

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 23, 2005 at 7:30pm. in the library media center at Memorial Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Brown, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka, Dr. Shoemaker. Also present: Mr. Gourley, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Raczka called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Public Comment: Pam Lang cautioned the Board that by cutting the budget to gain public support becomes problematic. There are some people who will never be inclined to support the budget and in the process of making cuts the Board may alienate some of their best supporters. She suggests cutting less and taking a chance to see if the budget passes before cutting too deep.

Teresa Opalacz has discussed the budget with many people. She said the kindergarten cuts are supported as long as the aide time still exists. She feels it may not be necessary to add them back in if the class sizes climb to eighteen students. Parents are concerned about the amount of money being spent on substitutes, because that means that teachers are spending a lot of time out of the classroom. Parents are also confused about the need for more special education positions. There needs to be clarification on the positions that are being mandated.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board of Education Meeting is the Strong School Principal Interviews on March 30, 2005 at 7:00pm in the library media center at Coginchaug High School. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for April 6, 2005 at Coginchaug High School. The Board meeting will begin at 7:30pm in the library media center and the Public Hearing on the 2005-06 Budget will be held at 8:00pm in the auditorium.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the agenda was unanimously approved as amended to discuss Old Business before the Superintendent's Report.

Dr. Shoemaker made a motion, second Mr. Currlin to approve the minutes to the March 16, 2005 Board of Education meeting. Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currlin, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka, Dr. Shoemaker voted yes. Mr. Brown, Mrs. Golschneider abstained.

Finalize 2005-06 Budget for the Public Hearing: Mrs. Viccaro reviewed the budget and cuts that were presented last week. She distributed a reduction list that was compiled by the administrators, prioritizing their view of how the cuts should be considered. Mrs. Viccaro asked administrators to speak on some of the concerns discussed.

Mrs. Luckenbach is very concerned about remedial services. At the high school we do not offer any remedial services. At Strong School the .7 remedial teacher has a caseload of 36 students. She feels strongly that this position should be increased to fulltime, allowing for much more flexibility within the schedule at Strong and allowing the students to be seen more frequently. The .3 position increase would not have any benefits cost associated with it because the teacher already receives benefits.

Mrs. Emory discussed the 2 ½ special education teaching positions that have been added. One teacher is for the Wesleyan program. The District is responsible for the students in this program until age 21. It is a mandated service that has been previously paid for by a grant. The .5 ABA teaching position is to work with students who are currently in the program at Brewster, Korn, Memorial, and Strong and to work with the Birth to Three program. It is also a

mandated service. The final position is a fulltime speech pathologist. There has been an increased need, especially in the preschool area and the District is mandated to meet the needs of these special education students based on their IEP.

Dean Coutsouridis, Music Department Chair, was asked to speak to the Board about the instrument lease program. Mr. Coutsouridis explained that it is a three-year lease to own program. Some of the instruments that the students are using were purchased when the school was built and are 35 years old. The lease program will also help to bring more instruments into the lower levels. The commitment is for three years at \$20,000.00 each year. The lease would be with Goldie and Libro, a company that the District has worked with for many years.

Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee discussed 501C3 Foundations at their meeting this week. This type of foundation may be something that the Board may want to consider as a way to finance items such as instruments. There are many tax advantages and it would be a separate entity from the District.

Members questioned some of the reductions. The reduction in library collections is a cut in new purchases throughout the District. The cuts to the materials/supplies budget are split up into many areas. No one special subject or program will be impacted significantly by the cuts.

Mr. Raczka said that although he feels it is important to try to come in with as low a budget as possible, the difference in the mil impact for Durham if the music lease, field trips and library assistant are cut is only .07 and he doesn't feel it is worth it.

Ms. Parsons questioned whether any changes to the budget are usually made between the public hearing and the budget meeting. It was explained that it is possible to make changes, but it has been many years since the Board has chosen to make changes between the hearing and the budget meeting.

The Board discussed replacing the library assistant position for the .3 remedial position needed at Strong School. It was agreed that the remedial position at Strong should be in the budget.

Mr. Hennick made a motion, second Mrs. Adams, agreeing to the cuts presented on the administrator's reduction list, Items # 1 through 16, totaling \$164,162.00 and to keeping the music lease and field trips and adding a .3 remedial teaching position at Strong School, totaling \$58,700.00 in the budget. Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka voted yes. Mr. Brown and Dr. Shoemaker voted no.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Mr. Hennick that the Board of Education go to the public hearing with a total gross Regional District 13 budget of \$29,005,558.00. Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka voted yes. Mr. Brown and Dr. Shoemaker voted no.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro attended the play at Strong School last weekend. It was a wonderful program entitled, A Family Album, directed by Ali Brandt. She also attended the Scholarship Ball on Saturday and the Exchange Club Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday.

Mrs. Viccaro said the Teacher of the Year Reception has been moved to May 4, 2005 at 2:30 pm due to the weather forecast for tomorrow.

Mrs. Viccaro shared with Board members the questions that students asked the principal candidates when they came to Strong School last Friday. The candidates met with teachers,

administrators, students, and parents. On Monday a team from the Search Committee went on site visits to both of the candidates schools.

At Admin Council this morning Mrs. Luckenbach reviewed the Interview Handbook that has been developed. This book will help to standardize the interview process across the District.

Mr. Currlin told Board members that the Invention Convention is being held at Memorial School tomorrow morning and he encouraged anyone available to attend.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee met last night. They are looking at the student discipline policy again, using a model policy from the attorney. The Defibrillator Policy has been written, the regulation has been written but it has to be reviewed by the medical advisors before the Board approves it. The Use of School Facilities Policy is being reviewed because the Districts attorney says that we should be charging a fee to all groups who use the buildings. Sponsorship is also being reviewed and the possibility of the 501C3 Foundation was discussed.

The Policy on Non-Resident Students was distributed to members for their review before the next meeting. Some members were concerned about students in the twelfth grade being able to complete the school year in District 13 without paying tuition or without an amount of time in the District being specified in the policy.

Personnel Policy: Mr. Raczka said the Committee will be meeting again next Monday; negotiations are ongoing with the support staff union and the custodians' union.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Dr. Shoemaker the Board of Education unanimously approved to move into Executive Session to discuss Teacher Non-renewals.

On a motion by Mr. Hick, second Mr. Currlin the Board of Education unanimously moved that the contracts of employment for Maura Lundt, Jessica Loffredo and Sarah Dlugolenski not be renewed for the following school year upon their expiration at the end of this school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action.

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