

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 1, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. in the media center at Coginchaug High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Dr. Shoemaker. Members absent: Mr. Raczka. Also present: Mr. Gourley, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comment: Donia Viola thanked Mrs. Viccaro for responding to her questions. She questioned why we are only saving 1800 gallons of fuel for the busses by having the depot in town. Mrs. Viola is alarmed that ten administrators salaries amount to over one million dollars without benefits. She wants to know what the mil impact of the budget will be and she is concerned that more money is spent per student in the ID program than in the Contemporary program; she feels spending should be more equal per child.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on March 8, 2006 at Coginchaug High School.

On a motion by Mr. Currin, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved to amend the agenda to include Friends of Education Award under New Business.

Dr. Shoemaker made a motion, second Mr. Hennick to approve the minutes to the February 8, 2006 Board of Education meeting. Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, Dr. Shoemaker voted yes. Ms. Parsons and Mr. Hicks abstained.

Communications: Mr. Hicks commented on the newsletter he received from Strong School. He said it was very well done and filled with information. Mr. Nicols was present and commented that many teachers and students put a lot of work into the newsletter.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony last night. Twelve students were inducted.

The CMT's and CAPT's began today; testing ran smoothly.

Mrs. Viccaro received a letter from State Representative, Ray Kalinowski, regarding the letter the Board of Education sent to him concerning the Board's position on House Bill 6576. Rep. Kalinowski agrees with the Board's position and will be a strong supporter of local control and oppose the bill.

Mrs. Viccaro discussed the decrease in reimbursement for special education costs received from the State. In the 1990-91 school year the state covered 40.58% of the cost and by the 2003-04 school year the State was only covering 30.39%. Placing a cap on the excess cost formula has also had a significant impact on the receipts that the District receives. Mrs. Viccaro is on a committee with CAPSS that is looking at making it a legislative agenda. Their goal is to seek reimbursement from the State for 50% of special education costs.

Mrs. Viccaro reminded Board members that tomorrow is Read Across America Day and will be celebrated at Brewster, Korn and Lyman Schools.

Mrs. Viccaro said that on March 7th at 7pm the Local Prevention Council is holding a Drug Awareness Prevention Presentation at Coginchaug. Parents and community members are invited to attend.

Mr. Gourley told the Board that in this year's budget the District is losing \$102,000 because of the cap placed on the excess cost formula. The District is also losing \$72,000 in transportation costs that would normally be reimbursable as excess cost.

2006-07 Regional District 13 Budget: Mrs. Viccaro presented the 2006-2007 Proposed Budget. She said there are four main areas impacting the budget: energy costs, special education, health insurance and contractual obligations. There is an anticipated increase of \$150,000 in electricity, \$105,000 in heating oil and \$2,500 in bottled gas. Special education increases include tuition increases for outplaced students \$138,751, increased costs for homebound students \$24,967 and transportation and monitors for special education students \$150,000. Health insurance is increasing by \$262,191, pensions by \$6,000 and social security by \$23,000. Contractual Obligations include salary increases for: Teachers and Support Staff \$467,720, Special Education \$164,883, Library Media \$98,567, General Services \$9,108, Building Administration \$36,837, Business Services \$7,750, and Buildings and Grounds \$55,000. The total salary increase amounts to \$839,865.

The impact on staffing is minor. There is a decrease in a speech position, a .2 science position at Coginchaug, .4 social studies position at Coginchaug, .4 business position at Coginchaug, and .4 music position between Strong and Coginchaug. The only increases are a .5 library media position that is the other half of the position that began in January at Strong School and a .4 teaching position at Strong School for under staffing. The net impact on staffing is a decrease of 1.5 staff.

The total budget is \$30,857,455 or 6.38% over last year.

Mr. Gourley said there are no new programs to review and no new textbooks. They have focused on the operating budget. It is not a difficult budget to review.

Mr. Currin is concerned because he doesn't know where the Board can look to begin to make cuts.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned the cost of copiers. She feels that the Board will need to look closely at items such as the cost of copying and purchasing supplies and find ways to be more efficient. With many costs out of the Board's control she feels that it is important to look very closely at the items that the Board does have some control over.

Mr. Gourley explained to Mrs. Flanagan that the principals have cut basic supply costs significantly over the last three years.

Mrs. Flanagan asked if classes that aren't in demand at the high school have been looked at. Mrs. Viccaro explained that some of the reductions in staff are based on information gathered at the high school regarding class demand. Scheduling is currently taking place at the high school and more information will be known soon. Board members asked to review information regarding class sizes at all grades at the next meeting.

Mrs. Adams asked if it is true that all teachers will be required to have Special Education certification by the year 2012. If so, will the District incur additional costs to reimburse teachers who need to take additional classes to achieve certification? Mrs. Viccaro said that it is true that the State is considering having all new teachers becoming cross certified in special ed/regular ed. She believes that current teachers will be grandfathered in. Regular education teachers have to be prepared for many more complicated students in their classrooms and some special education training is becoming necessary for all teachers.

Mr. Hennick asked if an audit of the bus routes and stops could be done. He wants to see if they are reconfigured if a cut of a bus can be made. He also asked if the efficiency of the lights and the boilers has been reviewed. Mr. Gourley said this has already been done, temperatures have already been set back and lights and computers are turned off daily.

Dr. Shoemaker asked Mr. Gourley and Mrs. Viccaro to look at making cuts in increments of \$100,000, \$200,000 and \$300,000 for next week's meeting.

Mrs. Flanagan would like to see student population data by school by year.

Dr. Shoemaker would like to know what impact it would have on busing if we picked up students at corners in large groups, what would it do to the routes.

Dr. Shoemaker would like to revisit the possibility of elementary students bringing in their own supplies.

Ms. Parsons wants to know how field trips are being funded. She also asked about the money for the musical instruments that were in the budget last year. She was told that they were not put in this year's budget. It was decided that it was a one time \$20,000 expenditure last year. More information on field trips will be provided at next week's meeting.

CRHS Seniors' Washington, D.C. Trip: Dr. Wysowski said this is the same trip that the seniors have been taking for many years. It is very well run and a great experience.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Senior Class Field Trip to Washington, D.C. from November 15, 2006 to November 18, 2006.

Dr. Shoemaker asked if students are informed that the Board has the right to cancel the trip if necessary for safety reasons. Dr. Wysowski said that students are made aware.

Friends of Education Award: On a motion by Mr. Currlin, second Dr. Shoemaker, the Board of Education unanimously approved Roger Newton to receive the Friends of Education Award.

Policy Committee: On a motion by Dr. Shoemaker, second Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved the revised Graduation Requirements Policy 5127.

Wellness Committee: Mrs. Golschneider reported that the new Wellness Committee has met two times. The State is requiring all school boards to have a wellness policy in place by the start of the 2006-07 school year. The District will incur any costs associated with this new policy.

ACES: Mr. Currlin said an interim person is in place as the executive director. The committee is meeting every week to find a replacement.

On a motion by Dr. Shoemaker, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.