

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Monday, May 5, 2014 at Nonnewaug High School, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophieazane Bartlett, George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, John Swendsen, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Director of Instruction Sue Domanico; WMS Principal Alice Jones and faculty members Lucinda Hart and Liberty Swift Fitzpatrick; student representative Vincent Pistrutto; Technology Director Paul Ciotti; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Janet Morgan

Audience members included: reporter Mike Preato and about 6 additional members of the public

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

**II. Review of the Minutes**

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 21, 2014*.

Entered by Mr. Cosgriff, and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 6-0-1** with Ms. Bartlett abstaining.

**III. Presentation(s)/Reports to the Board**

Mr. Goeler began by reporting that he delivered 89 dictionaries, on behalf of the Tribury Rotary, to grade 3 students at MES. Then, he read a letter submitted by Lion Peter Perkinson expressing the club's appreciation for the use of the NHS auditorium to host the Army Band concert, as well as the use of the MES property for the Haunted Hayride.

Ms. Jones presented information, along with Ms. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Hart, about merging English Language Arts and Social Studies for grade 7 students at WMS. They explained the rationale for combining these two subjects, how doing so is consistent with Common Core and Social Studies standards, and covered how they make it work in terms of units of study and learning tasks. They showed examples of student work, described the variety of learning resources used as well as independent reading and use of the internet, and offered feedback from both students and parents about the program.

Mr. Bauer asked what additional resources are needed to enhance this program. Ms. Jones replied that technology has enabled them to acquire online subscriptions and other resources, but that additional devices would be valuable. Students are reading on their phones, for instance, so more devices would help.

Ms. Domanico commented that the middle school program is a vanguard in combining disciplines, and it is successful because it is well thought out and organized. It puts the district well ahead of the curve in what the state is requiring.

Vincent updated the board on goings on at WMS and NHS. He noted that middle school music students piloted a music/fine arts assessment. He also spoke about the Tri-M mentorship program, where WMS students travel to NHS for music lessons. He feels that this introduction to music at NHS shows students they don't have to choose between sports and music when they get here; rather, they can find a balance and do all the things that interest them. He also told about the March Madness event at WMS that was a huge success and that sounded like fun to him.

Vincent also reported on the FBLA state leadership conference attended by NHS students, earning gold key chapter status (1 of 3 in CT). He also noted the 9-5 Musical, Top 10% Banquet, Senior (Citizen) Prom, and the beginning of AP exams.

**IV. Strategic Plan Status and Update**

Ms. Domanico gave an update on the work of district leadership. The Strategic Planning Core Team will need to reconvene to review the relevance/structure of the 4 overarching goals; to review format; to determine actions needing to be carried over, updated and added for the coming year; to develop action steps for next year and to update glossary terms.

A Curriculum/Professional Development Council (CPDC) has essentially completed its work. The group has identified essential 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills; created a timeline for curriculum revision; developed recommendations for PD; and communicated paradigm shifts.

Ms. Domanico thanked those who served on the CPDC: Alice Jones, Eric Bergeron, MaryLou Torre, Kim Culkin, Rita Cole, Carol Gonthier, Joann Wright, Shelley Rinaldi, Kathryn Scruggs, Deborah Massimin, Tami Gilbert, Sarah Mazzei, Lucinda Hart, Fiona Docherty, Nadine Pratt, and Maria Sortito.

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Lastly, the CSDE requires districts to create Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDEC), so Region 14 will merge the existing CPDC group and the teacher evaluation committee into a PDEC to carry forward the work of advising the district on PD, especially related to the Educator Evaluation and Growth process.

#### V. Privilege of the Floor

Tom Arras, Woodbury, thanked the board for how the budget was put together this year. He found it much easier to decipher. He cited statute requiring the board to present estimated receipts and expenditures for 2013-14 and 2014-15, estimated surplus/deficit, bonded debt, and estimated per pupil expenditure during the budget meeting that preceded the board meeting. The board did not present those figures, though he could find all but the surplus/deficit in the budget document.

Mr. Chapman explained that the board is required to *have* a statement of those figures, which it does. Mr. Arras believed the figures are to be presented. Mr. Chapman interpreted the chairman's statement as saying the statement of figures needs to exist, and it does. Mr. Arras asked if the information is available to the public and was told it is. He was given a copy at the end of the meeting.

#### VI. Facilities, Finance and Operations Update

Mr. Bauer had no finance report, but urged everyone to get out and vote tomorrow.

Ms. Van Aken was unavailable for the last safety meeting, but Mr. Bauer reported that work is progressing on the safety plan for the state, and user name/password are all that is needed for background checks to begin.

There have been no building committee meetings.

Mr. Chapman received an update on a partial ruling in the Waterbury case and will look to gain a better understanding of next steps.

Ms. Brown noted upcoming flower sales, a wonder Senior (Citizen) Fling hosted by John Dominello's students, and a recently filmed roundtable discussion between Mr. Goeler and Ms. Domanico. Her Public Relations committee will next meet on 5/20.

#### VII. Safety Update

No further report.

#### VIII. Other Business

Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to approve the Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip for Team Beta to Battlecry@WPI Robotics Competition, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA, May 24-25, 2014, for approximately 20 students and 5 faculty/parent chaperones, via parent vehicles, and funded through the team's Student Activity Account and student payments.* Mr. Cosgriff seconded the motion. Discussion centered around the use of parent vehicles for transportation, and whether those parents had been or could be background checked. It was noted that the group has traveled this way in the past and parents sign off that they understand fellow parents will be providing transportation. It was presumed that an umbrella policy would cover the district for this. *The motion was modified to include the contingencies that liability would be investigated and background checks, if possible by that date, would be done.* **The motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Chapman explained that the board would consider a parent challenge to an athletic eligibility issue at NHS. The Board would act under policy 1312 covering public complaints. He supplied the board with copies of correspondence, timelines, handbook explanations of requirements, and other documents pertinent to the case. He saw 2 issues: weighting of grades and how that affects participation, and communication of those requirements. He noted the student handbook doesn't address weighting grades as pertains to athletics and acknowledged communication weaknesses there. The athletic handbook more clearly explains that unweighted grades are used. He asked board members for input.

Ms. Van Aken favored the board taking no action, and upholding the administration's decision in this matter. The rules are clear, she said, and the board should not overrule a decision already made.

Ms. Brown has seen a similar situation in the past and said it's heartbreaking, in a senior year, to be ineligible, but felt we have to stand firm on the rules. It's a tough lesson, a difficult situation, but it is also clear what the rules are and there isn't much the BoE can do. We need to follow CIAC rules.

Mr. Chapman reiterated that one thing that can be done is to recommend additions to the handbook(s) to make the rules abundantly clear for the future and that it is the unweighted average that will be used.

Ms. Brown urged contact between coaches and students to monitor eligibility, but the CIAC is firm – if coaches let ineligible athletes play, they lose the season.

Mr. Bauer was interested to know, per Bill Nemeck, whether other schools use unweighted averages. It was noted that, even if they don't, we do.

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Mr. Cosgriff also urged making sure such students' situations are known to counselors, teachers, coaches to address potential ineligibility before it occurs. He, too, favored upholding the administration's decision.

The board advised Mr. Goeler that is would be supporting the decision that was made by the administration. Follow up with Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Nemec would be needed to look at handbook changes/additions and to make clear eligibility requirements.

IX. **Adjournment**

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 7-0**.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:02 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

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Carol Ann Brown, Secretary  
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 5/7/14