

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, September 27, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room at Korn Elementary School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka, Dr. Shoemaker. Also present: Mr. Gourley, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Raczka called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Brewster School on October 11, 2006.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currlin, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Dr. Shoemaker made a motion, second Mrs. Adams, to approve the minutes to the Board of Education meeting of September 6, 2006. Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Hennick, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka, Dr. Shoemaker voted yes. Dr. Ochterski abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Golschneider and Mr. Raczka both attended the Open House at Korn School. They were both impressed with the number of parents in attendance and the level of energy in the building.

Mr. Raczka told Board members that they had an article in their packet that he would like them to read.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said the Local Prevention Council has changed their name to "Local Wellness Council". Beth Galligan, Guidance Director at Cuginchaug, is heading up a new program for the group called a Local Roundup. It is a community wide scavenger hunt where coats, canned goods and turkeys are collected by students in grades three and up.

Mrs. Viccaro had a letter from Governor Rell inviting kindergarten classes to each make two ornaments for the Christmas tree for the Governor's mansion.

Mrs. Viccaro reported that Ms. Larsen and the CRHS Choirs have been collecting school supplies for the Martin Luther King Elementary School in New Orleans. So far over 800 lbs of supplies have been sent and the shipping costs have also been paid from donations.

The State Department of Education has asked the kindergarten teachers to complete a readiness survey, rating students on the skills they are coming into kindergarten with. Mrs. Viccaro anticipates that the State will be analyzing this information to document the need for public preschool for all children. She does not know when this initiative will take place but she anticipates it happening in the near future.

Mrs. Viccaro said that she will be presenting on the Mastery and CAPT testing at the next meeting. She had planned to talk about them at this meeting but the scores are embargoed until tomorrow.

Korn School: Laurie Sinder, Principal at Korn School, talked about the qualifications of the new teachers hired this year. She is very pleased with the new staff and their transitions into the building.

Mrs. Sinder also discussed Korn School's continuing goal in literacy. They will be inviting Nancy Boyles back to Korn School for the next professional development day to continue to work on comprehension. Sue White, a teacher who just retired from Korn School, felt so strongly about the success of this program last year, that she has donated money toward bringing Ms. Boyles back this year. Mrs. Sinder said the three elementary school principals will be attending a workshop on November 8th entitled "The Principal's Role in the Instructional Process of Literacy".

On behalf of the Board of Education Mr. Raczka wanted to publicly thank Susan White for her generous donation toward the professional development program for the Korn School teachers.

Board Retreat: Mr. Currlin said that South Farms is no longer lending out their rooms at no cost. They were able to make connections for a room at Water's Edge, a new facility on Church Street in Middletown. The retreat is being held on Sunday, October 15th, beginning at 8am.

Model UN Club to Brown University Field Trip Request: This is a new field trip for the Model UN Club.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the field trip for the Model UN Club to Brown University in Providence, RI from November 10-12, 2006.

Freshman Basketball: Todd Salva, Boys Basketball Coach, talked about the freshman program. He said there is great interest in basketball at the junior high school level. The numbers are already high in the J.V. and Varsity programs and there will be no place to put students coming in this year without a freshman program. The basketball program will lose the "middle of the road athlete". The Benchwarmers have agreed to match funds up to \$4,400 to run the program. The people present at tonight's meeting are here in support of the program and are asking the Board to reconsider. They would like freshman basketball reinstated to maintain a program that has been successful for many years.

Tony Calcagni, the new Girls' Basketball Coach, said that girls receive many benefits from playing sports. He would like all parents to have the opportunity to see their child succeed and he would like the program reinstated.

Pete Donecker, a parent of boys that have gone through the program, said the game gets harder and faster as the kids get older. The kids need the freshman program to develop skills to play at the higher levels. Even though he does not have a child at the freshman level, he is willing to help fundraise to keep the program intact.

Bob Thomson, parent of a senior, said that if it wasn't for freshman basketball his child may have been distracted and made poor choices. He does not want to see any child that wants to play basketball have idle time to make poor choices. He is willing to fundraise to keep the program and he would like to see the program back in the budget next year.

Paul Sutterlin, a Middlefield parent of boys that have played basketball, said it does not make sense to pull one grade out of a program that exists from grade 7 through 12. He asked the Board to reconsider.

Theresa Opalacz said that the travel basketball program has been growing in the town over the last few years and more children are playing at a higher level. She and others would be willing to fundraise to keep the program alive.

Mr. Currilin said that Mr. Salva contacted him about this issue a month ago. Mr. Currilin would like to see it put back. The group of supporters is not asking for money, they are asking for the blessing of the Board to continue the program.

Ted Lombardo, Athletic Director, said there is some urgency in making a decision. The schedules are being put together now for the league. He anticipates the total cost to be approximately \$8,800; \$3,600 for each coach depending on experience and \$100 a game for referees. There is no cost for transportation because the coaches drive the Benchwarmer's van to the games.

Dr. Shoemaker is concerned about the cost if the group can not raise enough funds. The stipends for the coaches are a contractual obligation that may have to be paid regardless of whether the season is played. The Board does not have the money in the budget to fund the program.

Karen Buckley Bates asked why line items can't be shifted if needed. She said the District has a history of doing this in the past.

Mr. Gourley explained that the Board made a public commitment that certain items were being taken out of the budget. He does not think it is appropriate for the Board to consider funding any of the items cut from the budget.

Mr. Hennick said he did not want to take freshman basketball out of the budget from the beginning. He understands the Benchwarmers reluctance to fund the program. He would like to allow the group the chance to bring the program back.

Mrs. Adams asked what the difference is between this initiative and the group trying to bring back the Devil's Advocate. Mrs. Viccaro explained that the money donated toward the Devil's Advocate has been put into the Activity Account at CRHS; it is not going toward a stipend and the students have been told that the money raised to date will only pay for three issues of the newspaper.

Mrs. Flanagan agreed that the Board should not consider funding the program in any way until next year.

Maria Richardson, a resident, suggested that the group communicate their fundraising efforts through the Town Times, and they can also communicate that they are doing this independently of the Board of Education.

Steve Markowski, of Durham, said there are eight travel teams where parents are paying to have their children participate. He feels that they will be willing to help pay to get this program reinstated.

On a motion by Mr. Currilin, second Mr. Hennick, the Board of Education unanimously approved to reinstated the freshman boys and girls' basketball programs; completely funded by private fundraising efforts, pending acceptable review of the progress of donations by November 1, 2006.

Transition Committee: Mrs. Adams said the committee met this evening. An ad will be placed in the papers next week and the brochure is almost done. The committee has an aggressive timetable; applications are due by October 20, 2006 and the hope is to have someone on board by December 13, 2006. An interview committee of about ten people is being selected.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the committee met to discuss whether the District should choose to agree to the Food & Nutrition Guidelines, Public Act 0663, and collect 10¢ on the

dollar on each student lunch served. It is estimated that approximately \$10,400 extra in revenue could be brought in from participating in this program, but the restrictions on fundraising efforts throughout the District could impact groups by as much as \$53,000. The State's purpose in implementing this program is to fight childhood obesity. Mrs. Viccaro said the District nurses reported a 2% student obesity rate in District schools. The Policy Committee does not believe it is in the District's best interest to participate in this initiative.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously voted to not meet the standards of Public Act 0663, concerning healthy foods and beverages in schools.

Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee also discussed graduation competencies. Steve Wysowski was present at the meeting and told the group that students entering late in their junior year or senior year are having difficulty meeting the competency requirements. This issue will be discussed further.

The courses at the Hartford Academy for the Performing Arts were also discussed. This issue is being referred to the Curriculum Committee.

Dr. Wysowski suggested changing the grade point scale at the high school to a 4.0 scale. It will be investigated further and will also be discussed by the Curriculum Committee.

Personnel Policies: Mrs. Flanagan said the Committee met last evening for the first time to begin the process of negotiations with the administrators. The Boards of Finance from both towns were invited to the meeting. The only representative present from either town was Jon Brayshaw, 1st Selectman of Middlefield. Anne Littlefield of Shipman and Goodwin explained the negotiation process for those present. The opening session with the administrators is scheduled for October 12, 2006.

Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Hennick said he read an article about the new high school in Middletown using fuel cells to save on energy costs. He has since spoken to someone from Middletown who suggested he contact an attorney at Shipman and Goodwin who has helped school districts secure funding for alternative energy.

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