

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, August 25, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Public Comment: Jeremy Renninghoff of Middlefield said during the budget process the Board discussed the possibility of having a facilities study committee regarding a school closure due to declining enrollments. He asked if the committee has been formed and if any discussions have been held. Mrs. Viccaro said it is a school utilization study, not a school closure that will be discussed. The Board has not discussed forming a committee yet, but she expects it will be on an agenda this year.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on September 15, 2010 at John Lyman School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider, the agenda was unanimously amended to include a discussion on refinancing general obligation bonds and a discussion on a new technology.

Mrs. Flanagan made a motion, second Mr. Currin to accept the minutes of the meeting of July 1, 2010. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Golschneider abstained.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Ms. Parsons to accept the minutes of the meeting of July 27, 2010. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick abstained.

Communications: Dr. Ochterski thanked the volunteers that helped out on the Brewster School Playground build. He also wanted to thank the Durham town crew for their cooperation with the project. Mrs. Heckler commented that the playground looks amazing, she can't wait for the kids to come back to see it. It is being well used by the community.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro introduced and welcomed Brian Bodner, the newly hired Vice Principal at Coginchaug High School.

Mrs. Viccaro said the District is slated to receive \$354,043 from the Education Jobs Fund from the Federal Government. The District should receive the money within the next thirty days. It must be used between now and September of 2012. The intent of the money is to help bring back positions but it can also be used to defray costs within the budget. It is acceptable for the District to hold onto the money until the next budget year. Mrs. Viccaro wants to talk to her administrative team to see if they have any recommendations for the money. She believes the guidelines will be less stringent than they were with the AARA funding but she is still waiting for more information.

Mrs. Viccaro distributed a field trip request from Lorrie Martin for a trip to Block Island by the Oceanography classes on September 17, 2010. This is the same trip that has been approved in the past.

On a motion by Mrs. Boyle, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Oceanography Class field trip to Block Island on September 17, 2010.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the welcome back meeting in Hartford with the Commissioner of Education. Although Connecticut did not receive Race to the Top funds, the Commissioner is still pushing his agenda for secondary school reform. The graduation requirements will change for the graduating class of 2018 (freshmen class of 2014). This will include a Capstone project and a 25 credit requirement. Student success plans starting in Grade 7 will also be required. There will be some curricular changes necessary because of the specific credits being required.

The assignments for the sub committees of the Board of Education for the 2010-2011 School Year were distributed.

Mrs. Viccaro distributed copies of the new poster and brochure of the new strategic plan. She thanked Anne Coffey, Carl Luckenbach, Amy Emory, and the Central Office staff for weighing in on the design. The posters will be hung in all classrooms, the town halls, and town libraries. All staff will receive a brochure.

Mrs. Viccaro invited all Board members to the Opening Day meeting on August 30th. It will begin with coffee at 8am. She expects the meeting to last a little longer than usual as the new Strategic Plan will be reviewed as well as Power School Training and many awards presented.

Mrs. Viccaro distributed a letter that she received today that was sent by email to parents of many students at the high school. It was regarding the National Honor Society selection process. The anonymous author of the email was dissatisfied with how the selection process works. The parent is holding a meeting on September 4th at Allyn Brook Park for concerned parents.

Mr. Hicks suggested that Board members go onto the National NHS website. He feels a lot of this letter is unfounded.

Mr. Currilin asked if the Board is satisfied with the way the NHS members are picked and if they should review the procedure. Mrs. Viccaro said she has sat twice with the advisor to go over the process and she feels the process is fair. The selection committee is fair and well balanced.

Mrs. Flanagan asked when the students find out what the requirements for selection are. She feels it is too late if they are finding out when they are juniors. Mr. Nicol said students present the NHS as early as Strong School. The requirements are also listed in the student handbook.

Mr. Hennick suggested a rotation of the teachers on the selection committee if it is not already happening.

Mr. Hauser will familiarize himself with the current process and report back to Mrs. Viccaro.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik told Board members that the information they received in their packets on the audit was just for communication purposes. No action needs to be taken. The audit team just completed their first week here; they will be returning for another week in October.

Mr. Melnik said that road work on RT 68 is beginning this week. The tarring is scheduled for the first week of school. We anticipate further delays with buses during that time.

Mr. Melnik announced the retirement of Brewster School Head Custodian, Mike Brauer. He has been with the District for 25 years. Interviews were conducted today for his replacement.

Refinancing General Obligation Bonds: Mr. Melnik explained that by refinancing the existing bonds the District has the potential to save about \$123,000.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board unanimously approved to waive the reading of the Resolution authorizing the refinancing of the bonds.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously adopted the Resolution authorizing the refinancing of the general obligation bonds issued in 2001 and 2003. A copy of the resolution is attached to these minutes.

CMT/CAPT: Mrs. Viccaro distributed handouts on the 2010 CMT and CAPT results for the District. She said the best comparison is to look at cohort scores; looking at the same group of students over time. In most cases the cohort scores have gone up. In general, Mrs. Viccaro was disappointed in the scores overall. She feels the data team work is going to help improve the scores. The schools are able to identify the issues during the year and address them immediately. Mrs. Viccaro asked the Board to review the documents and if they have specific questions to contact her.

The Common Core State Standards: Mrs. Viccaro said the State is one of 38 states that has committed to adopting common standards. Administrators across the State have been comparing how Connecticut schools compare to the common standards. Many of the standards will be new and will have significant curricula implications. Side by side comparisons will go out to the districts soon.

Pension Plan Committee Make-up: Mr. Melnik explained that he is looking to change the structure of the pension committee (for all non TRB eligible employees). He said he hopes to have the new pension plan in place soon. He is close to getting the agreement signed by the final bargaining group. The plan will be retroactive to July 1, 2010. The committee makeup must include members of the community as well as District representatives. The Board needs to decide how many people and who will be on the committee.

Board Retreat: The Board has been discussing the possibility of holding a “non-budget” Board Retreat. Mr. Hennick offered suggestions to members to have Attorney Anne Littlefield speak to members about the rights of the Board of Education and to answer members’ questions. There was much discussion about when to have an additional meeting and it was decided to hold this on the same day as the budget retreat, by lengthening the day. The Board Retreat will be held on October 24th. Mr. Hennick will contact Attorney Littlefield to see about her availability.

New Technology: Dr. Ochterski said he attended a professional development workshop on a new technology, Smart Pens. He is excited about this as a note taking tool and will be piloting its use in his classroom in East Hampton this year. The pen has an audio component that will record everything happening while you are taking notes. If you touch the notepad where you were writing, it will play back what was being spoken at that time. The audio can also be uploaded onto a computer. The Board feels this technology will have good and bad implications. It may be an item that the Policy Committee may need to review in the near future.

Transportation Committee: Mr. Currlin said the Transportation Committee met this evening to discuss whether buses should be allowed to go onto private property. This discussion has come about because of a request from a daycare that wants the bus to turn around in their driveway. The Transportation Committee will be asking the Policy Committee to make a decision on this issue. They feel that it should be on a case by case basis, with some general guidelines.

Building Committee: Mr. Currlin said the Building Committee also met this evening. The wells at Lyman and Memorial are almost complete. The plan for the Brewster School well has not

been accepted by the Department of Public Health. A meeting is being held this Friday with the DPH to try to come up with a new plan.

The replacement panels on the roofs at Lyman and Memorial are complete. The old panels are being kept for use on the field house building at the track.

The athletic fields are coming along well. Aerial pictures of the progress are on the Durham Town website. Paving of the staff parking lot will take place on Friday and line painting on Saturday. Mr. Currin shared samples of the drainage panels under the track. There are some drainage issues on the bank that are being corrected. The Committee must attend the September meeting of the Durham Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the screening of soil on the site. The substantial completion date for the project is still mid November.

Mrs. Viccaro told the Board that the dedication ceremony for the library at Strong School in honor of Dr. Breck will be held on October 17th. Invitations will be coming out soon.

The Policy Committee meeting scheduled for September 14th is going to be rescheduled.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 10:00pm.