

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, October 22, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the library media center at Strong Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Absent: Mrs. Golschneider. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Coginchaug Regional High School on November 12, 2008.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams the agenda was unanimously approved as amended to include a presentation by Mr. Lombardo under the Superintendent's Report and to eliminate the presentation by the Garden Club.

Mr. Currlin made a motion, second Mrs. Adams to accept the minutes of the meeting of October 1, 2008. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mr. Hicks abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan said she received a call from a parent voicing her concerns about some of the differences between the elementary schools that she believes may impede students. Of particular concern was the issue that at one school the students get to learn who their new teacher will be before the end of the school year and at the other school they don't find out until the end of the summer. Mrs. Viccaro said the schools wanted to do it in different ways and she supported it. It is the second year that they have done it this way.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Melnik introduced Virginia Antonelli, the new administrative assistant from central office that will be sharing the responsibilities for the Board meetings. She was in attendance to watch the operation of the Board and will begin taking minutes at the next meeting.

Ted Lombardo, Athletic Director, spoke to the Board about two projects that have been proposed by different groups for the athletic complex. The Coginchaug Little League has offered to repair the dugouts to the varsity softball field and would like to build a press box above the one that has an equipment shed attached. The roofs are currently leaking. One of the roofs has already been repaired. They will also put a sound system into the press box.

The Babe Ruth Baseball League has offered to build a building behind the varsity baseball field. It will have a storage room and concession stand on the lower level and a press box on the upper level. There will be no cost to the District. Mr. Lombardo has spoken to the building officials in the town but understands that he may need to go before the Planning & Zoning Commission with the projects.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, second Mr. Currlin to support the project to repair the dugouts and build a press box at the varsity softball field donated by the Coginchaug Little League and the project to build a storage room and press box at the varsity baseball field donated by the Babe Ruth Baseball League.

Mrs. Parson asked if the improvements fit in with the plans for the athletic complex upgrades. Mr. Lombardo said that the softball and baseball fields were untouched in the new plans, only new fencing may be considered. He feels the upgrades will enhance the athletic complex.

Mrs. Flanagan asked if the Board of Education will be responsible for the buildings once they are done. Mr. Lombardo said yes, they will be District buildings; after the softball and baseball seasons end they will be used by the other groups. Mrs. Flanagan also asked if the plans are going to be reviewed by the Buildings & Grounds Committee.

Dan Wheeler, of Babe Ruth, said the project will be completed by local builders. Rob Francis has seen the plans and the local building official has also looked at the plans. The building will meet all codes. There will be electricity in the building only to run the scoreboard and sound system.

Mr. Melnik told Mr. Wheeler that all contractors working on the project will be expected to provide a current certificate of liability insurance to the District. He also wants the Planning and Zoning process followed to be sure that there are no problems down the road.

The Board of Education unanimously approved the motion to support the project to repair the dugouts and build a press box at the varsity softball field donated by the Coginchaug Little League and the project to build a storage room and press box at the varsity baseball field donated by the Babe Ruth Baseball League.

CMT/CAPT Presentation: Mrs. Viccaro began by saying that she is not happy with the CMT results this year. She presented the results through a PowerPoint presentation. Some grades are lower and some were slightly higher on the test scores. When comparing the same students at the next grade level the impact was much less in all areas except writing. Science was tested for the first time this year in grades five and eight. Mrs. Luckenbach was very pleased with how the District did on the science part of the test. The test is based on inquiry based science and that is how the District has been teaching science at the elementary level for years. The District also made good gains in the area of reading comprehension.

On the CAPT test students made gains in all four areas of the test. Mrs. Viccaro said she would still like the scores to be higher. Reading is still the lowest scoring area of the test.

Mrs. Viccaro said that she and Mrs. Luckenbach attended a CAS workshop last week that focused on high school reform. The State is now looking at a grade 6 to grade 12 initiative. There will be significant implications if the plan is implemented. Some of the areas discussed include a student success plan, an early warning system, and a model language arts curriculum. Twenty-five credits will be required for graduation. This will include four years of math instruction. Students will have to pass exit exams in five areas before they are allowed to graduate. Mrs. Viccaro emphasized that this is the first draft of the plan and it still has to be approved by the State legislature. She is sure there will be many changes before the final draft is revealed. Mr. Hicks questions the requirement for senior projects. Mrs. Viccaro said a Capstone experience for seniors and eighth graders has been proposed that is similar to WISE projects. This would require all students working with an advisor to complete their project.

Mrs. Viccaro shared a new document from the State entitled Scientific Research Based Interventions. This is a new tool that Districts will use to tell if students are really learning what they are being taught. Mrs. Viccaro will begin meeting with administrators to review the document and to put together a plan for each building to assess instruction.

Mrs. Viccaro said she met last week with Lainy Melvin and Henry Coe from the Senior Board. They asked if the District would allow use of a computer lab to teach seniors computer skills. Mrs. Viccaro will be meeting with the Adult Education Director to see if a program can be arranged.

Mrs. Viccaro announced that the Community Round-up is being held on December 6th.

Mrs. Viccaro said she and Mr. Melnik met this week with Phil Johnson and Cliff Gibson of Dattco to discuss some busing issues. She feels they are making progress.

Mrs. Viccaro received a letter from the State commending Mrs. Emory on meeting all of the requirements for the Strategic School Profile Reports. Mrs. Viccaro said the process is very difficult and her staff works very hard at getting everything submitted.

Mrs. Viccaro wanted to publicly thank Karen Girosky, Administrative Assistant to the Pupil Personnel Director for saving the District over \$30,000 in transportation costs for an out of District placement. She was able to negotiate a significantly lower price for transporting a student.

Mrs. Viccaro said the District was notified that it must participate in a civil rights data certification. The District has never been asked to participate in this before.

Mrs. Viccaro told Board members that they received a handout of the guidelines for in-school and out-of-school suspensions. She would like everyone to review them.

She also distributed a copy of the newest version of the District Crisis Manual. A copy will be distributed to all staff members.

Mrs. Viccaro said she has been informed by the State that a new requirement for a meningitis vaccine for students entering 7th grade will become effective in 2010.

Mrs. Viccaro received a call from Max Stewart of the Kiwanis Club of Middletown. They sponsor a program called "Warm the Children" that helps to provide winter clothing to children in need. They would like to extend their program into our towns. Each child identified would be given \$80.00 worth of new winter clothing.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik distributed a budget calendar for the upcoming budget season.

Mr. Melnik said the auditors finished their on-site visits yesterday. The preliminary audit report will come out in approximately three to four weeks.

Mr. Melnik has scheduled a meeting with Mark Walsh of Transportation Advisory Services. His company will be completing an efficiency study of our transportation services. They will begin working on it within the next few weeks.

Mr. Melnik reported that the budget is on track for the first few months of the school year.

A letter is going to all staff members tomorrow explaining some of the changes in 403b accounts and how it will affect them. He said the process has been very difficult but the plan will be improved in the end.

ACES: Mr. Hicks introduced Craig Edmonson, Executive Director of ACES and Gary Shettle, Assistant Executive Director of ACES. Together they gave an overview of the ACES schools and many of the programs that ACES has to offer the twenty five school districts it serves. ACES is a Regional Education Service Center (RESC). It is one of six RESCs in the state. They have 2400 students in their schools from the participating districts. Their headquarters is located in Hamden, CT as well as all of their special needs schools. They also are responsible for the management of the Thomas Edison Magnet School in Meriden, the Wintergreen Magnet School in Hamden, and an Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven. ACES also runs a program called Access, an employment service for multi-handicapped adults. ACES current operating

budget is \$103 million a year. ACES provides many professional development opportunities for teachers throughout the year at their professional development building in Hamden.

Mr. Currllin said that ACES gives kids a chance that they would never have had years ago. He is happy to be a part of their success.

Mrs. Viccaro believes that the District has had students at all of the ACES schools at one point in time. She feels that ACES tries hard to keep the cost to districts in mind and does a good job at it. Mr. Edmonson said that ACES is the most cost effective RESC. Mrs. Viccaro has a lot of confidence in the ACES programs.

Strong School: Scott Nicol spoke about the Individual Academic Plans (IAP) that have been developed at Strong School. The school began working on IAPs last year. Students selected for study were all achieving below goal on their prior CMT tests. Of the nine students selected last year eight out of the nine achieved goal on the reading portion of the CMT at the March testing date. This year teachers began working on nine student case studies at the August professional development day. Each academic team is working on two or three cases. Learning occurs for the staff while they are reviewing the cases and discussing instructional strategies as a team. As the teachers become more proficient at completing the IAP process they may be able to add more students for review, but Mr. Nicol does not want to overload the staff and have the process be less thorough.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee met on October 7th. The policy on computer use for employees was emailed to board members and will be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Hicks would also like Board members to review the in-school and out-of-school suspension guidelines. The committee discussed the possibility of beginning a policy manual update. It was last done five years ago. Mr. Hicks would like to vote on the proposed changes to the National Honor Society Policy at the next meeting. The changes are required due to language in the District policy that goes against the National NHS rules.

Buildings & Grounds Committee: Mr. Currllin said the committee discussed the reading rooms that have been on hold at Cuginchaug and Korn Schools. These rooms are being built with private donations and can be built now that the building projects are complete. Mr. Currllin said the first building committee will be resurrected. The committee will not be moving forward with the potential bus depot at the DMIAAB site.

Mrs. Boyle asked if the District will have the answer on the referendum when the legislature goes into session in January. Mr. Hennick said there is a possibility for another special session in November and it will again be requested to be on that agenda. If it is not discussed then, it will most likely not get discussed until close to the end of the legislative session in March.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.