

Board of Education Special Meeting
Suffield High School Media Center
and via Zoom
July 10, 2023

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum (via Zoom), Tracy Cloyd, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, Glenn Gazdik (joined via Zoom 6:40p.m.), and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: Josh Barrows, Jamie Drzyzga, James Mol

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

None

Reports to the Board

● Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tassel said staffing for the upcoming school year is near complete. Unanticipated vacancies could arise but at this point in time the district is in good shape. Superintendent Van Tassel visited with the crew of students hired for summer maintenance and all were in good spirits. He thanked the students and the district's custodians for their hard work in preparing the buildings for the upcoming school year and he thanked the administrative assistants who are also very busy preparing for the start of school. Superintendent Van Tassel said Board members may receive parent reach outs in regard to the CIAC moving the soccer team to the L bracket due to Suffield Public Schools being a School of Choice. School of Choice is a CIAC designation that takes into consideration the agriscience students. He said Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, has reached out to the CIAC for further explanation and that Mr. Zenczak will hold a Zoom conference with parents once he has more information.

Board members discussed the possibility of a communication to Suffield Middle School families relative to the new teaming structure at the middle school. Superintendent Van Tassel will ask that a message regarding the new teaming structure be sent. Board members discussed the physical education teacher position at McAlister Intermediate School, and Superintendent Van Tassel stated that the hiring process is continuing. Board members discussed the CIAC processes for designating a school's division for the purposes of State championships.

● Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan said at the end of the school year she, Superintendent Van Tassel and representatives from Suffield High School, interviewed students for the Junior Class BOE

Student Representative position. Chair Sattan is proud to announce that Keila Silva will be serving as a BOE Student Representative and that Keila will do a fine job representing the school. She thanked Milo Graham for continuing to serve as the Senior Class BOE Student Representative. Chair Sattan said the focus of the August Board meeting will be goal setting.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff said many summer projects are going on and that he and Larry Plano, Director of Facilities, meet regularly to review the status of projects. Jackie McDunnah, M&J Bus Company Manager, is working on finalizing bus routes and should have bus lists to parents by early August. Mr. Hoff said work with the auditors has begun and some 30 reports will be reviewed. A Board member asked if there was any indication as to whether the district will be struggling with retaining bus drivers for the upcoming school year. Mr. Hoff said 16 busses will be running and he is optimistic about a smooth start.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #24-01: Glenn Gazdik moved, Melissa Finnigan seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of June 5 and June 19, 2023. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #24-02: Brian Fry moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

- A. Suffield High School Agriscience Field Trip Request – Indianapolis, IN – Oct. 31-Nov. 4, 2023

Glenn Gazdik seconded the motion. Board member Fry asked if insurance was required as indicated on the form. Mr. Hoff said insurance is not required as it is covered under the National FFA Convention. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- End of Year Financial Update

Business Manager Bill Hoff said the end of year financial update is not yet finalized but an accurate report will be given at the next BOE meeting. There is approximately a \$3 surplus for the end of the year. Approximately \$67,000 in expenditures was moved out of the Open Choice budget and into the Board of Education budget. Transfers and account balances will be reviewed and approved at the August BOE meeting.

- Gifted and Talented Overview

Dr. Diana Kelley, Director of Special Services, and Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi gave an overview on Gifted and Talented. Dr. Kelley reviewed Connecticut laws and regulations on Gifted and Talented Education and provided the definition for Gifted and Talented. Under current regulations, school districts must identify but are not mandated to provide services to students. She explained the process and criteria Suffield Public Schools uses for identification and noted that the district's policy needs to be updated to reflect changes in language to include the requirement of using multiple measures to determine whether or not a student is eligible. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said that a committee was put together in 2018 to research what surrounding districts were using as criteria to identify Gifted and Talented students. She reviewed the pros and cons of using a districtwide assessment for identification and said best practice is to use the current assessment data available. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said MTSS meetings have put the district in a better position to capture where students fall. She is proud to announce that Suffield High School does not limit access to advanced courses and she is currently applying for a grant to add some additional rigorous courses. Spaulding School currently has academic support in each classroom and that is proving to be beneficial. Curriculum Coaches are working with teachers and providing them with the proper tools to help with differentiation. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said parent communication is key and the elementary level is notifying parents if their student is achieving above grade level. She said if struggling students can be caught early, then resources can be shifted to reach our high achievers. She said grants are available for enrichment but not for a true Gifted and Talented program. Board members discussed supporting students without adding another position, providing programming to attract and retain students, offering an opt-in assessment for identification, how to best filter all assessment data criteria needed to identify students, and if the state provides support for this type of programming.

Subcommittee Reports

- July 6, 2023 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – Board member Finnigan said some items for the 2023-2024 budget were purchased with 2022-23 funds. She said Todd Zenczak is putting together information relative to student activities and teacher stipends to audit which clubs are running and needed. Summer building projects were reviewed. AWS and MIS fencing is complete and work on the playgrounds has begun. Additional funding is needed to make the elementary playgrounds fully ADA accessible. The AWS main office is being reconfigured to create a new conference room, the portables are being upgraded with new roofing, siding and carpet. The remainder of the laminate flooring may be installed this winter and the two boilers will be looked at. MIS is working on creating a new Special Services suite and lockers will be replaced with cubbies. SMS projects are on hold. SHS fencing is almost complete, the band room is being worked on and work on the LAF will begin in July. Safety and Security was discussed. District staffing was reviewed and is in a good place. Todd Zenczak is looking into branding uniforms for a consistent look.

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said she is looking for a Board member to be the CREC Liaison Representative.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said agriscience students are active during the summer, as well as teachers. SAE projects are monitored over the summer by agriscience teachers.

Leadership training opportunities will be available to agriscience students through August. Agriscience teachers are working on completing some professional development. The large animal facility project is anticipated to break ground this month.

- CABE – Board member Finnigan said she did not attend the Legislative Update. She did watch the full committee hearing on mental health and found it to be informative. Bill Hoff said schools are now required to educate students until the end of the school year that they turn 22. Superintendent Van Tassel said the start age for kindergarten has changed. Bill Hoff said the September Legislative Update will be very informative and helpful, full price lunch will be put back in place in September and funding for agriscience students is not clear.

Future Business

Board Chair Sattan would like an update on the elementary reading curriculum, summer programming (ESY, Enrichment) and a district discipline report.

Public Comment

Sandra Janick, 380 Prospect Street, would like to know if the district was successful in obtaining any minority hires.

Board Member Comment

- Board member Fry appreciated the Gifted and Talented presentation and said we may be under identifying students. He would like to look into additional screeners as we head into budget season next year.

Adjournment

Melissa Finnigan moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [10JUL2023 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of August 14, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Board Chair