

Regional School District 12  
Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes  
Shepaug Valley Middle High School  
March 10, 2014

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:31 p.m., on Monday, March 10, 2014, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were: Valerie Andersen, Michelle Gorra, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley. Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent, and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations were also present. Gregory Cava arrived at 6:32 p.m. Alan Brown arrived at 6:35 p.m. Michael Sinatra arrived at 6:37 p.m. Emily Hibbard arrived at 6:42 p.m. Tony Bedini was absent.

**PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2014-2015**

Dr. Cosentino thanked the administrators, Bob Giesen and the Finance Committee members for their time and contribution in helping put the budget together. Dr. Cosentino began her presentation reminding the Board about the Vision / Mission statement still being rewritten and just about complete, and will be presented to the Board soon. Vision statement: *The Region 12 educates, challenges and inspires all learners to become compassionate, creative and courageous individuals who are empowered by knowledge, character and perseverance to achieve their greatest potential within the global society.* The Mission statement's three goals: 1. Optimize student achievement; 2. Build collaborative learning; 3. Develop engaged citizens. Dr. Cosentino spoke about how the budget stems from the Long Range Strategic Plan's three goals which are: Curriculum, technology, and aging facilities and declining enrollment. Dr. Cosentino stressed that everything is based on the achievement of the regional goals and what is best for students.

Dr. Cosentino told how she looked for a balanced approach to dealing with providing outstanding educational and academic programs, using resources efficiently and effectively while remaining fiscally responsible. Last year's budget focus was on the high school but this year more attention went toward an attempt to reduce costs and promote the theme of "Thinking Regionally" at the elementary level. The budget concentrates on the Common Core State Standards and the education reforms in curriculum, the new SBAC assessment, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, professional development and college and career readiness. The TV studio is being installed this week, lighting and grading next week which will permit for more shows. PowerSchool was introduced and implemented this year. It has been very successful. Ongoing professional development will help staff with all the initiatives and changes for academics and unified arts (i.e. music, art, business). In the area of technology, the district made leaps and bounds in technology this year. This budget includes the expansion of the Chromebook program for students in our 3rd and 4th grades as we continue to move toward a digital learning environment. Currently all grades 5 through 11 have chromebooks. Dr. Cosentino spoke about taking safety and security very seriously; to provide a safe and secure environment. The district promotes an "all hazards" approach and promotes safety and security awareness.

Dr. Cosentino spoke about the budget process which began in November. After meeting with administrators and department chairs, the budget initially totaled \$22,082,780 or 1.95% over last year's budget. Dr. Cosentino collaborated with Mr. Giesen and reduced the budget by \$304,759 (1.41%) to bring a total budget recommendation of \$21,778,021 or .54% over last year's budget. Dr. Cosentino spoke about the changes which include: Personnel services – 1.19% increase; salaries up \$144,303; benefits down \$48,325; Capital facilities up \$258,350; and program improvements down \$232,700. The FY2015 budget reduces the current staff by 6.25 full-time employees (FTE's). This includes the elimination of one

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Burnham kindergarten teacher, 1.15 FTE's of Intervention and Remedial Tutors, a .6 Physical Education Teacher. If the referendum passes, Dr. Cosentino plans to combine the kindergarten students at BFS and BS (15) and if it doesn't, she will then make a K-1 class at Burnham (grade 1 = 7 students and K = 4). Another significant reduction is 3.6 FTE in non-certified staff (paraprofessionals and tutors). The cost savings from these reductions is \$215,780. Purchased Professional and Technical Services increased, in large part are due to the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) visit coming in March next year as required every ten years. Purchased Property Services increased 8.83% and Other Purchased Services also decreased .98%. Supplies decreased. Property and Program Improvements decreased by 5.48%, Dues and Fees increased 4.93%.

Dr. Cosentino went over the budget distribution for the towns: Bridgewater – 21.96%, Roxbury – 32.69% and Washington – 45.35%.

In conclusion, Dr. Cosentino expressed that she believes that this budget would permit all students to be successful and will allow for the same great programs to continue and to improve. Dr. Cosentino thanked the Board of Education and the communities of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington for their support. The Superintendent's proposed budget was distributed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.