

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
Monday, January 28, 2008**

Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary
Mrs. Lisa Bradway
Mrs. Tracy Rummel
Ms. Patricia Saunders
Ms. Julie Stafford

Absent: Mrs. Lisa Finch
Miss Cassandra Weed, Student Representative

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Dr. Marcia Elliott, Principal, West Stafford School
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Ms. Jill Gregori, Business Manager
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Mrs. Paula Kuenzler, Principal, Staffordville School
Dr. Dan Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Hank Skala, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mr. Kenneth Valentine, Principal, Stafford Middle School

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. A quorum was established.

ITEM I. Secretary's Report – Approval of Minutes

Special Meeting, January 22, 2008

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the January 22, 2008, Board of Education special meeting, as presented.

ITEM II. Treasurer's Report

A. Report on Bills

Board Bills

January 16, 2008 \$848,785.43

A consensus of the Board approved the Board Bills as presented.

ITEM III. Correspondence

Mr. Fontanella reminded the Board members that the ticket order form for *Bye Bye Birdie* was included in the Board packet this week. He also reminded Board members that they had agreed to place a full-page ad in the program for *Bye Bye Birdie*, which needs to be paid for by the end of the week.

ITEM IV. Board Reports

There were no Board Reports.

ITEM V. Superintendent's Reports

A. 2008 – 2009 Calendar Survey Update

Dr. Fishman distributed to the Board updated copies of the calendar survey responses. She also provided survey responses broken down by respondent (i.e. individual reports for parent responses, student responses, teacher responses, staff member responses). She also noted that due to issues with the web site, the survey would be available to students for one additional day, so that all students will have a chance to complete the survey.

The combined survey responses indicated that 764 individuals responded to the survey, which were fairly evenly distributed among all grade levels. 36.6% of the respondents wanted to begin the school year before Labor Day, while 63.7% wanted to start the school year after Labor Day. Of those that would like to begin before Labor Day, the overwhelming majority want to begin on Wednesday, August 27, 2008. 48.8% of the respondents would like to see February vacation added back into the school calendar, while 51.2% would not. In order to end the school year earlier in June, 46.6% would eliminate February vacation, while 36.0% would not like to eliminate any vacations. With regard to the shortened student days for curriculum meetings, 45.8% would like to continue with the current number of shortened days, while 30.4% would like to have more shortened days, and 17.2% would like to eliminate them. The Board was also presented with a copy of the 245 comments that were submitted as part of the survey.

Dr. Fishman distributed a copy of this year's school calendar and a copy of a blank school calendar for next year, as reference material for the Board. She pointed out several issues that may arise next year due to the way holidays fall in 08 – 09. For example, how will the district schedule the December holiday vacation around holidays that fall towards the middle and end of the week, and should April vacation include Good Friday, which falls on April 10?

Ms. Stafford noted that working parents with younger children may have a hard time finding and affording childcare if the full week in February was added back into the calendar. She also stated that she would like to see the school calendar start after Labor Day.

Mrs. Bradway stated that she would like to see the calendar start before Labor Day, the February break consist of a long weekend with a common curriculum day at the end, and have two full weeks off in December for the holiday break.

The Board also agreed to consider an option that adds an additional day to the long weekend in February.

Dr. Fishman stated that she would present two versions of the school calendar to the Board at their next meeting on Monday, February 4. One version will begin before Labor Day, and the other will begin after Labor Day.

B. Head Start Report through December 2007

Dr. Fishman presented the Head Start report through December 2007, as prepared by Ms. Jill Gregori, Business Manager. Dr. Fishman stated that her memo contained a typo, as it reported that the grant period ends on February 29, 2008. In actuality, the grant period ends on January 31, 2008, with the new grant period beginning on February 1. She stated that to date, the grant funds for renovations is 100% expended, while regular expenditures are 85.1% expended.

C. Head Start Governance Presentation- Dr. Marcia Elliott, Principal, West Stafford School

Dr. Fishman stated that as part of the Head Start performance standards, there must be periodic updates given to the Board of Education on Head Start policy and program information. Dr. Fishman introduced Dr. Marcia Elliott, Principal of West Stafford School.

Dr. Elliott gave a PowerPoint presentation, which provided an overview of the Head Start program and how Head Start works within the Stafford Public Schools. Dr. Elliott highlighted the following areas:

- Head Start's system of shared governance meshes the legal / regulatory responsibilities of the Board of Education and the federal regulations that define the Policy Council's responsibilities to guide the grantee and delegate programs.
- The partnership between Head Start and the Stafford Public Schools is mutually beneficial. While Head Start benefits from the resources of a public school district, Stafford Public Schools benefit from the funds that Head Start provides for programs that address the whole child (education, social, health and nutrition).
- Dr. Elliott reported that the Board of Education is responsible for ensuring that the Head Start program operates effectively and responds to issues and concerns in the community. She stated that the Board's role is to develop a mission and goals for the district that support Head Start performance standards. They assume legal and fiscal stewardship of the Head Start program, and they oversee the administration of services. She reported that the Board's responsibilities are to understand the program, understand the Head

Start performance standards, understand how services are implemented, act as an advocate for the Head Start program and promote partnerships in the community, and keep abreast of developments.

- Dr. Elliott stated that Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive early childhood program for low-income children and their families. Therefore, the district's program is subject to federal monitoring. Dr. Elliott noted that she expects a site visit sometime in March or April 2008. Stafford's program currently receives \$95,832 to help support 18 children in our integrated pre-kindergarten program.
- Dr. Elliott stated West Stafford School received a one-time grant award from Head Start for renovations in the amount of \$149,578. She also noted that there is a Head Start EC Link Grant, which is pending, but could provide the district with \$45,000 over two years. Should the district receive the grant award, it would be used for an online child development associate course for paraprofessionals, pediatric first aid training, professional development on NAEYC standards, and environment / learning resources enhancement.

Ms. Stafford had a question regarding the family income requirements. Dr. Fishman stated that she would get that information for the next meeting. Ms. Stafford also asked whether the 18 spaces in the district were enough to cover the need in Stafford. Dr. Elliott stated that it is possible to negotiate for more spaces for Stafford's program; however, she has found that 18 spaces is a good number for Stafford.

D. Cafeteria Profit and Loss Statements- November and December 2007 and Student Survey Results

Dr. Fishman stated that Mrs. Folker was not available to attend the meeting.

Dr. Fishman stated that the cafeteria profit and loss statements show an overall cash balance of \$3,150.33 at year's end. She also noted that due to days off from school for holiday observances, November and December are months when few meals are served.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the student survey results with the Board. She stated that at the middle school level, it was noted that a high percentage of students answered that they did not have time to eat. Dr. Fishman stated that she had a discussion with the middle school administration, and they informed her that this often happens with 6th graders at the beginning of the year. They reported that students have plenty of time to eat.

Dr. Fishman reported that at Stafford Elementary School, the peanut butter and jelly bag lunch was one of the least popular.

It was also noted that the cafeteria staff is looking at options with regard to variety. They are going to try to determine if it is better to have more variety, or to just stock more of the most popular items.

Mr. Fontanella stated that it is important that the building services department keep working on trying to modify the menu to find those items that are most popular with students.

Mrs. Rummel suggested that something other than peanut butter and jelly be offered at the elementary school, such as tuna, especially with all of the concerns about peanut allergies.

Ms. Stafford asked how the inventory was tracked at the schools. Ms. Gregori answered that it is tracked by paper inventory. Ms. Stafford also noted that she is very concerned that students may not have enough time to eat. She asked if the issue at the high school had been rectified. Dr. Fishman stated that another register was added, and that seemed to solve the problem.

**E. Continuation of the Presentation of the Proposed 2008 – 2009 School Budget-
Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Jill Gregori,
Business Manager**

Dr. Fishman began the presentation by reviewing answers to the questions that Board members asked at the last meeting.

- She provided the Board with a draft job description, which contained the duties of the proposed 10-month secretary at Stafford Elementary School. Mr. Skala noted that sometimes his secretary has to work overtime and that as the year progresses, it seems that he needs the help more than ever.
- She stated that specific examples of what was included in the \$10,000 for the PE curriculum would be provided at the meeting on February 4. She also noted that the textbook line includes social studies books for grades 1, 2, and 8, at a cost of \$24,000, high school business, at a cost of \$4,800, and English / language arts for grades 6 – 12, at a cost of \$95,000. Mr. Fontanella asked how much it would cost to add back in the replacement of the reading series at the middle school that Mr. Bednarz noted in his memo he was delaying until 2009 – 2010. Mr. Bednarz stated that he would have to get back to the Board with that figure.
- Dr. Fishman stated that the cost of the Literacy Consultant would be \$15,000 for 20 – 25 days of consultation at the middle school. She stated that this consultant would assess our current practice and programming at the secondary level and provide recommendations for improvement, work directly with teachers to integrate reading strategies into instruction, and model via classroom co-teaching experiences best practice in literacy instruction. Mrs. Bradway asked if it wouldn't be more cost-effective and instructionally effective to have a half-time permanent staff member that would work all year. Dr. Fishman and Mr. Bednarz stated that it is difficult to find a half-time person for this type of position and that this option would be more expensive. Ms. Stafford asked if there was a way to measure the success of having this consultant in-district to possibly justify having a full-time or permanent position. Mr. Bednarz stated that it would be difficult to get useful information after just one year of having the consultant in-house.

- Dr. Fishman reviewed the way we arrived at the figures for the related salaries. Most of these figures were contractual.
- Dr. Fishman and Mr. Kennedy presented more details regarding the proposed guidance intern at the high school level. At a cost of \$12,000, the intern from the University of Connecticut would work in the guidance suite. The intern would concentrate on transition issues of ninth graders and the personalization of Stafford High School for its students. Mr. Kennedy stated that the intern would meet with each ninth grade student individually at least twice per month. Mrs. Bradway asked if the students would be pulled out of class. Mr. Kennedy stated that they would work around study halls for these meetings. A Board member asked how the current intern is working out. Mr. Kennedy stated that the intern is working out very well, but the proposal that they are looking at is slightly different in that the intern from UConn would be a paid employee of the district, rather than a volunteer.
- Dr. Fishman informed the Board that the heating oil contract expires on August 31, 2008, or when 145,000 gallons have been used, whichever occurs first.
- Lastly, Dr. Fishman reported that Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and Mr. Dan Ford, Assistant Director of Building Services, would be present at the Board meeting on February 4 to discuss the capital project plans for Stafford Public Schools.

Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation, presented details about the district's athletic budget. Mr. Frassinelli stated that the proposed athletic budget totals \$214,165, a \$14,331 increase over last year's budget.

Mr. Frassinelli stated that the increases in the Athletic Trainer, Coaches, Officials / Support Staff, and Transportation lines were contractual increases that he cannot control. He stated that the \$2,050 in the Uniform line is for uniforms for middle school teams, including cheerleading. The district has been relying on the Booster Club at the high school for uniforms at that level. Mr. Frassinelli stated that the Equipment line contains funds for items that have a longer shelf-life, like bats, etc., while the Supplies line contains funds for items that have a shelf life of a year or less. He also noted that \$2,049 is included in his budget to add cheerleading at the middle school level.

Dr. Fishman stated that she is negotiating with the Superintendent of East Windsor Public Schools to provide funds to cover the transportation of the East Windsor students to Stafford to participate on the cooperative football team between the two towns. Mr. Frassinelli stated that next school year is the last year of the cooperative agreement with East Windsor. Mrs. Fowler asked how many East Windsor students participate on the team. Mr. Frassinelli stated that 15 students participate.

Ms. Stafford asked if any teams were lost last year in the budget process. Dr. Fishman stated that no teams were eliminated last year. Mr. Fontanella noted that there was not enough interest to form two teams.

Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, presented the technology budget. The proposed technology budget is \$320,159, an increase of \$19,842 over last year's budget. He gave the Board details regarding each line of the budget as follows:

110- Related Salaries: Mr. Bednarz stated that this line contains \$12,000 for a new .40 FTE technician, who will work two days per week to help with the maintenance of the new technology, specifically the whiteboards.

Mrs. Bradway asked if Mr. Bednarz could give her an idea of what the current staffing in the technology department looks like and how this new position will fit in. Dr. Fishman and Mr. Bednarz explained that currently the district has an IT consultant that has agreed to stay on with the district through next school year. In 2009 – 2010, this person will be replaced with a 12-month IT person. Additionally, the district currently has 2 technicians. These are also 12-month positions. Lastly, the district has a Technology Integration Specialist (TIS) position, which remains vacant at this time. Mrs. Bradway asked about the qualifications of the TIS. Mr. Bednarz explained that this person would be working with teachers and students to integrate technology into the classroom, so a teaching certificate is required.

430- Repair and Maintenance: Mr. Bednarz stated that this line contains funds for repairs, software, installation fees, and the Cisco contract, which has increased this year for the first time in years.

530- Communications: Mr. Bednarz stated that this line contains funds for the district's virus protection programs and firewall protection.

610- Supplies: Mr. Bednarz stated that this line has decreased from last year, as last year's budget included substantial funds for 2007 Microsoft Windows software. He reported to the Board that this line includes \$9,000 to update our web site. The district is still looking at several companies to provide this service. He stated that this line also includes funds for backup tapes, so that district e-mails can be backed up as recommended by the State.

730- Equipment: Mr. Bednarz reported that this line includes funds for a laptop cart at the middle school level, which will bring the total number of laptop carts in the district to eight. He stated that the district would be stopping at 8, as that would be the most that we could support financially with regard to the replacement schedule. The Board asked what a laptop cart consists of. Mr. Bednarz stated that it is 24 laptops that are on a mobile unit to be used within the classroom. The laptops are loaded with all of the same software as the computers in the computer labs. Mrs. Bradway asked why the existing carts couldn't be reallocated, since there doesn't seem to be enough people to help them use the carts that already exist. She also asked if the existing cart at the middle school is fully booked. Mr. Valentine said that it is.

Mr. Bednarz stated that on page 29 of the budget document, the Board members could find an itemized list of the equipment being proposed in the Equipment line (730). Mrs. Bradway asked if the pcs and laptops listed in the first three lines were replacements. Mr. Bednarz stated that they were replacements and that the district is on a 6 – 7 year

replacement cycle. Dr. Fishman stated that this is why the price per computer is slightly higher than some may expect, as the district purchases larger machines with good warranties in order to get the required 6 – 7 years out of them. Mrs. Fowler asked if the price per computer is the same as last year. Dr. Fishman stated that the prices are slightly higher than last year, as prices on the larger machines are not coming down as they did in years past.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the questions that the Board would like answered at the next meeting. They were:

- How are the current laptop carts being used?
- What is included in the v-brick system?
- Are the district's laptops encrypted to secure student data?
- What is the cost of the reading program that has been placed on hold?

Ms. Gregori stated that she believed that the first public hearing on the budget will be moved to Wednesday, March 5, 2008. Dr. Fishman stated that at the next Board meeting, Board members should be prepared to give her direction regarding the budget. The Board's final review of the budget will be at the regular meeting on Monday, February 25. Immediately thereafter, the budget will be prepared and delivered to the Board of Finance.

ITEM VI. Public Forum

There were no questions or comments.

ITEM VII. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

ITEM VIII. New Business

A. Appointment of Board Member to the Student Activity Account Committee

The Board appointed Mrs. Bradway to the Student Activity Account Committee.

ITEM IX. Personnel Matters

There were no Personnel Matters.

ITEM X. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

ITEM XI. Adjournment

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Saunders, and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary