

Board of Education

September 22, 2009

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, September 22, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mrs. DeAngelo, Mrs. Hodges, Ms. Malec, 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; Silas Deane Middle School Principal, Mr. Cook; Hanmer Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Zacchei; Charles Wright Elementary School Interim Principal, Mrs. Wilkie; Emerson-Williams Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Catarius; Highcrest Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Harvey; Webb Elementary School Principal, Ms. Guari; District staff and residents.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. September 8, 2009 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Stanziale MOVED the approval of the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of September 8, 2009, as presented. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Malec and VOTED unanimously.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Communications

Mr. Bushey shared with the Board and public monies collected for the Matthew Crane Memorial Foundation have been turned over by his family to be administered by Mr. and Mrs. Pentalow. To honor Matthew's passion for basketball, enhancements will be made to

the sound system in the Wethersfield High School gymnasium and a plaque will be displayed honoring Matthew.

Chairperson Hodges moved to agenda item 8.a.

8. Board of Education

a. Teacher Recognition

Mr. Kohlhagen announced a formal recognition ceremony will be held on November 12 at Silas Deane Middle School at 7:00 p.m. to highlight the accomplishments and achievements of District staff.

Mr. Kohlhagen acknowledged and recognized Barbara Andre, Anthony Poitras and Mary-Jo Riddle for their commitment and dedication to the Wethersfield Public Schools and extended best wishes for a long and successful retirement.

Mr. Kohlhagen acknowledged the following staff for their dedicated years of service to the Wethersfield Public Schools. Norma Gallagher, Nan Lamm, Erik Stenson and Michael Sullivan for 25 years of service; Amanda DelMastro, William Embacher, Susan Fennelly and Linda Yarrow for 30 years of service; Maurice Cattanio, Barbara Granato, Margaret Leone, Elaine Paradise and Edward Pontbriant for 35 years of service and MaryAnn Fortin, David Kenyon, Nola Mohrman and Santino Pollicita for 40 years of service.

Mr. Kohlhagen explained the process that is followed in selecting a teacher of the year noting individuals are nominated by their peers.

Mr. Kohlhagen outlined the career accomplishments of Ann Barton, Wethersfield High School's Teacher of the Year; Lisa Corcoran, Hanmer Elementary School's Teacher of the Year; Giselda Forst, Emerson-Williams Elementary School's Teacher of the Year; Pamela Klein, Silas Deane Middle School's Teacher of the Year; Cynthia Wahl, Highcrest Elementary School's Teacher of the Year; Karen Wilson, Webb Elementary School's Teacher of the Year and Maria O'Rourke, Charles Wright Elementary School's Teacher of the Year and Wethersfield Public Schools Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. O'Rourke thanked her colleagues for the honor of Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Montinieri thanked all District staff for their continued dedication to the students of Wethersfield making the Wethersfield Public Schools successful.

Chairperson Hodges thanked the individuals present for their dedication and commitment to the Wethersfield Public Schools.

Mr. McKenna MOVED to take a brief recess to congratulate District staff. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to reconvene the meeting. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. McKenna and VOTED unanimously.

Chairperson Hodges returned to agenda item. Communications.

5. Communications

Mr. Kohlhagen introduced Regina Aleksandravicius from the Wethersfield Public Library.

Ms. Aleksandravicius shared a video clip with the Board and public featuring the District's elementary principals at the culminating event for the Summer Reading Program.

She explained in an effort to encourage as many students as possible to participate in the Summer Reading Program, the Rock, Roll and Read Band was created to perform for those who participated in the reading program. She thanked everyone involved in this program to promote reading.

Ms. Aleksandravicius shared other collaborative projects the Wethersfield Public Library and Wethersfield Public Schools work on together.

Dr. Negroni reported on the Professional Development activities held on Friday, September 18. Student achievement data was reviewed and professional growth objectives were developed.

Dr. Negroni shared staff comments with the Board and public regarding the professional development activities. The next Professional Development day will be held on November 3 and work will continue on vertical articulation, curriculum mapping and the goal to blend the assessment tracker program with the curriculum mapping system.

Dr. Negroni stated it is anticipated District staff will be able to build their own curriculum assessments during spring professional development days.

6. Action Item

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Request for Leave of Absence for Teacher

Ms. Malec MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve a childrearing leave of absence for ID #904676 for the period of February 23, 2010 through June 30, 2010, in accordance with Article 5.6 of the current Agreement between the Wethersfield Board of Education and the Wethersfield Federation of Teachers. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of Request for Leave of Absence for Teacher

Mr. McKenna MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve a childrearing leave of absence for ID #904789 for the period of March 1, 2010 through April 2, 2010, in accordance with Article 5.6 of the current Agreement between the Wethersfield Board of Education and the Wethersfield Federation of Teachers. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Stanziale and VOTED unanimously.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. 2009-2010 District Strategic Instructional Improvement Plan

Mr. Kohlhagen stated the document before the Board is the result of the work of the Board of Education and the District Leadership Team.

Mr. Kohlhagen explained the creation of the Board goals have developed very strong student centered outcomes which are documented and achieved each year.

Mr. Kohlhagen stated the Theory of Action document will be reviewed with each staff member during upcoming faculty meetings. Mr. Kohlhagen explained the Theory of Action is based on systemically integrating research-based academic instructional improvement initiatives in all content areas; with strong student support services; fortified by collaborative leadership development throughout the Wethersfield School Community; supported by internal and external communications and efficient facilities and strong financial management as well as high levels of accountability throughout the system, then students will master grade level outcomes and be academically prepared for the next grade in the K-12 continuum and successfully graduate from Wethersfield High School with the necessary skills to positively contribute to our community.

Mr. Kohlhaben continued with a review of the five individual goals that have been developed.

The Student Achievement Goal will be achieved 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; meeting the performance target of 90% of all students at or above goal in Language Arts and Mathematics by 2010 as measured by State assessments which meets or exceeds 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. Mr. Kohlhaben noted significant improvement has been made on State assessments and results will be reported at the next meeting. Work will continue to increase reading and mathematics proficiency in the subgroup populations and to continue to comply with the Sheff agreements between and among districts in the Hartford region.

Mr. Kohlhaben outlined the following strategies that will be implemented to improve student achievement throughout the District which include focusing on Professional Development on Differentiating Instruction, K-12 with an emphasis on enrichment and intervention; training K-8 staff and implement the updated English Language Arts curriculum; developing a strong system for district-wide implementation of the State mandated Response to Intervention with Scientific Research-Based Interventions; focusing on vertical articulation process on mathematics and science on the 6th to 7th and 8th to 9th grades transitions; strengthening WHS 9th grade team with training and support and training in co-teaching and differentiated instructional strategies for students in need of extra core content support; strengthen Gifted and Talented support via development with during and after-school enrichment program at each elementary school; realign the District's Professional Growth and Teacher Evaluation Plan with anticipated revised state guidelines; continue to align student IEP Goals/Objectives with curricular expectations; improve the K-12 writing outcomes for all students including subgroups with an emphasis on high school writing and a focus on essay writing and SAT preparation, strengthen rigor in all middle school content areas with an emphasis on math and science and review and re-align homework policies and procedures throughout the schools.

To meet the Student Support Services Goal the District will continue to implement a complete K-12 Developmental Guidance Program that supports the social, emotional and

academic needs of students. Mr. Kohlhagen outlined the key strategies that have been developed to accomplish this goal: implementing the RTI module of IEP Direct; systematically implement *Responsive Classroom*, (a classroom management program) at each elementary school; design and implement a K-12 Developmental Guidance Curriculum that includes strengthening of anti bullying, cyber bullying as well as drug and alcohol prevention programs; regularly monitor the special education indicator data as outlined in the School Performance Plan provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education; redesign the 8th to 9th grade course selection process with increased rigor and high expectations; implement the Naviance Guidance System at Silas Deane Middle School and improve college preparation, search and applications services, including athletic NCAA services to students and families. Mr. Kohlhagen noted the District is dedicated to improving the Guidance Department Services to our families.

Improving internal and external communications through the implementation of a series of strategies across the District will be used to meet the Communication Systems goal. It is important to engage all parents to participate in the education of their students. Mr. Kohlhagen reviewed the following strategies created to meet the Communication Systems Goal including implementing a full paperless newsletter and parent communication system via Connect Ed email module; develop long-range communication plan and “Learning Campaign”, continue to utilize the IEP Direct program, continue to collaborate among town, school, parent, student stakeholders for the Community of Concern anti-drug/alcohol effort; address the needs of disenfranchised parents; conduct survey on parent involvement with the assistance of Parent Teacher Organizations; ensure that communications are translated for ELL families and train PTO leadership on parent engagement.

The Capital Improvement and Financial Management Goal will be met as determined by the Board, to continuously improve school operations and facilities to ensure student health and safety and refine fiscal accountability systems to ensure for effective management of school budget resources. Mr. Kohlhagen stated the following strategies have been created to meet the Capital Improvement and Financial Management Goal – fully plan and implement “arrears” payment for all staff in all bargaining units for July 1, 2010; reorganize budget via MUNIS Financial Management Software to allow for view and analysis by program and object for budget development and implementation. Mr. Kohlhagen noted the District is

always looking to be as clear and transparent as possible regarding its financial status. Continue to identify efficiencies and savings in all areas including fuel, centralized purchasing and insurance costs; strengthen internal controls across all business office systems; explore opportunities to replace the WHS auditorium seats and continue to investigate options for shared services between the Town and Board of Education.

Mr. Kohlhagen reported a new Technology Plan has been created and will be implemented to help meet the Instructional Technology goal. Strategies developed to meet the Instructional Technology goal include refining the use of all data systems for implementation of true data warehouse through the district's curriculum mapping and assessment builder system; secure competitive funds for funding of implementation plan of 2009-2012 Instructional Technology Plan; initiate replacement cycle of district-wide computer hardware; strengthen home school connection and 24/7 learning opportunities via Virtualization Project; implement Response to Intervention module of Techpaths, continue successful implementation of the IEP Direct Special Education component; continue utilization of Kinney Systems for reporting Medicaid eligible reimbursement and ensure that Technology and information Literacy "assured experiences" are being implemented and assessed in the content areas.

Chairperson Hodges thanked Mr. Kohlhagen for his presentation and for incorporating Board members' suggestions from the retreat into the document.

b. Announcements/Information

There was no discussion.

8. Board of Education

c. Meetings Held

Chairperson Hodges stated the following meetings have been held: Early Readiness Council and CREC Council.

d. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson Hodges announced the following meetings are scheduled: Policy and Planning Committee and Human Resources & Personnel Committee.

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Board Comments

Mrs. DeAngelo questioned how the "EveryDay Math" textbooks for grade 6 were able to be purchased.

Mr. Kohlhagen explained that we continue to implement the Everyday Math Program adopted by the Board of Education several years ago. Gaps existed which were pointed out to the Board of Education over the last several years, once the budget freeze was lifted in the Spring, monies were available to purchase instructional materials including those to upgrade and enhance the current "EveryDay Math" system currently being used. This upgrade allows for better planning and implementation of this strong program.

Dr. Negroni stated she will provide the cost of these materials in the next Board packet.

Mrs. Montinieri stated she is pleased to hear the funds were available to purchase "EveryDay Math" materials. She acknowledged the generous efforts of the Pentalow family to administer the Matthew Crane Foundation funds.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to leave public session and enter executive session at 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of Discussion of 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, Ms. Malec; 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. Stanziale MOVED to leave executive session and enter public session at 9:15 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. McKenna and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Stanziale MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Malec and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Montinieri, Vice-Chairperson - Secretary