

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, January 5, 2009, 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, 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; Interim Principal Kimberly Gallo and Interim Vice Principal Eric Bergeron; Director of Special Services Christopher Quirk; K-8 Math Coach Anne Uberti; NHS Math Teacher and Union President Timothy Cleary; Agriscience Director William Davenport and students Amanda Elsenboss, along with her mom, Aimee Mard, Kerry McDonald and her mom, and Maxwell Alexander; NHS student representative Tessa Kalin; reporters and about 4 members of the community.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bulvanoski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Ms. Bulvanoski requested a *motion to add to the agenda, under Old Business, discussion of the teachers' contract.*

Mr. Cosgriff made the motion, seconded by Ms. Gati, and the **motion carried 6-0.**

III. REPORT FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Kalin, Treasurer of the Senior Class Council at Nonnewaug High School, notified the Board and audience of tomorrow night's agriscience college fair, the guidance department's upcoming senior scholarship information night on 1/28/09, and exams scheduled for the week of 1/23/09. She spoke of the student honor code which is undergoing final revisions with student input, and welcomed everyone to come out to support winter athletics. She added that the drama club will present the play, "Harvey," on 1/30 and 1/31, and invited all to attend.

Ms. Corsico arrived at this point and motions will reflect seven members present.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Bulvanoski called on the Agriscience students for a report on their recent trip to Europe. Mr. Alexander offered a slide show with photos from the various countries visited and highlighting activities and competitions in which the students participated. In turn, each of the four students explained what the trip meant to them and expressed their appreciation to the Board for its support of the rare opportunity. They answered questions from Dr. Cronin and the Board, and the two parent chaperones present also described trip highlights. Mr. Davenport added his appreciation to the Board, as well as to the owners of Arethusa Farm, who generously financially sponsored the students and accompanied them on the trip.

January 5, 2009

IV. PRESENTATIONS (CONT)

Ms. Hochsprung presented the Improvement Plan for Mitchell Elementary School. She explained that instructional decisions are based on a number of Board and school goals; detailed reading, writing and math goals; and outlined methods for measuring progress. She spoke about ways to achieve continuous improvement and steps being taken at her school toward that goal.

She responded to questions from Dr. Cronin and the Board.

She explained that topic tests in math are like "chapter tests," and results from these are used for flexible grouping of students. When asked about self-reflective writing, she said that response to literature is an opportunity for this type of writing. Asked about flexible math grouping for third grade students, she said that paraprofessionals assist students until mid year. Asked about the science program, she said it is a focus for this year. Science coordinator, Nadine Pratt, has been consulting, and 4 blocks per week are dedicated to science in the form of non-fiction reading and experiments and activities with the SCOPE program.

V. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

In the absence of Ms. Juhas, Ms. Corsico made a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 15, 2008*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion, and the **motion carried 6-0-1**. Ms. Gati abstained, not having been present for the meeting.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Bulvanoski noted an email from a parent interested in serving on the committee which will work to revise the Mission Statement. She and the Board received emails regarding NHS boys' basketball and this matter will be referred to Attorney Roseann Padula as a personnel issue.

VII. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

None.

VIII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Cronin reported that Mastery Testing will take place during March, from 3/2-3/27, although a number of those days will be used for make-ups. All Connecticut students in grades 3-8 will take the writing prompt on March 3rd. CAPT testing will be during the same time period.

In his effort to keep the Board apprised of the plans for the preschool, Dr. Cronin explained that he will meet with the team on Thursday, and will get an update then on the staff's progress.

IX. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Pam Gengenbach, of Woodbury, cannot see what has been gained with a K-2, 3-5 configuration of the elementary schools. She feels the idea that a better education was being had at Bethlehem Elementary affected the Board's decision. She feels that sacrifices have been made by the families of elementary aged students and she wants to know why these are being made.

Mary Ann Sprague, of Bethlehem, and Stop Planned Parenthood representative, wanted to make everyone aware that the student attitudes and behaviors survey will be given to middle and high school students. She does not feel it should be given in English classes and wants to get Planned Parenthood and sex education programs out of our schools.

January 5, 2009

X. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF FISCAL SERVICES

Mr. Hubelbank referenced materials Board members had received tonight regarding foods and beverages served outside the school lunch program. He asked them to review these and plan to discuss them at the next meeting.

He also thanked bus drivers for their performance during recent winter weather. He reported they had been on time and safe in their travels.

Finally, he reported that the region is in full budget mode at present. By the end of the month he hopes to present a budget to the Board.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Teachers' Contract

Mr. Cosgriff spoke of the negotiations process, noting participation by community members from each town and by board counsel. He mentioned that mediation began at 6:00 pm and concluded around 3:30 am the following morning.

Mr. Baider said the negotiations committee went in with clear focus on what it wanted to achieve, the culture toward which the region wanted to move, and the Board's interest in attracting and retaining good teachers. He was very pleased with the outcome as negotiations, he said, are never easy; but, there was good give and take and both sides understood what the other wanted.

Dr. Cronin thanked Mr. Cleary and the negotiations team. He outlined some of the language changes to the contract:

1. Personal days for teachers will be capped at 3 per year as opposed to having an unlimited number.
2. Tutoring requires steps and the student's own teacher is the first choice. The new contract incorporates flexibility when this is not possible.
3. Planning periods at Woodbury Middle School are stated as being the same length as an academic period.
4. The sick leave bank is maxed out at 540 instead of 360.
5. Child rearing leave is now limited to one leave per child.
6. Prep periods must now be balanced to meet the needs of students, parents and teachers.
7. Work days for guidance counselors in the summer have been reduced from 15 to 5, and the director of guidance from 20 to 10 days.

Mr. Hubelbank discussed financial details of the contract, including salary and benefit changes, stipends for activities and savings realized from decreases in guidance summer hours.

Dr. Cronin summarized by explaining that the changes put the region into Litchfield County averages both on entry level and step 13 pay rates. Region 14, he said, is above average for wealth yet it was below average for salaries, and the changes made in the contract closes this gap.

January 5, 2009

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Cronin requested *motions to approve the following teacher retirements*. Mr. Paluskas, in making each motion, thanked the retirees for their years of services and talent, and wished them well in their retirements.

1. Timothy Cleary, Math Teacher, NHS, after 35 years of service to Region 14, effective 6/30/09. Mr. Cleary, who was present, received enthusiastic applause from the audience. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 7-0**.
2. Lynne Kearney, Music Teacher, NHS and WMS, after 10 years of service to Region 14, effective 6/30/09. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 7-0**.
3. Charles Planz, Math Teacher, NHS, after 37 years of service to Region 14, effective 6/30/09. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 7-0**.
4. Tara Rickart, Guidance Counselor and former Math teacher, NHS, after 36 years of service to Region 14, effective 6/30/09. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 7-0**.
5. Adele "Rusty" Gray, Grade 4 Teacher, MES, after 46 years of service to Region 14, effective 6/30/09. Ms. Corsico made the motion, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. The **motion carried 7-0**.

XIV. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Ms. Gati. The **motion carried 7-0**.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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