

Board of Education Minutes
October 14, 2009

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room. Present were Mr. McCord, Mr. Testa (7:34 p.m.), Mr. Briscoe, Mrs. Ricker, Mrs. Banker, and Mrs. Dame. Also present were Dr. Pukas, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Wilkison, and Mr. Sandford. Vice Chairman McCord called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Mr. McCord told those present that the meeting was being taped.

2. Public Comment – None.

3. Community Relations – Additional articles were at the Board members' places.

4. Presentations – a. CAPT Student Achievement Recognition – Dr. Pukas introduced Mr. Sandford. He explained we had three students that reached the highest level of achievement on the CAPT. Those students are Kerri Steinbrecher, Kaylyn Demara, and Ciara Haines. He had further explanation. Kerri Steinbrecher was in attendance and recognized and congratulated by the Board. Mr. Sandford told the Board Spirit Week was next week and asked Miss Steinbrecher to review the schedule. Mr. Sandford elaborated. He thanked Miss Steinbrecher for her efforts and said she was a rising star in the school community.

b. P.H.I.T. (Positive Health in Teens) – Dr. Pukas commended Mr. Sandford on all the work he has done with SERAC (Southeastern Regional Action Council). Mr. Sandford gave some background information on SERAC. He said a community action council of North Stonington was formed and “Positive Behavior in Teens” is the name of the group. He spoke of what they are trying to do and that he had applied for another grant. He spoke of the \$6,000 received this year which will be used to target issues in the report he passed out. He had further explanation of some of the items the group will be doing. The group meets the first Wednesday of every month. He had further comment. Mr. Briscoe had comment. Mr. Sandford said about 15 people attended the first meeting. Mr. Briscoe said they are trying to provide activities for the kids and their parents as well. Mr. Sandford is finishing a press release that will be going out.

c. Boiler Asbestos Abatement Project – Dr. Pukas thanked Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Boucher for taking care of this project and making sure everything was done in a timely manner. She wanted to commend them. Mr. McCarthy passed out a timeline of the events and said it was approximately two weeks from the time the concern was brought forward to almost being complete. He said CONN-OSHA came in and did some air sampling in the high school boiler room and will return in another week to do the elementary school. He had further explanation. There were questions asked and answered about the repairs' life span and cost. Mr. McCarthy estimated the cost to be \$60,000-\$70,000 and there was discussion as to where the funds would come from. Mr. McCarthy said it is in our budget right now and had further comment. Questions were asked about exposure to staff members. Mr. McCarthy explained that EnviroScience and CONN-OSHA didn't think so; he said steps have been taken to have

baseline exams done for those that want them. There was further discussion. There were further questions asked and answered. Questions were asked about the boilers now being asbestos-free and Mr. McCarthy answered that they are probably not and will be treated as asbestos-related when they are taken out. There were further questions asked and answered.

5. Administrators Reports – Dr. Pukas said that Mr. Susi and Mrs. Costa were excused from tonight’s meeting. Mr. Sandford told of happenings at the middle/high school including the PSAT’s, Homecoming, the bonfire, a group of seniors going on a field trip to Six Flags for “Fright Night,” and a mock evacuation of the busses. Mr. Sandford told the Board he and Mr. Susi are going to a NEASC conference on December 2, 3, and 4. He elaborated. He said the workshop would cover the new standards for evaluation. Mr. Sandford spoke of reading at the middle school and said they came up with plan and explained. He told the Board that a number of our students had artwork chosen to be published in a calendar by the Westerly Airport Association and passed around a copy of the calendar. These students were under the guidance of Ms. McGowan. Mr. Testa asked about the conversion of the teachers’ lounge to a health classroom. Mr. Sandford explained what was happening with that and he thanked the PSPBC. Mrs. Wilkison said the new reading teacher, Heidi Mehringer-Macina, was starting tomorrow. She told of happenings at the elementary school including the 3rd to 5th graders taking the Blue Ribbon assessments, and workshops being held. She spoke of SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Instruction). She told the Board that Friday the 23rd the teachers will be working to develop interventions in math and a workshop in visualization in reading will be held, Fire Prevention Week was last week, Homework Club started last week with about 20 kids, October 8th the “Read for the Record” event was held, and on October 30th the kindergartens’ Taste of Fall will be held.

6. Administrative - a. Approval of Minutes – September 9, 2009 – On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mrs. Ricker, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the September 9, 2009, meeting.

b. September 23, 2009 – On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mr. Testa, the Board voted five in favor and one abstention to accept the minutes of the September 23, 2009, meeting. Mrs. Ricker abstained.

b. Correspondence – Dr. Pukas told the Board about the letter received from Mrs. Linda Rusich complementing staff members especially Mrs. Costanza, Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Wilkison. She spoke of the Veterans’ Luncheon.

c. Personnel – Dr. Pukas told the Board the Jeff Joyce, English teacher, had resigned and that she had accepted the resignation. She explained she was holding him for 30 days unless we can get a replacement sooner. She elaborated. Dr. Pukas wanted to publicly thank Mr. Joyce for his years of service to North Stonington.

Dr. Pukas said she supported the recommendations of Mr. Susi and Mrs. Turner for the athletic vacancies. On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of Principal Susi in a memo dated October 8, 2009, and to allow Dr. Pukas to fill necessary vacancies.

7. Reports - a. Superintendent – Dr. Pukas told the Board she had attended the breakfast at the elementary school and elaborated. The Crisis Management team met and will reconvene in November. Dr. Pukas had further explanation. She thanked Jay Weitlauf for allowing the use of the Hilltop Inn. Dr. Pukas said she was asked to be one of 12 for a panel to discuss relevant topics to be published in the “Education Leadership” magazine. There were questions asked and answered about the crisis meeting. There was comment. The kit for first responders was brought up and Dr. Pukas explained those were in the crisis plans and had further explanation. She had further comment.

b. BOE Chairperson – None.

c. Committee Chairs – A Policy Committee meeting was scheduled for the 28th at 7:00 p.m. and the Facilities Committee will meet at 7:30 p.m. that same evening. Dr. Pukas said that Attorney Littlefield asked her to remind the whole Board of Education that mediation is next Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. She asked for all that could attend to please be there. There were comments and questions.

d. PSPBC Liaison – Mr. Steve Aiello was present and gave an update. The gym flashing package will be available this Friday and will be given to the Board as soon as possible. They were still looking into the kindergarten bathroom. Mr. Aiello said they are looking for a better way to communicate with the Board of Education. He brought up the tech room project and there was discussion of that and why there was a delay. Dr. Pukas said it was at the building level. There was discussion.

e. Committee Action List – None.

8. Financial – a. September 2009 Financial Statements – On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mrs. Banker, the Board voted unanimously to approve expenditures from the General Fund of \$1,018,768.46, grant expenditures of \$36,189.12, for a total of \$1,054,957.58 for the month of September 2009.

b. Transfer Request – Mr. McCord explained the transfer sheet. On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to accept the transfer request of the Business Manager in a memo dated September 23, 2009.

9. Old Business – None.

10. New Business – a. Board of Education Members’ Service Recognition – Dr. Pukas explained she wanted to put this under New Business in case this was the last regular meeting; she did this at Dr. Robert’s request. She

thanked Mr. McCord and Mr. Briscoe for their service. She said it is not easy to sit at this table. Dr. Pukas said Mr. McCord and Mr. Briscoe always had the best interest of the children in mind. Board members and those present expressed their thanks. Mr. Briscoe presented parting gifts to Dr. Pukas and Dr. Robert. Mrs. Banker said she developed a great deal of respect by working with both of them and elaborated. Mrs. Ricker echoed Mrs. Banker's sentiments.

11. Calendar – Upcoming meetings were reviewed.

12. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mr. Briscoe, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education