

**SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784**  
**REGULAR MEETING, OCTOBER 2, 2019**  
**THE SHERMAN SCHOOL - LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**  
**7:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:08 PM in the Library Media Center on October 2, 2019.

**1. PRESENT:**

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Absent for the Board:	Mrs. Enright and Mr. Laughlin
Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Kalkreuth and Mrs. Snowden
Residents:	3 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. CELEBRATIONS:**

Dr. Melendez shared that October 2nd is National School Custodial Day. Many of the students celebrated and recognized Renato Ribeiro and Rosa Vintinilla with cards and pictures. Dr. Melendez noted his appreciation for the custodial staff under the leadership of Mr. Lombardozzi.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No Public Comment

**4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:**

No additions to the agenda

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the Board's approval the Consent Agenda items 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.5 and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Mrs. Diotte noted that the Monthly Budget Report 19-20 Budget by Function and Summary of Funds have been tabled due to an issue with the new accounting software regarding encumbrances.

**5.1 Review of Minutes:**

Minutes - Regular Meeting, September 4, 2019  
Minutes - Executive Session, September 4, 2019

**5.2 Personnel Actions - None**

**5.3 Monthly Enrollment Report**

**5.4 Monthly Budget Report 19-20 Budget by Function & Summary of Funds**

**5.5 Disposal of Damaged/Obsolete Items by the Maintenance Department**

**6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:**

Mrs. Diotte tabled the approval of 2019-20 Current Bills due to an issue with the accounting software system.

6.1 2018-2019 Current Bills

Enclosure 6.1

**7. ORAL REPORTS:**

**7.1 SPTO Update**

Mrs. Amanda O'Neill provided a SPTO update:

- The Harvest Fair will take place on Saturday, October 5th
- The Book Fair is currently running the week of October 1st
- The next SPTO meeting will take place at the Painted Lemon, scheduled for November 5th at 6:00 PM

**7.2 Sub-Committee**

**Curriculum Committee**

Mrs. Lenihan requested the Curriculum Committee update be tabled until after the SBAC Presentation.

**Maintenance Committee**

Mr. Neunzig shared the Maintenance Committee plans to review the water issue and at the upcoming Maintenance Meeting. Also, they will prepare for the State visit, scheduled for Wednesday, October 9th.

**7.3 Chairperson**

Mrs. Diotte shared that she attended Open House and was pleased with the evening, as well as presentations. Mrs. Diotte suggested a review to increase parent attendance.

**7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez  
Strategic Plan Update**

Dr. Melendez presented the October StopLight report and provided an update on each 2019-2020 Action Steps. The report can be viewed on the school's website under the About Us tab.

After Dr. Melendez's presentation, Mrs. Rosemary D'Ostilio questioned what a Steering Committee is. Dr. Melendez briefly explained the nine-member committee was formed last year and is a collaborative decision-making model. He shared the three tasks the committee will work on this year:

- Instructional Time Analysis
- Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum
- Culture Climate Survey

Dr. Melendez pointed out that information regarding the Steering Committee can be found on the school's website under Faculty/Strategic Plan and PD Catalog.

## 8. PRESENTATIONS

### 8.1 2018-19 SBAC Data

Mrs. Snowden presented SBAC results as well as District assessment data from the 2018-19 school year. For comparison purposes, Mrs. Snowden's presentation data included results from the 2015-16 through 2018-19 school years.

2018-19 SBAC Results for Grades 3-8

- 62.6% of students met or exceeded expectations in ELA
- 58.8% of students met or exceeded expectations in Math

Compared to the previous year, ELA scores decreased by 2.5% which represents 5 students. Math scores increased by 2% which represents 4 students.

Mrs. Snowden explained that grade level data could not be shared publicly to protect individual student identity. The school receives data on each student which is analyzed with each teacher to identify patterns, examine strengths/weaknesses and instructional plans.

Mrs. Snowden noted in the past the Board has inquired about trends and patterns. Mrs. Snowden reported inconsistent performance year after year within a grade level, but more consistent performance when you follow a cohort overtime. This information informs that improvement is needed to be more student centered to meet the needs of individual students. Mrs. Snowden noted that the analysis shows that the curriculum is strong as evident with high test results, but in areas of decreased results, must tailor the curriculum for such needs.

Dr. Alexander noted this is where the Strategic Plan and focus on differentiation comes in. Mrs. Snowden agreed and acknowledged it is difficult work facing many school districts in Connecticut. Mrs. Snowden noted the school should feel good about the developed curriculum and continue to teach it, but improve differentiation for different needs.

Mrs. Snowden explained the State emphasizes growth and sets growth targets and shared growth results with the Board. She noted growth is exciting to see, especially in math, considering the effort put forth and feels overtime will translate into increased proficiency.

Mrs. Snowden shared how the school compared to the State and the top three DRGs. In both Math and ELA, Sherman is above the State level, but below DRG C.

Mrs. Snowden presented District-Wide Assessments results and noted there are other ways to measure growth and achievement besides standardized test scores. Mrs. Snowden shared fall and spring results from the following assessments:

- STAR Reading
- Fountas and Pinnell
- Writing Sample
- STAR Math
- Bridges Math Comprehensive Growth Assessment

In addition to the initiatives presented last year to improve assessment results, Mrs. Snowden presented additional plans which included:

- Facilitate weekly grade level department meetings to monitor growth and progress, support planning and differentiation.
- Embedded math goals included in each teacher evaluation plan. All math teachers must have a least one math focused student learning objective. All teachers are contributing to a school wide goal around the math practices in an effort to raise awareness.
- Monthly math committee meetings
- Scheduled Professional Development Days - Bridges, Big Ideas, V-Math Intervention Program, SRBI and Mindset for Learning
- Examine use of Instructional Time
- Math is Everywhere Theme
- Monthly department grade level newsletter in an effort to increase awareness

Mrs. Snowden shared they were expecting that some of the efforts put forth last year (student goal setting, increased communication with parents about student performance, improving testing environment) would have a greater impact on the test scores. They are pleased to see improved growth, especially in math, but would have liked to see greater proficiency. The ultimate goal is that students are 100% proficient in reading, writing and math and Mrs. Snowden believes they should continue with established efforts and newly launched plans. Lastly, Mrs. Snowden shared we are mindful of the importance of high test scores, but the most important goal is supporting students to be the best possible version of themselves. High test results are evidence of proficiency in reading, writing and math, but not empathy, self direction, critical thinking and perseverance. She is hopeful to present evidence next year regarding progress in these skills as well.

Dr. Alexander questioned the level of communication to parents regarding scores and progress. Mrs. Snowden shared it is different at each grade level. Last year parents were informed of math pre/post test results on a unit by unit basis and the same process will continue this year. Students were also involved in their progress by graphing their test results. This year conference schedules were changed to see data now, followed by time for growth from conferences to report card distribution. Dr. Melendez added in conjunction with the SPTO, a survey will be administered to determine ways to increase two-way communication with families. He noted the vital role of support from parents.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2020 Board of Education Meeting Dates**

The Board discussed the upcoming 2020 Board of Education Monthly Meeting Dates. The following Retreat dates were added: January 25, 2020 and July 18, 2020. Also, December's meeting has been moved to December 9, 2020.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Dr. Alexander seconded the approval of the 2020 Board of Education Meeting dates, and the motion passed unanimously. 5-0.

## **9.2 Discussion and Possible Action to Establish District Targets for SBAC Performance**

Mrs. Lenihan provided an update on the Curriculum Meeting that took place on October 1st. The committee viewed Mrs. Snowden's SBAC and assessment presentation. Mrs. Lenihan noted speaking on behalf of Mrs. Enright, who was not in attendance, that Mrs. Enright would like the Board to look at establishing a stated goal tied to the Strategic Plan with the Administration's responsibility ensuring rigorous curriculum with 100% of students reaching 3 and 4 on the SBAC. Mrs. Lenihan shared that Mrs. Enright feels very passionate about this goal.

Mrs. Diotte explained the Board operates through a committee structure. Typically, questions, problems, concerns, new ideas, etc. are brought to the Committee level for review and research, debate and discussion. Formal recommendations are then made to the full Board, providing an assessment and/or summary of information. The Board would then deliberate on the committee's recommendation. Mrs. Diotte shared at the end of the committee meeting, she asked the Curriculum committee if they plan to make a recommendation to the Board, and Mrs. Enright stated there is no formal committee recommendation to the Board. Mrs. Diotte further shared the committee members did not agree on one opinion on the topic. It was decided to leave as agenda item with the anticipation that there might be a recommendation from the Curriculum Committee. Mrs. Diotte shared there is no formal recommendation from the committee to deliberate on, but feels it is important for the full Board to discuss.

Dr. Alexander agrees with Mrs. Enright's view of the scores being sub-par. (Mrs. Diotte shared the entire committee also agreed). Dr. Alexander acknowledged the Board has been informed about the assessment scores and strategies that have been established for improvement. She noted if the sub committee's job is to make recommendations, then aside from looking at our data, the Board needs actual research on goal setting and what impact it has on Districts. Dr. Alexander further commented that a reasonable timeline should be established to see improvement in SBAC results, but if improvement is not achieved, what are the District plans to change.

Mrs. Diotte agreed with Dr. Alexander's comments and feels it provides the Board with tangible next steps. Mrs. Diotte also commended Mrs. Enright on the stance she has taken to improve SBAC results over the past eight years as a Board member.

Mrs. Seeger shared she feels the Administration is moving in the right direction. To review and respond to student performance data is in the Strategic Plan, which is in effect this school year.

Mrs. Diotte further shared the Curriculum committee was in agreement regarding all of the steps that have been put in place for progress thus far.

Dr. Alexander suggested to continue a dialogue as to when we can expect to see change, and also an understanding of what is the cutoff for what plans are ineffective.

Mrs. Diotte reflected on the creation of the Vision Statement, and the intentional decision as a District to not emphasize test scores because scores do not define the whole student.

Mr. Neunzig shared that if Curriculum can show setting a target would benefit the

student, then he would consider, but he has not seen this thus far. He does see the Administration put changes in place for students to be successful. Mr. Neunzig is not in favor of teaching to the test. He further shared that he does not want kids to lose sight of all the things they can discover in XP. Not every child will go to college, some will go to trade /vocational school.

Mrs. Diotte noted this issue will return to the committee level. No motion.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **10.1 Discussion and Next Steps regarding Design and Innovation Committee**

Mrs. Diotte referenced the September 26th Board letter that was sent to the Sherman community outlining the focus of the Design and Innovation Committee through the release of the RFP/Q. Mrs. Diotte shared that she along with Dr. Melendez, Mr. Neunzig and Mr. Laughlin attended the September Board of Selectmen meeting and provided an update on the committee. Conversations will take place with representatives from both Park & Rec and the Senior Center to discuss needs prior to interviewing and selecting an Architecture firm.

Mrs. Diotte shared this item will remain as a standing item on the monthly agenda until a recommendation is made to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Diotte noted that the recommendation to the Board of Selectmen will be for funding to engage a firm for conceptual drawings of what the building might look like and what that cost might be. Mrs. Diotte encouraged everyone to view the letter and corresponding links and shared community input is welcomed.

### **10.2 Update on RFP for Architectural Design Services**

Dr. Melendez reported the release of the RFP/Q on September 13th. Eleven firms participated in the mandatory walkthrough on September 27th. The firms have until October 4th to direct any questions to Dr. Melendez. Dr. Melendez will have a week to respond. To date, he has not received any questions, but if he does, all firms will be provided with the questions asked and his response in an effort to remain as transparent as possible. Proposals are due October 25th and oral interviews/presentations will take place on November 4th. Dr. Melendez noted the Board will need to discuss the selection process prior to interviewing candidates.

Mrs. Diotte suggested the Maintenance Committee meet and review in detail and make an informal recommendation to the Board. She is aware of how much time is involved, but feels the full Board should weigh in.

Mr. Neunzig suggested the Board view some of the projects completed by the architecture candidates. Mrs. Diotte feels time will be available between the interviews, November 4th, and the Board of Education's recommendation to the Board of Selectmen on November 21st for site visits.

Dr. Melendez shared that Kosta Diamantis and his associates from the State are scheduled for a walk through of the school on October 9th. Mr. Diamantis controls State funding.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

One email regarding home schooling was received by the Board. Dr. Melendez will follow up.

**12. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Rosemary D'Ostilio questioned how committees receive feedback and/or input from the public.

Mrs. Diotte explained all committee meetings are open to the public. She shared the nature of the meetings and explained community input is welcomed. Committees make recommendations for action to the full Board, and only the full Board of Education at their monthly meeting, with a quorum can make a decision. All Board of Education meetings are publicly warned and posted on the school's website.

Jean Robbins from the Sherman Sentinel stated the meetings are not on the Town of Sherman website. Mrs. Diotte confirmed the meeting agendas are physically posted on the Town hall's bulletin board.

**13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

Mrs. Diotte thanked everyone for all of their work and service.

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS**

14.1 Board of Education Meeting, November 6, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center

14.2 Policy Committee, October 7, 2019 at 3:00 PM - Superintendent's Office

14.3 Maintenance Committee Meeting, October 8, 2019 at 8:30 AM- Superintendent's Office

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded the Board adjourn at 8:42 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig  
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler