

**Regular Meeting  
Stafford Board of Education  
Pinney Administration Building  
Monday, September 8, 2008**

**Board Members Present:** Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson  
Mrs. Lisa Bradway  
Mrs. Lisa Finch  
Mrs. Tracy Rummel  
Ms. Patricia Saunders

**Absent:** Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary  
Ms. Julie Stafford

**Also Present:** Dr. Therese G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Miss Katie Bradway, Acting Student Representative  
Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst  
Mr. Brett Duchon, Teacher, Stafford Middle School  
Ms. Jill Gregori, Retired Business Manager  
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School  
Mr. George Melnick, Teacher, Stafford Middle School

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

**ITEM I. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes**

Regular Meeting, August 18, 2008

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on August 18, 2008, as presented.

**ITEM II. Treasurer's Report**

**A. Report on Bills**

Bills:

August 20, 2008	\$18,894.60 Encumbered
August 20, 2008	\$47,046.75
August 27, 2008	\$41,668.70
September 3, 2008	\$81,486.51

A consensus of the Board approved the board bills as presented.

**ITEM III. Correspondence**

The School Building Committee minutes for 6/3/08 were reviewed by the Board. Mrs. Bradway asked how much landscaping is left to be completed and if the landscaping company will be replacing the dead trees. Dr. Fishman said that she will bring these matters up at the building committee meeting this month.

#### **ITEM IV. Board Reports**

Miss Katie Bradway updated the Board on upcoming games and meets for field hockey, boys' and girls' soccer, boys' and girls' cross country and football. Miss Bradway also reported that student council was selling shoes for diabetes and that the Jeff Braun memorial tag sale would be held this coming weekend. Lastly, she noted that drama rehearsals have already started and that Wednesday, September 10, is picture day.

#### **ITEM V. Superintendent's Reports**

##### **A. Financial Report through August 2008**

Dr. Fishman reported to the Board that 25% of the budget has been expended so far this year. Last year at this time, 24.18% of the budget was expended. Dr. Fishman highlighted the following areas:

- 86% of code 400 has been expended due to additional costs for trash hauling, since the town will be unable to provide for trash removal this year as previously thought
- There will be additional health and safety costs for severely allergic students at Stafford Elementary School at an approximate cost of \$20,000.
- The district still has not locked in a price for fuel oil. The price offered on Friday, September 5, was \$3.31, but has increased to \$3.38 as of Monday, September 8, because of the hurricane in the Gulf. Dr. Fishman noted that the district budgeted \$3.00 per gallon. Even if the district is able to purchase oil for \$3.25 per gallon, that would still create a budget deficit of \$30,000. Additionally, there is no lock-in offered for diesel, so we must pay the going rate.

Mr. Fontanella asked why the deal with the town for trash removal fell through. Mrs. Devlin stated that she received an e-mail from Mr. Minich stating that the town would not be able to afford the start-up costs for this project this year.

##### **B. CAPT Report- Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School**

Dr. Fishman introduced Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Mr. Bednarz informed the Board that the 2008 CAPT results were from the second year of the third generation test and that these results were for tenth grade students only. Mr. Bednarz highlighted the following points of pride:

- ❖ For the sixth consecutive year, Stafford outperformed the DRG F average in all sub-tests.
- ❖ Stafford outscored the State average in every sub-test.
- ❖ For the fifth consecutive year, Stafford achieved NCLB benchmarks in math and reading.

- ❖ Stafford achieved a 100% participation rate for each sub-test.
- ❖ For the fifth time in the past six years, Stafford ranked first in the DRG in at least 3 of the 4 sub-tests.
- ❖ Stafford's highest achievement results this year were in writing with 66.4% of students achieving goal.
- ❖ Stafford is outperforming the State average for percent of students meeting goal on all four areas by 8.9%. For the percent of students achieving goal on none of the areas, the district is lower than the State average by 13.3%.
- ❖ For the first time, Stafford has three scores at 60% and higher for students achieving goal.

Mr. Bednarz reviewed several charts with the Board, some of which detailed the percent of students achieving goal, participation rate, percent of students at proficient level, a score band comparison, the district's ranking in DRG F, CAPT graduation requirements, and percent of students in the proficient range for NCLB sub-group economically disadvantaged. Mr. Bednarz stated that overall, Stafford did a tremendous job.

Mr. Bednarz introduced Mr. Kennedy, principal of Stafford High School. Mr. Kennedy presented the high school's action plan for further improving the CAPT scores.

Mr. Kennedy stated that while the high school is very happy with the results this year, there is always room to improve. Therefore, the high school administration, along with the middle school administration, high school department heads, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Director of Pupil Services, created an action plan that was designed to enhance the CAPT 2008 – 2009 performance results.

Mr. Kennedy highlighted the following areas of the action plan:

- ❖ Four additional initiatives have been included in this year's plan- Reading and Writing Theme, Student Incentive / Challenge, School Visitations / Workshops, and Results Based Planning.
- ❖ High School / Middle School interface events will be emphasized to an increased degree this year.
- ❖ Interfacing between the high school and the middle school, especially with respect to the transition that eighth graders make in understanding the importance of the CAPT and having exposure to the kind of problem solving skills necessary to achieve success on the exam.
- ❖ Accountability focus for the curriculum in various subject areas such as math, English, science and social studies must be addressed in terms of CAPT related skills. Teachers will incorporate into their instructional planning and execution the various skills required to be successful on the CAPT and be held accountable for ensuring that

the pertinent standard or style of instruction and assessment are inherent in their curriculum delivery.

- ❖ A reading and writing focus will be continued across the curriculum. Connecticut Writing Project initiatives will be further refined this year and additional support will be available for the Reading Across the Disciplines section with the recent addition of a reading teacher at the high school.
- ❖ Student incentives / challenges will be designed to encourage / entice students to perform their best on the CAPT.
- ❖ Results based planning.

Mrs. Rummel stated that there was an article in a local newspaper that compared Stafford's scores with Tolland, Somers and Ellington (towns close in proximity, but not in our DRG). She stated that our scores did not look very good in that comparison. She asked that a press release be sent to area newspapers with Stafford's CAPT results as compared to our DRG towns.

### **C. SAT Report- Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School**

Mr. Kennedy reported that the SAT results for the class of 2008 continue to surpass the State / National average in the Critical Reading section. However, while the Writing section scores surpass the National average, they are below the State average. The Mathematics scores are slightly below both State and National averages. The scores are detailed below.

	<u>SHS Class of 2008</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>National</u>
Critical Reading	516	509	502
Writing	496	513	494
Mathematics	509	513	515

Mr. Kennedy explained that this is the third graduating class to be administered the new SAT. The new version of the SAT is longer and more difficult than previous versions, with a writing component included for the first time since its inception. A perfect combined score on the new SAT is 2400, as compared to a perfect combined score of 1600 prior to the class of 2006.

Mr. Kennedy noted that for the first time this year, the PSAT will be paid for by the district and will be administered during the school day. He said that he is hopeful that this will encourage greater participation on the PSAT and then on the SAT. Mr. Kennedy also reminded the Board that the participation rate for the class of 2008, which is 66%, includes students that took the SAT at any time during their high school career. Board members asked that Mr. Kennedy return with an update with regard to the number of students that elected to take the PSAT.

Mr. Kennedy noted that the math department has ordered new SAT materials and is working on reviewing curriculum for its alignment with math skills assessed on the new SAT. He also noted that guidance is available for SAT support and that Saturday School will be used as prep time for the SAT.

#### **D. 2008 Summer School Report**

Mr. Bednarz and Mr. Melnick, middle school teacher and summer school coordinator, gave the Board members a summary of the 2008 summer school program. They thanked the Board for bringing summer school back to full status this year, as it is a very valuable program. This summer, one hundred and sixty students took advantage of the program, with twenty-five students earning high school credit.

In the credit recovery summer program, five classes were offered at Stafford High School for high school students. The five classes offered were grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 English and Algebra I. This program met for 3.75 hours each day for 18 sessions, from July 8<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>. Twenty-five students completed the program and earned high school credit.

The summer school program for grades 2 – 8 was held at Stafford Elementary School, from July 8<sup>th</sup> through July 29<sup>th</sup>, from 8 – 11:45 a.m. One hundred ninety-eight (198) students were invited to attend; one hundred and three (103) participated, which Mr. Bednarz stated was a higher than normal number. Transportation was provided for these students, and no fee was charged.

Mr. Bednarz also updated the Board on Study Island, which is a new on-line program to which the district subscribes with funds made available through a grant. He reminded the Board that Study Island is a web based program aligned to CMT skills for reading and math that was made available to every student in grades 3-8. He reported that even with little time left in the school year to alert students and families, one hundred and ninety-seven students logged on for almost 350 hours. The district has received good feedback about the program from students. A team from Stafford Elementary School and Stafford Middle School will be meeting with Study Island representatives to design academic support programs for grades 3-8 for use throughout the 2008 – 2009 school year.

Mr. Melnick stated that summer school went very well this year, and he thanked the staff members that assisted him.

#### **Item VI. Public Forum**

A member of the audience stated that the CAPT article was in the North Central News, asked about the district's plans if the State does away with CAPT, and commented on the price of oil and its relation to the hurricane season.

Mr. Fontanella stated that parents that were in attendance at the meeting that would like to comment about the ACT Magnet School transportation would be given another opportunity to do so when that item was discussed.

**Item VII. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**Item VIII. New Business****A. ACT Magnet School Transportation**

Dr. Fishman stated that magnet schools have been in the State for several years. Through last fall, districts were asked if they wanted to be a partner in the magnet schools. If so, the districts would purchase slots. Stafford never partnered with any magnet schools. Therefore, if any Stafford student attended a magnet school, their parents would pay the tuition and provide transportation. If the district had a bus already going that way, magnet school students were allowed to ride the bus.

She stated that last year, the State said that magnet schools should be self-supporting and that any student can attend if accepted, and the sending town must pay the tuition. Additionally, ACT told us that we were also responsible for transportation. In hopes of being cost effective and better able to budget for expenses, Stafford purchased two slots at ACT for \$5,000 each through the budget process. ACT recently informed the district that due to the increasing cost of diesel fuel, the slots were going to cost the district \$7,400 each.

Dr. Fishman reported that in addition to the two slots that the district “owned”, she recently found out that we would also be responsible for paying for the tuition of any student from Stafford that was accepted at ACT, as per State mandate. She found out that the district is not responsible for transportation. However, ACT has been telling the district and the parents that Stafford would be responsible for the transportation costs as well. Clarification from the State was not received until Monday, August 25. On Wednesday, August 27, Dr. Fishman said that she held a meeting with all of the parents of ACT students to give them this new information. She said that the district could not take on the cost of transportation for those students beyond the two slots that Stafford already owned, since this would be setting a precedent for any student from Stafford attending any magnet school, such as those attending Great Path Academy in Manchester.

Several of the parents of ACT students were in attendance at the meeting. They appreciated the budgeting challenges of the district, but at the same time were upset by the fact that they received incorrect information from ACT, on which they made their decision about where their child would attend school, and that the information they received from the district was received just a week before school was scheduled to start. They stated that it is nearly impossible to come up with close to \$4,000 for this year’s transportation cost at this late date, but on the other hand would hate to have to change their child’s school after the school year had already started.

After much discussion, the Board reviewed the options available to parents.

1. Parents pay ACT \$3,900 for bus transportation to and from their home.
2. Parents carpool and get reimbursed \$1,300 (per family) by EASTCONN.
3. Students ride on the Windham Tech bus and get another ride home.
4. Stafford pays for transportation for these students for this year only.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Saunders, that the Board of Education does not provide transportation to magnet schools for those students who are attending magnet schools as part of the parent choice provision recently enacted by the State. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

Mr. Fontanella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board direct the Superintendent of Schools to look into other viable options for transportation to ACT and report back to the Board at the regular meeting on Monday, September 22, and continue to provide transportation to all ACT students until Friday, September 26, 2008. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

**B. Capital Grant for Customer-side Distributed Generation Resources**

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education request that the Board of Finance consider using the funds obtained through a capital grant from the Department of Public Utility Control for customer-side distributed generation at Stafford High School and Stafford Elementary School to replace the boilers at West Stafford School. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

Dr. Fishman noted that she invited Mr. Muska to attend the Board meeting tonight, but did not hear back from him. She also noted that Ms. Gregori, the district's previous business manager, was in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions.

Mrs. Rummel asked if the district has been able to keep up with replacing the filters in the new furnaces at Stafford High School and Stafford Elementary School. Dr. Fishman stated that we have been able to do so without adding staff, as EASTCONN recommended.

**C. Review and Approval of Middle School Fundraiser**

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education approve the fundraising proposal for the Stafford Middle School band and chorus, as presented. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

Mr. Duchon informed the Board that the stage and select choir would be singing the National Anthem at the Springfield Falcon's hockey game on March 13, 2009.

#### **D. Disposition of Bid- Laptop Computers**

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education reject all bids for laptop computers opened on July 16, 2008. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education award the bid for laptop computers to Hewlett Packard, for model HP Compaq 6910p Notebook, under the State of Connecticut bid program at \$810 per laptop. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

#### **E. 2008 – 2009 Budget Freeze**

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Saunders, that the Board of Education institute a freeze of the 2008 – 2009 budget, effective immediately. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Bradway stated that she would like to see a list of the types of things that will not be approved.

Mrs. Rummel asked that the district look at combining stops on bus routes to save money.

#### **Item IX. Personnel Matters**

##### **A. Appointments- Certified Staff Members**

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following staff members:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Certification Area</b>	<b>School / Assignment</b>	<b>Replacing / New</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Chianelli, Amanda	Art, PreK – Grade 12 (042)	Stafford High School / Art Teacher	Dana Bachiochi	\$39,257 (BA, Step 2)	8/21/08
Dembeck, Gaile	PreK – 8 (001), Reading and Language Arts Consultant (097)	West Stafford School / Remedial Reading and Math (.50 FTE) (One Year Leave Replacement)	Marci Stiles (LOA)	\$33,379 (6 <sup>th</sup> Year, Step 13, pro-rated 45%)	9/2/08
Vaghini, Thomas	School Library Media Specialist (062)	Stafford High School / Library Medial Specialist	Donna Norige	\$43,527 (MA, Step 3)	8/21/08

Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.



Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Ms. Saunders, to place Item IX.B.- Superintendent of Schools' Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated), into executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a short recess at 9:55 p.m.

**B. Superintendent of Schools' Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)**

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 10:00 p.m. The Board invited Dr. Fishman to attend the executive session.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 10:27 p.m.

Mr. Fontanella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that based on the Superintendent's exemplary evaluation over the past year that the Board of Education extend the Superintendent's contract by one year and extend a 3% raise in salary. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried.

**Item X. Student Matters**

There were no student matters.

**Item XI. Adjournment**

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Saunders voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary**

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**Mark Fontanella, Chairperson**

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**Sandra Fowler, Secretary**