

Stonington High School
SBIT Minutes
September 20, 2011

Members Present: T. Farrell, M. Gillick, S. Murphy, and J. Norcross

Visitors Present: M. Blanchette and M. MacDonald

Meeting called to order: 5:06 PM

I. Reports

- A. Minutes (3/15/11): approved
- B. Student Report: None
- C. BOE Reports: None

D. Principal's report (Dr. Stephen Murphy):

- i. Assistant Principal Search-Update. Dr. Murphy commented that a search committee comprised of representation from the BOE, Central Office, SHS teachers, parents, Superintendent and Principal have received and reviewed 36 applications and conducted six formal interviews for the Assistant Principal position. Three candidates were invited back for a second round of evaluation. Candidates are being forwarded to the BOE. It is hoped that the position will be filled by mid-October. In the meantime, Mr. Brown is serving as an interim Assistant Principal and has been very helpful during this transitional period.
- ii. New Hires: Dr. Murphy reviewed the staffing changes at SHS. He noted that having an approved budget at the start greatly helped with the hiring process and allowed for a more effective outcome. 18 people were hired including new social studies, Special Ed, and language teachers. Ms. Sullivan joined the staff of guidance counselors and multiple Paraprofessionals were also added. Dr. Murphy noted other changes, including: Amy McKenna—new interdisciplinary/ academic coordinator for Humanities and Pamela Schroeder, the new school nurse. Welcome to all and good luck in your new roles.
- iii. Discussion included an update on new courses and several unique initiatives made available to students. The following lists the newly approved and offered courses and initiatives:
 - 1. Mandarin III
 - 2. Stonington History
 - 3. Allied Health and Medical Careers
 - 4. Web Design
 - 5. Advanced Mathematical Decision Making (a senior level course offered as an option who seek an alternative to Pre-Calculus)
 - 6. Community Classroom: This program, for intellectually disabled students, recently introduced a new phase focused on teaching

transitional and life skills by utilizing “classrooms” in the greater Stonington community. Currently two such sites exist at the Mystic Aquarium and Avalon/Stoneridge. Students travel to these sites and participate in different activities.

7. Sea Research/JASON Project *Exploration Command Center*: this past summer, an exploration command center was installed in one of SHS’ science classrooms. The center provides real time contact with Dr. Ballard of the Mystic Aquarium. Students will have the opportunity to use the classroom and interact with Dr. Ballard throughout the year, watching as he and his team of researchers conducts investigations. This command center is available to all science related classes. This is not a course per se; rather, it is an additional educational resource for students to witness and participate in science in a new way.
 8. Digital Academy of Arts and Sciences (Bio 21; Algebra 21; Skills 21): This series of new classes is the second collaboration with the Center of 21st Century Learning—the other is the E-Commerce and Entrepreneurship class. A group of freshman have already enrolled in the digital academy which is technology based. The courses have a competitive Expo component in which students will visit and present their progress at a regional conference in the spring. Next year, the Digital Academy will expand to include Earth Science; Geometry; Skills. The program will follow the students for four years, continuously expanding its curriculum with each year. One of the advantages to the Digital Academy not only includes the incorporation of technology into the curriculum, but also provides the opportunity for SHS teachers to be trained to teach in this format. Also, SHS expands its offering of classes enabling students to differentiate their learning experiences.
 9. NOTE: Dr. Murphy iterated that each of these new initiatives directly links to the District’s Strategic Plan, specifically by integrating educational tools and technology in instruction, and by matching talent to benefit students and the community of learners. Most definitely, these new initiatives integrate SHS with the community; the collaboration supports the achievement of students.
- iv. Assessment Data/CAPT and SAT results: SHS continues to demonstrate proficiency in core academic areas. CAPT testing results were higher than the state for goal and proficiency. Similarly, SAT results were above the State and Nation. A special note: for the class of 2011, the overall participation in SAT testing by the class increased by 12%. Last year, 84% of the class of 2011 participated.
 - v. Dr. Murphy noted that preliminary preparations were underway for the self-study evaluation (2014) required as part of the school’s accreditation process.
- E. SBIT Goal: The SBIT attendees discussed ways in which the team could help improve the school using the Strategic Plan goals as a source of guidance. It was decided that

the team would like to focus on ways in which the SBIT could better align with the various Booster organizations at SHS to see if there are any synergies or identify areas in which we are duplicating efforts.

II. Visitor Comments:

- A. M. Blanchette and M. MacDonald both expressed concern over the newly implemented parking fee of \$100 for juniors and seniors. Much discussion followed regarding the purposed use of the collected money. Some community members had been told that the funds would be used to support the scoreboard, auditorium seats, and other maintenance fees. Dr. Murphy shared that this was not correct and that the money collected went directly back to the BOE and that the new policy was part of the recently approved 2011-2012 budget. SHS is required to enforce the policy. Superintendent Leanne Masterjoseph's recent blog was mentioned wherein the reasoning behind the \$100 fee was outlined. The visitors noted that the policy was unfair in that it imposes a "penalty" on a select group of students and that at other area schools the parking fees are considerably less expensive (\$20-\$25/year). Dr. Murphy noted that of the available 185 parking spaces, approximately 65-70 students have paid the fee. It was recommended that parents and students with concerns attend the BOE meeting at 7:00PM.
- B. T. Russell noted that although CAPT score reports were sent home, missing in the mailing was an explanation of how students could demonstrate proficiency in certain subject areas beyond relying on the CAPT scores. Dr. Murphy highlighted that students can meet graduation requirements in several ways: 1. they can pass the CAPT test at or above proficiency, 2. they can pass individual core classes such as Chemistry, Algebra II, etc., or 3. have SAT scores at national proficiency levels.

III. SBIT Comments:

IV. Action: None

V. Agenda:

VI. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:39 PM