

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

Present: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Zydanowicz,
Superintendent List, Student Representatives Tyree Seymour (Conard), Kendall Teare (Hall)
Absent: Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

INDEX

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:

THAT the Board of Education agenda be revised to allow for Board reflections regarding Newtown prior to Public Communications and to move item VI. B. 2. Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant announcement to be presented just after Public Communications

The motion passed unanimously.

Each Board member offered their reflections regarding the incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. It was noted that an email was sent by Mr. Putterman on behalf of the Board to the Newtown Board offering the Board's sympathy and an offer to assist in any way. A reply was received back expressing their appreciation.

John Joyce, 170 South Main Street, addressed the Board with reflections about Newtown and caring for one another.

Dr. List introduced the panel of Dr. Nancy DePalma, State Senator Beth Bye, Ms. Margaret Hann, Director of the Bridge Family Center, and Ms. Deborah Zipkin, Director of the Family Resource Center. It was announced that, in partnership with Great by Eight, a grant had been received from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in the amount of \$170,000

Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

Revision to Agenda Order

Board Reflections

Public Communications

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

2

over a three year period to fund the Family Resource Center. The grant would allow for the expansion of the Family Resource Center activities to Webster Hill School, bring in experts to help with the development of transition skills from pre-school to Kindergarten, and to provide opportunities to develop parent leaders and thereby play a community based role in the renovation of Charter Oak. It will also allow for the pilot/exploration of the Early Development Index (EDI).

Board members expressed their thanks and reaction to the announcement. Ms. Zipkin explained that Webster Hill School requested an early learning playgroup for children ages 1 through 4..

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

THAT the Board of Education ratify the negotiated agreement between the West Hartford Education Association (WHEA) and the Board of Education for the period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016.

*Ratification
of the WHEA
contract*

Board members, Mr. Rick Ledwith, and Mr. Chip Ward provided a history of the negotiations and complimented all parties involved with the agreement process which allowed for arbitration to be avoided. Mr. Ward outlined the highlights of the wage and step scales. Mr. Ledwith outlined the health insurance, tuition reimbursement and sick pay at retirement components of the agreement.

Board members asked for elaboration of several details of the contract which were explained by Mr. Ledwith and Mr. Ward.

The motion passed 4, 0, 2 with Mr. Sarzen and Mr. Zydanowicz abstaining.

Dr. List noted that there were flyers available regarding resources for helping to deal with the Sandy Hook tragedy. In addition, Dr. List made note that a script prepared by Sedgwick Principal Roszena Haskins, and

*Superintendent's
Report*

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

adapted by King Philip Principal Michael Renkawitz, to assist teachers in dealing with their students regarding the Sandy Hook tragedy was used to help the students at Reed Middle School in Newtown.

Dr. List introduced Assistant Superintendent Tom Moore and Police Chief Tracey Gove to speak about school safety. Mr. Moore noted that the people in leadership positions in town are incredibly professional and that the district has been actively engaged in school safety for a long time. He explained that the following are in place: The district has mental health professionals in every school. The schools know our kids and know who we need to be checking in with. There are detailed school safety plans for a variety of incidents. There are two evacuation sites for each school. There are regular fire and lock down drills at each school. There are school resource police officers at each high school and a dedicated police officer assigned to visit each of the other schools. There are school security officers at each secondary school. There is a buzzer system at all schools below the high school level except at King Philip. A buzzer will be installed in the near future. Security personnel are stationed at the entrance of each high school. There are regular meetings between Mr. Moore and the police department. There are regular walk-throughs with school personnel. There are disaster preparedness meetings. For the future, Mr. Moore is looking to hire additional security personnel and to implement security audits. Wireless capabilities are currently being installed which will allow for a key swipe system to identify who is in the building and when there are open doors. Mr. Moore noted that the schools are also used for community events (i.e. town basketball). He is also looking into the installation of a “panic button” in each school which would directly alert the police department in case of an emergency. Chief Gove reiterated the close working relationship with school administration, outlined several of the initiatives and programs the police have established to work with and serve the youth of the town and assured

*School
Safety*

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

4

everyone that the department has the capability of a swift and sizeable response if it was ever needed. West Hartford is ahead of the curve in terms of readiness and training. The police department goes through extensive training and will be conducting drills in several schools over upcoming breaks.

Board members offered their thanks and observations about various situations they have encountered throughout the school district. It was noted there needs to be a balance between safety and keeping an open, friendly school environment.

Dr. List introduced Dr. Nancy DePalma, Mr. Paul Vicinus and Ms. Kerry Jones. In July, 2010, the new Common Core State Standards were adopted. The panel brought the Board up to date on the implementation process in West Hartford and the professional development structure relating to the math and English curriculum split between grades K-5 and 6-12.

Ms. Jones outlined the K-5 CSI cycle, intermingled with grade level meetings, emphasizing the importance of the opportunity for feedback. Mr. Vicinus then outlined the 6-12 model based on department level meetings rather than grade level. Core team meetings have also been introduced into the school day as part of teachers' duty time allowing for more frequent collaborative time. They both pointed out highlights of the progress made with the curriculum which are available on the website. Each provided examples of sample questions to demonstrate the shift in focus in both the math and English curriculum and outlined the next steps in the process.

Board members offered their thoughts about the presentation, the changes outlined, and the impact on the classroom.

Dr. DePalma noted that there will be a presentation coming up regarding breaking down barriers between students and the use of technology in that endeavor.

*Common Core
State
Standards*

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

5

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 20, 2012

The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Sarzen abstaining.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 4, 2012

It was noted by Mr. Putterman that Mrs. Brassil Spinella was marked absent but had, in fact, resigned her Board position just prior to the meeting so therefore should not have been marked absent.

The motion passed unanimously with Ms. Katz abstaining.

Tyree Seymour (Conard) reported that students had the opportunity to reflect on the events in Newtown. In addition, some clubs and sports teams are planning fund raising events. The senior citizen performance of the winter concert was held. Conard will be putting on the play "Peter Pan" in the spring and winter sports are underway.

Kendall Teare (Hall) reported that there are form sympathy cards available in the cafeteria and library all week for students to fill out. They will be sent to the families, first responders and staff members involved in the Sandy Hook incident. She also noted changes in security and that efforts will be made by clubs and the Global Problem Solving class to see what can be done about peace. Mock Trial won and will advance to the quarter finals on Feb 4. The math team is currently in second place among teams

*Approval of
Minutes*

*Report from
Student Board
Representative*

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2012

6

in the Greater Hartford area. The Executive Board of the Student Association had intended to present a proposal about open campus. However, in light of the Sandy Hook incident, the Student Board recognized that now was not the time to make such a presentation and hopes to do so in the future.

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

1. Tuesday, January 15, 2013, Board Awards at KPM, 6:00 p.m. followed by a regular Board meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
2. Tuesday, January 29, 2013, Board Workshop, 6:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, room 400

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

John Joyce, 170 South Main Street addressed the Board regarding school safety.

*Comments from
Visitors*

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Zydanowicz:

THAT the Board adjourn at 10:12 p.m.

Adjournment

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Bruce Putterman, Chairperson

Naogan Ma, Secretary

Respectfully Submitted by: Mrs. Kathy Hickey