

The Regional District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Dr. Shoemaker. Members absent: Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Golschneider. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comment: Chet Raczka thanked the Board for all their time and hard work. He knows teacher negotiations and the budget are coming up and hopes things go well for everyone involved. He also said that last year the Board expected some help from the State regarding updating the track and fields and that didn't happen. He said the track really needs to be repaired and hopes it can be done soon.

Ann Koba said she approved of program choice and hopes the Board decides to keep both education programs in the District.

Donia Viola felt both programs can be consolidated. She feels that program choice separates neighborhoods, that allocations per pupil are not the same for each program and consolidation would cut transportation costs.

Josh Stockdale said he is an advocate of program choice and did not feel the study was done that well. He feels the District is known for their program choice and would not like to see that change.

Karen Meiman said she thought the study was supposed to be a cost benefit analysis and wanted to know if the report accomplished what the Board intended it to do.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board of Education meeting will be November 28, 2007 at Strong School.

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

On a motion by Dr. Shoemaker, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the minutes to the October 24, 2007 Board of Education meeting.

Communications: Mrs. Adams heard from a number of people regarding program choice. She said generally they were in favor of choice.

Mrs. Viccaro received a communication from Robert Bandzes who attended the program choice meeting. He felt the report was well done and he would like to see both programs in the schools. He said they can be neighborhood schools that would cut down on transportation costs.

Mr. Hennick saw the art work in the legislative building in Hartford from the District's K-4 students that was excellent. He also attended the high school honor band festival that included students from surrounding areas. Mr. Coutsouridis was in charge and it was an amazing event. Dr. Ochterski also attended the band festival.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro reported in addition to the band festival there were also several Veterans' Day concerts as well as the Italian Cabaret. Also in the music department,

Tim Fisher, band director at Memorial School, has received a grant to purchase a much needed saxophone.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the regional Teacher of the Year reception and will attend the State Teacher of the Year celebration with Betsy Bascom, District 13's Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Bascom also received a parking space sign from the District for being Teacher of the Year that will be passed on year to year to future teachers of the year.

Mrs. Viccaro held several small meetings with new staff to see how their transition to the District was going. All were very happy to be here and are delighted with the quality of education in the District.

Ray Kalinowski is still working on including money in a bill at Hartford to help with the track renovations. He had put in a million dollars last year that was cut to half a million and then cut completely.

The Wellness Council and District 13 are holding their Community Round-up on December 1st. Last year over \$2,000 and 13,000 items were collected. Several businesses are donating snacks and prizes for the students involved.

Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik, Mr. Currilin and Ms. Gara attended a meeting with parents regarding the track and fields. The parents represented all sports held at the complex and will meet again at a later date to get an update on the possible renovation project.

Brewster School received a \$2,000 grant from Liberty Bank to purchase reading material.

The Homeland Security Grant will need to be put off until next year. The money needs to be in the budget before the District can receive a reimbursement for the money expended. The District will only receive about half reimbursement for money spent.

Mrs. Viccaro attended an emergency planning meeting in Middlefield and will attend a meeting in Durham in the future.

John Lyman held an all day program for other school districts who are interested in becoming a H.O.T. School.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik gave an outline to the Board of Education regarding bonding procedures. He also reported that the capital project update has been given to the administrators to review. He will be attending the inland-wetlands meeting on November 19 to discuss the wetlands near the track.

Mr. Melnik has begun talking with a water company regarding a couple of the wells in the District and will bring back information to the Board at a later date.

The 2006-07 Audit has been completed and the auditors are scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee to give their report.

Mr. Melnik has begun working on the format of the 2008-09 Budget and will bring that to the Board at a later date.

Strategic School Profiles: The Board has received copies of the District's Strategic School profiles that are also on the State Department of Education's website. Mrs. Viccaro asked that the Board contact her with any questions they have regarding the profiles.

CRHS – Andre Hauser: Mr. Hauser stated the high school is introducing the “Capturing the Kids Hearts” program at the school. Five teachers attended a three day professional development workshop to be trained in the program. The high school has received a grant to fund the training for five teachers per year over the next three years. The goal of the program is to help good teachers become better at building meaningful relationships with students. Both students and teachers have been very enthusiastic about the results and feel it has improved student – teacher relationships and classroom behavior.

NESDEC Report: Mrs. Viccaro stated the report was not intended to be a cost benefit analysis. It was to look at both programs educationally, get feedback from both staff and parents about the programs, to see if resources and the education were equitable, and what if any changes should be made.

It was mentioned that looking at numbers could be misleading and not be as meaningful as people think. Numbers would not give the information about the education of the programs that the Board was looking for. The report did bring out that the culture of the schools is very different and that having the students from Brewster and Korn schools be in the same building would be a benefit to the culture of the Contemporary program.

Dr. Ochterski stated it would not be a big difference in the number of buses or transportation costs to have neighborhood schools.

Parents like the idea of program choice. It is part of what makes our District special. Change can set both programs back and can also cost more money than to keep the two programs.

One of the things mentioned in the report was to have parents decide after Kindergarten which program their student should attend. Mrs. Viccaro stated that Kindergarten students would need to be in a separate school from either program in order to do that because parents usually keep their students in the school they started in because they are familiar with that school. Dr. Shoemaker stated that may become a possibility in the future because the State is going to eventually mandate all day Kindergarten and the District will need another building project to accommodate the additional space needed. It may be possible to have a PreK-K building and two grade 1-4 buildings.

The Board of Education accepted the NESDEC Report on Program Choice and thanked the people that did the study. At this moment they will maintain the status quo of both programs and will begin to think about all day Kindergarten.

H.O.T. School Grant: The Board needs to approve that Karen Brimecombe, on behalf of the Board can execute the H.O.T. School Grant for John Lyman School with the State of Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved that Karen Brimecombe, Principal at John Lyman School, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of Regional District 13 a certain contract with the State of Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and to affix the corporate seal.

Personnel Policies Committee: Mrs. Flanagan reported the committee is in negotiations with the teachers’ union and have several future meetings scheduled. A representative from the Middlefield Board of Finance has sent a representative to be part of negotiations but no one from Durham has participated as of yet.

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