

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2011 7:00 PM Eastern

Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
16 Levinthal Run
Stafford Springs, CT 06076

I.	Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum
II.	Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes
II.A.	Minutes- Regular Meeting, 1/10/11
III.	Treasurer's Report
III.A.	Grants- 1/6/2011, \$6,966.05
III.B.	Bills- 1/14/11, \$182,309.75
IV.	Correspondence
V.	Board Reports
V.A.	Report from Student Representative
VI.	Superintendent Reports
VI.A.	Presentation of the Proposed 2011 - 2012 Budget for the Stafford Public Schools (45 minutes)
VII.	Public Forum
VIII.	Old Business
IX.	New Business
X.	Personnel Matters
X.A.	Authorization of Superintendent of Schools to Give Written Notice of Non-Renewal (5 minutes)
X.B.	Retirement- Administrative Staff Member
X.C.	Personnel Matter (Executive Session Anticipated)
XI.	Student Matters

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
January 10, 2011**

Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary
Mrs. Lisa Finch
Ms. Beth Ann Morhardt
Mrs. Tracy Rummel
Mr. Stephen Szymanski

Absent: Mrs. Lisa Bradway

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Mrs. Meg Devlin, Business Manager
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Miss Vivian Ojeda, Student Representative
Ms. Jolene Piscetello, School Social Worker
Mr. Gary Shearer, Teacher, Stafford High School

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. A quorum was established.

Item II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, December 6, 2010

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on December 6, 2010, as presented.

Item III. Treasurer's Report

Bills- 12/16/10, \$99,394.96
Bills- 12/15/10, \$704.95 (Encumbered)
Bills- 12/21/10, \$5,958.70
Bills- 12/21/10, \$248,749.32
Bills- 1/5/11, \$142,292.12
Grants- 12/21/10, \$5,180.56

A consensus of the Board approved the Board Bills and Grants, as presented.

Item IV. Correspondence

There was no Correspondence.

Item V. Board Reports

Miss Ojeda reviewed recent and upcoming high school activities, as outlined in the report that was sent to the Board in their electronic Board packets.

Mrs. Rummel stated that she also serves on the EASTCONN Board. She informed the Board of Education that in the January 2011 edition of *EASTCONN Connections*, there is an Inter-district Grant Update. She noted that Stafford participates in and receives funding for one-third of the 19 grants listed.

Item VI. Superintendent's Reports

A. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through November 2010

Dr. Fishman presented the Cafeteria Profit and Loss report through November 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Mary Folker, Food Service Coordinator, and reviewed by Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and Mrs. Meg Devlin, Business Manager. She said that the program shows a profit of \$5,186, as compared to last year's profit of \$10,088. Dr. Fishman stated that a majority of this difference is due to the fact that in November 2009, the program had already received a check in the amount of \$5,764 from the State as a partial payment for Healthy Food Program participation. The program has not yet received this promised reimbursement from the State this year. Also of note is that expenses for providing lunch/breakfast are increasing due to higher negotiated wages, more food service workers participating in our health insurance program, and the increased cost of food and paper goods.

B. Head Start Report through December 2010

Dr. Fishman presented the Head Start grant report through December 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Meg Devlin, Business Manager. She reminded the Board that there are two different Head Start grants included in the report.

The first grant is the Basic Head Start Fund for the period of July 1, 2010, through January 31, 2011, in the amount of \$51,578. Dr. Fishman reported that \$27,904 of this grant has been expended through December 2010, and that the transportation payment of \$16,816 will be processed in January's grant check run. She noted that this will leave a remainder of \$6,858, which will be spent in areas other than transportation.

Dr. Fishman reported that the Early Head Start grant is for the period of September 30, 2010, through September 29, 2011, and that the total amount of this grant is \$68,500. She said that through the end of the month of December, \$16,473 has been expended or encumbered. She reminded the Board that the Early Head Start grant program runs throughout the summer months.

C. School Calendar Survey Results and Initial Review of Draft 2011 – 2012 School Calendar

Dr. Fishman stated that in response to a request from the Board in February 2010, she prepared a sample school calendar for the 2011-2012 school year and a calendar survey. She

noted that the survey was open from November 3 to December 10, 2010, to parents, guardians, staff, administration and older students. Dr. Fishman stated that a letter notifying parents of the survey was sent home to parents of students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade five, e-mailed home via Edline (with several reminders) to parents of students in grades 6-12, and that there was a link on the district web site. Administrators, faculty and staff were notified via e-mail.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the results of the calendar survey with the Board, as listed below. She also noted that the results of the survey were reviewed with administrators and the SEA Calendar Committee prior to tonight's Board meeting.

- Most respondents agreed with the date proposed in the draft calendar for the start of the 2011-2012 school year for students (39%). Others wanted a start date a day later than the proposed start date (21%), or wanted to start a day before the proposed start date (21%).
- Most respondents wanted to keep Veterans' Day as a day out-of-school for students (69%) and had very strong opinions regarding this matter.
- A large majority of respondents (48%) wanted Presidents' Day to be the only day out-of-school for students in February. When these numbers were further broken down, the results were 136 parents, 18 staff members, 9 students, and 35 teachers. The second largest percentage of respondents (29%) wanted only one additional vacation day to be added to Presidents' Day. When these numbers were further broken down, the results were 52 parents, 22 staff members, 3 students, and 38 teachers.
- The greatest amount of division among respondents was in response to the question regarding the April vacation week. While 26% of survey takers wanted vacation to be the week of April 2, 31% wanted the week of April 9, and 33% wanted the week of April 16. Dr. Fishman noted that surrounding towns were surveyed regarding placement of their district's April vacation. However, most had not yet set their school calendars for 2011 – 2012. Of those that had set a calendar for next year, most had designated the third week in April for this vacation. EASTCONN, however, was leaning toward the first week in April, but had not made a final decision.

Dr. Fishman stated that she provided a proposed draft 2011 – 2012 school calendar in the Board packet for the Board's review. She said that she would be presenting the calendar for approval at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, which will allow the public another opportunity to have input on the school calendar. Mr. Fontanella allowed the public to comment regarding the proposed draft calendar / survey at this time.

A member of the SEA Calendar Committee asked why there wasn't more discussion surrounding the placement of the Common Curriculum Days. She said that out of the 153 people that answered the question regarding the Common Curriculum Day placement, 53 of them mentioned the early release days specifically. Of those 53 people that mentioned the early release days, 75.4% of them had negative feedback. Specifically, teachers stated that

the early release days are disruptive to the school day and that the time would be better spent with students. A member of the SEA executive board stated that student behavior is negatively impacted during the entire week that encompasses the shortened day.

Another member of the SEA Calendar Committee stated that he finds the early release days very helpful, as they provide time to work on the SRBI initiatives at his school. A teacher at Stafford High School present at the meeting also stated that early release days provide needed time to work on SRBI initiatives.

Mr. Kennedy responded that he finds the early release professional development time very beneficial.

Dr. Fishman stated that if the Board were to decide to eliminate the early release days that she would like to have an opportunity to discuss the change with the administrators first. Additionally, she noted that as she explained to the SEA Calendar Committee when they met, the district has a contractual obligation to provide training for the paraprofessionals during the early release days. If they were to be eliminated, some type of agreement would have to be reached with the leadership of CSEA. Lastly, Dr. Fishman said that four of the five building administrators find the early release time beneficial for their staff.

Mrs. Rummel stated that she has heard the concerns that were brought up during the meeting regarding the early release days. However, since the agreement with CSEA was just finalized a short time ago, this matter would need to be brought up again during the CSEA contract negotiations. Additionally, she said that when the next calendar survey is prepared, the question regarding Common Curriculum Days will be broken into two parts- full days and early release days.

Mr. Szymanski stated that since the public and staff had a considerable amount of time to offer their input regarding the school calendar, he didn't feel that it was necessary to bring the calendar to another Board meeting.

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, that the Board of Education approve the proposed 2011 – 2012 school calendar, as presented. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Item VII. Public Forum

There were no additional questions or comments from the public.

Item VIII. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item IX. New Business

A. Acceptance of Stafford Elementary School Construction Project #134-0050 as Complete

Mr. Szymanski made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education reconfirm acceptance of the Stafford Elementary School as a completed building project (#134-0050) from the Stafford School Building Committee. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Presentation and Possible Approval of Proposed Freshman Academy

Dr. Fishman stated that in the district's continuing efforts to meet the needs of all students so that they may successfully graduate from Stafford High School, a study committee at the high school, led by Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, met for more than one year to investigate the possibility of implementing a Freshman Academy at Stafford High School.

She explained that having a Freshman Academy would mean that all first-year freshmen would have the same small group of teachers, and that these teachers would meet regularly to discuss student progress toward academic as well as behavioral, social, and study skills goals. She noted that because of the size of Stafford High School, the teachers who would be working with freshmen would also be teaching at least one course to sophomore, junior, or senior students. Additionally, the same special education teacher and guidance counselor would work with all freshmen as they need these services.

Dr. Fishman introduced the members of the committee that were present at the Board meeting- Mr. Campbell, Mr. Shearer, Social Studies Teacher and Dept. Chair, and Ms. Piscetello, School Social Worker. The other members of the committee are Colleen Martin, Special Education Teacher, and Diane Glettenberg, Math Teacher. Mr. Campbell showed the Board a PowerPoint presentation, which included information about the proposed program, including the mission, the issues that the program would address and statistics on the dropout rate at the high school.

Dr. Fishman stated that there will not be any additional cost to the district to implement this program next year.

Board members had questions regarding the scheduling difficulties that a program like this might cause. Mr. Campbell stated that although he is sure that scheduling issues will arise (as with any program), he is confident that the administration will be able to handle each issue, as it arises.

Mrs. Rummel requested that the committee present the "beginning of the program" student data prior to the beginning of the 2011 – 2012 school year. She was also interested in information regarding how the administration at the high school would fit into this program. Board members also requested that they receive periodic updates detailing the progress of the program.

Mr. Fontanella asked that the committee consider alternatives for advanced students that might not need as much support as this type of program provides, especially since the program will limit the number of electives that students will have an opportunity to take during freshman year.

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, that the Board of Education approve the concept outlined in the proposal for a Freshman Academy at Stafford High School. Mrs.

Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to place **Item X.A- Future Negotiation Strategies (Executive Session Anticipated)**, into executive session. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:38 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 8:49 p.m.

Item X. Personnel Matters

A. Future Negotiation Strategies (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to enter executive session. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 8:50 p.m.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, to return to regular session. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:14 p.m.

No action was taken on this item.

Item XI. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XII. Adjournment

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, to adjourn. Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary