

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, October 6, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Board Chairperson Linda Bulvanoski, and Board members Scott Baider, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Monica Gati, Carla Juhas, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi. Also present, Superintendent of Schools Robert Cronin; Director of Fiscal Services Jay Hubelbank; Woodbury Middle School Principal Alice Jones; Director of Special Services Christopher Quirk; CIAC/CAS representative Robert Deasy; newspaper reporters and about 8 members of the community.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bulvanoski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Bulvanoski led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Bulvanoski offered the following *motion*: *That the Board add the following item to tonight's meeting agenda: consideration of the resignation of Ruth Foster (Executive Session anticipated).*

Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and the **motion carried 7-0**.

Ms. Bulvanoski further *moved that the Board add the following item to tonight's meeting agenda: approval of the resignation of Ruth Foster (action anticipated)*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and the **motion carried 7-0**.

Ms. Bulvanoski *moved to add the above item to New Business*. Mr. Paluskas seconded that motion, and the **motion carried 7-0**.

Ms. Bulvanoski made the *motion for consideration of the above, in Executive Session, to occur after Old Business but before New Business on the meeting agenda*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and the **motion carried 7-0**.

III. REPORT FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Daphne Kounavis and Kristen Blum reported on activities and events at Nonnewaug High School. They spoke of the unity and teamwork created at Senior Day; told that the contest, "Mr. Nonnewaug," would be rescheduled; and reminded the audience of favorite upcoming events, Trick or Treat Street and Dancing with the Teachers. They explained that the Senior Café is being prepared – seniors will be permitted to use what was the faculty lounge as a privilege and are working with the administration on guidelines for its use. Student Council is also working on a draft of an honor code to be presented in administrative homeroom in November. All fall sports are going well, and the football team recorded its first ever win.

IV. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Juhas made a *motion to approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education Meeting of September 15, 2008*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and the **motion carried 6-0-1**. As she was not in attendance at the meeting, Ms. Juhas abstained.

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V. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Bulvanoski reported having received correspondence from Mr. Quirk, who requested the opportunity to present the idea of unified sports for Region 14. She called on Mr. Quirk, who introduced Mr. Deasy, explaining that he would speak of a meaningful way to offer inclusive sports. Mr. Deasy explained that he seeks to implement school-based programs in Connecticut, pre-k through 12, and had spoken with Mr. Quirk about one at NHS. The idea is to combine regular and special needs students in sports to the benefit of both groups. He proposes a \$3600 start up grant for an NHS program. The ideal situation is to find other schools with which to compete, typically during a half-time game. He urged the audience to check out the CIAC/CAS website to find a tournament to watch. He took questions from the Board.

Ms. Bulvanoski asked if the grant had already been submitted, and Mr. Deasy said he awaits it in the mail. Ms. Corsico asked the next step, and Mr. Deasy said he will meet with Jim Parker, the Athletic Director at NHS, Mr. Quirk, and student groups who would be potential partners, as well as finding a certified coach and working up a schedule for actual games. Ms. Corsico asked if the teams are co-ed and was told they are. She asked if NHS team players would be the partners and was told they would not, or at least not players currently involved in a season. Mr. Quirk confirmed that the goal would be an inclusion team for basketball season.

VI. REPORT FROM CHAIRPERSON

Ms. Bulvanoski reported as the Board's representative to ASAP. At that group's last meeting, it was reported that the first youth AA meeting was held and well attended, as was the first group meeting for grandparents.

VII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Cronin reported on research based school improvement and both reviewed the work of the past two years as well as looked forward to what needs to be done.

He spoke of systemic improvements in the region, including work with the CT Center for School Change, now in its third year, and the Systemic Instruction Improvement Grant (SIIP) now also in its third of five years. He spoke of changes resulting from reconfiguring the elementary schools, including an added 2.5 hours of PD per week for teachers. He spoke of the benefits of the new positions of K-12 Literacy Integration Specialist, K-8 Science Coordinator, and K-8 Math Coach in terms of implementing plans into classroom practice. He outlined curriculum revision, instructional practices, data-driven decision making and leadership development.

Dr. Cronin offered a number of recommendations to the Board. He suggested review of the language arts curriculum to determine if desired results are being achieved and benchmarks reached. He wants to determine if teachers see effects and impact to curriculum due to the math coach. He also wants to study school improvement plans – how they are implemented and whether they need modification.

Dr. Cronin also recommended holding off on filling the position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction. He wants to see if current initiatives are moving the region in the desired direction so that, when the position is filled, it will be with the person best qualified to continue those efforts. Further, Dr. Cronin recommended expanding the role of the K-12 Integrated Literacy Specialist to include a language arts/social studies connection. He wants to begin the work on the social studies curriculum in grade 12 and work backward to kindergarten, noting that scope and sequence for social studies has already been identified. He noted that the social studies

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VII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT (CONT)

curriculum at the middle and high school levels exists, but is dated, and he wants to step up the speed in completing it.

Ms. Bulvanoski explained the differences between enduring understanding and essential questions. She considers it a good system that prepares students for inquiry based assessments. There was discussion about the amount of time spent in class by the K-12 specialist, feeling the more time in class the better. The benefits of the Understanding by Design model was discussed, and questions about reaching goals without a Director of Curriculum were asked.

Dr. Cronin assured the Board that school improvement plans and math curriculum work in K-5 would be accomplished. He and the building principals are overseeing the work of the coaches in buildings. Ms. Bulvanoski saw benefits to the timing of bringing the curriculum director in once the resources are in the classrooms. Ms. Corsico felt ideally we would do both, but with limited financial resources, she saw the benefit of the coaches' work in the classrooms, after which a director of curriculum would be brought in.

Mr. Baider asked at what point the position would be filled. Dr. Cronin felt not this school year; this model would be implemented and he would report mid-year on whether it is meeting our needs. The position would be included in the next budget, he said. Mr. Baider asked for specifics in reporting, as speed of delivery is needed with regard to curriculum. Ms. Corsico added that curriculum documents plus training in instruction are both needed, noting that instruction drives even a mediocre curriculum.

VIII. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Pam Gengenbach of Woodbury noted 137 fewer students, an astounding number to her, and representing a grade level. She seeks a review of why that occurred and points to reconfiguration as the cause.

Bill Mulready of Bethlehem submitted a letter to the Board. Ms. Bulvanoski explained that his previous letter had been forwarded to Board counsel, as would this one be.

Duncan McDougal of Woodbury contended that the Board knows how the majority feels about the busing situation. Also, it is "mind boggling" to him that so much curriculum writing needs to be done. He suggests "stealing" curriculum from other school systems, so teachers can spend time teaching.

(Mr. Sordi arrived at 8:15 pm, and subsequent motions will reflect 8 Board members present)

Gary Suslavich of Woodbury asked where money for the curriculum coordinator position would be reallocated. He thanked Dr. Cronin for his presentation but noted it lacked engagement with parents, who are not included in the plans. He noted new state regulations for posting agendas on websites within 24 hours of a meeting, and minutes within 7 days after a meeting.

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IX. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF FISCAL SERVICES

Mr. Hubelbank offered several screen projections to show changes in enrollment as well as an accounting of where students have gone. A smaller incoming kindergarten class than the outgoing senior class, as well as the typical movement of rising 5th and 8th grade students to private/religious school options, accounted for the difference.

He also spoke of bus arrival, and total route, times. He offered data on daily mileage for buses.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Sordi, reporting for the Building Committee, said his committee had met, reviewed educational specifications, and will meet again on 10/15. Antinozzi Associates are gathering more research numbers for the committee.

Mr. Baider, reporting for the Facilities Committee, noted that his committee had met tonight and discussed repair/improvement initiatives. Of note were bids for WMS tennis court repairs, which should be done by Thanksgiving; replacement of 5 classrooms' windows at that school; and long range understanding of costs involved in proposed plans. A report on Pop Warner field use was also heard, he said.

Dr. Cronin and Ms. Gati reported for the Personnel Committee. Applications for the position of NHS principal had been reviewed and about half of the 14 candidates were out-of-state. Two viable candidates were identified during this unusual posting period. Dr. Cronin noted the Board policy of bringing 3-5 candidates forward for interview, and recommended reopening the search in January, closing applications in February, interviewing in March with the goal of filling the position in the spring and having a new principal in place by July 1, 2009. He reported that Kimberly Gallo and Eric Bergeron have agreed to stay on in interim capacities for the school year.

Ms. Bulvanoski reported for the Planning Committee. Dr. Cronin has recommended reducing the phase-in program for next year's kindergarten class. Also, ten families took advantage of the after school care program during this year's phase-in of the kindergarteners.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 8:45 p.m., Ms. Bulvanoski made a *motion to enter Executive Session to consider the resignation of Ruth Foster*. Ms. Corsico seconded the motion and the **motion carried 8-0**. All Board members, Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank were present.

Following Executive Session, at approximately 9:15 pm, Ms. Bulvanoski *moved that the Board accept the resignation of Ruth Foster*. Ms. Corsico seconded the motion and the **motion carried 8-0**.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel

a. Non-Tenured Teacher Employment Termination

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion that the Board give no further consideration to this agenda item*. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Sordi. The **motion carried 8-0**.

b. Extra Duty Appointments

Dr. Cronin requested a motion regarding the extra duty position recommendations listed in Board members' packets. Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to approve the appointments as posted*. Mr. Baider seconded the motion, and the **motion carried 8-0**.

2. Ms. Bulvanoski requested a *motion to approve the field trip to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IA*. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Ms. Corsico. The **motion carried 8-0**.

XIV. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Baider. The **motion carried 8-0**.
The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carla Juhas, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education