

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom
June 5, 2023

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry (arrived at 6:37 p.m.), Glenn Gazdik, and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel; Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff; and SHS Student Representatives Sophia Mormino and Milo Graham

Absent: Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, James Mol

Recognition

Superintendent Van Tassel and the Board recognized staff members who are retiring at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. A. Ward Spaulding School Principal Gina Olearczyk spoke of Assistant Principal Jack Ferraro. McAlister Intermediate School Principal Kris Pryce spoke of Amy Larson. Suffield Middle School Assistant Principal Dianna Kolodziey spoke of Michael Alexopoulos, Sandy Hull and Brian McEvoy. Superintendent Van Tassel spoke of Business Manager Bill Hoff and Dr. Richard Segool.

Superintendent Van Tassel and the Board recognized the 2024 Paraeducator of the Year, Kathlene Bissonnette, and the 2024 Suffield Teacher of the Year, Dr. Laura LaFlamme, as presented by Elementary Special Services Supervisor Jana Volpe and Teacher of the Year Committee Co-Chairs Shannon Picard, Suffield Middle School teacher, and Gina Cronin, McAlister Intermediate School teacher, respectively.

Superintendent Van Tassel and the Board recognized the Suffield High School Class of 2023 Board of Education Student Representative, Sophia Mormino. The Board thanked Sophia for her work with the Board of Education.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Sophia Mormino, Class of 2023, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School. Student Representative Mormino said Suffield Middle School has been busy with the Spring Choral Concert and 8th Grade Class Night. The Summer Reading Kickoff is happening on June 7 and SMS music students will be participating in the Fantastic Festivals on June 9 at Six Flags New England. Suffield High School has been active with music concerts, Scholarship Night, Senior Banquet, Undergraduate Awards and Senior Outing Day. The Senior Walk to Spaulding and Yearbook Picnic will take place on Friday. Suffield High School Graduation is on Saturday, June 10, at 9:30 a.m. on Beneski Turf Field.

Milo Graham, Class of 2024, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A. Ward Spaulding School. Student Representative Graham said Spaulding School visited Roaring Acres Alpaca Farm in preparation of reading *Saving Winslow* and had a successful Field Day last week. The Soup & Sing held last month generated a large food donation for Suffield Community Aid. Over 250 students participated in the Bike/Walk to School Day. Spaulding and McAlister students are looking forward to the Senior Walk on Friday. McAlister's Field Day will take place on Friday. Student Representative Graham thanked Superintendent Van Tasel for the opportunity to serve as Student Representative to the Board of Education and looks forward to next year.

Sophia Mormino and Milo Graham left at 6:45 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board members Gazdik and Drzyzga congratulated all who were recognized.
- Board member Antrum thanked all the retirees, congratulated Dr. LaFlamme and welcomed Sophia Mormino to the UCONN family.
- Board member Finnigan thanked all the retirees, congratulated the Teacher of the Year and Paraeducator of the Year, and thanked Student Representative Mormino. She said she appreciated the opportunity to meet their families.
- Board member Fry congratulated the award winners and thanked the dedicated members of the district who are retiring.

Reports to the Board

• Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tasel congratulated Dr. Laura LaFlamme and Kathy Bissonnette on being named our district's Teacher and Paraeducator of the Year. He thanked everyone involved in planning tonight's reception. Superintendent Van Tasel shared the news that Suffield Public Schools was designated as one of the Best Communities for Music Education in 2023 by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation. Suffield is one of 29 communities in Connecticut and 830 nationally to receive the award. Superintendent Van Tasel said graduation will be held on Saturday, June 10, and the last day of school for undergraduates is Friday, June 16, which will be an early release day. The Town's carnival setup will begin this week, please look for notification going home regarding MIS and SMS arrival and dismissal procedures. Superintendent Van Tasel thanked the BOE, administrators, faculty, staff, students and their families for another great school year. He wished everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

• Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan attended a graduation planning meeting and Board members are asked to arrive at Suffield High School by 8:45 a.m. on Saturday. Interviews for a new Board of Education Student Representative, Class of 2025, will take place this week. Chair Sattan, on behalf of the BOE, attended a district equity team meeting with representatives from each school that was led by SERC Consultant Malik Champlain. The June BOE Workshop will be covering the Superintendent's evaluation, BOE self-evaluation and goal setting. She said Board member Fry was interested in creating an ad hoc committee with a focus on district data and that interested BOE members should contact her. Board Chair Sattan is working on scheduling State Senator Kissel and State Representative Zawistowski to attend a BOE meeting.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff congratulated Dr. Laura LaFlamme, Teacher of the Year, and Kathy Bissonnette, Paraeducator of the Year. He said these are two incredible individuals who are very deserving of these awards. Mr. Hoff thanked the Board of Education members, current and past, for their support over the years.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-125: Melissa Finnigan moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of May 1, May 15 and May 24, 2023. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Terry Antrum left at 7:33 p.m.

Consent Agenda

MOTION#22-126: Maureen Sattan moved, Brian Fry seconded to separate Policy #5123.3 from the Consent Agenda for consideration. Sattan, Drzyzga, Finnigan and Gazdik voted in favor. Fry abstained. The motion passed **4-0-1**. Board Chair Sattan said the policy was discussed at the Policy Subcommittee meeting and there was some question as to whether some of the content would remain in the Board Policy or if it should be moved to an accompanying Administrative Regulation. Board Chair Sattan said the section regarding Graduation Ceremony Adornments should be placed in an Administrative Regulation. Superintendent Van Tasel said a process is being developed to identify the adornments and a structure will be put in place.

MOTION #22-127: Melissa Finnigan moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

- A. Revisions of Policies: #3280 – Gifts, Grants and Bequests and #6174 – Summer Learning Academy

Maureen Sattan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- April Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the projected surplus for the year, state and federal grants, food service and possible end of year purchases.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education's Recommended Flexibilities for the 2023-24 Teacher and Administrator Evaluation

Superintendent Van Tasel said he received a correspondence from the Commissioner of Education for the State of Connecticut notifying Superintendents of schools that the State Board of Education has acted to adopt flexibilities for the upcoming school year surrounding the teacher evaluation system. The Connecticut State Department of Education recommends adopting these flexibilities because the State is in the process of developing a new teacher and administrator evaluation system.

These flexibilities have been adopted for the past three years. Superintendent Van Tasel has already begun work with the Professional Development Evaluation Committee (PDEC) in regard to our district process and to develop new teacher and administrator evaluation plans during the 2023-2024 school year.

MOTION #22-128: Glenn Gazdik moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to approve the Connecticut State Department of Education's Recommended Flexibilities for the 2023-24 Teacher and Administrator Evaluation. Board members discussed what teachers' opinions were on the flexibilities, if schools across the state used the same model, if MTSS data can be used toward evaluation and if the district had a choice in the accepting the flexibilities. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of Suffield High School French Textbook

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi said the 6-12 French Department proposed the book after review. The book is brand new and the plan is to purchase Level One, which is actually separated into two sections, Section A for seventh grade and Section B for eighth grade.

MOTION #22-129: Melissa Finnigan moved, Jamie Drzyzga seconded to approve the Suffield High School/Suffield Middle School French Textbook. Board members discussed the fact that the current textbook is over 20 years old and inquired if an inventory of all textbooks was available. Board members also discussed the online option provided with the new textbook and that students will be able to watch videos of French dialogue being exchanged between people. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Action on the Food Service Management Company Request for Proposal Committee Recommendation

Business Manager Bill Hoff said the district is required by the Federal Department of Agriculture to go out every five years for bid and issue RFPs for a food service contractor. The district issued an RFP in April. Four vendors came for the mandatory walkthroughs and four bids were received. A committee reviewed the bids using an assigned rubric. Out of the four bids received, two were acceptable. Mr. Hoff recommends Aramark to continue services for Suffield Public Schools. He said he will begin working with Aramark, if approved, to get a contract for July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 and starting next April the district would go through and start a new renewal process. The renewal process simply revises the rates based on the consumer price index. Board members discussed looking at quality, reliability and access costs.

MOTION #22-130: Maureen Sattan moved, Melissa Finnigan seconded to approve the FSMC RFP Committee recommendation to approve Aramark as the Food Service Management Company for the 2023-24 school year. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of FY2023-24 Budget

Business Manager Bill Hoff said on March 6, 2023 the BOE approved the budget with various line items that were then presented to the Board of Finance. That budget had been adjusted and was approved by the BOF and the Town on May 10, 2023. The approved budget is actually \$100,010 less than the budget that was approved on March 6. A number of line items needed to be adjusted to match the budget that was approved so that we have a budget for July 1. Mr. Hoff said the Board needs to approve the line items.

MOTION #22-131: Glenn Gazdik moved to approved the FY2023-24 Budget in the amount of \$38,533,892 which is a \$2,073,231 or 5.69% increase as per the line items presented. Jamie Drzyzga seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- May 15 – Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee – Board member Drzyzga said Devlyn Bent, Suffield Middle School World Language Teacher, presented the new French Level I textbook to the Subcommittee. The new textbook will be introduced to 7th and 9th graders and will provide an online component. Principals Smith and Apanovitch shared the bell schedules for next school year.
- May 24 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee – Board member Finnigan said budget items were discussed and approved. Class enrollment and Program of Studies were looked at in depth. The brick work is almost complete at Suffield High School and the Large Animal Facility will be worked on over the summer. Fencing has been ordered for school grounds. An RFP is being worked on for the elementary playgrounds. Athletic uniforms were discussed and the goal is to have a cohesive look. The April financial report was reviewed and discussed. Food Service gains have to go back to Food Service.
- June 2 – Policy Subcommittee – Board member Fry said the following policies were reviewed and will be discussed further at a future meeting: Policy #6113 – Senior Privileges, Policy #5122.3 – Assignment of Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes, Policy #6146 – Graduation Requirements, Policy #6146.1 – Grading/Assessment System. Due to time constraints, the following policies were not reviewed and will be discussed at a future meeting: Policy#6172.6 – Virtual Online Learning, Policy #5144 – Student Discipline. The policies discussed will not be going to 30-day read. The Subcommittee held a robust and productive meeting but the Subcommittee agreed further review of these policies is warranted.

Board Liaison Reports

- Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – Board Chair Sattan said she received a communication from Greg Florio, Executive Director at CREC, that House Bill 5003 will not make it to the final budget as proposed. CREC is hopeful that the State will fund the magnet school tuitions instead of the schools but clarification is needed from the State.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry congratulated Laura LaFlamme on receiving her Doctoral degree and on receiving the Teacher of the Year recognition. He said Dr. LaFlamme is passionate about and dedicated to the Suffield Agriscience Program.
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) – Board member Finnigan said the Legislative Wrap Up is happening next week.

Future Business

A. 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 member Drzyzga congratulated the Music Department on receiving the NAMM Award and said she has enjoyed watching all the music and choral groups grow over the course of this year.

Board member Fry said the initiative around digital signage is gaining traction and moving forward. Gail Demco presented the initiative to the Police Commission who responded positively and will be

drafting a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission to show further community support. The Town Attorney is drafting a social media policy in anticipation of this digital signage. It is the hope that the PZC will see fit to bring this to reality.

Board Chair Sattan thanked Amanda Danek and Allison Daly, SHS Senior Class Advisors, for planning the overwhelmingly positive and successful class events throughout this school year, particularly this month, for the Class of 2023. Board Chair Sattan thanked Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics & Student Activities, for all of the programs that he oversees.

Adjournment

Brian Fry moved, Maureen Sattan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [05JUN2023 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of July 17, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga
Secretary