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Board of Education

Regional District 13

December 10, 2008

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, December 10, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the library media center at Memorial Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Absent: Mr. Currilin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

Ms. Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held at Korn Elementary School on January 14, 2009.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Boyle the agenda was unanimously approved.

Mrs. Golschneider made a motion, second Mrs. Adams to approve the minutes to the meeting of November 12, 2008. Mrs. Adams, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Boyle abstained.

Communications: None

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro talked about seeing the project on the core ethical values made by Mrs. Hamilton's 5th grade class at the Durham Fair. She was so impressed with the project that she visited the class and asked them to come and share it with the Board of Education. They presented a PowerPoint presentation showing how they made mosaic hands depicting each of the core ethical values. The entire class worked on the project. The mosaic display will be shared with each of the three elementary schools and then put on display at Memorial School. Mrs. Golschneider thanked the students and said they are roll models for their peers. She also suggested displaying the project at the town libraries.

Superintendent's Award Students: Mrs. Viccaro recognized this year's Superintendent's Award winners, Hannah Bober and Natalie Sabino and she presented each of them with a gift from the District.

District 13 Teacher of the Year: On behalf of the board of Education, Mrs. Viccaro presented Jennifer Penney, 2009 Teacher of the Year with a gift of appreciation from the District. Mrs. Viccaro said Mrs. Penney is the epitome of a great teacher, she is an excellent instructor, she inspires the students, is a roll model, and supports the students in activities within the school and within the community.

Mrs. Viccaro said the Community Round-up was held this past weekend. Between 400-500 volunteers participated in the event. 17,882 food items were collected as well as \$2,596 in gift cards and cash. Boxes of food were filled for 18 families in Durham and the shortage areas of the food bank in Middlefield were filled prior to sending the remaining food items to the Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown. The pantry is now fully stocked but even though, this amount of food will only last at the pantry for about one month. Because of this the Local Wellness Council has decided to hold a second collection this spring.

Mrs. Viccaro reported that at a Durham town meeting this past Monday, residents voted to support the purchase of an additional generator that will allow for movement of the emergency shelter from

Strong Middle School to Coginchaug High School. The District will go out to bid on a new generator. The shelter is manned with volunteers from the Durham Middlefield Exchange Club.

Mrs. Viccaro said the senior class trip to Washington DC was very successful.

Mrs. Viccaro held a meeting with all of the union presidents to discuss her concerns about the upcoming budget and to ask for their assistance in looking for creative solutions to savings. She felt that it was a very positive meeting.

The logo contest for a new District logo has begun. It is for students in grades 7-12 and entries are due on December 14th.

Mrs. Viccaro said the District will be offering an Adult Education class for senior citizens on computers during the spring session. It will be held after school for six weeks at Strong School. It will be open to residents 60 years and older. Michelle Burke, one of the technology integration specialists, will be teaching the class.

Mrs. Viccaro said the District is introducing an employee assistance program across the District. The teachers and the administrators have agreed to participate in the program and the other bargaining groups will be hearing about the program soon. The cost for the program is \$9.00 a year for each the District and the employee. The program is called Solutions and is run by Middlesex Hospital.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik discussed the 403b changes and told the Board that a third party administrator will be managing the plan. A resolution must be approved by the Board to engage the services of a third party administrator.

On a motion by Mrs. Golschneider, second Mrs. Adams the Board of Education unanimously approved the resolution to authorize 403b tax deferred annuity plan to engage the plan administration services of planwithease.com. (Resolution attached to these minutes.)

Mr. Melnik said the brown van was retired this week. The District purchased a 2007 cargo van. The purchase was budgeted for and was leased over a three year period.

Aquarium Project: Lorrie Martin, Oceanography teacher at CRHS, came before the Board looking for support of an aquarium lab at Coginchaug. She plans to pursue a grant through the Connecticut Valley Education Association to get the project off the ground. The aquariums would be located in the storage room at the corner of the main hallway and the hallway towards the industrial arts wing. Safety glass would protect the two aquariums, one at each hallway. She distributed a handout showing a sketch of the room layout. Mrs. Martin has been networking with many people interested in tropical reef aquariums, including Rich Cohen (present), a plumbing contractor that works for the school district. She would also like to establish an Oceanography Club once the lab is functional and would like consideration for a stipend as the advisor.

Mrs. Golschneider suggested involving the tech ed classes in building storage and shelving units for the room.

Mrs. Adams questioned what the cost will be to run the equipment. Mrs. Martin does not know because the labs she visited were very different than what she is proposing so it would be difficult to compare costs.

Dr. Wysowski said the storage room is currently used to store A.V. equipment but most of the equipment is now being stored in individual classrooms. He said the space could be made available and he supports the project.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously supported the proposal to pursue grant monies for the establishment of an aquarium lab in the current storage room at Cuginchaug High School.

Model UN Club Field Trip to Boston: Mrs. Golschneider asked for clarification on the funding source for students who can not pay for the trip. The field trip request form suggests that the social studies department budget is a source of funding and she wanted to be clear that the District does not fund field trips. Dr. Wysowski said that the Model UN Club is the funding source, not the department; that was an error.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously approved the Model UN Club field trip to Boston, MA from February 27, 2009 to March 1, 2009.

Mrs. Viccaro requested that the agenda be amended to include a presentation from Mr. Brough.

On a motion by Ms. Parsons, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously amended the agenda to include a presentation on Differentiated Instruction.

Differentiated Instruction: Mr. Brough wanted to update the Board on the progress that Memorial School is making with differentiated instruction. This is the third year that the school has been focusing on differentiated instruction and three major initiatives have taken place. They use the students learning style inventories to establish and understand each students learning style, pre-assessments and formative assessments are given frequently during units of study, and tiered lessons are designed to match a student's level of understanding and ability. The District was fortunate to receive a grant from the State to receive additional training, consultations and for support materials. Memorial has been working with Strong School for the past two years on differentiated instruction and will begin to work with the high school staff.

Building Committee: Mrs. Viccaro said the committee met this week. They are very excited that the validating act has passed and are ready to get to work. The first priority is to get proposals for architectural and engineering services. The committee will be meeting again in January.

Finance Committee: Ms. Parsons said the committee met this evening with the auditors to get a rough draft of the audit. She believes the numbers are where they should be. Ms. Parsons said this year's payroll is tracking high for November but she believes it is because they used actual figures this year. Mr. Melnik presented the Finance Committee with a new finance reporting format. Ms. Parsons really liked the new format and asked that all board members receive the report on a quarterly basis.

Magnet School: Mrs. Viccaro attended a meeting of the magnet school committee. She said the funding is up in the air for next year because they do not know what is going to happen with the State budget. They reviewed 4 proposals with increases ranging from 1 ½ % to 5%. The district currently only has 17 students enrolled at Thomas Edison but are paying for 22 spots. A decision will need to be made as to whether to cut back on the number of spots the District has or to market the school better. Mrs. Viccaro is reluctant to cut back to a point where the number is so small that students become reluctant to attend the program.

Mrs. Golschneider asked Mrs. Viccaro what the language is in the partnership agreement that ties the District to a specific number of students enrolled. Mrs. Viccaro will report back to the Board.

On a motion by Ms. Parsons, second Dr. Ochterski the Board of Education unanimously approved to move into Executive Session to discuss the Administrators' Evaluations.

The Board moved into regular session.

On a motion by Mrs. Golschneider, second Dr. Ochterski the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.