

Board of Education

October 13, 2009

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in special session on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. DeAngelo, Mrs. Massaro, Mrs. Montinieri, Mrs. Stanziale and Mr. Stanziale. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kohlhagen; Director of Human Resources and Business Services, Mr. Drezek; and Board of Education Attorney, Mr. Mooney.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to leave public session and enter executive session at 6:08 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Exempt Documents Pertaining to Contracts and Personnel Matters. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. DeAngelo and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session were: Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. DeAngelo, Mrs. Massaro, Mrs. Montinieri, Mrs. Stanziale and Mr. Stanziale. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kohlhagen; Director of Human Resources and Business Services, Mr. Drezek and Board of Education Attorney, Mr. Mooney.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to leave executive session and enter public session at 7:43 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. DeAngelo and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Massaro and VOTED unanimously.

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 7:50 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mrs. DeAngelo, Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. Massaro, Mr. McKenna, Mrs. Montinieri, Mrs. Stanziale and Mr. Stanziale. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kohlhagen; Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Negroni; Director of Special Services, Mr. Emmett; Director of Human Resources and Business Services, Mr. Drezek; Director of Maintenance and Operations, Mr. Bushey; Wethersfield High School Principal, Mr. Moore; Wethersfield High School Assistant Principals, Mrs. Krieger and Mr. Komar; Hanmer Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Zacchei; Emerson-Williams Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Catarius; Highcrest Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Harvey; Charles

Wright Elementary School Interim Principal, Mrs. Wilkie; Wethersfield High School Dean of Students, Mr. Verdame; Wethersfield High School Team Leaders, Ms. Bryan, Mrs. Colangelo, Ms. Lopes, Mr. McKenna, Mr. Pfister and Mr. Sand, members of the Wethersfield High School Marching Band and Color Guard and several residents.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Massaro led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. September 22, 2009, Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Stanziale MOVED the approval of the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of September 22, 2009, as presented. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously with Mrs. Massaro abstaining.

3. Public Comment

Nancy Andrews, Band Booster Parent, introduced members of the Wethersfield High School Marching Band and Color Guard to the Board and public. She thanked the Board of Education and Mr. Kohlhagen for their continued support of the Band. She reported that the Band is currently participating in its fall marching competitions and has placed first at the Rocky Hill, Lyman Hall and Cheshire meets. She invited everyone to attend the Southington competition and New England Championships in New Britain.

Mrs. Andrews stated the Band marched in the Columbus Day Parade this past weekend and will no longer participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in March as band members and parents no longer feel comfortable marching in that parade.

Mrs. Andrews announced the Band will be holding a bottle and can fundraiser on October 31 and their annual fruit sale is underway.

Members of the Band presented Mr. Kohlhagen with an official Band t-shirt.

Chairperson Hodges congratulated the Band and Color Guard for their outstanding achievements in their fall competitions.

4. Communications

Mr. Kohlhagen extended congratulations to Mr. Dion, members of the Wethersfield High School Band and Color Guard, Band Boosters and the entire Wethersfield High School faculty for the success of the Marching Band.

5. Action Item

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Contribution to Wethersfield High School 2010 Safe Graduation Party

Mrs. Montinieri MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education contribute \$1,000 to the 2010 Wethersfield High School Safe Graduation Party. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

6. Reports/Discussion Items

a. District Comprehensive Plan & State Assessments Overview; Presentation of the 2009 CMT, CAPT, SAT & AP Results as Reflected in the NCLB Adequately Yearly Progress Report

Mr. Kohlhagen stated the results found in this report provide for a celebration of the Board's goal of continuous improvement for our students.

Dr. Negroni reviewed the District's Comprehensive Plan and State Assessments in a PowerPoint presentation with the Board and public. Dr. Negroni stated the District's successes can be tied to the strategies that have been implemented to improve student achievement. Focusing on areas of need has resulted in improved scores.

Dr. Negroni stated work continues to meet the District's Student Achievement Goal by continuing to meet the needs of all learners with a focus on grade level outcomes to ensure each student is academically prepared for articulation to the next grade, K-12; to meet the performance target of 90% of all students at or above goal in Language Arts and Mathematics by 2010 as measured by CMT/CAPT which meets or exceed AYP targets as established by NCLB and to increase CMT/CAPT scores in each school by 5 to 10 percentage points annually in support of this goal.

Dr. Negroni commented the CMT and CAPT are difficult assessments as data involve different groups of students, different tests and different generations of the test.

Dr. Negroni explained when reviewing CMT Data unmatched comparisons are made, cohort data is reviewed, vertical scale scores are reviewed and District Reference Groups (DRG) comparisons are made.

Dr. Negroni stated CMT Scoring is based on five levels – Level 1 = below basic; Level 2 = basic; Level 3 = proficient; Level 4 = goal and Level 5 = advanced. The goal of the District is to significantly decrease the percentage of students at basic and below basic and to significantly increase the percentage of students at or above goal.

Dr. Negroni reviewed the District-wide CMT highlights noting grades 3, 5, 7 and 8 made significant gains in most content areas.

Due to extended time with Everyday Math, mathematic scores improved as students moved up from grades 3 to 6. The two years that have focused on professional development components of early literacy and systematic implementation of DRA2 assessments in grades K-3 has resulted in grade 3 reading scores across the District increasing by 5 percentage points. Significant gains have occurred in grade 5, 6 and 8; in reading; a review of writing articulation from grade to grade for more consistent and continuous growth will occur. Significant increase in both the 5th and 8th grade science scores can be attributed to increasing the non-fiction reading in this discipline. Strategies that have been implemented have resulted in Wethersfield moving up anywhere from four to fourteen places in its DRG.

Dr. Negroni reviewed several school-wide CMT highlights noting the strategies and interventions used attributed to the increased success of the students. At Charles Wright the Personal Growth Objectives (PGO) developed to focus on CMT Action Research resulted in grade 5 increases in reading, math and science. The CMT PGO focus and extra reading block in grade 3 at Emerson-Williams resulted in a 30 point increase in reading scores. Hanmer saw a significant growth in targeted areas of grade 3 and 4 math, reading and writing and significant reading gains in grade 6 attributed to teachers' PGOs and "Smart Flex" grouping to differentiate. CMT focused PGOs and emphasis on building academic vocabulary at Highcrest resulted in grades 4, 5 and 6 scores between 82.4% and 91.4% at/above goal in math, reading and writing.

At Webb all targeted areas increased including all grade 5 content areas and a 16.4 point increase in grade 3 reading due to school-wide focus on interventions and enrichment. The school-wide focus on reading in the content areas at Silas Deane Middle School resulted in significant increases in grade 8 reading and science which reversed a four-year downward trend.

Dr. Negroni continued reporting individual grade level results. Grade 3 has experienced a steady growth in test scores since 2006 in all content areas, mathematics, reading and writing, and continues to score above the State average. Grade four experienced a slight dip in its scores in all content areas but scored above the State average. Grade 5 achieved significant gains in all content areas over last year's scores and scored well above the State average. Grade 6 also reported gains in all content areas. While grade 7 scored above the State average, it experienced a slight dip in its scores in all content areas. Increased focus will be made in the area of writing for this grade level. Grade 8 experienced overall gains in all content areas and scored well above the State average.

Dr. Negroni shared the following content area increases at each school: Charles Wright Grade 5, Mathematics increased 18.2 and Grade 6 Mathematics increased 8.6; Grade 5 Reading at Charles Wright increased 13.0 and Grade 6 Reading increased 4.7; Writing at Charles Wright in Grade 6 increased 7.9. Emerson-Williams, Grade 4, 5 and 6 Mathematics increased 2.7; 3.2 and .6; Grades 4, 5 and 6, Reading increased 24.1, 9.6 and 16.8 and Grade 5 Writing increased 8.0. At Hanmer, Grade 4, 5 and 6 Mathematics increased 13.7, 14.7 and 26.5; Grades 4, 5 and 6 Reading increased 5.0, 7.5, 14.6 and Writing in Grades 4, 5 and 6 increased 15.6, 3.9 and 5.2. Highcrest's grades 4 and 5 increased 17.0 and 5.4 in mathematics and Grades 4, 5 and 6 increased 20.6, 1.8 and 5.7 in Reading and Writing increased 5.9 in grade 4 and 1.3 in grade 5. Webb experienced an increase in Grade 4 Mathematics of 19.3; Grade 5 Mathematics increased 15.6 and Grade 6 Mathematics increased 4.8. In reading an increase of 10.9 occurred in Grade 4, 9.4 in Grade 5 and 12.0 in Grade 6. Grades 4, 5 and 6 increased in Writing by .7, 2.4 and 8.3.

Mr. Emmett continued with a review of the Students with Disabilities Subgroup that continues to show continuous improvement in closing the gap with their non-disabled

peers. Steady improvement has occurred with students achieving at or above goal in Grade 3 in the areas of Mathematics, Reading and Writing. Grade 4 has increased 9.5 percentage points in the area of writing. Mr. Emmett explained limited data is available from 2009 as this was the year the MAS test was introduced. Results from this assessment is expected to be received by the District at the end of the month. Grade 5 experienced a decrease of 11.7 percentage points in the area of reading but saw an increase of the area of mathematics. Students in grades 7 and 8 experienced increases in all content areas.

Mr. Emmett stated that while the Students with Disabilities Subgroup continues to show improvement, collaboration with regular education staff continues.

Dr. Negroni continued with a review of the data for the District's English Language Learners. English Language Learner students who have been in the United States for 12 months or less are exempt from the reading and writing tests but must take the mathematics and science sections of the CMT. Dr. Negroni reported the ELL students' 2009 scores in all content areas have seen an improvement over their 2008 scores.

Mr. Emmett reported the Wethersfield Public School District achieved AYP status for 2009. Silas Deane Middle School is currently working on strategies to improve their scores for their Student with Disabilities Subgroup and Emerson-Williams and Charles Wright are working on initiatives to improve their scores for their Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup.

Mr. Moore continued the presentation with a review of the CAPT, SAT, ACT and AP scores from Wethersfield High School. He noted these scores are a reflection of the outstanding accomplishments of our Wethersfield High School students, the efforts of the Wethersfield High School Team Leader staff and the faculty as a whole.

Mr. Moore noted the implementation of the Professional Growth Objectives that were focused on literacy resulted in an increase of 8.9 percentage points in reading on the CAPT.

Mr. Moore reviewed the results of the 2009 SAT noting double digit increases were experienced in all areas. Mr. Moore shared 86.4 percent of last year's seniors chose

to participate in the NAEP test which is a direct reflection on the academic culture at Wethersfield High School nurtured by the leadership of the Team Leaders.

Mr. Moore reported there has been an increase in the number of students taking the ACT and Wethersfield High School students continue to score above the State average.

Students choosing to take AP exams has increased and the number of students scoring a three or higher has also increased.

Mr. Moore shared suspension data with the Board and public noting 178 suspensions during the 2008-2009 school year is the lowest reported over a five year period. Mr. Moore stated this also speaks to the positive atmosphere at Wethersfield High School and the efforts being made to increase communication with families.

Dr. Negroni concluded that the 2009-2010 strategies that will be in place to continue to promote student achievement will include research-based academic instructional improvement initiatives.

Mrs. Montinieri thanked all staff for their efforts in working towards improving our students' performance on standardized assessments. She noted these are impressive, measurable results. Mrs. Montinieri noted that while there are areas to improve, it is important to celebrate our accomplishments. She requested additional DRG information.

Mrs. Stanziale stated she is pleased with the elementary schools' results.

Chairperson Hodges stated that no matter how the data in this presentation is analyzed it reveals increases and improvements in all areas. She stated that presentations like these that celebrate the success of our students is why she is glad she chooses to serve on the Board of Education. She thanked everyone involved, students, teachers, school leadership and the leadership in the Stillman Building.

Dr. Negroni thanked everyone involved in preparing the report.

b. Annual Class Size Report

Mr. Kohlhagen reviewed the Annual Class Size Report with the Board and public noting the District continues to adhere to its recommended class sizes of 21 for K; 23 for grades 1 – 3 and 25 for grades 4 – 6. Additional support will be provided to

several classes due to a slight increase in their enrollments. The team concept continues at Silas Deane Middle School where class sizes average 19.72. This year Wethersfield High School is offering additional AP courses, a strong ninth grade support team is in place and class sizes average 20.05.

Mr. Kohlhaben stated the District continues its commitment to the neighborhood school concept providing equity throughout the District. Due to the careful management of the District's resources, appropriate allocations of staff and materials are provided to staff and students to ensure their continued success.

In response to Mrs. DeAngelo, Mr. Kohlhaben reported the following enrollment breakdown: Charles Wright – 312 students; Emerson-Williams – 471 students; Hanmer – 393 students; Highcrest – 430 students; Webb – 455 students; Silas Deane Middle School – 586 students and Wethersfield High School – 1200 students.

In response to Mrs. Stanziale, Mr. Moore explained attempt is made to keep the class size of level 2 classes lower than those of level 1 or honor classes due to the fact the level 1 and honor student is usually a more organized student requiring less individual attention than a level 2 student. The scheduling needs of students can also drive class sizes.

Mrs. Stanziale questioned the very low numbers in some of the electives.

Mr. Moore explained much work went into fine tuning this year's master schedule and there are still areas where improvement needs to be made. The number and variety of electives offered is an effort to meet the needs of all students. It was stressed by the Superintendent that there are many fewer classes below recommended class size this year due to careful and purposeful planning and scheduling for the current school year at the high school.

In response to Mrs. Stanziale, Mr. Moore explained that freshman spend a semester in pool class where effort is made to keep class sizes as low as possible. Upperclassmen split their school year between physical education and health classes.

c. **Announcements/Information**

There was no discussion.

7. Board of Education

a. First Reading: Update on Wethersfield Board of Education Policies: Adult Education, (Policy #6200); Bylaws of the Board (Policy #9030), Student Representatives on the Board of Education, (Policy #9160a)

Mr. Kohlhagen explained the policies before the Board this evening are the first reading and the Board is scheduled to take formal action on these policies at its next regular meeting.

The Adult Education Program is undergoing a compliance review from the State Department of Education and it was determined that a comprehensive policy was needed.

Chairperson Hodges explained the Policy and Planning Committee met and reviewed all three proposed policies.

In response to Mrs. Montinieri, Mr. Kohlhagen explained a stand alone policy for Adult Education was recommended.

Mr. Kohlhagen explained the language regarding school visits by Board members in the Board's By-Laws Policy was revised.

Chairperson Hodges explained that with the assistance of the Board's attorney, language was developed to encourage Board members' visits to school buildings but to do it in the most efficient, least disruptive way to the school day.

Mr. Kohlhagen reviewed the proposed policy for Student Representation on the Board of Education. Mr. Kohlhagen stated Board members will have to choose between language A or B. Mr. Kohlhagen reminded Board members this proposed policy had an initial review by the Board in June and was sent back to the Policy and Planning Committee for further review and discussion.

Mrs. Montinieri shared her suggestions to language changes and Mr. Kohlhagen distributed suggested language changes from Mr. Stanziale.

Chairperson Hodges clarified letters of intent should be submitted to the advisor of the extracurricular activity referred to in the policy.

Mrs. Massaro suggested a reorder of the language paragraphs.

Chairperson Hodges stated that everyone seems to be in agreement that student representation at Board of Education meetings is important; it is the process of choosing them that needs to be decided.

Chairperson Hodges urged her colleagues to submit any other suggestions or changes to herself or to the Superintendent's office.

b. Meetings Held

Chairperson Hodges reported the following meetings have been held: Policy and Planning Committee; Early Readiness Council and Human Resources and Personnel Committee.

c. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson Hodges announced the following meetings are scheduled: Finance and Information Committee; Governance Committee; CREC Council and Community and Public Relations Committee.

8. Public Comment

Balou Tooker, 65 Harmund Place, stated he is impressed with the drop in the number of suspensions at the High School. He requested additional information regarding the current drop out rate and a report from the Resource Officer at the High School.

9. Board Comments

In response to Mrs. DeAngelo, Mr. Kohlhagen explained that until late spring, 2009, a budget freeze of 75 percent had been in effect. The "EveryDay Math" materials and textbooks were purchases made out of the 2008-09 budget and 2009-10 budget.

Chairperson Hodges stated that several years ago a review of textbooks in the District revealed just how dated some textbooks were and it has been a goal of the Board to supply our students with the tools necessary to be successful.

In response to Mr. Stanziale, Mr. Kohlhagen stated information regarding the ARRA funds will be in an upcoming Board packet.

Mrs. Montinieri and Mrs. Massaro both complimented the Band for their outstanding efforts.

Chairperson Hodges thanked the Boosters for sharing their concerns regarding the St. Patrick's Day Parade and for participating in the Columbus Day Parade.

In response to Mrs. DeAngelo, Mr. Kohlhagen stated detailed information regarding the remaining Band competitions will be included in Friday's packet.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to leave public session and enter executive session at 9:55 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Discussion of Exempt Documents Pertaining to Contracts and Personnel Matters. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Massaro and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session were: Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. DeAngelo, Mrs. Massaro, Mr. McKenna, Mrs. Montinieri, Mrs. Stanziale and Mr. Stanziale. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kohlhagen and Director of Human Resources and Business Services, Mr. Drezek.

Mr. McKenna left the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to leave executive session and enter public session at 10:55 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Montinieri, Vice-Chairperson - Secretary