

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
May 5, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on May 5, 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
Gerald A. Calabritto
Eric Murillo
T. Sean Maher
Robert Saley
M. Toni Paine
Patrick Egolum
Andrew DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Howard Horvath

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

C. Reports:

C.1. Administration

Board Chairman Mark Palmieri stated that a middle school student was tragically killed today. He requested that a moment of silence be observed.

Dr. Andrees requested that our prayers and thoughts go out to this young man's family and all of his friends in the community. We have a plan in place so that tomorrow there will be social workers, nurses psychologists and other auxiliary staff available for students all day who might need our emotional support. The staff at both schools has been contacted and they will meet us early in the morning before school begins so we may go over our plan with them. Mr. Cavallaro will start his day at Bailey Middle School tomorrow and I will begin my day at Carrigan tomorrow. At this time we are not able to release the name of this young man. We will not be making any comments until the police department has finalized their investigation. We will be making a statement probably later on this evening which we will give to the press as well. Hopefully all of you will keep this young man's family in your thoughts and prayers.

We do have business tonight which we must move onto and we are quite pleased and proud of the work that is done by the students who spent so much time studying and preparing for the Spelling Bee. We are

so impressed each year with the words they are able to spell which some of us have difficulty even pronouncing. We would like to honor the following students who represent the various grades.

The nice thing about this particular event is that it involves both public and parochial schools.

The Winners of the 30th Annual Spelling Bee Citywide Contest who were honored are:

Grade 5	Abigail Immanuel	Living Word Christian Academy
Grade 6	Joanna Maddela	Living Word Christian Academy
Grade 7	Ashley Hatt	Carrigan Middle School
Grade 8	Ashley Iannone	Living Word Christian Academy

Unfortunately Abigail Immanuel and Ashley Iannone were unable to attend tonight but the Board extended their congratulations

Joanna Maddela is not only the Grade 6 winner but is also the Citywide Champion and District Finalist. We look forward to Joanna competing again next year.

Ashley Hatt is the Grade 7 winner and a former District Champion and she too vows to be back one more year to compete because you can compete through the eighth grade. We look forward to seeing her again next year.

Patti Fusco took pictures individually of the winners and plaques were distributed by Chairman Mark Palmieri. A group shot of both students was also taken.

Dr. Andrees thanked the family members of the above students for their support in helping the students to get to this level. Family members were acknowledged with a round of applause.

The board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees introduced Sally Anastos who works in the Experiential Education Office at the University of New Haven. Ms. Anastos discussed the English Collaboration with West Haven High School and the University of New Haven. This office focuses on opportunities for students other than strictly academic such as study abroad, internship service learning and undergraduate research. We are grateful to Mark Palmieri, Dr. Andrees, Neil Cavallaro, the West Haven Board of Education, Ann Valanzuolo as well as Merle Stevens for the strong connection we have.

We are currently working on the Big Read. There are 126 communities in the United States participating and the purpose is to restore and re-energize reading. We are having communities focus on one book and this year's selection is Fahrenheit 451. We are so happy that West Haven High School will be participating. There will be 60 students coming to UNH on June 10th. There will be a film screening of Fahrenheit 451 followed by a discussion. The West Haven students will enjoy lunch in the cafeteria and we will try to see if other college students will come as well that day.

Wes Davis and Holly Saren are two English faculty members who will help in the discussion and have offered to help out in any way. Wes has pictures and posters that are the originals and has taught movie classes at the UNH. We are excited to have him. One thing he will be pointing out is that Fahrenheit 451 is the only movie to not have credits shown in the beginning of the movie.

Dr. Andrees thanked Sally Anastos and UNH for extending themselves and their services and facilities to allow us to have this kind of experience on a college campus.

Dr. Andrees also thanked Ann Valanzuolo who coordinated this as well as the spelling bee and has done a phenomenal job.

The board gave thanks.

Last Fall there was a lot of anxiety and energy that went into the NEASC Accreditation for WHHS. Tonight Ron Stancil, Raffaella Fronc, and Trish Robles from WHHS are here to share with you the results of this evaluation so they then can then share it with the staff and students.

Trish Robles passed out a binder that includes the NEASC report. The visiting NEASC team wrote a 70 page report on what they found in our school and in that report are commendations and also recommendations that they would like to see happen. This report went to the NEASC commission who voted on it in March and we found out our status the beginning of April.

Trish mentioned 4 various decisions that could have been made and West Haven High School fell under Category #2: Continued Accreditation: Special and Two-Year Progress Reports requested. Every school has to complete a Two-Year Progress Report. We have a special report due in February. The issues they had of concern were noted in the Commission's letter. We are very proud of what happened because this is the **1st time** since 1965 when the school opened that we passed on the initial accreditation. We were always on warning and we finally were off warning about three years ago and now we are free and clear our diplomas are fully accredited. We do have things we have to work on but we are very proud.

Raffaella Fronc thanked the Board of Education, Dr. Andrees, Mr. Cavallaro, and Mr. Stancil, the leadership team at the high school, the faculty, staff, teachers, and parents. Everyone worked very, very hard to make this evaluation a success. We all worked together as a team. We should really celebrate our commendations. We are recognized for a lot of things and we should be proud. Some of the things we are recognized for are:

- mission statement
- plan of curriculum revision
- instructional technology across disciplines
- incorporation of the freshman and sophomore academies
- parent portal
- provost position for continued communication with parents

These are just a few of the areas where commendations were made. There is a lot that we can celebrate.

We have a special progress report we must update by February 1st where actions need to be shown on some of the recommendations that were made which go from the reduction of class size to improving security and science labs. We are already implementing some of the recommendations that were made for instance all the buildings and doors at the high school are kept locked.

The two year progress report is due on October 1, 2009. On this report we have to show actions on all the recommendations whether we are working towards them or they are in progress. We have to go through every single recommendation. We thank you for your support.

Ron Stencil said that the two ladies worked extremely hard and did a lion's share of what went into the reports and made sure all reports were done in a timely fashion. Ron also stated that if anything changes at the high school in a negative way the substantive change policy states we must report it to the commission. This is stated on the last page of the report.

Board member Jerry Calabritto asked who is putting the group or team together who will make sure the progress report is done in February. He asked that the board be kept informed of this in four or five months. Neil Cavallaro said we have been kept up to date as changes and recommendations have been made.

Dr. Andrees said there are some serious things that have to be done and some of them we can not gloss over like the construction of science labs. We have not even begun to look at that in the area of projects we might need to pursue. These kinds of things will be the things that will cause us to go back into not having met the accreditation again. Once we are out we as a board should look at what aspect of the recommendations applies to each of the committee chairs so that we can make sure we are doing our part. A big part of it is building and construction. The labs and bathrooms have to be corrected by 2009 and we have work to do. Neil said all the people at the high school are addressing the things that they can correct but these are things that are not in their power to correct.

Jerry Calabritto stated that some of these things have financial implications and only we can provide them with the resources to address those concerns; that was where I was trying to go earlier.

The board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees stated that we have Francine Coppola, Director of Adult Education who will inform us about the National External Diploma Pilot Program. Francine introduced herself and stated she is also Bilingual ESL Education and she introduced Ellen Thompson who is recently the retired Director of Adult Education in Hamden and who has been involved with the EDP Program for over 25 years.

In Adult Ed we have met the needs of adults to obtain their high school diploma through our CDP credit diploma program and our GED Program. We now have the opportunity to include another group of students; adult learners who through the External Diploma Program obtain a high school diploma.

Hip grants (program improvement grants) are now being offered. We chose to investigate the possibility of piloting this EDP program and applying for the grant of \$40,000.00. This is for the student who is 25+ years who has skills and who has been functioning in the community and working for a few years. People who need to be retrained in other jobs or people who have been homemakers for a few years. With this program we are trying to meet the needs of others in the West Haven community who do not have a high school diploma but will allow them to bring their life experiences through a series of assessments to reach their goal of a high school diploma.

Ellen Thompson said there are about 15 states that are now running the External Diploma Program and recognize it and Connecticut is one of them. There are 17 districts in Connecticut that are employing this program. It is a very controlled program and people work through a series of tasks to present and demonstrate 65 competencies that have been identified as high school graduate level competencies. They also have an individualized skill such as being a homemaker etc. Hamden has been doing this for about 25 years. We graduate approximately 35 people a year. We also have the CDP and GED Program. We also have done this through Yale New Haven Hospital. A further discussion ensued about

it being a very controlled program, with diagnostic skills, and assessments. They are awarded the same diploma as the credit diploma. You are tested before you can enter the program.

Dr. Andrees wished them success with this program and stated there is a definite need in our community for services and opportunities such as this.

Francine said the grant is due May 15th and we will be notified approximately by July 1st to the 15th.

The board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees said that we have an item on the agenda tonight for approval and Alan Belchak, Director of Food Services, is with us tonight to discuss the increase in prices if you would like him to address this now.

Neil Cavallaro said that Alan was recently awarded a certificate from the State Department of Education for increasing participation for the Seamless Summer Food Program for 2007. Applause followed. Alan stated that this award actually should go to the board because it is through the efforts of the board. The government calls it a seamless waiver because it takes away all the paperwork involved.

Dr. Andrees thanks Alan for insisting on a summer program to make sure that kids who were hungry during the school year and who are still hungry during the summer will be fed. Alan said that Dave, Gail, Marge and he went out and looked for sites where we could feed the students. We would figure out ways to get the application to make it an eligible site. We serviced Mr. Palermo's Autistic Program which was transferred to Savin Rock. We are even looking at the possibility with Mr. Stancil of doing summer school this year. There are all different ways to feed these students. We have a great program going at the baseball camp on Glade Street and also at Living Word Ministries.

A price increase is on the agenda tonight because the price of milk and bread is going up and to lessen the burden on the board we are trying to increase revenues. We are tending to get away from what is known as the Healthy Food Certificate. We are serving healthy food and we have a strong wellness policy that was developed by Mr. Murillo and Donna Kosiorowski. We will still be serving school wellness in the school but we are not going to adhere to the strict guidelines that the state wants you to do so that you would get an extra 10 cents from them. We will still serve the healthy meal and a lot of students will buy snacks of a variety. We will still sell the apples and the healthy chips etc. We will also restrict the sale of French fries to a certain sized portion if the child participates in the lunch program. We will not allow just the sale of junk food. This will allow our principals to have a bake sale. Under the healthy food certificate you can't. PTA's can have fund raisers during school time. We will still follow the wellness program with Mr. Capone following the physical activity of the children.

The price increase is minimal 12 ½% both middle schools from \$2.25 to \$2.50 and the high school from \$2.50 to \$3.00. The elementary lunches will go from \$2.00 to \$2.25. If you visit the high school there is always a line for the subway subs.

The Board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees thanked the City Council for their support of our budget this year as well as the Police Department and Public Works for coming up with an additional \$500,000.00 to allow us to be able to begin the work that we need to do. Our goal is to try to have the budget for you by May 19th. We will

work very diligently so that by June we can fill what positions we need to fill to begin the school year. Lastly, at the next meeting we will bring to you students who work with a program we have piloted all year called Compass Learning. This services our bilingual, special education, joint ed, and our gifted and talented students. Ms. Tammy Perzanoski will bring before you some gifted and talented students and special ed students who have done some amazing projects using their smart boards.

Lastly, Pagels walkthrough for tomorrow will be cancelled and softball and baseball has been cancelled tomorrow night for the Bailey students.

Eric Murillo spoke on the revision of the policy for physical examinations. He stated he was available to answer any questions the board might have. If there were no questions he would like the motion on the agenda tonight to be passed.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

The Public Portion began at 7:30 PM

Patricia Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Rd., West Haven congratulated the staff at Carrigan Middle School who put on an outstanding performance of Annie. The high school theatre group next year will be receiving very well prepared students. They did a fabulous job. It was just great.

The system wide retirement party is planned for Tuesday, June 3rd at Anthony's. Tickets will be available soon. Save the date!

The board gave thanks.

Cebi Waterfield, Seaview Avenue, the PTA President of Seth Haley said that this is Teacher Appreciation Week and the schools throughout West Haven are celebrating the wonderful teachers that we have. She had written to Jodi Rell and Mayor Picard and asked them for a proclamation to declare this week Teacher Appreciation Week. Cebi went on to read the proclamation from Governor Rell and stated Mayor Picard's proclamation was very similar. She read the proclamation at Seth Haley this morning. She thanked the board for letting the teachers take such good care of our children; they do such a wonderful job.

The Board gave thanks.

Donna Kosiorowski, Nursing Supervisor, Blake Building stated she never misses an opportunity to mention the nurses. In addition to it being Teacher Appreciation Week it is also nurses' week. This Wednesday, May 7th is School Nurse Day. I think we should celebrate the teachers, nurses, and entire staff in West Haven for everything they do because no one group can do it by themselves.

The board gave thanks.

Public Portion ended at 7:40 PM

C.1.a Status of Schools

Neil Cavallaro stated that Raffaella Fronc and I have met with our Yale contacts and have firmed up our fifth grade visits. Every fifth grader who goes will get a shirt with their name on it and the year of their college graduation. He will bring this along at our next meeting.

We also had the opportunity to wrap up the initiative we started this year and see where we are and where we are going. We are talking about the idea of expanding electives possibly at the high school. They offer a forensics class there but for example we may be able to take that forensic class and bring it to a second level and include in it not only people from Yale but also the resources they are using. Again, we couldn't have asked for more than we received from Yale in the first year of the partnership and are looking forward to expanding opportunities for our students and professional development for our staff. This is taking place the first week in June. You can contact my office if you have any questions on dates and we can send out a general schedule.

Dr. Andrees and I had the opportunity last week to meet with one of our physics teachers at the high school Brandy Heflin who made a proposal to us regarding professional development that will take place at Arizona State University for two weeks this summer. Based on her presentation to us we were so impressed that we are going to pick up the entire expense. She is learning a new model for teaching physics with a hands on approach that uses much more technology and less of the actual theory; mass calculations. This is something that we hope will get more students excited about physics and make it more meaningful and relevant. This is going to be our goal and we will purchase a lot of equipment and invest in a lot of technology. Coming down the road is the high school reform where all students are required to take some sort of physics class before they graduate. This is an opportunity to have West Haven be on the cutting edge and be able to make that offering to a lot of our students. We are pleased that a staff member took the initiative to research this professional development opportunity and we are happy to provide her with the equipment in school to make the program successful. We have a list of the equipment necessary which will be purchased along with ten laptop computers all of which will be in the class this fall.

Dr. Andrees said this lady was going to leave us last year but with the commitment that this board made to her by not laying off she is not going any place else. She has received offers for up to \$18,000.00 more to go to another district. She is committed to staying here. We have Joe Yacano looking into how we can secure all the equipment in her room to insure she can have the tools necessary. A further discussion ensued.

Neil extended congratulations to Ron Stancil and the NEASC team. Pat Libero put a lot of work into the production of Annie Jr. What impressed me about that play was that everybody in that school took some small part in making it a success. Everybody had something to do with those kids up there giving the performance.

Dr. Andrees and I attended the third walk for Diabetes at Thompson which was a great success. My thanks to Sandy McCauley, Kathy Barra and Frank Paolino for inviting us and letting us participate. It was very well organized and well run.

I also want to thank the City Council and all department heads for working with us in restoring the \$500,000.00 to our budget which will make quite a difference next year. It really was a pleasure to work with them.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.b Student Representatives

C.1.c Board

Andy DePalma went to see Annie, Jr. Saturday evening and was totally amazed at the job that the kids did. It was really phenomenal

Sean Maher went on a Mackrille Site Visit along with Toni Paine. We want to commend Cathy Biagetti on the beautiful school and great team effort that teachers have with each other. He also saw Carrigan's play Annie and kudos should go out to Ms. Mustakos, Ms. Bauer, the cast, crew and musicians. It showed an amazing ensemble effort and the amount of talent was incredible. I look forward to working with these students.

Take A Seat Program fundraiser will be held this Friday night at Westwoods. Ten alumni from recent classes will be coming back to perform as well as recent students and community performers. It should be a fun night and there are great prizes in the silent auctions.

Eric Murillo attended the play Annie on Friday night and wanted to thank all the volunteers it was very good and I was very impressed with the turnout it was a packed house. I enjoyed it very much.

Patrick Egolum said the play was very professional and the students were very motivated. It was very enjoyable.

Toni Paine said it was a packed house both evenings and it was a good community effort. She also did the walk through at Mackrille and Stiles both of which were wonderful we have so much to be proud of in our schools.

If you decide you want to do an Ad Hoc Committee to follow up on the NEASC improvements that need to be done I would like to volunteer for this.

Mark Palmieri said he told Mr. Maher that he has quite a bull pen coming up in a few years. Annie was great and everybody had a chance to do something.

I also want to thank Mr. Stancil, Mrs. Fronc and Mrs. Robles for the fine job they did with the NEASC Accreditation.

Tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Jr. Achievement will be held at Thompson School and any board member that would like to come and join us is more than welcome. Lunch will be provided.

Unfortunately once again tragedy hit home today. I knew this young man personally; his smile would light up a room every time he would walk in. He was a very respectful young man. It is just so important that you go to bed each night not angry with anyone and tell them how much you love them because you never know what tomorrow is going to bring. Please keep this beautiful family in your prayers. Thank you.

C.1.d Committee

Jerry Calabritto asked that board members save Thursday, May 22nd at 6:00 p.m. for a meeting on the budget if Dr. Andrees and Neil have all the necessary material ready. Neil said this meeting is tentative and will let us know definitely.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

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

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting,
April 16, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.1.a. and D.1.b. inclusive

Eric Murillo seconded the motion

All members were in favor

No discussion

No one abstained

Minutes were approved

D.2. New Hires (Certified)

08-65 Derrick Lewis, 101 Sumac Street, West Haven, CT 06516
Boys Asst. Track Coach WHHS
Effective: March 17, 2008
Salary: \$2,500.00

D.3. Resignations: (Certified)

08-66 Jason Stacoffe, Social Studies Teacher, West Haven High School
Effective: July 1, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-67 Evelyn DeJesus, Elementary Teacher, Savin Rock Community School
Effective: July 1, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-68 Linda S. Edmonds, Elementary Science Teacher, Pagels/Forest
Effective: July 1, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.4. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-69 Ardis Goldbaum, Assistant Custodian, WHHS
Effective: July 7, 2008
Reason: Retirement

08-70 Susan Murray, Literacy Paraprofessional Washington School
Effective: April 16, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.5. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

08-71 Alycia Rovinelli, Science Teacher, Bailey Middle School
Effective: June 6, 2008
Reason: Child Rearing Leave

08-72 Michelle Giglietti, School Psychologist, Washington/Molloy
Effective: May 23, 2008
Reason: Child Rearing Leave

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to accept D.2. through D.5. inclusive
Toni Paine seconded the motion
All members were in favor
No discussion
No one abstained
D.2. through D.5. were approved.

D.6. New Business:

08-73 Request from Alan E. Belchak for a recommended price increase for all school lunches and for approval of non-participation in the Healthy Food Certification Statement.

08-74 Request from Eric Murillo for approval of the revised version of 514.3 Health Assessment and Immunizations.

08-75 Request from Francine Coppola for approval of Form ED-244 Grant Application for Adult Education

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve item 08-73 through 08-75 inclusive
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
No discussion
All members were in favor
No one abstained or opposed
Items 08-73 through 08-75 are approved

F. Informational:

Eric Murillo wanted to thank the Board for approving the revision of the 514.3 policy tonight.

Neil wanted to point out to the board that under voluntary transfer information on the agenda we are on track to fill all of our current vacancies and to hire new candidates. We actually have begun the interview process for next year. We will be bringing you names as soon as this is complete maybe by next week especially in the shortage areas.

Mark wanted to thank the Mayor and the City Council for working with this board in approving that extra \$500,000.00. Mark wanted to reiterate what Dr. Andrees said that it was a great effort. When you have a group of people working together it is amazing how much more you can accomplish.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary