

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 16, 2008
Unofficial Minutes

Present: Mrs. Brassil Spinella, Mr. Captain, Mr. Darcey, Ms. Kindall, Ms. Mudge, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt, Superintendent Sklarz, Student Representatives Cassie Trammel (Hall), Andrew Bannon-Guasp (Conard)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall-Legislative Chamber

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The meeting was called to order at 6:58 p.m.

Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Schmitt provided a reminder that Public Comments should not contain personal attacks and serious concerns and allegations should be reported through appropriate channels.

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board to request that the wording of the previous week's minutes be revised and expressed concerns about student safety and transparency of reporting.

Public Communications

Courtney Bourns, 24 Saddle Ridge Dr., addressed the Board to announce a forum being held on October 7th by the Citizens Network of the Capital Region to discuss the State's proposal to increase high school graduation requirements.

Margaret Francoeur, 80 Westmont St., addressed the Board regarding changes in the curriculum and budget reductions.

Madeleine Hexter, 142 Bainbridge Rd., addressed the Board regarding volunteer recruitment in the schools.

Ellen Katz, 12 Forest Hills Lane, addressed the Board regarding increased class sizes and the impact on student learning.

Deb Gearty, 65 Brunswick Ave., and Suzanne Sayers, 72 Vera St., Board of Ed. Reps for Braeburn, addressed the Board regarding class sizes and concerns about additional cuts and changes in the science curriculum.

Dr. Sklarz reported on the district's commitment to the environment and highlighted the installation of solar panels at Conard High School in an effort to reduce energy consumption. He informed the Board of the selection of Hall High by a local news organization to

Superintendent's Report

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be featured as a 'Cool School' and described the exciting initiatives occurring at the school that warranted the attention. He also announced the efforts demonstrated by King Philip Middle School to observe the upcoming State of Connecticut Ethics Day.

Dr. List and Mr. Ward presented the results of the spring 2008 tests. Dr. List provided clarification on the differences in the terminology used to depict results and gave definitions and examples of word usage. Mr. Ward presented historical data of the results for the CMT and CAPT. District performance versus Board goals was reviewed. The district's performance and comparison to other DRGB district results were summarized. Dr. List outlined plans for improvement.

*Connecticut Mastery
Test (CMT) and
Connecticut
Academic
Performance Test
(CAPT) Results*

Mr. Tom Moore, Ms. Roszena Haskins and Mr. Paul Vicinus provided a presentation on the progress made at Conard High School in addressing the Achievement Gap and the challenges, approaches, strategies and administrative mindset employed to encourage those changes. They highlighted the successes of individual students previously identified as most at risk. Emphasis was placed on the success of the individualization of this model to be replicated throughout the district.

Board members praised the presentation. Discussion included the specific interventions implemented with students described and the reasons behind some of the improvements and dips. Comparisons to similar performance patterns across DRGB districts were made with consideration given to the individual demographics within districts. The use of common formative assessments and the importance of teachers sharing information were discussed.

Dr. List and Mr. Ward presented a summary of the standards required to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress and discussed the results and consequences for schools that did not meet that goal. Plans for improvement were outlined and the need to provide challenge and rigor to all students was emphasized. Both were available to answer the questions of the Board.

*Adequate Yearly
Progress (AYP)
Results*

Discussion included suggesting that a non-legal version of an IEP be created for all regular education students. The AYP standards were put in perspective with respect to the increased standard and the percentage of other DRGB schools that did not make AYP. It was noted that the majority of students in a school falling short of goal

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were performing well and plans were in place to address the subgroups that were not. The distinction between achieving mastery and proficiency was explored. The AYP requirements and the implications of the expectations of the law were questioned as to the attainability.

Mr. Darcey moved seconded by Ms. Mudge:

THAT the Board of Education approve the Financial Statement for the period ending June 30.

Ms. Kindall presented an oral report on the financial statement. Mr. Ward was available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Captain moved, seconded by Ms. Kindall:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting of September 2, 2008.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schmitt announced the members selected for the Charter Oak Facilities and Improvement Committee. Co-Chairpersons, Scott Slifka and Terry Schmitt, BOE members, Jack Darcey and Lib Brassil Spinella, Town Council members, Leon Davidoff and another to be determined, Principal, Mary Thompson, and community members, Reginald Paige, Janet Fournier and Deborah Zipkin.

Mr. Putterman provided a reminder of the open forum dates and the availability of an online survey to encourage public expression of opinions on the qualities believed to be important for the next Superintendent to possess.

Mr. Schmitt announced the following meeting dates:

1. Next Regular Board meeting, Tuesday, October 7, 2008, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall – Legislative Chamber, Room 314.

Mr. Schmitt provided a reminder that the second referendum vote on the budget will be held on Tuesday, October 7, 2008.

*Approval of
Financial Report*

Approval of Minutes

*Reports from Other
Boards and
Organization*

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

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Mr. Darcey commented on a Hartford Courant article reporting on statements made by the former president of the WHEA and expressed his disagreement with the statements.

John Joyce, 170 S. Main St., addressed the Board to continue his previous statements. The Board objected to the appropriateness of his statements and adjourned.

Mr. Putterman moved, seconded by Ms. Kindall:

THAT the Board adjourn to Executive session at 9:33 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kindall moved, seconded by Ms. Mudge:

THAT the Board return to Public session at 10:45 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Darcey moved, seconded by Ms. Mudge:

THAT the Board adjourn at 10:46 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Terry Schmitt, Chairman

Bruce Putterman, Secretary

Respectfully submitted by: Ms. K. Lawrence, Clerk of the Board

Public Comments

*Move to Executive
Session*

*Return to Public
Session*

Adjournment

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