

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, February 28, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the media center at Memorial Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Dr. Shoemaker. Member absent: Mr. Raczka. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board of Education meeting will be held at Strong School on March 7, 2007.

On a motion by Dr. Shoemaker, second Mrs. Flanagan, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Ms. Parsons, the Board of Education unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting of January 24, 2007, as amended.

Communications: Mr. Currin mentioned that he placed American flag stickers on Board members name plates in honor of Mrs. Golschneider's daughter Melissa who has just begun serving in Afghanistan.

Ms. Parsons had a citizen thank her for implementing pay to park. She was also told by a parent of a Valley student that the Cuginchaug basketball fans have the most sportsmanship like conduct at any of the basketball games she attends.

Mrs. Flanagan was contacted by one of our former school librarians regarding the presentation on automating the school libraries. The librarian was concerned about the perception of the condition of the libraries. Mrs. Flanagan wanted to clarify that the intent of the presentation was to document the need for more technology.

Mr. Hennick and Dr. Shoemaker both attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony. Mr. Hennick commented that it was both tasteful and serious.

Mr. Hicks attended a share assembly at John Lyman School. He said it was very well done.

Mr. Hicks welcomed Ron Melnik to his first Board meeting as the new Business Manager.

Mrs. Flanagan attended an environmental education class at Korn School and learned about tracking with Mrs. Klattenburg.

Mr. Currin told members that he has volunteered to be on the Energy Advisory Council in Middlefield and he would like to share information between the two groups.

Superintendent's Report: Joe Heller of CL & P is in the process of putting together a report on the energy saving initiatives the District has done.

Mrs. Viccaro and Mr. Raczka continue to meet with the selectman of both towns on a monthly basis. The tentative date for the next meeting is March 7th.

Mrs. Viccaro reported that the boys' basketball team will be playing in the Shoreline Championship against Old Saybrook this Friday night. She said that Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Chase purchased and gave away 300 T-shirts with "The Dream Season" written on them. It has really unified the fans and the games have been very exciting.

Mrs. Viccaro met recently with Cynthia Mitchell, the new Director of Durham Middlefield Youth & Family Services. She is requesting permission to conduct a survey of students in grade 7-12 regarding overall health issues. This survey was created by the United Way and is necessary if they want to apply for funding through the United Way. The survey content is being reviewed by the principals. It may be conducted this spring or next fall.

Mrs. Viccaro also attended the National Honor Society Induction. She said the evening is run by the students. She is always impressed by the pomp and circumstance.

Mrs. Viccaro said the NESDEC study is moving along. Marjorie Clark is spending a day at each of the elementary schools this week to get a sense of the schools. Focus groups are being planned with community members, parents (elementary through Strong), teachers, and staff. Interviews will also be held with key personnel and community members. She expects the team to complete their work by the end of April with a written report by the end of May.

Ms. Parsons questioned the members of the parent focus group. She thinks high school parents would also be valuable to include in the parent focus group. They have a perspective of having had a child go all the way through the program. Some parents may even have two children that have gone through different programs. Other Board members agreed that they should be included.

Mrs. Viccaro held the first meeting of her Superintendent's Advisory Council. She requested each principal to recommend two parents to serve on the council. Ten people attended the first meeting. It was a very productive meeting and they had some very interesting ideas about how to reach out to the community. They will be meeting again in April. The members have committed to serving on the committee through next year. Mrs. Viccaro is also starting a Student Advisory Committee, comprised of Strong School and Cuginchaug students. They will begin meeting soon.

Mrs. Viccaro has been asked by the Chamber to serve on the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council.

At today's Chamber meeting, the guest speaker was Michael Aresco, a CBS Sportscaster that covers the NCAA. Seven students from the TV production class attended the meeting. Mr. Aresco has invited the students to come to the CBS station in New York.

Science Curriculum Presentation: Carol Luckenbach presented the revised science curriculum. The science curriculum is being revised earlier than scheduled in response to the new Connecticut Science Framework. In 2008 science testing will be a part of the CMT's in grades 5 and 8. The CMT's are having a significant impact on how science is being taught. CAPT Generation 3 has also affected what science classes are being taught at the high school. Mrs. Luckenbach asked Board members to review the curriculum and to email her or call her with questions. The Board will vote on the new science curriculum at the March 14th Board of Education meeting.

Differentiation of Instruction Initiatives at Memorial School: Kevin Brough said Memorial School has been working for the last two years on differentiated instruction and understanding students individual learning styles. Learning style inventories have been completed on all students in grades 5 and 6. He explained learning style theory and distributed samples of a student's Learning Style Inventory report and the teacher's report on the individual student.

He discussed the professional development activities the Memorial School teachers have participated in over the past two years to support this initiative. The teachers have found the information from the reports very valuable. There was some discussion as to whether students' learning style inventories should be done again at a later grade. They are considering repeating the test in the 9th grade to see if the results change.

Signature Changes for Child Nutrition Program: On a motion by Dr. Shoemaker, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved Ronald Melnik as an authorized signer for the Child Nutrition Programs of the State Department of Education.

Request for a Special Testing Schedule – CAPT: This request was discussed at the last meeting but was not voted on. Dr. Shoemaker questioned whether changing the testing schedule will help test scores. Mr. Hauser said that before the State mandated the test schedule Coginchaug had some of the best scores in the state. He believes that the relaxed environment provides more stability and they hope to see an increase in scores.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mr. Hennick the Board of Education unanimously approved the request for a special testing schedule for the dates of the CAPT testing.

Fundraiser Building Use Request: At the last meeting a request was presented from Maryann Boord to hold a fundraiser craft fair on the evening of the Dave Brubeck Concert. It is to be held in the lobby of the auditorium before the concert. There was some discussion about whether the location was large enough to accommodate the sale. Mrs. Viccaro will discuss the details with Mrs. Boord.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Dr. Shoemaker the Board of Education unanimously approved the request by Maryann Boord to hold a fundraiser for the Haitian poor on May 19, 2007 in the lobby of the auditorium, in conjunction with the Dave Brubeck Concert.

Transportation Committee: The committee discussed the possible elimination of cul-de-sac bus stops and decided it was not practical to eliminate all of them. It is not any option for many students. It was also decided that it is not the right time to make the change in the school hours to eliminate busses. Some of the youngest students would be arriving home in the dark if this change was implemented. The committee is looking into using the DMIAAB property as a depot. A feasibility study is being done and costs analyzed.

Policy Committee: The Policy Committee met on February 12th. The committee discussed changes in the State statute on bullying as it relates to harassing on busses and on school grounds and the reporting of bullying. They also discussed using iPods as a teaching tool. Currently our policy says iPods are not allowed in any schools. The District policy regarding campaign literature on school grounds will be reviewed by legal council. During the last election there was distribution of literature on the property and the Elections Enforcement Office said that it was legal as long as it was 75ft. away from the building. Our policy states that they can not be on the property.

Magnet School: Mr. Hicks said the state is considering increasing the subsidy for magnet school reimbursement for next year. The Madison school district is withdrawing from their agreement with the magnet school. Mrs. Viccaro said that there is current legislation pending that will prohibit districts from withdrawing from magnet school agreements once they have signed on.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mrs. Flanagan, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.