

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
March 17, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rubino at 7:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Cavagnero, Ms. Cogswell, Mrs. Hoehne,
Mrs. Kosmulski, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Oliver,
Mrs. Raymond, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder,
Mrs. Domanico, Mr. Leone, Mr. Canciani

Absent: Mr. Emmett, Mr. Ji

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Ms. Calabrese, 43 Santamaria Dr., asked if the budget meetings were open to the public. The Board responded that all budget meetings were open to the public.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Lyons moved and Mr. Cavagnero supported a motion to approve tonight's agenda. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Lyons moved and Ms. Cogswell supported a motion to approve the regular Board meeting minutes of February 17, 2010. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

INFORMATION SHARING SESSION

Mr. Canciani reported that on Saturday, March 28th, the Torrington District Competition of Connecticut History Day will take place at the U.Conn-Torrington Branch. Approximately 200 middle school and high school students, many who are from Torrington, will be competing for an invitation to the state level competition on May 8th. The day begins with student registration at 8:30 a.m., opening ceremony at 9:00 a.m., judging until 12 noon, and the public is invited to view performance projects during that time. All other projects, papers, websites, documentary films, and exhibits are open to the public between 12 noon and 1 p.m. The day will conclude with an award ceremony at 1 p.m.

He reported that the THS semi-formal dance has been rescheduled to Friday, April 23rd.

Mr. Canciani reported that the list of schools to which seniors have been accepted to included Columbia, Merrimac, U.Conn, RIT, and many others.

He also recognized the THS swim team for having a very successful season. They have placed well, and tomorrow is the state competition and they are expected to do very well.

A. Acknowledgements

Mr. Leone reported that student artwork for the Central Office has been submitted from every school and is in the process of being matted. The goal is to have the artwork become part of a longstanding tradition which will be a calendar. He will be working with the community to find a fundraiser or donor who would be willing to support the calendar. The calendar will go to each and every family, and will list the events for the course of next year. The artists were acknowledged before the Board.

Mr. Leone also recognized 2 students from Vogel-Wetmore, who went above and beyond to raise funds for the victims of the Haiti earthquake. These 2 young ladies raised over \$200, which was self initiated, and they were congratulated for being outstanding members of the community.

Mr. Leone also recognized the Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative for their work over the past weekend at the Kindergarten Fair held at Torrington School. Over the course of the fair, 169 students arrived, enjoyed some fun and games and stories, and started the early registration process for kindergarten. These type of events bring the community closer together and are important in growing the school district.

B. Upcoming Presentation to BOE

Mr. Leone reviewed the upcoming presentations which will be given to the Board. At the last Board meeting in April, a presentation the TAG Program in Torrington, will be given. This will review a 2008 document which was submitted to the Board, status updates on that plan, and future recommendations for the program. In late April, the Central Office will be hosting a Special Education and ELL Summit to start to look at some of the numbers and challenges the district faces. There will be a May BOE presentation on Special Education and English Language Learners. Numbers, percentages, and achievements will be reviewed at this meeting. In June, a long-term blueprint revision for Moving Forward will be presented.

C. Insurance Update

Mr. Leone reported that last month the BOE approved a transfer of \$143,182, to cover the portion of the outstanding insurance bill for this year. That is phase I, which will be listed in the financial review later in this meeting. In phase II, the City and the BOE joined together late in December on RFP, for a benefits consultant to lower costs associated with health care and health insurance. There

has been a projected benefits increase of \$1.88 million dollars. Lindberg & Ripple & Associates were chosen to move forward and work with the district and the city to recognize possible health care savings and to review the possible benefits of an RFP.

D. Community Update

Mr. Leone reported that he attended a meeting on Monday which was organized by the THS administration with Hispanic residents of the community. Many of their concerns have been longstanding and stem from a lack of communication. Mr. Leone has asked for some immediate steps to be taken at the schools, such as having translation services available for school meetings and PTO meetings; translating material which is sent to homes with the inclusion of disciplinary letters; immediately working with all staff and faculty meetings to better understand the community needs; continuing to reassure all families that every voice will be heard and matters will be fully investigated; and providing necessary support and dialogue for students who have questions.

In conjunction with those immediate steps, the following steps have been taken or are currently in process with regards to community and parent involvement: There will be a TPS community meeting held on March 30th at 6 p.m. at Forbes Elementary School. Formal invitations and flyers will follow in the next week.

THS has contacted Martha Bentum, who is the Director of Family Services for Hartford Public Schools, to collaborate and review with another district on how communication can be improved. Support and offers from Brien McMahon High School out of Norwalk have also been received in this regards.

Material has also been forwarded to building principals to start building level diversity training and conversations, which will begin at future faculty meetings. Time will also be designated during the August professional development days to address cultural diversity in the community and the schools.

At the next school improvement committee, TPS along with the Torrington Police Department will discuss committee and school issues. A parent survey is currently being developed via the school improvement committee. Mr. Leone will be drafting a letter to local media regarding the hate-based postings that have been allowed to be published by local websites.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the date for the school improvement committee meeting, if efforts will be proactive immediately, addressing concerns earlier than high school level, and having adequate security for the meetings.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Cavagnero moved and Mrs. Raymond supported a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

1. Resignations/Appointments

Judith Babcock, Director of Student Services, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Sheila Hogan, Physical Education Teacher, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Carolyn McBreen, Literacy Support Teacher, SW, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Jane Sabatelli, Gr. 5 Teacher, Forbes, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Nicole Caron-Lichaj, Appoint. MS, Math Teacher, App. Eff. 3/15/10
Carol Wing, Language Arts Teacher, MS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
David Fenn, Head Custodian, MS, Ret., Eff. 3/21/10
Steven Ksenych, Gr. 4 Teacher, East, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Ellen Pecorelli, Gr. 1 Teacher, VO, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Richard Harvey, Business, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Harry Dauphirais, Math Teacher, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Margaret Rojas, Speech, & Lang. Path., FCA, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Bruce Kasenetz, PE/ Health Teacher, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Deborah Manasse, Health/STL, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Newell Porch, Health/Athletic Director, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Yesenia Sotomayor, Admin. Asst. to Supt., MI, App. Eff. 3/01/10
James Hlavacek, Math Teacher, HS, Ret., Eff. 6/30/10
Susan Domanico, Asst. Supt., MI, App. Eff. 3/01/10

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ACTION ITEMS

7.1 **Budget Presentation 2010-2011**

Mr. Leone gave a presentation regarding the recommended 2010-2011 budget. At the conclusion of tonight's meeting, Ms. Batchelder will present each Board member with a copy of the recommended budget and the 5-year capital improvement plan.

Mr. Lyons moved and Mr. Oliver supported a motion to give this budget to the budget committee. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

7.2 **Certified Personnel Policy (1st Read)**

Mr. Cavagnero moved and Mr. Traub supported a motion to receive the Certified Personnel Policy (1st Read). The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

7.3 **Acceptable Use Policy (1st Read)**

Mr. Lyons moved and Mr. Cavagnero supported a motion to receive the Acceptable Use Policy (1st Read). The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Lyons and other Board members made the following corrections. In the title, it should read R2030 rather than 2030R. On page 2, serve should read service and under

employee responsibilities it should read shall not be used. On page 3, under receipt of documentation/acknowledgement, copy should read could have significant repercussions, take out lead.

7.4 Bus Contract Offer

Ms. Batchelder advised the Board as to the All Star Transportation revised proposal.

Mrs. Hoehne moved and Mrs. Raymond supported a motion to have the Superintendent get a contract to present to the BOE. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the actual dollar amounts instead of percentages and the affect mandatory seatbelts would have on costs.

7.5 Acceptance of Enrollment Report

Mr. Lyons moved and Ms. Cogswell supported a motion to accept the Enrollment Report. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Nargi who abstained.

7.6 Removal of BOE Policy 4060

Mr. Oliver moved and Mrs. Hoehne supported a motion to remove the BOE Policy 4060 in regards to personnel policies for secretarial personnel. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

7.7 Overnight/Out-of-State Field Trips

Mr. Oliver moved and Mrs. Raymond supported a motion to approve the Overnight/Out-of-State Field Trips. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

7.8 Receive Monthly Financial Statement

Ms. Cogswell moved and Mrs. Raymond supported a motion to receive the February 2010 financial statement. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Nargi stated that he heard on a radio talk show that the national average for dropout rates in the United States is 11%. Torrington's dropout rate is higher than this.

Mr. Leone discussed how he was planning to address this issue.

Mr. Nargi stated that he also read an article in a local newspaper about some problems that minority students feel they are having in the school district. One of the comments voiced was that they felt that they were viewed differently and ostracized from the

mainstream of Torrington school culture. This got Mr. Nargi thinking again about the concept of school uniforms. He thinks this may bring the students together in having a more harmonious feel towards each other. Mr. Leone stated this will be addressed in the policy committee's April meeting.

Mr. Lyons commended the administration for addressing community issues.

Ms. Cogswell added that in an article she read, one of the community leaders at Monday night's meeting felt they were snubbed by the Board. She stated the Board did not have invitations. Otherwise, she feels the Board would have been there.

Mr. Cavagnero commended the administration for the overview of the budget.

Mr. Rubino thanked administration for putting together the budget. He also thanked the personnel committee for all the hours they spent at the arbitration hearing, along with the administrators.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Cogswell reported that most of the things done at the budget committee meeting on March 10th were talked about tonight, such as the bus contract and the insurance update. They also reviewed legal expenses and a pay-for-play program.

Mr. Oliver reported that a proposal for the construction of a sick bank was discussed at today's meeting. Also, the administration posted the high school principal position. The first round of interviews will be on April 22nd, with the second round in the first week of May.

Mr. Cavagnero reported that the school improvement committee's next meeting will include an examination of the multicultural issues in Torrington. The administration will give a presentation with an analysis of what can be done. They would also like to hear from the police. Mr. Cavagnero also wants to have an examination of the guidance department.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA - April 21, 2010

Mr. Rubino would like an update on NEASC. Mr. Cavagnero stated this could be done in April. The bus contract will be discussed. Cell phones/electronics policies will also be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m. All were in favor.