

BOARD OF EDUCATION
TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES

On December 14, 2021, the Board of Education held its regular meeting at Timothy Edwards Middle School, 100 Arnold Way, Room Alt 6.

Members present: Arthur Adduci, Anitha Elango, Beth Esstman, Madison Gonzalez, Dipali Kalia, Lisa Maneeley, Michael Paré, Jessica Waterhouse and Craig Zimmerman

Also present: Superintendent Dr. Kate Carter, Assistant Superintendent Tracie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent Colin McNamara, and Director of Finance and Operations Chris Chemerka

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked attendees to join him in a moment of silence to reflect on the 9th anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken.

Mrs. Kalia read the District Vision Statement.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2021 special meeting. (Gonzalez/Waterhouse)

VOTE: Approved/Unanimously (9-0)

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2021 regular meeting. (Maneeley/Paré)

VOTE: Approved/Unanimously (9-0)

COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Carter shared *Good News from Schools*. In addition, Dr. Carter noted that Chairman Zimmerman requested her to provide an update regarding the Pleasant Valley project related to an agenda item for Monday's Town Council meeting. She advised that the bids for the project have recently come in, and as expected, are higher due to the impact of the pandemic on pricing, shipping, labor and supply chain issues. She noted that the challenge was not unique to South Windsor and that she met with the State of Connecticut Office of School Construction Grants & Review who confirmed that other districts are bringing this to their attention. Given that all three schools in Phases I and II came in on time and under budget, the BOE and PBC Chairmen requested Dr. Carter to investigate the usage of those funds to support Phase III. Meetings were held with the Town Manager and Bond Counsel, Attorney Dave Panico, who advised that the Town Council has the authority to authorize the transfer of funds that were approved in prior referenda, but not needed, to another active project approved by referenda. Dr. Carter consulted with both the BOE and PBC Chairs as well as project professionals, and requested a subsequent meeting with the Town Manager and town staff, at which Attorney David Panico provided the relevant details. There is an agenda item for Monday's Town Council meeting to approve the transfer of funds from Phases I and II to the Phase III (Pleasant Valley) project. The total funds remaining from those projects is roughly \$3.1M,

although the final amount that the Council will act upon is not yet determined. Representatives from Colliers, Gilbane, the BOE and PBC and Dr. Carter will attend the meeting when this is discussed. Dr. Carter noted that this is excellent news for the project and clarified that these funds will not support anything new in the project, but will allow the project to be executed as described in the educational specifications. Dr. Carter remarked on the excellent stewardship of the PBC and project professionals for delivering three schools under budget, which has allowed for this action to take place.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Ms. Peterson deferred her comments until reports later in the meeting.

Student Representatives: There were no student reports.

Board Members: No board members wished to be heard.

HEARING OF VISITORS: No visitors wished to be heard.

CONSENT

Post-facto Approval of Open Choice Grant

MOTION: Move the Consent Calendar (*Paré/Kalia*)

VOTE: Approved/Unanimous (9-0)

DONATIONS

MOTION: Move to approve the following donation: \$1,000 from the South Windsor Community Foundation to Eli Terry Elementary School. (*Waterhouse/Gonzalez*)

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously (9-0)

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS REPORT

Student Spotlight: Artwork created by Advanced Placement students was on display prior to the board meeting. Student artists Karen Luo, Ji Min Lee, and Rally Bryan shared remarks on the positive impact that the SWHS art program has had on their school career and future aspirations, as well as on the therapeutic impact art can have on day-to-day lives. Students relayed their experiences with a variety of art courses that they had been fortunate to have taken since the beginning of their high school career and praised their art teachers. Board members congratulated the students on their amazing artwork and thanked them for sharing their inspirational experiences with the arts. Dr. Carter thanked the students for their arts advocacy.

Ms. Peterson informed the board that Mr. Canova was recently honored by the Connecticut Art Education Association as the 2021 Scott Shuler Distinguished Art Advocate. She explained that the CAEA recognizes visual arts educators for demonstrating excellence in the classroom, active participation and leadership at local, state and/or national level, publications and/or exhibits advocacy for the arts, and other art education-related accomplishments. The board applauded Mr. Canova for his success. Mr. Canova thanked the board for their recognition noting that the award is not only a reflection on him, but on the entire district, the board's support, and the exceptional art staff at SWPS.

Enrollment Report by SLAM Collaborative: Mr. Mike Zuba, SLAM Collaborative, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation which provided an in-depth review of South Windsor's enrollment projections from 2021 through 2031. He reviewed the projected October 1, 2021 enrollment versus actual enrollments noting that last year's K-12 projections were 0.6% - 1.9% lower than actual, with elementary projections showing the greatest deviation in kindergarten at 27 more students than projected. He reviewed each of the projected versus actual enrollments school-by-school. Mr. Zuba's report provided information on South Windsor's overall population, birth rates and those rates as they correlate with Kindergarten enrollments. He reviewed home sales and their concentrations in town, as well as planned housing developments and the impact of those on enrollment. He reviewed in-migration ratios which exhibited that after a down year in 2020, this year showed a return to historic in-migration levels. Mr. Zuba advised that SLAM utilizes a Cohort Survival Methodology, the standard method that is accepted by OSCG&R for school construction projects. The district enrollment has increased by 4.3% since last year, the sixth consecutive year with enrollment growth, with elementary showing the greatest growth of 6.7%. Throughout the report Mr. Zuba noted the current impacts related to the pandemic as well as the long-term impacts which are uncertain. Following his presentation, Mr. Zuba responded to board member questions.

Ms. Esstman reflected on the projected increase to the high school numbers and questioned whether Dr. Carter could provide comments. Dr. Carter noted that she recently attended the Capital Projects Committee meeting and shared the need to convert Wapping School into a high school annex given increases to enrollment. As the Wapping School is still a Board of Education building and within walking distance of the high school, it would seem to be the best option, rather than investing in an expensive high school addition. She noted that while the high school administration could use the Wapping building now, the district is trying to be respectful and courteous to Parks & Recreation who will be vacating the building. The high school will be looking to use Wapping at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. She noted that the district is in the position to offer the old Orchard Hill as a potential temporary or permanent location for the Parks & Recreation department, noting that Parks & Recreation would have preferred that site at the time over Wapping, but it could not be offered due to its necessity to be utilized as swing space. The building can be offered now because the town was able to purchase a parcel of land at the PV site which will allow the new construction and existing school to co-locate on the property during construction.

South Windsor High School Class Size Report: Mrs. Harlow provided an overview of the high school class sizes as of October 1st. She reviewed a summary included in the report, noting that there are 62 sections with enrollments fewer than 12 students, 26 of which have 11 students. There are 13 first semester sections, 18 second semester sections and 31 full year sections. Enrollments with class sizes greater than 25 equal 7, most of which are music classes. Seven courses were not scheduled due to lack of enrollment. There were no courses not scheduled due to an insufficient number of teachers. Mrs. Harlow described the course selection process noting that in September the scheduling process begins with high school administration and curricular leaders updating the high school catalogue to be posted on line in December. Students complete the selection process in February and curricular leaders then make decisions on how many sections to run based on student interest. Mrs. Harlow advised that there are 300 different courses with over 850 sections offered in the complex schedule. Students' schedules are finalized before they leave in June. Mrs. Harlow noted that as enrollment increases, the administration anticipates that the number of courses under 12 students will decrease. Mr. Rizzuto and Mrs. Harlow responded to board member questions.

A concern was raised regarding the cancellation of Italian II as well as the high number of students in Spanish IV.

Approve Modifications to South Windsor High School Course Selection Offerings: Mrs. Harlow reviewed the modifications for the 2022-2023 course catalog offerings and reviewed courses that were being

eliminated due to low course requests, as well as new course offerings. Mr. Rizzuto and Mrs. Harlow responded to board member questions.

MOTION: Move to approve the modifications to the 2022-2023 South Windsor High School Course Selection Offerings as presented. (*Adduci/Waterhouse*)

VOTE: Approved/Unanimous (9-0)

Personnel Report: Mr. McNamara reported on the following:

- Nancy Peck, Special Education Teacher at Pleasant Valley Elementary School, will retire effective June 30, 2022.
- Kristy Fischer, Language Arts Teacher at Timothy Edwards Middle School, will resign effective December 23, 2021.

UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Hearing of Visitors: No visitors wished to be heard.

Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Items for Future Agendas: No items were presented for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Waterhouse, seconded by Mrs. Maneeley, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann M. Walsh
Board Clerk

A video recording of the entire meeting may be found on the district website,
www.southwindsorschools.org