

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom
October 3, 2022

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum (via Zoom), Joshua Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Glenn Gazdik, and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tasel; Business Manager Bill Hoff; and SHS Student Representatives Sophia Mormino (via Zoom) and Milo Graham

Absent: Brian Fry, James Mol

Prior to the start of the meeting Board Chair Sattan said that two items of business surfaced after the agenda was posted. Adding agenda items to a Regular Meeting can be done with a 2/3 vote of the Board.

MOTION #22-78: Board Chair Sattan made a Motion to add the following to the Discussion/Action Item:

Section X, Letter D - Action Item: Child Nutrition Authorized Signature Change

Section X, Letter E - Action Item: Approval of Suffield High School Field Trip Request – Quebec City / Trois-Rivieres/Montreal – Canada – February 2 – 6, 2023

Jamie Drzyzga seconded the Motion. The Motion passed **7-0-0**.

Recognition

Jack Ferraro, Assistant Principal of A.Ward Spaulding School and TEAM District Facilitator, provided an overview of the TEAM process. TEAM, which stands for Teacher Education And Mentoring, is intended to help new teachers develop a mindset that professional learning is continuous, that it is acceptable to ask questions and that teachers are not expected to know everything. The TEAM program is intended to help beginning teachers become reflective practitioners, make cause and effect connections between their actions and choices and student outcomes, identify their professional growth needs and become highly effective teachers with a lifelong commitment to continuous professional learning. Since TEAM began in 2011, 66 teachers have participated and successfully completed the program, including 14 teachers last year. 59 of the 66 (89%) teachers are still teaching in SPS. This year 14 teachers will be participating in TEAM.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Milo Graham, Class of 2024, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A.Ward Spaulding School. Student Representative Graham said AWS and MIS had a successful Walk to School Day with over 200 students participating. AWS and MIS will hold school spirit days throughout the month of October. Eligible MIS Final Mile participants may participate in the

state Final Mile on October 25. Picture day at MIS is October 12 and AWS is October 20. Student Representative Graham extended congratulations to Teacher of the Year Danielle Bennett and Paraeducator of the Year Stephen McVey.

Sophia Mormino, Class of 2023, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School. Student Representative Mormino said SHS sports are in full swing and colleges began visiting the school this week. Art Teacher Tim Kudrle is hosting a month long art challenge during the month of October called Inktober. World Language Honor Society will hold inductions on October 18. Suffield Middle School fall sports have begun. Eighth grade students will have their class panoramic picture on October 11. Auditions for the annual SMS Variety Show will take place on October 12 and 13. SMS Art Club will begin meeting on October 24.

Public Comment

Dr. Cassandre Victor-Vega, 2 Melrose Lane, reiterated the persistent racial issues that have occurred in the district. She asked that the BOE consider putting a separate antiracism policy in place or that an expansive amendment be done to current policy. Dr. Victor-Vega would like to see a policy that defines racism, hate speech and discrimination, outlines specific detailed student restorative discipline strategies that eventually culminate in a zero tolerance pathway to expulsion and outlines how to rebuild student relationships and provides support for racially harmed students, peers and families.

Eric Harrington, 700 North Street, spoke of the recent racial controversies that have occurred in school districts throughout the state over the last few months. He would like to know what controls or policies the BOE has in place to prevent these things from happening, including whistleblower protections and punishment for offenders. Mr. Harrington said he reviewed the CT EdSight diversity website and would like to know if there is a plan to increase male teachers in the school system. He would like to know Suffield's breakdown of male and female teachers and said it would be beneficial to increase male teachers in the district since an increasing number of children in this country do not have fathers in the household.

Board Member Comment

- Board member Gazdik thanked those who provided public comment and the teachers who have completed TEAM.
- Board member Drzyzga thanked Assistant Principal Ferraro for his information on the TEAM Program and noted that she herself is TEAM trained. She thanked those who shared their concerns tonight.
- Board member Barrows thanked those who provided public comment. He said the BOE has a goal and that is the well-being and education of all children as well as providing a safe and welcoming environment. He said he does not want anyone to feel they are having something forced upon them. He said the complaints, criticisms and concerns are heard but said the media does not necessarily report on facts. He asked that the public have patience with the BOE as they try and navigate these situations.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tasel reported that the CSDE approved K-3 Core Comprehensive Reading Curricula/Programs. Starting July 1, 2023 local and regional boards of education shall select and implement approved curricula from the CSDE approved list. Teachers' College, the district's reading program, is not an approved program and cannot be utilized as our core reading program.

Teachers' College was one of the most recognized programs in the country. Over the next few months our reading curriculum coaches will review the approved choices.

Superintendent Van Tassel reported the state has high expectations surrounding the HVAC grant for schools to install, replace or upgrade HVAC systems. The grant is due by December 1, 2022. Under consideration are the high school HVAC system and a backup boiler for MIS. The in-depth application process may require the district to wait until next December. Superintendent Van Tassel said the district is still recruiting for several certified and non-certified positions. He said COVID cluster notifications will be sent to classrooms where three or more positive cases are noted. Superintendent Van Tassel thanked HR Specialist Kathy Carney for completing the district's annual Educator Data System Report to the state ahead of the September 30 deadline.

Superintendent Van Tassel said the process of putting together the FY 2024 Budget proposal has begun. It is the hope to have the budget prepared for the December transmittal to the Board with BOE deliberations happening during the month of January.

- **Board Chair's Report**

Board Chair Sattan said the CAFE Board Recognition Award is in process. She encourages BOE members to join serving in a CAFE capacity. Board Chair Sattan and Board member Gazdik will continue with SAG negotiations. She said the district-wide communication mentioned the SMS Building Project Zoom Forum happening on October 11 at 7:00pm. This will be posted as a BOE Special Meeting. Board Chair Sattan and Board member Finnigan will meet with Dedication to Community (D2C). This organization works with children to promote an atmosphere based on kindness and positive values. Board Chair Sattan said BOE members should reserve October 17 for the BOE Retreat at Deer Valley in Ellington for team building. The BOE will have continued discussion of strategic planning.

- **Business Manager's Report**

Business Manager Bill Hoff said HR Specialist Kathy Carney has kicked off the Walking Challenge.

- **Board of Selectmen's Report – None given.**

- **Board of Finance Liaison's Report – None given.**

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-79: Melissa Finnigan moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of September 6, 2022 and September 19, 2022. The motion passed **7-0**.

Consent Agenda

Board Chair Sattan called to remove the listed Regulations from Consent Agenda approval. The Board's charge is to approve Policies, and the related Regulations come from the Superintendent's office.

MOTION #22-80: Melissa Finnigan moved to approve the following on the consent agenda: Policy #4111.3 – Minority Recruitment Plan; Policy #5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program; Policy #5145.4 – Non-Discrimination; Policy #5144.1 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion; Policy #5145 – Students and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Policy #5157 – Completion Rates of FAFSA

Jamie Drzyzga seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- August Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the general operating budget and federal and state grants. Grant revenue compared to budget and turnover/vacancy savings were also reported on. The projected year end shows a net surplus of \$534,256 but Mr. Hoff stated this is a preliminary report. Transportation savings are due to running 14 buses as opposed to 18 buses. Board members discussed the turnover report and if it was affecting students who receive services.

- Transportation Update

Business Manager Bill Hoff said all students who want to be on a bus have been provided bus transportation. Mr. Hoff thanked parents for their patience and cooperation during this time. He said Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, has been working with M&J on athletic transportation. Mr. Hoff said the bus driver shortage is not just a state problem but a nationwide problem and is a concern. He said he and Dr. Van Tassel are meeting with the regional manager of M&J to discuss a plan for replacing drivers. Board members discussed providing parents with an earlier drop off time to help with overcrowding on buses.

- State Assessment Performance Data Presentation

Principals Kris Pryce, Ken Smith, Carrie Apanovitch and Gina Olearczyk, along with Curriculum Coaches Dom Casolari and Stephannie Holland, presented the 2021-2022 assessment results. SBAC, NGSS, PSAT, SAT and AP data was reviewed. K-12 instructional and program shifts, 2020-21 to present, were discussed. Administrators also reported on 2022-2023 School Advancement Plan highlights.

Kris Pryce, McAlister Intermediate Principal, began the presentation by explaining the focus areas. She said the STAR assessment provides predictability on how students will succeed on upcoming SBAC. STAR to SBAC cohort data was reviewed. Melissa Todd, McAlister Intermediate School Assistant Principal, shared that students are becoming more comfortable with navigating the platform used for testing. Ken Smith, Suffield Middle School Principal, reviewed curricular adjustments and stated two-thirds of students are at or above expectations in all three grades at SMS. Principal Smith said growth was achieved with the implementation of Teachers' College and Illustrative Math. Cohort growth was seen in ELA and math in all three grade levels. Mr. Smith shared NGSS science data and stated that it is an assessment given once every three years and that the district is exceeding compared to the state.

Dom Casolari, 6-12 Math Curriculum Coach, shared math assessment data at the secondary level. He began with PSAT, the trend was not positive and has been acknowledged. He said students struggled with foundational skills. Stephannie Holland, 9-12 Humanities Curriculum Coach, shared ELA cohort assessment data at the high school level. She stated grammar scores increased, which was a focus at SHS, and said the district was still above the state and national average. Ms. Holland said students take the PSAT in the fall and that the test is administered using paper and pencil. In the spring when the SAT is given, it is administered on the computer. Mr. Casolari said a positive note is that students are showing individual growth. He reviewed AP scores stating many courses scored higher than the state average.

Principal Pryce reviewed the MTSS and PLC process and noted that grades K-5 are developing push-in supports to provide additional adult support for reading, writing and math. Principal Smith said SMS is focusing on push-in supports and that grammar is a focus. He said the new science program had a strong impact on student engagement, as well as an increase in STEM and CTE. Carrie Apanovitch, Suffield High School Principal, said the STAR assessment is now being used at SHS and will provide teachers with additional data to which they can intentionally develop lessons, interventions and enrichment that is tailored to each student. Principal Apanovitch pointed out that the attendance regulations are having a positive effect on students.

Gina Olearczyk, A.Ward Spaulding School Principal, discussed next steps and the focus on continuous growth. She said the elementary level will continue to implement MTSS and PLC structures. She said district-wide student achievement meetings begin this month to set the tone of what targets are set for students. She said drop-in observations will be occurring more frequently to monitor classroom engagement.. To view the presentation click [HERE](#).

Board members discussed how to improve PSAT and SAT results and said they felt positive about the staff members involved in the process of improving data. Board members discussed paper and pencil assessments versus computer assessments, if the PSAT was optional, and whether students are understanding concepts. Student engagement and motivation were discussed. Board members discussed those who do not meet or exceed expectation, and if subgroups such as FRL and 504 were looked at.

Terry Antrum left the Zoom meeting at 7:54.

- Authorized signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs
MOTION #22-81: Maureen Sattan moved to approve the authorized signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs. Tracy Cloyd seconded the Motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.
- Suffield High School Field Trip Request to Quebec City/Trois-Rivieres/Montreal – Canada
February 2 – 6, 2023
MOTION #22-82: Glenn Gazdik moved to approve the SHS Field Trip Request to Canada, February 2 – 6, 2023. Jamie Drzyzga seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- September 6 – Curriculum and Instruction – Board Chair Sattan and Board member Finnigan said the Music Department discussed their scheduling challenges and discussed offering an honors music class. The music department is trying to increase the enrollment in their class offerings. Anthony Ferreira was introduced as the new music teacher. She said there is a great deal of excitement around program.
- September 9 – Policy – Board Chair Sattan said Policy/Regulation #5113 – Attendance, Excuses, Dismissal is being placed on 30-Day Read.
- September 29 – Finance and Facilities – Board member Finnigan said a Virtual SMS Building Presentation will be held on October 11 for the community. Tecton will partner in the presentation. It will be followed by a Q&A session and a follow-up survey will be sent. Community turnout is needed. She noted that the surplus of \$200,000 is reflective of need for buses. A facility update was given by Larry Plano and repair to the tennis courts will begin.

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – No report
- Agriscience – No report
- CABA – Board member Finnigan said there is a CABA Conference coming up in November and any interested Board members should contact her.
- Superintendent Van Tassel noted that the Suffield Agriscience Consulting Committee will meet on October 17 at 6:30pm in the SHS Agriscience Wing.

Future Business

- Nursing Review (TBS)
- World Language Program Review (SNT) – planned for the November C&I subcommittee meeting.

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

Public Comment

Sandra Janick, 380 Prospect Street, thanked Dr. Cassandre Victor-Vega for her comments. She said it is time to talk about human beings, not just academic performance. She does not want to live in a town where not all people are accepted. She said this is not the time to be quiet.

Dr. Cassandre Victor-Vega, 2 Melrose Lane, said there were positive things that occurred over the last few weeks. She said Superintendent Van Tassel included Safe and Welcoming School Initiatives in his update sent last week and she thanked him for that. She said she understands work is being done with policy and educating teachers but we need to do more as a community to move forward. She said she appreciates DEI being restructured and looks forward to the Listen & Learn series that are in the works. She appreciated the Minority Recruitment policy that is now in place. She said recruitment and retention of minority educators is important.

Dr. Kristina Hallett, 1211 Newgate Road, said addressing SEL is key as it feeds academic success. She would like to know the current status of the SERC contract and where the district is headed over the next year.

John Lambert, 49 Woodbridge Drive, said he moved to Suffield because of the reputation of the schools. His youngest daughter graduated last year and he was not impressed. He said the presented data reflects his experience with his youngest child. He said we live in one of the most technologically advanced states in the world with some of the greatest scientists, mathematicians and engineers. He said the quality of math skills is greatly decreasing.

Board Member Comment

Board member Finnigan said the BOE is a difficult position to be in. She said student privacy is important and that we all want the best for all children. She said she does take issues personally and understands the emotions behind them.

Board member Sattan thanked Superintendent Van Tassel for his district communication last week and added her voice to echo the commitment to support stopping racialized and discriminatory incidents from occurring in our schools. She said the Board asks parents and guardians to continue to help message the impact harmful statements can have on our school community.

Adjournment

Melissa Finnigan moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [10.03.22 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of November 7, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga, Secretary