

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

AUGUST 14, 2014

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, August 14, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present from the Board: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Pat Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from Administration: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; and Mrs. Kim Hunt, Personnel Manager.

MOTION: by Mr. David Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing AFSCME Negotiations and Personnel, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS AFSCME NEGOTIATIONS AND PERSONNEL

Mr. Brian Goralski declared the Executive Session ended at 7:18 p.m. and the Board returned to public session for the Celebration of Excellence.

3. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

At 7:20 p.m., in Celebration of Excellence, the Board recognized Softball Head Coach Davina Hernandez and the following CIAC 2014 Division LL Softball State Champions: Danielle Ahearn, Hayley Arduini, Caroline Burke, Rachel Dube, Sydney Ferrante, Kendra Friedt, Emily Lippincott, Emily Mankus, Haley Messenger, Kaitlin Paterson, Isabella Russo, Brenna Sarantides, Kaitlin Semmel, Natalie Wadolowski, Nicole White, Michelle Woodruff, and Lauren Zazzaro.

The student-athletes were presented with a Certificate of Excellence from Mr. Goralski, Board Chairman, and Mrs. Terri Carmody, Vice Chairman, assisted by Mr. Eric Swallow, Athletic Director.

4. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

The regular session was reconvened at 7:40 p.m. by Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from the administration were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; and Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations.

There were approximately 14 people in the audience.

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Connellan.

Mr. Goralski thanked Mrs. Karen Smith for her leadership and the excellent job as the Interim Superintendent.

Mr. Goralski asked for a moment of silence in memory of Agnes Kennedy who was the first Social Worker in the Southington school district employed for over 20 years. He noted that the family requested memorial donations in her honor be sent to the Southington Public Schools Jump Start Program.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ July 10, 2014

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of July 10, 2014, as submitted.”

Motion carried, with Mrs. Clark and Mr. Goralski abstaining.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue, noted that he was someone who tries to watch where the money goes in the town and that he has noticed a big difference with the Middle School Building Committee, staff and administration spending an extraordinary amount of time making changes before the schools are built, which saves time and money. He noted that Mrs. Karen Veilleux, Technology Director, worked on the technology package during her vacation, which was sent to the state. Mr. Cyr thought that it was impressive to get a \$3 million Technology Education package done in three weeks, and approved by the state, which normally is a three-month

process. He thought that it was best to do it right in the beginning so there would not be a long punch list of items to be changed later.

Robert Brown, 587 Burritt Street, Southington teacher and president of the Southington Education Association (SEA), welcomed Mr. Connellan to Southington on behalf of the teachers in town. He stated that the teachers look forward to working with Mr. Connellan to provide the best education to Southington students. Mr. Brown invited Mr. Connellan and his family to a reception on Tuesday, August 26, 2014, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Hawk's Landing. He noted that the Board of Education members and all school employees are also invited to the reception sponsored by the teachers union (SEA) and the Southington Administrators Association (SAA).

Ulla Plourde, 359 Burritt Street, spoke as a concerned Strong School parent regarding the bee infestation on the school field. She noted that safety was an issue because many students suffer from bee allergies, which can be life threatening. Her biggest issue was that a known infestation of bees had not been remedied placing the children in greater danger and risk. She asked why the Board of Education would knowingly neglect formulating a plan of action. Another major concern was the deprivation of equal play conditions. She felt that the Strong School students were entitled to the same level of outdoor play and conditions as the rest of the school district instead of being limited to the blacktop. She noted that the bees were first detected in May / June and the district had two options. One was for the district to investigate exercising the pesticide law exception for stinging insects and read the State Statute Section 10-231b of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Ms. Plourde noted that the exception calls for the approval of the Superintendent of Schools; however, she understood that Mrs. Smith [Interim Superintendent] was not made aware of it, but that it was communicated to the Board of Education and ignored. The second option recommended by the DEEP was to flood the fields, flush out the area, incorporate mulch and increase watering. Ms. Plourde noted that school begins in two weeks and she has not heard or seen anything being done to the field. She felt that the district was not working on a remedy to find a solution and this legally was categorized as an unreasonable failure to act, which is punishable by law. She noted that there would be costly litigation if a child is severely injured. She read the definition of negligence to the Board. Ms. Plourde stated that the digger bees will most likely return next spring if nothing is done this year. She remarked that the safety of children does not have any monetary boundaries and noted that a petition was currently being circulated. Ms. Plourde stated that the parents put the safety of their children in the Board's hands, trusting that the Board will do the right thing.

Mr. Goralski stated that the administration would be addressing her concerns because the Board makes the safety and security of the students as their number one priority and responds to things that they know about. He appreciated that Ms. Plourde has taken the time to bring this issue to the Board's attention; however, he noted that it is much faster to directly contact the building principal, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Director of Operations (Mr. Romano). Ms. Plourde stated that there was more than one email sent to the Board. Mr. Goralski asked Mr. Connellan and Mr. Romano to provide feedback as to what has been done to date.

Mr. Connellan remarked that over the last few days he has learned a lot about digger bees and that, as a parent and grandparent, he understood the emotions involved. He thought that there was misperception due to the fact that there was not enough communication with the parents. Mr. Connellan acknowledged that he and Mr. Romano had met with the Town Health Director on Wednesday of that week and were continuing to look at this scenario and the options

and solutions available to them. They know that this is a springtime problem and it does not appear that there is imminent danger at this time of year for students returning to Strong School on August 28. They are devising a plan to deal with this issue. Administration plans to ask the state to have an entomologist become involved so they will know better what they are dealing with. They will continue to work with the DEEP because they have received some conflicting reports from the DEEP representative indicating that, despite the state statute, the school district would not be allowed to apply pesticides and they would be fined. It is an issue that Mr. Connellan plans to address with the Commissioner of DEEP. He noted that there were a number of issues that are involved in this and that they are not ignoring it; but, they want to make sure that they are doing the right thing, the right way. Because of the time lapse from May/June, the options that Ms. Plourde mentioned may not be available to them right now. It is his understanding that when the nesting is actually occurring is the time to try the watering and flooding.

Mr. Goralski told Ms. Plourde that he would be happy to take any documentation that she would like to leave for the Board. He acknowledged that moving forward all communication would improve and be directed to the Strong School families as well as shared with the Board so they would all know the plans moving forward. Ms. Plourde remarked that perception is a huge part of the problem and, if people perceived that nothing is being done, the issue then becomes exacerbated. She felt that it would be better if the communication improved. Mr. Goralski asked Ms. Plourde to share with the parents to stop using social media and start using direct e-mail. Mr. Goralski noted that he is the Board of Education representative for Strong School and is communicated to regularly by the parents at Strong; however, no one e-mailed him about this issue.

Mrs. Smith noted that it was under her tenure as Interim Superintendent that the Board of Education became aware of the bee situation. She stated that the moment when she found out that there was a serious bee problem at Strong School she walked down to the Director of Operations office to discuss the situation and the next day they met with all appropriate staff including maintenance and the contractor to explore the four acres at Strong School. It resulted in an invitation to a Strong School parent to join Mr. Beliveau, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, to get a recommendation from the DEEP on how to remedy the situation. Mrs. Smith apologized that it was not communicated well enough to the parents; however, ever since she was notified it has been the topic of conversation with administration.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco requested that after the information is gathered an evening meeting be held with the parents to share the plans moving forward so there is communication in a public forum, such as the Board of Education has done in the past with other situations. Mr. Connellan replied that they will send out something within the next couple of work days to summarize where they are with the situation so parents can understand that they are working on this. He wants to make sure that they have valuable information first. Mr. Goralski remarked that he would attend Strong School's first PTO meeting in September.

b. Communications from Board Members and Administration

Communication from the Board Members:

Mr. Goralski encouraged everyone to stay abreast of the concerns of the community about the plans for Bradley Memorial Hospital a/k/a Hospital of Central Connecticut. He supported the Town Council’s plan to keep it as a functioning hospital and emergency room.

Mr. Goralski stated that he would ask Mrs. Albaitis, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, to electronically send the Adopt-A-School representatives list to the Board and if there are any changes to notify him.

Communication from Administration:

Mr. Connellan thanked Mrs. Smith, the central office staff, all faculty and staff for such a warm welcome and the Board members for their support. He reported on the following:

1. Superintendent’s Transition Update: Mr. Connellan stated that it has been a long three-month transition and that he had attended meetings and been involved in the personnel work that continues. This week, he had the opportunity to chat with a number of Board members. All the central office employees are being scheduled in his calendar to come and talk with him informally. He noted that Mrs. Albaitis has been fantastic with the scheduling. The transition was a little more difficult than he had anticipated due to a number of personnel issues. He thanked Kim Hunt, Personnel Manager, for all her assistance in educating him on the personnel process. He also plans to meet all the administrators in their buildings and has had the chance to speak to quite a few elected officials. Mr. Connellan felt that the transition was well underway since he officially started four days ago.

2. Achieve Financial Credit Union Update: Mr. Connellan announced that Mrs. DiNello received notification last night that the credit union was ceasing their operation at the high school due to a lack of business and other issues, which administration will explore. They will look to see if there are any other options.

3. Summer School Update: Mrs. Smith noted that this year was a wonderful Summer School session. At the next Board of Education meeting on September 11, 2014, she invited Mr. David DeStefano [Summer School Director] to present information on the Elementary School Enrichment Summer School Program, the middle school and high school programs and the new Summer School program this year called, “Camp Invention” that was held at Strong School for oneweek with over 110 students attending. Administration would like to continue and expand Camp Invention next summer. Ms. Rita Stearns was the Co-Director of Camp Invention.

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

MOTION: By Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the Personnel Report, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 9 – 0.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy and Personnel Committee Meeting ~ July 23, 2014

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee last met on July 23 and discussed the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). The committee invited Karen Veilleux, Technology Director, to their August 21 meeting to present her committee's recommendations to define the appropriate use of electronic devices within the school setting. The BYOD is still a pilot program and the Policy Committee would like a policy in place as soon as possible. The committee also reviewed the policy and regulation regarding field trips and they were all in agreement that the current policy remained appropriate. There were no recommended changes to the policy; however, because administration develops the regulations to support the policy, the committee is looking into the current regulations. Administration is researching the committee's questions and will get back to the committee at their next policy meeting.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski reported that he attended the July Board of Finance meeting where they approved the appropriation request from the Board of Education. Mr. Goralski assured them that the grant money would be going back to the Board of Finance for the two-way radios. Mr. Goralski thanked Mr. Romano for picking up where Mr. Cox left off so the two-way radios would be in place for the start of school.

Mr. Goralski asked Mr. Connellan, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. DiNello to arrange a workshop with the Board of Finance and Town Council before they start the new budget in order to answer the Board of Finance's reoccurring questions that they ask every budget season.

Mrs. Lombardi noted that Mrs. DiNello was recording the Board's decisions to save money during the year and they discussed whether they could get something in terms of those savings from the last budget year because the Board is asked that question all the time. Mrs. DiNello replied that she would get that information to the Board. Mrs. Queen asked if that would include the cost avoidances. Mrs. DiNello replied that it would. Mr. Goralski stated that in the invitation letter he would ask the Board of Finance and Town Council to send their questions to administration so the Board of Education could come to the workshop prepared.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Romano reported that construction on the middle schools was on schedule and they would be ready to open on time. Mr. Goralski stated that he walked through Kennedy Middle School that day and would be walking through DePaolo Middle School on Friday. He noted that the dust and dirt would be cleaned up. He was amazed at the amount of work that was done and noted that the testing was coming back faster with much better results.

Mr. Derynoski noticed a rooftop unit at DePaolo Middle School that seems very high and asked if that was part of the original design. Mr. Goralski replied that was a ventilation system that was put in during the project to bring fresh air into the building. The unit has a cooling component, which is why it is so big, and cools the entire second floor. It is a fully functional unit that will not remain. Mrs. Clark added that the unit would be turned over to the Town for their use. Mr. Goralski noted that Mr. Romano was looking at some of those uses.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reminded everybody what the situation was last year when construction was going on and school was about to start. In the final hours, they were pushing people to get those classrooms clean. She wanted the new administrators to know that the Board's expectations are that those rooms will be really fit for students to occupy, which means clean.

Mrs. Queen remarked that the people who brought to her attention last year the way the temporary windows looked are now commenting on how beautiful the building looks from the exterior and that the new windows are very striking.

Mrs. Johnson questioned the occupancy for the cafeterias and the auditoriums. Mr. Goralski stated that the Kennedy cafeteria was being tiled that day. He asked Mr. Romano to get the turnover date to the Superintendent to send to the Board. The auditoriums were on schedule but would not be turned over for the start of school. Mrs. Johnson asked Mr. Romano to get the information to the Board on which middle school cafeteria would be turned over late. Mr. Goralski noted that there were plans already in place if the cafeteria was not functional. Mrs. Johnson thought that a notice should be sent to the parents regarding the current process with regard to the cafeteria and the kitchen. Mr. Goralski acknowledged that the administration was putting a plan in place to communicate with the parents of both middle schools and the community through a public meeting to answer any questions.

Mr. Derynoski asked if there were conversations with the Town Building Department for the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Mr. Goralski replied that there would be a temporary CO this week and a functional CO next week. Teachers will have access to the building by Friday, August 22. The furniture would be moved in the middle of next week and would be cleaned.

- c. Administrator Evaluation Plan Update**
- d. Teacher Evaluation Plan Update**

Mrs. Smith reported that the Administrative Evaluation Team had met and tweaked their plan. The plan will be electronically submitted to the State Department of Education tomorrow. The state will review the plan and return it with their suggestions and then it will go before the Board of Education at the September 11 meeting. The roll out of both the Teacher Evaluation Plans and the Administrator Evaluation Plan and Support will be completed after Retreat Day #1, which is August 18, 2014, where all administrators will be developing a common and consistent script so all staff members will be hearing the same messages about teacher requirements for the Evaluation and Support Plan.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Superintendent's 2013-2014 Annual Report**

Mr. Goralski noted that this was a lengthy report with a lot of effort by all people in cabinet and the schools.

Mrs. Clark commented on the purpose of data collection that was in the report that she thought was wonderful because it was about individual students. She noted that it stated, "Data collection is not for the purpose of the whole, it is to look at each student individually." She

remarked that she loved that line because the Board is looking for what is best for each individual student. In the Operations report, Mrs. Clark questioned what the acronym RTU was for. Mr. Romano replied that it was a Roof Top Unit, an air conditioning and heating unit.

Mrs. Queen was impressed by the comprehensive nature of the document with each member of the central office cabinet and the building principals having a component of the document. She thought that it was a great document to have available to the public. She asked if it was on the website because it speaks so well to everything that is happening in the district. The Board has all commented on how the past year was going to be so difficult because of all the changes such as the implementation of Common Core and the changing in the standardized testing, the implementation of the Administrator and Teacher Evaluations and, yet, when reading the reports it seems like it was a seamless, smooth transition. Mrs. Queen noted that this was a multi-year effort and smooth as it was because the district was proactive. She asked Mrs. Smith to take them back a year to summarize what they did to plan for this.

Mrs. Smith stated that they measured success many different ways and were reaching the state determined goals. As soon as the Southington Public Schools learned of a new mandate, they immediately reached out to the teachers to partner with administration to establish what they understood about the mandate and formed a committee. The strength of their work rests on the shoulders of those in the trenches doing it. She said that leaders in the building make it look so easy, but it is not. Teachers who are in front of students make it look so seamless, but it is not. They are building from the bottom up rather from the top down. They had buy-in due to the cooperative spirit between the teachers and administration that started well over one year before the due date and meet regularly on how they are going to roll this out to everyone and to create a common dialog. She noted that Board support of the inclusion of three teacher leaders was major for morale and going forward with the implementation of the next year. She thanked the Board for the recurring agenda item over the past year so administration could update the Board on the small progresses. With administrative and teacher support, which is ongoing, they worked as a team. She noted that the state keeps changing the Teacher Evaluation Plan regularly.

Mrs. Lombardi thought that the report was very comprehensive and that the Board and community should be proud of what has been achieved in a short period of time in so many different areas. She noted that when she talked to teachers in other towns, they are not ready and do not have the materials for Common Core and their frustration is high. She noted that Southington's planning has produced quite a bit. On the flip side, she asked how they could make this better. She had two ideas to consider. One was that she would like to hear the teacher voice in this report in terms of their challenges and what they would recommend and also to hear the parent voice, not just the administrator's. The other idea was to include what was being done to achieve the Vision 20/20. Mrs. Smith thought that those were good ideas.

Mr. Oshana did not think that communicating the Annual Report on the website was enough. He thought that the report was tremendously comprehensive and covers a lot of material that people would like to know; however, he does not know if people go to the website and look for things like this. He thought that there was a way to cut this up by school and by function and push it out to audiences. He did not think people know half the things that have been done and that they needed a better way to get this report out to the public, which will draw in the parent and teacher voice. Mr. Oshana thought that they should make sure everyone knows where to find the report, how to research it and where to go if they have questions.

Mrs. Lombardi told the media in the audience that the Annual Report would be a good story in terms of the Southington Board of Education achievements.

Mrs. Queen felt that it would be good to print and bind the Annual Report and put a couple of copies in the Southington Public Library. Mr. Goralski thought that this was done in the past in book form. Mrs. Smith stated that she would look into it and report back to the Board.

Mr. Goralski stated that he read the Annual Report in its entirety last evening and thanked Mrs. Blanchard who proofs, edits and puts the report together and Mrs. Albaitis who made two minor changes on pages 1, 2 and 21 today for content consistency.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Lombardi:

“Move to approve the Superintendent’s Annual Report for the 2013-2014 school year, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 9 - 0.

b. Opening of School Dates 2014-2015

Mr. Connellan noted that the spreadsheet included events from August 20 through October 24, along with the School Open Houses for the Board’s reference. Mr. Goralski thanked Mr. Connellan for this document.

c. Staff Update 2014-2015

Mrs. Hunt [Personnel Manager] reported that the staffing update changed hourly and what the Board currently has is probably already outdated. There are currently four recommendations that will be eliminated from the list that are waiting to be processed. There are two new resignations. It is a very fluid time in the Personnel Office. She stated that in her 10 years as Personnel Manager, this is the most turnover that they have ever seen. For the new teacher orientation, there will be 45-50 individuals attending.

Mrs. Johnson asked to what this turnover is attributed. Mrs. Hunt replied there were 18 retirements and some new positions have been added, as well as turnover in short-term employees. Mrs. Hunt was not sure what impact the Evaluation Plan had on the turnover.

Mr. Connellan noted that they are currently and consistently interviewing and will provide an update to the Board on readiness. There are a number of specialized positions that are difficult to fill especially in special education.

Mrs. Queen asked if the 45-50 teachers are first-year teachers. Mrs. Hunt replied that they are new hires to Southington and some are experienced teachers.

d. ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to authorize the Superintendent of Schools and Director of Business and Finance as the designated signatories for the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs.”

Mrs. DiNello stated that this agenda item is to add the new Superintendent as a designee for signing monthly reports in order to file for claim reimbursements for the federal free and reduced lunches.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 9 - 0.

e. Class Size Report

Mrs. Smith reported that the class size numbers are constantly changing. In the past three weeks there have been approximately 49 new students enrolled which are spread out throughout the district. The grid the Board currently has is from last Monday and it is what she is basing her recommendations on for Board’s consideration.

The first recommendation is based upon the guidelines that the Board of Education has set for maximum class sizes. Hatton School currently has students enrolled in three classes of 19 students. She noted that Michelle Passamano [Registrar] will have one student entering Kindergarten registering on Friday that is not listed on the grid for Hatton. Mrs. Smith said that she spoke to Mrs. Kamerbeek [Principal of Hatton School] regarding the make-up of some of the Kindergarten students who are coming in from the Preschool Program.

The second school Mrs. Smith is concerned about was Grade 1 at Plantsville School, which shows two classes with 23 students each. The guideline developed by the Board for that grade is 22 students. On Monday, there is a child enrolling for Grade 1 at Plantsville resulting in Grade 1 class size of 24 and 23 students.

The third hotspot does not show up on the elementary grid and that is a strong request for a special education resource teacher to be assigned full-time to Derynoski School. During the past school year, multiple meetings were held between Dr. Murdica [former Director of Special Education], Mrs. Smith and the TEAM teachers to review their caseloads. There will be 91 students with IEPs at Derynoski Elementary School. The total number of special education service hours is over 403 hours with five special education teachers currently on staff. There have been five special education teachers on staff for 20-25 years and the time has come to give special education support to that building because the needs are more severe than ever before.

Mrs. Smith noted that the Board normally revisits the enrollment grid after Labor Day. She added that there are four other spots to keep watch on in fifth grade where they hope not to exceed 24 students. She noted that Flanders School currently has 23 and 24 with one more fifth grade student coming in next week. Plantsville School has two classes each of 25 students with a student enrolling next week and on the grid South End School shows 23 and 24 students with two students enrolling. Thalberg School has three classes of fifth grade students with 24 students each and two children enrolling next week. She noted that the numbers for fifth grade are doable compared to primary. Mrs. Smith pointed out that these numbers are impossible to predict in October of the previous year.

Mrs. Smith is recommending the elementary school resource teacher at Derynoski School, the Kindergarten teacher at Hatton School and the first grade teacher at Plantsville Elementary School. If the Board supports a Kindergarten teacher at Hatton along with that would come a .5 Paraprofessional because the ratio that they use is a .5 Paraprofessional for every full-time Kindergarten teacher.

Mr. Goralski questioned the readiness of these buildings for classroom availability, supplies and space. Mrs. Smith stated that Hatton School has space but will need funds for outfitting another classroom. Depending on the Board's vote, Mrs. Smith will send out an email to the other principals who always share materials and supplies. Mrs. Smith stated that Plantsville School has a classroom available for an additional first grade room. At Derynoski School, the space is available because it would be inclusive and they would not need a full-size classroom.

Mrs. Carmody stated that the policy of the Board of Education is to keep the Kindergarten and first grade classes as small as possible. She asked Mrs. DiNello where the funding for these positions would come from the budget. Mrs. DiNello replied that the cost for the three certified positions and for a part-time Paraprofessional would be approximately \$149,000. The Board of Education approved a Purchase Plan at the close-out of the previous school year that included whether funding would be available to try to frontload the technology infrastructure, Phase II, with money from the 2013-2014 budget. We were able to do that; therefore, the 2014-2015 budget has \$200,000 budgeted for the technology infrastructure upgrade. She noted that Phase III needed to be done, which will be part of the 2015-2016 budget. At this time, knowing they were able to complete Phase II with money from the previous year, her recommendation would be to use the money allocated in that line item to currently fund these positions. Her follow-up recommendation would be for the Finance Committee to look at line items through the months of September and October. There is a chance that there are positions that will not be filled at the start of the school year which may free up other salary dollars that can assist in covering some of these salary costs and to leave some money to continue the infrastructure for technology.

Mrs. Lombardi asked if the situation of 14% of the student body identified as special education at Derynoski was also represented in other schools. She asked why they did not include the Derynoski request in the development of the budget if they knew they had only five teachers at Derynoski and they had 91 special education students. Mrs. Smith reported that this resource support has been requested for multiple years. Mrs. Lombardi noted that they did not cut this request from the budget. Mr. Goralski pointed out that it could have been cut before it reached the Board. Mrs. Lombardi asked if there were other high needs that were cut from the budget before it reached the Board. Mrs. Smith replied that there are always high needs that are cut from the budget. By the time the Board receives the budget, it has gone through scrutiny to the point that it hurts to hear of the things being reduced. Mrs. Lombardi asked if there was another school in the district with the same need as Derynoski in special education because she wants to make sure there is equity. Mrs. Smith replied that the Board would hear about it if there was another principal coming forward with the same passion.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that the Derynoski special education ratio was 18.2 students to one special education teacher. She asked what that would look like in other schools. Mrs. Smith replied that it is not just the numbers at Derynoski, it is also the situations, severity and IEP hourly needs.

Going forward, Mrs. Johnson would like to see a formula to weigh the severity of the need against the numbers and what the data point would be for the special education needs in a particular school as opposed to others. Mrs. Smith thought that was a great point and they have started on a small scale with that philosophy in the area of literacy. This year, they are starting the District Professional Learning Community which will study district data for the purpose of allocation of resources. When hired, the new Director of Special Education will be co-leading this effort.

Mrs. Carmody agreed with Mrs. Lombardi and would like to see a report that would give the Board an idea on numbers regarding special education in order to be equitable. Mrs. Smith noted that, after speaking to administration at Derynoski, the resource support is to help prevent recommendations for potential outplacements.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Johnson:

“Move to approve the three positions as recommended by the administration for Hatton, Plantsville and Derynoski Elementary Schools along with a half time Paraprofessional at Hatton.”

Mr. Goralski stated that, when it comes to special education, it is not like the class size grid that the Board uses because one student’s IEP could become a one-to-one. He stated that IEP hours is really what special education teachers are about. When it comes to special education teachers, they cannot say that equity is numbers. Mrs. Smith stated that Mr. Goralski was correct. Mr. Goralski clarified that they were not spending more money than what they had; they are just taking money from somewhere else. Mr. Oshana added that \$149,000 is a lot of money; but, they are actually saving \$51,000 over the budget. They are using less money to do more for the students.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES ~ Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Carmody, and Mr. Goralski.
Motion carried unanimously 9 – 0.

Mr. Goralski asked Mrs. Smith to keep the Board abreast of the numbers in the other classrooms. Mr. Oshana would also like the tracking of the IEP hours versus population numbers.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary