

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Media Center
and via Zoom
April 4, 2022

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum, Tracy Cloyd, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, James Mol and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel

Absent: Glenn Gazdik, Scott Lingenfelter

Executive Session

Board Chair Sattan moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing the non-renewal of contracts for long-term substitutes and one-year assignments, and invited Superintendent Van Tassel to join the session. Jamie Drzyzga seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Board went into recess at 6:22.

The regular meeting resumed at 6:33 pm and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director of Special Services Diana Kelley, Business Manager Bill Hoff and SHS Student Representatives Sophia Mormino (via Zoom) and Connor Shaw (via Zoom) joined the regular meeting in addition to those listed above.

Board Chair Sattan thanked the Board for their flexibility in moving the meeting to Monday.

Recognition

Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, introduced Suffield High School students Avery Cipic, Class of 2023, and Connor McCue, Class of 2022, who were recognized as All American Athletes after placing in the top 5 for the Pentathlon at the Indoor Track Nationals in New York City. Both boys spoke positively about the experience and were grateful for the opportunity.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Connor Shaw, Class of 2022, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School.

Sophia Mormino, Class of 2023, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A. Ward Spaulding School.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Finnigan said she was happy that field trips and traditions are happening again.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report
 - Superintendent Van Tasel said he acknowledged and apologized for the racist threat that was seen on a social media platform last week. He said the district acknowledges and recognizes that the comments made were traumatic and harmful and cannot happen again.
 - Superintendent Van Tasel congratulated the All Americans and all student athletes.
 - Superintendent Van Tasel wished the Robotics Team good luck in their upcoming competition.
 - Dr. Van Tasel thanked Devonte Dillion and Terrell Huff from Diligence Training, as well as Malik Champlain, from Passion, Hunger Drive, for their inspirational and thoughtful presentations. He said the district is looking forward to working with them in the future.
 - Dr. Van Tasel thanked the Board of Finance for hearing the BOE's budget presentation on March 28. He said the next Town Meeting to discuss the BOE budget is on May 11.
 - Superintendent Van Tasel said the second round of interviews for the SHS Principal position is April 6. He said a candidate could be brought to the Board for a possible principalship appointment by May 2, giving the candidate notice to begin their new role on July 1.
 - Superintendent Van Tasel reported the Volleyball Marathon and Trivia Night were successful events and enjoyed seeing groups together.
 - Dr. Van Tasel said two contracts, nurses and cafeteria workers, are currently under negotiations.
- Board Chair's Report
 - Board Chair Sattan said she and Glenn Gazdik are Board representatives on the hiring committee for the SHS Principal position and that all Board members will take part in the final hiring step.
 - Board Chair Sattan along with Board members Finnigan and Gazdik attended a meeting focused on insurance plan options. No alternative insurance plan changes were recommended for next year.
 - Board chair Sattan said Board members Cloyd and Fry volunteered to join the Wellness Committee.
 - Board Chair Sattan reported Superintendent Van Tasel holds monthly virtual coffee hours and to please come if you can.

Terry Antrum left at 6:54pm

- Business Manager's Report
 - Bill Hoff said we are required every five years to go out for a RFP for our food service vendor.
 - Bill Hoff reported that bids to replace the current water fountains with water bottle filling stations have gone out. He said the replacements should be completed by the start of next school year.

- Board of Selectmen's Report
 - No report
- Board of Finance Liaison's Report
 - No report

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-46: James Mol moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of March 7, 2022 and March 21, 2022. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- COVID-19 Update

Dr. Van Tasel said cases have remained low and we continue to see good progress.

- February Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the projected surplus for the year, state and federal grants, and food service. Board members discussed plans for food service to remain cost-free to students.

- Preschool Update

Dr. Diana Kelley, along with preschool teachers Leah Slawinowski, Anita Bage and Elysia Simmons, and PreK-5 Supervisor Jana Volpe, gave a presentation on Suffield Public Schools Integrated PreK Program. Dr. Kelley talked about special education requirements, peer models, staffing and current enrollment. She provided referral history and IEP/peer model numbers. Preschool teacher Leah Slawinowski explained the PreK service-delivery model. Ms. Slawinowski spoke about Early Learning Development Standards and the eight domains of the ELDS. She discussed the assessment and data collection used. Preschool teacher Anita Bage reviewed a typical day in preschool and shared family engagement methods. Dr. Kelley discussed next steps for the program. Dr. Kelley reviewed NAEYC standards and fees. Board members had questions around the NAEYC accreditation and class size and there were discussions around the merits of preschool for all.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2022-2023 Healthy Foods Certification

Mr. Hoff said the state is requiring two motions to accept the Healthy Foods Certification and the Board needs to approve this for next year's program.

MOTION #22-47: James Mol moved, Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Suffield Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or

non-school organizations and groups. Tracy Cloyd seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

MOTION #22-48: Melissa Finnigan moved that the Suffield Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. Jamie Drzyzga seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

- Non-Renewal of Staff in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes

MOTION #22-49: Tracy Cloyd moved to approve the non-renewal of staff as presented in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes. James Mol seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- March 21 – Curriculum & Instruction – Board member Drzyzga said the middle school math courses, placement in those courses and the potential impact middle school placement has on upper-level math courses in high school was discussed. Some assessment data was discussed. The math department is looking at how to better streamline courses to allow for a more fluid transition between academic and honors level courses.
- March 31 – Finance & Facilities – Board member Finnigan said discussion of an RFP for MIS and SMS cafeteria steamers is being considered because a grant was not received. She said if the trend of a surplus continues for the end of the year, Bill Hoff has reached out to building principals to find out any needs. The AgSci Food Science room renovation has begun and bids are still out for the Food and Consumer classroom. Water fountains will be replaced with water bottle filling stations.

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said she attended a CREC meeting which covered the typical Board of Education work surrounding budget and policy recommendations.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said the AgSci Expo is taking place April 6 and 7.
- CABC – Board member Finnigan said she received information regarding principals’ impact on student achievement and equity.

Terry Antrum returned at 7:57 p.m.

Future Business

Board Chair Sattan reviewed the list of Future Business items:

- Student Achievement Review
- Special Education Transition Program, 504 Profile and School Avoidance
- Nursing Review
- World Language Program Review

Public Comment

Dr. Kristina Hallett, 1211 Newgate Road, requested that a follow-up communication be sent to parents regarding the recent social media incident.

Dr. Cassandre Victor-Vega, said that as a parent, mother and physician, she was thankful for the communication that went out. She expressed her trauma of the video and is glad that this is condemned and that SPS is continuing to make a safe learning environment.

Board Member Comment

- Board member Drzyzga thanked the preschool team for their presentation.
- Board member Fry congratulated the All Americans and thanked the preschool team for the presentation. He said he hoped that there would come a time when preschool would be available for all in the Suffield district.
- Board member Mol said he appreciated the presentation on preschool and asked that it be considered periodically.

Adjournment

James Mol moved, Maureen Sattan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-Gtvkh9sCGsin5CBZGadhmk-8XLWraYT/view?usp=sharing>

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of May 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga
Secretary