

Board of Education Special Meeting
January 8, 2018

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium.

Present: Board members Kendra Wiesel, John Richter, Susan Mercik Davis, Michael Sepko, Maureen Sattan, Debra Dudack, Lori D'Ostuni, Matt Service (6:10 p.m.), Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

Absent: Board member Beiter

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board observed a moment of silence for Justin Donnelly, Board of Finance Chair, who recently passed away.

Recognition

The Board of Education recognized the SHS athletic program for being selected as a CIAC Michael's Achievement Cup exemplary program. Mr. Bosworth said nine student athletes attended the banquet and five of those students were in attendance tonight. Caitlin Bombard, Emme Muska, Karissa Stanio, Rylee Harfouche, and Jessica Dery shared their experiences in being a part of the high school athletics program. They spoke about the positive aspects of participating in sports such as teamwork, leadership, relationship building and learning lessons they would not necessarily learn in the classroom, like perseverance and sportsmanship. Superintendent Berasi thanked Mr. Bosworth, the high school administration and the student athletes.

Public Comment

Jen Urbanski, 67 Marbern Drive, spoke about her daughter's positive experience at Suffield High School. She noted the Agriscience program, special education program, and the faculty and staff who have invested in her daughter which has led to noticeable gains. She specifically thanked Ms. Sewell, Ms. Bonnet and Ms. Daly.

Approval of Minutes

Dudack moved to approve the January 2, 2018 meeting minutes. D'Ostuni seconded the motion. Board member Mercik Davis said the minutes do not reflect what is happening in the meeting and she would like more specific details included. Ms. Wiesel said the format of board minutes will be discussed at the Board's workshop. All members voted in favor except Mercik Davis, who voted against. The motion carried 7-1.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #18-22: D'Ostuni moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

- A. Policy #3520.13 – Student Data Privacy Protection & Privacy/Cloud Based Issues
- B. Policy #5121 – Examination/Grading/Rating
- C. Policy #5124 – Reporting to Parents
- D. Policy #6144 – Controversial Issues
- E. Policy #6171.3 – District Placement of Special Education Students Out-of-District

Richter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 8-0.

Discussion/Action Items

- 2018-2019 Proposed Elementary, SMS, SHS & Curriculum Budget Presentations

Mr. Hendrickson said the budget has been a collaborative effort among all district stakeholders and is reflective of the district's values. He reviewed the district's mission and beliefs and the rapid changes in education over the last few years. He added the District and School Improvement Plans were developed to guide and drive improvement. The major line item changes compared to this year's budget were highlighted which included curriculum leaders, instructional coaches, curriculum resources, professional development summer programs and textbooks. He noted the reduction in the instructional coaches line is due to not filling the technology integrationist. Curriculum resources are proposed to be 45% less than this year's budget due to reducing the math consultant position as capacity has now been built internally. Mr. Hendrickson displayed a graph of the amount of money spent on professional development since the 2010-2011 school year. He noted the tremendous amount of education reform from 2010-2015 which resulted in a great need for professional development of staff. Professional development is proposed to be 19.9% less than this year's budget because of the investment in professional development over the last few years to build the capacity of our faculty. Mr. Hendrickson explained the key indicators of success which include improved assessment scores, increased graduation rate, improved attendance rate, an effective district curriculum development process and data from parent, teacher and student surveys relative to school climate, improved procedures for behavior management, improved technology reliability and effective use by teachers and students, and increased teacher collaboration and planning time. The principals and assistant principals spoke about the collaborative work in their buildings with curriculum leaders, coaches and teachers, curriculum writing that has been accomplished, analysis of data to drive student improvement, and the investment in professional development of administrators. Board member Dudack asked that the mid-year data that the administrators have mentioned tonight be shared with the Board as this information will be very helpful in the budget decision-making process. Mr. Hendrickson said there is a mid-year update given to the Board in March. Board member Dudack expressed concern that getting this information in March would be too late as the Board will be voting on the budget at the March meeting. She asked for the information to be provided sooner than March. Board member Mercik Davis asked when the administration anticipates seeing improvements in test scores. Mr. Hendrickson responded that it takes 3-5 years to see change, but the district is continually monitoring results and making adjustments accordingly. He noted last year was the first year the plan was fully implemented with the full staffing of curriculum leaders and coaches in place. Board member Mercik Davis questioned how the determination is made when consultants are no longer needed and she expressed concern as to the workload of the K-5 curriculum coaches, how their effectiveness is measured, and whether more coaches are needed. She asked if the 48 teachers discussed last week include special education teachers. Mr. Hoff said special education teachers are in addition to the 48 teachers. In determining reducing the math consultant, Mr. Hendrickson said survey responses from teachers reflect teacher confidence in the curriculum and instruction. Ms. Berasi noted there is a lot of work to be done and we are beginning to see evidence of the efforts put in place. In discussion relative to high school monitors, Board member D'Ostuni asked if one of the monitors is used in the weight room as this is a priority and there was one in past years. Mr. Bosworth said there is currently not a monitor in the weight room. For specific budget questions and answers go to <http://www.suffield.org/page.cfm?p=666>.

- 2018-2019 Proposed Athletics Budget Presentation

Mr. Bosworth began the athletics budget by reviewing the athletic program objectives for 2018-2019. He said the notable drivers in this budget are contractual stipends, transportation, participation and rental fees, and purchased services. Mr. Bosworth explained the athletics expenses broken down by location and the cost of each athletic team at Suffield Middle School and Suffield High School, for a total budget of just over \$600,000. He noted that expenses will be offset next year by pay-to-play revenue proposed for a total of approximately \$75,000 (\$125 per sport per student and a family cap of \$375), resulting in an approximate budget of \$525,000. In response to board member Sepko's question, Mr. Bosworth said there is a financial hardship waiver. Mr Hoff added that any student who qualifies for free or reduced lunch qualifies for the waiver, but also if anyone else has a hardship that student can also apply for a waiver. This information would be communicated to families and all waivers will be confidential.

Mr. Bosworth informed the Board of recent and future projects in the athletics department, such as installing a flagpole at the baseball field, resurfacing tennis and track courts, outdoor basketball courts, new scoreboards at HS and updated scoreboards at SMS. Mr. Hoff added that many of these projects were completed by the Town and he expressed his appreciation.

Mr. Bosworth also highlighted athletic recognition and accomplishments including Michael's Cup Sportsmanship Award for 2016-17 school year (one of 13 schools in CT given this award), and the Unified Champion School designation in 2017. Some accomplishments for this year are the 2017 boys golf state champions, the field hockey team, boys' and girls' soccer teams and volleyball team all qualified for the state tournament this past fall, and more than 400 students have participated on an athletic team this year. Board members expressed concern that pay-to-play may deter students from participating. Mr. Bosworth ensured the board that the high school will make every effort to make sports accessible to all who want to participate. Board member Mercik Davis suggested the administration look at other revenue opportunities such as parking fees for high school students. In response to board members' questions, Mr. Bosworth said the pay-to-play should not affect fundraising as those dollars go into the student activities account to purchase team warm-ups, the money that hockey parents pay is for ice time, at least half of the districts in our league have pay-to-play, some sports purchase their own uniforms (i.e. boys hockey), the uniform rotation is four years, and the revenue that comes into the athletic department from sales at sporting events goes into the student activities athletic account. In response to a board member Service's question, Ms. Berasi said pay-to-play could eventually apply to clubs as well. The current pay-to-play proposal will apply to high school sports only. For specific athletics budget related questions and answers go to <http://www.suffield.org/page.cfm?p=666>.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said because of the repair work occurring in the guidance department at the high school due to a roof leak last week, counselors offices were temporarily moved to the media center. The major work should be done by the end of this week and staff will be able to return to their offices. The insurance company may cover the cost of the repairs.

Board Chair's Report

- Board Chair Wiesel said she welcomes any board members' ideas for the January 20 workshop with CAFE. She will be finalizing an agenda at the end of this week.

- The Board has discussed holding a budget related forum potentially on February 12 to give community members an opportunity to ask questions or give their opinions. The Board is anticipated to vote on the budget at its March 5 Board meeting.
- A budget subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January 16 and an ACCE meeting is anticipated to be scheduled in February.

Business Manager's Report

- None

Subcommittee Report

Policy subcommittee Chair Dudack said the committee discussed their priorities going forward and decided to begin with the review and revisions of board bylaws. Each member will research specific bylaws and bring their findings to the next meeting on January 22 at 5:00 p.m. She also noted the committee will review any policy changes as a result of legislative updates.

Future Business

- Form a strategic planning subcommittee for holding systems accountable and determining progress towards outcomes.
- Review of Promotion/Acceleration/Retention Policy
- Form a community communications committee to have a vehicle to clearly communicate with the community.
- Determine the format of minutes that the full board feels comfortable with and ensures meeting efficiencies.

Adjournment

Sattan moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the special meeting of January 16, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary