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Board of Education

Regional District 13

February 11, 2009

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room at the Brewster School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons. Absent: Mrs. Flanagan
Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Public Comment: There was no Public Comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Memorial School on February 25, 2009.

On a motion by Mr. Currin, second by Mrs. Adams, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Mrs. Adams made a motion, second by Mr. Hicks to accept the minutes of the meeting of January 29, 2009. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Golschneider abstained.

Communications: Ms. Parsons attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at Coginchaug Regional High School. Ms. Parsons commented on what a wonderful event it is and how she always enjoys attending.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro informed the Board that the District will be participating in the United Way's "Live United Day" Friday, February 13, 2009. For a \$5.00 donation, employees are encouraged to dress down and wear jeans with all the proceeds going to the Middlesex United Way whose goal is to raise \$10,000.00 to help those hit hardest as a result of the current economy.

Mrs. Viccaro shared a United Way article written by Eileen Bengtson, Payroll and Employee Benefits Coordinator for the District. Mrs. Bengtson has been the United Way Coordinator for the District since 1986. She has kept the employees of the District aware of the financial and physical donations that the United Way needs to continue to help people in need. Most recently, Mrs. Bengtson organized a "Diaper Drive" where she received a huge response by employees of the District. Over 40 packs of diapers were donated to our local United Way. Mrs. Viccaro said that Mrs. Bengtson is one of the District's unsung heroes.

Mrs. Viccaro shared an email from Susan Michael, Science Teacher at Coginchaug Regional High School, regarding senior Hanna Bober. Hanna was selected as 1 of 2 students set to represent the State of Connecticut at the National Youth Science Camp. Mrs. Viccaro was especially excited to share that this was the 3rd year in a row that a student from Coginchaug Regional High School was selected to attend this camp. Mrs. Golschneider and Mrs. Adams inquired how students qualify to be part of the National Youth Science Camp. Mrs. Viccaro did not know but would follow up with that information.

Mrs. Viccaro also shared that Lorrie Martin, Outdoor Science Teacher at Coginchaug, had several students compete in the National Ocean Sciences Bowl in Rhode Island this past weekend where they came in 4th place. Mrs. Viccaro commented on what a fantastic Science department the District has.

Mrs. Viccaro shared with the Board a letter she received from CAPSS regarding the 7 areas of interest they will be focusing on for the upcoming 2009 – 2010 year. They are as follows: Examine State Agencies; Provide Full ECS Funding; Examine and Eliminate Unnecessary Mandates; Adopt No New Mandates;

Explore Regionalism; Consider Greater Uses of Technology; and Plan and Fund Appropriately Statewide Magnet Schools and Choice Strategies.

Mrs. Viccaro met with 3 elementary school teachers who were interested in possibly applying for a Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program that would take place this summer in Washington, DC. If selected they would act as Classroom Fellows and serve their regular teaching contracts with District 13 but would also need to participate in Fellowship activities outside of their regular teaching contracted hours by providing feedback on Department work, sharing their experiences with other Fellows and with the Department of Education at designated times throughout the year on specific initiatives. Mrs. Viccaro noted that there would be no cost to the District if anyone is selected.

Mrs. Viccaro received an email from an elementary school parent regarding February vacation. This parent felt that this vacation comes too soon after Christmas Break and should either be eliminated or shortened to a 2 or 3 day break. Mrs. Viccaro explained to the parent that the school calendars have already been approved for the 2009-2010 school year and it again included a February break. Mrs. Viccaro told the parent that she would bring her concerns to the Board. Mrs. Golschneider commented that the February Break issue came up a few years ago and was dismissed for many reasons, but mainly cost savings. Mr. Hicks commented that shutting down in February also helps clear out illness from the schools.

Mrs. Viccaro also attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at Coginchaug Regional High School this week. She said that 14 students in total were inducted - 2 from the Class of 2009 and 12 from the Class of 2010. Mrs. Viccaro also expressed what a wonderful night it was.

Mrs. Viccaro informed the Board that the Security Grant was finally received on Monday but unfortunately all bid specs, quotes and work must be completed by June 30, 2009 in order to receive the Grant. Mrs. Boyle asked if the District did only some of the work could they only be reimbursed for that portion in the Grant. Mrs. Viccaro said that the Grant must be used as requested. Mrs. Viccaro said she was going to try and get it all together and hopefully get it all completed by the deadline. Mr. Currlin offered his assistance to Mrs. Viccaro in helping her complete the task at hand.

Presentations:

Technology – IT Director, Rich Fielding presented the Board with a Technology Update for District 13. Mr. Fielding gave an overview of the current technology situation in the District. He spoke at length about the improvements and changes that have been implemented since the beginning of this current school year and what he hopes to have accomplished by the end of this school year.

Mrs. Viccaro pointed out to the Board how much Mr. Fielding has saved by negotiating with vendors to get their prices down on some recent hardware purchased for the District.

Mr. Fielding also shared with the Board a list of long term goals he hopes to have in place for the District in the near future one being a “1 Laptop/1 Child” program. The District would assist parents in the purchase of a laptop computer that the student would use while they are in District and take with them after they graduate. Mr. Fielding explained how this would eliminate the need for computer labs as each student would have their own computer and it would go with them to every class. Mr. Fielding said that Apple, Dell and HP all have similar programs where they work with school districts on everything from annual leases to replacement units if a lap top becomes defective.

Language Arts Curriculum: Curriculum Director Carol Luckenbach presented the Language Arts Curriculum to the Board for their approval. A copy of the curriculum is on the website.

Mrs. Luckenbach introduced Kris Nystrom to the Board. Mr. Nystrom is the High School English Department Chair and English teacher who currently is doing an Administrative internship with Mrs. Luckenbach.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second by Mr. Currlin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Language Arts Curriculum.

New Business:

2007-2008 Annual Report - Mrs. Viccaro presented the 2007-2008 Annual Report to the Board. The Board thanked Mrs. Luckenbach and Mrs. Coffey for their work on the report.

The Board had a couple of suggestions for next year's report. They would like to include the Core Ethical Values at the beginning of the report and they would like to include a list of the colleges and universities that the graduating seniors will be attending at the end of the report.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee:

Ms. Parsons said that the Finance Committee met on February 11, 2009. Merrill Lynch was in attendance to discuss the current MAPP and Defined Benefits plans. Merrill Lynch suggested that the entire Board meet before one of their future meetings to discuss investment goals and strategies for these retirement plans.

Policy Committee:

Mr. Hicks presented the Bullying Policy and Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Board approval. Mrs. Adams suggested a couple of revisions to the Bullying Policy. Mr. Hennick suggested that the Board approve that policy in total and revisit the policy at a later date to make any changes.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second by Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Bullying Policy and the Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

On a motion by Mr. Hennick, second by Mr. Currlin, the Board of Education unanimously approved the word changes for the Graduation Competency Policy.

Mr. Hennick reported that the Personnel Policy Committee met last week and that they are in negotiations with Support Staff.

Mr. Currlin reported that he attended the Middlefield Planning and Zoning meeting and the resolution for the building project was approved.

Mr. Melnik said at the Finance Committee meeting the committee discussed that Merrill Lynch merged with Bank of America and that the District should consider merging both accounts into one which would save the District approximately \$7,000.00 per year. Mr. Melnik suggested the Board should discuss this at their next meeting.

Mrs. Boyle asked if there was any new information regarding the transportation issues. Mr. Melnik reported that Mark Walsh of TAS and Cliff Gibson of DATTCO met on February 11, 2009 and he was waiting to hear how that meeting went.

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