

West Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education  
Regular Board Meeting  
**April 21, 2015**

Present: Mrs. Exum, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman , Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt,  
Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent Moore,  
Absent: Student Representatives Henley Solomon (Conard), Paul Zeuschner (Hall)  
Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

*Roll Call/Pledge of  
Allegiance/Revision to  
Agenda Order*

Tim Gifford from the University of Connecticut, along with Special Education teacher Stephanie Murphy, Social Worker Janet Gregorian-Michaelsen, Speech and Language Pathologist Thejasvee Singh and RAI Program Specialist Sherry Wong gave a presentation about Robotic Assisted Instruction (RAI). For the past three years this team has been evaluating the effectiveness of using Chris, a robot, at Whiting Lane School to help with instruction particularly with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mr. Gifford's research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Foundation of Science. They are planning to expand their work to include Smith School, as well as presentations to the Middle Schools and Robotics classes at Hall and Conard. Oftentimes, a robot can help students interact more effectively with inanimate objects who may have more difficulty doing so with human beings.

*Student  
Participation*

There were no Public Communications.

*Public Communications*

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Putterman:

THAT the Board of Education accept revised policies 4020, 4060, 4090 and 5520 – **First Reading**

*New Business*

Mr. Schmitt gave an overview of what the changes to the policies, which include Employee Smoking and Other Tobacco Use, Employee HIV/AIDS, Employee Use of Technology and Student Smoking and Other Tobacco Use and Possession, seek to address. There was a request to clarify the role of items that seek to help with tobacco addiction such as the patch or nicotine gum. The role of E Cigarettes in the Health Curriculum was also discussed

The motion passed unanimously

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Non Renewal of Non-Tenured Personnel

Mr. Rick Ledwith explained that he was seeking approval from the Board to accept the recommendation for the non-renewal of non-tenured teachers' contracts and to proceed with written notification b May 1 of those contracts which expire on June 30. In most cases they were hired to fill temporary positions.

The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Tom Moore noted that this was the college acceptance season and that students were hearing good news. He also announced several award recognitions received by West Hartford students. In addition, Mr. Moore announced the retirement of Catherine Buchholz and that Sue Henneberry has been hired as the new Principal of Granby Memorial Middle School.

*Superintendent's Report*

Dr. Nancy DePalma, Mr .Glenn McGrath, Mrs. Lynnette Kaschke, Mrs. Eva Golden and Mrs. Elizabeth Natale reported on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which is intended to be viewed as a whole tool box to evaluate what their students need to learn. It seeks to improve instructional practices and use multiple methods and choices to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter. UDL can be particularly helpful for students with disabilities but is really for all students.

*Universal Design  
For Learning*

Mr. Rick Ledwith, Dr. Maureen Lantner and Dr. Katherine Frewen gave an overview of the Leadership Academy which has evolved and grown over the last seven years. It has been an integral part of the district's succession planning. Mr. Ledwith noted that 5 of the 16 current Principals are graduates of the Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy seeks to develop leadership skills at a high level.

*Leadership Academy*

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Exum:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting of April 7, 2015.

*Approval of the Minutes*

The motion passed unanimously.

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The groundbreaking for the new Charter Oak International Academy will be held on May 14, 2015 at 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez announced the following meeting dates:

1. Tuesday, May 5, 2015, Board of Education meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
2. Tuesday, May 19, 2015, Board of Education meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
3. Tuesday, May 26, 2015, Board Awards. 6:00 p.m. King Philip Middle School, 100 King Philip Drive
4. Tuesday, June 2, 2015, Board of Education meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314

*Announcement of  
Meeting Dates*

Mr. Sarzen moved, seconded by Mr. Zydanowicz:

*Adjournment*

That the Board adjourn at 9:20 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

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Mark Overmyer-Velazquez, Chairperson      Terry Schmitt, Secretary  
*Respectfully submitted by: Mrs. K. Hickey, Acting Clerk of the Board*

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