

March 26, 2008

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting in the Middle School library on March 26, 2008. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Downs, Mrs. Johnson, Ms. Gerardi-Voccio and Mr. Gutierrez from the Board of Education. Also present were: Mr. Otto, Mr. Meehan, Dr. Keefe, Mr. Yanku, Mrs. Sweet, Mrs. Muscente and Mrs. Berry. Mrs. Hardell, Mrs. Bernier and Mr. Guyer were also present.

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 - no report

3. Minutes of Board Meeting:

MOTION: (Downs/Johnson) to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2008 meeting.

VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: (Johnson/Gutierrez) to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2008 meeting.

VOTE: Unanimous

4. Correspondence:

Included in Board packets were:

- a. Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees meeting minutes from February 26, 2008 and the agenda for the March 18th Board of Trustees meeting.

5. Presentation:

Mr. Guyer, representing MDG Associates, commented on a number of issues related to health insurance:

- the state initiative on towns joining together to purchase health insurance;
- the higher rates for Brooklyn because of a higher percentage of older workers;
- the present Health Savings Plan in the BEA contract and the need to market this plan to BEA members in order to achieve a reduction in the cost of health insurance;
- the joint town/school dental health plan; and
- the lack of 2008 rates for MEHIP, thus his inability to provide health insurance premium costs for the town for the next fiscal year.

6. Consent Agenda:

- a. Payment of Bills - a list of bills dated March 26, 2008 was distributed at the meeting.
- b. Extracurricular - no report
- c. Use of Facilities - no report
- d. Bus Driver Approval - no report
- e. Library Books - no report

MOTION: (Johnson/Gerardi-Voccio) to approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Unanimous

7. Administrative Reports:

a. Middle School Principal

Mr. Yanku reviewed the report in Board packets and commented on:

- parent-teacher conferences held on February 27th and 28th;
- progress reports which were distributed on March 3rd;
- the completion of the CMT Program;
- the participation of four middle school music students in the ERMS Concert;
- the Honors Assembly on March 14th and extra-curricular activities including the chess tournament;
- the administration of the survey on bullying and school climate with close to 400 returns; and
- the meeting scheduled for April 3rd with members of the math department at Woodstock Academy to discuss the Algebra I program.

Mrs. Johnson questioned procedures for selecting students for the honors night recognition, specifically the language in the handbook concerning requirements for participation in Honors Recognition Night.

Ms. Gerardi-Voccio asked the administration to review the amount of homework assigned during the period when the CMT Program occurs.

Mr. Yanku indicated that he would review these issues with his staff.

b. Elementary Principal

Dr. Keefe's report encompassed a variety of issues:

- the March calendar of activities at the elementary building which included: Read Across America Day; PTO meeting; Student Council meetings; field trips to the Ragged Hill Woods Environmental Center; CMT testing; and the kindergarten Johnny Appleseed Day. The family calendar also included a letter from Dr. Keefe on the student placement process for 2008-2009 and the goal to provide the best possible learning environment for each child.
- the completion of the CMT Program;
- the Blizzard of Books Program with the goal of reading 10,000 hours - actual number of hours was 11,160 which resulted in a school-wide celebration; and the presentation by Trooper Vangel on personal safety, decision-making and responsibility.

7. Administrative Reports (continued):

b. Elementary Principal

Following Dr. Keefe's comments, Mrs. Johnson complimented her on her leadership at the elementary building.

Mrs. Berry raised the issue of the need for a full-time assistant principal at the elementary building next year because of the increasing enrollment (622 students as of March 26, 2008) and noted that there are very few, if any, elementary schools in the state with this enrollment that do not have a full time assistant principal.

c. Assistant Principal

Mrs. Sweet's report included the following:

- the ERR report for the period of February 9, 2008 through March 14, 2008;
- the spring sports program; specifically:

Softball Mr. Lohbusch is coaching the girls this season. Sign-up and tryouts have been held. The team is ready to practice for its first game scheduled for April 4th against Pomfret at home. Coach Lohbusch is looking forward to having a good season.

Baseball Mr. Tim Panteleakos is coaching the boys again this season. Sign-ups and tryouts have been held. The team is practicing hard in anticipation of the first game which is also against Pomfret at home on April 4th.

Intramurals Intramurals ended on Monday, March 24th.

Track Mr. David Partyka is coaching the track team again this season. Sign-ups are currently being held. The first meet is scheduled for Thursday, April 24th at Ellis Tech.

Mrs. Sweet also commented on the conclusion of the CMT program and noted that there were 179 make-up tests which occupied most of her time during the past two weeks.

c. Director of Student Services

Mrs. Muscente's report included:

- a review on the current enrollment in special education programs (150); and
- a memo, which was distributed to all classroom teachers, on Multiple Intelligence by Howard Gardner of Harvard School of Education.

7. Administrative Reports (continued):

d. **Superintendent's Report**

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

- **Non-tenured Staff**

Consistent with prior practice, the Board of Education took the following non-renewal action on all the non-tenured teaching contracts:

MOTION: (Johnson/Gerardi-Voccio) to not renew the contract for employment for the following non-tenured employees until the 2008-2009 proposed budget is approved by the voters: Carrie Bauch, Kristin Bove, Sherri Brady, Gena Davidson, Patricia Dehls, Jennifer Ferragatta, Linda Jung, Pedro Lima, Lisa McCormack, Vicki Poirier, Mary Ann Sjogren, Willow Therrien and Jillian Weitknecht.

VOTE: Unanimous

- **Graduation**

MOTION: (Downs/Gutierrez) to approve the date of June 16th for the 2008 graduation program.

VOTE: Unanimous

- **Health Insurance Bid**

The request for a bid on health insurance for 2008-2009 was sent to MDG Associates and E-Benefits on March 6, 2008 with a return date of March 24, 2008. The only bid received was from MDG Associates which was presented to the Board earlier in the evening during Mr. Guyer's comments. The bid reflects a 7.2% increase over this year's costs.

Mrs. Kish-Thomson of E-Benefits stated on March 24th that she would not be submitting a bid on the BC/BS plans in the BEA and Union contracts but was interested in discussing alternative insurance coverage with the Brooklyn staff.

The following reports were included in Board packets: legislative update; news article on the Responsive Classroom Program at the elementary; cafeteria report for February, 2008 and enrollment report for March, 2008.

8. **Public Comments:** none

9. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Budget** - no report
- b. **Curriculum** - no meeting
- c. **Educational Planning** - no meeting

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

- d. **Facilities** - Included in Board packets were the capital projects referred to the town for consideration by the town's Capital Improvement Program Committee. Mr. Otto requested that we send the town our priority list of repairs/capital projects for planning by the CIP Committee.
- e. **Policy** - no report
- f. **Public Relations** - no report
- g. **Special Education** - no meeting
- h. **Staff Negotiations** - no meeting
- i. **Staff Relations** - no meeting
- j. **Technology** - no meeting
- k. **Transportation** - no meeting

10. Board Representatives to Other Committees:

- a. **Eastconn** - Ms. Gerardi-Voccio distributed the agenda for the EastConn meeting on March 25th.
- b. **Board of Finance** - no report
- c. **Insurance** - no meeting
- d. **Killingly Board of Education** - no report
- e. **PTO** - The last meeting of the PTO was held on March 4th for planning for the talent show, father/daughter dance, Masterpiece Art Program and Teacher Appreciation Week. Other activities discussed included the newsletter, website, fundraisers and discussion of the Boundless Playground. New agenda items included by-law revisions and PTO

Board nominations.

The next meeting of the PTO will be April 8th.

- f. **Preschool Building Committee** - Work is still behind schedule with the opening of the building for class use projected for September, 2008.
- g. **Recreation** - no report
- h. **School Readiness Council/Brooklyn Collaborative** - The next meeting will be held on March 31st.
- i. **School Safety Committee** - A meeting of this committee is needed to update members on the items to be purchased through the Homeland Security Grant.
- j. **Woodstock Academy** - Ms. Gerardi-Voccio reported on the last meeting of the Board of Trustees with comments on the restructuring of department chairpersons, the school calendar for 2008-2009, the review of professional development activities, 2008-2009 tuition for sending towns and the student trip to France.

11. Old Business:

a. Proposed Budget for 2008-2009

Following review of Draft IV of the proposed 2008-2009 budget, the Board members took the following action:

MOTION: (Johnson/Voccio) to approve the proposed 2008-2009 budget as proposed.

VOTE: Unanimous

12. New Business:

No new business was presented.

13. Other:

An unsigned letter, which had been received by all Board members concerning the scheduling of physical education teachers at the elementary building, was presented for review. Mrs. Berry was asked to investigate this issue and report back to the Board of Education at the next meeting.

14. Public Comments:

Mr. Otto reminded members of the Board of Education of the public hearing on April 1st and the referendum on April 10th for the proposed new library building.

15. Adjournment:

MOTION: (Gutierrez/Downs) to adjourn at 10:12 p.m.

VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Ms. Jo Ann Gerardi-Voccio, Board of Education Secretary