

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 27, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Fronc, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hicks (8:20 p.m.), Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mrs. Flanagan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the recital Pledge of Allegiance led by Mrs. Flanagan.

Public Comment: Susan Michael of Durham requested the Board reverse the decision of cutting the .2 science position at the high school. Mrs. Michael stated that this cut would block approximately 48 students getting into a course. Her goal is to protect students and prevent numerous study halls.

Becky Kalinowski of Middlefield requested that the Board consider not decreasing the Special Education budget. Mrs. Kalinowski spoke of services her son received through early intervention and how important these services are. She also asked the Board to look at grants to find money.

Stacia Bjarnason, of Durham told the Board that she has a child that receives services. Her child is a student at the high school and because of Special Education services he has received he is able to be involved in a number of extracurricular activities. She stated that her son is excited about going to school. He feels good about himself and wants to go onto college. Mrs. Bjarnason shared with the Board examples of accommodations teachers have made for her child. She asked the Board to think carefully about the Special Education budget. Students need to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

Bruce Gueble stated he is both a resident and business owner in Durham. Mr. Gueble asked the Board to look outside of the Special Education and programs and look at insurance costs. He recommended the Board look at health insurance and investigate other options such as a no deductible plans or HSA.

Mrs. Flanagan asked the public to keep their comments to 3 minutes. She also stated that there would be another opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Scott Wheeler of Middlefield addressed the \$75,000 utilization study and felt there were people in the community that would volunteer their time to assist in this approach. Mr. Wheeler also mentioned that portables be removed as enrollment is declining. He also recommended the elimination of a building administrator. Mr. Wheeler noted that the same number of assistants and teachers are carried over from year to year. Mr. Wheeler recommended that the

Board take a look at this number and ensure that every child is getting what is needed.

On a motion by Mr. Renninghoff, second Mrs. Boyle, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda.

Mrs. Flanagan asked for a motion to approve the March 20, 2013 minutes. Mrs. Fronc asked that the minutes be amended to include that she was not in favor of cutting the 6th grade science teacher position.

On a motion by Mr. Renninghoff, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the minutes of March 20, 2013 as amended.

Communications: Mrs. Fronc reported that the spring soccer season had officially started.

Ms. Parsons attended the trivia bee last Friday night and commented on the wonderful time she had.

Mrs. Buckheit attended the Memorial Jazz Band concert and commended the band on their performance.

Mrs. Flanagan stopped in at the project graduation program last Friday night where there was a hypnotist performing. Mrs. Flanagan stated that it was a lot of fun.

Mrs. Boyle attended the Scholarship Ball last Saturday evening and mentioned that attendance was down this year.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro mentioned that the Select Chorus also performed at Memorial School last week along with the Jazz Band.

Mrs. Viccaro announced to the Board that the District Choral Night was next Thursday evening at Cuginchaug Regional High School. Choral groups from grades 5 – 12 will perform.

Mrs. Viccaro and Mrs. Fronc attended a meeting on the teacher evaluation plan. It is an ever-changing, involved and cumbersome process. Mrs. Viccaro will be presenting a plan for Board approval at the second Board of Education meeting in April.

2013-2014 Budget: Mrs. Flanagan asked Mr. Melnik and Mrs. Viccaro to address the open questions from last week's meeting. Mrs. Viccaro furnished the Board with a handout. Mrs. Viccaro provided salary information to replace the Outdoor Ed retirement, the salary savings on the elimination of a .5 teacher assistant, and impact of eliminating the Tech position. Based on classroom elimination there is

reduction in the number of Smartboards at Lyman School. This change results in a savings of \$640 annually off the lease.

The Board had asked for the reduction of an additional grade 3 / 4 level classroom. Mrs. Viccaro stated that we would be over class size guidelines at Korn and Lyman. There would be no room for new students at that grade level.

An additional handout was provided outlining the percent of increases for Social Workers, Psychologists and Speech. Mrs. Viccaro also provided the update stipend information requested by Mr. Renninghoff.

The total expense to date was given to the Board for sub nurses. Nurses need subs while they are doing screenings. The Board asked Mrs. Viccaro to look at why this year's numbers for sub nurses is over budget. Mrs. Viccaro will provide this information at the next Board meeting.

A correction was made to the 2012-2013 budget for salaries for Korn and Lyman Art programs. Also, an additional \$175,000 will be in revenue from MTA due to the increase of fees and students.

Mr. Fielding addressed why iPads are purchased and other questions regarding hardware.

A discussion took place on activity fees at the high school. The Board eliminated the activity fee for clubs and reduced the activity fee revenue by \$5,000. The fee for sports participation will remain.

The Board made a recommendation that a study be done to compare actual travel expenses to stipends paid.

The purchase of a musical instrument \$10,000 for the high school has been deferred.

Mr. Melnik presented a spreadsheet showing reduction on the budget. Mrs. Flanagan asked the public for their support by emailing their representative regarding the cut of the RSD13 transportation grant funds to the District by the state.

Mrs. Buckheit asked how many support staff there were in the kindergarten classes at Korn and Lyman. Mrs. Viccaro said they were the same in both schools. Further discussion took place to include tutors in the buildings and eliminate interns. Mrs. Adams was concerned by increasing class sizes at the high school and asked if Dr. Berry had participated in these decisions. Mrs. Viccaro stated that all administrators were part of the decisions that were made.

Mr. Hicks inquired as to why there were caps on classes. Mr. Bodner explained

that the size of the classroom, drafting tables, equipment, etc. determine the class size. Mrs. Viccaro further explained that lots of discussion took place on these decisions.

Mrs. Flanagan opened the discussion of taking money from the capital reserve to add back items such as tutors. Mr. Renninghoff recommended that the Board not take from the capital reserve and suggested that Mrs. Emory reduce her budget. Mrs. Viccaro stated that Mrs. Emory would be able to cut a .5 SPED teacher.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Board members to vote on the following

- To keep 3 of the tutors in the budget. These tutors would be placed at Strong and the high school. All Board members agreed.
- To cut .2 science position at the high school. 6 in favor
- To cut .5 SPED position at the high school. 8 in favor

Further discussion took place on the utilization study and reducing the capital reserve. Mrs. Adams recommended that these areas remain as they are.

Mr. Melnik's Budget Reduction Sheet was updated.

Mrs. Flanagan entertained a motion.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Renninghoff, the Board of Education unanimously approved to go to the Public Hearing on the 2013-2014 education budget on April 10, 2013 with a total gross Regional District 13 budget of \$36,611,830.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Dr. Ochterski, the Board of Education unanimously approved to hold a referendum on May 7, 2013 on the proposed 2013-2014 Regional District 13 education budget to be preceded by a District Meeting to be held on May 6, 2013.

Finance Committee: No report.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks updated the Board on various items the Policy Committee discussed last Monday at their meeting. The committee looked at purchasing policy, tape recording of meeting, and a class money policy. Also being addressed is FMLA, Student Records and Wellness policies. Discussion on the finalization of the concession stand is at the top of the agenda for next meeting.

Other Committees: No reports.

Public Comment: Becky Kalinowski of Middlefield urged the Board to look at other areas of the budget to make cuts. She questioned such items as 10% shipping charge, where reams of paper are purchased, cost of student

handbooks, mileage and bulk shipping rate.

Susan Michael of Durham wanted to thank the Board for their time and clarified cap numbers.

Allison Kelly of Middlefield stressed the importance of early intervention. Her daughter could have been placed out of District but was able to stay in the District. She has made friends and is an active part of the community.

Roger Kleeman of Durham inquired about bidding guidelines.

Teresa Opalacz of Durham inquired about looking at bus routes and buses stopping every 100 yards on a street.

Leanne Slawinowski of Durham questioned cutting the .2 science position at the high school and also cutting the .5 Special Education position. Mrs. Slawinowski stated that although the number of students is declining in the District, the numbers in special education are increasing.

Fran Paulson of Rockfall urged the Board not to cut Special Education. She has a son who is autistic. Because of the services he receives from Special Education he is now able to talk.

Laura Samperi of Durham is a teacher in another District. She is an advocate for her children who receive services. The goal of these services is gain confidence. She stated that by making cuts this will impact students in the long run.

Jim Gust of Durham asked the Board for the number of Special Education students in the District.

Follow-Up:

- Why the budget for sub nurses is over budget this year.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second, Mrs. Adams the Board of Education unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Johnson