April 1 - Finance & Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- April 6 - Board of Education Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- April 19 - Board of Education Workshop - 6:30 pm
- April 22 - Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- April 29 - Finance & Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30pm
- May 3 - Board of Education Regular Meeting - 6:30pm
- May 14 - Community Engagement/PR Subcommittee Meeting - 9:00am
- May 17 - Board of Education Workshop - 6:30pm
- May 28 - Community Engagement/PR Subcommittee Meeting - 9:00am

Board of Education Calendar

SUFFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

[Susan Mercik Davis](#) - Chair

[Michael Sepko](#) - Vice Chair

[Maureen Sattan](#)- Secretary

[Jamie Drzyzga](#) - Member

[Debra Dudack](#)- Member

[Melissa Finnigan](#) - Member

[Brian Fry](#) - Member

[Glenn Gazdik](#)- Member

[Scott Lingenfelter](#) - Member



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