

West Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education  
Regular Board Meeting  
October 17, 2017

*Unofficial Minutes – Pending Approval*

Present: Mrs. Blanks, Ms. Exum, Dr. Greenberg, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Pauluk, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent Tom Moore, Student Representatives Grace Andrews (Conard) and Madeline Pliskin (Hall)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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<p>The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm</p>	<p><i>Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance</i></p>
<p>Students from Sedgwick Middle School Technology and Engineering Computer Science presented to the Board an overview of their class along with an exhibit of what they can do with robot technology. The students also presented the Board with a gift of a T-shirt with their school logo on it. The Board thanked the students and the staff.</p>	<p><i>Student Participation</i></p>
<p>Elena Sada, 12 School House Drive, West Hartford, spoke on the need for a Seal of Bi-literacy on student diplomas.</p>	<p><i>Public Communication</i></p>
<p>Joy Fausey, 46 Castlewood Road, West Hartford, spoke on the need for resource distribution at Duffy Elementary.</p>	
<p>No Unfinished Business at this time</p>	<p><i>Unfinished Business</i></p>
<p>No New Business at this time</p>	<p><i>New Business</i></p>
<p>Superintendent Tom Moore shared with the Board a report on students' college choice after graduation from high school. The report showed a wide variety of student college choice across the country with the most popular schools being University of Connecticut and University of Massachusetts. The Board asked questions on the acceptance rate of students as well as the schools where students were accepted versus attending. Superintendent Tom Moore also reported on the upcoming college fair to be held on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm and encouraged all students to attend.</p>	<p><i>Staff Communications and Reports Superintendent's Report</i></p>
<p>Dr. Roszena Haskins, Director of Diversity Advancement, along with Equity and Diversity Council (EDC) subcommittee chairs reported on diversity advancement in the West Hartford Public Schools (WHPS). Dr. Haskins was joined by: Mr. Jamahl Hines, Conard assistant principal, Dr. Melissa Zych, Charter Oak International Academy music teacher, Ms. Amy Yarbrough, WHPS Open Choice Family Engagement Consultant, and Ms. Cathy Davis, Aiken second grade teacher. Report highlights included the work of the EDC subcommittees: Ethnic Affairs/Future Educators of Diversity, Student Achievement and</p>	<p><i>Diversity Advancement in the West Hartford School System</i></p>

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Educator Capacity-Building, Family and Community Engagement, Open Choice Enhancement and the LGBTQ Advisory.

The team announced an exciting new partnership with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), which will provide an additional postsecondary pathway for students in the current Future Educators of Diversity program. By partnering with CCSU in Project Blue Devil Direct, district teachers and administrators will collaborate to support high school students in pursuing careers in education, placing special emphasis on recruiting students of color to areas of teacher shortages. Program participation incentives include: early application/admissions decision to CCSU; financial aid application support, including access to scholarship funding; access to dedicated CCSU academic advisor; access and opportunity to develop teaching and related skills in WHPS and on the CCSU campus; access and opportunity to interact with CCSU faculty and student organizations focused on education; and upon graduation from CCSU and licensure from the Connecticut State Department of Education, guaranteed employment-related interview with WHPS.

Dr. Melissa Zych reported on the Student Achievement and Educator Capacity-Building subcommittee's goals for building the district's cultural competence. She discussed the application of the Connecticut Cultural Competence Standards for Professional Learning, including the facilitation of Collaborative Inquiry teams (CIT), and emphasis within the athletic coaches' training modules. Other outcomes include the creation of the Culturally Responsive Schoology toolbox and collaboration with the Professional Learning and Evaluation Committee (PLEC). Ms. Amy Yarbrough highlighted the Open Choice Enhancement subcommittee's work focused on connecting with families by providing a welcoming environment. Three projects currently in progress are an Open Choice directory for families to connect with each other, the creation of family representatives to assist with family outreach, and an Open Choice family game night. Ms. Cathy Davis highlighted her work with the LGBTQ Advisory, noting that WHPS stands out as a place that looks at who teaches our students, their knowledge-base and ways that teachers push students to see the world with a broader view. The LGBTQ Advisory seeks to make schools more inclusive to all students. In the past year, the subcommittee looked at bathroom structures to suggest what can be done to help meet the needs of all students and made recommendations to the Leadership Team. The advisory is conducting a review of the 5th grade Human Growth and Development unit. Finding

developmentally appropriate materials is a challenge that the group is trying to overcome. This is an ongoing process in which the most accurate, research-based materials are being explored. The Board thanked Dr. Haskins and the EDC chairs for a wonderful presentation and asked questions regarding efforts to reach out to the business world for prospective teachers, Open Choice, and retention rates.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Mr. Paul Vicinus, gave a presentation on the Advanced Placement Test score results noting the focus being on college and career readiness not just college credit. Highlights included the increase in student participation in AP courses as well as the number of exams being taken. The 2016-2017 school year saw 1,218 students participate, nearly double of that from 2002. The average number of exams that were taken was 4.2 with students taking a total of 2,583 exams. Other highlights from this report included: an increase in AP Equity and Excellence rating to 59.9% - the highest ever achieved; exam participation across Conard and Hall averaging 89.7%; and record numbers of students identified by College Board for outstanding achievement. Stand out classes were AP Biology, AP English Language and Composition, and AP US History which saw approximately 200 or more students with over 95% exam participation and an average score of 3.0 or better. Mr. Vicinus explained the 5-point scoring scale, where 5 represents the highest possible score and scores of 3 or greater are considered for college credit. The average exam score was 3.3. Individual school results included 637 Conard students taking 1,396 exams and 581 Hall students taking 1,187 exams. Conard's most popular exam, English Language and Composition, saw 178 students taking the exam while Hall's most popular exam, Psychology, with 180 students taking the exam. Mr. Vicinus spoke on the College Board's recognition of students for excellence in both participation and scores on the AP Exams. Levels include AP Scholar, AP Scholar with Honor, AP Scholar with Distinction, State and National Scholar as well as Capstone Diploma and AP Seminar and Research Certificate. The Board asked questions on best practices to prepare students for exams and student choices in taking the exam.

Director of Finance, Mr. Chip Ward presented to the Board on the class sizes and enrollments as of September 29, 2017. Mr. Ward reported that as of October 1, we had 9,405 students in district in grades K-12. There were 59 more students than projected at the elementary level due in part to higher than expected Kindergarten enrollment. The report highlighted detailed class sizes throughout the district and provided a

*Advanced Placement  
(AP) Test Score results*

*Enrollment and Class  
Size Analysis as of  
September 29, 2017*

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comparison of projected school enrollments to actual enrollments. Class size comparisons over the last several school years was also discussed. The Board asked questions with regard to class size, 8th grade teams, Open Choice students as well as if there were any budget concerns.

Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez moved and Ms. Exum seconded:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education meeting of October 3, 2017

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pauluk reported on the Substance Abuse Prevention Program and the availability by December of more West Hartford Cares cards. Conard Student Representative Grace Andrews reported on PSAT Day held last week, the upcoming College Fair, and the upcoming Black Box performance of “*She Kills Monsters*.” Hall Student representative Maddy Pliskin reported on the great success of Fall Fest, the PTO sponsoring of Fight the New Drug, CT Student Link, and the National Honor Society’s blood drive.

Dr. Cheryl Greenberg announced the following meeting dates:

1. **Wednesday**, November 8, 2017, regular Board of Education meeting, Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, room 314, Legislative Chamber, 7:00 p.m. (due to Election Day on the 7<sup>th</sup>)
2. **Tuesday**, November 21, 2017, regular Board of Education meeting, Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, room 314, Legislative Chamber, 6:00 p.m. (time change for this meeting)

No comments from visitors at this time.

Mr. Sarzen moved and Ms. Exum seconded:

THAT the Board adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

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Dr. Cheryl Greenberg, Chairperson      Tammy Exum, Secretary  
*Respectfully submitted by: Mrs. C. Rogers, Clerk of the Board*

*Routine Matters*

*Approval  
Of Minutes*

*Information and  
Reports*

*Announcement of  
Meeting Dates*

*Comments from  
Visitors*

*Adjournment*

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