

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
June 2, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on June 2, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, President 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
Eric Murillo
T. Sean Maher
Robert Saley
M. Toni Paine
Patrick Egolum
Howard Horvath

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jerry Calabritto
Andy DePalma

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent of Schools
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Faraz Sabir

B. Reports:

B.1. Administration

Dr. Andrees had Jon Capone come before the board and introduce Jen Fuggi, a senior at WHHS. Jon spoke about the accomplishments of Jen Fuggi, a senior gymnast at WHHS. Two years ago Jen became a team of one and represented WHHS. We worked with Jonathan Law High School and became a part of their scheduling. Jen told Mr. Capone two years ago that all she wanted to do was bring something positive to West Haven High School and the West Haven Community.

This year she was:

- The number 1 gymnast in the SCC. In regards to the scoring system that they use she was ranked number 1
- She finished 4th in the State Open
- She finished 2nd at the New England Open
- She finished 7th over all in the country out of 100 on a State Team over the Memorial Day Weekend

Jon Capone stated he would say to Jennifer, "Mission Accomplished." She achieved her goal.

Chairman Palmieri presented Jennifer with two plaques. He stated that what stands out is that you were a one woman team and you represented our school tremendously throughout the New England, the State, the regions and throughout the country. We are very proud of you. You also had fun doing this and that means a lot.

Pictures were taken of Jen with her parents and coaches. Applause followed and the board gave thanks. Another person who was given thanks was Pat Simon the coach from Jonathan Law who helped to put this all together. He will be retiring this year from the Milford School system after 35 years. The Board presented him with a gift in appreciation of his help.

Jen asked to speak and she thanked the board and everyone individually by name that helped her in her accomplishments.

Dr. Andrees extended her congratulations and thanked her for the honor she brought to our community.

Mike Lenge was introduced and gave us an update on the partnership between the Community House and West Haven Public Schools. This is the 57th successful year that the Community House has partnered with West Haven Schools and we will have even more success next year. He thanked everyone for all their cooperation and assistance with Community House Services. Services are currently being provided for students attending every West Haven public school. There are programs physically located in all but one school. Through our Head Start and School Readiness Program we have about 100 children each year after two years of Pre-School and coming into Kindergarten. We assist in supporting non-traditional students through our services for pregnant teens and host Adult Education and GED classes. This year we served 800 children through our services that are part of the school district. We provided over \$3,000,000 in services to West Haven children and families and not one dollar came from the City or school district tax dollars. He thanked Dr. Andrees, the board and various other people. He congratulated Neil and looks forward to expanding that relationship. He passed out a paper showing all the areas of service that the Community House provides.

Dr. Andrees thanked him for applying for and receiving a grant to provide those wonderful after school activities particularly for those middle school kids.

The board gave thanks.

The next group being brought before the board was the High School Advisory Program for the fall. This is a cooperative effort with the high school administration, union and teaching staff who are bringing the last piece that connects with the Freshman Academy and the entire West Haven High School. The Commissioner of Education is asking schools in the future to look ahead at providing a different kind of advisory program to keep kids from falling through the cracks. This team did not wait for it to be mandated they are ahead of the game and we will be able to bring this to this district this Fall. Dr. Andrees introduced Connie Perkins, Heather Maresca and Mark Consorte.

Mark stated that they are excited about this program and it is a big part of the school reform movement nationwide. The NEASC Accreditation committee recommended this program to get adults in the building to connect with the kids. We visited five schools who have been doing this and we picked out the things that would work best for us. Branford High School has been doing this for about 11 years and has taken a lead on this. We think it will work well in West Haven.

The details of the program are that twice a month we will meet with an adult in the building (all teachers, administrators, and all counselors will meet with a group of 15 kids) they will stay with that

group for four years. Twice a month for half a period they will get a discussion going and build a relationship. As the relationship grows over four years kids will have one more person to connect with so they won't get into trouble or drop out. They will have an adult advisee. We are trying to make West Haven High which is a big building a little smaller. This advisory program will help all students. A survey which was borrowed from Chicago elementary schools was administered to all the students in the building and a book with the feedback will be distributed to the teachers in the beginning of the school year. The training for professional development will be done in the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Andrees thanked the team for their perseverance.

The board gave thanks.

Neil Cavallaro said we will now have the next presentation Special Education School Readiness Report. As part of the school readiness grant we operate three classrooms 2 at Seth Haley and 1 at Mackrille that provides special education classes for kids that are required at three and four to go into Special Ed Programs. We also reserve slots for school readiness children that fall under Larry's program. Children sign up for this and are placed on a waiting list. We had to decide whether or not to go through the accreditation process. Discussions with the State Advisors ensued and there are some concerns regarding the program. We have come up with an alternative plan that will provide the same service and we will follow the same rules and procedures but we will not have to go through that accreditation process. It is quite a lengthy and expensive process and at this point we may not have the personnel to be able to do this.

Cindy Smirnoff from the State of Connecticut and ACES was introduced and explained the process and why we came to the decision to not go through the accreditation process. She stated that it is a long process and there are 400+ criteria that must be met for accreditation. This means a loss of material time in planning and being away from the children. As she looked at our program and the high quality of the teachers we have she questioned was it necessary for us to do a self study which is a school readiness requirement not a board of ed requirement.

Larry Frattini talked about the credential for our teachers and that of the other programs. Larry stated there are minimum credentials for teachers in any of our other sub-grantees; it is called a CDA + 12 early childhood credits. The state will continually have those standards increase. The teachers that West Haven employees are required by the State of Connecticut to have a Bachelor Degree or a Masters and our teachers do. There clearly is a difference and we are already providing a high quality of education.

Cindy said when you look at the above and are deciding which way to go, we are simply changing the funding mechanism. Neil stated we will take it out of IDEA funds and not go through the accreditation process. Our teachers are superior education wise and professional development wise to what is offered at other sites. Some sites have 10 hour days 12 months a year and we are 2 ½ hour days 10 months a year. Larry Frattini The only change will be there will be no supervisory role in the capacity they have had in the past. We will still service the 37 part day slots; it will still be 2 ½ hours a day, 5 days a week, and 180 days with no change in services. Transportation will still be provided and there will be no cost to the parent for the program and the locations of the programs will remain the same.

Eric Murillo asked what are some of the things the state would make us do for accreditation. We would have to install two new playgrounds at Seth Haley and Mackrille where the pre K students can play. The playground's cost minimum would be between \$10,000 and 50,000 and you need one at both

schools. Howie Horvath asked if an analysis had been done. Yes but the paperwork was not available at the moment. Howie would feel more comfortable looking at this information on a spread sheet. The requested information will be given to Howie. Eric asked if there will be any changes to the program. No there will be not changes the criteria will remain the same. The child must be 3 or 4 and a resident of West Haven. Three year olds usually attend in the AM and four year old children attend in the PM.

The Board gave thanks.

Sydney Evans, President of Envelopes Anyone came before the board with a way to help the handicapped, the disabled and World War II Veterans. The program was started about seven years ago and it turned out to be a Bonanza. Other area towns are now following suit. Our challenge was to start businesses without an investment. Businesses that people want to buy into not so much into the business but the product that we make. Everything we make has been recyclable everything has been utilized two, three and four times before being delivered to the land fill. It costs a lot of money to collect waste material and if we can continue to use it over we save two or three costs of transportation collection, distribution and burning of the material.

He distributed lovely envelopes that were manufactured right here in West Haven by the Community House. This is a perfect example of different members of a community coming together to help another person help another person. Students from Molloy and Carrigan participated in the very first experiments using envelopes manufactured here. They need wallpaper, wall calendars etc.

If you are interested in working together to help contact Mr. Evans at P.O. Box 7753, Kilby Station, New Haven, CT 06519.

The Board gave thanks.

Marilisa Anania the yearbook editor presented Chairman Palmieri in honor of the Board's support with a yearbook from the class of 2008. If anyone would like to buy a book the cost is \$70.00. Mrs. Paine had previously suggested that the board only receive one copy of the book rather than nine and we applaud her for this recommendation.

Dr. Andrees and the board thanked Marilisa for the good work that she does and the gift to the board.

C. PUBLIC PORTION

Public Session began at 7:40 PM.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Rd., West Haven, CT welcomed Dave Cappetta who she knows will do a fine job and she also congratulate Neil Cavallaro. It is with heavy heart that she knows Dr. Andrees is leaving as she has been absolutely wonderful to have her here the last two year. She has brought us great ideas; the children, leaders, and administration all know her. Toni wishes her well wherever she should go.

The board gave thanks.

Ray Collins, 7 Apple Tree Terrace, West Haven, CT commented on how proud the board should be for not going outside for a Superintendent search when you have the best candidate among you. Why

should you go out and waste taxpayer's money. He had the privilege to work with Neil when he was Acting Superintendent and he was the acting chairman. They worked together closely through the union give backs and budget crisis and Neil was a pleasure to work with. Neil worked under two phenomenal superintendents with two completely different styles whom he learned from. He congratulated Neil and stated he knows he will do well. Neil thanked him.

Ray congratulated JoAnn on her new position and said she will be sorely missed. He thanked her for her fresh ideas. People come in and out of your lives everyday and once in a while a special person will come and stay for awhile and when they leave they leave a little of themselves. JoAnn you will be in the hearts of West Haven forever.

Dr. Andrees and the board gave thanks.

Jackie Grady, 83 Holcomb Street, West Haven, CT thanked Dr. Andrees for bringing a lot of class, feeling and hope to everybody (not just the students). You were present for everything and you were at the schools everyday. I want to thank you for doing this. You brought a lot to us and I won't ever forget you for doing this.

Dr. Andrees and the board gave thanks.

Robert Guthrie, 11 Spruce Peak Lane, West Haven, CT stated he unfortunately came to say goodbye but knows many will stay in contact with Dr. Andrees. A few years ago when Dr. Andrees came to replace a very popular Superintendent I told her she would have three hurdles to overcome and she overcame them. In my book this is the order.

- She was from out of town
- She was African American
- She was female

On all fronts she came in, she met the public, reassured them, turned around many programs, implemented programs, developed excellent team work and worked well with the board and Assistant Superintendent.

This board has the opportunity to do this with the new Superintendent and Finance Director to continue to work as a team.

I wish Dr. Andrees well and as the future goes on I will call her one thing, friend. Congratulations.

Dr. Andrees and the Board gave thanks.

George Monahan, 376 Center Street, West Haven, CT congratulated Neil and wished him well. He has served the district for many, many years with tremendous skills and talents. There is no doubt that you will continue to grow those talents.

He gave credit to former board president John Carrano implemented and required the most open and diverse search and hiring process that the City of West Haven has ever seen. He empowered nine seated board members and added to that representation from the administrative union, teachers and nurses union, paraprofessional union, PTA, and lay people from the community not directly connected to the Board. On numerous interviews those 15 people voted unanimously that Dr. JoAnn Andrees was the top choice. We were honored to hire her. The board established goals for the Superintendent and she went

above and beyond those goals and made very challenging commitments regarding extra activities and extra responsibilities that she felt she needed to bring to the table. JoAnn went above and beyond the call of duty. JoAnn is a class act and a very caring individual. Her work ethic and passion for her job and responsibilities can not be forgotten. We won't ever forget that. George said that he and many other people are humbled for having met her. Most importantly, when you go back home understand that there is a certain side of human nature called selfishness and it is that selfishness that results in people being disappointed in your decision to leave West Haven. After a short amount of time and analysis we realize that it is a human nature fault because who can fault you; you are going back home to serve previous friends and family in a district that you don't necessarily like better but it is an opportunity that I think the vast majority of people, if given the same opportunity, would make the same choice.

The most important thing to take with you is to know without a doubt that you have positively impacted the thousands of children for their entire lives and be very, very proud of that.

Dr. Andrees and the board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 7:55 PM

Dr. Andrees thanked the board for giving her the opportunity to serve in this community with the citizens of this town and in particular with the beautiful children of West Haven. It has been an honor and a privilege for me to be able to have this kind of opportunity. For you to welcome me as openly and as warmly as you did is really a complement to the greatness of this town. I hope you don't ever lose sight of what a wonderful town this is. Sometimes people forget about that and you have beautiful children here and it is the children where are attention and time should be spent. I have had the privilege to be able to focus my decisions and my time for what is best for the children. Mr. Cavallaro and the administrative team, the board of education deserve my thanks for providing me this opportunity. I couldn't have done it without all of you. You have made me a better person by allowing me to come to this new place and do what we have done. When you are in your home town you think that they like you and that is why you are promoted and all of a sudden you are in a different town and wonder can I do this here. You have provided me the opportunity to do that here and I thank you all very, very much and God Bless You.

Dr. Andrees wished Neil her dear friend and colleague the very best.

Applause

C.1.a Status of Schools

Dr. Andrees spoke about an Author who came to Savin Rock School, Ralph Masiellio. The students at SRCS entered a Dragon Writing Contest and as a result Mr. Ralph Masiellio spent a full day at the school and autographed a book for the board. Dr. Andrees asked the board if they would be willing to donate back to the school's library. They gladly said they would.

Our kids won the contest out of thousands of school children across the country. We came in first place in the Drawing the Dragon Contest. There were also international schools that competed as well.

One student did an outstanding drawing and was honored separately from all the others.

Dr. Andrees stated that one of our seniors Djeniffer Melo was honored this year as the Register and

Yale's Youth of the year. Jennifer will be attending Yale. It is an honor for us to receive that kind of recognition. Congratulations to Jennifer.

Neil Cavallaro stated that he had to speak about the goals and standards that Dr. Andrees set for herself. These goals made all of us here work that much harder to be that much better. If the standards are raised and we have now seen things in a different perspective we will keep them and we will keep raising those standards. This is a very important legacy that Dr. Andrees has given us. Sometimes it does take an outsider to come in and say to all of us, "you guys are pretty good." Sometimes we get down on ourselves or don't believe in ourselves but the positive attitude Dr. Andrees brought to us made us feel better about ourselves and you can't put a price on that. There are good players and great players and the difference between the good and great players are that the great players make those around them better and that is what you did for us.

Applause

Today Dr. Andrees, Mayor Picard and I went on the first set of tours for the fifth grade at Yale. The students were engaged and learned so much about the history of New Haven and Yale. It was a great opportunity.

Neil said that Chief Ron Quagliani is proposing to the City Council an ordinance regarding registered sex offenders and keeping them off of public and recreation areas and school property. He thinks the public hearing will be June 9th at 6:50 PM. Let the Council Members receive your support. Copies were passed out.

The board gave thanks

C.1.b Student Representatives

Faraz Sabir stated that all sports ended and the tennis team is the only one that made it to the State Championship which is me. Laughter. We made it to the second round but were beaten by Amity.

He thanked board members for coming to the band concert it really meant a lot to the kids.

He said he had been through this school system since kindergarten and as everyone stated since Dr. Andrees has been here everybody is refreshed and all the new ideas and programs helped the students a lot.

Mark Palmieri stated that Faraz forgot to say he was the Prom King. Congratulations.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.c Board

Sean Maher commended Katie Morris for her first show at Bailey School. In seven weeks she put together a comedy that was very impressive.

He was honored and humbled to work with Dr. Andrees for the last six months and only wishes it could have been longer. He looks forward to working with Neil

Eric Murillo stated that he and Dr. Andrees arrived at about the same time, he as a new board member and Dr. Andrees as Superintendent. You brought with you great passion to make a difference.

On many occasions we visited all the schools to get familiar with them. We walked the halls with the principals who would point out the great programs and let you know of their wish list of things they wanted to accomplish.

At Carrigan we noticed the dark gloomy walls around the hallways and classroom and spoke about painting them. Well, the new brightly colored walls put a smile on everyone's faces especially the children.

When computers became obsolete and printers ceased to function we came together with a plan to improve technology for the good of all children. You supported us with the wellness policy because you believe in the wellness of our children. During our Equity Team Meetings where Courageous Conversations took place I truly knew that your passion to improve the education of all children, regardless of color, is of the most importance in your career. You were a fundamental part in the building process in closing the systemic racial educational disparity in the West Haven school system.

As you continue your journey back home to Michigan I wish you, your husband and your children the best of life that God can give you. Thank you very much.

Patrick Egolum didn't want to re-hash what others have said about Dr. Andrees but I simply want to thank you immensely for the things you have done for this city and for the knowledge we have learned from you since I started as a board member here. I can not thank you enough. I wish you a lot of luck and God Bless you and Yours.

Howie Horvath agrees with George Monahan in that Dr. Andrees brought an incredible passion to the town of West Haven to do your job for the children. Your work ethic is second to none – I stand in awe. You have raised the standards. There is also a sense of wonder and joy. Maybe you maintain that fire from the children and you certainly have provided it to everyone who has come to know you and work with you. You have a special skill in instilling great belief in what we all can do. You are really an inspiration in helping us see that we can be more. I want to thank you for this very special contribution that you made since you have been here and I hope in some small way we have done that for you.

Rob Saley said that life is short Dr. Andrees and I know that the tenure of a Superintendent is even that much shorter. I will keep this short; I want to wish you and your husband Bob, because he doesn't like to be called Robert, I know that, I wish you all the best of luck out there.

Toni Paine said she wasn't prepared to say anything because she hoped you would change your mind. Laughter. It is such a joy to walk with you throughout the schools. All the little kids walk up to you or wave and you know so many of their names. You are everywhere all the time I can't figure it out. Your work ethic is phenomenal. You have truly been a friend and have treated everyone with respect and that is why you get that back.

Applause

Toni also stated the Washington walk through was phenomenal and the high school walk through was terrific. The Adult Education graduation was precious. They worked so hard for this and the stories

would just bring you to tears. The Mackrille Science and Art Fair was phenomenal. Students were dressed in period clothing and played the roles. They spoke of their various backgrounds. It was exceptional. Ralph Masiello did some artwork while at Savin Rock and he donated it to the school. It was a wonderful experience.

Mark Palmieri said that Dr. Andrees brought respect to this town and have communicated and drawn people to you no matter who they were or where they were from; you brought people together and this means a lot.

I enjoyed quite a few of the talks we had; they enlightened me and they were very helpful and I appreciate it. I wish you and your family I don't think you need luck you will do just fine but I wish blessings on you and your family. Thank you so much for all your efforts for our children especially.

Mark stated the Mayor attended Mystery Day at Pagels School and students were using the Smart boards. Mayor Picard said he was in awe and they did an excellent job.

Mark Palmieri attended the Honor Society and Mr. Stencil had an excellent speech of 38 seconds and we hope he will have the same one for graduation. Laughter. Mark also mentioned that on June 10th at UNH in collaboration with the English Department there will be a movie "Fahrenheit 451". This is open to the public in Dodd Hall.

C.1.d Committee

Nothing

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting, May 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

Toni Paine made a motion to approve D.1.a.

T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

Discussion: None

No one was opposed

Minutes were approved

D.2. New Hires (Certified)

08-89 Michelle Raccio, 18 Jones Farm Road, North Haven, CT 06473
Full time system wide Speech Pathologist
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$49,898.40 + Stipend (Step 7 – BS + 60)

08-90 Patricia Amodei, 1 Elliott Court, North Haven, CT 06473
Full time system wide Speech Pathologist
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$49,898.40 + Stipend (Step 7 – BS + 60)

- 08-91** **Norma Merced-TeXidor**, 382 Jones Hill Road, West Haven, CT 06516
 School Counselor – WHHS
 Effective: August 26, 2008
 Salary: \$48,190.46 + \$2,216.90 Contractual Stipend (Step 6 BS + 60)
- 08-92** **Melanie Deninger**, 2 Chestnut Court, Seymour, CT 06483
 English Teacher – Stiles Alternate School
 Effective: August 26, 2008
 Salary: \$36, 842.76 (Step 3 B.S.)
- 08-93** **Joseph Torre**, 24 Maplevale Road, East Haven, CT 06512
 Special Education Teacher – WHHS
 Effective: August 26, 2008
 Salary: \$54,512.87 (Step 9 – BS + 30)
- 08-94** **Shannon Zotti**, 780 West Main Street, Cheshire, CT 06410
 Special Education Teacher – Bailey Middle School
 Effective: August 26, 2008
 Salary: \$40,808.54 (Step 4 – BS + 30)
- 08-95** **Department Heads 2008-2009 School Year**
 Effective: August 26, 2008
 Stipend grades 9 - 12 \$4,800
 Stipend grades 6 – 12 \$9,600

D.3 New Hires (Non-Certified)

- 08-96** **Denise Jiannas**, 92 Ocean Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
 Title I Math Aide – Savin Rock Community School
 Effective: June 3, 2008
 Salary: \$15.09 per hour for 17.5 hours per week
- 08-97** **Lisa Eberle**, 455 Third Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
 Literacy Aide – Washington School
 Effective: June 3, 2008
 Salary: \$15.09 per hour for 17.5 hours per week

D.4. Resignations: (Certified)

- 08-98** **Ernest Cusano**, Social Studies Teacher, Carrigan School
 Effective: June 30, 2008
 Reason: Retirement
- 08-99** **Helene Koenig**, Elementary Teacher Grade 4 – Seth Haley
 Effective: June 30, 2008
 Reason: Retirement

D.5. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

- 08-100** **Jim Celone**, Teacher - WHHS
Effective: August 26, 2008
Reason: Under Section 10-66dd(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes

Toni Paine made a motion to approve D.2. – D.5. inclusive
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
Discussion: Nothing pertinent
All board members were in favor
None opposed
No abstentions
D.2. – D.5. Approved

D.6. New Business:

- 08-101** **Correspondence from Jolene Barnes**, Personnel Director listing the summer school teachers/directors for the High School and Middle School summer makeup programs.
- 08-102** **Correspondence from Gary Palermo**, Director, Pupil Services recommending staff for the Summer School Special Education Program at Savin Rock School.
- 08-103** **Correspondence from Gary Palermo**, Director, Pupil Services requesting the creation of a 10 month clerical position at WHHS.

T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve D.6. 08-101 – 08-103 inclusive
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members were in favor
None opposed
No abstentions
D.6. 08-101 – 08-103 Approved

F. Informational:

Nothing to add

T. Sean Maher made a motion to adjourn
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
All members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary