

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School
May 18, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Mr. Tony Frassinelli
Mr. Earl Goodell
Mrs. Andrea Locke
Mrs. Tracy Rummel, Chairperson
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Secretary
Mrs. Kathy Walsh

Absent: Mr. Peter Kovaleski

Also Present: Dr. Patricia A. Collin, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Business Manager
Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Greg Buonome, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Devin Cowperthwaite, Supervisor of Building Services
Mrs. Laurie Dillon, Teacher, Stafford High School
Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Stafford Elementary School / Staffordville School
Mr. Nick Girard, Student Representative
Ms. Christine Griswold, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Shelley Michaud, Principal, West Stafford School
Mr. Matthew Moore, Alternate Student Representative
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Jolene Piscetello, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mrs. Amy Stevenson, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Kenneth Valentine, Principal, Stafford Middle School

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. A quorum was established.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Student Representatives led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, 5/11/15

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on May 11, 2015, as presented.

Item IV. Treasurer's Report

Bills, 5/13/15- \$152,751.02
Grants, 5/13/15- \$10,406.08

A consensus of the Board approved the bills and grants as presented.

Item V. Correspondence

A. Board Meeting Reminder

Mrs. Rummel reviewed the Board of Education meeting reminder that was posted on the agenda.

B. Letter from Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) Regarding Continued Membership

The letter from CABE was provided for Board members via the portal. Dr. Collin read the letter for the audience.

C. Letter from New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEAS&C)

The letter from NEAS & C was provided for Board members via the portal. Dr. Collin read the letter for the audience.

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Report from Student Representative

Mr. Girard reported on the following topics:

- Only 22 days remaining until graduation!
- Senior Picnic
- Junior Prom, May 22
- Senior Banquet, June 3
- Smarter Balanced Assessments in Progress
- Blue Torch School Newspaper

Mr. Moore reported on the following topics:

- Sports Update
- Annual JI Invitational

B. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee members are Mrs. Rummel, Mr. Frassinelli and Mr. Kovaleski. Mr. Goodell and Ms. Shegogue are alternates. There was no report from this committee.

C. Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee members are Ms. Shegogue, Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Walsh. Ms. Shegogue reported that the committee met prior to the Board meeting this evening and reviewed a new photography text, which would appear later on the meeting agenda for approval.

D. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee members are Mr. Goodell, Mr. Kovalski and Mrs. Walsh. Mrs. Walsh stated that the committee met on Friday, May 15, 2015, at 8 a.m. Fifteen policies were reviewed.

E. Negotiation Committee

The Negotiation Committee members are Mrs. Rummel, Mr. Frassinelli and Mrs. Locke. Ms. Shegogue is an alternate. Mrs. Locke reported that the committee has a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, 2015.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Music and Drama Department Presentation

Dr. Collin stated that each year members of the various music groups at Stafford High School, as well as the Drama Club, make a brief presentation on their activities during the school year to the Board of Education. Mrs. Laurie Dillon, Music and Drama Director, introduced student representatives from each of the following groups: Band, Madrigals, Concert Choir, Ladies Chorale, Show Choir, Drama and Octet.

Mrs. Dillon provided Board members with a list of all of the events that the music and drama departments participated in this year.

B. Teacher of the Year 2016

Dr. Collin stated that Stafford's Teacher of the Year for 2016 is Mr. Michael Morhardt, Health and Physical Education Teacher at Stafford High School. Dr. Collin provided Board members with a copy of the announcement of his selection via the portal. Also included was an overview of the selection process, including the recent history of the Teacher of the Year program in Stafford, as prepared by Mr. Michael Bednarz, facilitator of the Stafford Teacher of the Year Program.

Mr. Bednarz introduced Mr. Morhardt. Mr. Morhardt is a graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University with his master's degree in Physical Education/Health. In 2004, Mike began his career in education at Windsor Locks High School as a tutor in an alternative education class in 1998 before serving as a Physical Education/Health teacher at the school in 2004 and ultimately beginning his tenure with Stafford Public Schools in 2010. In addition to participating on a variety of committees at Stafford High School (Vision, Advancement, School Climate, and School Safety), Mike is credited for designing "team building" professional development for staff, "pioneering" our Unified Physical Education program, and serving as Varsity Boys Basketball Coach. When asked to reflect on his personal feelings and beliefs about education, Mike wrote, "I teach to inspire young people through kindness."

C. Paraeducator of the Year 2016

Dr. Collin stated that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council established the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program. Renamed the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program, its purpose is the following: *to recognize the important role of the paraeducator in supporting student achievement.* Through this program, each school district is allowed to nominate one paraeducator for this award, *who has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the*

performance of his/her job, thereby earning the respect and admiration of students, teachers, administrators, coworkers and parents.

She said that Stafford's Paraeducator of the Year for 2016 is Ms. Ginny Briggs. Similar to the CSDE Teacher of the Year program, the nominee must meet specific criteria, which was outlined in Dr. Collin's letter to staff, parents, and community members, a copy of which was provided for Board members via the portal.

As the district's Paraeducator of the Year, Ms. Briggs will be invited to participate in next year's Paraeducator of the Year Selection.

Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal of Stafford Elementary School, introduced Ms. Ginny Briggs. Ginny is currently serving at Stafford Elementary School and began her 16 year tenure at West Stafford School in 1999. In addition to working in Programs After School in Stafford (P.A.S.S.) and the high school's Saturday detention program, she has also provided support to students in our summer programs.

Dr. Collin's letter notes that Ginny always has a positive attitude and during Dr. Collin's most recent conversation with her, she purposefully described challenging situations with which she has dealt as "opportunities", which speaks to her positive disposition about her work with students. Trained in remedial and specialized reading programs and behavioral interventions, Ginny is described as "hard working", "dedicated", "responsible", "kind hearted", "nurturing", and "an invaluable resource." She gets to know each and every student with whom she works and collaborates with classroom and special education teachers to promote success. A teacher noted, "Ginny has a strong awareness of the needs of the students and the classroom routine. I like to think of Ginny as a mind reader. She is always one step ahead and prepared to handle any situation. Ginny is a great asset to the SES team." A valued and respected member of the staff, she has high expectations for all students and consistently provides the appropriate level of support and encouragement for students to reach their fullest potential and positively impacts the climate and culture of SES.

D. Recognition of Stafford Public Schools' Retiring Staff Members

Dr. Collin stated that the following staff members, certified and non-certified, will have retired by the end of the 2014-2015 school year:

- Maryann Berry, Stafford Middle School
- Avis Braun, Staffordville School
- Suzanne Daras, Stafford Elementary School
- Ronald Fontaine, Stafford Elementary School
- Barbara Hodge, District
- Jo Ann Losee, Stafford Elementary School
- Carol Parker, Stafford Middle School
- Shirley Shegogue, Stafford Middle School
- Carol Thornton, District
- Katherine Witkowski, Stafford High School

Dr. Collin spoke briefly about each staff member and presented each that was present at the meeting with a gift.

E. Presentation of the 2014-2015 CABA Student Leadership Awards

Dr. Collin stated that each year, the CABA Student Leadership Award program honors Connecticut high school students who exhibit exemplary leadership skills based on the following criteria:

- Willingness to take on challenges
- Capability to make difficult decisions
- Concern for others
- Ability to work with others
- Willingness to commit to a project
- Diplomacy
- Ability to understand issues clearly
- Ability to honor a commitment

The program was then expanded for the 2009-2010 school year to include middle school students who exhibit exemplary leadership skills. One male and one female student from each school is eligible.

Dr. Collin stated that the 2014-2015 recipients of this prestigious award from Stafford High School are Hunter Davis and Alyssa Fecko. Both students are eleventh graders. The recipients from Stafford Middle School are Ashley Fecko and Nicholas Wyse. Both students are eighth graders.

The four honorees were present at the *Celebration of Excellence* to receive their awards. Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, and Mr. Kenneth Valentine, Principal of Stafford Middle School, presented their students to the Board and spoke briefly about each student. Board members were also provided with biographical information about each student via the portal.

F. Presentation of the 2014–2015 Academic Growth and Student Leadership in Learning Awards

Dr. Collin reported that because the district is affiliated with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), the district has the opportunity to present the National School Development Council (NSDC) Award for Academic Growth and Student Leadership in Learning to two high school students. The NSDC is a network of regional school study councils, like NESDEC, that supports excellence, equity and continuous educational improvements.

Dr. Collin said that the NSDC award is presented to high school seniors who have consistently pursued a high level of academic effort and have also served as positive role models for the student body. Recipients of the award exemplify admirable character and accomplishment.

Dr. Collin stated that the 2014-2015 recipients of this prestigious award are Bridget Keleher and Rowan Longmore. Mr. Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, introduced Miss Longmore at the *Celebration of Excellence*. Miss Keleher was unable to attend the meeting.

G. Recognition of the Student Representatives to the Board of Education

Dr. Collin stated that Stafford High School seniors Nicholas Girard and Matthew Moore have served as Student Representatives to the Board of Education for the 2014-2015 school year. She said that they have done an outstanding job updating Board members on student activities, not just at Stafford High School but also at the other schools, and they have provided a student's viewpoint on issues. They also willingly offer input

during Board of Education meetings and have served as advocates for students. Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, formally introduced both students.

Dr. Collin and Mrs. Rummel presented Nick and Matt with a gift card and a certificate commemorating their service to the Board.

The Board took a recess for refreshments at 7:45 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m.

H. Update on Stafford High School's Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Dr. Collin reported that in order to maintain its accreditation through the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc. (NEAS&C), Stafford High School completed its pre-self-study report, one of the steps of this extremely important process. The school is scheduled for an evaluation visit in the calendar year 2018.

Dr. Collin said that in a letter dated May 6, 2015, from NEAS&C (which was presented earlier on the agenda under "Correspondence") the high school was commended for the following:

- The inclusive and thorough process to revise the core values, beliefs and learning expectations;
- The school's integration of technology and personalization of learning in instructional practices;
- The school's work to enhance the advisement program;
- The work underway to review evaluation practices of student support services related to the school's 21st Century skills;
- The engagement of a consultant for future planning of facilities and enrollment capacities; and
- The self-reflection which the school has demonstrated in identifying and addressing specific areas of need prior to the decennial evaluation.

Mr. Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, provided an overview of the process used to revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Mrs. Rummel stated that she appreciated that the committee choose to "fine tune" the existing message rather than starting over and creating a new message.

Mrs. Walsh stated that she likes the civic expectations.

Mr. Frassinelli asked if local citizenship should be included. Mr. Pelliccia stated that the committee struggled with that question as well. However, it was the feeling of the committee that global citizenship encompassed local citizenship.

I. Financial Report through April 2015

Dr. Collin presented the financial report sorted by object code of funds budgeted and encumbered/expended from July 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015, as prepared by Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Business Manager. Dr. Collin said that the period to date expenditures/encumbrances total \$25,092,176, or 90%, leaving a \$1,817,610 balance of the total budget to be expended or encumbered by June 30, 2015.

Dr. Collin said that Mr. Adlerstein also included a report, which includes State, federal and local grant awards, expenditures, and reimbursements received as of April 30, 2015. Most grants are on a reimbursement basis, which means that the funding source of the grant reimburses the district after the latter covers the expense.

There were no questions or comments.

J. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through April 2015

Dr. Collin presented the Cafeteria Profit and Loss report for July through April 30, 2015, as prepared by Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Business Manager. According to statements, the Food Services program had a profit of \$35, while for the same period last year, reports indicated a loss of \$1,298. The reports indicate year-to-date revenues totaling \$506,268 of which \$280,842, or 55%, is State and federal aid. She said that the net income, as indicated in the report, is \$29,797.

Dr. Collin stated that as reported by Mr. Adlerstein, the fourth quarter of each school year is particularly challenging as a result of fewer serving days, summer start up costs and the payment of insurance waivers to employees. Mr. Adlerstein expects a smaller loss for May and June this year as compared to last year, therefore, he anticipates the year will end in the black.

Dr. Collin said that as stated last month, with the implementation of the district-wide point of sale system, the program hopes to provide parents/guardians with access to their children's meal accounts and allow them to make payments on line. While there is no additional cost to the program for providing the electronic payment capability, there is a small transaction fee charged to parents. At this time, the department plans to make this option available for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. Frassinelli asked how much the transaction fee charged to parents would be. Mr. Adlerstein responded that they are not that far along in the process, so he doesn't have that figure yet.

Mrs. Rummel asked if there has been any consideration regarding next year's program, and if the district will continue with the program that is in place, or if an outside service will be used. Mr. Adlerstein stated that since the program has shown improvement, he would recommend that the district continue with the current model. He noted that outside services have downfalls as well. He said that the program isn't meant to be profitable, but it should break even.

Item VIII. Public Forum

There were no comments.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of Photography Textbook

Dr. Collin stated that as indicated in the attached memorandum prepared by Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, the district recommends adoption of *National Geographic Complete Photography* (National Geographic, 2011) for the Photography course at Stafford High School. The textbook will replace *Complete Digital Photography* (Charles River Media, 2005).

Facilitated by Mrs. Tannis Longmore, and including Mrs. Sheree Pasini, the textbook selection committee made its decision based on established guidelines, which, in addition to highlights of the textbook, were enumerated in a memorandum that was provided to the Board via the portal.

Also provided via the portal was the corresponding New Textbook Request Form, which provides the rationale for new textbooks and identifies other textbooks that were examined. Dr. Collin said that prior to presentation to the full Board of Education, the textbooks were introduced to the Board Curriculum Committee.

The final negotiated cost of the purchase for 18 textbooks is \$630. Mr. Bednarz said that funds are available in the current Curriculum & Instruction budget due to the saving realized with the adoption of a less expensive math text.

Mr. Bednarz and Mrs. Longmore were in attendance at the meeting and provided a copy of the textbook for the Board's review. Mrs. Longmore stated that the textbook would be used for grades 9 -12. Mr. Bednarz noted that there were four tabbed pages in the book that indicated nude / partially nude photos. Mrs. Longmore said that these are photos that would appear in any *National Geographic* magazine, and that the Board should consider the text in the context in which the resource will be used.

Mr. Frassinelli stated that the photos in question should be a non-issue for high school students. The parents in attendance at the meeting agreed that they did not have an issue with the photos in the text. The student representatives felt that the high school students are responsible, and that these photos open students' eyes to other cultures.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Pelliccia suggested that he could provide information to parents at the onset of the course and allow students to opt out. Dr. Collin suggested that Mr. Pelliccia invite concerned parents in to see the photos, as they may think they are worse than they are.

Ms. Shegogue made a motion, seconded by Mr. Goodell, that the Board adopt the textbook, *National Geographic Complete Photography*, as presented. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke and Ms. Shegogue voted for the motion. Mrs. Walsh abstained. The motion carried by majority vote.

B. Appointment of Board Members to the Stafford Education Association (SEA) Negotiation Committee

Dr. Collin stated that pursuant to the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and the current Professional Agreement between the Stafford Board of Education and the Stafford Education Association, contract negotiations between the Board and the Association must begin by August 3, 2015. She said that the Stafford Education Association is interested in scheduling the first meeting the week of August 10th to establish ground rules and future meeting dates and that the S.E.A. Committee is available any day that week. Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Rummel agreed to participate on this committee. Mrs. Locke agreed to continue as chair of the committee.

Dr. Collin said that Attorney Janus, Sam Adlerstein, Christine Marinelli, and she will be reviewing the present S.E.A. contract. Prior to August 2015, Dr. Collin said that she plans to elicit input from her administrative team and anticipates some recommendations for changes in contract language to discuss with the Board Negotiation Committee. She asked that the Board committee forward to her any further changes in contract language in which they are interested in pursuing. Attorney Janus will then incorporate these proposed changes into a

packet that will be presented to the SEA negotiating team, and SEA will present their proposed changes in contract language to the Board's Committee on the same night.

Dr. Collin stated that a copy of the current contract between the Stafford Board of Education and the Stafford Education Association (S.E.A.) would be emailed to the Board SEA Negotiation Committee.

C. Presentation, Discussion and Approval of Reductions to the Board Approved 2015-2016 Budget for Stafford Public Schools

Dr. Collin stated that on February 23, 2015, the Board of Education approved the budget for Stafford Public Schools totaling \$27,822,500 for the 2015-2016 school year. This represented an increase of \$912,705 or 3.39% over the approved budget for 2014-2015. Subsequently, on April 6, 2015, the Board of Finance (BOF) directed the Board of Education to reduce its budget by \$200,000.

In response to the April 6, 2015, mandate by the Board of Finance to reduce its budget by \$200,000, the Board of Education approved a revised 2015-2016 budget for Stafford Public Schools in the amount of \$27,622,500 on April 9, 2015. This amount represented a 2.65% increase, or \$712,805, over the approved budget for 2014-2015.

Dr. Collin said that on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, the Town and District had a lengthy meeting with representatives from both Ovation Benefits and Anthem to review the district and town's current status (e.g. number of members and claims, as well as types and costs of claims, etc.). At that time, demographics were also reviewed and trends were analyzed. She said that Anthem commended the Town and District for the strategies they have implemented, such as the incorporation of preventive care language in bargaining unit agreements and promotion of Health Savings Accounts, which, by design, result in more informed consumers.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Town and District reviewed and discussed the balances in the self-funded health and dental funds and considered the impact of a reduction from the originally budgeted 2.5% increase to 0% in health insurance for 2015-2016 (As you recall, there was a 0% increase budgeted in dental insurance for the upcoming school year.).

Dr. Collin stated that when the referendum did not pass on May 13, 2015, the Board of Finance directed the Board of Education to further reduce its budget by \$150,000. The Town and Stafford Public Library Board of Directors were also directed to make reductions of \$75,000 and \$2,000, respectively, to their budgets.

In response to the mandate from the Board of Finance, Administration recommends the following reductions:

- Health Insurance: \$128,242 (a reduction from 2.5% to 0% in health insurance coupled with changes in plans as a result of staff turnover within the last few months)
- Professional Services: \$1200 (based on a 0% increase in contract for athletic trainer)
- Certified and Non-Certified Salaries: \$20,558 (projected savings based on staff turnover and recent new hires for 2015-2016)

Dr. Collin said that the aforementioned reductions result in a 2015-2016 budget for the Stafford Public Schools totaling \$27,472,500. This amount represents an increase of \$562,705 or 2.09 % over the approved budget for 2014-2015. A copy of the budget summary for the revised budget was provided for the Board's review and consideration.

Mrs. Walsh made a motion, seconded by Mr. Goodell, that the Board approve reductions in the amount of \$150,000 as mandated by the Board of Finance, to the 2015-2016 Stafford Public Schools budget totaling \$27,472,500, resulting in an increase of \$562,705 or 2.09%, as presented. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Walsh made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to place Item XI.A.- **Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)** into executive session. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:57 p.m.

Ms. Shegogue made a motion, seconded by Mr. Goodell to enter executive session. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 8:59 p.m.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Frassinelli to return to regular session. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:24 p.m.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

A. Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

No action was taken on this item.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shegogue, to adjourn. Mr. Frassinelli, Mr. Goodell, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Tracy L. Rummel, Chairperson

Sonya Shegogue, Secretary