

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, January 20, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Board Vice Chairperson Monica Gati, and Board members Scott Baider, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Carla Juhas, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi. Also present, Superintendent of Schools Robert Cronin; Director of Fiscal Services Jay Hubelbank; Principals Dawn Hochsprung, Alice Jones, and Melinda McKenna; Vice Principal Jeffrey Turner; Interim Principal Kimberly Gallo and Interim Vice Principal Eric Bergeron; Director of Special Services Christopher Quirk; K-8 Math Coach Anne Uberti; Guidance Counselor Carol Tomkalski; Social Worker Joy Geraci; Science Teacher Christopher York; Certified Public Accountant Charles Heaven; and about 4 members of the community.

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of Ms. Bulvanoski, Ms. Gati called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

### **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

### **III. PRESENTATIONS**

Ms. Gati called on Mr. Heaven to comment on his recently completed audit of Region 14, copies of which were made available to the Board ahead of the meeting. Mr. Heaven explained that the audit was done in accordance with standards set by the United States and that planning for it includes discussions with central office personnel, special education staff and personnel responsible for the hot lunch program. His timetable begins in the spring, test work is conducted in June and July, the audit is completed in November, and minor reports are completed in December. He noted that questions and follow up were done in a timely fashion by the central office and added that the region is constantly looking to improve. His audit included minor recommendations; however, he said it was "unqualified," meaning there were no exceptions, no findings or questions regarding the region's business practices.

Mr. Hubelbank added that the Finance Committee had reviewed the audit with Mr. Heaven prior to the Board meeting. He wanted to publicly thank Don Marsh, Jackie Rinaldi, Karen Victoria and Tammy Wasko, his central office staff, for all their help and good work.

Ms. Jones then presented the school improvement plan for Woodbury Middle School, noting that the format would be recognizable as the one used by Ms. Hochsprung and Ms. McKenna before her. She spoke of her Vision Team and guiding beliefs. She explained goals in reading, including having all students reading at their individual levels and incorporating a literacy block as a special. She spoke of flexible grouping in math and extra work on percents/fractions/decimals, a recognized

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**III. PRESENTATIONS (CONT)**

weakness for Region 14 students. She explained that the framework used in writing prompts is being utilized in teaching students writing skills. She spoke of school culture and community building and that everyone is involved in this. WMS is piloting a 6<sup>th</sup> grade advisory group and teachers are volunteering their time for this. Extra curricular activities are held Monday through Thursday to allow for more involvement by students.

Asked if the reading special facilitates language arts goals, she responded that it does. Asked if writing prompts are compared to previous ones, she said they are. Asked if weaknesses in writing are identified, she answered that they are, using the six traits of successful writing. Asked if different types of writing are explored, she responded that sixth grade students work of expository writing, while seventh and eighth graders do persuasive writing. Asked if students set their own writing goals and/or rewrite their papers, she said that the teachers identify needs and goals for students to work toward when rewriting their papers.

**V. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES**

Ms. Juhas made *a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 5, 2009*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion, and **the motion carried 6-0-1**. Ms. Juhas abstained, not having been present for the meeting.

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Gati acknowledged an email correspondence received by all Board members regarding boys' basketball.

**VII. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON**

None.

**VIII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Cronin outlined an organizational chart for Region 14. He spoke of changes introduced in the past two years during which the Region looked at professional development, benchmark assessments and the work of the administrative council. Based on the needs of the region, he is suggesting adding positions such as language arts and social studies coordinators for grades 7-12 and would look to federally fund a K-12 coordinator of special services. He explained that the region has been working to make practices systemic. A goal will be to accomplish the new positions through grants and by reassigning current staff. He does not intend to add staff. Asked if a K-6 science coordinator would develop and replace curricula, he responded that he would, on a multi-year cycle.

Dr. Cronin also distributed a draft school calendar for the next 3 years. He asked the Board to review it.

Regarding the preschool, Dr. Cronin reported having met with the staff and Mr. Quirk and he said the staff has made steps forward in terms of program planning. He spoke of the options for the location of the preschool; ideally, BES would be used, but the state department consultant had

### VIII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT (CONT)

advised him that the location is secondary to choosing a location where it can remain, and not move from year to year. Dr. Cronin has become less confident of BES and is now considering MES. Added parking at BES is costly, about \$14,000, and a dedicated bathroom is needed, which is possible at MES. The ratio of typical to non-typical students is to be 1:1.

Mr. Baider expressed concern about the transition preschoolers would make, from MES to BES and back to MES. Dr. Cronin agreed, but saw opportunities for such things as "buddies" and utilizing the proximity to WMS. Ms. Gati noted that the preschool now is in none of our schools; therefore, a similar transition sequence currently exists. Mr. Quirk noted that typical peers would be applying for admission, ideally, by the end of February. A cost analysis will be studied during an upcoming Board workshop. Reassignment of staff will fill the preschool teacher position(s).

### IX. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Tom Arras of Woodbury questioned the Board about a required meeting with the boards of finance of the two towns prior to teacher negotiations. Dr. Cronin said he would get him information about that.

Pam Gengenbach of Woodbury worried about the short time frame for the preschool move; costs have not been analyzed yet students are being enrolled; wondered if the move should not be done this August; asked the Board to think it through carefully.

Susan Scherf of Bethlehem holds the Board accountable for its actions; perceives no accountability for reconfiguration; sees no educational benefit; perceives lost educational time.

### X. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF FISCAL SERVICES

Mr. Hubelbank reported having met with building and district administrators as he begins the work on the 2009-2010 budget. The Board will participate in an upcoming workshop to study next year's needs.

He also noted recent problems with pipes at MES, and recent power outages in 3 buildings. Also, a pipe in the NHS greenhouse recently broke. All have been addressed.

### XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Building-** Mr. Sordi reported that this committee met on 1/12 and is close to bringing a proposal to the Board. They have revisited the field portion, are reviewing costs and will meet again to wrap things up.
2. **Finance-** Mr. Cosgriff reported that this committee met tonight with Mr. Heaven and reviewed the audit. He made *a motion to accept the audit as presented*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. **The motion carried 7-0.**
3. **Personnel-** Ms. Gati noted that this committee met to review the organizational chart, and to discuss the position of NHS principal. Interviews for that position will begin in March.
4. **Planning-** In the absence of Ms. Bulvanoski, Dr. Cronin reported that this committee had met to review music offerings at NHS; additionally, Ms. McKenna gave an update on BES.

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**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Hubelbank asked the Board to review the materials on food and beverages, with the goal of finalizing policy at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Mr. Sordi asked if the region participates in the National School Lunch Program, which it does, and whether there is a wellness policy, which there is.

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Cronin requested *a motion to approve the family medical leave of Sarah Mazzei, from approximately 3/19/09 until the end of the school year.* Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff and **the motion carried 7-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested *a motion to approve the NHS Cheerleaders trip to Florida from March 20-23, 2009.* Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. That **motion carried 7-0.**

**XIV. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Corsico made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. The **motion carried 7-0.** The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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