

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed. 11/04/2024

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom Webinar
October 7, 2024

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 Debra Dudack, Brian Fry (arrived 6:33 pm), James Mol, Gianna Rossi, Maureen Sattan, and Gregory Sparzo; and Superintendent Matthew Dunbar; Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Eric Remington; and First Selectman Colin Moll

Absent: Josh Barrows, Melissa Finnigan, Sam Toskin

Recognition

Superintendent Dunbar introduced Kelly Blais, Suffield High School Social Studies Teacher, and presented her with a plaque for being named a 2024-2025 Geography Teacher Fellow by the American Geography Society.

Justin Kaput, K-12 Science Instructional Coach, introduced Keila Silva, Class of 2025, and presented her with a plaque for receiving the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association Youth Changemakers Fellowship.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Keila Silva, Class of 2025, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School. Student Representative Silva highlighted Suffield Middle School's Spirit Week and said Suffield High School Agriscience students were busy at the Big E.

Olivia Mishtal, Class of 2026, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A. Ward Spaulding School. Student Representative Mishtal said composting has been implemented at both elementary schools. McAlister Intermediate School students had a visit from the CT Kid Governor and two of his cabinet members, Final Mile has started, and the Walk to School Day was a success. A. Ward Spaulding School held its Open House and students participated in the Nursery Rhyme Olympics.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack congratulated Kelly Blais and Keila Silva. She thanked the Permanent Building Commission (PBC) for touring the four school buildings, congratulated Amy Muska on her appointment to the Athletic Director position, and thanked McAlister Intermediate School for hosting the CT Kid Governor.

- Board member Fry congratulated Kelly Blais and Keila Silva and welcomed Amy Muska. He wished all a Happy Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Board members Mol and Rossi congratulated Kelly Blais and Keila Silva.
- Board member Sparzo thanked teachers for the work they do and congratulated Kelly Blais and Keila Silva.

Keila Silva left the meeting at 6:54pm.

Reports to the Board

A. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Dunbar acknowledged Suffield High School Principal Anthony Hibbert for attending the meeting in support of the recognition of his staff member and student. CollegeBoard has recognized Suffield High School as an AP Honor Roll School. Congratulations and welcome to Amy Muska who was recently hired for the Director of Athletics and Student Activities position. Mrs. Muska has served as the interim athletic director since May 2024 and brings 25 years of supervisory experience to the role. McAlister Intermediate School held its annual Walk to School Day last Friday. Superintendent Dunbar thanked Physical Education Teacher Denise Raymond for organizing the event, the Suffield Police Department for keeping the routes safe, and the students and families who participated. A Superintendent’s Cookie Hour has been scheduled for Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Suffield High School Commons. Also that night, the Agriscience Consulting Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. in SHS Room 508A. Joshua Robinson, Director of Pupil Services for Windsor Locks Public Schools, is working on his 093 Superintendent of Schools Certification and will be attending various meetings in the role of intern to the superintendent.

B. Board Chair’s Report

Board Chair Sattan said the CABE Board Recognition Award application has been submitted. Collective bargaining negotiations are continuing with Teamsters and the Suffield Education Association. The Data Ad-hoc Subcommittee met on September 11 and will schedule another meeting to discuss what information the Board would like to receive from administrators outside of our regular student achievement numbers. This could include enrollment trends, discipline reports and climate surveys. Thank you to Larry Plano, Joe MacArdle, and Board members who were available to attend the PBC walkthrough of Suffield Middle School last week. The PBC will complete its final physical review of the middle school next Thursday and have asked to speak to district administrators to learn more about how school facilities can enhance student learning.

C. Business Manager’s Report

Business Manager Eric Remington said transportation is running smoothly and one bus run is longer than others and is being monitored. Food Services continues to work through labor challenges and unpaid student charges. Food Services is due for an administrative review and a procurement review with the CSDE that will begin in April. A plan to reduce the Food Services surplus must be submitted to the CSDE by October 15, though it can be edited. He will come back to the Board with further details when asking for formal approval. The Suffield High School HVAC project to replace rooftop air-handling units totals \$3.5M and the deadline to spend the funds is December 2025. Given the complexity of replacing the rooftop air-handling units, it has been decided to complete the work during the summer of 2025. Board members discussed outstanding Food Services debt, surplus spending and the procurement review.

D. Board of Selectmen’s Report

First Selectman Colin Moll came in support of Keila Silva and thanked her for her role on the town's Sustainability Task Force and for her composting efforts in the schools. The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance will hold a joint meeting next week to discuss bonding projects. The town is intending to bond for a town emergency services radio system and they will be taking a look at other large capital projects to bring the bonding into the \$8-10M range. The BOE will have the opportunity to weigh in on possible capital projects to include in the bonding. The PBC should have a final report on town facilities in the next two to three months and Moll plans to convene a tri-board meeting (Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and Board of Education) once the report is finalized..

E. Board of Finance Liaison's Report
None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #25-15: Mol moved, Dudack seconded to approve the Board of Education regular meeting minutes of September 3, 2024 and September 16, 2024. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #25-16: Mol moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

- A. Suffield High School Agriscience Field Trip Request – FFA National Convention October 22-26, 2024 – Indianapolis, IN
- B. Suffield High School Music Department Field Trip Request – April 5-6, 2025 – Boston, MA

Rossi seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

A. District Professional Development: Year-to-date Review and Future Plans

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi along with Instructional Coaches Christy Baril, Heather Goldstein, Domenico Casolari, and Samantha Schrage, and Director of Technology Rebecca Osleger presented an overview of district professional development days. Instructional Coaches Baril and Goldstein reviewed the elementary ELA Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) and Bridges Math professional development plan. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi shared the district professional development calendar events for the year. She thanked the Meghan Voisine Fund for a grant to provide every staff member with a Kindness Matters t-shirt to start the first day of professional development on August 26. Professional development for Special Services, off-site opportunities, and online mandatory trainings were reviewed and discussed. Surveys are sent to certified staff following full day professional development days to gather feedback. Director of Technology Rebecca Osleger provided an update on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Home Builders Institute (HBI) program and discussed planning for the programs. Instructional Coaches Casolari and Schrage reviewed the secondary math and ELA professional development and discussed teachers' concerns and requests. Board members asked about how to balance the need for professional development when developing the district school calendar. Superintendent Dunbar spoke of discussions that are occurring around the State concerning the increasing number and length of mandated trainings.

Olivia Mishtal left the meeting at 7:55pm.

B. August Financial Report

Business Manager Eric Remington reported on the general operating budget and Special Education tuition, transportation, and excess costs. The Teamsters and Suffield Education Association contracts are currently under negotiations. Board members discussed reimbursement rates and the possible need to lobby for enhanced Special Education reimbursement from the state.

Colin Moll left at 8:14pm.

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

MOTION #25-17: Dudack moved to approve Matt Dunbar, Superintendent, and Eric Remington, Business Manager, as authorized signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs. Mol seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

D. Adoption of Proposed 2025 Regular Board of Education Meeting Dates

MOTION #25-18: Rossi moved to adopt the 2025 Board of Education Regular Meeting Dates as presented. Sparzo seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

E. Policy #5141.25 Students with Life Threatening Allergies

MOTION #25-19: Mol moved to approve Policy #5141.25 Students with Life Threatening Allergies. Dudack seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- A. September 6, 2024 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting – Subcommittee Chair Fry said policies #5141.25 Students with Life Threatening Allergies, #5145.5 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students), and #1330 Use of School Facilities were reviewed and discussed.
- B. September 13, 2024 – Community Engagement and Public Relations Meeting – Subcommittee Chair Dudack said the subcommittee discussed communications planning, the Suffield Middle School building project, and options for sharing board- and district-related activities on social media.
- C. September 24, 2024 – Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting – Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said the Special Education Model was discussed.
- D. October 3, 2024 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – no report beyond that presented in the Financial Report agenda item.

Board Liaison Reports

- A. Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – No report
- B. Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) – No report
- C. Agriscience – Board member Mol said the Agriscience Consulting Committee will meet on Wednesday, October 9.

Future Business

Chair Sattan noted that a workshop on Artificial Intelligence is planned for November 18, 2024 Board of Education meeting. The Career Technical Education topic is currently planned for the Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee in December.

Mol requested an Agriscience Program Review be considered for a future presentation. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said that an Agriscience Program Review will be taking place on October 15 within the Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack was excited to see the Superintendent's Cookie Hour scheduled for October 9. She thanked Colin Moll for attending the meeting.
- Board member Fry thanked Colin Moll for attending and acknowledged that the town is entering into new bonding projects and views it as a potential opportunity for the Board. The next Policy Subcommittee meeting will address artificial intelligence.
- Board member Sparzo is eager to learn more about the Suffield Middle School building project.

Adjournment

Mol moved, Rossi seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:31p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [07OCT2024 BOE Regular Meeting \(Recording 1 of 2\)](#)
[07OCT2024 BOE Regular Meeting \(Recording 2 of 2\)](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of November 4, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary