

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Monday, March 8, 2010 7:00 PM Eastern

Pinney Administration Building
16 Levinthal Run
Stafford Springs, CT 06076

- I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum
- II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes
 - II.A. Regular Meeting Minutes- February 22, 2010
- III. Treasurer's Report
 - III.A. February 24, 2010- \$98,205.32
 - III.B. February 24, 2010- \$11,694.21 (Grants)
 - III.C. March 3, 2010- \$364,920.18
- IV. Correspondence
- V. Board Reports
- VI. Superintendent Reports
 - VI.A. Update on Scheduled In-Service Programs on Racism at Stafford High School
 - VI.B. Update on School Improvement Plans
 - VI.C. Head Start Report through February 2010
- VII. Public Forum
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - IX.A. Approval of 2010 Stafford High School Graduation Date
- X. Personnel Matters
 - X.A. Resignation / Retirements- Certified and Administrative Staff Members
 - X.B. Teachers Eligible for Tenure / Teachers' Performance (Executive Session Anticipated)
- XI. Student Matters
 - XI.A. Discussion of Student Academic / Disciplinary Records (Executive Session Anticipated)

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School
Monday, February 22, 2010**

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

Absent: Ms. Julie Stafford

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. David Bartlett, Principal, Staffordville School
Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Dr. Daniel Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Hank Skala, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mr. Thomas Szymanski, Student Representative
Mr. Kenneth Valentine, Principal, Stafford Middle School

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

Special Meeting, February 8, 2010
Regular Meeting, February 8, 2010

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Reports for the special and regular meetings held on February 8, 2010, as presented.

Item III. Treasurer's Report

Board Bills and Grants:

February 10, 2010 \$ 132,692.78
February 17, 2010 \$ 179,496.83

A consensus of the Board approved the Board bills, as presented.

Item IV. Correspondence

Mr. Fontanella read an invitation to the Open Reception for the Student Art Show on Saturday, March 6, 2010, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., at the public library.

Mr. Fontanella read Ms. Stafford's letter of resignation from the Board of Education. Ms. Stafford moved to Ellington, Connecticut, in late January 2010. Mr. Fontanella stated that he notified the appropriate political party and is waiting for them to send candidates for the Board to interview.

Item V. Board Reports

Mr. Tom Szymanski, Student Representative, reported on the following:

- ✓ Stafford's Got Talent Production
- ✓ The Student / Faculty Volleyball Game
- ✓ The Fashion Show
- ✓ The District Concert, which is scheduled for March 30, with a snow date of March 31
- ✓ An Update on Sports at the High School

Item VI. Superintendent's Reports

A. Financial Report through January 2010

Dr. Fishman reviewed the Financial Report through January 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She said that the district started the year with a deficit, which is currently down to \$60,058. She noted that the district has been able to decrease the deficit, in part, through a budget freeze that was put in place at the beginning of the school year. However, any changes in the number of students outplaced, or unbudgeted purchases to address safety concerns, could increase the deficit. Dr. Fishman said that she is hopeful that the deficit will decrease to zero by the end of the school year.

B. Presentation regarding the Stafford High School Credit Re-Entry Program

Dr. Fishman stated that the Stafford High School Credit Re-Entry Program is an off-site location for students to gain credit. She said that the district has learned a lot over the past year regarding what conditions are necessary to make this program thrive. She introduced Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal of Stafford High School, and Dr. Daniel Lefebvre, Director of Pupil Services.

Mr. Kennedy began by stating that the high school has tried many things over the years to help students promote from one grade to another. He noted that past efforts included the 10K Program, Saturday Detention, the Principal's Homework Lab and resource rooms, when allowed by special education law. He said that now it is imperative that the district find ways to meet all students' needs within the classroom. He said that a core of students had been identified at the high school that were not responding to any of the programs that the high school had in place and were not earning credit. The credit re-entry program allowed students to benefit from a new structure, which seems to be working well for some students. Mr. Kennedy said that the pilot year helped the administrators identify which students would benefit most from this program and that they have made adjustments to how students are selected for this program.

Dr. Lefebvre stated that there is a profile of students that need to be off campus. He further defined those students as 1) repeat freshmen and sophomores, 2) previously expelled

students (to help them transition back to high school), and 3) older regular education students, or older students with disabilities (18 years or older). He thanked the town for giving the district space at the old town hall, which is a very easy location to supervise. He stated they currently have a committee at the high school identifying students that need this type of program, which is defined as small group instruction, or individualized instruction, in a 5 hour day, with 6 periods. The schedule was adjusted to allow students to earn enough credits to return to the high school. Additionally, double blocks give staff and schedule flexibility. Dr. Lefebvre stated that currently there are 14 students in the program, which is an increase from the 6 that started the program. He noted that with the increased enrollment, students are now viewing it as a school, which gives a better feel to the program. He also noted that there have been no discipline issues for the past three months, due to the better balance of students.

Dr. Lefebvre reviewed what has been learned from the pilot program, as follows:

- The composition of the group of students is very important and there is only so much that can be done to get students to commit.
- One administrator works better than two sharing the job.
- The parent has been the key in dealing with the disciplinary issues.
- They have not been able to re-enter as many students to the high school as they'd like. In addition, legally, students can't be kept in the program, if they want to return to the high school before they are ready.
- It took some time to get the staffing set up properly. Retention is still a concern.
- We have a viable model, to a point. Last year, this program cost the district nothing because one student was returned to the district from an outplacement. Most outplacements are at the high school level. Currently three students with disabilities are in the program and doing well.
- This program is one of a number of choices to serve students in this community, not the only option.

Mr. Kennedy noted that since this is not a disciplinary program, students can participate in all extra-curricular programs at the high school. He said that this has been a successful experiment; students that did not typically earn credit did. It has given some students the traction they need to move forward at the high school and graduate. Dr. Fishman said that once students get to their junior year in good standing, very few students drop out.

Mr. Fontanella asked if any other districts have a program like this. Dr. Lefebvre said that most districts have alternative schools, especially districts with more than 5,000 students. Dr. Fishman noted that she has given a high school committee the task of looking at what a real alternative school would look like in Stafford, rather than an alternative program.

Mr. Szymanski had a question about the transportation costs for the program.

Mrs. Bradway asked if any improvement could be noted on the CAPT. Due to the March administration of the CAPT, there wasn't much time to see improvement. However, the CAPT could be looked at this year.

Mrs. Rummel had questions regarding the optimal number of students for the program and the average length of stay in the program.

C. Update on the Retirement Incentive Plan

Dr. Fishman stated that the retirement incentive was offered to certified staff again this year, as she presented at the January 11, 2010, Board meeting. She said that seven staff members want to take advantage of this plan. Dr. Fishman reviewed the analysis of the retirement incentive with the Board.

Dr. Fishman proposed to the Board that they approve a plan to restructure the guidance department at the high school. She said that currently there are two full-time guidance counselors and one intern at the high school. The NEAS&C accreditation report stated that there should be three full time guidance counselors there. She said that one of the current full-time guidance counselors has agreed to retire and come back at .45 FTE, which would allow us to hire a full-time counselor to replace that person and give us 2.45 FTE in certified guidance counselors, rather than using an intern. She said that the Board could keep the .45 position for a year or two, until the Board decides it can afford to change the position to full time. She noted that the Board would realize savings, because the new hire's salary would be lower than the person they are replacing, and the district would not be paying for an intern.

Mr. Szymanski had several questions about the retirement savings spreadsheet.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education approve the addition of a .45 FTE guidance position at the high school and eliminate the intern position at the high school. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

D. Continued Presentation of the 2010 – 2011 Proposed School Budget

Dr. Fishman said that the savings from the retirement incentive and the savings from the guidance position changes had not yet been deducted from the budget. Mrs. Devlin said that the restructuring of the guidance department at the high school will save the district \$24,343, and the savings from the retirement incentive are \$20,458.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the information that the Board requested at the last meeting regarding the cost of the positions that were eliminated last year. She stated that adding a .50 FTE pre-kindergarten teacher at Staffordville School is very important, due to NAEYC guidelines and their upcoming accreditation visit. She said that the cost of that position, plus benefits to make the position full-time (it would be added to an existing .50 FTE pre-kindergarten position at Staffordville), would be \$34,987. She also said that a .50 FTE position without benefits, would work as well. Dr. Fishman said that \$12,000 would also be added to the budget to pay for materials and professional development related to diversity.

Mrs. Bradway suggested adding the .50 FTE pre-kindergarten position at Staffordville School and the full-time social studies position at the high school to the budget, as well as the money for the diversity programs. Mrs. Fowler agreed.

Mr. Szymanski questioned why the Board was just finding out about the need for the .50 FTE pre-kindergarten position at Staffordville School. He also stated that he does not agree with adding positions to the Superintendent's recommended budget and inflating it, without good reason and backup documentation. Mrs. Finch agreed, but said that she would support the

addition of the .50 FTE pre-kindergarten teacher and the additional funds for the diversity materials and professional development.

Mr. Fontanella said that the Board would be taking action on the budget later on the agenda.

E. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through January 2010

Dr. Fishman reviewed the cafeteria profit and loss statement through January 2010, as prepared by Mrs. Mary Folker, Food Services Coordinator, and Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and reviewed by Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She said that it shows a healthy year-to-date profit of \$17,018.24.

Mrs. Fowler asked if we would be doing another survey soon to get some feedback from students and parents. Dr. Fishman said that she would have the food service department work on putting a survey together.

Item VII. Public Forum

A member of the audience asked if she could speak about a topic that was addressed at the last meeting. Mr. Fontanella said that the public forum portion of the meeting is limited to items on the agenda of the Board meeting that night. However, Mr. Fontanella did update the public about what has been happening at the high school since the last Board meeting. He said that the State did come to the high school last week and gave the district an oral report of findings. A written report is forthcoming and will be shared with the public. Mr. Fontanella also stated that the district has been working on all of the initiatives that were discussed two weeks ago.

The same member of the audience expressed concern that the credit re-entry program is not located in an appropriate location and that the students there are stigmatized. She suggested moving the program to a location more associated with the school. Dr. Fishman stated that the district would consider moving the program to the refurbished Witt School building, if and when it is available.

A member of the audience asked what the ramifications would be if the district delayed the NAEYC accreditation. Dr. Fishman responded that she is working to make the two pre-kindergarten to grade one schools equitable, as West Stafford School was accredited last year. Additionally, she said that it could affect grant funding. The member of the audience stated that she would like to see the district redistribute students, rather than add a teacher.

A member of the audience asked to discuss a student matter. Mr. Fontanella asked that the parent discuss the matter with him privately, due to student confidentiality issues.

Item VIII. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item IX. New Business

A. Approval of the 2010 – 2011 School Budget

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fowler, that the Board of Education approve the Stafford Public Schools Budget in the amount of \$25,002,913, a 2.10% increase over last year's budget, including the addition of a .50 FTE pre-kindergarten teaching position at Staffordville School, a 1.0 FTE social studies teaching position at the high school and \$12,000 for diversity materials and professional development. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion. Mr. Szymanski abstained. The motion carried by majority vote.

Item X. Personnel Matters

A. Resignation- Certified Staff Member

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, that the Board of Education accept the resignation of the following staff member:

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Day, Jr., Keegan	Technology Education Teacher	Stafford High School	End of School Year, June 2010.	Personal.

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

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fowler, to place Item XI.A. Board Consideration of the Recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the Expulsion of Student E from Stafford High School pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-233d (Executive Session Anticipated), into executive session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 9:26 p.m.

Item XI. Student Matters

A. Board Consideration of the Recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the Expulsion of Student E from Stafford High School pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-233d (Executive Session Anticipated)

The meeting was called to order at 9:50 p.m. Mrs. Fowler recused herself from the proceedings.

Mrs. Bradway 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, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 9:51 p.m.

The Board invited the following individuals into the executive session:

Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
 Mr. Robert Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
 Attorney Peter S. Gersten, Counsel for the Student
 Attorney Peter A. Janus, Counsel for the Board of Education
 Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
 Attorney Anne Littlefield, Counsel for the Administration
 Student E
 Mother and Father of Student E
 Mrs. Christine Marinelli, Recording Secretary

At approximately 12:30 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 12:55 a.m.

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to return to regular session. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 12:56 a.m.

Mrs. Rummel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that based on the evidence received after a due process hearing, it is the finding of the Stafford Board of Education that on or about January 6, 2010, Student E committed an expellable offense, namely that Student E was in possession of alcohol on school grounds during the school day, Student E consumed and was under the influence of alcohol on school grounds during the school day and at an after-school activity; Student E violated the Board of Education's Policy 5114 (a)-(l), Board Policy 5131.6 (a)-(f) and Regulation 5131.6 (a)-(f), and the disciplinary guidelines, as outlined in the Stafford High School 2009 – 2010 Student – Parent Handbook; and it being 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.

Furthermore, based upon the evidence and testimony received as to the length of any expulsion to be imposed for the offense by Student E, it is the finding of the Stafford Board of Education that Student E 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 through the end of the 2009 – 2010 school year.

Moved further that the Administration provide Student E with an alternative educational opportunity during the expulsion period.

Upon the return to school by Student E at the beginning of the 2010 – 2011 school year, Student E shall be on probation for the first academic quarter. If Student E does not commit a violation of the Board of Education's policies and regulations warranting suspension or expulsion, then this expulsion shall be expunged from Student E's cumulative education record at the end of the first quarter.

Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rummel and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion. Mrs. Bradway opposed the motion. The motion carried by majority vote.

Item XII. Adjournment

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary