

Old Saybrook High School
1111 Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
(860) 395-3157

The Old Saybrook Board of Education met in Special Session on Thursday, February 28, 2019, at the Old Saybrook High School, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

Board Members

Tara Barros
Jim Henderson
Eileen Baker
Alan Hyla
George Chang
Cindy Sultini (Arrived at 7:06PM)
Jan Furman
Karen Brodeur
Karina Julius

Others

Jan Perruccio, Superintendent of Schools
Amity Goss, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Krista Bauchman, Old Saybrook Middle School Principal
Heston Sutman, Goodwin School Principal

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Barros called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

II. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

Chairman Barros reminded the audience members of the rules for addressing the Board of Education. Chairman Barros asked Vice Chairman Hyla to keep time for each audience member while the audience member addressed the Board.

A member of audience stated that she felt 4th grade students do not belong with 8th grade students because of the wide gap in social and emotional development.

A representative from the YMCA Program stated that she felt 3rd grade students were not ready to transition to the middle school.

A member of the audience stated that she did not like the idea of 4th grade students starting school earlier and getting home earlier.

A member of the audience stated that he felt his 3rd grade daughter was ready to transition to the middle school and there is no need to change the current setup.

A member of the audience stated that her children had made the transition to the middle school in 4th grade and it was a positive experience for her children. She supported maintaining the current grade structure, but she saw the issue from both sides.

A member of the audience stated that her daughter is in 4th grade now and she has struggled with the transition to the middle school. She elaborated that, while there are many activities available for her daughter, some of those activities include students from 4th through 8th grade, leaving the younger kids too intimidated to participate.

III. EDUCATION ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Update on Demographics Committee Short Term Goals – Grade 4

The Ad Hoc Demographics Sub-Committee presented its second interim report to the Board of Education at their meeting on February 20, 2019. The update focused on progress made towards achieving short term goals that were outlined in the presentation given to the Board on November 13, 2018. Specifically, the Committee discussed the efforts made regarding the potential restructuring of grades to retain Grade 4 at Kathleen E. Goodwin School.

The Board of Education asked questions about the presentation related to resources needed to accomplish the transition, changes in programming for 4th and 5th grade, logistical restructuring at Goodwin and at Old Saybrook Middle School, due diligence done by the District regarding research conducted, change management, and the potential budget impact of the transition. Superintendent Perruccio, Principal Sutman, Principal Bauchman, and Director Goss each answered questions about the potential transition and presented outlines of plans that have been established to accommodate the move, pending Board of Education approval. Principal Sutman elaborated that his school created a special committee to evaluate and plan the necessary changes to accommodate the 4th grade class and his team is prepared to make those changes this summer regardless of which year the transition will actually take place. Principal Bauchman echoed Principal Sutman's remarks, indicating that similar planning was taking place at the Middle School to prepare for the potential departure of the 4th grade and make effective use of the vacated space. An emphasis was placed on pairing the 5th grade with the 6th grade, creating a "lower middle school" and "upper middle school" environment. Logistically, the transition is a budget neutral with the exception of the resources needed to physically make the one time move to the elementary school.

Superintendent Perruccio clearly stated that, while there is no research that speaks directly to our specific situation, the research conducted does indicate that the fewer transitions for students and limited transitions at a young age, the better and that she would support any change that alleviates fear and anxiety held by parents and students regarding the disparate ages of students in the pre-teen years.

At the end of the presentation, the Board indicated that they had received a sufficient amount of information to make an informed decision at the next Board meeting. They elaborated that they felt the District had done an exceptional amount of due diligence and that the Board had the resources to make their decision.

For the full presentation, please follow this link: [Demographics – Short Term Goals Presentation](#)

IV. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

A member of the audience thanked the Board and the Administration for the work done regarding the Grade 4 issue. She elaborated that the process was transparent and inclusive for the community.

A member of the audience thanked the Board for their opinions and their research. She also stated that there was no benefit in delaying the 4th grade transition by one year and that if the transition were to take place, it should be done for the next academic year.

A member of the audience stated that current research states that the fewer transitions for young students, the better and the longer you can delay those transitions, the better. He also stated that this transition should not be regarded as bringing the 4th grade back to Goodwin but rather, allowing the 3rd grade class to stay. He also suggested that the 6th grade class be evaluated regarding their pairing with 7th and 8th grade, expressing the difficulty of a 6th grade student to handle the social and emotional maturity of students in the older two grades.

A representative from the YMCA stated that her students and parents of those students would benefit from moving 4th grade to Goodwin.

A member of the audience cautioned that moving 4th grade to Goodwin where there is only 1 administrator could potentially burn that administrator out. He also stated that 7th and 8th grade should be evaluated for how they develop and prepare students for high school. He stated that even though he did not think moving 4th grade to Goodwin was the right move for his child, the research convinced him that this move would be good for the students in this grade overall.

A member of the audience thanked the Board for the thoroughness of the process regarding the 4th grade transition. The audience member stated that there should also be a focus on the 5th grade students and preparing them for any changes that this move may have on their class.

A member of the audience stated that 4th grade is too young to have students attend the Middle School and that even though interactions between the youngest students and the oldest are limited, there are still some interactions before and after school that are not as closely monitored.

A member of the audience stated the District did a great job on research, transparency and inclusion of the community. She supported the transition idea, stating that the change more closely resembled a Kindergarten through 8th grade model. She also stated that she was excited to hear proposals for the vacated space at the middle school.

V. REMINDERS

- OSMS – Grade 4 Choral Concert – February 27 – 7:00PM
- District – Special Board Meeting @OSHS – February 28 – 7:00PM
- Goodwin – Celebration of Reading – March 1

- OSHS – RAM Boosters – March 4 – 7:00PM
- Goodwin – PTA Meeting – March 5 – 7:00PM
- Board of Finance Meeting – March 5 – 6:30PM
- District – Snowflake Make-up Day – March 11
- OSHS – Winter Sports Night – March 12 – 6:30PM
- Board Meeting – March 12 – 7:00PM

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Baker/Brodeur

“Move to adjourn at 9:28PM”

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

Karen Brodeur, Secretary
Old Saybrook Board of Education

Minutes recorded and typed by:
Trent Gerbers, Executive Assistant
*DRAFT - Subject to approval at the next BOE meeting