

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 in the library media center at Strong Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currilin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Members absent: Mrs. Boyle, Ms. Gara. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on March 9, 2011 at Strong Middle School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currilin, the agenda was unanimously approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Golschneider, second Ms. Parsons, the minutes to the meeting of February 9, 2011 were unanimously approved.

Communications: Mrs. Golschneider attended Read Across America Day at Korn School today and read in a classroom. She enjoys participating in this activity every year. She will be reading at Brewster School tomorrow.

Mr. Hicks attended the legislative breakfast put on by the Chamber of Commerce. He said six newly elected legislators spoke to those in attendance. They were all quite confident that the funding to schools would not be cut. Mr. Hicks also attended a meeting of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities where the speaker focused on communication. Mr. Hicks would like to talk about it more with Board members at a later date.

Mr. Currilin commented that the student art work around the library in Strong School was beautiful.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro distributed this month's copy of Board & Administrator to Board members.

Mrs. Viccaro said the CMTs and CAPT testing will be beginning within the next few days.

Mrs. Viccaro is interested in bringing the documentary movie "The Race to Nowhere" to the District during the month of April. The movie questions if kids are being pushed too hard; if they are doing too much. Mr. Hennick said he has spoken to people who have seen the film in another community and the response was very positive. He would support showing it here.

Mrs. Viccaro said the Girls' Basketball Team won the Shoreline Championship last Friday night. They are starting to play in the State Tournament tomorrow evening.

Mrs. Viccaro met with the 1st Selectmen and the Park & Recreation Directors of the towns recently. They are going to be working together to encourage teachers to bring forward ideas to expand activities within the towns.

Tonight at Coginchaug, Durham-Middlefield Youth and Family Services is hosting a forum entitled Love is Not Violent about teen dating violence.

Mrs. Viccaro said thirty-eight Coginchaug students took sixty AP tests. Fifty-seven of them attained passing scores of 3, 4 or 5.

Mrs. Viccaro asked Board members when they would like to have our State senators and representatives invited to a Board meeting. It was decided that she will invite them to the 2nd Board meeting in April. Mrs. Viccaro will also reschedule the technology presentation for a meeting later in the school year.

Mrs. Viccaro distributed a copy of the Proposed District Goals for 2011-12. She asked Board members to review them and to get back to her if there are any additional goals they want added.

The Search Committee for the new Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment met for the first time last evening. Seventy applications were received, the pool was narrowed down to forty-five viable applicants and then she further narrowed it to seventeen applicants.

Mrs. Golschneider, a member of the committee, suggested that she and Mr. Hicks review all forty-five of the viable applications just in case they find any additional candidates that they would like to interview. She asked for the opinion of the Board.

Members agreed that it would be a good idea for someone to take another glance at them as long as they were willing to put the time into it. Mr. Hicks commented that the process was much easier now that everything is on-line.

2011-12 Regional District 13 Budget: Mrs. Viccaro presented the Superintendent's Recommended Budget for 2011-12. There is only a 1.74% increase in expenses. One and one-half teaching positions are being eliminated at the elementary level due to declining enrollment. Mrs. Viccaro thanked the 221 employees that have accepted a zero percent salary increase for the coming year. The largest increase in the budget is due to a 10.6% increase in the cost of health insurance. Mrs. Viccaro said this budget continues to expand technology integration across the District and supports funding of the long range capital plan. The academic summer school program has been eliminated due to its cost and declining enrollment and the permanent substitutes have also been eliminated because of the success of the intern program. The total net budget is \$33,905,896 with an increase of 6.25%.

Ms. Parsons explained the impact of the fund balance on the budget. In 2009-10 \$1,015,000 of the fund balance was applied to the budget. In the 2010-11 school year an additional \$1,190,000 of the fund balance is currently being used in the operating budget. An additional \$600,000 from the surplus is also being used in this year's operating budget. The fund balance at the end of the last fiscal year was \$489,215.

Mr. Melnik said he is concerned about the fund balance at the start of the school year. The District won't have a cushion at the beginning of the school year and the flow of money will be tight.

Mr. Hennick said the Board is faced with a difficult task. The lost revenue is difficult to cope with. The 1.74% increase in expenses is very low but the Board is still in a very difficult position.

Mrs. Golschneider asked about the elimination of the permanent substitutes and if we have been able to get the number of interns that we need. Mrs. Viccaro said the intern program has been successful in the District and the word is out at the college that we mentor them well so more interns are choosing to come here.

Mrs. Flanagan would like to set up a meeting with the Board of Finance members from the two towns to discuss the budget. She also asked for an enrollment and class size analysis for the next meeting.

Mr. Hennick would like Mr. Melnik to present any information he has gathered on early retirement incentive programs and also on any savings in the transportation budget by changing bus routes and bell times.

Mrs. Adams is concerned about the cancellation of the summer school program. She asked how the students are going to get the support they need. Mrs. Viccaro said parents will have to hire tutors. Mrs. Adams is concerned about the parents who are unable to afford a tutor.

Mr. Currilin asked if we know the amount of money we are getting from the State and if we can expect more. Mrs. Viccaro said we have preliminary information that the ESC money is staying the same. They do not expect to see any additional support.

7th Grade Camp Jewell Field Trip: On a motion by Mr. Currilin, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the 7th Grade Field Trip to Camp Jewell in Colebrook, CT on June 2 and 3, 2011.

New England Festival Choir: On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mr. Currilin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the New England Festival Choir trip to Burlington, VT from March 17 to March 19, 2011.

Communications Committee: Ms. Parsons said the committee is working on a survey monkey to parents and the community about the budget. They are also communicating to all of the PTA groups regarding the budget.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee has made minor changes to the policies presented to them for review.

Mrs. Flanagan had a question about the wording of Policy 3324 Contracts, regarding the meaning of "prescribed standards as required by law". A clarification will be received before this policy is approved. Mrs. Flanagan also questioned the Fingerprinting Policy 4112.1 4212.1, it states that a District 13 employee is trained in the fingerprinting process. The policy is not correct, the fingerprinting process is done outside the District, so that policy will not be voted on until corrected.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currilin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the revisions to the following policies: Authorized Use of School-Owned Materials 3514; Budget Reports 3432; Certified Staff Development 4131; Copies of Records 3250; Monies in School Buildings 3450; Non-School Employment 4138 4238; Security of Buildings and Grounds 3517; and Tuition Fee 3240.

Long Rang Planning Committee: Mrs. Flanagan said the Committee met on February 17th. They reviewed the construction project expenditures and the proposed expenditures for the remaining project money. They reviewed the process and prioritized the projects. The goal is to have all of the projects wrapped up by the end of the summer. The Capital Plan and the reserve fund were also discussed. The Capital Plan needs to be adjusted from year to year based on the needs of the District. An updated Capital Project Plan was submitted that evening. The Committee will meet again prior to the public hearing.

Magnet School: Mr. Hicks said the Magnet School Committee will be meeting next week. He should have more information on the tuition after that date.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Flanagan, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 8:32 p.m.