

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
September 20, 2011

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Unofficial Minutes – Pending Approval on 10/4/2011

Present: Mrs. Brassil Spinella, Ms. Katz, Ms. Kindall, Mrs. Ma, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt, Superintendent List, Student Representatives Ellis Boettger (Conard), Jennifer Ros (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*

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board regarding the meaning of test scores.

Public Communications

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

*Nomination,
Appointment and
Swearing in of New
Board Member*

THAT the Board of Education appoint Ms. Ellen Brassil as a member of the West Hartford Board of Education to fill the position vacated by Ms. Diane Mudge for the period of September 20, 2011 through the remainder of Ms. Mudge's term in November 2011 and THAT Ms. Essie Labrot, Town Clerk (or designee) swear in Ms. Ellen Brassil as a new Board member

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Brassil was sworn in and welcomed by the Board.

Mrs. Ma moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

*Motion by Lib Brassil
Spinella, Bruce
Putterman, and Terry
Schmitt to Accept the
Revised Policy 6235 –
First Reading*

THAT the Board of Education accept as a First Reading the following policy which was revised by the Board Policy Subcommittee:

6235 Controversial Issues

Mr. Putterman provided a review of the policy and the changes proposed. Emphasis was placed on students not having the option to opt out of the study of issues except as allowed by law. The procedures in place for parents to register concerns or complaints were reviewed.

Board discussion included an explanation of the process used when book titles are questioned by parents and acknowledging the value of learning appropriate ways to debate and disagree about difficult issues.

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The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Putterman:

THAT the Board of Education approve the following policy that was reviewed by the Board Policy Subcommittee:

6241 Fraternities, Sororities and Other Secret Societies

Mr. Schmitt explained no changes were made to the existing policy and requested the policy be accepted.

The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. List recognized the outstanding achievements of staff and administration and offered her congratulations. The support of the Board for Pre-Kindergarten programs was acknowledged and an update on the accreditation status of existing programs and the opening of an additional Pre-K program at Bugbee was provided. Dr. List encouraged Board members to visit the school.

Mr. Chip Ward and Dr. Eileen Howley explained the five bands used and reviewed the seven year history of the CMT scores and reported on the steady gains. Comparisons were made to the results of other DRG B districts. The demographics and distribution of the represented student groups were also reviewed and compared with other DRG B towns. How the students' performance compared with the overall goals of the Board and the interpretation and utilization of the scores and data by principals and teachers was reviewed.

Board discussion recognized gains in the scores and in addressing previous concerns about the gap in the performance of special education students. The distinction between different categories of special education students and test taking (MAS, Skills Checklist) and the impact of the Modified Assessment Test (MAS) on the CMT scores was discussed. The agent of change and the increased accountability was discussed. The evaluation process for measuring progress and teacher accountability was reviewed. The purposes of the test were discussed. The continual use of collaborative assessments to supplement interventions was emphasized.

The historical data of the CAPT scores was reviewed. Mr. Ward provided a summary of the scores and comparisons to DRG B towns and highlighted that the scores were the highest achieved to date. Plans for continued improvement were outlined.

*Motion by Lib Brassil
Spinella, Bruce
Putterman and Terry
Schmitt to Approve the
Reviewed Policy 6241*

Superintendent's Report

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

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Board members commended the scores and discussed any potential correlation programmatically. Caution was emphasized about drawing conclusion on scores from a single year and the percentage differences between Hall and Conard test scores were discussed. The interest in data collection on student performance post graduation was raised. The efforts involved in gathering and analyzing testing data was acknowledged.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

THAT the Board of Education reopen the agenda order to introduce a New Business item to address the Financial Examiner position

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Mr. Schmitt:

THAT the Board of Education consider a new item not previously identified regarding the vacancy of a Financial Examiner position

The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Brassil Spinella moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

THAT the Board of Education nominate and approve Ms. Ellen Brassil as the Financial Examiner for the Republican Party

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Mr. Schmitt:

THAT the Board of Education approve the Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2011

Ms. Katz provided an oral report on the financial statement. Mr. Ward was available to answer the questions of the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the

*Motion to Revise the
Agenda and Reopen
New Business Items*

*Motion to Consider a
New Business Item
Related to the Financial
Examiner Vacancy*

*Motion to Nominate Ms.
Brassil as Financial
Examiner*

*Approval of Financial
Report*

Approval of Minutes

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regular Board meeting of September 6, 2011

The motion passed 6-0-1.
Ms. Brassil abstained due to absence.

Ms. Katz provided an update on the efforts and activities of the 'Growing Great Schools' organization and the addition of Billy Grant as the newest 'Chefs to School' celebrity chef. She announced a taste testing event on October 28, 2011 at Conard High open to the West Hartford elementary school families.

*Reports from Other
Boards and
Organizations*

Jennifer Ross reported that Hall had six Merit semi-finalists for the PSAT, Fall sports were off to a good start and Curriculum Night had a strong parent presence. Information was provided on the changes in the cell phone policy and the positive reception by students.

*Report from Student
Representatives*

Ellis Boettger reported on the success of Conard's Open House, that the Fall sports were enjoying a positive start and announced several upcoming events including a college planning night, the selected theatre production and a school climate/bullying awareness day.

Ms. Kindall announced the following meeting dates:

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

1. Next Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, October 4, 2011, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, Legislative Chamber, Room 314

Kathy Wilson, 39 Montclair Dr., addressed the Board regarding the presentation on the Common Core of State Standards and encouraged the public to attend.

Comments from Visitors

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board regarding concerns about Board goals and test scores and students that fall below mastery.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

Adjournment

That the Board adjourn at 8:51 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

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ATTEST:

Clare Kindall, Chairperson

Naogan Ma, Secretary

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

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