

Board of Education

Regional District 13

May 13, 2009

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room of Brewster School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle (arrived 7:35), Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons. Absent: Mr. Currilin and Ms. Gara. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

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

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be a special meeting May 18, 2009 on the 2009-10 Budget at Coginchaug Regional High School.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting will be May 27, 2009 at John Lyman School.

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

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mrs. Flanagan, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting of April 29, 2009.

Mrs. Adams, made a motion, second by Dr. Ochterski, to accept the minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2009 as amended. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Hennick, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Golschneider and Mr. Hicks abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Adams said she attended the band concert honoring Bruce Schottlach at Coginchaug.

Mrs. Flanagan said that she, Mrs. Boyle and Ms. Parsons met with representatives of all the unions and asked for concessions. She wanted the community to know that in every contract there is a give and take from both sides and that contracts are not just about money. She said that concessions were made in health care with increases in co-pays and in insurance costs. Mrs. Flanagan said that she let the representatives know that the Board needs help to get the budget where it needs to be. She asked each group for any ideas they may have and asked that they all let the Board know what they would be willing to do by Monday so that the Board can react to any concessions they may receive.

Mrs. Golschneider congratulated Mr. Hennick on his reappointment to the Board.

Mr. Hicks wanted to correct a misinterpretation Josh Stockdale of Durham had made regarding the ID teacher at the special meeting. Mr. Hicks supported the ID teacher but said he suspected that it would get cut after the budget was voted down.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said she received a call from Jenny of Bike & Build. Bike and Build is a non profit organization that works in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity. Jenny stated that the 30 member group are biking across America and would be in Durham on June 6, 2009. Jenny was asking if it would be possible for the group to stay at a school for one night. Mrs. Viccaro told the Board that there would be at minimum a custodial expense to the District. Mrs. Flanagan asked about liability concerns and Mrs. Viccaro said that she was unsure. She said Jenny was going to be getting her more information and would let the Board know as soon as she had it.

Mrs. Viccaro asked Principal Karen Brimecombe to update the Board on the ID program enrollment. Mrs. Brimecombe told the Board that she received a request this week from a private school regarding the records of

a current 4th grader. She said that would make the incoming 5th grade ID program number 74 with class sizes of 25, 25, and 24. Mrs. Viccaro said that the ID program will remain closed.

Mrs. Viccaro handed out copies of the Regional District 13 Technology Integration Standards and Benchmarks Grades 3-12 (in draft form) and the Connecticut State Department of Education Educational Technology Plan Template. She asked each Board member to review the 2 documents as they will be up for discussion at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Viccaro told the Board that the District was moving into a very busy time of the year. She wanted them to know of the following events that will be taking place in the next few weeks:

- Brewster 2nd grade play will be held on May 14, 2009 at 6:00 pm.
- Lyman ID Share Fair will also be held on May 14, 2009 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.
- Fajita Fiesta will be held at Coginchaug at 6:00 pm on May 15, 2009.
- Seussical Jr. Show Choir will take place on May 19, 2009 at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm for students of the District and then again on May 20, 2009 at 7:30 pm for the general public.
- Brewster Art show will be held on May 21, 2009 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm.
- Ice Cream Social will be held at Strong on May 21, 2009 at 6:30 pm.
- DARE Graduation will be held at Memorial on May 26, 2009 at 6:30 pm.
- Lyman 3-4 concert will be held on May 27, 2009 at 2:00 pm and at 6:30 pm.
- Coginchaug Spring Choir concert will be held on May 28, 2009 at 7:30 pm.
- Senior Awards Night will be held at Coginchaug on June 3, 2009 at 7:00 pm.
- Brewster Dance Festival will be held on June 4, 2009.

Magnet School Agreement: Craig Edmonson Executive Director of ACES spoke to the Board regarding the Articulation Agreement and enrollment with Thomas Edison Magnet School in Meriden. Mr. Edmonson stated that the Agreement is up for renewal next year and ACES hopes the District will renew that contract. Mrs. Viccaro told the Board that if the District wanted to end its agreement with ACES that they would need to give 1 year's notice. Mr. Hennick asked how many spots the District is committed to and how many students are actually attending. Mr. Edmonson said that 14 students were attending and the District was committed to 22 spots. Kevin Brough, Principal at Memorial school told the Board the total number of students that were originally enrolled this year was 16 but then 2 students left. Mr. Brough said the main reason they leave is because they miss their friends. Mrs. Flanagan asked why enrollment has declined over the years and Mr. Edmonson said that a lot has to do with the community. He said that this District has a strong community and the children tend to want to stay. Mr. Hicks also pointed out enrollment was high back when Strong was under construction and when the construction was completed the numbers started to decline. Mrs. Golschneider asked if there was a better way to market the program and asked if it would be possible to start to introduce the option of the Magnet School in the 4th grade. Mrs. Brimecombe thought that would be confusing for 4th graders. She felt that there were too many transitions going on for them in 4th grade. Mr. Edmonson said ACES would work with the District to help promote the program in any way they could. Mrs. Flanagan said that when the agreement comes up that we are going to have to reassess the number of spots the District takes because she is concerned about paying for empty seats.

Grade 1 / 2 Overnight Camping Trip: Mrs. Viccaro read a letter from Mrs. Berndt's grade 1/2 class requesting permission to campout at Lyman overnight on June 13, 2009. Mrs. Viccaro said that Mrs. Berndt has been doing this for with her classes for the last 15 years. Mrs. Flanagan asked if they would need a fire permit and Mrs. Viccaro said she would find out.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Grade 1 / 2 Overnight Camping Trip at Lyman School on June 13, 2009.

2009-2010 District Goals:

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second by Dr. Ochterski, the Board of Education unanimously approved the 2009-10 District Goals.

2009-10 Budget: Mr. Melnik distributed a budget handout showing \$240,279.00 in additional cuts to the budget. Mrs. Viccaro stated that she and Mr. Melnik met with the administrators and they discussed the new cuts to the budget. She stated that of all the new cuts made the reading consultant was the one that pained them the most. Mrs. Viccaro said that the ID teacher salary and benefits were backed out now that the 5th grade class sizes at Memorial are back to acceptable levels.

Mrs. Flanagan said she was also sad to see the reading consultant go.

Mr. Hennick said it was a shame to see the reading consultant go. He said the district can not really see the impact since it was only around for a year, but it was an extravagance the district can not afford.

Mr. Melnik stated that with those cuts along with cutting and additional \$49,000 from the capital reserve the new net increase was now at 1.65%.

Mr. Hicks asked about offering early retirement. He said if the District offered to assist teachers who are in year 34, 36, 37 or 38 who wanted to retire early with healthcare cost the District could then hire new teachers at a lower rate. He said that he is certain that some teachers are continuing to teach because of healthcare costs and not for the salary. Mrs. Golschneider felt that opening up this option could leave the District at a shortage in specialized areas like math and foreign languages where teachers are hard to find.

The Board asked how many teachers could be eligible for early retirement and what kind of cost savings the District could offer on healthcare. Mr. Melnik said getting all that information together would require more time. He did not think it could be done by Monday.

Ms. Parson said the Finance committee met today and they put together a list of cuts they would like to add. They are as follows:

- \$25,000.00 in Bond interest savings
- \$10,000.00 District wide in Library Books and periodicals
- \$5,000.00 from buildings and ground maintenance
- \$15,000.00 in uniforms
- \$25,000.00 District wide in supplies
- \$30,000.00 to be determined by the Superintendent

Ms. Parson stated that these cuts along with cuts presented earlier to the Board would total \$350,279.00 in new cuts and a net increase of 1.29%.

Mrs. Viccaro thought cutting an additional \$25,000.00 from supplies was high. The administrators also felt that this figure was high and collectively did not know how it could be done. Each principal felt that they have been currently operating with the bare minimum and could not see going with less. They all felt that because the budget was frozen so early this year it has made the year difficult. Nancy Heckler said that the additional cuts in supplies will hurt, but she felt that it would be better than losing a teacher.

Mrs. Flanagan said that while she understood the administrator's concerns on cutting an additional \$25,000.00 in supplies, she felt that tough times call for tough measures.

Dr. Ochterski asked how many employees of the District were currently enrolled in the Health Savings Plan. Mr. Melnik said that there were about 35 employees currently enrolled. Dr. Ochterski wanted to know what has been done to promote this health plan. Mr. Melnik said that the District has held 2 health fairs within the last few months and there was not a lot of interest in it. Mr. Melnik said that he thinks the reason employees are not interested is because there is some financial risk during the first year of the plan. Also, the plan requires some initial start up work like opening a bank account and getting an ATM card. Mr. Melnik thought if that if the District was able to pay their portion of the plan either quarterly or all in one shot the employees may be more

interested. Mrs. Golschneider thought maybe the District could use part of a Professional Development day to sit everyone down and make them listen to the benefits of an HSA.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously moved to approve the net budget of \$31,445,745.00, an increase of 1.29%, pending any additional adjustments that might come in on Monday, May 18, 2009.

Personnel Policy Committee: Mrs. Flanagan said that they are continuing to make progress with the Support Staff, Cafeteria Staff and Custodial Staff and they would be coming to an agreement soon with all three bargaining units.

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