

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room at Korn Elementary School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Fulton, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff. Member absent: Mrs. Flanagan. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

Public Comment: Lisa Davenport of Durham asked for clarification from the Board regarding shifting the burden of proof to parents regarding special education issues. Mrs. Davenport has spent a significant amount of money on private testing for her children to help the special education department of our District teach her children. She shared the specifics of her children's learning difficulties. Mrs. Davenport feels it is very important to understand the burden of proof; it is not only the parents' problem. Mrs. Viccaro said the topic is on the agenda and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Cuginchaug Regional High School on November 9, 2011.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Dr. Ochterski, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda as amended to include a discussion of Oil Tank Replacements at Brewster and Memorial Schools under Old Business.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting of October 12, 2011 as amended.

Communications: Mr. Hicks attended the football game and the dedication of the track and field this past Saturday. It was an excellent ceremony and a great afternoon.

Mrs. Adams received a thank you note from Sheryl Slight regarding the Movie Frenzy held at Korn School.

Mr. Fulton said he noted the Board Committee assignments have been posted on the website. Mr. Fulton attended a CAPSS budget presentation at EASTCONN. He said the information regarding communicating the budget to the public was informative and interesting.

Mrs. Boyle was contacted by a parent after the homecoming dance; she was concerned about the short length of some of the skirts the girls were wearing. Mrs. Boyle asked whether our dress code policy is adhered to at dances. Mrs. Viccaro said she believes it is relaxed but still applied, but she will talk to Mr. Hauser and report back at the next Board meeting.

Committee Agendas: Mr. Hennick said he met last week with Sue Gaudreau, Rosemary Allen and Virginia Antonelli regarding Board meetings and agendas. Mr. Hennick reviewed some Board protocols and reminded members that minutes need to only be a reflection of the motions and votes taken at the meetings to be legal. The minutes are also a historical representation of what took place at the meeting but are in no way supposed to encompass everything that everyone says. If a Board member anticipates bringing a motion before the Board, Mr. Hennick would like the motion in writing prior to the meeting if possible. If the agenda needs to be amended to include a potential motion on a subject not on the agenda, he would like to be informed of that prior to the start of the meeting so the agenda can be amended at the start of the meeting.

Mr. Hennick also reminded members that agendas for committee meetings need to be submitted at least 24 hours in advance and minutes of the committee meetings should be filed within seven days of the meeting. Any meeting that is considered a special meeting cannot have the agenda amended and nothing can be discussed that is not on the agenda. Mr. Hennick used the Policy Committee minutes as an example of minutes that he feels are well done; brief and to the point.

Special Education Resolution – Changing the Burden of Proof: Mrs. Viccaro said that currently 45 states follow the federal guidelines regarding burden of proof. In Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and West Virginia the burden of proof lies entirely on the school districts. Mrs. Viccaro distributed two articles; one is testimony that was read before the CT State Board of Education in support of following the federal guidelines. There are many arguments for following the federal guidelines where the burden of proof lies with whoever brings forth the suit. Mrs. Viccaro said the Board has time to review the documents and a vote can be taken at the meeting in November. Mrs. Viccaro distributed a sample of the possible resolution that the Board will be asked to act on at the next meeting.

Mr. Hennick also had a copy of an article from the Office of Legislative Research that Ms. Gara sent to him regarding this issue. He asked that she send the article to all the Board members prior to the next meeting.

Field Trip Requests Specific to the High School: Mrs. Viccaro said an issue came to light after the discussion at the last meeting regarding payment for students who cannot afford field trips. At all schools except the high school parent organizations help to offset the costs for student who cannot afford field trips. The high school does not have a parent organization and all money for field trips was removed from the operating budget a few years ago. Mrs. Viccaro suggested that a line item may be needed in the budget for the high school for field trips. Some Board members were hesitant to bring a line item back into the budget for field trips. It was suggested that a percentage of the student activity fee could possibly be designated to be used for students who cannot afford field trips. Members would like further discussion about what types of trips would qualify for assistance. Mr. Hauser will be asked what percentage of the activity fee he feels would be necessary to designate for this purpose.

The Model UN Field Trip was approved at the last meeting, conditional that funding was found for students who could not afford the trip. It is Mrs. Viccaro's understanding that there is no one who is in that situation for this trip so the trip is therefore approved.

Oil Tank Replacements at Brewster and Memorial Schools: Mrs. Viccaro said the District is required to do several steps prior to starting these projects in order to qualify for State reimbursement. The money for the oil tank replacements at Brewster and Memorial Schools is in the Capital Reserve Fund and is scheduled to be started this year.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Dr. Ochterski the Board of Education unanimously voted to establish and reauthorize the present Building Committee for the purpose of overseeing an oil tank replacement project at Brewster School and Memorial School in Regional School District 13.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams the Board of Education unanimously voted to authorize the preparation of design and specifications for an oil tank replacement project at Brewster School and Memorial School in Regional School District 13, using Silver/Pertrucelli Associates for such services.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously voted to authorize the submission of grant applications for the purpose of receiving state assistance in the oil tank replacements at Brewster School and Memorial School in Regional School District 13.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Ochterski, the Board of Education unanimously voted to authorize the funding of the oil tank replacements at Brewster School and Memorial School from the Regional School District 13 Capital Reserve Fund, utilizing the designated amounts for these specific purposes.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro asked the Board if they would consider going paperless. She would like to start emailing all Board information to them. Members were very receptive to the idea. Information will be sent to both the District 13 email addresses and also to home email addresses.

Mrs. Viccaro said the new Business Manager, Pamela Mangini, will be starting on Monday. Mrs. Viccaro is very excited to have her on-board. Rob Gourley has been working for the last two weeks on a couple of projects, the closeout of the Brewster well and getting the oil tank projects started. Mrs. Boyle asked if the water has been free of arsenic at Brewster since the project was completed and if there is going to be an article in the paper to inform parents.

Mrs. Viccaro announced that the District has received a \$10,000 grant from Cigna for health and wellness activities for staff. They are going to begin offering free health screenings such as blood pressure and cholesterol testing and counseling. A program called 10,000 Steps; a walking program is also going to be starting soon with a culmination of a walk on the track in the spring.

One hundred and fourteen staff participated in the flu clinic yesterday.

The District is again participating in the "Warm the Children" program this year. The school counselors are identifying families in need and then the families have to apply for the assistance. Students get between \$40-80 worth of clothing through the program.

Mrs. Viccaro attended meetings of the two new curriculum councils, math and language arts, over the last two weeks. They are both large committees. They will be focusing on the curriculum changes at the elementary level first, but there are teachers from all levels on the committees.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the Diversity Conference at Wesleyan this week. It is put on by the consortium. It is a great activity for our students and their evaluations of the program are always very positive.

Safe School Climate Plans: Mrs. Viccaro reviewed a document regarding the new Safe School Climate Plans. She reviewed the entire list of requirements of the new plan. All school employees will have to be trained to recognize bullying, including substitutes and coaches. Many of the requirements are already addressed but the timeline that we will have to follow is much stricter. She does not anticipate significant costs associated with implementing the plan with the exception of additional staff training.

Curriculum & Achievement Committees: Mrs. Adams said the two committees are being combined. A meeting date has not been scheduled.

Communications: Mrs. Boyle said the next meeting of the Communications Committee will be on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

ACES Board of Governors: Mr. Hicks said he attended a presentation at ACES on an early head start program that District 13 is eligible to participate in. Mr. Hicks will work on scheduling a time for ACES personnel to come present at a Board meeting about ACES programs.

Personnel Policies: Ms. Parsons said that Personnel Policies will be meeting tomorrow at 4:45pm to start negotiations with the administrators.

Follow Up:

1. Mrs. Viccaro will ask Mr. Hauser whether the dress code is applied at school dances.
2. Board members will review the documents regarding shifting the burden of proof and Ms. Gara will send an additional article on the topic to all Board members. Members should be prepared to take action on this item at the next Board meeting.
3. Mrs. Viccaro will ask Mr. Hauser what percentage of the student activity fee he feels would be necessary to set aside to cover field trip fees for students who qualify for assistance.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Susan Gaudreau*