

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Media Center
and via Zoom
August 14, 2023

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 Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Melissa Finnigan, Glenn Gazdik (joined via Zoom), and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: Terry Antrum, Jamie Drzyzga, Brian Fry, James Mol

Board Chair Sattan acknowledged and welcomed Eric Remington, incoming Business Manager of Suffield Public Schools.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

None

Reports to the Board

● Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tassel welcomed Eric Remington to Suffield Public Schools. Mr. Hoff will be transitioning Mr. Remington into his new role over the next few weeks. Superintendent Van Tassel met with the new fire marshal, Eric Vincent, who completed a very thorough analysis of all the schools. Several large scale projects were indicated within the analysis and Superintendent Van Tassel will keep the Board up to date as some of the projects may find their way to ACCE. The district is in a good position with vacancies. The recent resignation of a high school physical education teacher has created internal movement. Long term substitute teacher positions are proving to be a challenge to fill but Suffield Public Schools is in much better shape than many districts throughout the state. Superintendent Van Tassel congratulated Dr. Diana Kelley, Director of Special Services, for being awarded a mental health grant in the amount of \$182,000 that will be disbursed over the next three years. He said the administrative Leadership Retreat will be held next week, August 22 and 23. Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, and Superintendent Van Tassel spoke with Gregg Simon, CIAC Assistant Executive Director, regarding several of Suffield's sports teams being placed in a different division for the post-season state tournament due to Suffield being recognized as a School of Choice. Mr. Simon said he is in support of Suffield Public Schools appeal and believes the appeal may be heard by the CIAC Board of Control sometime in September. Superintendent Van Tassel said the first day of school is Wednesday, August 30, and New Teacher Orientation will be held Friday, August 25. Kindergarten enrollment is lower than what was anticipated. 135-140 students were projected and the current enrollment is 118 students. Superintendent Van

Tasel recommends not filling the kindergarten teacher position and said the kindergarten team is strong. Gina Olearczyk, A. Ward Spaulding School Principal, reviewed the kindergarten student to staff ratio if seven sections were to run.

Board members discussed FMLA leaves, backfilling teaching positions, enrollment and cost savings.

MOTION #24-03: Sattan moved to add agenda item IX. E. Action Item: Kindergarten Staffing to allow for a vote. Finnigan seconded the motion. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan thanked all for attending the August BOE meeting. The Suffield High School Student BOE Representatives will start attending BOE meetings beginning in September. August 28 will be the BOE Goal Setting Retreat with a special training hosted by outgoing Business Manager Bill Hoff. Any questions or topics Board members would like to discuss should be communicated to Board Chair Sattan. Board members are encouraged to attend New Teacher Orientation and Convocation.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff welcomed Eric Remington. Food Service will again have free breakfast for all students. Parents will be notified that students who qualify for free/reduced-price lunch will now receive free lunch. Bus transportation routes will be posted this week. M&J Transportation has secured a spare bus driver. The bus drivers are required to drive their routes before the first day of school. Mr. Hoff said this is his last public meeting and thanked the Board, staff, administrators and parents of Suffield Public Schools.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #24-04: Gazdik moved, Sattan seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of July 10, 2023. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- Facilities Update

Superintendent Van Tasel said an occupancy study is currently being done at AWS. If the district were to develop a grades 5-8 middle school as a new construction project, what would need to be done to accommodate grades 3-4 at AWS must be considered. Architects will provide an occupancy report in approximately one to two months. Larry Plano, Director of Facilities, gave a status update on the various current facilities projects throughout the district. Mr. Hoff said the rubberized flooring at AWS will be complete before the start of school. Board members discussed

ADA accessibility for playgrounds, improvements made to the school grounds and exterior of buildings.

- Summer Programming Update

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi said several programs ran this summer and thanked her administrative assistant, Terri Zaczynski, for organizing the registrations. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said 135 students participated in the Summer Learning Academy. There were 11 courses offered to students in grades K-8. Principal Olearczyk said the Kindergarten Experience was offered again this year and was a huge success. The program offers two, four-day offerings for two hours per day and 106 incoming kindergarten students attended. Principal Olearczyk will send a survey to parents to gather information for improvements. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said SMS offered a hybrid Math Prep Course for students close to meeting accelerated criteria for grades 7 and 8. Credit Recovery Summer School was offered again this summer at the secondary level for ELA and Math only. Parents were notified in April if their student was in need of this course. Scholarships were available for all summer offerings. Dr. Diana Kelley, Director of Special Education, reviewed the Extended School Year (ESY) program. Two sessions were offered and 57 students received ESY services.

Board members discussed the pathway to summer school and marketing strategies for summer programming.

- Student Activities Update

Todd Zenczak, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, gave an update on Student Clubs and Activities. He reviewed the number of clubs that are running at each school and the number of students participating. Mr. Zenczak discussed the process for starting a new club or activity and shared that he has created a Clubs and Activities Handbook. He also shared his goals for next year. Board members discussed having students recruit for clubs at the secondary level and the need for after school activities at the elementary level.

- Discussion and Possible Action on End of Year Transfers and Account Balances

Business Manager Bill Hoff reviewed the general operating budget, the Federal and State Grants, and the Food Service Income reports for the year ending June 30, 2023. The year-end surplus is \$73 which is subject to internal and auditor adjustments. Mr. Hoff reviewed FY2023 End of Year Transfers.

MOTION #24-05: Finnigan moved, Sattan seconded to accept the End of Year Transfers as presented. Board members discussed Open Choice seats and bus transportation. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Action on Kindergarten Staffing

Board Chair Sattan reminded the Board of the proposal to reduce the number of kindergarten classes from eight to seven. Superintendent Van Tasel is in support of reducing the number of kindergarten classes.

MOTION #24-06: Sattan moved, Cloyd seconded to modify the approved budget to reduce the number of kindergarten classes by one. Board members discussed the new enrollment age for kindergarten and faculty turnover factors. The motion passed **5-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

None

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said CREC is hoping for increased council representation and an alternate member should be named. The commitment is once a month and meetings are hybrid.
- Agriscience – None
- CAFE – Board Finnigan reminded Board members that the CAFE/CAPSS Convention is November 17-18 in Mystic. Early registration closes on October 13 and interested Board members should reach out to her.

Future Business

Board member Finnigan would like a school based midyear recap to hear how things are going throughout the district regarding recent policy changes.

Elementary Reading Curriculum (to be scheduled)

District Discipline Report (to be scheduled)

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board members Gazdik, Barrows, Cloyd, Finnigan and Sattan thanked Mr. Hoff for his work and wished him the best in his retirement.
- Board member Finnigan said BOE members may benefit from Chromebooks. She would like to ensure check-ins are happening with students to help with any beginning of the year anxieties.

Adjournment

Gazdik moved, Finnigan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [14AUG2023 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of September 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Board Chair