

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, August 24, 2011 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. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

Mr. Hennick welcomed the members of the public. He asked people to limit their speaking time to three minutes and he asked that people put their concerns regarding busses in writing.

Public Comment: Bill Currin, Chair of the District Building Committee reported on the final progress being made at the track & field. In 2006 a fundraising effort was completed that raised \$44,050.78 toward the track project. This money was used as seed money for the initial feasibility study and for the initial architectural plans. A balance of \$29,700.78 remained and is being used to purchase three out buildings (ticket booth, storage shed and concession stand) as well as to build the press box on site. A scoreboard was purchased and donated by the Benchwarmers and will be installed next week.

Mr. Renninghoff questioned when the District must have the toilet facilities completed. The town has required that they be finished 18 months after the completion of the project.

Rafaela Franc of Durham spoke on behalf of her neighbors on Shunpike Road and Chalker Road. They are asking that their bus stop be moved. There are many hazardous conditions and the road is very narrow.

Julia Carroll of Woodland Heights, Middlefield child goes to day care at Miss Joanne's Learning Center in Rockfall. Fourteen children are being affected by the stop being removed. If a stop is not added she would like to ask that the schools are opened earlier so that parents are not late for work.

Mrs. Viccaro explained that last year we had students getting to school late every day. The changes made to shorten the routes were as much in response to this problem as they were a fiscal response.

Dina Diefenbach of Stagecoach Road Durham asked how parents can be a part of the decision making process. She does not agree with the process. The parents need answers now; it is only a week away from the start of school.

Matthew Lockwood of James Road East, Durham asked if money was taken out of the transportation line item. He was told it was \$40,000. The Board is cutting stuff that the parents want. Parents shouldn't have to be late for work and kids shouldn't have to wait on Route 17.

Chris Nelson of Durham is concerned about the stop at Wagon Wheel Road and Old Farms Road. There is no line of sight on Wagon Wheel Road. It will only cost \$23 per child per year to reinstate the money for the busses. According to the documents found on the website the cuts to transportation were not made until May.

Tracy Turecek of Burt Drive, Middlefield lives .8 miles from John Lyman School. Her child's bus stop is now at Chestnut Hill & Way Road, only 100 yards from the school at a busy intersection of all the bus traffic. She would rather have her child ride her bike and wait in her classroom until the busses clear than wait at this stop.

Michele Genest of Shunpike Road is an educator in another district. She is upset that her message has not been returned since last week. She feels the plan may have looked good on paper but it does not make sense. There is a parking issue in the neighborhood. She is disappointed in the lack of notice and the lack of response.

Larry DiBernardo of Howd Road, Durham said his child is being expected to walk around a blind corner where a child was killed on this street in the past. The stop is unsafe.

Kelly Munro of Old Farms Road, Durham is very concerned about the stop that has been assigned to her two sons. They have to walk down a very dangerous road and she doesn't know where we expect the children to stand. She asked the Board to reconsider adding the old stops back into the neighborhood.

Ellen Sabilia of Dolphin Days Daycare Center said the stop for the center is now on the corner of RT 68 and Ozick Drive. She does not feel that this is going to be time saving and it will be very dangerous. She is representing 40 families that use her center.

Kendra Liptak of High St, Middlefield said her John Lyman student is being expected to walk up High Street past the school and down to the corner of Chestnut Hill Road and Way Road. Although they live near the school, her son's teachers have encouraged her to have him ride the bus so that he is better prepared to go on to the next school and now he loves the bus ride. High Street is very narrow and dangerous with busses and parents traveling to the school.

Carol Harvey of Wintergreen Lane, Durham has a grandchild who is being expected to walk to the corner of Haddam Quarter Rd. and Arbutus Street. It is a very dangerous area.

Claudia Rovelli is new to the District. She said she will live with whatever she has to in terms of a stop but she asked if the District is going to put up signs identifying the bus stops. She said one stop is really needed on Arbutus Street. She said Eileen at the Superintendent's Office has been great to work with.

Pat Yale has a nine year old who attends Donna Adams daycare on Derby Road. The stop has been moved to Maple Ave and Rt 157. Ms. Adams does not have any staff and cannot be expected to walk with kids down Maple Ave. It is a cut through road and very dangerous.

Peg Forester of 72 Shunpike Road, Durham feels that whoever came up with these routes didn't know what they were doing. She finds it insulting.

Maureen Sander of 28 Way Road, Middlefield has a daughter at CRHS. Her stop was moved from Way Road and Rt. 147 to Way Road and Chestnut Hill Road. There is a blind spot and she would rather have the stop moved back.

Margo LaBasse of Oak Terrace, Durham has a kindergartener that goes to Dolphin Days and cannot believe where the stop is located.

Deb Papallo of Toad Ridge Road, Middlefield is the owner of Munchkins Daycare. She has been trying to work with Ron Melnik on this issue all summer. If the daycares are not allowed bus stops the parents are going to have to find another provider for before and after school care and all of the home daycares and daycare centers are in the same situation. The parents will not have any options. She asked that daycares be given priority for bus stops.

Jen Zettergren has a child with cancer who will be getting the bus from Dolphin Days. She was very upset that this stop is in a dangerous location.

A Strong School parent who lives on Garden Hill Road, Middlefield understands the concerns about the daycare centers and said she is sure that changes will be made where there are real safety concerns, but she feels that parents should come together and help watch each others

kids at bus stops and people should not be allowing young children to walk alone to a bus stop anyway.

Diane St. John of Deer Run Road, Durham said the suggestion that this is being done to shorten bus routes is not true. Her kids will be on the bus much longer than they were last year. It is not acceptable.

Scott Geness of Shunpike Road, Durham said some of the kids have to walk a very long way. The younger one should be given priority. He thanked the Board for listening.

Kathy Yura of Whisper Winds Road, Middlefield said there is only one stop for the entire area at the corner of Whisper Wind and Hubbard Street. She would like the bus stop moved halfway down their street where all the kids can meet.

Donald Smith of High Street, Middlefield said the towns are at a disadvantage because we don't have sidewalks. The home daycares offer a tremendous advantage to the District because many kids are picked up together. In this economy no one wants to be late for work and his son cannot be left alone. We need to allow the daycares to have house stops.

Julia Coogan said that if a lot more parents start driving their kids to school the traffic is going to be incredible. This will cause a delay in the busses being able to drop off kids and delay the routes.

Pat Smith of Middlefield has a son in daycare. She just returned to work after being laid off. She cannot tell her employer that she has to leave to get her kindergartener from school because the daycare provider can't meet the bus.

Parents were told that the bus route changes were done by in-house staff with DATTCO. The cost was minimal because the work was done during regular employee hours. The school district does go out to bid for the bussing contract. Parents were told that changes will not be made tonight but safety concerns will continue to be looked at on a daily basis. Parents will receive a call if a change is made to the bus stop for their child.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at John Lyman School on September 14, 2011.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second Mr. Hicks the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda as amended to include a motion to clarify the vesting language for the employee pension plan under Finance Committee and a motion to accept the Track and Field Report.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Ms. Parsons to approve the minutes to the meeting of July 5, 2011. Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff voted yes. Mrs. Adams, Ms. Gara abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan received an email from a parent regarding their student's placement in classes at CRHS. Mrs. Viccaro said it is being referred to Mr. Hauser.

Dr. Ochterski attended the presentation for the trip to Yellowstone National Park taken by several CRHS students this summer. He said the students had a great time and learned quite a bit. He said it was a great trip.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said Board members received an email regarding a fundraiser that the football team would like to hold. They are now looking at holding it in October so the Board can discuss it at the next meeting.

Common Core Update: Dr. Linda Berry and Mrs. Viccaro presented on the topic. The State of Connecticut has joined with twenty-nine other states in forming an assessment consortium. They have agreed to have the same standards. The Common Core Standards are more aligned with college and work expectations. They are based on plans to better prepare students to succeed in the global economy and society. The standards are fewer but the depth of understanding will be greater. The challenge is huge and the implementation timeline for change is very aggressive. The District does have access to the other states that are in the consortium and some of them are farther along in the process than Connecticut. By 2013-14 the Common Core curriculum should be fully implemented. In 2014-15 all Common Core assessments will be administered on-line in grades 3-8 and grade 11 during a 12 week window.

Mrs. Flanagan asked if all of the curricula that were recently approved would need to be revisited. Mrs. Viccaro said it would need to be looked at again. They may still be valid but it may not be taught in the same year as in the past. Some content will also change. It is still unclear how the NEASC process will be affected. The existing curriculum will be used this year. The change will take place over a three-year process.

Mr. Fulton asked if we will be using existing people to implement the plan or if new positions will be needed. Mrs. Viccaro said we might need more assistance in the technology area. The only other area she anticipates that may need more funding may be in professional development.

New Student/Staff Data Requirement: Mrs. Emory, Pupil Personnel Director discussed another new requirement from the State of CT. TCS (Teacher, Course, Student) is a new initiative from the State where districts must identify every teacher, course and student in their classes. Based on June 30, 2011 data, the District must provide this information to the State by September 30, 2011 on all students. There are also new requirements for SEDAC, the Special Education database that will give the State more live and accurate data on an ongoing basis. This information is due to the State by November.

Mrs. Viccaro explained that the District does not have the personnel that can do the data entry. Mrs. Emory has some grant money that can be used for the purposes of tracking special education students. Because special education students are also a part of the whole student body this grant money can also be used for TCS. They estimate that they can afford to bring someone in to work on the data input for 12 ½ hours per week for the rest of this school year. Mrs. Viccaro said they would have to revisit the need for the additional staff at budget time.

Mr. Renninghoff asked for an explanation of where the grant money is coming from and if we will need to keep this person on staff next year. Mrs. Emory explained that most of the money is coming from the IDEA grant with the remainder coming from the ARRA grant. Mrs. Viccaro said the demands for the data input are not going to get smaller.

Mrs. Flanagan is concerned that we are spending a lot of time entering redundant data into different systems. She asked if there is a program to integrate data at a single entry point. Mrs. Emory said there are three main programs at work, Powerschool, PSIS and SEDAC. The state says they are trying to develop a program where the three can talk to each other but there is nothing currently functioning. There is a program called IEP Direct that would be very helpful in inputting the massive amount of information that goes on each IEP.

Mrs. Viccaro said the State of CT is beginning to implement 21st Century Skills as of July 2012. The District will be required to have student success plans in place for students grade 6 and up. The plan will follow students through the rest of their school career. Students need to meet with someone three times a year and be counseled along the way.

Buildings, Grounds, & Transportation Committee: Dr. Ocherski said the committee met twice this summer. He said the District worked very hard to come up with the new routes. On August 19th the routes went live on the DATTCO and District websites. This past Tuesday Dr.

Ochterski spent the morning at the central office. He went out and viewed safety concerns at several bus stops. As a result some changes were made. Dr. Ochterski said a letter was also sent home to all parents discussing bussing and an article appeared on Patch.com. Dr. Ochterski said Board members need to remain neutral in case parents request a transportation hearing. He will have to recuse himself from hearings involving the stops that he reviewed. The bus routes are substantially shorter than last year.

Phil Johnson of DATTCO said eliminating stops is always very difficult. The District has added many door stops over the years. He feels that Eileen and Karen did a great job with the changes. They looked at everything and went to many streets and stops.

Some Board members felt that the concerns shared about daycares were valid but they did not want to approve a change for them and open the door to allow changes for everyone else.

It was decided that the Transportation Committee would review the policy to consider changes to allow for house stops at licensed daycares, providing they meet certain criteria. As this will take time for the Policy Committee to then approve, it was decided that a motion to act on the proposed change will allow the Superintendent to act on the requests on a case by case basis for this school year.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second Mrs. Adams the Board of Education unanimously approved a motion supporting the implementation of a change in the Transportation Policy regarding house stops to licensed daycare providers. Requests must be made in writing and certain criteria must be met. The Board gave Mrs. Viccaro the authority to approve or deny the requests on an individual basis for this school year.

All of the local daycares that have contacted the Superintendent's Office will be contacted tomorrow and will be asked to submit a copy of their license, the number of children that are currently in their care and any special considerations that the Board should be made aware of.

Finance Committee: Mrs. Flanagan said the Finance Committee met twice since the last meeting. They are focusing on key issues that they would like to receive updates on, such as: expenses and revenues, operational issues, cafeteria, and Middlesex Transition Academy.

A concern about wording in the new pension plan was discussed. A staff member questioned if the 1st year of working counts as a year for vesting purposes. The language in the plan is confusing and it has been recommended that language be inserted for clarification.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second Mr. Hicks, the Board of Education unanimously accepted the resolution regarding the Pension Plan. A copy of the resolution is attached to these minutes.

Mrs. Flanagan said the Finance Committee would be meeting regularly before the second Board Meeting of every month.

Track & Field Report: On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Flanagan the Board of Education unanimously approved to accept the private funds raised to be used toward the purchase of the out buildings at the track and field facility.

Business Manager Search: Mr. Hennick said the search committee has been working hard and is prepared to bring one candidate forward for the Board to interview. A special meeting was scheduled for August 31st at 6:30pm.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Renninghoff, the Board unanimously approved to adjourn at 11:00pm.