

Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, November 15, 2011 7:30 PM Eastern

Town Campus Hammonasset Room  
10 Campus Drive  
Madison, CT 06443

- I. Call to Order / Attendance
- II. School / Community Session - 7:30 p.m.
  - II.A. Recognition:
    - II.A.1. American Education Week: November 13-19, 2011
    - II.A.2. Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Superintendent / Student Leadership Award: Nicholas D'Agostino, Hunter Ryan
    - II.A.3. National Educational Support Professionals Day: November 16, 2011
    - II.A.4. Daniel Hand High School Guidance Department - Connecticut School Counseling Association Professional Recognition Award for Outstanding Student/Parent Program for 2011
  - II.B. Public Participation
- III. Board of Education Student Representatives' Report
- IV. Board of Education Organizational Session (Ref. Bylaw #9410)
  - IV.A. Election of Officers
  - IV.B. Assignments for Committees and LEARN Liaison
  - IV.C. Assignments for School Liaisons
- V. Superintendent's Report
  - V.A. Report on Out of State Travel (Ref. Policy #6010.16.1)
  - V.B. Update: Minds in Motion
  - V.C. Other
- VI. Board Members' Comments
- VII. Board Committees / Liaison Updates
  - VII.A. Planning Committee
  - VII.B. Personnel Committee
  - VII.C. Policy Committee
    - VII.C.1. Madison Public Schools Safe Schools Climate Plan
    - VII.C.2. Technical Revisions to Existing Policies (Ref. Bylaw #9620)
      - VII.C.2.a. #4111.1, Reference Checks
      - VII.C.2.b. #4112, Hiring of Personnel
      - VII.C.2.c. #5020.1, Compulsory Attendance
      - VII.C.2.d. #6030, School Calendar
  - VII.D. Finance Committee
  - VII.E. LEARN Liaison
- VIII. Audience Reponse to Information Presented
- IX. Consent Agenda (9.1 - 9.2) Ref. Bylaw #9540.2 and #9540.8
  - IX.A. Bills Payable: \$6,406.93 (10-11); \$1,557,675.82 (11-12)
  - IX.B. Line Transfers: \$37,722.61
- X. Action Item: Minutes of the November 1, 2011 Board of Education Meeting
- XI. Action Item: Madison Public Schools Safe Schools Climate Plan

- XII. Action Item: Technical Revisions to Existing Policies (Ref. Bylaw #9620)
- XIII. Old Business
- XIV. New Business
- XV. Future Agenda Items
  - XV.A. Presentation of the DHHS Proposed Program of Studies: December 6, 2011
- XVI. Meetings of Importance
  - XVI.A. November 16, 2011: Planning Committee Meeting; 7:30 a.m., Central Office Room B
  - XVI.B. November 18-19, 2011; CABE/CAPSS Convention; Mystic Marriot, Groton, CT
  - XVI.C. November 30, 2011: Planning Committee Meeting; 7:30 a.m., Town Campus Hammonasset Room
  - XVI.D. December 6, 2011: Finance Committee Meeting; 6:30 p.m., Central Office Room B
  - XVI.E. December 6, 2011: Board of Education Meeting; 7:30 p.m., Town Campus Hammonasset Room
- XVII. Executive Session
  - XVII.A. Discussion: Personnel Issue
- XVIII. Adjournment

Public Participation Guidelines:

Members of the community are invited to speak on topics of interest and / or topics to be addressed in the agenda. The Board of Education may choose to interact with participants, but will not act upon topics that require further study before action is taken. The participation time will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and fifteen (15) minutes overall to guarantee efficient operation of the entire meeting.

Board of Education Meeting  
November 1, 2011  
Meeting Minutes

1. The public meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairperson Coffey at 7:32 p.m. Ms. Coffey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Bill Clorite, Becky Coffey; John Dean; Jean Fitzgerald; Debra Frey; Seth Klaskin; Pam Meier; Robert Ruggiero; Cindy Wood

Also present: Anita Rutlin, Interim Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; district administrators; faculty; staff; community members.

2. School / Community Session

2.1. Recognition:

2.1. Recognition: Retiring Board of Education Member (*Anita Rutlin, John Dean*)  
~ *Rebecca Coffey*

Ms. Rutlin commented that all of us hope to make a difference, and “All of us can say that Becky Coffey in her ten years of service to the Madison community as a member of the Board of Education has made a positive difference”.

Ms. Rutlin further remarked that in that pursuit, “Ms. Coffey has shown that the heart of making a difference lies in recognizing that such an impact only rarely occurs as a result of isolated, individual efforts, but usually occurs as we find ways to work together”. She stated that with Ms. Coffey’s leadership, “We have found ways to work together, and it has been satisfying”.

Ms. Rutlin concluded by addressing Ms. Coffey directly: “Becky, this room is full of people who, like you, have found ways to make life more satisfying by working together to help others. All of us appreciate the difference you have helped us make”.

Mr. Dean stated that he will miss Ms. Coffey. He commented that they have spent a lot of time together, especially at negotiations sessions which always worked out well. He recognized Ms. Coffey’s role on the High School Building Committee and how she always gave detailed progress reports, and noted that the project came in on time and under budget. Mr. Dean thanked Ms. Coffey for the contributions she has made over the past 10 years and said that he hopes she enjoys her new found free time.

Ms. Coffey thanked Ms. Rutlin and Mr. Dean for their comments. She expressed her appreciation to the Madison community for allowing her to serve for the past 10 years and make a contribution. She also thanked the Administrative team and Central Office staff for their hard work and support. She stated that the support of the community and staff has allowed her to serve and make a difference all these years.

First Selectman Fillmore McPherson was present and stated that he has come to know Ms. Coffey as an extremely intelligent, hardworking, devoted and successful individual, noting that she will be on his ‘short list’ for any odd study groups that may come up. He thanked Ms. Coffey on behalf of the Town of Madison for all she has done.

Ms. Coffey thanked Mr. McPherson and stated that it has been a privilege to work with him and other Town officials and volunteers.

Ms. Frey thanked Ms. Coffey for her many contributions and the integral role she has played in the success of the district over the past 10 years. She stated that it has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with Ms. Coffey.

Atty. Klaskin thanked Ms. Coffey for all she has taught him personally and for her fine service to the community. He noted that he respected Ms. Coffey's keen insights and many contributions to the Town.

Mr. Ruggiero stated that Ms. Coffey has been a role model to him as a Board member and he has appreciated her candor and willingness to help.

Ms. Meier stated that serving as a Board member with Ms. Coffey for the past two years has been an amazing tutorial but stated that it was not long enough.

Ms. Fitzgerald thanked Ms. Coffey for her contributions and stated that she will miss her 'amazing institutional memory'.

Ms. Wood commented that she and Ms. Coffey have known each other for a long time, since Ms. Wood was first involved with the Parents Representative Council. She stated that Ms. Coffey was always willing to take the time to work with parents to help them understand the budget process, and she helped Ms. Wood understand herself, so she could explain it to others. She stated that Ms. Coffey was always willing to give of herself.

Mr. Clorite echoed all the comments made by his fellow Board members and remarked that Ms. Coffey was a huge help to him personally.

Mr. Frank Henderson, Principal of Polson Middle school spoke on behalf of the Administrators, thanking Ms. Coffey for her service and stating that she had helped make their work easier over the past 10 years.

Ms. Jean Baker, Director of Guidance and Counseling, also thanked Ms. Coffey. She noted that Ms. Coffey was part of the interview committee when she was hired in Madison and she remembers and appreciates the very thoughtful questions Ms. Coffey asked.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Dean presented Ms. Coffey with a gift of appreciation for all she has done.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m. for a brief reception in Ms. Coffey's honor.

The meeting reconvened at 7:58 p.m.

## 2.2. Public Participation

None at this time.

## 3. Student Representatives' Report (Jessica Buller and John Ovia)

Ms. Buller reported on the following:

- Halloween – students and teachers alike came to school dressed for Halloween; some departments had themed costumes.
- Mrs. Schneider and other staff told stories throughout the day in the Library Media Center for students that had a free period or study hall.
- Homecoming is this Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. Students can purchase their tickets for \$20 during lunch waves through Wednesday.

Mr. Ovia reported on the following:

- The Daniel Hand football team is still undefeated
- "Band Night" – The Grade 8 band students from Polson will perform with the DHHS Band during the halftime show at the football game on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>.

- The DHHS Cross Country team placed 6<sup>th</sup> at States last Saturday; one member of the team qualified for the State Open
- The Encore group will perform on Saturday at Our Lady of Mercy; the Waes Haeil Madrigals will soon begin to tour the elementary schools.

Ms. Buller thanked Ms. Coffey for all she has done for the district on behalf of the students of Daniel High School.

Before proceeding with the meeting, Ms. Coffey took a moment to honor the memory of Mr. Richard Fasano, retired Music / Band Teacher at Daniel Hand High School, who recently passed away. Ms. Coffey described him as an exceptional individual, leader and an inspiration to many. She commented that he brought great enthusiasm and excitement to his work, and recalled Mr. Fasano saying that teaching wasn't a job for him, but what he loved to do. Ms. Coffey requested a moment of silence in Mr. Fasano's memory.

#### 4. Superintendent's Report

##### 4.1. Update: Class of 2011

Ms. Rutlin introduced Ms. Jean Baker, Director of Guidance at Daniel Hand High School, to give her annual update to the Board on the prior year's graduating class. Ms. Baker stated that she was happy to be presenting this report to the Board once again. She expressed her appreciation to the Guidance Department Staff, particularly Rachel McNellis, Isabelle Hahn and Peggy Keenan for compiling the data and preparing the report during a very busy time in the Guidance Department.

Ms. Baker distributed a report and introduced a PowerPoint presentation (both on file) highlighting the accomplishments of the graduating class of 2011. Ms. Baker noted that this was a very strong class and there were impressive college acceptances.

Ms. Baker reported that of the 307 graduates from the Class of 2011, 88% of the class went on to a four year college. She noted that attendance to 4 year colleges have been fairly consistent over the past four years, with a slight decrease in applications and attendance due to the economic climate. She also noted that many students apply early – approximately two-thirds of the senior class applied for either Early Action or Early Decision by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Baker explained the difference between Early Action, which means that students can apply early but do not need to make a commitment to the college, and Early Decision, where the students commit to attend the university once they are accepted.

Ms. Baker reported that 143 students were accepted to the 61 colleges ranked as "most" competitive with 55 students attending 36 schools in that ranking. For 43 schools ranked as "highly" competitive, 272 acceptances were reported, with 53 students attending 22 colleges in that ranking. Ms. Baker noted that the top indicated majors for the Class of 2011 were Health Sciences / Science / Pre-Med.

With regard to AP (Advanced Placement) scores, Ms. Baker reported that 247 AP tests were administered with 84% of students scoring 3 or higher.

Ms. Baker next discussed the UCONN Early College Experience that is available and stated that 192 students from Daniel Hand are enrolled in these courses, a number which is significantly higher than the state average.

Ms. Baker reported that 95.5% of the Class of 2011 took the SAT and 47.7% took the ACT. She noted that DHHS had a significant increase in mean SAT scores in Critical Reading, Math and Writing compared to last year. She commented again that while this was an exceptional class, she hoped the upward trend would continue.

In conclusion, Ms. Baker reviewed some of the initiatives for the Guidance Department for 2011-2012:

- to continue implementation of the of the Student Success Plan for grades 6 through 12;

- to continue to update the comprehensive school counseling curriculum;
- to continue to expand job shadowing and internship opportunities for students; and
- to continue to foster a positive school climate through a variety of resources and programs.

4.2. Discussion: Burden of Proof as it relates to Special Education  
*Cindy Twiss, Director of Special Education and Student Services*

Mrs. Twiss came before the Board once again to discuss the Board's option to adopt a resolution to support changing the burden of proof in due process hearings regarding special education matters to the party requesting the hearing. This was a continuation of the discussion started at the October 18, 2011 Board of Education meeting. Since that time, Mrs. Twiss provided Board members with additional information to assist them in understanding the request, including a listing of legal expenses incurred in Madison since 2004 and a flowchart that detailed due process.

Discussion ensued. Some Board members feel that they need additional information and would like input from others, such as parents of Special Education students. There is concern among some Board members that this decision does not just affect Madison, but other districts in the state as well. However, other Board members feel that as the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to its constituents, the issue should be looked at from the point of view only as it pertains to Madison.

Mrs. Twiss reminded the Board that the question before them is whether or not they want to have a voice in the decision, and she has no idea what the State Board of Education will decide. She stated they have the option to support the resolution, not support it, or do nothing. The State Board of Education will consider input from among the 169 districts that offer an opinion.

It was the consensus of the Board to not move this topic forward for action at this time. They would like to hear input from other parties, including parents and Special Education professionals, as well as to discuss the issue with their colleagues at the upcoming CABE / CAPSS Convention. The action item will be tabled for now, and the Board will continue to discuss this issue before making a decision.

4.3. Update: Safe Schools Climate Plan

Ms. Rutlin next introduced a Power Point presentation (on file) on the Safe Schools Climate Plan recently developed by the district. This plan is precipitated by Public Act 11-232 which went into effect on July 1, 2011 and effectively shifts the focus of the "bullying law" from simply implementing consequences for mean behavior to proactively building a positive school climate. In addition, it expands the definition of "bullying" as well as the scope of the schools' response to it.

Ms. Rutlin referred to the Safe Schools Climate Plan booklet, which was also distributed to Board members. She stated that the plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the Board of Education and the Administration. The Board has approved all relevant policies, including the bullying policy which was revised to comply with PA 11-232, as well as the Code of Conduct. The Administrative team then put together the plan itself. Ms. Rutlin stated that it was an excellent document and the district is ready to implement and work with the plan. She noted that the district has a strong Code of Conduct and this plan codifies what we have been doing.

Ms. Fitzgerald commented that she has already reviewed the plan and she thinks it is a very good and thorough document. She commended the Administration for doing an excellent job on the plan.

Ms. Rutlin asked the Board to review the plan and forward any questions to her in the next two weeks, as it will be on the agenda for approval on November 15, 2011.

4.4. Other

Ms. Rutlin had nothing further to report.

5. Board Members' Comments

None at this time.

6. Reports from Board Committees / Liaisons

6.1. Planning Committee

No report.

6.2. Personnel Committee

No report.

6.3. Policy Committee

Atty. Klaskin reported that the Committee has not met but will recommend waiving the second and third readings and then move for approval the revised Nondiscrimination policies, #4118.1 and #5020.1 to add the words "gender identity or expression" to the list of protected classes. The Committee is recommending that the second and third readings be waived as the revision is statutory in nature.

Ms. Meier noted a typographical error on line 5 of Policy #4118.1; it will be corrected and approved as amended.

6.4. Finance Committee

The Committee met prior to this Board meeting. Mr. Clorite reported that while the district is in good shape for the current fiscal year, a \$250,000 embargo has been put in place to cover any shortfalls in external placements and expenses for substitute teachers. He explained that this is a 'typical' embargo and there is no reason for concern at this time.

Mr. Clorite also noted that the 2012-2013 Budget is being compiled and a budget season calendar was distributed.

6.5. LEARN Liaison

No report.

7. Audience Response to Information Presented

No response at this time.

8. Consent Agenda

8.1 Bills Payable: \$19,953.69 (10-11); \$868,209.00 (11-12)

8.2 Line Transfers: \$36,130.69

8.3 Budget Expenditure Report as of October 26, 2011

8.4. Donation: \$6,640.00 to the J. Milton Jeffrey Elementary School to fund classroom field trips, from the Jeffrey School PTO.

MOTION: by Dean, seconded by Wood to approve the Consent Agenda.

Atty. Klaskin called out the very generous donations from the Jeffrey School PTO.

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

9. Action Item: Minutes of the October 18, 2011 Board of Education Special Meeting.

MOTION: by Klaskin, seconded by Dean to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2011 Board of Education Special Meeting.

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

10. Action Item: To waive the Second and Third Readings to Revised Policies

MOTION: By the Policy Committee to waive the Second and Third readings to revised policies:

- #4118.1, Nondiscrimination (Personnel)
- #5020.1, Nondiscrimination (Students)

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

11. Action Item: Approval of Revised Policies

MOTION: By the Policy Committee to approve the revisions as presented on the following Board of Education Policies:

- #4118.1, Nondiscrimination (Personnel)
- #5020.1, Nondiscrimination (Students)

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

12. Action Item: Resolution to support changing the Burden of Proof in Due Process Hearings

This item was tabled.

13. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

#### 14. New Business

No new business was discussed.

#### 15. Future Agenda Items

15.1 Board of Education Organizational Meeting: November 15, 2011

15.2 Presentation of the DHHS Proposed Program of Studies: December 6, 2011

Ms. Coffey suggested that as part of the presentation on the Program of Studies, the high school administration also give an update on the NEASC visitation. Ms. Rutlin noted that the final report will not be available until sometime in January, but the high school staff can report on the process and also what they are doing based on initial results of the visit.

Ms. Meier stated that she would like to add two items to the calendar for future reports:

- The report given by the Daniel Hand High School administration earlier in the day to the PTO on the trimester model.
- An update on accommodations for precocious learners at the elementary and middle school levels.

Ms. Coffey noted that Central Office has a working draft calendar of scheduled reports to the Board and suggested that it be distributed at the next meeting.

Ms. Rutlin distributed the schedule of district events for Veteran's Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>. Events are scheduled throughout the day at each of our school buildings to commemorate the day and help our students learn about and understand its significance. Ms. Rutlin invited members of the Board to attend any of the events throughout the day.

#### 16. Meetings of Importance

Ms. Coffey referred to the list of upcoming meetings on the agenda. She noted in particular the Facilities Employee Recognition on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> and the CABE / CAPSS Convention on November 18 and 19.

#### 16. Executive Session

MOTION: by Dean, seconded by Klaskin to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue at 10:00 p.m.

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

MOTION: by Frey, seconded by Fitzgerald to adjourn Executive Session at 10:22 p.m.

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

The Public Session of the Board of Education Meeting reconvened at 10:23 p.m.

18. Meeting Adjournment

MOTION: by Dean, seconded by Meier to adjourn the meeting at 10:53 p.m.

AYES: Clorite, Coffey, Dean, Fitzgerald, Frey, Klaskin, Meier, Ruggiero, Wood

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

Submitted for approval at the November 15, 2011 Board of Education Meeting  
dmd