

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
September 10, 2007**

Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Jennifer Davis
Mrs. Lisa Finch
Mrs. Sandy Fowler
Mr. Scott Nozik
Mrs. Tracy Rummel

Absent: Ms. Ilene Whitmarsh

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Linda DeSantis, Teacher, Stafford High School
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Ms. Jill Gregori, Business Manager
Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School
Miss Cassandra Weed, Student Representative

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. A quorum was established.

ITEM I. Secretary's Report – Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, August 20, 2007

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the August 20, 2007, Board of Education regular meeting, as presented.

ITEM II. Treasurer's Report

A. Report on Bills

Board Bills

August 15, 2007	\$420,582.47
August 15, 2007	\$117,430.11 (Encumbered)
August 22, 2007	\$396,301.39

Grants

Federal Grants	August 31, 2007	\$ 10,901.67
State Grants	August 31, 2007	\$ 15,777.10

A consensus of the Board approved the Board Bills and Grants as presented. Mrs. Fowler stated that the NAEYC bill is reimbursable.

ITEM III. Correspondence

Mr. Fontanella stated that Ms. Gregori, Business Manager, was interviewed by the *New York Times* for an article regarding Connecticut Light and Power and inaccuracies in the district's bills for electrical service.

Mrs. Davis corrected something that was stated during the last Board meeting on August 20, 2007. She stated that the town's planning and zoning commission could approve a special use permit without a town meeting.

There were no questions regarding the Building Committee minutes for 7/19/07.

ITEM IV. Board Reports

Mr. Fontanella introduced Miss Cassandra Weed, the new Student Representative for this year. Miss Weed stated that she would be presenting her first report at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Rummel requested that Miss Weed contact the middle school so that she could include information about events at the middle school in her report as well.

ITEM V. Superintendent's Reports

A. Review of 2007 Education Legislation Summary

Dr. Fishman presented a summary of the 2007 education legislation. She highlighted the following laws:

- ✓ **Textbook Loans-** Boards of Education are now allowed to loan textbooks to students residing in and attending non-public schools in their district, even if those textbooks are not ones currently being used in public schools in the district.
- ✓ **Transportation-** Applicants for licenses and endorsements to drive school buses and school transportation vehicles will now have a check of the state child abuse registry made. DMV is now required to notify bus companies and school districts periodically of any school bus drivers whose licenses have been suspended, withdrawn, or revoked. Bus companies have ten days after reviewing the list of bus drivers who have had licenses suspended, withdrawn, or revoked to remove such drivers. Random drug tests have been extended to those drivers who transport less than ten students in smaller vehicles. No temporary licenses will be issued to drive school buses and school transportation vehicles. The bus company's name, phone number, and bus number are to be prominently displayed in black on the back of any school bus. A special device securing a student in a wheelchair while transferring the student to and from the bus must always be used. By 2010, larger-sized school buses must be retrofitted with emissions-reducing equipment. Some grants will be available to help defray this cost. Dr. Fishman stated that this will be a very expensive project.

- ✓ **Pesticide Use-** The ban on the use of pesticides has now been expanded to the use of lawn care pesticides on school playing fields and playgrounds of schools serving students through grade eight. It also expands the superintendent's ability to authorize emergency applications of such pesticides in health emergencies to school playing fields and playgrounds of schools serving students through grade eight.
- ✓ **Democracy Education-** Public and private elementary schools must provide students in grades four or five with instruction on the branches of government in a **participatory manner**. Mrs. Davis asked why the high school stopped having the voting machines brought in for the students. Mr. Kennedy stated that it has not been as feasible to get the machines to the high school, but that the students do still learn the concept in individual classrooms.
- ✓ **Magnet Schools-** Once students in participating school districts in a magnet school program have filled slots in the school at each grade level, any remaining slots will be open to students from any other school district who apply to attend. The district in which the student(s) would normally be attending school will be responsible for tuition. Dr. Fishman stated that this is an unfunded mandate.
- ✓ **Suspensions and Expulsions-** Effective July 1, 2008, all suspensions must be in-school suspensions unless the school administration determines that the student poses such a danger to persons or property or is so disruptive of the educational process that he or she must serve the suspension outside of school. The maximum length of an in-school suspension has also been extended from five to ten days. Effective immediately, school administration may shorten or waive the suspension period for a student who has not been previously suspended or expelled if the student completes an administration-specified program and meets any other conditions the administration may propose. Boards of Education may similarly shorten or waive the expulsion period for a student under the same conditions. However, Boards of Education may not require parents or students to pay to participate in any program they establish. Also, when students are suspended or expelled for the first time, school administration may choose to expunge these offenses from the student's record when the student completes the specified program and requirements. Finally, when parents and students are given notification of an expulsion hearing, they are to be provided with information on free or reduced rate legal services locally available and how they can access these services.
- ✓ **Restraints and Seclusion in Public Schools-** Regulations on the use of physical restraints and seclusion of students receiving special education in public schools address reporting of instances of such use. School officials must notify parents or guardians of each instance and provide parents and guardians with information regarding their rights under state laws regarding the use of restraints and seclusion at the initial planning and placement team meeting. The law also limits the use of seclusion. Finally, each school district must now keep a record of all use of restraints and seclusion with students.

- ✓ **Transfer of Records for Students Exiting Unified School District #1-** This law streamlines the time in which the records of students exiting an educational program in incarceration are transferred back to the sending district.
- ✓ **Deprivation of Rights Due to Sexual Orientation-** This law adds sexual orientation to the prohibitions against discrimination in Connecticut General Statutes.
- ✓ **Health Assessments for Adolescents-** Effective July 1, 2008, public school students must have a health assessment in either grade 9 or 10, instead of the present requirement to have such a health assessment in either grade 10 or 11.

B. Update on Status of Grants, Mr. Michael Bednarz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Fishman explained that Mr. Bednarz could not be at the Board meeting and that she would be updating the Board. She stated that the district has received \$113,600 in competitive grant monies over the past year at the high school, middle school and elementary levels. Dr. Fishman reported that many of the grants involve technology and professional development opportunities for teachers.

C. SAT Report, Mr. Francis Kennedy, Principal, Stafford High School

Dr. Fishman introduced Mr. Kennedy, principal of Stafford High School. Mr. Kennedy stated that the participation rate for the SAT for the class of 2007 was at 78%, an all time high. Mr. Kennedy reported that the district's scores as compared to the State and National scores were:

	<u>SHS</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>National</u>
Critical Reading	518	510	502
Writing	501	511	494
Mathematics	505	512	515

Mr. Kennedy stated that the math section was changed to more broadly reflect what is taught in American high schools and is therefore more rigorous than it was before. The math department is working on revising the curriculum to more closely match the SAT. Mr. Kennedy stated that the math department would be available to make a presentation to the members of the Board regarding the future changes in the curriculum at the high school. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Kennedy stated that only the last sitting of the test counts for each student, not the highest score. Mrs. Fowler stated that the guidance counselors should make it a point to speak with each student about the SAT. Mr. Kennedy stated that this is being done already with small groups and individual students, for both the SAT and PSAT.

D. Update on York RTU's at Stafford Elementary School

At the last Board meeting, Dr. Fishman updated the Board regarding the status of the York RTU's at Stafford Elementary School. One of the Board members requested an opinion in writing from the Board of Education attorney regarding the matter. Dr. Fishman provided

the Board with a copy of the letter from the attorney and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

E. Update on Cost Estimate and Timeline for an Educational Impact Study on The Ranch of the Risen Son, Inc.

Dr. Fishman stated that at a prior Board meeting, she was asked to develop an RFP for a study to determine the educational impact of The Ranch of the Risen Son, Inc. project, and, in consultation with educational agencies, determine a cost estimate for such an involved study and a timeline in which a consulting agency might be able to complete such a study. She said that the questions that she developed with input from EASTCONN, CREC, and CAPSS which would address impact were: If the Stafford Public Schools were to add 360 new students with possible social, emotional, and educational problems, what would be the impact on: facilities (adequacy), staff (regular education, including art, music, and p.e.; special education, psychologists, social workers, etc.; paraprofessionals, custodians and maintenance staff, nursing staff, secretarial and clerical staff, and food services), materials (books, supplies, classroom furniture, etc.), transportation, class size, and possible outplacement tuitions and transportation? What would be the potential costs associated with such an impact?

Dr. Fishman reported that the cost estimate range for such a study, according to EASTCONN, CREC, and CAPSS is between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and the estimate of time needed to complete this study is three to five months, with two of the agencies needing three months and one stating that five months may be needed.

Dr. Fishman stated that she has heard that the Ranch is not planning on re-applying for this project, but there is nothing in writing to confirm that at this time. Mrs. Rummel stated that the Board should receive ample notice if the Ranch reapplies.

ITEM VI. Public Forum

A member of the audience questioned whether students at the Ranch would be schooled on-site. A Board member responded that unless this was a Connecticut Licensed facility, they would not be allowed to school on-site. Additionally, a representative from the Ranch stated that the children that live there would be attending Stafford schools.

ITEM VII. Old Business

There was no old business.

ITEM VIII. New Business

A. Review and Possible Approval of Environmental Science Textbook

Dr. Fishman stated that the Board was being presented with a proposal for an Environmental Science textbook. She stated that this course was developed to provide an alternative to chemistry as the third science credit now required for graduation from Stafford High School and to respond to student interest. She stated that due to Mr. Bednarz's negotiation skills and contacts, the cost to the district is \$2,814 for materials in

this program, which are valued at \$6,700. She introduced Ms. Linda DeSantis, Science Department Chairperson.

Ms. DeSantis stated that this course was initially developed for students that could not make it in chemistry and that the rigor of the curriculum can be modified to the level of students in the class. She stated that she hopes that in the future the course will have real-world connection and be tied to the community in some way. Ms. DeSantis stated that this would be another option for seniors that would like to get a fourth science credit.

Board members were asked to call Dr. Fishman or Mr. Bednarz with questions.

This item will be placed on the agenda of the next regular Board meeting.

B. Review and Approval of Athletic Trainer Agreement for 2007 – 2008

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that the Board of Education approve the agreement for athletic trainer services with Johnson Memorial Hospital for the 2007 – 2008 athletic season. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education authorize Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairman of the Board of Education, to sign the contract with Johnson Memorial Hospital on the Board's behalf. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

C. Review and Approval of Revision to Board of Education Policy 3541.22 (a)-(b)- Transportation- Bus Operator's Responsibility

Dr. Fishman explained that with the restructuring of the grade configurations this year, our transportation policy was causing confusion with bus drivers and parents. Specifically, the policy reads that for students Pre-K through grade 3, no such student will be dropped off by the bus unless there is a parent / guardian present and visible at the student drop off. If the adult is not visible, she stated that it has been the district's policy to return the child to the school. She stated that the policy does not extend to students in grades 4 and 5. Since Stafford Elementary School houses students in grades 2 – 5 that all ride the same buses, this was causing confusion. She suggested that a minor modification to the policy would make it usable for this school year and that the policy could be reviewed by the committee and revised for next school year, if necessary.

After discussion, Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that the Board of Education modify Board Policy 3541.22 (a)-(b)- Transportation- Bus Operator's Responsibility, section B.7. to read: "Only students in grades 4 and up may be dropped off without an adult present and visible at the drop-off point. Sibling groups will be kept together." Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

D. Review and Approval of Middle School Fundraiser

Dr. Fishman stated that the middle school band and chorus would like to have a fundraiser that would run about the same time as the other fundraisers are just being reviewed by the Board (late September / early October). She stated that the fundraiser would consist of selling cookie dough and fruit snacks. She stated that this fundraiser meets the requirements of the Wellness Policy in the following ways:

- Fruit snacks being sold are on the State Department's acceptable snack list for brand, type, and portion size.
- There are no trans-fats in the cookie dough being sold, and one of the varieties of cookies being sold meets State Department guidelines for an acceptable snack.
- Orders of tubs of cookie dough will be picked up from the school by adults only.

Mrs. Fowler stated that she would like our fundraisers to more closely meet our Wellness Policy.

Mr. Nozik made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education approve the Stafford Middle School Band and Chorus fundraiser for September – October 2007, as proposed. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion. Mrs. Fowler abstained. The motion carried by majority vote.

ITEM IX. Personnel Matters

A. Resignation- Certified Staff Member

Mr. Nozik made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that the Board of Education accept the resignation of the following staff member, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

Name	Position	School	Effective Date	Reason
Hope E. Petersen	Special Education Teacher	Staffordville School	9/27/07	To take a position in another district in CT.

Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Appointment- Certified Staff Member

Mr. Nozik made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education appoint the following staff member, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

Name	CERTIFICATION AREA	SCHOOL/ ASSIGNMENT	REPLACING/ NEW	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE
Mary Ellen Clay	Comp. Special Education, PreK-12 (065)	Stafford High School / Special Education Teacher	Patrick Jones-Hafford	\$60,074 (6 th Year, Step 10)	8/27/07

Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to place Item. IX.C.- **Superintendent of Schools' Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)** into executive session. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:37 p.m.

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fowler, to enter executive session. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, to return to regular session. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:03 p.m.

C. Superintendent of Schools' Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

The Board presented Dr. Fishman with a written copy of her evaluation.

ITEM X. Student Matters

There were no student matters.

ITEM XI. Adjournment

Mrs. Finch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nozik, and Mrs. Rummel voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary