

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, November 5, 2012 at Bethlehem Elementary School, 92 East Street, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members George Bauer, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, , John Swendsen, Maryanne Van Aken, and Pamela Zmek; Interim Director of Operations John Turk; BES Interim Principal Eric Bergeron; and Board Clerk Debra Carlton

Absent: Board members Sophiezane Bartlett and Gary Suslavich

Audience members included: Bethlehem Selectman Ed Roden, community members Katie Yocis, Jim Crocker and Linda Butkus, and *Voices* reporter Meg Spicer

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentation – Region 14's Finest

Mr. Goeler called Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Swendsen to award Region 14's Finest certificates to newly elected officers of the BES Student Council and their faculty advisors. Mr. Bergeron described the students as advocates for their classmates, elected through voting by all students in grades 3-5. Each student officer read prepared remarks, after which Mr. Swendsen congratulated them and presented them with award certificates. Students recognized were: Kiley Bushka, President, Carmen Lo, Vice President, Amanda Wochek, Secretary, and Bryce Bauer, Treasurer. Faculty advisor Barbara Dains and Katie McKeon also received awards.

III. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Bauer requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 15, 2012*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 6-0**.

IV. Correspondence

None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Bauer thanked all involved in the interview process for Director of Finance/Operations, which is an ongoing process that Mr. Goeler would speak to in more detail. He noted the next strategic planning session to be held on 11/19 at 3:30 pm. A special education consultant will report to the Planning Committee on 11/19. A Board retreat is being organized for 12/8 and members should forward ideas for agenda items, such as Board goals and handbook.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler reported that 6 finalists for the DF/O position were interviewed and, although 3 emerged as the strongest of that group, the committee decided to repost to see if, through further networking, more experienced candidates may be found who can then be measured against the 3 who will remain under consideration.

He also noted his attendance at a CTCEF conference where he heard from the College Board president about how college assessments will also change due to new common core standards.

Great strides are being made with the district curriculum initiative by Mr. Martinez and he has met around math curriculum with teachers and worked on standards, alignment with current practices, areas needing change, developing R14's philosophy on math, content lessons, a transition plan, needs for teacher preparation and PD, particularly at the elementary level. Resources are being evaluated, as is developing a K-5 writing curriculum.

Mr. Goeler is finishing up with goal setting meetings with directors and principals.

He thanked the BES custodians for their assistance tonight. He also saw confirmation last week of the quality and level of preparation by Woodbury and Bethlehem town officials.

Mr. Chapman asked for more information about curriculum work, assuming that Mr. Martinez's strengths are in math, and wondering if similar strides are being made in writing and other disciplines. Mr. Goeler referenced the Columbia Writing Program and that the middle school is aware of the work being done at the elementary level. He is pleased with the progress being made with writing at the middle school. Mr. Chapman asked who is leading the overall effort in district and, for instance, leading teachers to particular events that could be valuable, such as the Columbia event in NYC this past weekend. Mr. Goeler described the steps he takes when he becomes aware of worthwhile opportunities, and indicated that he will coordinate with literacy specialists to increase faculty participation.

VII. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)

Jim Crocker, Woodbury, acknowledged the need for PD but noted that a lot of money is spent in R14 on this and feels we need to look at what we spend on everything. Our student performance, he said, is not in line with what we spend.

VIII. Report from the Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Turk indicated that he is preparing detailed reports for the Finance and Facilities Committees.

IX. Committee Reports

From Ms. Zmek: Public/Community Relations will meet on 11/19; monthly meetings with BoS/BoF and the superintendent will begin in December; a superintendent's forum is in the works to discuss issues such as those raised by Mr. Crocker.

From Ms. Van Aken: Planning will meet on 11/19 with the special education consultant.

From Mr. Cosgriff: Negotiations session on 11/8 will include legal counsel and teachers for the first time. Time is short and we need to get moving.

From Mr. Bauer: Building met on 10/16 and will meet tomorrow at 6 pm. On 10/16, NHS ed specs were reviewed; a topographical report has been requested; next steps for elementary schools was discussed, as was K-8 designations for Woodbury and Bethlehem.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve the Woodbury Middle School Washington, D.C. trip for grade 8 students, May 8-10, 2013, via coach bus transportation and including faculty and parent chaperones and lodging at the Sheraton Washington North in Beltsville, MD.* Seconded by Ms. Van Aken. Mr. Swendsen confirmed that the trip is funded by parents. Ms. Zmek asked Mr. Bergeron about vetting chaperones and he responded that, should the Board adopt policy regarding chaperones, it would need to apply to all field trips. He and Mrs. Jones make determinations about suitable parent chaperones and the hotel provides around the clock security. **The motion carried 6-0.**

XII. Board Announcements

Mr. Chapman raised the idea of surveys on the topics of food service and janitorial service. The Planning Committee will compile questions to be used for such a survey.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Katie Yocis, Woodbury and NHS faculty member, noted the high cost of curriculum development and feels the community does not understand the weight of the requirements coming from the government, nor that much of what is required is no longer funded by them. Taxpayers only see the expense, but are not in it and so do not realize all that must be reported. She fears we are becoming a committee driven district and that the few who serve on all the committees are being stretched too thin.

Jim Crocker, Woodbury, agreed but noted that R14 spends more per student than districts performing much better. If the tests have any meaning, they show we spend more than 110 other districts but perform worse, particularly at the elementary level. He thought the BoE meeting at which the principals presented test results was a "home run," showing what is right as well as what it wrong; but, as K-3 appears to be the problem, he asked what is being done to help in that area. He suggests making the case; a problem needs to be stated in order to seek funds to fix it.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Ms. Van Aken. The **motion carried 6-0**. The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryanne Van Aken, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 11/8/12