

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
January 27, 2014**

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

Absent: Mr. Tony Frassinelli

Also Present: Dr. Patricia A. Collin, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Greg Buonome, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Mr. Jerry Domanico, Business Manager
Mr. Dean Fortin, Network Coordinator
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Mr. Ben Gluck, Student Representative
Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Food Services
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Mr. Mark Seddon, Supervisor of Building Services
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 6:33 p.m. A quorum was established.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gluck led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, 01/13/14

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on January 13, 2014.

Item IV. Treasurer's Report

Bills, 1/9/14- \$75,898.44
Bills, 1/9/14- \$1,948.00
Grants, 1/22/14- \$3,922.89
Bills, 1/22/14- \$504,696.43

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

Item V. Correspondence

Mrs. Rummel distributed a flyer entitled *Parent Information Night- Common Core Standards*. Mr. Bednarz said that the schools will be sending the flyer home via email within the next few days. He said that dinner and daycare will be available, the cost of which will be covered by the PASS grant.

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Report from Student Representative

Mr. Gluck reported on the following topics:

- Mid-Terms / Report Cards
- National Honor Society
- CAS Scholar Athletes
- New Signage at the School
- Student vs. Staff Volleyball Game
- Sports Update
- Music Update

B. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee members are Mrs. Rummel, Mr. Frassinelli and Mr. Kovaleski. Mr. Goodell and Ms. Shegogue are alternates. Mrs. Rummel stated that a budget committee meeting was held on Wednesday, 1/22/14, at 6 p.m., at the Pinney Building. She said that the budget was discussed in more detail and that the discussion was deferred to this regular meeting.

C. Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee members are Ms. Shegogue, Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Walsh. There was no update from this committee.

D. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee members are Mr. Goodell, Mr. Kovaleski and Mrs. Walsh. Mrs. Walsh stated that the committee held a meeting on Friday, January 24, 2014. She said that several policies were reviewed and discussed and that they will be brought forward for the full Board's review at the next meeting.

E. Negotiation Committee

The Negotiation Committee members are Mrs. Rummel, Mr. Frassinelli and Mrs. Locke. Ms. Shegogue is an alternate. There was no report from this committee.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Food Services Profit and Loss through December 2013

Dr. Collin presented the Cafeteria Profit and Loss report for July through December 31, 2013, as prepared by Mr. Jerry Domanico, Business Manager. The lunch program experienced its first loss of the year totaling \$24,083.34. Dr. Collin said that this figure includes an insurance adjustment of \$8,197. Of this amount \$6,035.15 is the insurance cost (health, dental and life) for one staff member for September, October and November, and \$2,162 is the insurance cost, pro-rated, for July and August since deductions are not taken during the summer months.

Dr. Collin said that without the aforementioned adjustment, the loss for December would have been \$15,886.34. For the same period last year, the program had a loss of \$15,467.21. A number of factors affected the program in December, such as delayed openings and early dismissals. The year-to-date total shows a profit of \$2,392.81, while last year at this time the program had a loss of \$6,502.97.

Dr. Collin reported that Mrs. Elizabeth LaPane, Supervisor of Food Services, and Mr. Domanico had an initial meeting with a nutrition specialist from the State to discuss strategies to enhance the breakfast and overall food service program. She said that they also continue to work with the middle and high school student councils and to network with other district food service managers.

Mr. Domanico stated that December is traditionally not a good month for the program. Ms. LaPane noted that she continues to try to bring in new items and is also pursuing grants.

Mr. Goodell asked if the loss was due mostly to the cost of food. Ms. LaPane responded that a lot of factors are involved and that the program must follow stringent federal guidelines.

Mrs. Rummel inquired about the option of using an outside food service company. Mr. Domanico responded that it is too late to make a decision for next school year. Mrs. Rummel stated that she would like a comprehensive review of the current program in June 2014, so that the Board has time to make an informed decision for the 2015 – 2016 school year.

B. Update on Self-Funded Insurance Account

Dr. Collin presented a report regarding the status of the district's self-funded health and dental insurance programs, as prepared by Mr. Domanico, Business Manager. She said that as of December 31, 2013, the health insurance fund reflects a balance of \$72,833.39, and the dental insurance fund reflects a balance of \$46,384.31. At this time last year, the former account was overspent by \$305,953.69. Currently, all funds borrowed against the Town's general fund have been returned.

Mrs. Rummel asked how much of a balance should be kept in the fund. Mr. Domanico stated that a four-month balance would be ideal. However, most towns maintain a two or three month balance.

C. Report on Graduation Rate- Class of 2013

Dr. Collin stated that the Board was provided with a letter and corresponding documentation from the State Department of Education, Bureau of Data Collection Research and Evaluation, regarding our 2013 cohort graduation data via the electronic Board packet. She said that as indicated in the letter, the *adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate* tracks an individual cohort from its initial entrance into grade 9 through to graduation with a regular high school diploma in four years or less.

Dr. Collin reported that of particular interest is the dramatic increase in the percentage of students graduating with a diploma, across all three categories, as compared to previous years. Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, provided a report that indicates that Stafford High School's drop-out rate has steadily decreased. Dr. Collin also said that "2013 marks the first year SHS is above the State average".

Dr. Collin said that it is believed that these improvements are a direct result of interventions implemented at Stafford High School, coupled with strategies employed beginning in the earlier grades. She also credited the work of the Dropout Prevention Committee, which was instituted during Dr. Therese Fishman's tenure as

former Superintendent. She said that this committee was also instrumental in raising the level of awareness in the district and community and in laying the groundwork for improvement.

Mr. Pelliccia reviewed the graduation rate comparison chart for the Board. He also gave examples of Tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions.

Mrs. Rummel noted that due to the smaller class sizes, one student can make a big difference in the percentages.

D. Administrators' Reports on 2012-2013 School Goals and Presentation of 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans (SIPs)- Stafford High School and Stafford Middle School

Dr. Collin stated that following the release of the 2013 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) results to districts, Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education, forwarded the School District Profiles, which included 2012-2013 differentiated CMT and CAPT performance targets and performances for districts, schools, and subgroups. In addition to CAPT performance targets, the Connecticut State Department of Education also identified performance targets for the "four-year graduation rate" (the percentage of students who receive a standard diploma within four years, which concurs with the federal definition), "extended graduation rate" (students who stay enrolled in high school for longer than four years), and students who receive a certificate of completion. The rate does NOT apply to students who dropped out or transferred to another school district and never enrolled or have an unknown status. These reports were presented to the Board of Education at its meeting on January 13, 2014.

Mr. Marco, Pelliccia, Principal, and Mr. Bob Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School, and Mr. Ken Valentine, Principal, and Mr. Gregory Buonome, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School, briefly highlighted their progress on the 2012-2013 School Improvement Plans (SIPs). They also provided an overview of the 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans, which were written in S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) format.

Dr. Collin noted that Mrs. Amy Stevenson, Director of Pupil Services, and Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, are working collaboratively with all building administrators to attain student learning outcomes. They were also present at the Board meeting.

E. Discuss the Proposed 2014 – 2015 Itemized Estimate of the Cost of Maintenance (Budget) for the Stafford Public School District

Dr. Collin reported that at the Board of Education meeting on January 13, 2014, a proposed itemized estimate of the cost of maintenance for the Stafford Public Schools for 2014-2015 was presented. Subsequently, the Board Budget Committee met on January 22, 2014. In anticipation of the latter, Board members forwarded specific questions to her.

Dr. Collin said that during the aforementioned Board Budget Committee meeting, additional questions and requests for information were generated.

Dr. Collin asked that Board members reflect on and communicate what is important to them. She said that it would also be beneficial if the Board would provide the administration with the highest percentage increase with which they would be comfortable, and then the administration will do their very best to respond.

Mrs. Rummel stated that she feels that it is very important to support the new teacher evaluation plan. However, she said that she feels that reinstating the Assistant Principal position at Stafford Elementary School is most important. Mrs. Walsh and Ms. Shegogue agreed.

Mr. Goodell asked how the enrollment decrease has affected the number of teachers on staff. He said that he would like to see more information regarding the student/teacher ratio. He also asked if the administration has looked at the size of the budgets in towns of similar size. He said that many are much lower and he'd like to know why. He also asked if the district can reduce or eliminate the prekindergarten program.

Mr. Kovaleski asked if someone could find out what the CPI was for this area. He said that might be a good guideline for the percentage of increase for the budget.

There was some discussion regarding sending the budget to the Board of Finance, as presented. Mrs. Rummel said that this would be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Collin asked that Board members email her directly with any questions. She said that the budget would be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

Item VIII. Public Forum

A member of the audience said that they do not support the addition of a consultant to assist with the teacher evaluation plan since that person will not have the background of the district's administrators, nor will that person have the same dedication.

A member of the audience noted that when the district eliminates a staff member, the savings must be off-set by the amount that the district must pay for unemployment.

A member of the audience said that she moved to Stafford because of the district's test scores. She said that she hopes that the Board will support the budget that the administrators have presented.

A member of the audience noted that the town's population and student enrollment has declined over the years. He asked how the staffing levels compare and if they have been reduced accordingly. He said that it is the Board's responsibility to present a reasonable budget. He also noted that he thinks that the use of the CPI is a good idea. He said that he will be forwarding an FOI request for information to the Board.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of the Proposed 2014 – 2015 School Calendar

Dr. Collin presented the proposed school calendar for 2014-2015. She said that this proposed calendar has had input from administrators and, per bargaining unit agreement, teachers. St. Edward School staff has also been consulted, and the calendar was shared with the co-presidents of the CSEA. She said that the calendar reflects 180 instructional days for students and that this proposal is a modification to the regional calendar, which, according to recent legislation, school districts must adopt for the 2015-2016 school year.

Dr. Collin said that the calendar proposes a start date for students of Wednesday, August 27, 2014, giving an end date of June 11, 2015, barring any school cancellations. Because inclement weather will likely affect the district's ability to provide instruction during the winter months, the only days that school is not scheduled to be in session are January 19th, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, February 16th, Presidents' Day, and March 16th, Professional Development Day.

Dr. Collin reported that the calendar reflects eight early release days: four days for the purpose of Parent-Teacher conferences at the elementary schools (two in the fall and two in the spring) and two days at the middle/high schools (one day in the fall and one day in the spring), November 21st (the day before the Thanksgiving holiday) and on the last day of school for students.

She said that the proposed school calendar also provides for one day of New Teacher Orientation and seven contracted Professional Development (PD) Days, two of which are scheduled prior to the start of the year in order to allow for convocation & mandated trainings.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kovaleski, that the Board of Education approve the school calendar for 2014-2015, as presented. Mr. Goodell, Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

There were no Personnel Matters.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Kovaleski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Goodell, to adjourn. Mr. Goodell, Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Tracy L. Rummel, Chairperson

Sonya Shegogue, Secretary