

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING OF May 1, 2003**

Members Present: Nadine Bell
Raffaella Coler
Tina Lionetti
Charles McMonigle
Anne Schmidt
Frank Szeps (Chairman)
Marinella Tirillo
Catherine Vargas
Jennifer Viggiano-Grosse

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Member Absent: None

A meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, May 1, 2003, in the Council Room of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman Szeps called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Lionetti, seconded by Mrs. Bell, to accept the minutes of the April 22, 2003, Finance Committee meeting, and the minutes of the April 10, 2003, Board of Education meeting, as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Vautour noted correspondence recognizing students on their performance on the National Latin Exam. A letter from Mark Williams, Human Services Director, was

mentioned. Mr. Williams thanked Ms. Marino and the students of Griswold Middle School for the birthday bags they contributed to the food pantry.

A thank you note addressed to Dr. Vautour from David Bell was noted. Mr. Bell thanked the Superintendent for his clear presentation of the Board of Education budget. He pointed out the variety of people who spoke about the quality of education in Rocky Hill.

A letter from Gail Szczygist addressed to Dr. Vautour complimented Ms. Mesiarz on her teaching skills and her enthusiasm. Another letter from Gail Szczygist was noted, addressed to Richard Bruno, commending him for his presentation at the National Honor Society's recent induction. The Tri-M Music Group's recent fundraiser purchased a guitar which was donated to the Children's Hospital in honor of a student who recently passed away.

Mr. Whitman's letter regarding the Memorial Day Parade to be held on May 26 beginning at 9:30 a.m. was noted.

On Monday, May 5, the Connecticut Association of Schools will honor Mr. Pear with the National Distinguished Principal's Award at the elementary grade level. Mr. Pear will be honored on May 19 at the Aqua Turf, and will attend a ceremony in Washington, D.C. as well.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

RHTA Liaison Committee

Raisa Bublick reported on the recent workshop on inclusion, where teachers were informed on the new law.

Student Representatives

Corinne Thompson, Griswold Middle School, reported on the seventh grade sister program with Quirk Middle School in Hartford. Twenty-five students from each school got together last week for some activities and a pizza party. Students will meet again on May 21 for the last time. Students will go through the rope course.

The seventh graders are involved in an inter-disciplinary unit on volunteerism. Each Friday in May speakers will be at the school. This Friday a football coach from CCSU will talk about how the football players had to do community service to stay on the football team. Next Friday, someone from the Alzheimer's Society will speak. The annual carnival is scheduled for June 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Last year the carnival raised \$1,500 for local charities.

The eighth grade field trip will take place on Wednesday, May 14, with a trip to the traveling Vietnam Memorial in New Britain and the Iwo Jima Memorial, and with lunch at Walnut Hill Park. The Select Chorus sang the National Anthem at last Monday's Rock Cats game.

Meeting Open to the Public

Tony Cozza, 335 Farmstead Road, reminded everyone about the June 7 inaugural induction of the Rocky Hill Athletic Hill of Fame at the Rocky Hill Marriott.

1. Consent Calendar

The May 1 consent calendar included a child rearing leave extension request for Tyrrel White, PE, GMS, and approval of the a field trip to Newport for seventh grade students who are studying French..

Moved by Mrs. Viggiano-Grosse, seconded by Mrs. Tirillo, to accept the consent calendar of May 1, 2003.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2. Personnel and Negotiations

Dr. Vautour reported that the Committee met to review financial information concerning early retirement incentives, similar to the Ohio Plan. Twenty-two staff members expressed interest in possibly availing themselves of the plan. The Committee's

consensus was that it was not in the Board's best interests to pursue the plan. The Board would lose over \$40,000 if they did. The Personnel and Negotiators Committee did not recommend that the Board consider the Ohio Plan at this time.

3. Policy

Dr. Vautour reported that the Policy Committee met and reviewed language that has been worked on with Parks and Recreation concerning the use of fields in Town. The policy addresses priorities assigned to field use and scheduling. The language clarifies that with respect to school fields, the Board of Education has field priority over all of them. In the event of inclement weather, the decision whether or not to hold the event will be made by the Director of Parks and Recreation in conjunction with the Coordinator of Student Affairs at the high school. Tonight's review was to be considered the first reading. The second reading and approval will be on the next agenda. The Council has reviewed and approved the policy.

4. Finance

Mrs. Schmidt reported that the Finance Committee met last week to continue to gather numbers in preparation of future budget deliberations. The only outstanding piece is hearing back from Mr. Lindberg on the insurance.

5. Curriculum

Mrs. Bell reported that next week the Curriculum Committee will review textbook requests and put them into priority order for purchase as funds become available from this year's budget.

6. Professional Development

Mrs. Boutilier would report on this under "New Business".

7. Facilities

Mrs. Lionetti reported that she has attended the Government Operations Committee meetings. Work is still being done on the school fields. Work is still on schedule. The Council members asked her to remind everyone that if a field is closed, the public should obey the posted signs. There was some recent vandalism.

8. Technology

Mrs. Boutilier reported that there is a new requirement from the State of Connecticut to develop a three year technical plan. The last plan was developed in 2000. A committee has been developed comprised of twenty members: parents, past and present Board members and staff members. The committee will develop goals and activities dealing with technology. The Committee would be reporting to the Board.

9. Transportation/Accommodations

Mrs. Vargas reported that the Transportation Committee met and reviewed the bus contract and referred it back to the Finance Committee.

10. Liaison Committee

Mrs. Lionetti reported that the Liaison Committee met on April 14 and discussed the sound system at the high school. Mr. Cooke reported that the sound system works as designed. Dr. Vautour will talk with staff and teachers to see if there are new parameters that could be used. The Committee also discussed the storage problem and the safety concerns with moving items to the Town garage. The Committee will discuss the storage situation again at their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

11. Professional Development Activities

Mrs. Boutilier stated that the last Professional Development Day was held last Thursday. Staff did extensive work on math strategies and looked at the objectives covered by the CMT. Staff took part in “Understanding by Design” activities, graphics workshops, and heard a presentation by a professor from Central Connecticut State University. High school staff worked on NEASC recommendations.

Staff met in the mornings and broke up in the afternoons and worked on subject specific activities. Ms. Levy’s staff listened to a lawyer speak on the “No Child Left Behind Act”.

Mrs. Boutilier read comments from staff members on the workshop.

12. Math Curriculum Review

Mrs. Boutilier, Monique Leonard (Stevens School), Kathy Oryell (high school), Michelle Simon (middle school), and Sue Symington (West Hill), provided a detailed discussion of the district’s math curriculum. Mrs. Boutilier introduced the math department members to the Board and highlighted their credentials.

Mrs. Boutilier gave a synopsis of the program, noting that at the elementary school, math is taught by all teachers and supported by three .45 math resource teachers and two part-time paraprofessionals. There are two levels of math in the elementary schools. The middle school program is delivered by six certified math teachers. Classes are offered at three different levels: modified, average and above average. In eighth grade, accelerated students take algebra. The high school program includes nineteen different courses taught by 7.4 math certified teachers. Two advanced placement courses are offered, and there are normally fifteen and sixteen students in those classes.

Ms. Simon reviewed the Board of Education goals, which included students mastering communication skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, physical/life sciences and social studies. Rocky Hill students will demonstrate basic understanding and appreciation for the fine arts technology, health and fitness and career options. Students will learn responsibility and good citizenship, and learn to develop their aptitudes and interests.

The core math curriculum supports Board of Education goals, and emphasizes problem solving throughout the courses. Students are asked to communicate, and communication skills are reinforced by projects, reports and open-ended responses which require written responses.

Ms. Simon summarized the content area and student expectations. Content areas were: number sense, operations, estimation and approximation, ratios, proportions and percents, measurement, spatial relationships and geometry, probability and statistics, patterns, algebra and functions, and discrete mathematics.

Ms. Symington recapped the early elementary math curriculum. She displayed an example of manipulatives used, and gave an example of students using M & M's. Students are each given their package of M & M's, learning sorting, estimating, probability, counting, graphing, patterning, and addition and subtraction skills. In addition, they make up a written problem for their neighbor to solve, learn geometry skills and non-standard units of measurement.

Ms. Leonard reviewed the Grade 3 to 5 curriculum, when basic skills are reinforced. One of the students' exercises is to form a snowman construction company, using a variety of different skills. Students learn skills in preparation of the Connecticut Mastery tests.

Ms. Simon explained the middle school math curriculum which focuses on problem solving. In the sixth and seventh grades, three levels of math are offered: modified, average and above average. Through teacher recommendations and standardized testing, some Grade 8 students are enrolled in algebra.

The high school has five honors classes, five academic courses, eight general courses, and a remedial class.

The math classroom uses a variety of assessment tools. Students take quizzes and tests, have daily homework assignments, prepare oral and written reports, student projects, do performance task assessments with rubrics, take part in daily class activities and observations, work on projects and interdisciplinary units, have notebooks, and take standardized tests such as CMT, CAPT, and the SCAT tests. The SCAT test is the School and Class Ability Test, which was added four years ago, and is given in May or early June to determine whether a child can handle the rigors of an accelerated program. Rocky Hill has increased its course offerings over the last few years.

Mrs. Boutilier compared Grade 4, 6 and 8 scores of graduating classes of 2001 through 2006. In four of the six classes studied, the scores have increased. The graduating class of 2004 has taken the third generation of the CMTs, in which new concepts were being tested. The test was appropriate, but was more rigorous.

Mrs. Boutilier also compared the CAPT test results for the years of 1995 through 2002. Students at percent of goal increased from 35% in 1995 to 51% in 2002. All towns in the

ERG are in the 50% range. The current test is the second version which more closely aligns with the CMTs.

Ms. Leonard reviewed the indices of effectiveness and described technology used in the math classrooms at the elementary level, middle school level and Ms. Oryell reviewed the high school technology uses. She stressed the need for additional graphing calculators. She noted the enrichment opportunities which included field trips and participation in the capitol area math league. Rocky Hill recently had ten to twelve students involved. Students participate in the GHAMAS field day at Trinity College, and students were also involved with the American Math Competitions.

Mrs. Boutilier reviewed the program strengths which included: committed staff, the addition of the elementary leadership position, student involvement, developmentally appropriate teaching methods, use of manipulatives, emphasis on multiple ways of solving problems, flexibility in level placement, Mathematics Recovery approach, high school texts updated, 30% of grade 8 students taking honors and academic algebra, two AP classes offered, variety of assessments used, use of technology, inter-disciplinary units, connections between math and other subjects, needs of gifted students met.

Most of the staff attended the November professional development day.

Issues to be addressed were review of curriculum/text at elementary level, need to revisit math selection process in grades three and five, in-depth study, access to computer labs at the high school, which is limited, basic/remedial level classes are large in middle and high school, need consistent math language, graphing calculations are needed for all classes, Mathematics Recovery approach for those in need, need time for teachers to collaborate on lessons, need to increase parent communications on leveling and placement decision, and a need for a math consultant.

The math department's recommendations were: Curriculum development to develop a common language, assessments, explore new math program for elementary school, equip every secondary classroom with graphing calculators (100 x \$125), hire math consultants, explore addition of a math lab at the high school level, and reduce class sizes of remedial level classes at the middle school.

Mrs. Coler noted that when the Board looked at the CMT scores and the percent of students reaching goal by cohort group, there was a dip in the grade six because elementary school teachers were not certified but the elementary students had a higher score than middle school students, when those teachers were certified.

Mrs. Boutilier explained that the elementary teachers were certified in elementary school education, but not certified in math. The sixth grade score is reflective of what happens in Grades K to 5. Those students have not had the benefit of sixth grade when they take the test. That will change when the tests are given in April.

Mrs. Tirillo asked if the scores for the graduated classes and the scores shown for Grades 4, 6, and 8 were the same class group; Mrs. Boutilier said they were. Mrs. Tirillo asked if the students who were at goal for the year the CAPT test was taken were the same students; Mrs. Boutilier said they were not. The CAPT test is only given once. There is a different group from year to year.

Mrs. Schmidt asked if the professional development was addressing training for teaching CMT skills. The staff members told her they spent two full days of training with a professor from CCSU. He identified a few reference books and talked about working with the books and using them at grade level meetings. Ms. Leonard commended the elementary school teachers. Last year seven strands of students tested at level three; only five strands this year need to be targeted.

Ms. Schmidt asked if the math department had looked at modifications to curriculum; Mrs. Boutilier responded that they were not ready to make any shift yet. They would meet with the elementary staff by grade level, and take students and text books and all resources to see where the overlaps and gaps are. That will start the process. The courses are very much aligned with the CMT. There are different ways to solve problems. Students are now allowed to solve a problem in different ways, instead of being taught there is only one way.

Mrs. Schmidt discussed the classroom size in general level math. At the high school, the class size guidelines are increased. She questioned whether the size guidelines should be adjusted. Dr. Vautour agreed that that was information being derived from Mrs. Boutilier's report. It appears that students in the remedial class do better with smaller class sizes. Ms. Oryell agreed that it would be better for the students if they started with smaller classes, instead of starting with larger classes and moving into smaller classes.

Mrs. Lionetti asked about the Math Recovery Program. Mrs. Boutilier explained that one of the math resource teachers who works with the students attended a two week session on Math Recovery. It is a one on one program, which requires the teachers to video tape themselves teaching the student and then reviewing the tape to review their teaching and the student's reaction. This is the first year. The State will not be providing the training this summer.

Chairman Szeps referred to Page 15 of the handout, and the recommendations which were incomplete. Mrs. Boutilier explained that those items would be completed during the 2003-04 school year.

Chairman Szeps noted the next Board meetings were scheduled for May 15 and June 5. On May 14 the Board of Education will meet with the Town Council to review the budget. Graduation is scheduled for June 19.

13. Executive Session

Moved by Mrs. Bell, seconded by Mrs. Tirillo, to go into executive session at 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of student discipline/pending litigation.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Mrs. Bell, seconded by Mrs. Tirillo, to go into executive session at 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of student discipline/pending litigation.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Mrs. Vargas, seconded by Mrs. Tirillo, to go out of executive session at 8:55 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Mrs. Vargas, seconded by Mrs. Tirillo, to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie W. O'Neill
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: _____