

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
Monday, September 26, 2022, 6:30 PM**

Board Members Present (in person):

Ms. Erica Bushior
Mrs. Jennifer Davis
Mr. Mike Delano
Mr. Aaron Hoffman
Ms. Sara Kelley
Ms. Laura Lybarger
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Absent: Mr. Wesley Murdock, Student Representative

Also Present (via Zoom, except as noted):

Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools (in-person)
Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (in-person)
Ms. Kathryn Desrosiers, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School (in-person)
Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator (in-person)
Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School
Ms. Kathie Gabrielson, Director of Pupil Services (in-person)
Mr. Timothy Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School (in-person)
Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School (in-person)
Miss Alexa Morrell, Student Representative (in-person)
Ms. Sue Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School (in-person)
Ms. Jennifer Russell, Supervisor of Pupil Services (in-person)
Mrs. Sara Varga, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School (in-person)

The meeting agenda and copies of all Board meeting materials were posted on the district's website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us) prior to the meeting, in accordance with the requirements for electronic meetings. Audience members were able to participate by phone utilizing the phone number provided on the meeting agenda. The recording of this meeting is available on the district website.

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

Miss Alexa Morrell, Student Representative, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting Minutes, 9/12/2022

B. Communications and Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes, 9/12/2022

Mr. Delano made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bushior, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on Monday, September 12, 2022, and the Communications and Community Relations Committee meeting held on Monday, September 12, 2022. Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IV. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Unpaid Leave of Absence- Certified Staff Member

B. 2021-2022 Bills and Grants, 9/26/2022, \$720,678.18

C. 2022-2023 Bills and Grants, 9/26/2022, \$148,385.05

D. Obsolete Equipment- High School

Ms. Kelley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, that the Board approve the consent agenda, as presented. Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried.

Item V. Correspondence

A. Board Meeting Reminder

Ms. Shegogue read the flowing reminders: the next Policy Committee meeting will be held on Monday, October 3, 2022, at 5:30 p.m., in the Stafford Elementary School Conference Room, the next Budget Committee meeting originally scheduled for October 24, 2022, will be rescheduled, and the next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, October 24, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., at Stafford Elementary School.

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Student Representatives' Report

In Mr. Murdock's absence, Miss Morrell provided the Board with updates for each of the schools, including open house dates and a reminder regarding the upcoming early release day.

A. Curriculum Committee

Mr. Hoffman provided an update regarding the topics that were covered at the Curriculum Committee meeting, held at 5 p.m., prior to the Board meeting. The topics he covered were as follows:

- State Endorsed Reading Programs (5) Announced; Programs will be piloted and committee will facilitate selection process for district's next reading program.
- Curriculum and Instruction Strategic Goals and Action Plan for Staff
- Curriculum Update Progress Since 2019; twenty-nine courses worked on during the 2021 – 2022 school year; next update to be provided in October 2022.
- August Professional Development and New Teacher Academy Review; staff responses on Professional Development Survey

- Mr. Hoffman mentioned evaluations were taken after the PD day. He shared one data point by the team. One question was, "What you did on PD development connected

you to what you do in the classroom”. There were 162 responses from staff with 93.2% answering yes, which was an increase over last year by 8.1%. This was one great example.

Item VII. Superintendent’s Reports

A. Presentation of the 2022-2023 School Improvement Plans for Stafford Middle School and Stafford High School

Mr. Moccio explained that each fall the Board of Education is asked to review and approve the Strategic Educational Framework (SEF), which serves as the District Improvement Plan for the school year. He noted that this item will appear later on the agenda under “Old Business” and will include the additional information that the Board members requested at the last meeting.

Mr. Pelliccia and Mr. Kinel presented Stafford High School’s “School Improvement Plan” for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Mr. Pelliccia highlighted some key accomplishments.

- Strong graduation rates continued through the COVID pandemic and remains over 90%
- Held open forum and collaborative discussions in reaction to difficulties teachers were having with pandemic related items. A forum was held for a full week in the school library after school. It allowed teachers to voice their concerns and were able to address their concerns. We were able to come up with solutions to their concerns and it service the school well.
- Learning walk protocols were utilized with teachers and the bell schedules

Ms. Kelley thanked the high school administrators for their work on the plan. Ms. Kelley said moving forward she would like action steps included that would support the identified goals. Mr. Hoffman said that he would like the teachers to present an update to the Board in January / February regarding the PLCs.

Ms. Mike and Ms. Desrosiers presented Stafford Middle School’s Improvement Plan for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Ms. Mike also highlighted some key accomplishments.

- A new bell schedule that provides a collaboration time during the school day.
- The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) handbook.
- Implemented three learning walks within the building.
- The 8th grade class was the first class to take the PSAT, and the students did very well.

Mr. Delano asked about the change in the bell schedule and if it is now aligned to the high school. Ms. Mike stated that the schedule is very similar, but not exactly the same. Ms. Bushior asked for specific information regarding the proficiency target in math. Ms. Mike explained that she and the teachers are still reviewing the testing result data. Ms. Kelley said she would like action steps included that would support the identified goals moving forward. Ms. Shegogue stated that she heard wonderful feedback from staff, parents and students regarding the middle school’s open house.

Mr. Hoffman asked if there was a way to check which students might not be taking the STAR test serious. Ms. Mike explained that you can actually go into the STAR scores and see how much time students are taking on the test, so she is targeting those students and will take some action plans to move those students forward.

B. 2022 Summer Scholar and ESY Program Report

Mr. Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Ms. Russell, Supervisor of Pupil Services and Summer School Coordinator, presented an update regarding the 2022 Summer Scholar and ESY program.

Mr. Hoffman said that the district has to work to increase participation in the program. Mr. Autieri stated that he and Ms. Russell have already met and will be working with the town's recreational program coordinator to try and develop a summer program that includes academics in the morning, and then a recreation component in the afternoon.

Ms. Gabrielson clarified the ESY numbers, as Mrs. Russell explained the extended school year services for children with IEP's is a program by qualifications. Students who do not qualify for ESY are encouraged to enroll in regular summer school activities and opportunities.

C. Review of the Required CSDE Corrective Action Plan Regarding the 2020-2021 Audit

Mr. Moccio explained the need for the Stafford Public Schools to develop and submit a corrective action plan, in response to the recently completed Town of Stafford fiscal year 2020-2021. Within that response, the district is required to identify progress that has been made in addressing the highlighted recommendations, as well as any adjustments to district financial practices that align with the identified recommendations. Upon receipt of the letter from CSDE, Christine Marinelli, Director of Finance and Human Resources, and Mr. Moccio began taking the necessary steps to develop the requested plan. They have spoken with the Town of Stafford's new auditing firm, discussed recommendations and elicited suggestions of what to include in the plan. The corrective action plan will be submitted to the State once the Board has the opportunity to see it. Mr. Moccio went through the action plan with the Board members, and he and Mrs. Marinelli also scheduled a meeting with Sal Titus, First Selectman, and Lynn Nenni, Interim Chief Financial Officer, to discuss how the Town of Stafford and the Board of Education can work collaboratively to resolve this matter.

Item VIII. Public Forum

Before taking member of the audience comments, Ms. Shegogue reminded the audience that any public comment must be on the agenda and when approaching the stand please give full name and address.

Nick Boudreau 4 Acorn Drive – “It has come to my attention last year and early this school year as well, parent was having concerns regarding library books that they didn't want their kids exposed to, concerns that some books are not appropriate, including books that talk about abusive relationships, Pride books, BLM etc. There are also concerns with the security of the school doors.”

James Madsen 12 School Street - “Question to Mr. Pelliccia - regarding High School report, when you saw students returning from COVID there were problems you were seeing, students were not accepting of other students, can you elaborate on this?”

Ms. Shegogue reminded the public this is not a give and take, it is public comment session. Mr. Moccio explained that Ms. Shegogue is only trying to explain this is public comment, and Mr. Pelliccia would be more than happy to discuss the topic outside of the Board of Education meeting. Mr. Moccio requested audience members to schedule an appointment with Mr. Pelliccia to discuss any issues.

Haley Bohadik 98A Handel Road– “So we are here today on behalf of many Stafford parents who are very concerned about inappropriate content being taught to our students in school. Here are a few examples: in the school library there are numerous sections for LGBTQ.” The audience member listed numerous books that were inappropriate.” These books are being read to our children in numerous classrooms and grades. There are pride flags around the schools. On the other hand there are flags not being allowed in the same manner. The schools are catering to a small percentage of children and discriminating against the rest. The morals and values we taught our children are being destroyed. Homeschooling rates are skyrocketing and this is why. Everyone needs to focus on excellence and academics and leave inappropriate content out of school. We are requesting a “parent opt out policy” for all inappropriate and sexual content to be placed in school immediately.

Ms. Shegogue once again asked the audience to limit their comments to items on the agenda.

Another member of the audience - Agreed with the last comment from a concerned parent. Parent did not provide her name or address.

Another member of the audience – Noted that another audience member mentioned, “Pride, we all know what that means.” Parent did not provide her name or address.

Ms. Davis explained that PRIDE is a motto for the High School, it doesn’t have anything to do with the LGBTQ community.

Member of audience responded “This is just a comment, anything my child is learning, I would like my written consent from me saying this is okay and I think it’s fair to be said for any curriculum.” Parent did not provide her name or address.

Ms. Lybarger pointed out that it was report in the curriculum committee at the end of the year that the curriculum will be available online for parents to access, through the Rubicon Atlas.

Kathleen Cote 3 Cemetery Road– A parent online had a question about how the policy is going to go on line so parents can be informed, and what is going to be involved in the curriculum? They also questioned if an opt out option available to parents?”

Ms. Shegogue replied she would have someone get back to the speaker, to answer her questions.

Mr. Moccio reminded listeners that a weekly newsletter is sent out of his office. He will include the current legal mandates from the State of Connecticut regarding what curriculum parents have the ability to opt out of. I will include those in an upcoming newsletter. Mr. Autieri noted that it’s written in Board Policies 6144 Curricular Exemptions.

Mr. Hoffman thanked the parents who have taken the time out of their busy schedule to speak on behalf of their students. Mr. Hoffman requested a conversation about that policy and the books in the library be included on the Policy Committee agenda next week.

Ms. Lybarger agreed with Mr. Hoffman regarding the books, but not necessarily taking them out of the library. May make the student feel like part of the community. We shouldn't be excluding these items if some parents want their child to read them. The books may need to be relocated to another school library.

Mr. Moccio mentioned that this topic will be put on the next Board of Education meeting on October 24, 2022.

Item IX. Old Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of the 2022-2025 Strategic Educational Framework

Mr. Moccio discussed the Strategic Educational Framework (SEF) and overall vision for the district.

Mr. Moccio identified the three strategic imperatives of Organizational Health; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; and Continuous Learning for All. Mr. Moccio explained that each imperative is broken down into three-year long-term strategies, which are further broken down into short-term actions to be completed throughout the school year.

Mr. Moccio also mentioned that each Fall, updates to the SEF are presented to the Board of Education. For 2022-2023, the Board is being requested to adopt a new three (3) year SEF that will serve as the District Improvement Plan for 2022-2025. The Board of Education reviewed and requested certain clarifications be made to the draft SEF, on September 12, 2022.

Mr. Moccio and Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, reviewed the updated, SEF that incorporates the requested revisions, and were available to answer any questions from the Board.

Ms. Kelley thanked Mr. Moccio and Mr. Autieri for including the data piece. She reiterated her desire to have action steps included in embedded within the plan.

Ms. Lybarger made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, that the Board of Education approve the 2022-2025 Strategic Educational Framework, as presented. Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried.

Item X. New Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of CSDE Flexibilities Associated with the Stafford Public Schools Professional Learning & Evaluation Plan

Mr. Moccio regarding State Department of Education evaluation of flexibilities related to the professional learning and evaluation plan. Mr. Moccio introduced Mr. Autieri who provided a short presentation.

Mr. Autieri presented the 2022-2023 Stafford Public Schools Educator Evaluation Plan updates.

Ms. Davis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bushior, that the Board of Education Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried.

Ms. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, to move item XI. A.- Update and Discussion Related to Negotiations (Executive Session Anticipated) into executive session. Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried. The Board took a brief recess at 8:30 p.m.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

A. Update and Discussion Related to Negotiations (Executive Session Anticipated)

No action was taken on this item.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no student matters

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bushior, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mr. Hoffman, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Lybarger voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine C. Marinelli / Lori Dobson, Recording Secretaries

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Laura Lybarger, Secretary