

October 5, 2009

(Please note: these minutes are in draft form and not yet approved by the Board of Education)

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, October 5, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Superintendent Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.; Board Chair Monica Gati, Board members Scott Baider, Linda Bulvanoski, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Carla Juhas, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi; Director of Finance and Operations Jay Hubelbank; Director of Special Services Christopher Quirk; building principals Melinda McKenna, Alice Jones and Lori Ferreira; NHS student representatives Lindsey Sieber, Jennie Schmalter and Katie Nolte; two newspaper reporter and two members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Gati called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Gati led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

III. Report from Student Representatives

Senior Class Vice President Ms. Seiber, Secretary Ms. Schmalter, and Treasurer Ms. Nolte reported on news from NHS. They told of a new unified school government where all the grades will work together; plans for Trick or Treat Street and 8th Grade Open House. They looked forward to the Superintendents' Awards Dinner, at which 3 of the school officers will be honored, and told of new learning labs at NHS which are study hall type sessions where teachers offer extra assistance to students. They also expressed satisfaction with new, uninterrupted, 45 minute lunches.

IV. Presentations

Mr. Quirk updated the Board on the opening of the STAR preschool program at Woodbury Middle School, which opened on September 8th. He explained that the program consists of 2 classrooms, each with a morning and afternoon session, and that children can attend for half or full days, and can attend daily or on selected days. The program does not run on Tuesday afternoons, for purposes of planning. He reported 23 typically developing peers, ages 3-5, are currently enrolled, along with 9 identified students. He said he and his staff have received many, unsolicited, positive reviews and the children are eager to come to school each day. He explained that the program is fully inclusive, center based and standards driven. It runs according to preparing for Kindergarten in Region 14, as well as toward meeting state pre-k benchmarks. Services are delivered using authentic opportunities in the classroom. He noted the excellence of his staff: Deborah Kavanaugh, lead teacher; Tami Gilbert and Julie Capupuzzo, classroom teachers; Kathy Reif and Gigi Leslie, OT and PT respectively; Joyce Brazauskas, speech and language pathologist; Carrie O'Donnell and Patti Gabriele, instructional support; and Jackie Smith and Lori Bennett, paraprofessionals.

Ms. McKenna offered the School Improvement Plan for Bethlehem Elementary School. She celebrated student gains from the previous year in literacy, noting that 78% of kindergarten students, 83% of grade 1 students, and 85% of grade 2 students scored at or above district benchmarks, and 80% of grade 2 students scored at or about goal on DRP testing. In fact, between the fall and spring, writing prompts needed to be revised for students performing at a higher level. She also celebrated the fact that 45% of students who received reading

intervention during the year reached grade level benchmarks by June. Utilizing the literacy specialist and tutors, students received extra "hits" of literacy instruction as needed. She attributed much of the success achieved in 2008-09 to focus on intensive literacy professional development for teachers, daily literacy instruction for students, and tracking student progress to plan focused literacy instruction. She outlined 2009-10 goals in areas of reading, writing, math and school culture for her school. She concluded with her goal of continuous improvement, which will be achieved by continuing to focus on developing and embedding instructional practices while infusing the Region 14 lesson components template and the Plan, Do, Check, Act/Adjust strategy into the work.

V. Review of Minutes

Ms. Bulvanoski made the *motion to accept the minutes of the special Board meeting of 9/16/09*; second by Mr. Paluskas; **motion carried 7-0-1** (Ms. Juhas abstained)

Ms. Bulvanoski made the *motion to accept the regular Board meeting minutes of 9/21/09*; second by Mr. Paluskas; **motion carried 8-0**.

Ms. Gati requested a *motion to add, under Old Business, addressing of policies*. The motion was made by Mr. Paluskas, seconded by Mr. Baider, and the **motion carried 8-0**.

VI. Correspondence

Ms. Gati noted receipt of a letter from William Drakeley to which a response would be drafted after consulting with counsel.

VII. Report from Chairperson

Ms. Gati reported that efforts were being made to begin taping Board meetings by the next meeting on 10/19/09

VIII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin explained that the key focus for this year will be on best instructional practices and specifically components of effective planning. His administrative council will participate in walk-throughs at each school – next Tuesday at BES, in December at MES, in February at WMS and at NHS in April. Principals will focus professional development on planning and these initiatives will carry into next year.

IX. Privilege of the Floor

Michelle Ecsedy, Woodbury, suggested reaching out to private school students for the 8th grade open house. She also endorsed allowing 8th graders to shadow at NHS if considering private school options.

Dr. Cronin agreed, and also felt it would be good to bring the middle school students to NHS more often; for instance, holding the electives fair at the high school instead of bringing the high school students and teachers to the middle school.

Ms. Jones suggested also bringing NHS graduates back more often, to showcase how well they did with their public school educations. This is done with agriscience graduates, but not graduates in general.

X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

1. Facilities – Mr. Hubelbank reported that the grant from homeland security is complete and was used for security doors at MES and BES.
2. Finances- Mr. Hubelbank reported on stimulus money received for special education and Title I costs; we will receive \$300,000 to offset state cut backs in

the educational cost sharing grant that the towns receive, and will be asked to monitor number of staff employed because of these funds and how many layoffs were avoided – how many jobs were maintained.

3. Food Services – for the Board’s information, he reported on the number of families who are behind on paying for their children’s lunches. The Region is working with them on this.
4. Transportation – Mr. Hubelbank noted that, beginning the week of 10/19, data will be collected from bus drivers on arrival times and numbers of students riding.

Mr. Hubelbank also spoke of an energy management meeting at which the district will look at reducing energy use. The program being considered guarantees a savings of 20% on energy costs.

XI. Committee Reports

For the Community Relations Committee, Ms. Gati noted that “Coffees with Bob” resume on October 16th with others scheduled for 10/30 and 11/6, all at WMS

For the Planning Committee, Ms. Bulvanoski reported that her committee met on 10/1 and discussed district initiatives for the year. She spoke of Best Instructional Practices, Student Consultation Teams (Instructional Interventions), Instructional Coaching, and Systemic Practices; in addition, Dr. Cronin clarified the responsibilities of each of the Curriculum Coordinators and what their goals and objectives for the year will be with the focus being placed on curriculum review and revision, further development and analysis of common assessments, and increasing rigor in course content and in instructional practices in the classroom. She said that Dr. Cronin also reported to her committee on the work of the data administrator and progress on school improvement plans and when they will be presented to the Board.

XII. Old Business

For the Building Committee, Mr. Hubelbank requested direction on the Nonnewaug building project. Numbers can be updated by O&G and prices for labor now would be good, although the economy is a clear downside. Ms. Juhas felt the scope of the project should be reconsidered. Ms. Corsico noted how many of the improvements would also benefit the community. Mr. Hubelbank said that the architects could break out the different project components. Mr. Baidier was interested in seeing costs for bonding. Mr. Paluskas noted that the state is not currently bonding school projects. Mr. Hubelbank explained that not much of the current building project is subject to reimbursement. Mr. Sordi anticipates some push back on any version of the project; however, he noted 2 years have been spent planning it and it is a good project. Mr. Hubelbank agreed to request cost break outs from the architects.

Dr. Cronin reminded the Board that they had previously received and reviewed policies on which counsel has been advising the region based on legislation. Revisions have been made to several based on questions and suggestions from the Board. Though the Board felt it needed more time to review several of the policies, it was ready to approve others. Ms. Corsico made a *motion to accept the following policies: Smoking Prohibited, Transportation Safety Complaints, Athletic Coaches, Drug Free Workplace, Equal Employment Opportunity, Family Medical and Pregnancy Leave, Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment, Minority Recruitment Plan, Prohibition of Recommendation of Psychotropic*

Drugs, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, and Hiring Policy (contacting previous employers. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baider and the motion carried 8-0.

XIII. New Business

1. Personnel

A. Approval of Extra Duty Appointments

1. Pam Sordi and Margaret Gildea, Senior Activities Advisors, NHS
Motion to approve, Ms. Corsico; second, Mr. Paluskas; motion carried 7-0-1 (Mr. Sordi abstained).

2. Katherine Parlato, TEAM Advisor, NHS
Motion to approve, Ms. Corsico; second, Mr. Paluskas; motion carried 8-0.

3. Erin Keating and Charles Von Hollen, Cross Country Coaches, WMS
Motion to approve, Ms. Corsico; second, Mr. Paluskas; motion carried 8-0.

B. Approval of Increase in Secretarial Assignment

Linda Bond, NHS, part time to full time ten month position
Motion to approve, Ms. Corsico; second, Ms. Bulvanoski; motion carried 8-0.

C. Approval of Field Trip

NHS agriscience students to Toronto, Canada, 11/12- 11/14, 2009
Motion to approve, Ms. Corsico; second, Mr. Paluskas; motion carried 8-0.

XIV. Board Announcements

None

XV. Executive Session

Ms. Gati requested a motion to move to Executive Session to discuss pending litigation.
Ms. Corsico made the motion, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. Motion carried 8-0.
Mr. Hubelbank was invited to attend the session, as well.

XIV. Adjournment

Following the session, Ms. Corsico made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, and the **motion carried 8-0**. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Bulvanoski, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education