

Regional School District 14 www.ctreg14.org

December 7, 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, December 7, 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; NHS Principal Lori Ferreira; WMS Principal Alice Jones; NHS student council representative Lindsey Sieber; one newspaper reporter and one member of the community.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Gati called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Gati led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Report from Student Representative

Ms. Sieber reported on recent events at Nonnewaug High School, including the FFA plant and wreath sale and Animals for Life pet adoption this past weekend; the Agriscience college fair attended by about 200; the successful school play on November 21-22; and recent National Honors Society blood drive which yielded 62 units of blood and earned the school a third in state placement for donations. She noted that a new issue of the Chief Advocate school paper is out; senior class council is collecting old cell phones, ipods and other small electronics as a fundraiser; and reported on the fall sports banquet, at which athletes earning All-State and varsity letters were honored, which food supplied by the Booster Club.

IV. Presentation

Ms. Ferreira presented the improvement plan for Nonnewaug High School, highlighting goals in curriculum and assessment, instruction, leadership and learning expectations, and school culture. She reported CAPT, SAT, AP and CTE scores for NHS students and answered questions from Board members. Ms. Juhas asked her opinion of the SAT scores, which Ms. Ferreira saw room for improvement in and felt AP courses would be a factor in pulling them up. Asked about ACT tests, she said students were counseled on the importance of these and felt more of them would take them now. Dr. Cronin asked about plans for increased rigor starting next school year. Ms. Ferreira replied that as more rigorous learning tasks and curriculum assessments are built in to curricula, they are being utilized, even now. Ms. Corsico asked about high school reform as it relates to improving credits. NHS is at 21, and she asked if budgetary reasons prevent us from bumping credit requirements to 24, which Dr. Cronin acknowledged was partly the reason. Ms. Ferreira noted that many NHS students have well over 21 credits. Mr. Paluskas confirmed that NHS offers 13 AP courses and asked if they are full classes, which Ms. Ferreira said they are not. In many cases, AP students join an honors class and work beyond those course requirements to earn AP credit. AP English for juniors is also being considered.

V. Review of Minutes (action anticipated)

Regular Board Meeting of November 9, 2009

Ms. Bulvanoski made a *motion to approve these minutes*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. The **motion carried 7-0-1**. Ms. Bulvanoski abstained, having left that meeting prior to its conclusion.

VI. Correspondence

None.

VII. Report from Chairperson

Ms. Gati reminded the Board that a new teachers' contract was negotiated last year. In light of the current state of the economy, she informed them that the President of the Teachers' Union, Angelo Casagrande, had been sent a letter today from her in which she asked for the opportunity to discuss the possibility of some concessions on the part of that group. She will update the Board on his response.

Also, she noted challenges occurring in the different schools: Rachel's Challenge and WMS, the Code Marathon at MES and Truth about Hate at NHS. She offered a challenge to the citizens of Bethlehem and Woodbury to let the Board hear from them about Region 14 programs and experiences to assist them with budget preparations for next year; for example, do people use the tennis courts weekly, etc.

VIII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin reported on his attendance at the annual Litchfield County Superintendents Student Award Banquet, along with six recipients from Region 14: Shauna Clifford and Vincent Pistritto from WMS, and Jennie Schmalzer, Katie Nolte, Greg Bove and Justine Greisenaur from NHS. He highlighted several of the many accomplishments of each student.

He also distributed protocol for reviewing Board policies in advance of adopting them. He supplied Board members with packets of revised policies for their review, and explained how he would like them to communicate questions and/or comments on them.

IX. Privilege of the Floor

Pam Gengenbach talked about the Energy Education presentation at the last Board meeting and costs associated with the program and accompanying software. She thought it seemed like the Board didn't feel comfortable with it that day and that the decision seemed rushed. She wishes there was less pressure to decide things so quickly. She reminded the Board members that they were elected, have brains, and that she wishes they would ask more questions and express what they think.

Mr. Hubelbank was asked to clarify inaccuracies in Ms. Gengenbach's perception of the process. He began his research into Energy Education about a year ago; said the software is from a 3rd party; reminded her that we are reimbursed for any shortfall and that the cost of the internal employee comes from savings realized; that savings will come from conserving, not rates; and that the budget remains flat and is not affected by this contract.

Ms. Corsico reiterated that the net effect to the budget is 0. Mr. Hubelbank confirmed this, adding that money saved can be used elsewhere in the budget. Mr. Baider added that the program is initiated and in place for four months before any payments are made.

X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Hubelbank reported on his efforts surrounding the Clean Energy Program. He is looking into the possibility of pooling resources with the two towns to acquire solar panels and similar equipment. He also told of students' need to be able to use files back and forth from home. WMS, and then NHS will utilize an e-pal system, hosted off line, to email files to themselves with web addresses provided to them from the schools.

He also spoke of the district's current administrative software programs: Admin Plus, Gradequick and Edline. These three combined cost the district about \$23,000 annually. He would ask that consideration be given to what is considered a superior program, PowerSchool, which would cost the district \$15,000 annually for the first three start-up years, and then \$9,600 annually after that. The advantages of the PowerSchool option were discussed, and it was verified that we have a written proposal. Ms. Gati requested a *motion to direct Mr. Hubelbank to enter into a contract with PowerSchool for three years*.

Mr. Baider made the motion, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. **The motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Hubelbank also provided a handout showing, along with many data categories, that approximately 21 of the 30 million dollar school budget goes directly to salaries.

XI. Committee Reports

Reporting for the Personnel Committee, Ms. Gati said her committee had met this morning regarding the Assistant Principal vacancy at NHS.

For the Planning Committee, Ms. Bulvanoski reported on her 12/3 meeting where a graduate student's research proposal was considered and approved, Ms. Ferreira's NEASC timeline was reviewed, and free passes for Board members to attend sporting events were declined, though the offer was appreciated. Criteria for L2 band and chorus were also discussed.

XII. Old Business

None.

XIII. New Business

Approval of Resignation

Kimberly Gallo, Assistant Principal, Nonnewaug High School, effective 1/19/2010

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve this resignation*. Mr. Cosgriff seconded the motion, with regret. **The motion carried 8-0.** Ms. Gati wished Ms. Gallo well as Principal of Shepaug High School.

Mr. Paluskas added thanks for her years of service, noting how well regarded she was.

Approval of Leave of Absence

Brenda Cleary-Williams, Literacy Specialist, Nonnewaug High School, from approximately 2/22/2010 until 4/2/2010 for maternity leave

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve this leave*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **The motion carried 8-0.**

Approval of Appointment to Extra Duty Positions

1. Jennifer Armour, Cheerleading Coach, WMS
2. Charles Von Hollen, Video Events Coordinator, BOE
3. Lisa Gombos and Maureen McCurdy, Video Events Coordinators, Athletic/Other

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve these appointments*, seconded by Mr. Baider.

The motion carried 8-0.

XIV. Board Announcements

.None.

XV. Executive Session

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue*, seconded by Mr. Baider. **The motion carried 8-0.**

Following the session, Ms. Juhas made a *motion to waive the Board policy on administrative hiring for the Assistant Principal position at Nonnewaug High School,*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas.

The motion carried 8-0.

XVI. Adjournment

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Baider, and the **motion carried 8-0.**

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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