BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ridgefield, Connecticut

September 24, 2012 **Board Conference Room**
Regular Board Meeting **Town Annex**
66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT

Members Present:

Mrs. Irene Burgess	Mr. Austin Drukker
Mr. Russell Katz	Mr. Christopher Murray
Mr. John Palermo	Mr. Michael Raduazzo
Mrs. Amy Shinohara	Mr. Richard Steinhart
Mrs. Karen Sulzinsky	

Superintendent of Schools: Ms. Deborah Low
NEA-R Representative: Mrs. Pat Gotimer
PTA Representative: Mrs. Jackie Putman
The Ridgefield Press: Mr. Jake Kara
Mr. Paul Hendrickson, Mrs. Patricia Michael, Mrs. Karen Dewing, Ms. Karen Berasi, Mr. Craig Tunks, Mr. Joe Morits, Dr. Stacey Gross, Mr. Carl Charles, Mrs. Lisa Singer, Mr. Tim Salem, Mr. Marty Fiedler, Mrs. Susan Gately, Dr. Jason McKinnon, Mr. Jamie Palladino

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Mr. Drukker, chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. leading those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Drukker invited Comments from the Public:

- Suzanne Sherter, Haviland Road, addressed the Board on the topic of closing an elementary school. At a recent K-5 Facilities Committee meeting, members discussed which of the schools could accommodate use of portable classrooms. Ms. Sherter stated that if the district were to close a school, it should be done without the need for portables. In addition, Ms. Sherter commented on future redistricting the middle schools and the need to prevent elementary schools from having split placement of their fifth graders into two different middle schools when promoting students to sixth grade.

Sam Gravitte, RHS Student Representative, reported on Spirit Week and scheduled Homecoming events.

Assistant Superintendent Patricia Michael presented the 2012 Testing Report (on file). The CMT scores in math, reading and writing at the elementary level were strong across the board with the exception of reading and writing scores for third grade- the grade level when student first begin taking these types of tests. Reading in third grade is the biggest challenge at the elementary level. Elementary principals will present their improvement plans to the Board at the next meeting to address performance issues and the content areas which are the focus of Professional Development at the elementary level. It was noted that attention will be given to CMT test results of the 2013-14 third grade class, who will have had the benefit of full-day kindergarten. The four-year tends in test scores show growth over time at the elementary level and more stability at the middle school level.

Middle school CMT performance in math and reading remains strong. CMT test results in science are likely to improve as CMT performance improves in fifth grade. The district is working to include more writing tasks in content areas and increase instructional strategies for embedding writing in expository and persuasive lessons, which gives students the practice they need to improve performance; an increase to writing across content areas is also a major emphasis in the forthcoming Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Ms. Low stated that a new generation of testing is starting next year and, by 2015, all students will be required to take the state testing online.

Discrepancies exist between goal and proficiency levels among special education students. At this time, the proficiency level is used to determine the special education students' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). That will change in 2012-13. The state has introduced a new assessment-based accountability system. This system includes a set of performance targets that replaces AYP measures and will be addressed later in the meeting.

High school CAPT, SAT and AP test results indicate strength and improvement in certain areas. Reading continues to be an area in need of ongoing support. The high school is working with a consultant to improve reading for students who need assistance and designing professional development which focuses on disciplines showing slow improvement. SAT scores mirror the state and national trends. The percentage of students taking AP courses has increased since 2005; participation number is high with 95% of students passing the AP final with a score of 3 or better, granting them college credit for course taken. In summary, Mrs. Michael reported on the number of college bound students. As in 2011, 88% of 2012 RHS graduates went to colleges or universities rated by Barrons- 52% of those 2012 graduates went to 'highly' and 'most competitive' colleges.

Superintendent Low introduced the next topic for discussion, the new State Assessment System. The Connecticut State Department of Education received approval for a waiver from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to establish a new accountability system for Connecticut. Beginning in 2012-13, school performance and progress will be assessed using different indicators than in previous years. Ms. Low explained the new metrics (PowerPoint on file) and provided a description of the new accountability indicators and performance targets for schools and subgroups for 2012-13.

The intent of the new state assessment system is to set more meaningful goals for schools and to more accurately understand performance using a formula to calculate a performance index (PI) for several categories- the District (DPI), individual schools (SPI), subgroups, and students (IPI). Point values determine a school's classification. Ms. Low distributed copies of the District's Performance Targets for the 2012-13 school year (on file). These first-year statistics will be used as a benchmark, and will enable the District to focus on improving performance in subgroup categories.

Ridgefield High School Principal, Dr. Stacey Gross and High School Athletic Director, Carl Charles provided follow-up information regarding eligibility requirements for sports participation at Ridgefield High School. Discussion followed on whether or not student athletes should be required to maintain a minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 for participation in sports as stated in Policy 5114.21, *Extracurricular Activities.* Dr. Gross and Mr. Charles stated reasons for not requiring a minimum GPA in the policy and provided supporting documents (on file) including a copy of eligibility rules as adopted by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and a list of 2012-13 academic requirements for athletes for each school district in the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC). Most schools in FCIAC, including Darian, New Canaan and Wilton, base student eligibility for sports participation on CIAC rules where participation is not associated to a strict GPA requirement. Further discussion followed with Board consensus to incorporate a 2.0 minimum GPA into District Policy 5114.21 using the language for academic requirements found in Stamford High School's eligibility policy: "If an athlete's GPA drops between a 1.5 and 2.0, the student may appeal to the principal and, if appeal approved, the student must attend mandatory study hall and academic monitoring. The administration reserves the right to repeal if the student doesn't live up to the agreement."

Discussion continued on when the policy provision would begin. Mrs. Burgess proposed that the policy go into effect after second quarter ends in late January. The Board will decide and take action on policy revisions at the next regular meeting on October 9.

Mrs. Shinohara introduced the next order of business, 2013-14 Board of Education Goals. A draft of the goals was reviewed (on file) and the following will be added to the draft: On page one, the second goal, *Promote a Fiscally Responsible District*, Indicators of Success to include 'transportation' and read, "Encourage the identification and implementation of ideas toward reduction in energy, transportation costs and health care costs." On page one, first goal, *Support the District Priorities*, Indicator of Success to include 'wellness' and read "Develop systems for social, emotional, behavioral and wellness support programs geared towards detecting, preventing and combating substance abuse." Mr. Katz moved that the Board of Education approve the 2013-14 Board Goals as amended. The motion passed, 9-0, with Mrs. Burgess, Mr. Drukker, Mr. Katz, Mr. Murray, Mr. Palermo, Mr. Raduazzo, Mrs. Shinohara, Mr. Steinhart, and Mrs. Sulzinsky voting in favor of the motion.

Superintendent Low spoke of the successful start to the school year and about upcoming school/community events including the talk by Dr. Robert Brooks on "Raising Resilient Children" and Adolescents on October 1; Ms. Low encouraged all to attend the upcoming fundraiser for Ridgefield Education Foundation on October 19. Ms. Low informed the Board that the process for the Assistant Superintendent search has started.

Mrs. Burgess, K-5 Facility Committee representative, commented on the schedule change for the next committee meeting- September 25 has been cancelled; the next meeting on October 9.

Mrs. Sulzinsky, Outreach Committee, asked Board members to send her an email to let her know when they are free to host a monthly Lunch Bunch session.

Mrs. Putman, PTA Representative, reminded the Board and public of the October 1 talk by Dr. Brooks, *Raising Resilient Children* at Ridgefield High School.

There was no Correspondence sent to the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Cheryl Cook
Executive Secretary to the
Board of Education