

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom
August 15, 2022

Call to Order

Board member Gazdik called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum, Tracy Cloyd, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, Glenn Gazdik and Maureen Sattan (via Zoom); and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: Josh Barrows, James Mol

Recognition

None

Public Comment

Dr. Cassandre Victor-Vega, 2 Melrose Lane, asked about restoration and rehabilitation in regard to the racial incident that occurred in March. She asked what the BOE has done to further advance our schools in providing a safe environment for students.

Board Member Comment

- Board member Fry recognized the State of California for providing free school meals to all students, post COVID-19. He said he would like to find a will and a way to feed all students of Suffield Public Schools.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report
 - Dr. Van Tassel said a communication will be shared with families on August 26 welcoming everyone back for the first day of school on August 31. The communication will also provide an update on new district hires. He said Convocation will be held the morning of August 29 and that he plans to limit it to one hour. Board members who are available to attend should contact Melissa Bielonko. Dr. Van Tassel gave special recognition to the district custodians and thanked the student summer workers for their work in preparing the schools for the 2022-2023 school year. Dr. Van Tassel said administration will attend Leadership Retreat on August 16 and 17. He said Board member Finnigan is working with the town on the long-range facility study and that a Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting has been scheduled for August 22. Dr. Van Tassel said a tri-board meeting will be scheduled in September. He said a copy of the complete plan will be forwarded to all BOE members.
- Board Chair's Report
 - Board Chair Sattan said the Board is intending to meet on August 24 inclusive of the collective bargaining for the nurses' contract which will be held in executive session. The

meeting will also cover BOE Goals and BOE Self Evaluation. Board Chair Sattan said there had been some email issues and asked Board members to reach out if they feel communications have not been shared. She said Tecton has an in-depth long-range facilities plan that will be shared with Board members. Board Chair Sattan asked that Board members join in Convocation as it is a very uplifting, fun start to the new school year.

- Business Manager's Report
 - Business Manager Bill Hoff followed up on Board member Fry's comment and said California and Maine have both said they are permanently making school meals free to students. He said Vermont and Massachusetts are providing free meals for the 2022-23 school year. Mr. Hoff said Connecticut did provide some funds this year and Suffield will be starting with free breakfast and lunch for all students, most likely until November. He said he encourages families to apply for free and reduced lunch. Mr. Hoff is working on bus transportation and said the district will run with 15 busses to start. He said busses will be a bit more crowded, runs will be longer and stops more frequent. Mr. Hoff said a Job Fair will be held on August 18, 1:00-3:00 via Zoom and 3:00-6:00 in person at CO. He said the district is looking for bus drivers, food service workers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, academic support and more.

- Board of Selectmen's Report
 - No report

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report
 - No report

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-71 Tracy Cloyd moved, Terry Antrum seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of July 25, 2022. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- Discussion Item: Facilities Update
Larry Plano, Director of Facilities, gave an update on district-wide facilities projects. Mr. Plano discussed the Suffield High School room conversions, SHS courtyard, Suffield Middle School STEM Lab, McAlister painting and Spaulding flooring. Mr. Plano also discussed some larger district projects including the SHS turf replacement and SHS column repair. He said power washing of the schools and sidewalks is almost complete. He said SMS tennis courts are slated for repairs to begin in late October and should be complete the following year. He said water bottle filling stations should be installed before the start of school. He said a bid will go out next week for a storage facility and three-bay animal shed behind the large animal facility and will be financed through ASTE. Mr. Plano said the SHS Family Consumer Science renovation was completed with no general contractors, only local vendors and in-house staff were used. Mr. Plano gave special recognition to staff members Joe MacArdle and Bob Bissonnette for keeping to the timeline and making this project happen. Dr. Van Tassel said walkthroughs with Board members will occur at a later date. Board members discussed the turf renovation and updates on security features.

- Discussion Item: Special Services Update

Dr. Diana Kelley, Director of Special Services, along with Dr. Sharon Goulet, Supervisor of Special Services 6-12, gave an update on Section 504 and Transition Planning. Dr. Kelley reviewed the purpose of IDEA, the responsibilities of school districts in Connecticut and the focus of transition services. Dr. Goulet reviewed age-appropriate transition assessments and the Transition Planning IEP Team. Dr. Kelley discussed the responsibilities of the 6-12 Transition Coordinator. Dr. Kelley reviewed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. She explained the difference between Section 504 and IDEA, the purpose of Section 504, the responsibilities of the school district, impairments recognized under Section 504 and she provided examples of major life activities. Click [HERE](#) to review the presentation. Dr. Van Tassel said this topic was brought up as a future business matter for the BOE. He said the Transition Coordinator was added this year to help support the transition program in the district. Board members discussed number of students under IDEA, the process of sharing special services information with staff and substitutes, and the number of students in the RISE program. Board members discussed grouping similar diagnosis and the number of students on 504 plans.

Subcommittee Reports

July 27 – Policy Subcommittee - Board member Fry said the Policy Subcommittee meeting was ambitious. The following policies were placed on a 30-day read: Policy/Regulation #5113 – Attendance, Excuses, Dismissal; Policy #4111.3 – Minority Recruitment Plan; Policy #5131.911 - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program; Policy #5145.4 – Non-Discrimination; Policy/Regulation #5144.1 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion; Policy/Regulation #5145 – Students and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Policy/Regulation #4131 – Staff Development; and Policy #5157 –Completion Rates of the FAFSA. Board member Fry said the Suffield High School administration shared thorough information on the loss of credit policy and that it was the focal point of the meeting and constructive conversations were had. He said the larger Board will be looking for a policy that will allow for a loss of credit but that they will not be diving into administrative regulations, regulatory policies. He said that will be put in the hands of the administrators and they will decide how they are going to impose it. Board member Fry said a portion of the meeting was related to looking at policy on discrimination, racism in particular, and ensuring that those policies were worded appropriately. He said the Policy Subcommittee talked briefly about the reporting system for bullying, dating violence and discrimination. Board member Fry said the Minority Recruitment Plan Policy was received without hesitation. Dr. Van Tassel noted that Regulation #5113 is being pulled for legal counsel to review and Policy/Regulation #4131 is being pulled from 30-day read due to the redline item not being included but will be revisited in September. Board member Fry feels confident that the high school administrators will be able to move forward with the loss of credit policy

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said CREC Council did not meet. She received information from Greg Florio, Executive Director of CREC Schools, that their staff convocation will be held virtually as a preventative measure and they are intending to start school with masks optional.
- Agriscience – no report
- CABA – Board member Finnigan said Bill Hoff is going to CABA Conference.

Future Business

- Nursing Review (TBS)
- World Language Review (C&I)

Key: RTS (Referred to Subcommittee), SNT (Scheduled Near-Term),
TBS (To Be Scheduled), HLD (On Hold)

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

None

Adjournment

Melissa Finnigan moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [15AUG2022 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of September 6, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga
Secretary