

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
January 22, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on January 22, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Palmieri, Chairman
Gerald Calabritto, Vice Chairman
Patrick O. Egolum
T. Sean Maher
Eric Murillo
M. Toni Paine
Robert Saley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Howard Horvath Jr.
Andrew DePalma

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Shamsi Aysha

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

Dr. Andrees stated we have Eric Triffin, M.P.H., Director of Health, City of West Haven and Richard Fontana, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator City of West Haven and Region 2 who have worked closely with Ann Valanzuolo, Language and Arts Coordinator and Kathy Cassell, Assistant Director of Pupil Services to produce this educational calendar that shows off the wonderful artwork of our students. Mr. Triffin and Mr. Fontana are with us tonight with certificates for the students and we have pins for the students and wish to honor them this evening.

Mr. Triffin stated that this is the third calendar that has been produced. We did one on lead, another on immunizations and now we have completed one on the pandemic flu.

This calendar teaches us some practices that are good to prevent not just the threat of the pandemic flu but also the prevention of colds and all kinds of hand to mouth diseases.

The following students were called up individually to receive their certificates. Pins were distributed to each individual present by Board Chairman, Mark Palmieri. Patti Fusco, President of the West Haven Federation of Teachers took pictures individually of each child and in a group. Unfortunately many of the honorees who were students in West Haven High School last year were unable to attend this meeting. Many students are away at college. Calendars, certificates and pins will be sent to their homes.

Pandemic Flu Preparedness Calendar Honorees:

Gilbert Agyeman – WHHS - Cover
Evan Dupee – WHHS - Cover
LaDonna Brookshire - WHHS
Suzy DellaValle - WHHS
Maria Perusina - WHHS
Brittney Riordan - WHHS
Brian Snyder - Bailey
Ashlie Triolo-Dekkers - WHHS
Edgar Trujillo - Carrigan
Jigme Woser - WHHS
Christina Zheng - Carrigan

Parents and guardians of the above students who were in the audience were asked to stand and they received a round of applause.

Dr. Andrees stated that the next honorees we will present are 5th grade students who participated in an essay contest. Their Principal, Mrs. Rita Pepe happens to be here with us tonight to honor these students. Across the State of Connecticut over 1,000 individual entrees were made by students in this essay contest. We are very proud to state that this year from West Haven we had a second place winner and two students who received honorable mention. These students have already been recognized by Congressional District 3.

The following students were honored:

Second Place Winner Secretary of the State’s Essay Contest for Congressional District 3:

Aidan Krala - Seth G. Haley

Honorable Mention Secretary of the State’s Essay Contest for Congressional District 3:

Salvatore DelCollo - Seth G. Haley

Honorable Mention Secretary of the State's Essay Contest for Congressional District 3:

Kelly Sullivan – Seth G. Haley

Parents, guardians and friends who were with the students tonight were asked to stand and received a round of applause.

Board Member Toni Paine asked if all the students were from Seth Haley and Mrs. Pepe stated yes that their fifth grade teachers made this a project and Mr. Ralph Filippelli is with us tonight and two of the students are from his class. Mr. Filippelli joined in the group picture.

The topic of the essay was who you would want to have as President of the United States. Aidan chose his sister, Karen. Salvatore chose Oprah and Kelly chose her Dad.

Dr. Andrees stated that although they are not here tonight I wanted to share with you that from Savin Rock Community School Leslie Cote, Art Teacher and Rita Bruno, Library Media Specialist entered students in a Project that the whole school was involved in called Fired Up For Reading. Out of thousands of students from around the world who entered a contest for the drawing of a dragon Savin Rock came in first. This is the kind of material we want to see in the paper about the wonderful things that are happening in our town for our children. I certainly hope the press is here tonight to showcase our students. Kudos and congratulations.

Dr. Andrees stated it is wonderful when we have our community partners help us to realize goals that we set for ourselves. The high school extends invitations each year and receives lots of responses to support Up All Night. Mr. Ron Stancil, Principal WHHS is here to say thank you to the members of our community who continue to support our students.

Ron Stancil said that we have just completed our 14th year of having a substance free graduation party. We take the students right after graduation to the cafeteria where we feed the students and their families with food from our supporters. From there the students go by Winkle Bus to the Jewish Community Center and are up all night having a substance free good time. Students who are juniors are also invited in order to build excitement for their senior year graduation. It is a great time and anyone who has not seen it is invited to see it. This year we will be graduating Friday, June 20th. The PTA helps out a lot and we appreciate this.

We appreciate everything everyone does for our kids. This is a very special town and I'm glad to be a part of it.

The following individuals/companies received plaques in recognition of their contributions to the 2007 Project Graduation "Blue and White Up All Night"

ShopRite of West Haven
Super Stop & Shop of West Haven
West Haven Food Service Department
Harry M. Bailey Middle School PTSA
West Haven Police Union – Local 895
Winkle Bus Company
Exxon Mobil Corporation
West Haven Professional Fire Fighters – Local 1198
American Medical Response Ambulance
West Haven Parks & Recreation
Rotary Club of West Haven
Texas Roadhouse
West Haven Youth Service Bureau Drug & Alcohol Task Force
P-Dawg Productions
Life Touch – National School Studios, Inc.
West Haven High School Band Members – Class of 2007
West Haven Board of Education
West Haven Federation of Teachers and West Haven Federation of School Nurses
GHP

The Board gave thanks.

There was a two minute break before the public portion began.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

The public portion began at 7:30 p.m.

Sharon Spaziani, 85 Main Street was disappointed that the budget meeting is scheduled as the same time as the City Council Meeting. She has heard rumors that two administrative positions are being contemplated. She feels the board of education is top heavy on the administrative level and the priority should be for teachers and textbooks for our students. She has the utmost respect for Dr. Andrees and complimented her on the fine work she is doing.

The Board gave thanks.

Shawn Brown, 56 Highview stated he received a call from the president of the league that he started three seasons ago. Politicians are coming after this league. These children do not have as much as children from the shore and the center areas of town. He is appalled when he hears leaders criticize them because of the color of their skin. He expects more from educators. Leaders dictate these kid's futures and he expects leaders to help out; not to strong arm a recreational league.

The Board gave thanks.

Lou Persiani, 104 Martin Street agrees with comments Sharon Spaziani made earlier and feels more money should be spent on Art rather than on administrators.

Dr. Andrees is doing an excellent job and has brought light and fresh air to this education system.

The Board gave thanks.

Ken Cox, High Street is having an Arts Program which will be displayed in New Haven. He will hang 75 to 100 pieces of artwork and is asking the students to participate early. Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools will be working with Mr. Cox on this project. The artwork will be displayed for two weekends this year rather than just one so more people can come to New Haven and see the display.

There were no further speakers
Public Session closed at 7:45 p.m.

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

C.1.a Status of Schools

Dr. Andrees stated The University of New Haven partnered with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and has helped to provide a wonderful opportunity in music for students in our schools. UNH and Bayer have partnered in trying to get instruments for students in our elementary schools. Bayer may commit up to \$10,000 in order for our children to have instruments. We are sending out surveys to all students to see if they have an interest in playing an instrument. She believes in a country as wealthy as ours all students should have this opportunity.

A woman who recently became a widow learned that West Haven was searching for instruments for their students and she knew that is what she would do with the instrument that her deceased husband had owned. She was very happy to see it go to a child who would use it.

Please help us in our endeavor to provide musical instruments for our students.

Dr. Andrees thanked the audience for the kind words and asked them to challenge the legislature to get funds for programs we want for our kids. All Day Kindergarten is one of these programs. Dr. Andrees met with Gail Slosberg who stated Milford put in All Day Kindergarten three or four years ago and are now reaping the benefits. As board member Eric Murillo has said ECS dollars should belong to the Board of Education and used for our school children. If you require any names or phone numbers Dr. Andrees will have them available in her office through her secretary Maria.

Dr. Andrees stated that Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools along with the collaboration of the staff and principal has done an amazing job at WHHS. We are moving forward in a progressive way in high school reform. We do not require certain courses that we are unable to staff. She stated that Neil will speak about this tonight.

Neil Cavallaro stated he is excited about the presentation that will be brought before the board at the next board meeting. The high school staff has embraced this. We are creating a school within a school which will make WHHS a smaller friendly environment for incoming freshman. Freshman will be together in a smaller area and will have the same lunch period. At our next board meeting there will be a more detailed presentation on what we will be doing.

Tracking is taking place at the high school – we are eliminating the lowest classes and providing support for these students to be competitive.

There are many freshmen who repeat their freshman year and by making summer school mandatory that would help them move closer to graduation and get them to their sophomore year. If summer school does become mandatory we will try to take funds from this year's operating budget to fund it. Upon completion of the summer school course a small amount of money will be awarded. This is an added incentive to students and parents.

We are in the process of setting up after school enrichment classes and will notify potential candidates. Sign ups begin next week and run through February. We hope to utilize the new computer classrooms.

Fifth grade classes will tour Yale University and meet with a science professor for half a day and have a picnic lunch on campus.

The Protrax Contract will come before the board for a vote soon. Hopefully you will be able to view how it works during the February vacation when training is expected. Mounds of paper will be eliminated.

A lot of good things are going on in our district.

C.1.b Student Representatives

Shamsi Aysha stated that the MS Walk Team Organization has raised about \$90 and will be holding a raffle on Valentines Day. The Rostrum is expected to be on sale before February vacation. The West Haven High School Math Team now ranks among the top half in Connecticut and is qualified for the State Tournament which will take place after their last meet on February 7th.

C.1.c Board

T. Sean Maher toured Forest School with Dr. Andrees, Toni and Rob Saley and was extremely impressed with the things going on there; Mr. Hunt should be commended. He was most impressed with the way the custodial staff keeps the campus; the cleanliness and the look of the school overall.

Jerry Calabritto also was impressed with the condition of Forest School and publicly commends the custodial staff there. He also commends Mr. Hunt and his staff for demonstrating to us the smart board in operation. It was wonderful seeing the children using that smart board.

M. Toni Paine was quite impressed with Forest School. The whole atmosphere of the school is absolutely wonderful; it is very bright. The staff is just unbelievable and the kids are so excited to show you what they are doing. I can't say enough about the smart board. What a great name for it! I wish we had one for every room.

Rob Saley congratulated Principal Hunt who is doing a great job. The Breast Cancer Jump was a success and fellow board member Howie Horvath did jump in and helped to raise a lot of money.

A couple of years ago this board went from school to school for the meetings. I know it is hard for parents and teachers to come to these meetings and I thought this might help for parent involvement and asked if the board would consider this in future months perhaps in the Spring.

Patrick Egolum stated he was very pleased with the impending innovations that Dr. Andrees and Neil Cavallaro commented on tonight.

Patrick stated that perhaps one of the ways to bring pressure on our representative to help us receive money for our kids is to invite them to our meetings along with the PTA and the public and we can hear from them. Is this something we can do?

Dr. Andrees stated Hamden just posted a meeting of all the legislators and invited all the people to attend. Jerry Calabritto stated that CABA has regional meetings where they invited the legislators and CABA is our lobbying group in Connecticut.

Patrick Egolum stated but this doesn't involve the public.

Mark Palmieri thanked Dr. Andrees for going to UNH yesterday. Mark has a team of 10 to 13 year old young ladies and they were able to interact with the student athletes at UNH and have lunch with them and tour the campus. They were so interested in the University and life on campus that he received phone calls from his team's parents along with parents from the other team. The University is always trying to do something for our school district and they have very good intentions.

Dr. Andrees stated that it was Dr. Martin Luther King Day and UNH didn't leave this out they allowed the students to participate in an activity with UNH students which was very impressive.

C.1.d Committee

Eric Murillo passed out new State health related legislative changes for 2007/2008 and stated this would be discussed with the Policy Committee Members.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting, January 7, 2008
at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve the above minutes

Rob Saley seconded the motion

all were in favor

minutes were approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

08-18 Frank DeGennaro, Assistant Coach – Football, WHHS
Effective: January 7, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-19 Leslie Hahn, Pre-School Medical Paraprofessional Haley & Mackrille
Effective: January 4, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-20 Loretta Collins, Assistant Custodian WHHS 12 - 5
Effective: End of School Year 2007/2008
Reason: Retirement

08-21 Vito A. Brienza, Para, Special Ed, WHHS
Effective: End of School Year 2007/2008
Reason: Retirement

D.4. New Hire: (Certified)

08-22 Jorge L. Pol, 486 Huntington Street, Shelton, CT 06484-4630
Spanish Teacher, West Haven High School
Effective: January 15, 2008
Salary \$42,512.06 (Step 5 B.S.+30)

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

08-23 **Eduardo Alvarez**, 38 Second Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Bilingual Aide, Pagels and Mackrille
Effective: January 23, 2008
Salary: \$15.09 per hour for 12 hours per week

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.2. – D.5. inclusive
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
all in favor
Items Item 08-18 – 08-23 approved

F. Informational:

Nothing to report under informational

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
All were in favor
Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola