

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, September 16, 2013 at Bethlehem Elementary School, 92 East Street, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophiezane Bartlett, Carol Ann Brown, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, Janet Morgan, John Swendsen, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; BES Principal Susan Ruddock; Director of Instruction Susan Domanico; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Board member George Bauer

Audience members included: R14 faculty and staff members Walt Carey, Hank Chabot, Bruce Beeman, Katie Yocis, Linda Butkus, and about 10 additional members of the community

I. Call to Order

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentation – Region 14’s Finest

Ms. Ruddock said it was an honor to do the first Region 14’s Finest of the year and, for her school, the choice was unanimous. The summer custodial crew was tasked with moving 12 of her 15 classrooms during some of the hottest days of summer. She has never seen anything like it, she said, in the 5 buildings she has worked in. The crew took charge in the absence of the head custodian, who was sidelined with health-related issues, and did a great job. Head custodian, Bruce Beeman, agreed that the work done by the summer crew was awesome, they flipped the school and had it ready for the opening bell, and he couldn’t be more proud of them.

Ms. Brown awarded certificates to Mr. Carey and Mr. Chabot. Elizabeth Stratton accepted a certificate for her grandson, Eric Cunningham, and Ms. Ruddock accepted for Nick Miller, who is away at college.

III. Review of Minutes

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 3, 2013*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 7-0**.

IV. Correspondence

None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Chapman had no report, other to say he was pleased with the showing at BES tonight, and looks forward to the Board retreat on October 19th.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler reported on the work of the District Management Council as they have been analyzing data related to staffing, contracted services, out-of-district placements, enrollments, and numbers of students referred for special services. On 9/23 they will interview teachers, team leaders and members of parent groups and will conduct walk-throughs on 9/24. They will survey principals, teachers, testers and parents, and he will ask them to include BoE members, too. Mr. Chapman asked what the next steps are after those two days of interviews. Mr. Goeler said they will be looking at specific areas, what programming students are receiving, and will look at possible reallocation of resources. Mr. Chapman asked whether recommendations would be received by October, and Mr. Goeler thought more like November-December. Ms. Domanico noted that there is much legislation around time with non-special ed

students, certain interventions are mandated, and mainstream strategies required. Ms. Van Aken asked if they would be presenting to the BoE when the work is done, and was told they will.

Mr. Goeler also presented an update on strategic planning. For each of the 4 identified goals, he reviewed action needed and progress made to date. Discussion followed regarding the targeting of completion date estimates.

Ms. Domanico spoke about State assessments and provided percentage figures for students at or above proficient and goal at all grade levels. She cited strong proficient scores at NHS, 96.8 and 98.4 in science and writing, respectively, but noted a significant gap between the number of students at proficient and at goal. WMS scores reflected the school's focus on literacy, and there was no gap between proficient and goal. BES had strong scores in math in grades 4-5, as did MES in grades 3-5. She stressed the importance of having good readers by grade 3. Writing is also a concern at both schools, and is being addressed through the Columbia program. She also reported having added new curriculum tabs on the district website; and she will be doing instructional audits in the building for use by administrators for data collection. As to the assessment results, she noted this is a time of transition in CT, and districts who have been successful in making changes in classroom teaching methods are finding they are having mixed success on standardized tests. Formative assessments throughout the year are being used to monitor student progress. SBAC field test assessments will be used, but there will be no comparative assessment data.

VII. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)

Karen Miller, Bethlehem, urged the spelling out of acronyms the first time they are used to help with understanding. She appreciated receiving handouts of information being discussed by the board. She asked about online curriculum, so that teachers can teach instead of developing curriculum. Ms. Domanico noted that R14 has capacity within district to develop curriculum, which also adds ownership. Buying curriculum off the shelf is efficient, but is not one-size-fits-all and there are trade-offs and there is still money involved. Mr. Goeler added that we are looking at online courses for students, virtual classrooms, at a policy level first, as a great opportunity for students to take courses not offered at the school. Ms. Domanico added that the capacity of the students to be successful must also be considered, and what supports are in place. Ms. Miller asked what is done for the gifted students and whether college classes online could be an option for them. Mr. Goeler will plan a presentation on that. Ms. Miller would also like to see half of the BoE meetings take place in Bethlehem.

Art McNally, Woodbury, referenced July building committee minutes and asked about plans being made at that meeting. Mr. Chapman replied that this was essentially "game planning" in order to be ready for when the committee can resume its work. Mr. McNally asked that the building committee members' names be added to the website.

VIII. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. McAllister explained that the 2011 copier lease agreement excluded central office copiers. The one being used there, which is owned by the district, has outlived its useful life and replacement parts for it are no longer available. He is seeking permission to include a new CO copier to the current agreement. Discussion followed. Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to authorize the addition of a Ricoh copier to the current copier lease plan*. Seconded by Ms. Morgan, the **motion carried 7-0**.

IX. Committee Reports

For Policy, Mr. Swendsen reported having met on 9/10 and provided 12 policies to the board for first read. This completes the "most critical" list. He also explained need for a new physical education policy that counsel has suggested embedding into our wellness plan. He hopes to have that policy for the next meeting.

For Public Relations, Ms. Brown reported having met tonight and sharing a lot of good information. She also noted much good press for R14 lately, specifically the article on Bill Davenport in the Litchfield County Times.

Ms. Morgan reported for Facilities/Enrollment/Transportation, which met on 9/10 and heard from Mike Molzon about the energy efficiency project at all schools, a summary on the gas conversion project, a report on work done over the summer, and a list of capital plan projects. The enrollment issue was discussed and plans to add paras in larger classrooms outlined. A report on busing for the first week of school was given, as well as the current contract and DOT reports.

Ms. Van Aken noted that Planning/Personnel will have its first meeting in October.

For Ad hoc Safety, she reported having met last week with members of the leadership team and NHS faculty to discuss issues related to the senior circle, sign in procedures, and to evaluate the Raptor system which was not deemed necessary at this time.

For Negotiations, Mr. Cosgriff indicated one contract is outstanding, the instructional assistants, and that dates are needed to begin administrator negotiations.

X. Old Business

Mr. Goeler indicated that additional paraprofessionals will be added in Kindergarten classes during morning hours at both schools and at MES in the afternoon, as well, where one will be relocated from the preschool.

Changes to the agenda format will be covered at the Board retreat.

Discussion of the school play at NHS was tabled due to Walter Culup's unavoidable absence.

The security clause was removed from the Use of Facilities form.

Ms. Morgan said she wasn't sure it was necessary for Mr. Culup to present to the Board so long as the issue is addressed. Ms. Van Aken agreed and did not feel the Board needed a presentation. Mr. Goeler explained that Mr. Culup would be providing his rationale for doing "9 to 5: The Musical" and not asking the Board to weigh in.

XI. New Business

The Board received copies of 12 policies for first read, representing the last of the "most critical." Approval will be sought at the next meeting.

XII. Board Announcements

Mr. Chapman reiterated that there is no change in the status of the lawsuit(s) and, when there is new information, he will report it.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Mr. McNally returned to ask if approved contracts can be viewed at Central Office and was told they could be. He asked for verification that 2.5 paras will be added and was told they would. He apologized for his tone when speaking. He said when he projects his voice, he sometimes sounds "obnoxious" but the Board assured him this is not the case.

Ms. Miller returned with concerns about the Common Core, and early release time for teachers for professional development. She asked if all teachers in a grade level must be on the same page at all times.

Ms. Domanico clarified that this is only figuratively. They are to cover the same content, but with flexibility in order to meet the individual needs of students. Pacing guides are provided, for example, and emphasis is on building a firm foundation in elementary grades. Mastering material, not just covering it, is the goal.

Ms. Miller also asked the enrollment of the preschool, which was estimated for her at the time, and which is currently 51. She asked if enrollment can be included on the website.

XIV. Executive Session

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to add Executive Session to the meeting agenda, to discuss the employment status of an elementary teacher*. Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 7-0**.

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to move to executive session*. Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Ms. Morgan, that **motion carried 7-0**. The Board moved to executive session at 9:31 pm.

The Board returned at 9:45 pm. Mr. Chapman entered a *motion to authorize the Superintendent to offer to resolve the employment matter with the elementary teacher based upon the terms discussed in Executive Session*. Seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 6-0**, in the absence of Ms. Bartlett.

XV. Adjournment

Following executive session, Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to adjourn*. Entered by Ms. Morgan and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 6-0**.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:50 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, 9/20/13