

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room at Brewster Elementary School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka. Member absent: Dr. Shoemaker. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Public Comment: None.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on June 14, 2006 at Strong School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Ms. Parsons, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda.

Mr. Hennick made a motion, second by Mrs. Golschneider, to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 16, 2006. Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka voted yes. Mrs. Adams abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Adams received a call from a parent thanking the Board for hiring Scott Nicol as the principal of Strong School. The parent has been very pleased with how he has handled an issue with their child.

Several Board members have received calls regarding the budget decisions made at last week's meeting. Members are concerned that people believe by voting the budget down that positions will be reinstated. The Board feels that this is highly unlikely. There is a lot of misinformation regarding the class size policy and potential savings from insurance being discussed that are misguiding the voters.

Mrs. Viccaro believes that the District website will be of help next year because so much more information will be available to the public.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro read a thank you note from Mildred Sutherland. Mrs. Sutherland received a call from Mrs. Akerley's 2nd grade class on her 78th birthday, singing Happy Birthday to her, and she wanted to let the Board know how much this meant to her.

On Monday Mrs. Viccaro attended the 6th to 7th grade Transition Night at Strong School. This was a student run evening and they did an excellent job talking about the issues important to the kids entering Strong School.

On Tuesday Mrs. Viccaro attended the Memorial School Concert at Cuginchaug. The concert was a terrific event.

This evening she attended the Korn School Band and Chorus Concert at Cuginchaug. The chorus has 162 students in it out of 198 students in the school. The band also did a great job.

Mrs. Viccaro told the Board members that the Durham Garden Club will hold the Dedication Ceremony for the courtyard at Cuginchaug on May 31st at 1pm.

Mrs. Viccaro has also received letters regarding the budget and three letters from students in support of the student assistance counselor and a petition signed by approximately 200 high school students in support of this position.

Mrs. Viccaro spoke with Joe Geruch, Finance Director of Middlefield, regarding the insurance discussions. He would like to be able to go public with the projected savings, but Mrs. Viccaro made it clear that it cannot happen while negotiations are ongoing.

Mrs. Viccaro has also spoke with Jon Brayshaw, 1st Selectman of Middlefield, regarding the recent cuts and has asked if he will publicly support this budget. He has asked for information to be sent to him for his review. Mrs. Viccaro hopes to have a similar conversation with Mr. McLaughlin, 1st Selectman of Durham.

Mrs. Viccaro read from a letter received from The Commissioner of Education, informing the District that Strong and Korn Schools have been selected to participate in additional testing next year. The testing will take place during January and February and is part of a nationwide standardized test.

Vote on Technology Plan: Mrs. Coffey returned to this week's meeting to answer questions on the technology plan. The Board was very pleased with what was presented in the plan. Mrs. Coffey said the plan has already been approved by the ACES Tech Council and will have to be approved at the State level next.

On a motion by Mr. Currin, second Mrs. Flanagan, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Regional District 13 Technology Plan for 2006-2009.

Field Trip Request: On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Hennick, the Board of Education unanimously approved the overnight field trip request for Mrs. Berndt's 2nd grade class on June 9, 2006 at John Lyman School.

Wellness Committee: Liz Welsh, Chair of the Wellness Committee, shared the committee's work in creating a new Wellness Policy for the District. The need for the policy has been mandated by the State and must be in place by the start of school year 2006-2007. The committee has focused on physical fitness and nutrition and has assessed the District's strengths and weaknesses in developing the policy. The policy will be reviewed by the Policy Committee and will also be reviewed by the District's attorney before being approved by the full Board.

Mr. Raczka thanked Ms. Welsh and the Wellness Committee for all the work that has gone in to writing the new wellness policy.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Use of School Facilities Policy cannot be voted on tonight because the attorney still wants to address some of the language in it. The Board voiced no concerns regarding the fee schedule portion of the policy so Central Office will begin sending letters out to organizations informing them of the new charges. The updated policy information will be emailed to Board members and will be voted on at the June meeting.

Transition Committee: Mrs. Adams said the Transition Committee met to discuss Rob Gourley's replacement and Central Office responsibilities. Mrs. Adams said the time frame is short, but she thinks the transition is doable.

Personnel Policies: Mr. Hennick said he has the information on beginning negotiations with the administrators. This needs to start in October. Mr. Raczka said he would like the letter inviting the town's participation in the negotiation process to be hand delivered to the 1st Selectmen of each town.

Transportation: Mr. Raczka encouraged Dr. Ochterski to begin looking at sites for the bus depot again.

Mrs. Viccaro said that a Strong School parent has volunteered to provide a sign for the front of Strong School. He has also offered a larger sign for the campus but that would have to be put into the budget.

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