

Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Suffield High School Library Media Center  
and via Zoom  
December 5, 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, Jamie Drzyzga (arrived 6:50pm), Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, Glenn Gazdik, James Mol and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd

Prior to the start of the meeting Board Chair Sattan made a motion to move Discussion/Action Item E. Suffield Public Schools STEM/CTE Presentation to Item III. B.

**MOTION #22-88:** Glenn Gazdik moved, James Mol seconded to move Discussion/Action Item E. Suffield Public Schools STEM/CTE Presentation to Item III. B. The Motion passed **6-0-0**.

Recognition

*Schools in the Spotlight*

- CAPSS Student Recognition Award Recipients

Vincent Nguyen and Cecilia Partain were recognized for being selected as this year's Suffield High School Student Recognition Award recipients. Aleah Bryant and Grace Sauer were recognized for being selected as this year's Suffield Middle School Student Recognition Award recipients. Superintendent Van Tassel spoke of the students' involvement in school, character traits and leadership abilities that led to them being selected for this award. Superintendent Van Tassel and the entire Board congratulated the students on this distinguished honor.

- Suffield Public Schools STEM/CTE Presentation

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi along with CTE/STEM teachers Kate McCluskey, Mike Sanchez, Kevin Mattia, Brooke Schomburg and Jess Marzi provided a STEM/CTE presentation. The presentation provided an overview of K-12 standards, general curriculum scope and sequence, a look into classrooms, and student and teacher experiences. Suffield High School student Mia Morales explained how the hands-on STEM math approach has helped her to better understand math concepts. Suffield Middle School student Grace Sauer spoke about her class with Mr. Mattia where she made a wooden flag and wall holder by incorporating proper measurements and the use of a 3D printer. Kate McCluskey and Mike Sanchez spoke about collaboration between classes and employable skills being taught. Brooke Schomburg and Jess Marzi spoke about creating skills needed to reach the next level in school. They said science and math are largely incorporated into the elementary STEM program. Jess Marzi said over 100 students are signed up for the Invention Convention. Board members discussed how these specific high school math classes were brought to students' attention and the timeframe of the middle school project. Board members discussed students remembering these types of classes and asked what the criteria was for acceptance into

courses. Board members discussed scheduling of STEM classes at the elementary level. Mike Sanchez would like to invite all Board members to stop and see the classrooms.

#### Suffield High School Student Representatives

No report.

#### Public Comment

Amy Oliveira, 10 Highland Ridge Drive, said she was disappointed by the sudden departure of her child's fifth grade teacher. She said she felt the communication to the children and families was not handled appropriately and was concerned about the social-emotional impact it had.

Jennifer Thompson, 308 Babbs Road, recognized staff members Mark Janick, Charlene Flagg and Larry Plano for their dedication to the district and students.

#### Board Member Comment

- Board members Gazdik and Mol congratulated the CAPSS Student Recognition Award recipients and thanked the teachers for their STEM/CTE presentation.
- Board member Antrum congratulated Tim Tkacz for being recognized on his outstanding soccer season. He said there was an incident involving two students at the high school and was pleased with how one of the students resolved the issue.
- Board member Finnigan thanked everyone for the STEM/CTE presentation and was happy to see students enjoying hands-on experiences.
- Board member Fry thanked the CSDE and Governor's Office for requiring Native American studies commencing July 1, 2023.

#### Reports to the Board

##### • Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tasel said the CT Association of Public School Superintendents Student Award Recognition program recipients for this year are Grade 8 students Aleah Bryant and Grace Sauer, and Grade 12 students Vincent Nguyen and Cecilia Partain. He congratulated the cast and crew of the high school production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Superintendent Van Tasel gave special congratulations to the two BOE Student Representatives Sophia Mormino, who played the role of Knave of Hearts, and Milo Graham, who played the role of Mad Hatter. He congratulated all of the fall athletes who competed at the middle and high school levels. Superintendent Van Tasel congratulated the students who participated in this year's NCCC Music Festival. He said the BOS will be meeting to vote on whether to hold a Town Meeting regarding the HVAC projects that the district is in the process of applying for. He said the departure of a fifth grade teacher was unexpected and he will review the process of notifying families in the future. Superintendent Van Tasel said Wednesday, December 7, is National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day to commemorate the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He thanked all Veterans who lost their lives and served during that time.

##### • Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan shared the Board's CAFE/CAPSS award with all. She encouraged Board members to attend professional development offerings. Board Chair Sattan reminded BOE members of the budget workshop scheduled for January 21. She said the next Board meeting is on December 19 and the focus will be on student enrollment and personnel. Board member Finnigan added that the D2C program will be held on Wednesday, December 7, at 6pm in the SMS Auditorium. She is excited about this program and hopes everyone can attend.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff said the HVAC projects have been submitted through the state website. Mr. Hoff commended Ceci Partain for her lead role in eliminating Styrofoam trays in the district. He reminded everyone that the free lunches for all students are no longer available. Free and reduced lunches are available for those who qualify.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

First Selectman Colin Moll thanked the Joint Facilities group for the work being done. He thanked Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, for gathering volunteers for the Field of Flags. He thanked the Agriscience Department for their involvement with Suffield Alight. First Selectman Moll will be revamping the Sustainability Task Force and will be looking for one member of the Suffield Sustainability Council to join.

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

Board of Finance member Brian Kost said he felt the boiler projects should be approved without issue.

#### Approval of Minutes

**MOTION #22-89:** James Mol moved, Glenn Gazdik seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of November 7, 2022 and November 21, 2022. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

#### Consent Agenda

None

#### Discussion/Action Items

- Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Proposal/Transmittal

Dr. Van Tassel read his formal transmittal of the 2023-2024 proposed budget of \$37,882,615, which is a net increase of \$1,421,972 over this year's budget, or a 3.90% budget increase. He highlighted the key takeaways of the budget request which included proposed personnel increases (a 1.0 math interventionist at Suffield High School, a 1.0 school counselor at Suffield Middle School and a 1.0 reading interventionist to be shared between AWS and MIS), proposed personnel decreases (a 1.0 ELA teacher, 1.0 math teacher, 1.0 science teacher, 1.0 social studies teacher and a 1.0 6-8 humanities instructional coach at SMS) and proposed budget neutral changes (reducing a .5 FTE vocal teacher at SMS and adding a .5 FTE vocal teacher at SHS; reducing a 1.0 SHS special education teacher and adding a 1.0 special education transition coordinator at SHS). Dr. Van Tassel noted that 84% of the operating budget is due to personnel costs. He said the ARP ESSER grant will cover three positions.

- October Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the general operating budget, federal and state grants, and food service income. The projected year end shows a net surplus of \$57,795 compared to \$333,009 in September. Board members discussed what the monthly cost would be for free lunches for all.

- Discussion and Possible Action on Education Specifications for AWS, MIS, and SHS HVAC Projects

Business Manager Bill Hoff reviewed the education specifications for the boiler room replacements at Spaulding and McAlister. He reviewed and discussed the McAlister 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classroom split

units. Mr. Hoff reviewed and discussed the plan for replacing 17 roof top units and one make up air unit at Suffield High School.

**MOTION #22-90:** James Mol moved, Terry Antrum seconded to approve the Education Specifications for the A. Ward Spaulding School Boiler Replacement Project. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

**MOTION #22-91:** James Mol moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to approve the Education Specifications for the McAlister Intermediate School Boiler Replacement Project. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

**MOTION #22-92:** James Mol moved, Terry Antrum seconded to approve the Education Specifications for the McAlister Intermediate School Split System HVAC Units Replacement Project. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

**MOTION #22-93:** James Mol moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to approve the Education Specifications for the Suffield High School HVAC Rooftop Units Replacement Project. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Action on Booster Club Fundraising Concept – Advertisement Signage  
This Discussion Item will be rescheduled.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- November 11 and December 2 – Policy Subcommittee – Board member Fry said Policy #9325 Meeting Conduct and Policy #5144 Student Discipline were discussed at the November 11 meeting and carried over to the December 2 meeting. Policy #9325 is being placed on a 30 day read. He said Policy #4117.6 and #4217.6 Exit Interviews were discussed at the December 2 meeting and will continue to the next subcommittee meeting.
- December 1 – Finance and Facilities – Board member Finnigan said surplus decreased due to health insurance. She said blueprints for the large animal facility were shared and costs will be covered by ASTE Grant. HVAC grants were also discussed.

#### Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said the CREC annual report has been published and she will share with the Board. She said CREC’s budget is around \$400 million with over 2,000 students participating in Open Choice and over 2,400 employees. She said magnet school funding is a concern. Board Chair Sattan said CREC has a short-term goal of offsetting tuition to districts that send over 4% of their student population to magnet schools.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said AgSci hosted the Suffield Farmers Market. The AgSci Make & Take event took place on December 5. The seven Career Development Teams competed at UCONN and placed very well with three teams advancing to the national level. He said the AgSci Department accepted a rejected lamb from a local farm and named it Elsa.
- CABA – Board member Finnigan said she, Board Chair Sattan and Superintendent Van Tassel attend the CABA Convention in Mystic CT. She said she felt fortunate being on the Suffield BOE.

#### Future Business

- Nursing Review (TBS)

- Gifted and Talented Population (TBS)

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

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board members Gazdik, Fry and Mol congratulated McAlister Intermediate School on their recognition as a School of Distinction.

Board member Drzyzga congratulated MIS on their recognition and reminded all that the FFA Holiday Sale is happening all week.

Board member Finnigan said data is a wonderful and useful tool but we need to remember the human side of children and embrace that.

Adjournment:

James Mol moved, Melissa Finnigan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [05DEC2022 BOE Meeting](#)

*Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of January 3, 2023.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga, Secretary