

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, APRIL 11, 2018
CAFETERIA, THE SHERMAN SCHOOL
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Hanley at 7:03 PM in the cafeteria of the Sherman School.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mr. Hanley, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Absent:	Mrs. Enright
For the Administration:	Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Mr. Carlone and Mr. Trinchillo
SPTO:	Mrs. Ribisl
Town Residents:	23 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded to move Agenda Item 8.3 Gig Band, XP Expo and Capstone Projects to the beginning of the Agenda, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

8.3 Gig Band, XP EXPO and Capstone Projects

Dr. Melendez reflected on the importance of the school's Vision. He referenced the Most Likely to Succeed Presentation (February 2017) and the desire to explore similar programs at the school. In September, the school rolled out a series of XP programs and Dr. Melendez shared a few photos of the programs offered.

Dr. Melendez introduced Mr. Carlone, Band Teacher. Mr. Carlone shared that when the XP program was presented he was excited to think of ways to take students who were passionate about performing on their instruments and put them in a small ensemble group where they could explore different styles of music. The expanded music programs now offers more opportunity for students to play their instruments and sing.

Mr. Carlone proudly shared the Sherman School is now part of the Western Regions Festival (an accredited CMEA music school part of a conference). Nine Sherman students auditioned this year and four were accepted. The acceptance affords students an opportunity to work with conductors from around the world. Now that the school is accredited, outstanding elementary band students can also be nominated.

The Gig Band performed Happy and Uptown Funk. The performance was very well received by all in attendance and the Gig Band received a standing ovation. Mr. Carlone appreciates the opportunity to work with the students and thanked the Board, Dr. Melendez and Mr. Trinchillo.

Dr. Melendez shared that the Capstone program is designed for 8th Grade students and it gives them the opportunity to explore something that they are passionate about. He briefly shared examples of Capstone Projects explored this year: Build a computer, Write a Novel, How to Ride a Motorcycle, How to make natural cosmetics and Crime Scene Investigation.

Two students were invited to present their Capstone Projects to the Board.

John Romano - Capstone Project - "Sherman Style". John had an interest in dress design and decided to make a dress for his Capstone Project. He provided a slide presentation and discussed the detailed steps of his project with the Board, and shared the finished product with them.

Eilish Foy - Capstone Project - "Kids for Cure 5K". Eilish turned her passion for running into a 5K Capstone project benefiting the Susan G. Komen fund. Eilish provided the Board with a slide presentation and shared the detailed steps of her project. Eilish's efforts contributed \$1,002.00 to the Susan. G. Komen fund.

Both John and Eilish received a warm round of applause from the Board and audience.

Mr. Hanley commented positively on the level of student composure presenting to a group and is pleased they have been provided a platform to do so. He shared that the presentations are examples of the Board's strategy to reinvest resources into the program of instruction.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mrs. Ashleigh Blake asked how the XP Program is assessed, and how it is determined to keep or eliminate a course.

Mrs. Snowden shared that grades have not been assigned to XP courses, and there are no plans to do so in the future. The XP Expos are the culmination and performance of the courses. She shared that both students and teachers have been surveyed about their XP experience and feedback was taken into consideration for planning upcoming courses. Administration spent time on April 10th discussing the upcoming XP program with the teachers. Student data was reviewed and they discussed their experiences and ways to make the courses better. A Student Reflection component will be added to the courses in the fall. Mrs. Snowden shared that both high and low enrollment in a particular class is telling, which impacts elimination or repetition of a subject. Mrs. Snowden noted that teachers shared their opinions which provided a great insight into what classes worked, needs adjustments and brand new ideas.

Mrs. Ribisl commented positively on the presence of a State Trooper at the school. She thanked the Board for making it possible.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda items 5.1 through 5.5, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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| 5.1 | Minutes - Regular Meeting, March 22, 2018 | Enclosure 5.1a |
| 5.2 | Personnel Action | |
| 5.3 | Reports - Monthly Enrollment | Enclosure 5.3 |
| 5.4 | Monthly Budget Report 17-18 | Enc 5.4a - 5.4b |
| 5.5 | Disposal of Unused Items | Enc. 5.5a - 5.5b |

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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| 6.1 | 2017-2018 Current Bills | Enclosure 6.1 |
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7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mrs. Ribisl shared the following awards were presented at the SPTO Gala:

- SPTO Service Award - Mrs. Alicia Sakal
- Most Valuable Person Award - Mrs. Molly Garcia

The Gala took place on April 7th with approximately 60 people in attendance. The event raised \$7,000.00. Mrs. Ribisl extended thanks to those who attended and participated in the planning of the event.

Approved Requests:

Kindergarten: \$310.00 - High Touch High Tech Program

Kindergarten: \$325.00 - Happy Acres Farms Field Trip

First Grade: \$650.00 - Action Wildlife

First Grade: \$750.00 - Pratt Center

Third Grade: \$1400.00 - Cove Island

Fifth Grade: \$1,500.00 - Sturbridge Village

Middle School Band & Chorus: \$750.00 - Bus Transportation to Music in the Park Festival at Lake Compounce

All Grades: \$250.00 - Spelling Bee

Odyssey of the Mind: \$1,300.00 - Students attending World Finals

Mr. Hanley congratulated Mrs. Ribisl on the success of the Gala.

7.2 Sub-Committee

Negotiations Committee - Mrs. Lenihan

Mrs. Lenihan shared that the New Milford High School contract is complete and will be voted on under Agenda 9.2. Mrs. Lenihan also reported that she along with Dr. Melendez and Mr. Neunzig started contract negotiations with Shepaug Valley School District on April 10th. The Board's attorney will be working on minor contract language.

Policy Committee - Mrs. Seeger

Mrs. Seeger reported that the Policy Committee did not hold a meeting. Mrs. Seeger provided a brief update on the Long Term Strategic Steering Committee. Communications have been sent out via email/newspapers inviting residents to a break out session on April 24th.

Maintenance Committee - Mrs. Diotte

Mrs. Diotte shared that the school has been receiving Facility Study bids. Mr. Iadarola will review them.

Dr. Melendez noted that Mr. Iadarola will follow up the week of April 23 with his recommendation on which firms should be interviewed. Dr. Melendez anticipates the study will be completed by June 1st.

7.3 Chairman**7.4 Superintendent - Dr. Jeff Melendez**

Dr. Melendez announced that both the last day of school and Graduation are scheduled for June 22, 2018.

8. PRESENTATIONS**8.1 Update on Board Goals - Dr. Melendez****(Enclosure 8.1)****Board Goal 1. To develop a comprehensive long-term Strategic Plan.**

Dr. Melendez noted that Mrs. Seeger addressed the long-term Strategic Plan goal during her update. Dr. Melendez is looking forward to the Strategic Planning Workshop scheduled for April 24th.

Board Goal 5. To cultivate a mindset for learning among leadership, faculty, staff and students

Dr. Melendez shared that Professional Development was held on April 10th. XP was discussed to determine what improvements can be made.

Dr. Melendez shared that Mrs. Snowden provided a phenomenal Professional Development piece for the faculty. Five thought provoking articles were discussed which generated good conversation amongst faculty members.

Dr. Melendez noted the XP program was just an idea this time last year and is pleased to see it come to life. He recognized that the program could not have been accomplished without the teachers, and he is hopeful the staff knows how much they are appreciated.

He noted all goals are moving forward and making progress.

8.2 Budget "At-a-Glance" - Dr. Melendez**(Enclosure 8.2)**

- **Exceptional/Special Education**

\$18,000.00 balance increase due to the resignation of BCBA, which Dr. Melendez noted as a tremendous loss. The school has contracted with an agency to provide BCBA services.

- **Operation & Maintenance of Plant \$15000.00**
\$15,000.00 spent on generator maintenance, asbestos inspection, new tables/chairs (reduce alliance on rental fees), HVAC repairs and tools.
- **Tuition to CT School Districts**
\$22,000.00 supplemental services paid to Region 12.
- **Tuition to Non-Public Schools**
Revenue received in the amount of approximately \$10,000.00 for the Excess Cost Grant Award

8.4 Drivers of Student Achievement and Class Size - Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Snowden

Dr. Melendez referenced the research work of Professor John Hattie. Professor Hattie has taken 800 studies that analyze student achievement, and has derived a list of influences and assigned an effect size and ranking. His initial data represents 80 million students, and has since been updated and includes over 120 million students.

Dr. Melendez shared with the Board a Meta-Analysis effect on student achievement in rank order. A few examples were:

Influence	Effect Size	Rank (# out of 138)
Student Self Efficacy	1.44	Rank #1
Student Behavior in Classroom	.80	Rank #6
Teacher-Student Relationship	.72	Rank #11
Enrichment	.39	Rank #68
Class Size	.21	Rank #106

Mrs. Snowden noted that Class size had an effect size of .21 (Rank 121 out of 138). She shared that Professor Hattie identified an effect size of .4 as average, and he recommends focusing on those influences with an effect size of .40 or greater to have the highest potential impact on student achievement. Although smaller class size does have a positive effect, it is small. Mrs. Snowden shared the groups that benefits most from small class size are: lower grades, minority students, student with low socioeconomic status, and when teachers are trained to capitalize on small groups

Mrs. Snowden shared research does not prove that small class size leads to increase student achievement and learning. The subject was address in the study and Professor Hattie noted that going from class size of 25 to 15 would require teachers to be trained differently to capitalize on a small group, and he speculated it may have a greater impact on student achievement.

Mrs. Snowden provided a comparison of Sherman's class size to other schools in DRG B. She noted that recent calculation conducted by the Connecticut School Finance Project in 2016 reassigned Sherman to DRG B.

Mrs. Snowden shared the Teachers' contract language of class size with the Board. She noted teaching and learning have changed, and teachers are asked to differentiate their teaching style to meet the needs of their students.

Mrs. Snowden shared how Sherman is using the other influences that Professor Hattie identified to have a great impact on student achievement: Classroom Behavior, Teacher/Student Relationship, Meta-Cognitive Strategies, Creativity Programs and Professional Development.

Mr. Hanley shared that he appreciated the presentation and requested that it be added to the Google drive. Mrs. Lenihan requested the articles discussed in Professional Development also be added to the Google drive.

Mrs. Blake commented on the impact of student behavior and teacher/student relationship on class size. She also commented on the reverse of having to change teaching style moving from class size of 15 to 25. Teaching a small class and jumping to a larger class is the same problem, but in reverse. She questioned if the teachers are prepared to jump to larger class sizes?

Mr. Hanley commented that research becomes more meaningful when discussing policy, guidelines and strategies, versus statistics. He noted an articulate rubric is needed to determine functionally appropriate class size.

Dr. Alexander commented that the information gathered was very helpful. She noted class size is not a one size fits all. She feels guidelines can be set, but also a protocol is needed to accommodate for other situations.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Discussion and Possible Action to Fund Portions of the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals Trip

Mr. Hanley shared that for the past several years, the Board has provided travel expense support in the amount of \$500.00 per student to attend the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

Mr. Hanley questioned the Board if they wanted to fund the trip, and at what level of contribution?

The Board discussed the history of Odyssey of the Mind at length. Discussion included, student achievement within the program, per student expenditure, and the need for a policy to determine funding of an after school program/school endorsed program.

Mrs. Lenihan moved and Mrs. Seeger second to support thirteen students attending the Worlds competition in the amount of \$500.00 per student, and the motion passed unanimously 6-0.

9.2 Discussion and Possible Approval of High School Education Program Agreement with the Board of Education of the Town of New Milford

Enclosure 9.2

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to approve the agreement negotiated by the Negotiations Committee on the high school education program agreement with the Board of Education of the Town of New Milford, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 Second Reading of:

Policy & Regulation 0521 - Nondiscrimination

Policy 4118.11/4218.11 - Nondiscrimination

Policy 5118.1 - Homeless Students

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to approve Policy & Regulation 0521 Nondiscrimination, Policy 4118.11/4218.11 Nondiscrimination and Policy 5118.1 Homeless Students, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

10.2 Discussion and Possible Action to Suspend Regulation 6141.322 - Website Pages

Dr. Melendez requested the suspension of Regulation 6141.322 Website Pages to align with the current actions of the school.

Mrs. Seeger added that some of the regulations and processes have changed and are inconsistent.

Mr. Hanley questioned if the policy should also be suspended since the regulations operationalize the policy. Mrs. Seeger did not feel it was necessary to suspend the policy.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to suspend Regulation 6141.322, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

10.3 Discussion Regarding Song to Symphony

Mr. Hanley provided a recap on the Song to Symphony program request that was presented to the Board last June. At that time, it was suggested that the music teachers determine if the program could formally integrate into the school's music program/curriculum. It was determined by faculty that the Song to Symphony is not a useful integration into the current music program.

The Board spoke highly of past Song to Symphony performances. They understand how the program fit in the past, but noted the school offers enrichment and creative opportunities for all students. They questioned funds aside, is it a meaningful program for the school to run as part of the curriculum, or voluntary for students to do outside of school. Mr. Hanley noted that the dilemma is similar to the Odyssey of the Mind request.

Mrs. Snowden shared with the Board that she received a detailed proposal from Mr. Eliot Bailen, Artistic Director of the Sherman Chamber Ensemble. Mrs. Snowden spoke with staff members to gain an understanding of the program. She provided the Board with standards addressed for students, school time and facility requirements and financial expectations. Mrs. Snowden understands the unique experience the program has to offer; however noted the Board investment in the school's band, music, XP and enrichment programs. She also noted the level of commitment required by the students would take away from instructional time and questioned if the sentimental value of the Symphony outweighs the impact on academics.

Mr. Hanley feels the Board must default to the way it should operate rather than intervene. Dr. Melendez feels the issue was complicated since the request was initially made to the Board.

Dr. Alexander feels that time should be spent on crafting a Policy that will decide what is funded. She shared that the program may have to be reimaged and should be discussed once a Policy has been established.

Mrs. Diotte added the Policy will shape the decision making process so we do not rely on presidences.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Hanley will craft a letter to Mr. Balen which will explain the Board's stance on the program.

11. COMMUNICATION

Mr. Hanley requested that all Board members forward emails that they receive from the community to Mrs. Diotte. Receipt of email(s) will be publicly acknowledged at the monthly Board of Education meetings, without divulging confidential information.

Mrs. Seeger added that this new step will be added to Policy and Bylaws.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ashleigh Blake thanked the Board for their Odyssey of the Mind generosity. She shared that she appreciates the need for Policy surrounding funding, as well as class size. Mrs. Blake requested when crafting a Policy around Odyssey, to keep in mind that some children do not take part in team sports, but find a team experience within Odyssey. Sherman students take the Sherman School name to the competitions and represent/compete well. She feels it is an amazing program and would like to see more involvement.

Mr. Hanley added the Board should investigate the potential funding of Odyssey on the front end, as opposed to travel expenses. Mr. Neunzig agreed.

Dr. Alexander thanked Mrs. Blake for her comments. She invited her to attend the upcoming Policy meeting as it is a public meeting.

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mr. Hanley commented very positively on music performance and student presentations. He would like the Board to investigate in a token for students (ex. Lapel Pin) to recognize achievements that reinforces the school's vision.

Mrs. Blake commented positively on Mr. Carlone and the impact he has had.

Mrs. Snowden commented positively on the last XP Expo showcase.

Mr. Neunzig acknowledged Dr. Melendez for the incredible role he took during the Shepaug Valley contract negotiation meeting.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

14.1 Regular Board of Education Meeting - Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 7:00 PM

14.2 Communication Sub Committee Meeting - Monday, April 30 at 5:00 PM

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hanley moved and Dr. Alexander seconded that the Board adjourned at 9:44 PM, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Diotte
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education