

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Monday, April 21, 2014 at Bethlehem Elementary School, 92 East Street, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members 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; BES Principal Susan Ruddock, Student Representative Stephanie Lewis; Region 14's Finest Wilma Narciso; Faculty and Staff members Linda Butkus, Barbara Dains, Bonnie Grzelak, Judy Perrucci, Jackie Rinaldi, Kate Von Duntz, and Katie Yocis; Technology Director Paul Ciotti; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Janet Morgan and Sophieazane Bartlett

Audience members included: about 16 additional members of the public

I. Call to Order

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 7, 2014.*

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

III. Presentation(s)/Reports to the Board

Ms. Ruddock spoke about Ms. Narciso's contributions to the district and what a pleasure it was to work with her until her recent retirement. She has learned what a wonderful teacher, and person, she is. She presented Ms. Narciso with a Region 14's Finest award and the board and audience responded with a long and enthusiastic standing ovation.

Mr. Goeler presented her with an engraved pewter bowl on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mr. Swendsen commented she had been the "librarian of his family for three generations." As a student, he remembers her smiling face and his children and grandchildren have those same memories.

Ms. Brown commented on the great time at the Painted Pony when Ms. Narciso's retirement was celebrated where great stories were heard. She noted that Ms. Narciso cared for the children for all these years while her late husband cared for the school.

Ms. Narciso commented that she has been so many places and seen so many children in her travels and adventures, but the best people are right here is Region 14. She said although she lives in Bethlehem, she has always considered herself a member of "the Region."

Mr. Chapman couldn't put words to the occasion. He realized the number of lives touched by Mr. Narciso in her work is unfathomable, and he thanked her.

IV. Strategic Plan Status and Update

Ms. Domanico reported on progress with Smarter Balanced field testing. Students in grades 3-5 have been rotating through the computer lab at MES to complete online tests in math and language arts. NHS is doing most of their testing this week with Juniors. BES and WMS will test during the 4/28-5/16 window. Testing is going well due to advance planning and scheduling by administrators, the tech dept., and school test coordinators. Faculties have shown flexibility and have been positive about the experience. Though scoring reports will not be generated, there have been benefits to experiencing this testing environment. Also, the Curriculum/Professional Development Council has developed recommendations for professional learning time for next year. These suggested changes will be brought to the full board. Work also continues on elementary progress report revisions, and planning has begun for summer curriculum writing teams.

Stephanie reported on happenings at the elementary schools, including a talent show, trip to the Warner Theatre, and book fair at BES, and book fair, ice cream social, and "heart for learning" jump rope for heart events at MES.

Mr. Chapman asked Ms. Domanico whether MAP testing is being administered in every grade, and was told it is being piloted in grades 1,3,5,6,7, and in math and language arts in grade 9. Next year, budgeted funds for testing in grades K-12 have been requested.

Mr. Chapman also recalled the NWEA presentation where quarterly assessments were discussed. Ms. Domanico spoke about a survey with goals assessment for fall, winter and spring, along with other opportunities for interim assessments in the primary grades. The winter assessments have been given and the spring ones are upcoming.

Mr. Chapman was interested to know how teachers are using those results in classrooms and asked Ms. Domanico whether MAP testing is aligned with our curriculum; how teachers will use the results; are results used to develop curriculum not currently in place; and, regarding scheduling, he was concerned about the availability of computer labs when they are also used for assessments.

Ms. Domanico responded to each of those questions. She explained that MAP testing is aligned with CT Core Standards, and that our curriculum is moving in that same direction; within 2 years, the answer to his first question will be yes. Training is being done for staff in the using of results, and administrators and teachers are pleased with the information being generated which is specific to the students' mastery of material, not just grade level to allow for better differentiation. The assessments hone in on where the student actually is, and results are available almost immediately. Teachers received training on 3/17 on understanding results, and they also have access to webinars. To concerns about use of computer labs, she noted installation of wireless access points, which will allow for moving students through more quickly, and also stressed the idea of moving technology into the classroom as opposed to bringing students to technology.

Ms. Ruddock agreed, hoping for laptops on carts for next year and expressing how helpful the wireless will be next year.

Mr. Chapman commented that the value of assessments is what we can get out of them, how they inform instruction.

Ms. Brown commended teachers and the leadership team for training and adapting to these changes. It is paying off for everyone.

V. Privilege of the Floor

Katie Yocis, Woodbury and NHS Science teacher, expressed concerns about reducing special ed faculty and staff in response to recommendations from the DMC. Special ed teacher and paras are essential in classes such as hers where many ability levels are combined in one class and where a great deal of differentiation and scaffolding is required.

Patty Broderick, Woodbury, explained the circumstances leading to her daughter being ineligible for softball this season. She asked for resolution to the issue, since the season is underway.

Mr. Chapman said the board is aware of the situation and there will be the need to meet with all stakeholders – but not here. He will look to move as quickly as possible on the Broderick's situation. To Ms. Yocis's concerns, he assured her the board is looking seriously at the recommendations of the DMC, not as a cost cutting opportunity but rather as a way to improve instruction. The report is compelling, he said, and we will need to involve all stakeholders to develop a system that makes sense. Our metrics are not in line and we are looking at ways to learn to do things differently.

VI. Facilities, Finance and Operations Update

Mr. McAllister reviewed costs associated with the lawsuits. The concluded declaratory judgment in Litchfield ended up costing the district \$19,864.26 in legal fees. Fees through February for the Arras, Miller, Miller, Murphy, and Suslavich case continuing in the Waterbury Court total \$69,934.95. The total for both cases is currently \$89,799.21 with bills for Waterbury for March and April still expected. The district awaits the judge's decision and is in a holding pattern until then.

Ms. Brown reported having met with her Public Relation committee this evening. They will next meet on 5/20. She announced the upcoming Senior (Citizens) Spring Fete scheduled for 5/2 from 3-5 pm and sponsored by John Dominello's students and encouraged seniors to attend. Neither prom dress nor date required.

VII. Safety Update

Ms. Van Aken reported that the committee will meet Friday to finalize the emergency plan and to hear an update on background check procedures.

VIII. Other Business

Mr. Goeler reviewed results of the recent SRO Survey offered to both students and adults. He read each question and then told the percentage of respondents answering "yes."

Ms. Van Aken recently had the occasion to speak with Offr. Currier at NHS. She gave many examples of classes he has been involved with and contributions he has been able to make at NHS this year.

Ms. Ruddock agreed that the SROs have built a climate of trust and her officer has been valuable everywhere from on the intervention team to the playground.

Mr. Goeler added commendation for Sgt. Joe Roden for his supervision of the officers, and Ms. Ruddock added that Offr. D'Elia in Bethlehem has been instrumental to the success of the program, too.

Mr. Chapman felt the survey results should be added to the website as they are evidence of the value of the SROs.

Mr. McAllister spoke of interviews having been conducted with 2 search firms. Base fees and associated costs for CES were \$13,900 and NESDEC quoted a price of \$17,952. Ms. Van Aken said her committee discussed both options, felt comfortable with CES, and are prepared to offer a motion to secure their services.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion that the Board approve the hiring of Cooperative Education Services (C.E.S.) to facilitate the Superintendent search for a fee of \$13,900.* Mr. Bauer seconded the motion. He commented that this firm stressed involving community, staff and parents and this aligned with what the board wanted. Mr. Cosgriff added that they promise a good transition plan and would be involved after the hire, as well. **The motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Chapman reviewed that the Superintendent's budget was presented to a small crowd last week. He thanked the leadership team for pulling it together and making necessary sacrifices.

Mr. Chapman entered a *motion to adopt the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2014-15 in the amount of \$32,383,247.* The motion was seconded by Mr. Cosgriff.

Ms. Van Aken thanked the leadership team for their hard work and appreciates the sacrifices made. She noted the many late nights and weekends put in by Mr. McAllister and appreciated his efforts in preparing the budget. She commented, too, on the small but supportive crowd at the public hearing and said it was nice to hear a positive reaction to the budget.

Mr. Bauer, too, thanked the leadership team for putting the budget together and thanked Mr. McAllister for having whatever information was needed almost before it was asked for. Throughout the process, the community asked good questions and received answers in a timely fashion.

Mr. Cosgriff also thanked the leadership team for a professionally done budget.

Ms. Brown commended all 4 schools for working together to even things out; there was a lot of shifting around to accommodate needs, and everyone worked together for equity.

Looking forward, Mr. Chapman will hope to start the process earlier next year and to have more face time earlier with administrators to assess needs and better inform the board of what those are. He would like to look further than one year down the road and would like to see a 3-5 year rolling plan.

The motion previously made and seconded carried 6-0.

IX. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **The motion carried 6-0.**

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:44 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, 4/23/14