

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
September 17, 2013

Present: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Zydanic, Student Representatives Jordan Gelber (Hall), Randa Griffin (Conard)

Absent: Superintendent List

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

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

Mr. Putterman extended condolences to Dr. List on the loss of her sister.

John Joyce, 170 S. Main St., addressed the Board regarding test scores, potential discrepancies between individual school performances and addressing students below achievement rate.

Public Communications

Mr. Putterman provided a reminder about the Superintendent search survey and noted the deadline had been extended to allow sufficient opportunity for all to participate.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Tom Moore provided the Superintendent's Report in the absence of Dr. List. He provided the Board with an update on the Charter Oak building project and reported on meeting and touring with the architectural firm to determine the needs and wants. Public meeting dates were announced and assurances were given that information would be distributed to the public and a survey was in the process of being developed. The recognition received by Mr. David Downes, Director of Continuing Education by The Bridge was shared and the upcoming visits by NEASC to both Hall and Conard were discussed.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Chip Ward and Dr. Nancy DePalma introduced the report with the recognition it would potentially be the final presentation on CMT and CAPT results.

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

Mr. Ward reviewed the CMT vocabulary and provided a seven year history of the scores. The test scores from the same students tested over a period of time were reviewed and comparisons were made between the performance of West Hartford students and the scores of our District Reference Group (DRG) B and districts throughout the State. The distribution of the four different student groups were charted and compared with DRG B mastery scores and the average number of students within the groups not achieving mastery was

discussed. The Board Performance Indicators and overall student performance was summarized. Dr. DePalma reviewed how data are analyzed and used to support student performance and achievement and the Continuing Plans for Improvement and the processes in place to build the level of collaboration through District and connected school development plans were outlined. Mr. Ward and Dr. DePalma were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board members sought and received clarification on the background and definition of Mastery and the terms were placed in context. Board discussion identified future struggles faced by the Board to set goals and concerns about the changes in reviewing and reporting individual student scores with the different systems were raised. Concerns about the existing gaps in performance with DRG B comparisons, the achievement gap within demographic groups and the translation of the data as an indicator of larger social problems were discussed. Understanding of the data being utilized in the classrooms as a starting point and the optimistic expectation for change and possibilities brought by the shift to Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests was provided. Focus on the middle school developmental years and the importance of collaboration and communication between school and parents was emphasized. Determining when strategies may not be working with specified segments, pressure placed on the administration as a function of the Board for accountability and appreciation for the recognition of any unknowns or ambiguity was expressed.

Mr. Ward presented the results of the CAPT scores for 2013 and provided a seven year history and comparisons with the DRG B results. The number of students not a mastery and the alignment of student performance to the Board Indicators and Goals was reviewed. Mr. Ward and Dr. DePalma were available to address questions and concerns of the Board.

Board members expressed concern about the discrepancy between Hall and Conard scores and discussed the breakdown of CAPT results by school. Clarification for the causes contributing to the performance differences and comparisons and similar levels of performance were provided.

Mr. Sarzen moved, seconded by Mr. Schmitt:

THAT the Board of Education approve the Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2013

Financial Statement

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Mr. Sarzen provided an oral presentation of the financial report. Mr. Ward was available to answer the questions of the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez:

THAT the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 3, 2013

The motion passed 6-0-1.

Abstained: Mrs. Ma due to absence

Mr. Schmitt reported on his commitment to serving as the Council Chair for CREC. He provided a description of CREC and the services available and those utilized. The uniqueness of the magnet schools and the impact on the town were reported.

Jordan Gelber reported that all was quiet at Hall and with preparations underway for the NEASC visit; the improvement in building maintenance was notable. He spoke about anticipation for the installation of stadium lights and the upcoming Curriculum Night for parents.

Randa Griffin also reported that Conard was quiet and preparing the NEASC visit as well and shared excitement for stadium lights, Student Council events and the start of the fall athletic teams.

Mrs. Ma reported on her observations on the opening day of school and her experience of hosting a student from another country. Ms. Katz announced a fundraising event for the stadium lights and reported on the SEPTA meeting. Mr. Zydanowicz reported on his attendance to The Bridge breakfast.

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

1. Tuesday, October 1, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
2. Tuesday, October 15, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314

Mr. Putterman requested a greater understanding and discussion regarding the Special Funds Budget Item.

Ms. Katz requested a discussion on Middle School culture.

Approval of Minutes

*Communication and
Reports
CREC Update*

*Report from Student
Board Representatives*

*Other Information and
Discussions*

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

*Request for Future
Agenda Items*

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John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board regarding test scores statistics and the response by Administration and the district.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

That the Board adjourn at 9:22 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Bruce Putterman, Chairperson Naogan Ma, Secretary
Respectfully submitted by: Ms. K. Lawrence, Clerk of the Board

Comments from Visitors

Adjournment

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