

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff. Members absent: Also present: Mrs. Mangini, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

Public Comment: Michael Doyle of Durham read a letter that he sent to Board members regarding the mistreatment of student athletes. He is frustrated by the high school administration. He is looking for the Board's involvement to create a process for students or parents to submit a grievance against a coach.

Donia Viola of Durham referenced the Town Times article regarding all day kindergarten and asked for an explanation of what "executive skills" were. She wants to be sure that the push for all day kindergarten is not in response to a superintendent's push that began many years ago. She wants to hear all of the cost implications for all day kindergarten. She also questioned the continued increase in cost for the magnet school tuition. She wants to know what it is really costing taxpayers.

Chet Raczka of Durham, a former Board member, said the benefits of all day kindergarten are obvious. The District has a gifted staff; they need more time with the children. The time has come to implement all day kindergarten. He told the Board to put it in the budget and to have the courage to leave it there.

Rick Parmelee of Durham is against any activity fees; they have no place in the budget. The Board needs more oversight, not less. More information needs to be published. He wants the salaries to be presented. He feels the buildings and grounds budget needs to be scrutinized better. The District should not spend down money at the end of the year. The budget should be written in a more understandable format.

Christine Montgomery supports full day kindergarten. She has one child who will be entering school next year. As a social worker she knows that kids are cognitively ready. The increased time will allow the teachers to get to know kids better, they will have time for the arts, the new curriculum and they will be able to identify individual styles of learning in students.

Chris Ness has two children. Her 1st grader says she doesn't like school and she feels this is because they are trying to play catch-up for what she wasn't taught in kindergarten. She does not want that to happen to her child that is entering kindergarten. She is hoping that all day kindergarten goes through.

Catherine Thiel feels the District needs to change as the curriculum changes. We are doing a disservice to the kids. Please keep all day K in the budget.

Gwen Wirger has had two kids go through half day kindergarten and they had to play catch-up. She is a stay at home mom so it is not out of convenience that she wants it. All of the surrounding towns either have full day kindergarten or are proposing it. She moved here for the good school system and worries that the reputation of the towns will diminish if our testing scores go down. It will also begin to effect home values.

Denise Brennan is a 1st grade teacher in Glastonbury, she also taught kindergarten for eleven years. She explained that even though the children are in school for about 2 ½ hours per day, the actual time for learning is much less. She urged the Board to make the move to all day kindergarten. Mrs. Brennan also spoke to the Board regarding the African Children's Chorus that came to the District a couple of years ago. Several District schools donated money or items to the school in Uganda, Africa.

Mrs. Brennan traveled to the school this past summer and helped to install eight computers that were donated by the District. These computers were the first computers ever used by the students. She gave thank you gifts from the students to the administrators of each of the schools that participated.

Jennifer Dragon has a son in preschool. She is in support of all day kindergarten. She does not want her son to be behind the curve. The District cannot wait until the State makes it mandatory.

Cecily Quincy has three children currently at Brewster school. One of her children stayed for all day kindergarten the year the District had a grant to support an extended program for some students. She said this child would not have done as well with a half day program. She urged the Board to consider all day kindergarten.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Strong School on March 14, 2012.

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

Mrs. Adams made a motion, second Ms. Gara to approve the minutes as amended to the meeting of February 22, 2012. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff voted yes. Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Hicks abstained.

Communications: Mr. Renninghoff received an email regarding the bill about integrated pest management. The bill would allow school systems to apply pesticides on fields if other approaches are not working. Ms. Gara has had a conversation with Mr. Francis regarding this topic and will monitor what happens with the bill in the legislature. She said the CT Conference of Municipalities and the Council of Small Towns both support the bill.

Mr. Hicks read an email he received from Debbie Golschneider. Mrs. Golschneider said the Board voted to endorse all day kindergarten many years ago. Mr. Hicks said he would review old minutes to find the information.

Several Board members said they read at either Brewster, Korn or Lyman on Read Across America Day. They all felt it was a great experience and love the opportunity to go into the schools.

Mrs. Boyle acknowledged six other letters or emails that Board members received in support of all day kindergarten. She also received one that was against it.

Mr. Hicks suggested that the Board of Education meetings begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. Members agreed and it will be added as the first item on the agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Boyle the Board of Education unanimously agreed that all Board of Education meetings will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Old Business: Mrs. Viccaro said she decided to hold off on further discussion of the Strategic School Profiles until the next meeting due to the budget presentation.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said members were given a copy of Board and Administrator. Members were also given a copy of the 2010-2011 Annual Report for review.

Mrs. Viccaro said she will be sending members information about CAFE's March 14th "Day on the Hill" for school board members. If anyone is interested in attending she will find out the cost for non-members.

Mrs. Viccaro said the Technology Committee is going to be designing a grant application for teachers to apply for technology grants for use in the classroom. Erate reimbursement money that can only be used for technology purchases is going to be used to fund the grants.

2012-13 Regional School District Budget Presentation: Mrs. Viccaro showed a PowerPoint presentation. She reviewed the budget calendar, discussed the organization of the District, current and projected staffing, enrollment projections and she reviewed the budget drivers leading to the budget increase. In summary, the proposed total gross budget is \$36,231,464; an increase of \$1,444,490 or 4.15%. The total proposed net budget after receipts is \$34,410,378; an increase of \$1,400,443 or 4.24%. Mrs. Viccaro showed a breakdown of discretionary and non-discretionary spending. Non-discretionary costs make up 95.89% of the budget. Mrs. Viccaro explained that all day kindergarten is a part of this budget. Three teaching positions have been shifted to kindergarten positions and 1 ½ teacher assistants will be added to support the program. The elimination of the mid day bus run will save \$70,000. If the proposal for all day K is not funded \$150,000 could be cut from this budget. Mrs. Viccaro said seven teachers and one support staff have already declared retirement at the end of the 2012-13 school year, resulting in significant budget savings.

Dr. Ochterski wanted it to be clear to the public that the Board finalizes the budget at the meeting on March 28th.

Mr. Fulton encouraged public attendance at the Finance Committee meetings and at the Board meetings.

Mrs. Viccaro reviewed the full day kindergarten proposal. It contains a cost analysis, the benefits and concerns of full day kindergarten, sample schedules from each school, and maps of room locations.

Mrs. Heckler explained what executive functioning is, in response to Mrs. Viola's question. Executive functioning is being able to learn to attend, self regulate, and function. This is usually done through play, center based activities are great for teaching this. Teachers can't build readiness skills without these foundation skills and they must be taught in the early grades.

Mr. Renninghoff would like to know how the related arts will work without having to add additional staffing.

Mr. Fulton asked if the transportation savings will be a permanent reduction in costs. Yes, the savings will continue. He also questioned whether teaching positions are going to be eliminated next year with the declared retirements. Mrs. Viccaro said that is not known, but there will be savings because new hires would be lower on the salary scale.

Mr. Hicks asked for a chart of class sizes to be presented at the next meeting.

2013 Field Trip Request to Washington, D.C.: On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Boyle, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Senior Class Field Trip to Washington, D.C. from November 14-17, 2012.

Finance Committee: Mrs. Flanagan said the Committee met tonight and reviewed the contract for Dr. Chung for the demographics study. A couple of things will be added to the contract but they expect the contract to be finalized within the next couple of days. The contract amount is \$16,000.

The Committee began to review some budget items in further detail such as the price of oil. They are concerned that the consortium has not locked in a price this year. The District is going to attempt to go out to bid on our own for next year for heating oil and diesel fuel. At the next Finance meeting Amy Emory will be discussing the Pupil Personnel budget in more detail.

On a motion by Mr. Renninghoff, second Mrs. Flanagan, the Board of Education unanimously approved Policy 2122, Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Fulton, the Board of Education unanimously approved Policy 1140, Distribution of Materials by Students.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved Policy 5111, Admission/Ages of Attendance.

Mrs. Flanagan commented that she liked getting a copy of the policies that showed the changes and she would like for the Board to get them this way all of the time.

The Policy Committee will meet again on the March 15th.

Dr. Ochterski said the Building and Grounds Committee met on February 28th. They reviewed the Buildings and Grounds budget and spending projections for this year. The Capital Reserve Fund was also discussed and revised. They will meet with the Long Range Planning Committee next week to incorporate it with the debt plan.

Follow-up: Strategic School Profile update
Current and projected class sizes

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Renninghoff, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Susan Gaudreau