

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**  
**February 4, 2008**  
**Regular Board Meeting**

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on February 4, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:05 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Palmieri, Chairman  
Patrick O. Egolum  
T. Sean Maher  
Eric Murillo  
M. Toni Paine  
Robert Saley  
Howard Horvath Jr.  
Andrew DePalma

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gerald A. Calabritto

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent of Schools  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mayor John M. Picard

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES  
PRESENT:**

Board Chairman, Mark Palmieri stated that we would reverse the order of the meeting and have presentations before public session.

Dr. Andrees stated they would like to reverse the order of the Agenda and have the presentation on Fiber Optic Network by Patti Fusco and Alan Olenick moved to the end of the agenda because after the presentation is completed you may wish to go into executive session.

**C.1. Administration**

Dr. Andrees is very thankful for the opportunity to bring before everyone something they are very excited about. West Haven High School's leadership and staff are looking at reforming their freshmen class next year. Some of these things will occur in the High School Reform Package that is in the State of Connecticut right now. This team at

WHHS has taken this on. After you hear the presentation tonight you will be as proud and excited as I am. This is about what is best for our students.

Neil Cavallaro thanked Dr. Andrees for being very supportive of their efforts in implementing this program. We worked together as a team and have most of the questions and bugs worked out. He stated he is very proud of the faculty from our administrators, department heads, to the teachers chosen to be part of this Freshmen Academy. These people have embraced this project and worked to have it done the best way possible.

Raffaella Fronc and Scott Shand worked on the presentation and were available to answer any questions along with all the administrators. We are truly committed to making this project work.

A slide presentation was given which will be available on the website.

The Academy Model – We tried to create a school within a school for our freshmen. The stakeholders for the program – BOE, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, Leadership Team, WHHS & Both Middle School Principal were involved in the planning, Academy teachers, WHHS Faculty, Parents and Eighth Grade students and teachers.

A great deal of time has been spent with the Leadership Team. Everybody involved must know how this will work in order to make it successful.

#### Placement

Middle School Math CMT Scores

Use Power school to enter scores in middle school

#### Goals

Reduce retention rates by 65%

Reduce truancy and discipline issues 70%

Increase student achievement by 10% and are looking at the following data to do this

8<sup>th</sup> grade end of year exam

9<sup>th</sup> grade mid-term exam

9<sup>th</sup> grade final exam

Increase collaboration among faculty members

#### How are we going to do this?

Place all ninth grade students on teams for the four core subjects:

English, Math, Science & Social Studies

All teams will be housed in the same part of the building

(B wing on the first and second floor and Science the B/C Wing)

1 administrator in charge of all the teams.

Toni Paine asked if we are redistributing the administrator and not creating a new position. The answer was yes we are redistributing not creating a new position.

The departments being moved took it very well for the betterment of the students involved. This will create a smaller environment.

### WHHS Team Structure

Four teams

Each team will have a team leader

Honors students will float in and out of the team. They will float for their highest level subjects outside of the team

Max of 90 students per team – based on the number of incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders

One reading specialist for all teams

4 Inclusion teachers

There will be a reading specialist and an inclusion teacher.

The course requirements are English I, Pre-algebra or Algebra, Biology, Global Studies (a new 9<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies course), Freshmen Seminar and electives.

Further discussion included teacher requirements, team leaders and their roles, repeating freshmen, mandatory summer school, retained students and assignments to different teams, parent role, and the scheduling of classes for Freshmen Academy.

A discussion involving teacher preparation and professional development followed along with Team A – Team B participant names and their area of study.

### The BOE Role

Reading Specialist with an estimated cost of \$50,000.00

Professional Development and Mandatory Summer School Program at an estimated cost of \$50,000.00. Neil stated that the board has already appropriated the \$50,000.00 in their budget request and we thank them for that. He stated the Reading Specialist is part of the proposed budget for the reasons mentioned.

The WHHS Administration and Staff expressed their gratitude to the entire BOE for their support and allocation of resources to help make this program a success and to help students achieve.

Toni Paine stated that this will directly reflect the CAPT Scores. Scott Shand stated that the principal in Bristol began this program ten years ago and has seen dramatic improvements. This became a catalyst for them to change things and they have a Tenth Grade Academy as well.

Howard Horvath stated that this is one of the most exciting concepts in his five years on the board and he couldn't be happier. This took a lot of people who have an open mind

to come together on this and how you work together as a team will determine the success. In a few years we will be reading in the paper about the great success of this program.

Mayor Picard said this is a great start. You can never stay with the status quo and this is a great leap forward. How we monitor the success of this will be important. Next year we can show how well it worked and how we can continue to improve upon this. I think this is great and deserves a round of applause.

Mr. Jordan a member of the audience added his congratulations also stating that this was something that was long overdue. This program will really make a difference. He discussed the cultural, demographic and social economic change in West Haven. He hoped in this program that the teachers know the culture and language of these students and can relate to their parents too. Raffaella Fronc stated we are confident we have excellent teachers for these roles.

Dr. Whitney stated that ELL is already in place this year and we have seen a dramatic increase in the confidence and the scores of these students.

The Biology teacher for this program will be spending the summer in the Dominican Republic this summer and hopes to expand her knowledge of the culture.

Out of two of the team members that are here one is tri-lingual and one is bi-lingual.

Dr. Andrees thanked the staff and their level of commitment to the children. This type of program doesn't come about in the hours from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM there is a great amount of commitment to the children of the West Haven School District here. These people volunteered to do this and we look forward to supporting you in this endeavor.

Dr. Andrees said our children are benefiting greatly from our partnership with Yale. Neil said we will discuss some of the benefits tonight. Raffaella has been our liaison with Yale and other local colleges and we have a list of what we have planned for the remainder of the year with Yale. Raffaella Fronc passed out information on the West Haven/Yale Partnership below and went over some of the events:

**WEST HAVEN/YALE**  
**PARTNERSHIP**

Joanna Price

Coordinator of Community Program Of Studies

Claudia Merson

Director of Public School Partnership

## List of Events

11/20/07

Teachers attended a GM foods workshop with Nancy Kerk.

3/ 7/08

Twelve high school students will be attending together with their teacher Mr. Tremblay the "Discover To Cure" information session for summer internships.

3/27-3/28

All high school teachers will have the opportunity to attend the NSTA conference in Boston.

4/7- 4/12

All grade 7 students will be going to Yale Peabody to learn how to:

"Make a DNA Necklace"

April/May

Elementary Teachers in grades 4 and 5 will receive more training on how to use the FOSS kits.

6/2- 6/5

"Elementary College Visit"

Project search

Project search is also continuing with high school honor students.

## INTERNS

Interns have been assigned to work with classroom teachers to help implement the FOSS Science Program.

Suzannah Holsenbeck is working at Molloy Elementary and Washington Elementary

Jennifer De Cataldo has been assigned to Seth Haley Elementary and Thompson Elementary

Mayor Picard thanked Claudia Merson and Joanna Price for being here tonight and helping out. He would be remiss if he did not thank President Levin and Bruce Alexander and Mike Moran for all they have done. He feels there was some confusion when people found out that Yale was purchasing the Bayer site. People don't fully realize the benefits to West Haven due to this. He stated that this relationship will only get better and better. He thanked Dr. Andrees and Neil and he is very excited about where the educational system in West Haven is going and it will continue to get better and better.

Dr. Andrees stated we will hold the last presentation until the end of the meeting.

### **B. PUBLIC PORTION**

Public Portion began at 7:50 PM.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Rd. gave information about the West Haven Black Coalition Dinner which will be held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at Fantasia Restaurant in North Haven. The cost of the ticket is \$50.00 per person. She has tickets available if anyone is interested. All money must be turned in by the 12<sup>th</sup> of February.

She read the minutes of the budget meeting and is concerned that every year we have to fund the Field, Rink and Food Service to the tune this year of \$410,000.00. With all the good things going on there has to be some better way. She contacted CCM and asked for budgets for the past three years from area towns similar to our own for these three areas to see if everyone else is in the same situation. If they are not maybe we can explore some other avenues to save the district money.

The areas discussed tonight along with All Day Kindergarten are very exciting. This will benefit the children in all factors including academics and the discipline. She would rather see the board be proactive and try to do this first as to waiting until the child gets into trouble.

She is extremely concerned about the legal bills. They have never been changed. It is impossible to ascertain who is speaking to whom (whether it is an attorney or secretary). You should be able to see **who** talked to an attorney for an hour. Some things are private some are not. If an administrator is talking to an attorney that doesn't need to be private. She suggests that something needs to be done about this.

She stated that our hearing officer, to her, is the same as a judge. Our attorney should not contact our hearing officer without the other side present. There are three cases which I will site and am asking for the emails on. This should not be done. Would you want to sit with a judge that already knows everything ahead of time? Why is your attorney or anyone in their office contacting the hearing officer (who she perceives as the judge)? This stopped for awhile and needs to stop again. She would like to explore the possibility of getting other hearing officers that have new fresh and different ideas to look at the children fairly.

She challenges anyone to look at the expulsion records. The Board's attorney has a 99.999% success rate how can that be; court isn't even that good. Once a child goes into an expulsion hearing the child is getting expelled. There are a couple of other things she is investigating. Certain children who have been arrested (for drugs and other serious issues) have not been brought up for expulsion hearings. This needs to be a fair process.

She also understands that one of the board members with an extensive knowledge of technology who chaired the technology committee is not even on the committee this year. She hopes that this is just an oversight and gets rectified.

The board gave thanks.

Curtis Jordan, 249 Macomb Road commended the board and superintendent for the programs brought forward this evening. These programs will get good results.

He feels teachers, nurses and students have been shortchanged in the past due to politics, incompetence and fiscal irresponsibility.

Three to four million dollars sent to the fire district should have gone to All Day Kindergarten. A further discussion about politics in West Haven ensued covering three prior mayors and deficits.

He supports Mayor Picard because we need proficient professionals to run the system.

The board gave thanks.

Margi Maher, 403 Center Street stated that this Saturday Bed Bugs is being produced and is free for children and parents pay \$2.00.

GODSPELL will be performed on March 13, 14, and 15 at 7:30 PM. Saturday matinee at 2:00 PM is free for Senior Citizens. Tickets are \$10 in advance \$12 at the door.

Take A Seat has raised \$16,000.00 to refurbish the chairs and all donations are welcome.

The Dates on the Field Trip Permission Form to Ireland for item 08-28 on the agenda is incorrect. The dates should read April 9, 2009 to April 20, 2009. Correction will be made.

The Board gave thanks.

Buffy Rivera, Cow Pen Road stated that Dr. Andrees is doing a fabulous job. The new technology that has gone into all the schools pleases her. Business should continue to go forward and rumors should cease.

The Board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 8:05 PM

### **C.1.a Status of Schools**

Dr. Andrees stated that it is National School Counselor's Week and they should be applauded for the great job they do.

She will be in Hartford tomorrow morning to address the issue of All Day Kindergarten and High School Reform along with having ESC Funding allocated to schools directly not the towns.

In looking at possible Magnet Funding in 2009 we may be looking at a cost of Five Million Dollars and we will have no say.

Neil stated that he was a moderator at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Spelling Bee Competition today and there was a lot of pressure but the kids handled it well. The finals will take place on Wednesday at 10:00 AM for the City Wide Championship.

### **C.1.b Student Representatives**

### **C.1.c Board**

Sean Maher wanted to send a commendation to Francine Coppola and Mrs. O'Leary from Forest and Mrs. Howard from Thompson who are the bilingual teachers. He attended a presentation that Mrs. O'Leary and Mrs. Howard gave for Hispanic parents on how to get more involved in the children's education. This was an extremely well thought out and well attended presentation at Forest School and they deserve commendations for this.

Mark Palmieri stated that this Partnership we have with Yale reminds me of the Partnership we have with Bayer. Bayer had a program called Science Makes Sense and

they interacted with the students. I feel we are a very fortunate district that people take such an interest in us and I know too that we take an interest in them.

#### **C.1.d Committee**

#### **D.1. Approval of Minutes**

**D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting**, January 22, 2008  
at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

**D.1.b Special Meeting West Haven Board of Education as a Whole for Finance**, January 28, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

#### **D.1. Approval of Minutes inclusive**

Sean Maher made a motion to approve D.1.a and D.1.b inclusive.

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

No discussion

All members were in favor

Motion carries

#### **D.2. Resignations: (Certified)**

**08-24 Barbara Evangelista, English Teacher, WHHS**  
Effective: End of the 2007/2008 Academic Year  
Reason: Retirement

**08-25 Chet P. Evangelista, Special Ed Teacher, Inclusion**  
Effective: End of the 2007/2008 Academic Year  
Reason: Retirement

**08-26 Matthew J. Morgan, Head Coach, Junior Varsity Boys Lacrosse**  
Effective: January 28, 2008  
Reason: Personal

Andrew DePalma made a motion to approve D.2. 08-24 – 08-26 inclusive.

Rob Saley seconded the motion

No discussion

All members were in favor

Motion carries

#### **D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)**

**08-27 Suzanne M. Collins, Literacy Aide Molloy School**  
Effective: February 1, 2008  
Reason: Personal

Andrew DePalma made a motion to approve D.2. 08-24 – 08-26 inclusive.  
Rob Saley seconded the motion  
No discussion  
All members were in favor  
Motion carries

**D.4. New Hire: (Certified) Addendum**

**08-29 John Ascenzia**, 168 Park Terrace Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516  
Boys Assistant Hockey – West Haven High School  
Effective: November 26, 2007  
Salary: \$3,350.00

Andrew DePalma made a motion to approve item 08-29  
Rob Saley seconded the motion  
No discussion  
All members were in favor  
Motion carries

**D.5. New Hires: (Non-Certified)**

**D.6. New Business:**

**08-28 Field Trip Permission Form from Margi Maher**, English Teacher,  
WHHS requesting permission for 30 students from Theatre  
Workshop to go on a field trip to Ireland from April 9, 2009 to  
April 20, 2009

Eric Murillo made a motion to approve D.6. 08-28 (with the date corrections).  
Rob Saley seconded the motion  
No discussion  
All members were in favor  
Motion carries

**08-30 add the Motion to vote on the District Calendar to tonight's Agenda  
for approval.**

Sean Maher made a motion to add the vote on the District Calendar to the agenda  
Eric Murillo seconded the motion  
No discussion  
All members were in favor  
Motion carries

Rob Saley made a motion to approve the District Calendar  
Andy DePalma seconded the motion

No discussion  
All members were in favor  
Motion carries

## **F. Informational**

Nothing further to add

Chairman Palmieri stated we would now go back to administrative reports.

## **Reports**

### **C.1. Administration (Continued)**

Dr. Andrees stated that a presentation on Fiber Network by Patti Fusco and Alan Olenick will be given as a PowerPoint Presentation. This will be available on the web. You will then hear a ten minute presentation from AT&T and ChimeNet the two bidders for this contract

At this time the City was given permission to separate from us and only the school board will be entering into an agreement for the Fiber Network. On February 7<sup>th</sup> we must have a signed document in the mail giving us 64% reduction on the cost.

The presentation given by Patti Fusco and Alan Olenick followed:

#### Highlights

Fiber-optic lines are strands of optically pure glass as thin as a human hair that carries digital information over long distances.

Fiber-optic communication transmits information from one place to another by sending light through an optical fiber.

First developed in the 1970's

Process of communicating using fiber-optics was explained as well as the reason for the Network (such as Power School)

The full presentation will be available on the web.

Patti then introduced Tim Hackett, Senior Account Manager from AT&T and Les Bowman, Regional Manager from AT&T who gave a presentation and passed out information pertaining to their presentation.

A discussion followed.  
The Board gave thanks.

Patti then introduced the group from ChimeNet which is owned by the American Hospital Association. Tim Poler, Account Representative, ChimeNet, Matt Hoey, Vice President and Director of Operations, ChimeNet and Bob David, from FiberTech who is the Enterprise Account Manager. FiberTech will be providing the fiber service. Information was passed out and a presentation was given.

A discussion followed.

The Board gave thanks

Most of the audience left the board room after this presentation.

Mark Palmieri said we are going to take a 5 minute break but before we do asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:30 PM to discuss the two companies who bid on the contract.

Eric Murillo made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:30 PM  
Rob Saley seconded the motion  
All members were in favor  
Motion to enter Executive Session after a five minute break is approved.

M. Toni Paine left the meeting before the Executive Session began.

The Board entered in to Executive Session at 9:31 PM. Also invited were: Superintendent Andrees, Assistant Superintendent Cavallaro, Interim Business Manager Gary Miller, Patti Fusco a member of the District's Tech. Team and Alan Olenick from the City's Tech. Department.

Andrew DePalma made a motion to come out of Executive Session.

Robert Saley seconded the motion

The Board voted to come out of executive session at 10:19 PM

Robert Saley made a motion to add 08-31 to the Board's agenda to award ChimeNet the bid for fiber optic service.

The motion was seconded by Andrew DePalma

There was no discussion, and the vote was unanimous to add the item to the agenda

Sean Maher made a motion to award the bid for fiber optic service to ChimeNet.

The motion was seconded by Robert Saley.

The Board voted 6 – 1 in favor of the motion with Board Member Eric Murillo voting against the motion and members Paine and Calabritto absent.

The motion 08-31 carried.

Andrew DePalma made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Robert Saley seconded the motion

The vote to adjourn was unanimous

The meeting ended at 10:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary