

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom Webinar
October 2, 2023

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry (arrived at 6:38), Glenn Gazdik, James Mol and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tasel; Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, and Business Manager Eric Remington

Absent: Terry Antrum, Jamie Drzyzga

Recognition

Kris Pryce, McAlister Intermediate School Principal, introduced faculty advisors and several former students of the MIS Student Council who collaborated on the Megan Voisine Kindness Grant lawn sign project. In the spring of last year MIS teachers Megan Ralston, Brittany Popeleski and Joy Tierney and current sixth grade students Evan Monahan, Jaime Thompson and Adriana Forsman brainstormed ideas for the grant before deciding on the lawn sign project. Every member of the MIS Student Council created a design and a school-wide vote was held to select the winning designs. Evan Monahan's and Adriana Forsman's designs were selected for the 350 signs you see throughout the town, the state and Western Massachusetts. To launch this project, students choose to plant the first sign at the Voisine's home. Megan Voisine's sister and brother, who live in Pennsylvania and Texas, were also sent signs to help spread kindness throughout their communities. Mike and Patti Voisine, Megan's parents, wish to continue a Fifth Grade Kindness Project going forward.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Milo Graham, Class of 2024, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School. Student Representative Graham said Suffield High School freshman elections and PSATs are happening next week. A school assembly with author Jarret Krosoczka is October 18 and picture day is October 30. SHS Drama Club production will be Sherlock Holmes. Fall athletics are in full swing.

Keila Silva, Class of 2025, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A. Ward Spaulding School. Student Representative Silva said Spaulding School is in partnership with the Sustainable Suffield Taskforce and the SHS Suffield Sustainability Council to implement composting in grades K-2 with an exhibition planned for students on November 13. Kindergarteners are learning about value in art and STEM is working on *NASA Sparx* lessons. McAlister students are learning about CARES values. MIS Walk to School Day is October 5.

Public Comment

Andrew Bombard, 6 Whitfield Way, said he is the SHS Senior Class President and presented the BOE with a proposal that would allow senior class members to paint their parking spots. He would like the BOE to consider introducing a tradition that would bring the senior class together.

Board Chair Sattan thanked Andrew Bombard for the proposal and materials and will have discussions on how to route it through a process of consideration. Someone would be in touch.

Board Member Comment

- Board members Gazdik, Barrows and Cloyd appreciated the MIS Student Council presentation and the student parking proposal.
- Board member Finnigan was thankful for the student parking proposal and said she had been asking for five years to allow for painted parking spots. She said it builds community and hopes to make it happen.
- Board member Fry would love to see more students attend BOE meetings and felt Andrew Bombard's presentation set a good example and should be encouraging to others. The topic may be brought to the Policy Subcommittee for review and consideration of whether it could be managed by administration or whether it should be addressed at a BOE policy level.
- Board member Mol looks forward to the Policy Subcommittee meeting, he welcomed BOE Student Representative Keila Silva and welcomed back BOE Student Representative Milo Graham. He is excited about the composting project at Spaulding School.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tassel recognized the students attending the CIAC Sportsmanship Conference and said it is a wonderful experience for them. He thanked parents, faculty, staff and administration for the well-attended Open Houses. The SHS Music Department has applied for a 501(c) Booster Club. The district's athletic team placement in CIAC post-season tournaments has been appealed and the district is waiting on a response. The CABE/CAPSS Convention is happening November 17 and 18 and BOE members should contact Melissa Bielonko if interested in attending.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan said Assistant Superintendent Zawawi will be putting together a Calendar Committee and meetings will start sometime in December. Four Board members have been requested to participate. The middle school construction project is going to be a topic of discussion at a future Joint Facilities meeting. Board Chair Sattan will keep members up-to-date.

Milo Graham and Keila Silva left at 7:02 p.m.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Eric Remington said transportation is off to a good start, bus drivers are needed for athletic runs. Food Service is running smoothly but staff is needed. Kiosks with breakfast items will be available to students as they enter the buildings in the morning. Substitute coverage is a budget concern. Fire code work is being resolved and has been costly. The LAF project is nearing completion. The Business Office payroll position is in transition and the district is close to securing a candidate.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #24-08: James Mol moved, Glenn Gazdik seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of September 5 and September 18, 2023. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- August Financial Report

Business Manager Eric Remington reported on the projected surplus for the year and food service. Health insurance looks favorable but may change. A request for proposal (RFP) for Spaulding's boiler replacement has gone out.

- Student Assessment Presentation

Michelle Zawawi, Assistant Superintendent, thanked the administrators, the Curriculum Coaches and District Data Specialist Marianne Sabia for their work on this presentation. Superintendent Van Tasel said the district is trying to follow the lead of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) on how best to present student assessment results. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi reviewed testing populations and explained adaptive tests. Achievement levels and scaled scores were explained. Principal Pryce and Principal Smith reviewed the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) achievement levels and scaled scores in ELA and math. A comparison to surrounding towns, not DRG, was done. Principal Pryce said the Math Curriculum Coaches have reached out to surrounding towns to see what is proving successful in those districts. Principal Smith said trend data is analyzed. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said changes to student assessments will be coming. She said the data shows that the district is maintaining the CSDE's level of expectation consistently year over year.

Maureen Sattan left the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Principal Pryce discussed NGSS results for Grade 5, Principal Smith noted that Lab-Aids for Grade 8 has helped students in science and that Lab-Aids was supported by the BOE. Assistant Principal Matt Dobi reviewed the Grade 11 NGSS results and discussed techniques used by the science department to help build student success. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi reviewed the NGSS scores for grades 5, 8, 11. Stephannie Holland, 6-12 Humanities Coach, and Dom Casolari, 6-12 Math Coach, reviewed the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT results.

Tracy Cloyd and Brian Fry left the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Vice Chair Glenn Gazdik called a recess at 8:14 p.m., citing the lack of a quorum. The meeting resumed at 8:21 p.m. with ***Brian Fry*** rejoining the meeting and a quorum of the Board present.

Grade 11 School Day SAT results were reviewed. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said students can take the SATs anywhere, the district holds School Day SAT Day but students are not required to take it. She said 80% of colleges are now test optional. Stephannie Holland reviewed the structure changes to the new PSAT and SAT, both tests will be adaptive. Dom Casolari reviewed the content changes to the new PSAT and SAT.

Tracy Cloyd rejoined the meeting at 8:40.

Carrie Apanovitch, SHS Principal, reviewed the Advanced Placement (AP) results. She said although Suffield High School is small, the programming provides a wide range of college level courses to students. She asked the Board to consider FTEs during budget season as reduced FTEs will impact diverse student programming. Dom Casolari reviewed the AP math course results. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi reviewed the K-12 instructional and program shifts.

Board members discussed the presentation and its impact on decisions regarding budget and policy. Board members asked building leaders to consider and communicate how the information being presented is useful to the BOE in district level decision making. Board members expressed a willingness to listen how the data should inform possible Board action, including budget allocations.

- School-based Updates
 - Suffield High School Block Schedule
Principal Apanovitch said the block schedule has been running and she is seeking feedback from students. Passing period and Wildcat Flex were main concerns from students.
 - Suffield High School Math Intervention
Mark Janick, SHS Math Interventionist, provided an overview of the math intervention program at the high school level. He explained the screening process, student population, enrollment process and typical schedule for students.
 - Suffield Middle School Hybrid Team
Principal Smith said the new team model is running smoothly but has required some adjustments. He discussed class size and the impact it has had on parent requests for team placement. Board members discussed creating a formal process for parents to request placement changes, special education teacher placement and snacks in the classroom.

Michelle Zawawi left at 9:34 p.m., returned at 9:36 p.m.

- Adoption of Proposed 2024 Board of Education Meeting Dates

MOTION #24-09: James Mol moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to adopt the 2024 Board of Education meeting dates as presented. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

- Authorized Signers of ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

MOTION #24-10: James Mol 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**.

Subcommittee Reports

- September 22, 2023 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting – Board member Fry said Policy #5141.3 Health Assessment and Immunizations, Policy #5123.3 Graduation Ceremony and Policy #6141.322 Bring Your Own Technology were reviewed and have been placed on 30-day read. Board member Fry said Policy #5141.3 was updated to reflect legal updates eliminating a vaccination exemption for religious reasons. He said Policy #5123.2 addressed graduation adornments for student achievement and clubs. Board member Fry reported some Board member feedback regarding the graduation adornments, cords and pins, including specific input regarding the Agriscience cords. Board member Fry said Policy #6141.322 was reviewed with specific attention on middle school cell phone use. Suffield Middle School students had recently been allowed to access cell phones during the school day, specifically during lunch waves. SMS administrators shared that cell phone use infractions had greatly increased. The

Policy Subcommittee is making a recommendation to prohibit cell phone use PreK-8. Student use of devices at the high school will be addressed separately. Board members discussed a perceived abrupt change in recommended policy and discussed the reasons the Policy Subcommittee advanced this policy.

- September 28, 2023 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – Board member Finnigan said the August Financial Report was discussed and Spaulding boilers will be paid with reallocated funds. Kindergarten age eligibility was also discussed.

MOTION #24-11: Brian Fry moved, Glenn Gazdik seconded to extend the Board of Education meeting past 10:00 p.m. in order to complete the agenda. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

- October 2, 2023 – Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting – Melissa Finnigan reported that Capstone had been added to the graduation requirements due to a state mandate covering the mastery-based diploma assessment. The State will no longer require this credit. The BOE and Policy Subcommittee will need to make decisions regarding graduation requirements relative to this update as well as other state mandates, such as a personal finance requirement.

Board Liaison Reports

- Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – No report
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said 135 students and 27 parents participated in the trip to the Big E and students received first place ribbons across the board. Four AgSci teams will be competing at Nationals in November. Behavior and Training classes will begin with the students training racing pigeons, there was a combined AgSci/PE Goat Yoga class, students made butter with milk from Hastings Farm and floral classes created centerpieces for East Granby's Land Conservation Group.
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) – Board member Finnigan said BOE members interested in attending the CABE/CAPSS Convention should contact Melissa Bielonko.

Superintendent Van Tassel said a Board member can speak against to placing an item on 30-day Read. It can be removed to allow for Board discourse in advance of a vote. He asked if there were any objections to placing the policies advanced from the Policy Subcommittee onto 30-day Read. No objections were noted, but Superintendent Van Tassel said discussions can still take place before the final vote.

Future Business

No items were added to future business.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board member Fry said transportation is a concern and questioned if M&J Transportation is meeting the needs of the district. He suggested holding the Calendar Committee dates after work hours so that parents and Board members may attend.

Adjournment

James Mol moved, Melissa Finnigan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [02OCT2023 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of November 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Board Chair