

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Monday, December 16, 2013 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, Janet Morgan, John Swendsen, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Director of Instruction Sue Domanico; NHS Student Representatives Stephanie Lewis and Vincent Pistrutto; MES Principal MaryLou Torre and BES Principal Susan Ruddock; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton
Audience members included: *Voices* reporter Mike Preato, and 2 additional members of the public.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentations

Mr. Goeler invited Ms. Torre to recognize Region 14's Finest recipients from her school. Ms. Torre called to the podium Officer Craig Tibbals, and students Ksenia Korobov, Grace Koukopoulos, and Chris Velleca. The students, she said, exemplify the attributes of the D.A.R.E. program and are positive role models for their peers.

Ksenia goes above and beyond in all she does, is a good citizen and a helper in class where she assists her classmates. She is well versed in science, particularly weather, and is a strong swimmer.

Grace is also a fine young citizen and positive role model for her peers who pushes herself to be the best person she can be for her family, friends and community. She is active in student council and sports teams, where she supports her teammates on and off the field.

Chris helps his community and recently helped his sister with the One Blanket, One Smile project. He is a self-starter who has saved money for the food bank, helped clean his church yard, and will use his own funds for gifts for the needy.

Officer Craig was recognized for connecting with students and building relationships within the school community. He is a positive role model with an impactful role that he understands.

On behalf of the BoE, Mr. Swendsen presented certificates to all recipients while the audience offered hearty applause.

Mr. Goeler invited Ms. Torre and Ms. Ruddock to share details of their School Improvement Plans with the Board. They spoke of teacher requirements, goal alignment – with greatest need in staff professional growth, and detailed their goals and indicators of success. They took questions from the Board.

Ms. Van Aken knows the two principals collaborate with each other, but wondered to what extent they communicate with the middle school. Ms. Ruddock responded that, with different programs and the Common Core, the communication with the middle school is heightened; discussions are K-12, and the mindset is 1 region and not 4 schools. Ms. Torre added that changes in programs create gaps and discussions with other schools need to address those gaps.

Mr. Swendsen asked about resources for struggling students, particularly in math. Ms. Ruddock indicated that the math specialist in effective, front loading materials to parents and teachers, and she believes students are beginning to live the math program and use the vocabulary. Ms. Torre added that math tutors are being requested in the budget.

Mr. Cosgriff is interested in data collection and would like to see the distribution of student performance. If the drop in scores predicted with the Common Core assessments is seen, he'd like to have something to compare to.

Mr. Bauer asked about benchmark assessments. Ms. Domanico explained there are 3 levels of assessments: teacher created/scored, state tests, and commercially created products. Mr. Bauer also suggested that, from the Board's standpoint, it is clear that technology and PD are top needs. Both principals agreed.

Mr. Chapman asked what is needed from the Board, to which they replied "time." Ms. Ruddock has 2 years worth of PD planned, and has prioritized "need to know" over "nice to know." She hopes for less new things next year. Ms. Torre commented that the teacher evaluation plan is rigorous. Even post observation conferences can last an hour, but always powerful as PD in themselves. Mr. Chapman is also interested in receiving "360 feedback" on the Columbia program to find out how we're doing with that program. He is also interested in helping the literacy specialists be as impactful as possible.

III. Review of Minutes

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 2, 2013*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 6-0-2** with Ms. Bartlett and Mr. Swendsen abstaining.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Chapman noted one email correspondence from Art McNally which included links to information on the Common Core.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Chapman noted the decision from Judge Pickard in Litchfield and that it is posted on our website. He is pleased to put to rest, hopefully, a decision made by the people. Mr. Cosgriff noted Woodbury has stated they won't appeal. It was thought that Bethlehem will not, either.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Stephanie reported on elementary school news, including Flay Day and Veterans' Day ceremonies, Odyssey of the Mind, Student Council events and fundraisers for typhoon relief.

Vincent reported on middle and high school news, including recognition for Scott Parkhouse as History teacher of the year, school dances, field trips, senior citizen luncheon, winter concerts and sports updates.

Mr. Goeler reported on his recent activities, including progress with the economic development committee, safety updates at all schools, his attendance at Christmas festivals in both towns, basketball scrimmage, winter concert at NHS, and a phone conference with DMC where the draft report and next steps were discussed. DMC will report to the board and want to plan a retreat. Mr. Chapman requested advance copies of the report so the board can study up before hearing from them. Mr. Goeler will be playing keyboards at the Senior Center on Thursday, and also noted receipt of a letter of retirement from a veteran teacher, effective 1/1/14.

Ms. Domanico also shared a report. She has been working on K-12 alignment with literacy and math specialists. She explained in detail the results of the School Performance Index Report, which will no longer be used but which provided valuable feedback on student performance at all four schools.

VII. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)

None.

VIII. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. McAllister reported four firms have submitted RFQs for health insurance services and he commented on their relative size and experience without naming them. The Finance Committee will interview them on 1/13/14 with the goal of bringing 1 to the Board for approval. He has evaluation criteria to be used. He also reported having met with the state about compliance with the school lunch program.

IX. Committee Reports

For Bylaws/Policy/Ethics, Mr. Swendsen reported having been snowed out of his meeting, which will be rescheduled. Mr. Chapman asked that he include on his next agenda the construction of BoE agendas, and Ms. Van Aken asked that background checks also be addressed.

For Public/Community Relations, Ms. Brown reported on positive articles in the newspapers, her attendance at a recent BES PTO meeting where parents talked about the new math program, and difficulties at the schools due to lack of wi-fi.

For Facilities, Ms. Morgan reported having met (on 12/9) and received a facilities update from Mike Molzon, enrollment figures from Mr. McAllister, and information about bus run times and numbers of students on buses. There are no current transportation issues.

For Finance, Mr. Bauer met (12/9) and received monthly budget updates, descriptions of technology and safety grants, budget transfers, and RFQs for health insurance. Interviews will begin at 6 pm on 1/13/14.

Ms. Van Aken reported for Planning/Personnel, which met tonight and heard about new course offerings at NHS. Ad hoc Safety Committee will meet on Friday, 12/20 at noon.

For the Building Committee, Mr. Bauer anticipates meeting at 6:30 pm on Thursday of this week.

For Negotiations, Mr. Cosgriff noted that administrator negotiations concluded successfully; the board will be informed when that group approves the contract.

X. Old Business
None.

XI. New Business

The board had previously received a proposal regarding 1/17/14 as a full PD day. Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to modify the 2013-14 school calendar to include 1/17/14 as a full PD day*. Seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. Ms. Domanico stressed the need for more time, explaining that the My Math people will be in to address the online component and do a mid-year check during the morning, and NWEA will be covered in the afternoon. It would be impossible to do the online assessment piece in a half day. Ms. Van Aken hoped for assurance that teachers will not opt for a long weekend and be absent that day; further, she cautioned against making 180 student days the new norm and hoped 181 could be maintained in the future. Ms. Brown is sure the need is there for PD, to give teachers time and to give intense development. **Motion carried 8-0.**

XII. Board Announcements

The Board was gifted with poinsettias from the agriscience center which they happily accepted. They look forward to the return of monthly reports from that program.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor
None.

Mr. Bauer entered a motion to add an Executive Session to the meeting agenda, for the purpose of personnel evaluation.

XIV. Executive Session

Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of personnel evaluation*.
Seconded by Ms. Bartlett, the **motion carried 8-0**. Time: 9:26 pm.

XV. Adjournment

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to adjourn*.
Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 8-0**.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 10:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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, 12/18/13