

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

Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Lisa Bradway
Mrs. Lisa Finch
Mrs. Tracy Rummel
Ms. Julie Stafford

Board Members Absent: Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary
Mr. Stephen Szymanski

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Miss Katie Bradway, Student Representative
Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Dr. Daniel Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. A quorum was established.

ITEM I. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, November 17, 2008
Special Meeting, December 1, 2008
Special Meeting, December 1, 2008

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on November 17, 2008, and the special meetings held on December 1, 2008, as presented.

ITEM II. Treasurer's Report

A. Report on Bills

Bills:

November 19, 2008 \$79,627.05

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

ITEM III. Correspondence

Mrs. Bradway noted that she received thank you notes from West Stafford and Staffordville Schools for reading to the classrooms.

Mr. Fontanella read a portion of a letter from Senator Guglielmo that was written in response to an e-mail that Dr. Fishman had sent to him regarding upcoming budget issues. Dr. Fishman noted that Senator Guglielmo and Representative Bacchiochi are both available to attend a Board meeting to discuss the 2009-2010 budget.

Dr. Fishman said that Jonathan Costa, the district's Strategic Planning Consultant, was available on Monday, January 5, 2009, for a presentation on the status of the district's Strategic Plan. She said that this would be a single topic special meeting. All of the Board members in attendance said that they were available to attend this meeting.

ITEM IV. Board Reports

Miss Bradway, Student Representative, reported on the following topics:

- ❖ Progress reports were issued last week.
- ❖ The Sports Banquet was held last Thursday.
- ❖ SATs were administered last Saturday.
- ❖ The Madrigal Feast was held last weekend and was a big success.
- ❖ The Environmental Club / Class went on a field trip to the Museum of Natural History in NY to visit the global warming exhibit.
- ❖ The Environmental Class is participating in a "Going Green" video contest sponsored by CL&P. Miss Bradway said that she would get back to the Board with the link so that they could vote for Stafford High's video.
- ❖ The sports schedule for the upcoming week.
- ❖ Auditions for All New England will be held this coming Saturday.
- ❖ The Board's ½ page yearbook ad would cost \$160.

Ms. Stafford reported that she recently spent time at Stafford Middle School during the lunch periods. She said that the meals looked good, and that there were many healthy alternatives. She also spoke of the bread baking for shelters project at SMS.

ITEM V. Superintendent's Reports

A. Fall Sports Presentations

Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation, introduced the fall sports team coaches, team captains and players that were present at the Board meeting. He thanked the high school administration for their support.

Each team gave a brief overview of their season. The following is a list of coaches, team captains and players that were present:

Coach Dunn, Tom Sledzik and Alicia Dabek, Cross Country; Coach O'Keefe and Stephen Bachiochi, Boys Soccer; Danielle Bourque, Girls Soccer; Coach Green, Katie Burnham and Chelsey Green, Cheerleading; Coach Powers and Tucker Fontanella, Football; and Coach Boldi, Emma Broadhurst and Emily Bourque, Field Hockey.

Mr. Frassinelli and Mr. Dunn thanked the Athletic Booster Club for their generosity and support. Mrs. Boldi, coach and booster club member stated that since 2003, the Athletic Booster Club has donated over \$77,000 to the schools' athletic department.

Mr. Fontanella thanked the coaches and players for taking the time to attend the meeting.

B. Head Start Report through November 2008

Dr. Fishman reported that the district has expended \$20,483 of the \$48,318 in Head Start grant funds, as of the end of November 2008. She noted that the grant period ends January 31, 2009.

C. Financial Report through November 2008

Dr. Fishman presented the financial report for the district through November 2008, as prepared by Mrs. Devlin, Financial Analyst. She noted that 92.29% of the budget has been encumbered / expended through November 2008. While this number seems high, Dr. Fishman reminded the Board that it includes most fixed costs, which accounts for most of our budget dollars.

Dr. Fishman noted that the district has begun using the software program to encumber all salaries; however, we have not yet encumbered the non-certified salaries. They will be included in next month's report.

There were no questions or comments.

D. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through October 2008

Dr. Fishman presented the cafeteria profit and loss statement through October 2008, as prepared by Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and Mrs. Mary Folker, Food Service Coordinator. She reported that through October 2008, there is a profit of \$11,418.

Board members stated that food service personnel should be commended on a job well done and for the wonderful job that they did during the Madrigal Feast.

Dr. Fishman also reviewed the free and reduced price lunch numbers as of November 2008. For 2008 – 2009, free lunches totaled 326; reduced lunches totaled 175. In 2007 – 2008, free lunches totaled 277, and reduced lunches totaled 182.

Dr. Fishman stated that a new plan to address lunch charging is being piloted at Stafford Middle School and Stafford Elementary School. She said that she hopes to bring the plan before the entire Board for all schools to use in January, after the administrators have had a chance to review it.

E. Update on Elementary Science Units, Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Fishman informed the Board that Mr. Bednarz was ill and that she would be making the presentation in his absence.

Dr. Fishman reminded the Board that in August 2008, Mr. Bednarz reported on a redistribution of science units, grades 1-5, necessitated by the new science subtest of the Connecticut Mastery Test for grade 5. At the same meeting, Mr. Bednarz assured Board members that elementary classroom teachers would adjust their science teaching this year to accommodate for this redistribution of science units. The Board received a copy

of a report that Mr. Bednarz prepared, updating them on the status of these accommodations.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the status report with the Board. She noted that the use of Science Facilitators in grades 1 – 5 has helped immensely with the implementation of the “shuffling” of the science units. Dr. Fishman also reviewed the plan that the facilitators created to address the transition “gap” units for grades 2, 4 and 5, which are in addition to the prescribed grade level units. One-year grant funding for science kits has also helped. Lastly, she stated that classroom teachers are reporting that it is going well.

Mrs. Rummel asked that the Superintendent express her thanks to Mr. Bednarz and the science facilitators and teachers. She also noted that a teacher is running a wonderful science program in the after-school program (PASS) at Stafford Elementary School.

F. NEAS&C Final Report

Dr. Fishman stated that Stafford High School has received the final report from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEAS&C). The report states that the high school has received continued accreditation for the next ten years.

Dr. Fishman noted that Stafford High School is one of the few high schools in the State that was reaccredited without any warnings. She said that in addition to the two-year progress report, the high school will be required to complete a special progress report, which is due November 1, 2009.

Dr. Fishman introduced Mr. Kennedy, principal of Stafford High School. Mr. Kennedy reported that the high school was scored as “acceptable”, at least, on every standard. He stated that the high school is a good school that can be much better. Mr. Kennedy highlighted many areas of the report. The full list of commendations and recommendations are as follows (bold text added by Mr. Kennedy):

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING COMMENDATIONS

1. The comprehensive process employed by the mission and expectations for student learning committee that engaged a wide range of stakeholders including students, parents, staff, faculty, and administration.
2. The emergence of Stafford High School as a mission-driven school.
3. The extremely high degree to which the mission reflects the beliefs of the school system and the community at large.
4. The use of the civic and social expectations in the PRIDE statement to update the discipline program.

CURRICULUM COMMENDATIONS

1. The demonstration of reflective critical thinking, problem-solving, varied assessments and technology integration in the curricula of subject areas that have completed the six-year revision cycle.
2. The appropriation of sufficient resources for the curriculum revision process.
3. The current technology infrastructure that allows curriculum to drive future technology plans.

4. The implementation of the six-year curriculum cycle by the central office administration.
5. The high level of involvement of the professional staff in revitalizing the curriculum.

INSTRUCTION COMMENDATIONS

1. The close alignment of instructional strategies with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. The expanding use of technology by teachers and students.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING COMMENDATIONS

1. The emerging utilization of varied assessment strategies.
2. The communication with parents on students' academic progress.
3. The clarification for students of the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that are being assessed.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION COMMENDATIONS

1. The support of the principal's autonomy and leadership by the superintendent and board of education.
2. The principal's leadership in the development of the mission statement.
3. The efforts of the school community in implementing the mission statement in all aspects of school life.
4. The willingness of teachers to assume leadership roles for the improvement of the school.
5. The commitment of the principal and assistant principal to provide programs that promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The voluntary efforts of some faculty members to teach additional courses to meet student needs and interests.
7. The reduction over a period of five years of classes with student enrollment greater than 24.
8. The implementation of the mentoring program and the participation of many members of the school faculty and staff.
9. The genuine concern of the faculty in promoting the well-being of students.
10. The comprehensive nature of the student recognition program that includes both school-based recognition and community support.
11. The commitment of the school district to provide additional professional development time for its staff.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING COMMENDATIONS

1. The creation of a focus group to address issues around the delivery of special education services.
2. Implementation of a co-teaching model for special education students.
3. Implementation of the mentorship program supported by faculty and staff members.
4. The pursuit of additional resources at no cost by the library media specialist.
5. The board of education program for donating older computers to the community.

6. The efforts of the current library media center staff to provide high quality library media services in an inviting and welcoming atmosphere in the absence of a certified library media specialist.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING COMMENDATIONS

1. The renovation of and addition to the school that will help to provide adequate space for programs and services for students.
2. The environmental science class for the development of the *Stafford Goes Green* program that has impacted the community.
3. The participation of 75 students in job shadowing.
4. The community for the support of the high school renovation and addition.

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Align the mission and expectations for student learning with state and national standards.
2. Integrate the mission and expectations for student learning fully into Stafford High School's decision-making process.
3. **Define more explicitly the indicators to be used to judge the school's achievement of the civic and social expectations.**

CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking in all curriculum documents.
2. Integrate school-wide academic expectations more completely into every aspect of the curriculum.
3. Ensure that all curriculum documents include the use of school-wide rubrics among the suggested assessment techniques.
4. Continue the implementation of the six-year curriculum revision cycle incorporating the alignment of the academic expectations in the remaining content areas.
5. **Share the critical thinking, problem-solving, technology integration, and CAPT responsibilities across all departments.**
6. Ensure that the curriculum revisions include curriculum integration across disciplines on a regular basis and focus on depth of understanding in unit planning.
7. Assure translation of higher-order thinking skills into the daily classroom experiences of all students, regardless of course or level.
8. Increase formal professional development dealing with curriculum design throughout the curriculum revision cycle.
9. Support the curriculum with instructional materials (updated textbooks and resources) throughout the curriculum revision cycle.
10. Continue to expand the coordination and articulation among departments and district schools in order to provide students with the benefits of a fully integrated curriculum.

INSTRUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure that all instructional practices are aligned with the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. **Set high standards of achievement in all levels of instruction.**
3. Formally seek feedback on effective instructional practices from students and parents.
4. **Designate time for teachers to discuss instructional strategies with members of their own and other departments.**
5. Implement professional development opportunities for teachers to learn how to use technology to more effectively deliver the curriculum.
6. Establish a process to ensure that the instructional strategy upon which professional development is focused is evidenced by increased usage by all teachers.
7. Implement the strategies to differentiate instruction and to facilitate the inclusion of special needs students into “mainstream” classes.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Complete the development and implementation of the process for assessing student progress in achieving academic expectations.
2. Develop a process to assess student achievement in courses that are not related to the CAPT.
3. Complete the development and implementation of the process for assessing student progress in achieving social and civic expectations.
4. Expand the community service requirement beyond the current five hour requirement in civics class to achieve social and civic expectations for student learning.
5. Define uniform criteria for each level of rubrics.
6. **Ensure that the course specific rubrics covering multiple features are developed and implemented for all courses.**
7. Provide time for teachers to examine student work as colleagues and use this information to improve instructional approaches and assessment strategies.
8. Ensure that professional development activities provided by the school or district include training in assessment strategies and data review.
9. Develop a process to use data gathered from the identified indicators to establish benchmarks to be used to measure the school’s achievement of the civic and social expectations articulated in the mission.
10. **Ensure that all teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.**

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Adopt student grouping patterns that reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school’s mission and expectations for student learning.**
2. Ensure that each teacher has a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
3. **Adopt a schedule that is driven by the school’s mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the**

- curriculum, instruction, and assessment and provide common planning time for teachers.**
4. Develop and implement a plan to increase participation of parents and students in the decision making process.
 5. Make changes to improve the effectiveness of the mentoring program for new teachers.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Fully implement the Developmental Guidance Curriculum.**
2. Give immediate attention to the impact of caseloads on the delivery of services in the guidance department.
3. Examine the need for clerical assistance in the guidance department.
4. Provide hard copies of information provided on the district or department websites for individuals without internet access.
5. Clarify the role of the special education facilitator and create a job description for this role and share with all staff.
6. **Personalize the course selection process for students to encourage greater achievement.**
7. Provide group counseling sessions to meet a variety of student needs.
8. Development of a work-study program.
9. Distribute emergency response procedures to non-certified staff.
10. Implement the Learning Resources and Information Technology Curriculum.
11. Involve the new library media specialist in the implementation and support of curricula.
12. Ensure all students have Seek Knowledge and Increase Literacy through Library Strategies (SKILLS) training.
13. Provide ongoing training for paraprofessionals.
14. Evaluate the effectiveness of the co-teaching model for special education students.
15. **Ensure that all staff members are trained on modifications and accommodations in general education for special education students.**
16. Reduce the drop-out rate for special education students.
17. Ensure a continuum of services exists for all special education students.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Disseminate scholarship information through the guidance office in a timely manner.
2. Increase the level of involvement of parents in school life.
3. Resolve the uneven heating and cooling issues throughout the school.
4. **Implement the chemical hygiene plan to provide the safe storage of chemicals.**
5. Implement the technology plan as written.
6. **Provide appropriate electrical service to the cafeteria.**
7. Mount the fire extinguishers with appropriate signage.
8. Affix directional signs inside and outside the building.
9. Maintain a dependable level of funding for Stafford High School.

Mr. Kennedy thanked the Board, faculty, staff, steering committee and standard's committee for their support and hard work.

Mr. Fontanella remarked that the district is set up for great success. Everything is falling into place for Stafford. He said that it is the perfect timing for Strategic Planning (which will be discussed at the special Board meeting on Monday, January 5, 2009).

G. Update on PSAT at Stafford High School

Dr. Fishman stated that Mr. Kennedy presented on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results at the September 8, 2008, Board meeting. At that time, he noted that the PSAT was a good practice test for the SAT. He also reminded the Board that in order to encourage more students to take the PSAT in 2008 - 2009, the administration had recommended in their school budget that the cost of the PSAT (\$13 per student) be defrayed for all eleventh grade students at Stafford High School, and the Board of Education approved this. Further, all of the eleventh grade students would take the PSAT in the fall during a regular school day, unless the student's parents opted their student out of the experience.

Mr. Kennedy reported that this new program has made a huge difference. This year, 140 students took the PSAT, versus 73 students taking the test last year. He noted that the results have just come in and he will give a full report to the Board once they have had a chance to review the information and prepare the report. Lastly, Mr. Kennedy stated that Mr. McGann, Guidance Counselor at the high school, will be meeting with each student to review individual PSAT results.

Item VI. Public Forum

A member of the audience asked for the percentage of the budget that has been expended to-date. Dr. Fishman stated that we have expended 92.29%.

A member of the audience inquired if the district would be able to reduce the price that we were paying for oil, since the price has dropped so dramatically. Mrs. Devlin stated that the district has already locked in for this year, so we will not be able to reduce the price this year.

Item VII. Old Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of Revisions to Board of Education Policy and Regulation 6142.101 (a)-(h)- Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education approve the revised Board policy 6142.101 (a)-(b) and regulation (a)-(h)- **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)**, as presented. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

Item VIII. New Business

A. Approval of Signatories for Payroll Checking Account

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stafford, that the Board of Education approve the Board Chair, the Board Secretary, and the Financial Analyst as signatories

for a new checking account at New Alliance Bank. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Proposal for Alternative Education Pilot for Stafford High School, Dr. Daniel Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services

Dr. Fishman stated that she is in support of a proposal from Dr. Daniel Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services, Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal of Stafford High School, and Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal of Stafford High School, for an Alternative Education Pilot for students in all grade levels at Stafford High School. She said that this program will run from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m., at the teen center in town (off-site). She stated that students with poor attendance, disciplinary issues and poor attitudes would be recommended for this alternative education opportunity (regular and special education). She said that this school would have a maximum of fourteen students, with a high teacher to student ratio, similar to a tutoring situation.

Dr. Lefebvre stated that this would not be an alternative school, and he has been careful not to use that verbiage. He said that the students that would attend this school are those that have had a history of failed learning opportunity at Stafford High School. Specifically, it would be those with a small number of credits and behavior issues. He stated that 90.8% of students graduate, and 89% of those students go on to college. What about the others? He said that the graduation rate for students with disabilities is low; however, as Dr. Fishman pointed out, the number of students with disabilities eligible to graduate is small. Additionally, Dr. Lefebvre reported that the district has not been able to find an alternative for students with disciplinary issues when the regular program has not worked. He said that he is proposing something radically different in implementing this pilot program.

Dr. Lefebvre said that this program would begin with about seven students and may grow as time goes on. The program should provide students with help to develop better work habits and give them an opportunity to earn credits. He said that these students have the ability to succeed, but there is a mismatch academically, which may be what is causing the behavior issues. He noted that the students will have to work on addressing the issues that were cited by the committee when they recommended them for the program. Not until then, will they re-enter the high school. He noted that some students may never re-enter the high school.

Dr. Lefebvre stated that he currently has five parents who have agreed to have their children attend the program. He has also secured staff members / outside substitutes to fill the teaching slots in the program. He said that the students are committed, and the parents are happy that the district is trying something new. Dr. Lefebvre said that he may have to come back to the Board at a later time to change the physical location of the program.

Ms. Stafford said that she would like clear data about how the program is working in order to make informed decisions at the budget meetings. Mrs. Bradway asked if there would be a counseling piece to this new program. Dr. Lefebvre said that there would be.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education approve the pilot alternative education program for selected students at Stafford High

School for the remaining portion of the 2008 – 2009 school year. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IX. Personnel Matters

A. Request for Leave of Absence- Certified Staff Member

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stafford, that the Board of Education approve an unpaid leave of absence for a teaching staff member, as follows:

NAME	INITIAL EMPLOYMENT DATE	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	ENDING DATE OF LEAVE
Katherine Bontempo	8/25/99	Stafford Elementary School	1/12/09	2/2/09

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

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to add the following item to the agenda: **IX.B.- Appointment- Certified Staff Member**. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Appointment- Certified Staff Member

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stafford, that the Board of Education appoint the following candidate for a teaching position:

NAME	CERTIFICATION AREA	SCHOOL/ ASSIGNMENT	REPLACING/ NEW	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE
Hurley, Dana	Comp. Special Education, K-12 (265)	Stafford High School / Special Education Teacher	Mary Ellen Clay	\$61,779 (MA, Step 11, pro-rated)	1/20/09

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

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to place Item **X.A.- A Parent Request regarding Early Readmission of Student G from Expulsion from Stafford High School (Executive Session Anticipated)**, into executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 9:15 p.m.

Item X. Student Matters

A. A Parent Request regarding Early Readmission of Student G from Expulsion from Stafford High School (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 9:25 p.m.

The Board invited the following individuals to attend executive session:

Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Student G
Student G's mother
Mrs. Christine Marinelli, Recording Secretary

The Board took a recess at 9:40 p.m. to deliberate. All invited individuals left the boardroom.

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 10:06 p.m.

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that the Board of Education deny the request for immediate readmission of Student G and uphold the original decision rendered on May 28, 2008.

Furthermore, the Board will accept this petition as the official request for readmission of Student G to Stafford High School, as stated in the May 28, 2008, decision. Early readmission will be considered at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools at the regular Board of Education meeting on or about January 12, 2009.

Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mr. Fontanella and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion. Mrs. Rummel abstained. The motion carried by majority vote.

Item XI. Adjournment

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary