

## STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING April 9, 2014

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education meeting room in Old Mystic, CT. Members present were Deborah Downie, Secretary, Faith Leitner, Alisa Morrison, Alexa Garvey, and Terry Stefanski.

Absent: Craig Esposito

Also present were Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Emily Craig of the Student Government, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

### Board Presentations

Allison Van Etten, Special Services/Special Ed Director, and Special Ed teacher Chanel Lapid shared a video and presentation on the LearnPad, a new tool being used on a variety of learners in Special Education. Mrs. Van Etten explained that out of 70 applicants submitted nationwide for the LearnPad Champion, Chanel Lapid was one of eleven teachers selected to be the LearnPad Champion. Mrs. Van Etten noted that there are only currently five available, which are currently being used at West Broad Street School. Ms. Lapid demonstrated how teachers and students make use of the LearnPad in the classroom.

### Communications & Recognitions

#### Communications

Deborah Downie noted that artwork from various students of Stonington Public Schools is on display at the gallery in the Westerly Library and will be exhibited until April 27. Mrs. Downie added that this is a free event and beautiful to look at.

Deborah Downie and Faith Leitner reminded all of the upcoming event, SHS Empty Bowl project, on April 29. Mrs. Downie noted that there are over 100 bowls available for purchase. The cost is \$10, which covers a simple meal of soup and bread distributed in the bowls. Local businesses and restaurants will be providing food for the event and some of the proceeds will go to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. Mrs. Downie also noted there will be a Special Education Family Resource Night on April 30 at SHS where over 25 vendors will be present.

Alisa Morrison noted that spring sports have started and wished all the Bears good luck for the season.

Van Riley reported that the second food pantry went well with over 100 families, 65 of which were new families and around 15 volunteers. Dr. Riley shared that he attended the recent United Way Breakfast where the district was presented with two awards, one for outstanding achievement, and one for school partner of the year.

#### Recognitions

Deborah Downie and Faith Leitner congratulated the middle school and high school band and chorus for their excellent concerts this past month. Mrs. Downie noted that she had a conversation with the teacher on how to get more community involvement at these events.

Dr. Van Riley recognized the kindergarten class at West Vine Street School for their wonderful performance earlier this evening of *The Three Piggy Opera*.

Frank Todisco recognized Pawcatuck Middle School for their phenomenal performance of *The Wizard of Oz*.

#### Comments from Citizens

Jennifer Herbst, parent of two MMS students, had questions regarding budget increase, mill rate, rainy day fund, town reserve fund and budget comparisons with area towns. Ms. Herbst thanked the Board for their dedication.

Cindy Nadeau noted that WVSS/WBSS will have their art show and concert on May 1 at PMS and the unified sports talent show will take place on May 2 at SHS. Mrs. Nadeau thanked Bill King and Ken Donovan for their timely and safe manner in which the repairs on the wall at WBSS were handled over the weekend.

**Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes – March 13, 2014 (Regular)  
March 19, 2014 (Special)  
March 27, 2014 (Special)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report
- E. Approval of MMS Washington Field Trip – October 2014

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Deborah Downie:

**Motion I: To approve the Consent Agenda Items A - E as presented.**

**All: Aye**

**Student Recognition**

Deborah Downie asked for the Board's suggestions regarding restarting a districtwide student recognition program for their contributions to the district. Mrs. Downie asked the Board to come up with criteria for this recognition program. The Board discussed criteria, how many would be recognized, where the recognitions would come from and number of times per year. The Board discussed the possibility of having this be part of the Student Government duties. Dr. Van Riley will bring this idea to the principals at the next Leadership meeting.

**District Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan**

Frank Todisco explained that it has been a while since mission and vision statements have been looked at and noted that it might be appropriate to revisit these documents.

Dr. Van Riley explained that some of our mission statements were revised a long time ago. Dr. Riley will be bringing some suggestions to the May Board meeting. Dr. Riley would like to involve parents, staff, and Board members in this process and would like to finalize this before the start of school in the fall.

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

- A. District Update
- B. Administrative Hiring Procedure
  - Dr. Riley distributed an outline of the administrative hiring procedure, noting steps the district should take when hiring for administrative positions. Dr. Riley asked the Board for their approval on this process and the Board was all in agreement with the process.

**Monthly Report**

All monthly reports were presented in written form as part of the Board packet.

Emily Craig, Student Government representative, reported on the upcoming spring concert event to benefit HelpHOPELive Association on June 13 from 6pm to 8 pm.

Nikki Gullickson reported that teachers from PMS, Marika Heughins and Tina Eisenbeis, were accepted to the Connecticut Dream Team and Tim Flanagan, also a PMS teacher, will be participating in a Fulbright-Hays Group Project called "Morocco's Bountiful Perspectives" where he was one of twelve teachers from Connecticut selected to participate. Mr. Flanagan will be spending a month in Morocco studying Arabic in order to introduce our students to Arabic culture.

Mark Friese noted that final preparations are being made for the June 20 Relay for Life taking place at SHS.

Committee Reports

Teaching and Learning Committee – Deborah Downie reported that the committee met and discussion focused on the middle school configuration and design. Dr. Riley added that there will be a meeting after spring break with staff and more ideas will be shared with the Board when available.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

Sue Jones commented on the student recognition program and voiced her concerns, suggested that teachers and students be part of the nomination process.

Ashley Gillice also commented on the student recognition program and feels each school should be able to recognize students from other schools.

Items for Future Agendas

- Televised School Events
- Graduate Questionnaire
- Social Media

Board Comments/Concerns

Alisa Morrison requested a list of upcoming school events.

The Board commented on social media and possibility of telecasting future school events.

The following motion was made by Terry Stefanski and seconded by Faith Leitner:

Motion 2: To adjourn at 8:48 p.m.

Aye: All

  
Deborah Downie, Board Secretary