

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, September 29, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room at Brewster Elementary School. Board members present: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currilin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Members absent: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Hicks. 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 Board meeting of October 13, 2010 was scheduled for Memorial Middle School. It was decided later in the meeting to move the meeting to Strong Middle School so that Board members will be able to attend a special presentation at Strong School earlier that evening.

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

Dr. Ochterski made a motion, second Mrs. Boyle, to accept the minutes of the meeting of September 15, 2010. Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currilin, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski voted yes. Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider and Ms. Parsons abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Golschneider was concerned about the Durham Fair light towers and booth still on the grounds at Korn School since the fair. She asked when they are going to be picked up as she feels it is a safety issue. Mrs. Viccaro will follow-up with the fair.

Mrs. Boyle said she was asked by people at the fair whether the District plans to give the kids a day off or a half day on Thursday of the fair next year. Mrs. Viccaro said the buses were not delayed and she does not see any reason to dismiss the students early or close school due to the Thursday fair.

Mr. Hennick reminded Board members to send him questions that they would like discussed with Anne Littlefield and also any ideas for Board meeting presentations.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro also reminded Board members to send ideas for discussion at the Board Retreat.

Mrs. Viccaro said the date for the administrative council meeting on Oct 13th has had to be changed to Oct 12th due to a major presentation involving students at Memorial, Strong and CRHS on the 13th. Rachel's Challenge is a bullying and violence abatement program that was developed by the family of a student that was killed in the Columbine shooting. On that evening there will also be a presentation for the public from 6:30pm to 7:30pm at Strong School. Oct 12th is also the date of the next Policy Committee meeting. It was decided that the Policy Committee will meet on the 12th without Susan Viccaro in attendance as they have items on their agenda that must be resolved soon. The Board meeting location on the 13th will be changed from Memorial School to Strong School so that Board members will be able to attend the presentation if they choose and the Finance Subcommittee meeting will take place immediately following the Board meeting.

Mrs. Viccaro shared a letter from Connecticut Appleseed, a nonprofit organization that is doing research on how the 2008 mandated changes in bullying policies have affected school districts. District 13 has been asked to participate in the study. The goal of the study is to highlight successful policies and to share them with other districts. Mrs. Viccaro has not been directly contacted by anyone from the organization yet.

Mrs. Golschneider questioned when the researchers would be talking to staff members and if there would be a financial impact on the District. Mrs. Viccaro will find out details. The study does not begin until January and she had not yet agreed to the District's participation.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik said he has received the approval from all of the unions regarding the new pension plan. The plan will be retro active to July 1, 2010. The plan matches closely the town's policy. The Pension Committee still needs to be set up.

Mr. Melnik said a meeting was held this evening with Webster Bank regarding the refinancing of the bonds. The bond sale will take place tomorrow. Mr. Melnik expects the savings to be substantial.

Mr. Melnik discussed the email that Board members received regarding food services. He said he and the Food Service Director, Mark Basil, met with the parent last week to talk about her concerns. He wanted to clarify a couple of points from the email regarding foods served. The District does not use fryolators in any of our schools and hasn't in three years. Even though we do not participate in the State's Healthy Schools program, we are over 75% compliant with the State with what is served. If a student bought school lunch every day of the school year they would still only be receiving 15% of their annual caloric intake from school meals.

Mr. Hennick asked how the new Point of Sale system is working in the cafeterias. Mr. Melnik said the lunch lines are getting quicker. They are going to Guilford next week to look more closely at how they use the system. Another register has been installed at the high school as an interim step to move the lines along more quickly.

SAT Profile: Mrs. Viccaro distributed a handout showing a five-year profile of Coginchaug's SAT scores, compared to the State and National Mean scores. Mrs. Viccaro said there is quite a difference in the number of students in the senior class from year to year and the percentage taking the test has changed. She is pleased with the percentage of students who took the test last year and with the scores. Of the 193 public and charter schools in Connecticut that took the test last year, the College Board Report ranked Coginchaug 37th in Reading, 40th in Writing, and 50th in Math.

Ms. Gara asked how the SAT tests compare to the CAPT tests.

Mrs. Boyle would like to see reporting on the ACT tests as well, so that the District can start to track them. Mrs. Viccaro will find out how many Coginchaug students are taking the ACT as well as the SAT tests.

Ms. Gara asked if there is any financial support for students wanting to take the SAT prep tests but can't afford it. Mrs. Viccaro said the District offers the prep classes through the consortium at a reduced rate. If we have a lot of Coginchaug students interested in the classes we offer to house the course at Coginchaug.

Mrs. Flanagan suggested contacting one of the local organizations to see if they would be interested in sponsoring scholarships for students to attend the SAT prep classes.

Ms. Parsons would like to know what percentage of students actually attended college from the classes of 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Delayed Openings: Mrs. Viccaro said she spoke with the administrators about the delayed openings. The idea regarding using support staff to watch children will not work for the October 25th date because they have professional development scheduled. They administrators could not come up with an answer to keep everyone happy. Mrs. Viccaro reminded everyone

that we are piloting the program for just this year. It is mandated that teachers be given enough time to work in their data teams.

Mrs. Heckler said that on early dismissal days the elementary schools do not have enough time to work on professional development. There are too many distractions and delays to getting started. They usually have only about 1½ hrs to get anything accomplished.

Climate Initiatives: Mrs. Viccaro said the Policy Committee met with parents to talk about some of the climate initiatives that are being implemented across the District. She wanted to know if the Board would like a presentation on this topic or on some of the bullying initiatives in the District.

There was some discussion particular to bullying. The members would like to know what types of bullying we are seeing in the District; what our needs and concerns should be as a District and Board of Education. Mrs. Viccaro said that electronic media has definitely changed the face of bullying and how we handle it has to change with new technology. She will have a presentation prepared that will show what programs are happening in each of the schools.

Building Committee: Mr. Currin said he sent pictures of the project to all of the Board members. The final grandstand footings are being poured today. The infield of the synthetic field has been laid. The edges need to be laid and glued. They are cutting the numbers and letters for the sidelines. The base of the track has been prepared but the blacktop surface has not been applied. After it is paved it must sit for twenty days before the track surface can be applied. Mr. Currin invited all Board members to stop by to see the work in progress.

Policy Committee: Mrs. Golschneider said the Policy Committee met last week. They discussed Smart Pens and will be asking Amy Emory if any students are using them or if they would benefit from them. They also discussed facility use fees. They are looking at what area schools charge and will decide what needs to change.

Finance Committee: Ms. Parsons said the Finance Committee met briefly this evening. They reviewed the information that was prepared for them by Central Office. They are also looking at a new lease on copiers.

Personnel Policies: Mrs. Flanagan said the Personnel Policies Committee had their initial meeting this week to prepare for teacher negotiations. She is still trying to make contact with representatives of the finance committees from the two towns to invite them to the negotiations.

On a motion by Mrs. Golschneider, second Dr. Ochterski, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.