

Board of Education Board of Education Regular Meeting
Monday, November 15, 2010, 7:00 PM
Pinney Administration Building

- I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum
- II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes
 - A. Regular Meeting, 10/25/10 2
 - B. Special Meeting, 11/10/10 10
- III. Treasurer's Report
 - A. Bills- 10/27/10, \$253,660.30
 - B. Grants- 10/27/10, \$8,641.60
 - C. Bills- 11/3/10, \$127,424.45
 - D. Bills- 11/10/10, \$266,320.04
 - E. Grants- 11/10/10, \$6,366.93
- IV. Correspondence
- V. Board Reports
- VI. Superintendent Reports
 - A. Detailed Financial Report through October 2010
 - B. Head Start Report through October 2010
 - C. Report on Goal Three of the Strategic Plan
 - D. Status of the Stafford Energy Committee Recommendation for a Grant Application for a PV Array for Stafford Elementary School
- VII. Public Forum
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - A. Approval of Twenty-First Century Skills
 - B. Review and Approval of 2011 Calendar of Regular Board Meetings
 - C. Schedule Board Policy Committee Meeting
- X. Personnel Matters
 - A. Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)
- XI. Student Matters

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
Monday, October 25, 2010**

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

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst
Mr. Gary Fisher, Chairperson, Stafford Energy Committee
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Dr. Neil Hoss, Parent
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Miss Vivian Ojeda, Student Representative
Ms. Bonnie Smith, ERASE

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. A quorum was established.

Item II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, October 4, 2010
Special Meeting, October 14, 2010

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Reports for the regular meeting held on October 4, 2010, and the special meeting held on October 14, 2010, as presented.

Item III. Treasurer's Report

Bills- 10/06/10, \$126,034.95
Grants- 10/13/10, \$1,092.68
Bills- 10/13/10, \$81,407.41
Bills- 10/14/10, \$38,346.93
Bills- 10/20/10, \$158,812.54

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

Item IV. Correspondence

There was no Correspondence.

Item V. Board Reports

Mr. Fontanella introduced Miss Vivian Ojeda, the new Student Representative to the Board of Education.

Miss Ojeda distributed a handout to the Board outlining recent and upcoming high school activities. She also reported on the following:

- Spirit Week will be held from November 1 – November 5, 2010.
- The homecoming parade will be held on Main Street, on Saturday, October 30, 2010.
- The Names Committee, which is an ADL Anti-Defamation League program, led by Mr. McGann, met for the first time on Wednesday, October 20, 2010. Fifty student volunteers and twenty-five faculty volunteers are involved with the program. An all-school meeting will be held on November 17, 2010.
- Two showings of *Aladdin* and *Cinderella* will be held on November 13 and 14.
- The Coffee House will be held on Wednesday, October 27, 2010.
- *The Sports Page*, which is a new, free publication, recently named Thomas Szymanski as the October Student Athlete of the Month.
- A sports update.

Mrs. Bradway stated that she attended a conference with Dr. Fishman last week regarding Social Networking, which was very well done. Dr. Fishman stated that the district will be giving a two hour presentation for all staff during the next full common curriculum day (11/12/10) regarding social networking and the issues surrounding its use, specifically for educational professionals.

Item VI. Superintendent's Reports

A. ERASE Survey Results

Dr. Fishman stated that at the Board of Education meeting on December 7, 2009, Ms. Sarah Copeland from ERASE, the Regional Action Council for Substance Abuse Prevention that serves Stafford and fourteen other towns east of the Connecticut River, spoke about a questionnaire that has been developed for students in grades 6-12 regarding substance abuse. She said that at that meeting, after discussion, Board members approved the proposed ERASE survey for students in grades 6-12, according to the guidelines outlined in Board policy 6162.51.

Dr. Fishman said that the ERASE survey was administered in May and June, 2010, to students at Stafford Middle School and Stafford High School. She noted that students' parents and guardians received letters notifying them of the purpose and content of the survey and had the choice to opt their student out of the survey. She stated that 911 students took the survey in grades 6-12, a 77.5% response rate.

Board members received a complete copy of the Student Substance Use and Related Behavior Survey Report, 2010, in their Board packets. Ms. Bonnie Smith, Executive Director of ERASE, addressed the Board regarding Stafford's survey results and highlighted various sections of the report in her PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Smith noted that, as compared to national survey data, Stafford students in grades 9-12 ranked below national averages in tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use. Stafford students in grades 9-12 also ranked below state and regional averages in all areas, except tobacco use. In this area, Stafford students' use was slightly above regional averages and even with the state average.

Ms. Smith also noted a trend in the substance use by grade level reports, which she typically does not see. She said that rather than showing a step-like increase in the usage percentages as the grade level went up, last year's tenth grade stood out as a class whose use results were consistently above the grades 11 and 12 student results.

Ms. Smith informed the Board that ERASE has plenty of staff to provide further support to help the district send a message of prevention to students.

B. Head Start Report through September 30, 2010

Dr. Fishman presented the Head Start grant report through September 30, 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She reminded the Board that there are three different Head Start grants that she will report on. The first is the Basic Head Start Fund for the grant period of July 1, 2010, through January 31, 2011, in the amount of \$51,578. She said that \$7,599 of this grant has been expended through September 30, 2010, while no funds have been expended for transportation, since we had received no invoices before the end of September.

Dr. Fishman said that the Early Head Start grant is for the period of January 18, 2010, through September 29, 2010, in the amount of \$49,306. Because this grant period spans two fiscal years, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, there was a carryover into 2010-2011 of \$24,216. She said that since this grant funds activities that continue throughout the summer months, funds have been totally expended or encumbered through September 29, 2010.

Dr. Fishman stated that the Quality Improvement Head Start grant is for the grant period of July 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010, and that this is a small, one-time grant for professional development. She noted that, as with the Early Head Start grant, the Quality Improvement grant spans two fiscal years. A carryover balance of \$1,641 was brought into the 2010-2011 fiscal year. As of September 30, 2010, this grant has been totally expended / encumbered.

C. Official Enrollment Report- 10/1/10

Dr. Fishman reported that the official enrollment for the district as of October 1, 2010, is 1,863 students. Dr. Fishman noted that this is a minimal increase over last year's enrollment of 1,855 students. She said that it will be important to look at the enrollment trends when next year's enrollment data is available to note if the district is experiencing a plateau, or an upswing, or if this year's data is a "blip" and the district's enrollment will decrease.

Dr. Fishman stated that most districts in the area have experienced a decrease in enrollment.

D. Honor Roll Criteria- High School and Middle School

Dr. Fishman stated that in 2008-2009, a team was formed to investigate ways to better prepare students for the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. A team of administrators, teachers and teachers who were parents of Stafford high school and middle school students looked at transition issues and investigated possible solutions. At the Board meeting on March 8, 2010, Mr. Pelliccia reported on the findings of the team. At that time he reported on many areas of suggested change, including changes to the honor roll criteria, which the team wanted to be more in line with the high school criteria with regard to the number of students making the honor and high honor roll.

Dr. Fishman reviewed with the Board the middle school criteria for honors (85% or above in every subject) and high honors (90% or above in every subject). Mr. Kennedy stated that at the high school you must have an 85 average for honors and a 90 average for high honors, with no grade below 77. He also stated that the same criteria have been in place since at least 1981. Dr. Fishman noted that the high school staff recently secured data from other districts regarding their policies, but no pattern was noted.

Dr. Fishman presented the Board with comparison data from 08-09 (old criteria) / 09-10 (new criteria) regarding how many students made honor roll and high honor roll from the middle school, as well as information from the 3rd and 4th quarters at the high school last year.

Mrs. Rummel commented that of the eight districts that responded to our request for honor roll data, only one doesn't use averages. She asked why we would change the criteria from middle school to high school.

Ms. Morhardt stated that she would like to know what was considered when the criteria were changed. Dr. Fishman stated that the change was presented to the Board in March as a report, but the Board was not offered an opportunity to vote on the change. She stated that the Board could move this item to an action item and vote to change the middle school criteria to align with the high school criteria.

Mrs. Bradway stated that she would like to get more parent feedback regarding the honor roll, especially at the high school level.

Mr. Szymanski stated even if the Board considers changing the criteria, it would not be changed during the middle of the school year. He said that he would like to have the middle school administration report back to the Board early next year, and provide the information that the Board has requested.

Mr. Fontanella allowed public comment regarding this matter at this time.

A member of the audience commented that the honor roll criteria should not change from middle school to high school. She stated that she appreciated the work of the team that investigated this matter and made the change. However, she felt that if too many students are making the honor roll at the middle school, but not when they moved up to the high school,

then that should be addressed by making the curriculum more difficult at the middle school, not by changing the honor roll criteria. She asked if the Board / middle school administration felt that a student that has an 84 average means that the student is struggling, because that is the message that is being sent by keeping the student off the honor roll. She asked if the district really wants students that have a 92 average in middle school to not receive recognition for making the honor roll.

Another member of the audience commented that Edline is a great tool for tracking students' grades, which can help to inform parents in a timely manner that there is a low grade, and they can work together with the student to improve the low grade.

E. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through September 2010

Dr. Fishman presented the Cafeteria Profit and Loss report through September 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Mary Folker, Food Service Coordinator, and reviewed by Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She said that the program shows a profit of \$2,645. Dr. Fishman also noted that considering that there are start-up costs that must be accommodated in the first months of school, this is a healthy profit. Last year at the same time, the program showed a loss of \$1,533.

Dr. Fishman also informed the Board that while there is a decrease in the number of paid lunches this year, there is a large increase in free meals served for both lunch and breakfast, with a corresponding increased reimbursement from the Child Nutrition Program.

Mrs. Finch requested that the food service program send out another survey to the students regarding the school lunch program. She said that students are complaining that there is very little variety. Dr. Fishman and Mr. Fontanella stated that one was done recently. Mr. Fontanella asked if Dr. Fishman could get the results of that survey and share them with the Board again.

F. Discussion Regarding Draft 2011 – 2012 School Calendar Survey

Dr. Fishman stated that in response to a request from the Board in February 2010, she prepared a draft calendar for the 2011-2012 school year and a draft calendar survey for the Board's review. She noted that the survey, along with the draft calendar, which should be used as a guide for those taking the survey, would be open to parents, guardians, staff, administration and older students, and that the draft survey has been reviewed by administrators and the leadership of the Stafford Education Association. Dr. Fishman stated that she would be making a link on the district web site for the calendar survey, which would include a paragraph of explanation. She said that the results of the survey would be considered when the final school calendar for 2011 – 2012 is formulated.

Mrs. Rummel stated that it is important to let parents know that there are five full common curriculum days during the school year and that only two of them are marked on the draft calendar, while the other three have been incorporated into the total number of days, but are not marked on the draft calendar (due to the fact that the district has not yet decided where on the school calendar they will be placed).

Item VII. Public Forum

A member of the audience asked for the official enrollment figure for the district for this year.

Item VIII. Old Business

A. Update on Parent Plans to Fundraise to Provide Boys and Girls Basketball at Stafford Middle School

Mr. Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation, stated that the district has determined that there are thirty to forty middle schools students interested in playing basketball this year. He informed Dr. Hoss of the interest. Dr. Hoss was present at the Board meeting to present his fundraising plans to reinstate the basketball teams.

Dr. Hoss stated that he and other parents plan to use the following events to raise money to support the middle school basketball program- Basketball Legends Night with a dinner and autograph signing in mid-November, the Harlem Superstars Basketball Team program and a donation based scratch-off game program. Dr. Hoss was hopeful that they would raise the requisite \$8,000 through the first two programs, so that they would not have to use the third program.

Mr. Frasinelli stated that he would work with Mrs. Devlin, Financial Analyst, to determine the appropriate financial avenue for donations.

Mrs. Finch asked Mr. Frassinelli what would happen if they didn't raise the full \$8,000. Mr. Frassinelli stated that if the parents were able to raise at least \$5,000 by December 1, 2010, then a modified basketball program could run. He said that he would not be able to run the program with less than \$5,000.

Mr. Szymanski made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that if the Friends of Basketball can raise at least \$5,000 by December 1, 2010, then the Board of Education will reinstate the boys and girls basketball teams at Stafford Middle School. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IX. New Business

A. Update and Possible Action on Proposal from Stafford Energy Committee

Dr. Fishman presented the Board with a report from Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst, on the work of the Stafford Energy Committee, which Mrs. Devlin has been invited to join. Dr. Fishman said that Mr. Gary Fisher, chairman of the committee, has the task of finding ways to conserve energy usage in Stafford. In September, the committee received information from DCS Energy about a leasing program, which would install photovoltaic solar array systems on municipal buildings whose roofs meet certain criteria. She said that this federal project is partially funded by Green Jobs, CT Clean Energy, and venture capital money.

Dr. Fishman reported that Staffordville School was determined by the committee to be an appropriate site for a DCS Energy solar array, with its shingled, pitched roof. She noted that

there is an estimated electricity savings of \$180 per month and several other added benefits for this “green” initiative.

Mrs. Devlin stated that if the roof at Staffordville School needed replacement, then there would be a cost to remove the solar panels and then re-install them.

Mrs. Rummel asked Mr. Fisher if there were any safety concerns with this system. Mr. Fisher said that there is no danger with this system whatsoever. He also said that any extra electricity not used by the school goes back into the grid at another location. However, that won't happen often because the school uses much more electricity than is generated.

Mrs. Devlin said that the insurance company would need to be notified, and the solar panel may slightly increase the premium.

Board members asked about upkeep cost. Mr. Fisher said that the system has a five year warranty, and the inverter has a ten year warranty. Board members asked when the system would be installed. Mr. Fisher said that they are trying to get them installed within 6 months of the contract, but it may take longer.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, that the Board of Education approve the lease plan with DCS energy for the solar array system, as presented. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, to place **Item X.A- Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)** and **Item XI.A- Review and Possible Approval of Superintendent of School's Recommendation for Early Readmission of Student F (09-10) (Executive Session Anticipated)** into executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 9:37 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 9:42 p.m.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. Dr. Fishman and Mrs. Marinelli were invited to attend executive session. The Board entered executive session at 9:43 p.m.

Ms. Morhardt made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:45 p.m.

Item XI. Student Matters

A. Review and Possible Approval of Superintendent of School's Recommendation for Early Readmission of Student F (09-10) (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent of School's recommendation for early readmission of Student F (09-10) to Stafford High School, effective November 8, 2010. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. Ms. Morhardt abstained.

The Board restated that Student F will be on probationary status for the duration of the original expulsion period and must abide by the Board's policies and disciplinary guidelines. If Student F violates these conditions of probation, then the full period of the original expulsion shall be automatically reinstated.

Item X. Personnel Matters

A. Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 9:47 p.m.

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 10:10 p.m.

No action was taken on this item.

Item XII. Adjournment

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to adjourn. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Ms. Morhardt, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:11p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary

**Special Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
Wednesday, November 10, 2010, 7:30 a.m.**

Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Lisa Bradway
Mrs. Lisa Finch
Ms. Beth Ann Morhardt
Mrs. Tracy Rummel

Absent: Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary
Mr. Steve Szymanski

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Attorney Peter A. Janus, Counsel for the Board of Education
Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Mrs. Marie McDonald, Title IX Representative, Stafford High School
Mother of Student A
Grandmother of Student A
Student A

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 a.m. A quorum was established.

2. Executive Session

- a. Board Inquiry into the Continued Enrollment and Attendance of Student A**
- b. Board Consideration of the Recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the Expulsion of Student A from Stafford High School Pursuant to CGS 10-233d**

3. Action by the Board in Response to the Superintendent's Recommendation or Motion regarding the Expulsion of Student A

Ms. Morhardt made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board enter executive session to discuss material that would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein as described in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-200(6)(E), subsection (b) of Section 1-210, specifically, personnel, student or medical and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute an invasion of privacy, and / or names and addresses of students enrolled in public school. Only those invited by the Board may be present in the executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 7:41 a.m.

The Board invited the following individuals into the executive session:

Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Attorney Peter A. Janus, Counsel for the Board of Education
Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Mrs. Marie McDonald, Title IX Representative, Stafford High School
Mother of Student A
Grandmother of Student A
Student A
Mrs. Christine Marinelli, Recording Secretary

The Board took a recess to deliberate at 8:21 a.m. All invited individuals, with the exception of Attorney Janus, left the meeting room.

All invited individuals returned to the meeting room at 8:25 a.m.

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 8:26 a.m.

Ms. Morhardt made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that based on the evidence and testimony received after a due process hearing, it is the finding of the Stafford Board of Education that culminating on or about October 27, 2010, Student A committed an expellable offense, namely that Student A bullied a female student; Student A sexually harassed a female student; Student A physically abused a female student; and Student A violated the Board of Education's Policy 5114 (a)-(l), Policy 5131.911 (a)-(c) and Regulation (a)-(h), Policy 5145.4 (a)-(b), Policy 5145.5 and Regulation (a)-(c), and the disciplinary guidelines, as outlined in the Stafford High School 2010 – 2011 Student – Parent Handbook. It is the further finding of the Stafford Board of Education that such action constitutes conduct which is detrimental and an endangerment to the health, safety and welfare of other students, that such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process and that such conduct also violates a publicized policy of the Stafford Board of Education. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Morhardt, to enter executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 8:27 a.m.

At approximately 8:42 a.m., all individuals invited to attend executive session by the Board, with the exception of Attorney Peter Janus, left the conference room so that the Board of Education could deliberate.

All invited individuals returned to the Board of Education conference room at approximately 8:52 a.m.

Ms. Morhardt made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to return to regular

session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 8:53 a.m.

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that based on the previous decision of the Stafford Board of Education that Student A had committed an expellable offense, and based upon the evidence and testimony received as to the length of any expulsion to be imposed for the offense by Student A, it is the finding of the Stafford Board of Education that Student A shall be expelled from the Stafford Public Schools, from any and all school privileges and premises, and all school-sponsored activities for disciplinary reasons, effective immediately, for a period of one calendar year.

However, Student A may apply for early readmission to school at the beginning of the 2011 – 2012 school year by submitting an application to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration by the Board of Education no later than at its scheduled meeting in August 2011. The Board will condition Student A's readmission on satisfactory performance in tutoring with no unexcused absences; maintaining a satisfactory academic record; attending counseling sessions as scheduled by the School Social Worker; and completion of 100 hours of community service. If Student A is granted early readmission and subsequently commits a violation of the Board of Education's policies and regulations warranting suspension or expulsion, then the original period of this expulsion shall be reinstated without further hearings.

Moved further that the administration provide Student A with an alternative educational opportunity during the expulsion period.

Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

4. Adjournment

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Ms. Morhardt and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli
Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary