

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
November 17, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on November 17, 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 A. Calabritto
Eric Murillo
Robert Saley
M. Toni Paine
T. Sean Maher
Patrick Egolum
Andrew DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Howard Horvath Jr.

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Shamsi Aysha
Faraz Sabir

B. Public Portion

Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone and introduced Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. He then asked for a moment of silence for Anthony Amato who passed and was a long time teacher in this school district for over 35 years. He then stated we would begin the Public Portion and asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Todd Tompkins, 770 Savin Avenue, West Haven came before the board with a few positives and one concern. Two of his sons are about to graduate from WHHS and have always maintained a 3.5 or above and have never been off the honor roll. He has three more children in West Haven Schools and that is what brings him here tonight. He is the President of West Haven Babe Ruth. Babe Ruth Baseball is very different from West Haven Little League and Shore Haven. Last year there was only one competing team at

his age groups which are 13 – 15 and 16 – 18. For their opening day there are only a handful of people compared to 1,000 or more for Little League & Shore Haven. there is no participation and this is a concern of his. For middle school sports baseball tryouts are once a year and no less than 50 kids try out for each team so that is 100 children around the age of 12 who have never been cut from a team. Now out of the 50 kids per team trying out only 20 are chosen and the rest are cut (30) per team. Out of those 30 kids 20 to 25 never play again and are devastated. His idea is that Babe Ruth should be invited to these try outs and the kids that are cut can play in the Babe Ruth League. We have to find ways for the 60 kids why try out and our cut to play ball. He also stated he agrees with the article in the paper that stated West Haven is the best place to raise children. He has six children and three are still in the West Haven School System.

The board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Rd., West Haven welcomed the new Assistant Superintendent and asked for information regarding the way each individual board member voted during the executive session meeting on October 20, 2008 regarding the Agent of Record. (The vote was recorded as 5 board members voted in favor and 2 board members abstained. Patrick Egolum and Andy DePalma were absent.)

On Tuesday, November 18th we are having the auditors hold their question and answer portion on the audit that was just published August 25, 2008. It will be held on the third floor of Council Chambers at 7:00 PM.

Mrs. Rossi attended the NFAC Meeting in Hartford on November 13th and if the board members are interested she can forward them copies. It was not a very bright, financial picture that was painted for the City of West Haven in the future. She wanted to make us aware of this and they stated the City is very vulnerable at this time. We have a weakened cash position and a deficit. If there is interest, Nancy will forward us the minutes of this meeting and the September 11th meeting. An open line of communication is best.

The board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 7:15 PM

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

Neil Cavallaro said there will be three reports tonight and one will be presented under Status of Schools; the presentation of the Strategic School Profile.

We have the coach of the NEASC Committee and he will give us a list of recommendation that we are in the process of implementing. We will be talking about the financial impact.

Trish Robles and Paul Cavanna the NEASC Co-chairs at the high school and are here to talk about the follow up committee and some of the things that we need to discuss for follow up. A further outline of the presentation will be on the website.

NEASC Follow-Up

Trish Robles

Paul Cavanna

Accreditation Status

- Continued accreditation
 - Special Progress report--February 1, 2009
 - Two-Year Progress Report--October 1, 2009
- What do we have to do?

Provide funding to complete the renovation of all science labs

- Include a plan and time line for these renovations
- Six science rooms need to be completely renovated
- Three general science rooms lack water and gas

Provide adequate funding to enhance library media center

- Print and on-line resources
- New furniture--original
- Technology

Inform community about the funding needs of the school to raise awareness

What have we done?

- New computer lab on 2nd floor
- \$5,000-\$7,500 for print and on-line resources in LMC
- Three Portable sinks for science rooms / switch rooms

What needs to be done?

- Six science rooms in need of complete renovation--plan and time line
- New furniture in library media center
- Increase funding for lmc resources--\$5,000-\$10,000 per year
- Community awareness

VALUE OF ACCREDITATION

CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS ON PROBATION

CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS ON PROBATION

Ron Stancil stated the West Haven Board of Education must start thinking about the life expectancy of the high school and at what point do you stop putting money into an old building and start putting it into a new building.

Neil Cavallaro stated we have to start asking ourselves a question; how much more do we want to invest in the current high school building. Right now we don't have a long term plan and we need to consider one. We need to partner with members from the City Council and get our PTA involved and decide what kind of investment we want to make in the current building or will it be a new high school. As times get better and the state recovers we need to have a plan ready to proceed. We need to form some kind of committee to begin to study the issue. We have not built a new school in almost 40 years and we need to look at this.

Mark Palmieri agreed and stated we are losing students who are going to nicer facilities.

The board gave thanks.

Neil Cavallaro introduced Francine Lytwinick, Tammy Mursko, and Maria Giovannini and asked them to give the Board an update on PSIS (Publish School Information System). He further stated that they have done an excellent job over the last couple of months to straighten this out. Neil further stated that they want to have one person oversee a state reporting system. It is becoming more and more crucial especially as dollars dry up that we do this. We have talked about the need to replace John Lessandrini's position and Neil's plan is to refine that position into a true data reporter to the state. Most districts our size have someone in charge of that. He then had them talk about where we were and how they have done a good job of getting the information, cleaning the data and getting it to where we are sitting very well with the State at this point.

It was explained that in the past the PSIS database was maintained by several staff members at once and no one was able to devote keeping it accurate on a full time basis. A central registration procedure has since been set up where all registers, unregisters, and inter-district transfers in Power School is being reviewed by Maria and then entered in PSIS on a daily basis. Continual support is being provided to the Power School Date Entry Personnel to ensure the date coming from Power School will be reported accurately to the State.

Eric Murillo asked if they were talking about just PSI reporting or State reporting. It was stated that everything comes off there. There are certain reports the high school needs to do like the drop out report etc. which Maria and Scott Shand worked together on. A lot of information comes from the schools and will get submitted centrally. A further discussion ensued.

The board gave thanks.

Neil said that each November we have to present the Strategic School Profile (a copy was given to board members) and they planned on highlighting the district profile tonight.

Rafaella Fronc stated that they have taken some of the highlights of the West Haven Strategic School Profile from the district and put them on a power point presentation which was shown. Some of the important parts were highlighted.

Neil commented on two of the items. The number of Juniors and Seniors working 16 or more hours per week and this may apply to all four grades. We do have a concern with the number of kids not turning in homework that is an issue. If they are working to support a family (not for just pocket money) you can sympathize and understand so that is something we are taking a long hard look at. (What kind of homework assignments are we giving and are the homework meaningful to them).

The other item he spoke about is very near and dear to him as he served as the Co-Chair for the School Readiness and Early Childhood Council for the City. The number of students who attended Pre-School and Nursery school relatively speaking it is not that bad compared to the DRG in the State. His concern is it is difficult to get an accurate number. How are we sure we are reaching new people to the city to see if their kids are attending pre-school and nursery school. He is wondering how accurate the number is.

Neil stated that the total minority rate is 52.6% and the Hispanic population is growing and we need more ESL Services for them. Our graduation rate 95.2% is higher than the State's.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski stated they are looking at the SAT scores and are considering the importance of getting kids into the process of taking such a long standardized test. What they are thinking is giving all kids the opportunity of taking the PSAT which we don't have right now in the high school. In some areas they require all students to take the PSAT in their junior year and the district pays for it and we look at the data and give it back to the students and they have a benchmark. This helps to take the edge of for students who are afraid of taking standardized tests. This will help to improve and increase the number of kids taking the test. A further discussion ensued

Toni Paine noticed we were a little above the state average on pursuing higher education but lower on the participation on the SAT's. Not all higher Ed requires SAT's.

Dr. Druzolowski spoke further about a self study we are in the process of taking with various different groups throughout the community and based on the outcome of this survey we will update and revise our district wide improvement guide. A further discussion continued.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Fabriz Sabir and Shamsi Aysha both gave reports.

Fabriz said the Fall sports have ended (girl's soccer, swimming, cross country, volleyball) and November 27th will be the last football game. Shamsi said that West

Haven High School has started their WHEAT Drive the production of Anne Frank will be presented at the High School this Friday and Saturday.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.a Status of Schools

C.1.c. Board

Sean Maher participated in National Young Readers Day at Thompson and enjoyed the time there very much. The students were very responsive and students from the high school also participated which was exciting. He toured Pagels and congratulated Mrs. Prisco and the staff. There was a great Smart board demonstration.

He commented on how hard the kids have been working on doing research for the production of Anne Frank to make the storyline as accurate as possible. They visited the Anne Frank Center in Manhattan and have done a lot of work on their individual characters. This will be an exciting show.

Jerry Calabritto welcomed Ann and has seen how busy she has been since her arrival and is certain we will see a lot of good things.

Eric Murillo welcomed Ann and spent time at the high school with her and hopes to work with her to get the projects off to a great start.

Neil told Eric that the Spanish phone line will be up and running as of this week. He thanked Eric for all his help and ideas. This will be great for our system.

Patrick Egolum welcomed Ann and looks forward to working with her.

Rob Saley welcomed Ann and wished her good luck and knows she will be an integral part of the whole system.

Regarding the high school, one of the things the West Shore area did when they were looking to build was the Fire Department was requested to put away a little money every year so that there was a certain amount of money up front. He is not sure we can do this by code but it would be nice to request this of the City Council if we are going in that direction. It might help to cover the design cost. This is something to think about when planning for the future. It will be very tough this year especially with the budget.

Toni Paine welcomed Ann and she had a nice visit at Pagels as well as the high school and enjoyed it very much. She had a great time at Carrigan during the Murder Mystery production. The students had a phenomenal time and this is put on by the administrators, teachers and the workers in the school. It is just such a good feeling when you walk into that school it is one big family. The teachers really care for the kids and the kids know it. I think they need to be recognized for that. Once a year we have the Superintendent's Award for the students. Can't we do something once a year and recognize a school. It is important to let the schools be recognized for their efforts. Neil agreed and said he had

been thinking about this is has been waiting for this information from the State but he will follow up. Carrigan has really come a long way over the last three or four years.

Mark Palmieri welcomed Ann Druzolowski and stated if there is anything this board can help you with and support you please feel free to contact us we are here for you.

There are a couple of things I would like to address. He agrees with what Mr. Tompkins stated earlier not only on the sports end but on everything in this school district. Any child who tries out for something should make it. He played football for West Haven and everyone made the team under Coach Tom Hunt who was a tough coach and what happened is that people cut themselves and that is fine. This should be the same for the band, drama, DECCA etc. every child should be allowed to join any group. I firmly believe this is what a child needs when they go into the school system and enter high school; to have something to look forward to and be a part of. Everyone wants to be accepted and be a part of something. As one board member I would hopefully believe that the administrators, coaches etc. can start addressing this.

Secondly, under new business to give more kudos to Carrigan, I feel good about professional days and people sharing information that works for them with others and this is a communication window and he gives Patricia Libero and Sean Morrissey a lot of credit for constantly trying to improve their situation there and they are doing a fantastic job.

Lastly, a new school, yes. In response to Mr. Saley he said he belongs to a club that for 27 years now they talk about a building fund and have a raffle and it is 27 years and nothing has been done. I think you are right and we need to start some plans but saving a little money here and there is the same thing. Once you are involved in something and have a fixed income it is hard to just put 10,000 – 20,000 away. I think we need to find a creative way to involve the state and have different political people that represent our town get involved. We need to go forward with this.

C.1.d. Committee

Eric Murillo said I want to follow up in regard to the high school. We need to get the ball rolling and bring people together as it is will be a long project and we should form a committee. By the time we receive state funds we should be ready and prepared.

D.1. Approval of Minutes:

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting held at 6:30 p.m. in Executive Session on October 20, 2008 in the Blake Bldg.

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting held October 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blake Bldg.

M. Toni Paine made a motion to approve the Minutes D.1.a. and D.1.b.
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Minutes are approved.

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-219 Patricia B. Hewston, Assistant Custodian - SRCS
Effective: November 17, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

08-220 Danielle White, Social Worker – Carrigan Middle School
Effective: January 20, 2009
Reason: Personal

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

08-221 Amber Withington, 88 Winslow Drive, West Haven, CT 06516
Elementary Science Facilitator - Washington/Molloy Schools
Effective: November 3, 2008
Salary: \$37,422.34 (Step 3 BS + 30)

08-222 Denise Rodriguez Fedon, 252 Hunter's Trail, Madison, CT 06443
Special Education Teacher – Mackrille School
Effective: December 2, 2008
Salary: \$49,898.40 (Step 7 BS + 60)

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

08-223 Leslie Malloy, 180 Highland Ave., West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Building Para – Thompson
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1

08-224 Tasheema Robinson, 14 Jaffrey Street, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Medical Building Para – SRCS
Effective: December 1, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1 + Stipend

08-225 Patricia O'Connor, 516 Third Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Building Para – Washington
Effective: November 18, 2008

Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1

- 08-226** **Sherry Argus**, 66 Cooper Road, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Medical Building Para - Forest
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1 + Stipend
- 08-227** **Bonnie McLaughlin**, 34 Savin Park, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Medical Building Para – Haley
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1 + Stipend
- 08-228** **Patrick Toole**, 64 Mohawk Drive, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Medical Building Para – Bailey
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1 + Stipend
- 08-229** **Nancy Plant**, 67 Smith Street, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Building Paraprofessional – Thompson
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1
- 08-230** **Thomas Halligan**, 220 Richmond Ave., West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Building Paraprofessional – Carrigan
Effective: November 18, 2008
Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.3. through D.6 inclusive

M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All in favor

Items D.3. through D.6 inclusive are approved.

D.7. New Business:

- 08-231** **Request from Pat Libero and Sean Morrissey** for 1 ½ Professional Days for workshops with the CALI Program.

M. Toni Paine made a motion to approve 08-231

T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All in favor

Item 08-231 is approved

08-232 Request from Cassandra Marcella for seven students from the WHHS Band to attend the All New England Band Festival which is being held at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire on Sunday, November 23rd Tuesday, November 25th.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-232
Eric Murillo seconded the motion

Discussion: Jerry Calabritto informed the board that Cassie was home sick but she wanted it mentioned that over 400 applications from the six New England States were received and only 160 were accepted and six were from the West Haven Band.

All in favor
Item 08-232 is approved

F. Informational:
Nothing to add

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting
Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn the meeting
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: None
The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary