

Middletown Public Schools

Middletown, Rhode Island

Monday, April 21, 2008

7:00 p.m. – Regular Meeting

MICHAEL S. PINTO CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present: Michael F. Crowley, Jr., Chairman

Liana F. Fenton, Vice-Chair

William Coogan

Theresa M. Spengler

Member Absent: Mr. Edward Draper

Also Present: Rosemarie K. Kraeger, Superintendent of Schools

Catherine McLeish, Business Manager

Edward Collins, Director of Facilities

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Michael Crowley. Administrative staff members present were Steven Ruscito, Gail Abromitis and Linda Savastano. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

SPOTLIGHT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

“Middletown High School Mexico Trip”

Fourteen students from Spanish 2, 3 and 4 classes at Middletown High School traveled to Mexico during February break and shared a PowerPoint presentation of their trip. The presentation highlighted the school they attended, as well as sites they visited. They were given authentic Mexican food cooking lessons and learned salsa dancing, which they taught to a PE class when they returned. Students lived with Mexican families during their stay and were expected to speak Spanish. The students visited the school where Mr. Ramey taught on a Fulbright Exchange a few years ago.

A grant from the Middletown Education Collaborative paid for the bus transportation to and from Logan Airport.

PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS

•MIDDLETOWN TEACHER OF THE YEAR – Each year, NEA, the Middletown Teachers Association selects the Teacher of the Year. This year Janice O’Donnell was selected. Mrs. O’Donnell has been a teacher since 1983. She began her career as a Spanish teacher at Middletown High School and then transferred to J.H. Gaudet School to teach Introduction To Foreign Language. In 2002, Mrs. O’Donnell became a Technology Integration Specialist at Gaudet School. She assists the middle school

students, teachers, as well as all staff. Mr. Crowley read a proclamation to Mrs. O'Donnell thanking her for her service and she was presented with a crystal apple.

•STUDENT AWARDS – Student Awards were presented in the following categories:

oNewport Daily News Student of the Week.

oGaudet Robotics Teams

oState Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards

•NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

•NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

No “Student Activities” for April 21, 2008.

INFORMATION

Mrs. Kraeger noted items of information in the School Committee Package.

CORRESPONDENCE

No “Correspondence” for April 21, 2008.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: 1) Liana Fenton, 2) William Coogan. To approve the Consent Agenda. Unanimous vote.

- Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2008 School Committee Meeting**
- Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2008 Budget Workshop**
- Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2008 Special School Committee Meeting**
- Approval of Financial Report, dated March 31, 2008, in the amount of \$20,084,679.38**
- Approval of Invoice Register, dated March 18, 2008, in the amount of \$323,518.75**
- Approval of Invoice Register, dated April 1, 2008, in the amount of \$1,085,329.31**
- Approval of Invoice Register, dated April 15, 2008, in the amount of \$246,309.26**
- Approval of Invoice Register, dated April 18, 2008, in the amount of \$951.43**
- Approval of Special Grants Register, dated March 18, 2008, in the amount of \$69,304.24**
- Approval of Special Grants Register, dated March 27, 2008, in the amount of \$400.00**

- Approval of Special Grants Register, dated April 1, 2008, in the amount of \$42,931.44
- Approval of Special Grants Register, dated April 15, 2008, in the amount of \$34,195.60

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION ON PERSONNEL

No Personnel for April 21, 2008.

(Minutes of April 21, 2008 School Committee Meeting, Page Three)

ACTION ITEMS

TUITION SCHEDULE

MOTION: 1) Liana Fenton, 2) William Coogan. That the School Committee approve the tuition schedule for the 2008-2009 school year. Unanimous vote.

OLD BUSINESS

No "Old Business" for April 21, 2008.

NEW BUSINESS

•MIDDLETOWN EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE – During the 2007-2008 school year, \$14,000 in grants were awarded. The MEC Committee met to review the requests. Grants were awarded in the following areas:

oRobotics

oProvided airport transportation for the MHS trip to Mexico

o5th grade visits to Starbase Atlantis on the Navy Base

o5th grade visits to the Festival of Cultures in the spring

o“Toying with Science” at Kennedy School

oBiome field trips

oAuthor visits

o“Stories on Stage”

This year the Golf Tournament will be held at Wanumetonomy Golf Club on June 30th. The Duck Race will be held on Sunday July 27th at 3rd beach. The Collaborative is requesting that Administration, School Principals and the School Committee help get news out about wants and funded projects. Next year there will be one grant cycle, ending on October 31st.

•SPORTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – The committee consists of a group of fourteen people representing Middletown Little League, Wrestling, Pop Warner and Youth Soccer. Two informational meetings have been held. The committee learned where the dollars are going and realize what the School Department is up against with

the budget. The next meeting will be held on May 7th. At the last meeting, it was decided to increase gate receipts by charging adults \$5, a \$1 increase, while keeping student admission at \$2. Mr. Coogan asked when the current bussing contract will expire and if it would be cheaper to charter 25-passenger busses from Viking Tours or another company. The contract ends this June and RFP's are already out through East Bay Educational Collaborative. By the third year of the new contract, all eight EBEC communities' contracts will be up. In the bid, each community has an appendix to suit their own needs.

(Minutes of April 21, 2008 School Committee Meeting, Page Four)

Mr. Collins said there would not be a dollar savings by going with a company such as Viking Tours. Mrs. Spengler asked about hiring a 15 passenger vans, but by law they now have to be equipped with the same safety enhancements as school busses, such as lights and the mechanical arm that swings out in front of the bus. These vans are difficult to find and expensive.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

•CURRICULUM – Grades 7, 8 and 9 will take the NWEA Test in ELA and Math. This will give a benchmark as to how the schools and students are meeting standards. Curriculum alignment at the high school is continuing. Science NECAPs in grades 4, 8 and 10 will be

done. Work on the Consolidated Resource Plan will begin soon. Summer School brochures are being completed. Mrs. Fenton will be writing grants for a robotics summer program.

•**FINANCIAL** – Mrs. Kraeger attended the Impact Aid conference in Washington, DC in March. The word from Washington is not to count on additional funding. A prior year payment will be received to help meet the budget for this year.

There will be a Budget Review meeting on May 8th with the Town Council meeting. Public Hearing dates are May 22nd and May 28th.

Mrs. Kraeger gave a PowerPoint presentation on Projected Maximum Budget Increases. These projections are based on the presumption that the State will continue to level fund. For FY2010 the bottom gap is close to 300,000, \$400,000 for FY2011, \$500,000 for FY2012 and in 2013 when we are at 4%, the gap is \$600,000.

“Frequently asked Questions on the Budget” will be online and sent to schools.

Mrs. Fenton said she is more worried about State level than town. Mrs. Kraeger said if the property tax relief bill goes through, we will lose \$6.8 million by 2011.

•**FACILITIES** – Mr. Collins did a brief report on the overall usage and

cost of utilities. More energy programs are in the works, including energy sensors that shut off lights automatically. He is continually looking at ways to conserve energy. Mrs. Fenton asked about grants.

Mr. Collins said there are grants, but he is concerned about efficiency. Utilities are based on demand – when demand is high, price is high. The main goal is to reduce usage. He also reported that his team is working on the fields and outside areas.

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) William Coogan. That the School Committee receive the Superintendent's Reports. Unanimous vote.

(Minutes of April 21, 2008 School Committee Meeting, Page Five)

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Mrs. Fenton – Passed out an article regarding Generation Y.

Mrs. Spengler – Attended the National School Board Conference in April. There were three keynote speakers. Declining enrollment is a nationwide problem. Mrs. Spengler attended a demonstration on “Brainwave Safari”, a program for students who are struggling learners. Students who did the program for 30-60 minutes, four days a week saw a 50% improvement in grades. Mrs. Spengler also attended a luncheon for Magna awards. She feels that Middletown

could apply for an award and receive it. The application is made in the fall. Mrs. Spengler received information on “Smart School Boards” where paper would be eliminated. Each School Committee member would have a laptop.

Mr. Crowley – Also attended the National School Board Conference. He attended a lively discussion on Federal standards and NCLB.

ADJOURN FROM MEETING

MOTION: 1) Liana Fenton, 2) William Coogan. To adjourn from School Committee Meeting at 8:45 p.m. Unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosemarie K. Kraeger