

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #10
Special Meeting of the Board of Education
LEWIS S. MILLS AUDITORIUM
24 LYON ROAD, BURLINGTON, CT 06013
Thursday, October 17, 2013
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Joseph Arcuri, Vice Chairman
Susan Baccaro
Beth Duffy
Thomas Fausel
Theresa Foley
Paul Omichinski
Phillip Penn
Raymond Sikora, Chairman
Noel Turner
Ted Scheidel

Board Members Absent: n/a

Also Present:

Alan Beitman, Superintendent
Bob Choiniere, Director of Student Learning
Kenneth Smith, Principal, Har-Bur Middle School
Pam Lazaroski, Principal, Lewis S. Mills School
Silvia Ouellette, Assistant Principal, Lewis S. Mills
Katie Hurlock, Student Representative
Eric Uhl, Student Representative
Patricia George, Recording Secretary
Leslie Sheldon, All-Star Bus Representative

- I. Call to order
The Board Chairman, Ray Sikora, established a quorum and called to order the Special Meeting of the Board of Education at 7:04 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
The Board Chairman, Ray Sikora, led the pledge of allegiance.

A handout was made available to all audience members.

Prior to business, Mr. Sikora stated to the audience that Region 10 does not have a transportation policy in place with regards to afterschool activities. Additionally, and interesting enough, a review of several surrounding towns' policies yielded the same results.

Mr. Sikora also explained the process of creating and implementing new policies within the school district. Due to the large amount of feedback from Har-Bur Middle and Lewis S. Mills parents and students, the two-step process was circumvented in order to address the issue at this evening's special meeting.

The meeting will encompass the following four items:

1. Objective of the afterschool activities and what the district is doing with regards to a transportation policy;
2. Current option and proposed new process;
3. Pros and cons to both with respect to numerous considerations;
4. Evaluation process.

III. Business:

Issue: Lewis S. Mills students riding the Har-Bur Middle school regular dismissal buses

The high school students were temporarily suspended from riding the bus due to some parental concerns and fears that had arisen.

Objectives:

To provide Region 10 transportation for Lewis S. Mills' students that need extra-academic assistance with teachers, are members of the homework club, afterschool club activities, English Language Learners, or have special permissions from the Building Principal/Director of Finance and Operations;

To monitor options and enforce issues/concerns/inappropriate behaviors of all students (LSM and HBMS);

To provide the option in a fiscally sound manner.

Mr. Sikora provided a history noting that two separate bus routes were maintained with the fifth grade relocation from Harwinton Consolidated School and Lake Garda School to the Har-Bur/ Lewis Mills' campus. The purpose for the separate bus routes was two-fold; state mandated space on buses and recognizing parental concerns of combining middle school and high school students.

Superintendent Beitman provided details of the current bussing option including the reasons a student might have access to afterschool bus transportation, issues and concerns in prior years, current issues, and anticipated/planned modifications for increased monitoring and enforcement of procedures.

Additional training for drivers, a Code of Conduct signed by students/parent acknowledgement, and timely notifications from middle school parents to report concerns to administration, are all aspects of the increased monitoring and enforcement procedures. Current practices in place which would

continue in the process are; the review of video and audio tapes and interviews with drivers and middle school students.

With the Board's permission, Mr. Beitman recommended that the high school students be allowed to return to the middle school bus on the following day (Friday). Additionally, he suggested the implementation of a committee with representation consisting of parents, students, bus company employees, administrators and teachers in an effort to develop a bus Code of Conduct for the high school students, which will be presented to the Board at their regular meeting of November 4th. No student will be allowed to take the bus unless they have returned the Code of Conduct within the agreed upon timeframe.

Mr. Beitman presented the particulars of a proposed new option, which included the cost of adding two buses per day and supervision costs for Lewis S. Mills' students.

Advantages and disadvantages with the current process and late bus option were highlighted.

IV. Public Participation:

Kayleigh Watson (student)

Student Kayleigh Watson attends Lewis S. Mills and is honor student. She is responsible for caring for her brother. She felt that all students should not be punished for the problems of a few. She implored the Board to repeal their decision and to allow students to utilize the Har-Bur Middle School bus.

Roland Perreault

Mr. Perreault is the proud parent of a high school senior. His concerns encompassed safety with regards to the late bus.

Emma Avery

Emma Avery is junior at Lewis S. Mills and supports the high school students utilizing the Har-Bur School bus under the conditions that Superintendent Beitman brought forward earlier in the meeting.

She said that enrollment in clubs would decrease significantly if students are not allowed to utilize the Har-Bur Middle School buses.

Anne DiSorbo

Ms. DiSorbo's children currently use the middle school bus due to their involvement in numerous afterschool activities. As adults she said, we encourage our children to be involved, be well-rounded students, to participate in the community and to give them a boost on their college resume. Not allowing students to take the bus home would hinder that process. If there is inappropriate behavior, it should be addressed and

corrected by the school and the parent of the offending student. It makes no sense that all should be punished because of the actions of a few.

Leah Schatz

Ms. Schatz is the parent of five students who all attend Region 10 schools. Removing the high school students from the middle school buses is a reactionary response to a single situation or complaint rather than a thoughtful response, she said. She wanted to take a moment to recognize the bus drivers who work tirelessly to transport the children to and from school. To exclude all the children, for the problems of a few, is unjust.

Trish Collins

Ms. Collins is a single-mother who said her children hear worse language standing in a line at Lake Compounce than that which is heard on the bus. She said that her child needs community service in order to get into college.

Elizabeth/ Valerie / William Willett

Ms. Willett said that the availability of the Har-Bur bus allows students to participate in afterschool functions, which also creates a really involved school campus.

Abby Roberg

Ms. Roberg thanked the Board for addressing the bus issue. She indicated that she rides the bus four times per week and has never seen bad behavior. She said that most high school students do not interact with the Har-Bur Middle School students while sharing the bus. Without the transportation, she, as well as many other students, would not be able to participate in afterschool activities.

Rebecca Noel

Ms. Noel is currently a junior at Lewis S. Mills High School. She said regular meetings of afterschool sports and activities are a vital part of making a competitive school. Without the consistency, the school would not be as successful.

Anna Schatz

Ms. Schatz, a junior at Lewis S. Mills, asked that the Board take into account all that was said tonight and to be in favor of the high school students riding the Har-Bur Middle School buses.

Heather Carmody

Heather is a sophomore student in support of Lewis S. Mills' students riding the Har-Bur Middle School buses. She said that working parents do not have the time to pick up their children from school which would force many to drop out of afterschool activities.

She posed a question to the parents of Har-Bur School students, asking what they would do when their children are attending Lewis S. Mills and want to participate in after-school activities.

Michele Shingleton

One piece of Ms. Shingleton's concern addressed congestion at the schools and the impact on ecology. She said she was in favor of allowing high school students to continue utilizing the middle school buses and said that each incident should be dealt with individually.

Lisa Conlin

Ms. Conlin thanked the Board for addressing the issue so quickly. She said that utilizing the middle school buses has been a lifeline for her freshman student who has great grades and was provided the opportunity to finish a project; something that he would not have been able to do without the option of the bus. She said that the bus should remain as is, allowing high school students the opportunity to ride middle school buses.

Katie Hurlock

Student representative Katie Hurlock was in favor of high school students utilizing middle school buses. A topic of her college interviews was her participation in school activities; something she could not accomplish without them.

Eric Uhl

Student representative Eric Uhl said that he relies on the Har-Bur buses on Tuesdays and Thursdays; they have been a lifeline for him and have allowed him to get projects completed and study for tests.

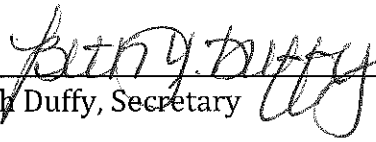
V. Action:

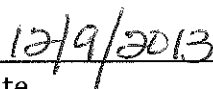
A motion was made by Paul Omichinski and seconded by Beth Duffy to continue to allow Lewis S. Mills High School students access to the Har-Bur Middle School buses with increased monitoring, a code of conduct, and an evaluation process; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

VI. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Beth Duffy and seconded by Ted Scheidel to adjourn the Special meeting of the Board of Education at 8:35 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Beth Duffy, Secretary


Date