

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 9, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. in the library media center at Coginchaug High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka. Members absent: Mr. Brown, Dr. Shoemaker. Also present: Mr. Gourley, Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Mr. Raczka asked for a moment of silence for the student from Strong School that was seriously injured earlier this week and for his family.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board of Education meeting will be held at Strong Middle School on March 16, 2005 at 7:30p.m.

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

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Dr. Ochterski, the minutes of the Board of Education meeting of February 9, 2005 were unanimously approved as amended.

Communications: Mr. Hicks said that he and several other Board members attended the Read Across America Program at Korn School. Many Board members attend every year and it is a wonderful event. Mrs. Golschneider attended the Brewster Loves to Read Night. She plans to bring the banner that the children made to a future Board meeting.

Dr. Ochterski was approached by a parent who is concerned about the suspension of the DARE officer. Some of the Board members were not familiar with the issues surrounding the suspension. Mrs. Viccaro said that it is a sensitive issue and she would like to be able to talk to Officer Topulus of Middlefield before discussing it with the Board. She will update the Board next week.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro shared a letter that went home to parents regarding the shooting. She wanted to let parents know about the resources available in the District. Mrs. Viccaro explained that administrators met on Monday night, the crisis chain was put in place, and counselors from other buildings were on stand-by on Tuesday morning. Students impacted in other buildings were also identified.

Mrs. Viccaro said that nineteen students have registered for the SAT prep classes offered by the consortium.

The Superintendents' Consortium is looking at virtual high school classes. These are accelerated classes such as languages that we don't offer. The courses are very challenging and involved. They are similar to distance learning but offer many more options and are not limited by time schedules because the students would be taking the class on-line. Students would receive credit for the class. Mrs. Viccaro may present more to the Board about this option at a later date.

Mrs. Viccaro told the Board that the CRHS music department has requested a change of location for their April field trip. Initially they were approved to attend a music festival in Myrtle Beach, NC but they had difficulty locating a school along the way that was interested in having them visit for a concert. They have determined that the trip is too long and would now like to attend a festival in Virginia Beach, VA instead. The trip will be from April 14-17, 2005.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the revised Cuginchaug Music Department field trip to Virginia Beach, VA from April 14-17, 2005.

Mrs. Viccaro said that the New England Music Festival begins tomorrow at Cuginchaug. Approximately 450 students will be arriving at the school and staying in host homes over the weekend. There are two concerts being held on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Hicks reported that the Strong School Principal Search Committee has been meeting. They interviewed seven candidates this past Monday and are inviting five back for a second interview next week. Twenty-nine applications were received.

2005-06 Budget Presentation: Mrs. Viccaro presented her 2005-06 budget. She has made cuts from the administrators' budget requests prior to sending the budget to the Board. They include: 1.0 teacher at CRHS, a 1/2 teacher at John Lyman, a .5 library media position at Strong School and 2.5 teaching assistants. The teaching assistants are from the kindergarten classes. At this point the kindergarten class sizes are at 13 and 14 students. Mrs. Viccaro feels that assistants can be reassigned within the buildings to be sure that critical times in kindergarten are still receiving assistant coverage.

Contractual agreements represent an increase of \$1,361,000 and state mandates account for an increase of \$66,000. The state mandates may be offset by an increase to the IDEA grant but the District will not be told the funding amounts until late in the spring.

There are new staffing positions in the budget. A full time 5th grade ID teacher has been added. It is in the budget as a .5 position because enough savings are being realized by the retirements to cover half of the cost. 1.5 special education teachers have been added. The .5 teaching position is to provide coordination across four school for students with very complex needs. The 1.0 special education teaching position is for the teacher at Wesleyan that runs the transition program. In the past this has been covered by a grant, but the grant has ended. The District will be charging tuition for students from other towns to attend this program so it may be able to become self-funding. A 1.0 speech pathologist has been added. There has been a tremendous increase in the need for speech pathology services, especially for younger students entering the District. This area is the number one shortage area and Mrs. Viccaro wants to secure another pathologist to be used between two buildings. A .6 student assistance counselor is being added at Strong School. This position will increase a position that is already at Cuginchaug to a full-time position.

New materials and services being added to the budget include: \$32,000 for science textbooks and materials, \$20,000 for a lease program to replace aging musical instruments, \$5,000 additional costs to belong to the consortium and \$85,000 in increase costs for buildings and grounds.

Mr. Gourley mentioned that there has also been a full time health teacher added at the elementary level. It was discussed during negotiations with the teachers union as a way for elementary school teachers to be able to have a planning period each day and students in grades 1 thru 4 will benefit by having health class for the full year. It was not presented because it is replacing the 1/2 teacher that has been eliminated at Lyman.

Mr. Gourley said the District has been hit hard by a 17 % increase in health insurance. He also reminded board members that the contracts for support staff, and custodians and nurses have not been settled yet. Placeholders have been put in the budget for these costs.

The percentage increase in the Gross District Budget is 6.80 as presented.

Mr. Currlin asked Mrs. Viccaro to look at the budget to see what it would look like if cuts were made. She will come back next week with incremental cuts.

Mr. Raczka said that surrounding towns have supported budgets with increases between 8 % and 13 %.

ACES Agreement: Mr. Hicks presented the new partnership agreement for the magnet school. He reviewed the changes to the document with the Board.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Partnership Agreement for the Operation of the Thomas Edison Middle School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams. The Board of Education unanimously agreed to appoint ACES as the management tool for the Thomas Edison Middle School.

Mr. Hicks said there would be another vote later in the year concerning the District's continued participation in the magnet school.

2005-06 Calendar: Mrs. Viccaro said that because the CAPT and Mastery testing are both going to be held in the spring next year there has been much discussion among superintendents about the testing window. They are asking the State Legislature to move the tests back into the last two weeks of March to allow enough time to complete and return all of the tests. If this happens it will affect the dates we have scheduled for our elementary school conferences and a professional development day scheduled in March. Mrs. Viccaro suggests changing them now because we are under pressure from many people to release next year's calendar. The administrators suggest moving the conferences from March 14th and 15th to March 9th and 10th and moving the professional day from March 24th to April 13th.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mr. Currlin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the changes to the 2005-06 calendar as presented.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee has not been able to meet because of storm cancellations. The Board did have the changes to the Attendance Policy given to them prior to tonight.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Mr. Currlin, to approve the changes to the Attendance Policy. Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka voted yes. Mrs. Adams abstained.

Mr. Currlin mentioned that he would be attending a meeting on March 31st regarding the ACES Educational Funding Organization. He encouraged any Board members interested in attending to join him at this meeting to learn how it is managed.

Personnel Policies: Mr. Raczka said that formal negotiation meetings have begun with both the support staff union and the custodian union.

Mr. Hicks showed Board members the sample of the plaque that the veterans would like to put at Memorial School. Because the Policy Committee has not had a meeting it was suggested that the full Board approve the wording of the plaque to not further delay the process.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mr. Currlin, the Board unanimously approved to amend the agenda to include Veterans Memorial Plaque.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams the Board unanimously voted to approve the Veterans plaque that will hang at Memorial School as presented.

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