

February 25, 2009

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on February 25, 2009 in the Middle School library. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Downs, Mr. Gutierrez and Ms. Gerardi-Voccio. Also present were: Mr. Yanku, Mrs. Sweet, Mrs. Muscente, Dr. Keefe and Mrs. Berry. In the audience were: Mrs. Hardell and Mrs. Frost.

**1. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Lyons at 7:15 p.m.**

**2. Public Comments/Comments by representatives of:**

- a. BEA - no report
- b. Local 1303 - AFSCME - no report
- c. PTO - Mrs. Frost, representing the PTO, spoke on the PTO's interest in a school recycling program and offered the help of the PTO in starting this program in conjunction with Willimantic Waste, the school's rubbish collector. Following a discussion on the recycling program at each building, Mrs. Berry indicated that she will call Mrs. Pepin, the representative of Willimantic Waste and meet with Mr. Kowolenko and the building principals to implement this program.

Mrs. Frost also commented on the fund drive for the Boundless Playground, the request to the PTO for a contribution, and the need to remove tree limbs near the present playground.

**3. Minutes of Board Meetings:**

MOTION: (Downs/Gerardi-Voccio) to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2009 meeting.

VOTE: Unanimous

**4. Correspondence:**

Included in Board of Education packets were:

- a. Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees meeting minutes of January 20, 2009 and the agenda for the February 24, 2009 Board of Trustees meeting.

**5. Consent Agenda:**

- a. Payment of Bills - a list of bills dated February 25, 2009 was distributed.
- b. Extracurricular - no report
- c. Use of Facilities - no report
- d. Bus Driver Approval - no report
- e. Library Books - no report

MOTION: (Downs/Gutierrez) to approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Unanimous

**6. Administrative Reports:**

a. **Middle School Principal**

Mr. Yanku's report included comments on the following:

- the closing of the mid-quarter marking period and the issuance of progress reports;
- the new math textbooks including fifth grade materials which were delivered last week;
- Staff Development Day on February 18th; and
- the blood drive sponsored by the National Junior Honor Society.

b. **Elementary Principal**

Dr. Keefe's report included:

- elementary school classroom enrollment for February 25th;
- comments on the Staff Development Day at the elementary building which included work on the language arts curriculum and CPR training for PK and K teachers;
- the family calendar for February; and
- the staff calendar for February.

Dr. Keefe also commented on a number of student programs held during the past month; specifically: the student council's program of recycling; the assembly on Abraham Lincoln; the Book Fair; and the Word Wizard Program, which is held each Monday to build students' vocabulary.

Following Dr. Keefe's comments on the CMT schedule, Mrs. Downs raised a question on the use of instructional time for library media and health education as listed in the 2007-2008 Strategic School Profile and noted that the elementary school spends less time on science and math than the state average.

Dr. Keefe stated that science should be integrated with language arts and there was a need for additional curricular material to accomplish this. She also noted that the emphasis was on reading and writing.

Mrs. Downs indicated that she was concerned about the appropriate use of time and the Strategic School Profile showed a great amount of time on library use and health.

Dr. Keefe agreed that there should be more of an emphasis on science and indicated that there was a lack of instructional time within the school day.

c. **Assistant Principal**

Mrs. Sweet's report did not include a report on the ERR Program as the report at the February 9th Board meeting included part of the February account of the ERR program.

The cheerleading program will conclude the winter sports season with the Cherry Pie Tournament on February 28th.

6. **Administrative Reports (continued):**

c. **Assistant Principal (continued)**

Mrs. Sweet also commented on the CMT Program which will begin on March 2nd and conclude on March 27th. This state-wide testing program requires that every student in grades three through eight participate unless they are exempted as a result of Planning and Placement team (PPT) decisions.

d. **Director of Student Services**

Mrs. Muscente's report included a review of the January, 2009 enrollment in the Special Education program (159) with (124) in attendance at the Brooklyn School; (21) attending our designated high schools; and (14) placed out of the district.

Mrs. Muscente also commented on the changes in CPR training (part of the February 18th Staff Development Program) as a result of update recommendations from the American Red Cross on CPR/First Aid Training Programs.

Following Mrs. Muscente's report, Mrs. Downs referred to the anonymous letter received prior to the February 9th Board of Education meeting and requested information on the number of students dropped off between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. each morning at the Elementary and the number of paraprofessionals employed to supervise these students.

Following comments by Dr. Keefe and discussion by Board members, Dr. Berry was asked to send another letter to parents on the availability of the before-school program provided by the Recreation Department.

e. **Superintendent's Report**

The following reports/issues were included in Board packets and Mrs. Berry commented on a number of them:

**Middle School Gym Bid Request for Repairs**

Mrs. Berry reported on the bid request documents which have been prepared and indicated that copies were sent to structural engineering firms(11) in this state and also sent to architectural firms (8) that are active in school construction. In addition, public notices were sent to the press. The deadline for bids for this project is March 12, 2009.

**State Grants for 2009-2010**

Mrs. Berry presented the most recent report on state grants which indicates that the 2009-2010 school transportation grant will be cut another 5%. The ECS grant for next year is listed at this year's level.

6. **Administrative Reports (continued):**

e. **Superintendent's Report**

Woodstock Academy Contract

Mrs. Berry presented a revised draft of the Woodstock Academy contract for Board of Education review. Following discussion of Section 2 on Student Enrollment and Section 9 on Capital Improvements, the Board members took the following action:

MOTION: (Downs/Gerardi-Voccio) to approve the draft of the Woodstock Academy contract for student attendance at the academy as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

Mrs. Berry was asked to send a copy of the revised contract to the Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees for their review and action. In addition, Mrs. Berry was asked to prepare a letter of concern about the increase in tuition for 2009-2010 and request that the Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees review their decision to increase their budget when Brooklyn is forced to reduce their staff and cut other accounts in order to meet the goal of the Board of Finance for a zero increase over the 2008-2009 budget.

Also included in Board packets was the enrollment report for February, 2009.

Mrs. Downs spoke on the issue of elementary staff involvement on the search for a new principal. Dr. Keefe expressed her interest and the interest of the staff in participating in the interviewing process.

Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio asked for information on the following capital improvement requests submitted to the town last April:

- roof replacement - Rose Wing
- freezer - middle school
- parking lot - north side of middle school.

A meeting of the Facilities Committee has been scheduled for March 25th when these projects and other facility needs will be reviewed.

7. **Public Comments:** none

8. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Budget** - discussion of the proposed budget for 2009-2010 is scheduled under Section 11.
- b. **Curriculum** - need meeting
- c. **Educational Planning** - no meeting

8. **Committee Reports (continued) :**

- d. **Facilities/Capital Improvement** - meeting scheduled for March 25th
- e. **Policy** - policy books are updated and are being distributed.
- f. **Public Relations** - no report
- g. **Special Education** - no meeting
- h. **Staff Negotiations** - no meeting; a meeting is needed to negotiate four administrators' contracts.
- i. **Staff Relations** - no meeting
- j. **Technology** - a meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2009 at 3:30 p.m.
- k. **Transportation** - no meeting

9. **Board Representatives to Other Committees:**

- a. **Eastconn** - Mrs. Johnson was unable to attend the meeting.
- b. **Board of Finance** - no report
- c. **Insurance** - a meeting of this committee was held on February 12, 2009. The next meeting is scheduled for March 5th. Representatives of school and town unions will be asked to participate. Minutes of the February 12th meeting were included in Board packets.
- d. **Killingly Board of Education** - Mrs. Lyons reported on her conversations with the Chair of the Killingly Board of Education on the issue of tuition for two students during the 2007-2008 school year, Mr. Murray plans to discuss this issue with the Killingly Board of Education.
- e. **PTO** - this report was given earlier this evening (see Section 2) by Mrs. Frost.
- f. **Preschool Building Committee** - Mrs. Lyons reported that the building project is almost completed with a few issues still to be resolved.
- g. **Recreation** - Mrs. Downs reported that the Commission met on February 19th and the new members are John Burns and Lauren Rossi. Members were presented with policy/program notebooks and reminded that they should participate as volunteers in the events of the Recreation Commissions. They also were informed that the old recreation building will be demolished. The Commission reduced its budget by 2% with no salary increase for the office staff and the director. The next meeting is scheduled for March 19th.
- h. **School Readiness/Brooklyn Collaborative** - Mr. Gutierrez reported on the last meeting (February 23, 2009) of this organization; specifically:
  - {Pig-Out on Reading Program scheduled for March 2nd - an evening program for PK, K and grade 1 students and their parents;
  - Community Conversation Night on March 26th - an evening to discuss an all day kindergarten program. This event will be held at Q.V.C.C. at 6:30 p.m.
  - Other events include the Parenting Series and the Senior Tea.The next meeting will be held on March 30th.
- i. **School Safety Committee** - no meeting

**9. Board Representatives to Other Committees (continued):**

**j. Woodstock Academy** - Ms. Gerardi-Voccio reported on the following programs:

- CAPT Program and Schedule;
- World Language Day;
- Read Across America Day;
- Freshmen Focus;
- Suicide Prevention Luncheon;
- Exchange Program with Senegal;
- Music Concerts with middle schools in sending districts;
- New Course Proposals: 1) Advance Placement Calculus BC and 2) 3D Animation and Game Design;
- Junior Counseling Program;
- Status of the Headmaster's Search;
- plans to schedule the March meeting of the Board of Trustees in Brooklyn; and
- plans to move forward with the Bentley Athletic Field Project.

**10. Old Business**

Woodstock Academy Contract - This issue was addressed in Section 6 e. of tonight's meeting.

Superintendent's Goals - Mrs. Berry was asked to provide Board of Education members with more measurable outcomes for Goals Two - Early Childhood Education, and Four - Financial Management. Mrs. Berry was also requested to provide Board of Education members with sample evaluation forms for superintendents.

Proposed Budget - Draft II 2009-2010 - As a response to the Board's request at the February 9th meeting following review of Draft I of the proposed budget, Mrs. Berry presented a second draft of the budget which included reductions in the following accounts:

- Account 111E - reduction of three positions;
- Account 111J - reduction of one position;
- Account 112C - reduction of two paraprofessionals;
- Account 210 - reduction of costs based on a change from 12% to 8% in the premium increase in health insurance; and health benefits for the of six employees noted above;
- Account 352 - reduction of one day/week of Eastconn technology consultant time;
- Account 561C - decrease in student enrollment at high schools:
- 600 Accounts (Supplies) - reduction of \$5,000; and
- 800 Accounts (Dues and Fees) - reduction of \$2,000

Following discussion of these cuts and the need to present a budget to the Board of Finance for 2009-2010 which has a zero increase over the present year, Mrs. Berry was asked to reduce Draft II by an additional \$52,000.

**11. New Business: none**

**12. Other:** none

**13. Public Comments:** none

**14. Adjournment:**

MOTION: (Gerardi-Voccio/Downs) to adjourn at 11:00 p.m.

VOTE: Unanimous