

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
Monday, February 4, 2008**

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

Absent: Ms. Patricia Saunders

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. David Bartlett, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Dan Ford, Assistant Director of Building Services
Ms. Jill Gregori, Business Manager
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services
Mr. Kenneth Valentine, Principal, Stafford Middle School
Miss Cassandra Weed, Student Representative

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, January 28, 2008

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the January 28, 2008, Board of Education regular meeting, as presented.

ITEM II. Treasurer's Report

A. Report on Bills

Board Bills

January 23, 2008	\$111,735.08
January 30, 2008	\$315,760.20

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

ITEM III. Correspondence

Mr. Bednarz distributed an updated informational pamphlet about the school district to the Board members. Mrs. Rummel suggested distributing it to the local real estate agents so that they have information for potential home buyers about the school district.

ITEM IV. Board Reports

Miss Weed reported on the following:

- ❖ The student / faculty volleyball game was held last week, and the faculty won.
- ❖ The freshmen Valentine's Day Dance will be held on Saturday, February 9. The seniors will be helping the freshmen set up, since the freshmen helped them with Homecoming.
- ❖ The boys' basketball team was playing a game that evening. If they won, they would move on to States. Miss Weed also mentioned that Stafford won the basketball game against Somers and that there were no issues.
- ❖ On Monday, February 25, the high school will be having a variety show.
- ❖ The National Honor Society is holding a Valentine's Day carnation fundraiser.
- ❖ MTV came to the high school last week. Over 100 students auditioned for a slot on *MADE*.

ITEM V. Superintendent's Reports

A. 2008 – 2009 Draft School Calendar

Dr. Fishman reviewed two versions (one with students starting school after Labor Day, one starting before Labor Day) of the 2008 – 2009 draft school calendar with the Board.

The Board members asked why April 20 – 24, 2009, was selected as the week for April vacation. They thought that having the spring vacation earlier in April would be better because students only have one shortened day in March. Dr. Fishman stated that several of the surrounding towns were taking this week for vacation. Mr. Valentine noted that the later the vacation, the better the chance of having spring-like weather. Additionally, it is possible that students would have weather related days off in March.

With regard to having the common curriculum days attached to weekends, the Board members asked if the administration was concerned about staff attendance on those days. Dr. Fishman stated that she has been monitoring this issue for the past few years, and she has noticed a significant improvement.

Dr. Fishman stated that she felt that starting school before Labor Day was the best option. Mr. Bednarz stated that the three student days gained by starting before Labor Day were much more valuable in terms of instruction than three days added on at the end of the year in June.

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stafford, that the Board of Education approve the version of the 2008 – 2009 school calendar that begins before Labor Day. Mrs. Fowler stated that she would like an explanation posted on the web site stating why the district chose to start before Labor Day when the calendar survey clearly shows that a large majority of respondents wanted to start after Labor Day. Additionally, she would like Dr. Fishman to continue to track staff attendance on common curriculum days. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Report on the PASS Grant, Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Fishman informed the Board that the district was awarded a competitive grant in the amount of \$150,000 for an after-school program in grades 2 – 5. Ms. Julia Jeremias, Early Education Program Facilitator, and Mr. Bednarz worked together on this grant.

Mr. Bednarz stated that this grant gave the district an enormous infusion of money for this after-school program. Mr. Bednarz was not notified that the district was awarded the grant until the end of December, and Stafford is one of only three or four districts that did not already have a program in place. He thanked Mr. Skala, principal of Stafford Elementary School, and Mr. Bartlett, assistant principal of Stafford Elementary School, for helping to get the program up and running.

Mr. Bednarz stated that at this time, some of the staff members are in place. He stated that brochures need to be created and distributed to parents so that he can begin to get the information together to create bus routes.

Mr. Bednarz gave samples of the types of programs that will be offered, such as Introduction to Spanish, Drama Club, Chess Club, Book Study, Dance Program, Quilting, Let's Learn French, Mathemagicians and 10 Pin Bowling. He said that the programs will be presented by faculty members, community members and parents.

Mrs. Bradway asked if there was a limit to the number of students that can participate. Mr. Bednarz stated that if the number of students interested exceeds the slots available, then a lottery would be held. Mrs. Bradway also asked that the district ensure that the bus ride is kept to a half hour or less since the program is ending so late in the day. Lastly, Mrs. Bradway asked if the high school students had been asked to participate as presenters. Mr. Bednarz stated that there are plans to do this in the future, but for this session, he is just concentrating on getting the program off the ground. Mr. Bednarz stated that a PASS council will be created for future sessions. He said that for this session, the principal and assistant principal will be acting as the council.

Mrs. Fowler asked if this was a renewable grant. Mr. Bednarz stated that he is still gathering information from the state about the future dynamics of the grant.

Mr. Bednarz and the Board thanked Ms. Jeremias for her help with the grant proposal.

**C. 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 reviewed the responses to the Board members' questions from the last meeting. The issues from the last meeting were:

- The projected cost of a reading program implementation at grades 6, 7, and 8 should this reading program be addressed in the 2008 - 2009 budget.

Dr. Fishman stated that a ball park figure for the extension of these materials into the middle school would be made up of costs from three sources: a specialized reading program for our struggling readers (about \$45,000), tradebooks (@about \$5,000 per grade level= \$15,000), and a reading strategies textbook (@ about \$35 per student=\$16,695). Thus, the middle school reading program would cost about \$76,695. In addition, she said that the district would want to extend this program in some way to the high school, particularly at the ninth grade level, with the specialized reading program for struggling readers (\$15,000) and a reading strategies textbook for all ninth graders at \$35 per student (about \$4,725), and, finally, tradebooks at the ninth through twelfth grade (\$20,000).

- The amount of use of laptops and computer labs in Stafford Elementary School, Stafford Middle School, and Stafford High School.

Dr. Fishman stated that Mr. Henry Skala, principal at Stafford Elementary School, reports that each class (28 in all) has at least a 30 minute assigned time in the computer lab each week. That amounts to about 2.5 days a week of back-to-back class usage. He said that classroom teachers can sign up for open slots of time, as needed. This usage, weekly, is about another day of back-to-back class usage. With regard to the usage of laptop carts, Mr. Skala states that they are booked for almost every class period throughout the week.

Mr. Kenneth Valentine, principal at Stafford Middle School, provided a report on computer lab and laptop cart usage at the middle school, which was given to the Board members. It indicated that the laptop cart is continually booked.

Dr. Fishman stated that Mr. Francis Kennedy, principal at Stafford High School, reports that currently there is one business lab at the high school that is used for business classes and that other classes use when it is "free." She said that laptop carts at the high school are booked for most class periods, 90% of a typical week's schedule of 7 periods per day.

- An update as to when V-brick technology will be available at Stafford Elementary School and Stafford High School.

Mr. Dan Ford, Assistant Director of Building Services and Co-Chair on the High School Building Committee, stated that the building committee is working on determining if additional hardware will be needed to properly install the V-brick technology at the high school. Once the technology is installed at the high school, the other schools will feed from there. Mr. Ford stated that he anticipates that it will be at least a couple more months before the high school and Stafford Elementary School are on-line, possibly longer. He also stated that if additional hardware is needed, the building committee may not have enough money to cover the cost. They are investigating why this additional hardware was not included in the specifications at the beginning of the project.

- A determination of whether laptops used in the schools and by administrative / specialized staff have encryption software.

Dr. Fishman reported that in speaking with Mr. James Kavanagh, district technology consultant, laptops in use in classrooms are passed out by the teacher from a cart to which they are locked. At the end of the period, the laptops are passed back and locked into the cart. At the end of the day, the cart itself is put into a locked storage closet. Moreover, students are using these laptops in a directed lesson by the classroom teacher. Thus Mr. Kavanagh does not feel these laptops would need to be encrypted.

She said that laptops used by administrators, psychologists, and social workers are not currently encrypted. While there could be some student records temporarily housed on these laptops, such as test reports, these are routinely uploaded to our Citrix system. The cost of encrypting these laptops (3 for central office administrators, 7 for building administrators, 4 for psychologists, 4 for social workers, 4 for speech and language specialists, 2 for building services, 1 for the occupational therapist, 1 for the technology consultant, and 1 for the maintenance technician) will be investigated.

- Examples of physical education supplies to be purchased at each grade level, as part of the implementation of a new physical education curriculum in 2008 - 2009.

Mr. Bednarz reported that in addition to replacing worn out materials and restocking inventories, some of the things suggested by the PE staff were snowshoes, a mat system, rhythmic gymnastic and tumbling materials, a dance system, Cardio Kids exercise equipment, a universal gym, step platforms, heart monitors, a leg press, air cycle bikes, core stability balls, free weights, and a double ladder sit up station.

Mrs. Linder and Mr. Ford were present to review upcoming building and capital projects in the district. Mrs. Linder reviewed a list of projected building projects for 2008 – 2009. She also reviewed a three-year projection for capital projects. Mrs. Linder stated that she is hopeful that the town will work with the district to repave the parking lot at Stafford Middle School. Another capital project mentioned was installing A/C in the nurse's suite at the middle school. Board members asked that Mrs. Linder secure a quote for installing A/C in

the entire middle school. Mrs. Linder reported that since the Staffordville School, Stafford Middle School and West Stafford School roofs were all renovated at the same time, the district should plan to have Kaestle Boos Associates come out and evaluate them in another three years.

Mr. Fontanella stated that the budget that was presented to the Board by the administration is an increase of 8.06% over last year's budget. He asked the other Board members how they would like to proceed. After discussion, Mr. Fontanella asked Dr. Fishman to provide the Board with a list of cuts in .5% increments for the next meeting scheduled for Monday, February 25, 2008.

ITEM VI. Public Forum

There were no questions or comments.

ITEM VII. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

ITEM VIII. New Business

There was no New Business.

ITEM IX. Personnel Matters

A. Resignations- Certified Staff Members

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education accept the resignations of the following staff members, as indicated:

Name	Position	School	Effective Date	Reason
Bogardus, Patricia	Special Education Teacher	Stafford High School	End of School Year, June 2008	Personal.
Pastormerlo, Amy	Special Education Teacher	Stafford High School	End of School Year, June 2008	Personal.

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

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to place Item **IX.B.- Personnel Matter**, into executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The Board invited Ms. Gregori and Dr. Fishman to attend the executive session.

The Board took a brief recess at 9:10 p.m.

B. Personnel Matter (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 9:12 p.m.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:31 p.m.

The Board did not take action on this item.

ITEM X. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

ITEM XI. Adjournment

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Ms. Stafford voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary