

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION Stamford, Connecticut December 2, 2008

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on December 2, 2008 at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Ms. Nabel, President, with the following Board members present: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mayor Malloy, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade. Also in attendance: Dr. Starr, Dr. Hamilton, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Gagne, representative from the Advocate and Stamford Times, and approximately 20 guests.

Salute to the flag.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Heftman presented the mission statement of the Board of Education.

Ms. Nabel noted that there were no minutes for approval and because of the intervening holiday we are well within the 7 day FOI window to make our minutes available. The minutes will be posted and available by tomorrow.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Starr reported that there was an incident at Hart Magnet Elementary School yesterday where a 4th grade student, who was known to have a heart condition, collapsed at the school. Due to the very quick thinking of the nurse and the custodian, they administered CPR, the AED was fully functional. EMS arrived and the child was stabilized. We did not use our AED because EMS was there and they wanted to use their own. The child was transported to Yale-New Haven Medical Center and is in stable condition. Dr. Starr noted that this is the second incident that we have had where all our procedures were in place. This is thanks to John Perrotta with a lot of help from Phil Cundiff who has been working with us to make sure our safety and security procedures are in place.

BOARD REPORT

Ms. Nabel welcomed our new and newest Board members, Ms. Heftman, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade. She asked not only the new members, but our veterans as well have the Board Member Manual that was prepared last Fall.

She encouraged everyone to read through the manual and refer back to it as a great resource. One of the things that it establishes is that there will be mentors on the Board for new Board members. She suggested to Mr. Rubino, Mr. King, and Ms. Lorenti that they make it a point to reaching out to the new members and making sure that all the contact information is exchanged and that people have a place to call on when they have questions.

Per the By-Laws and Policy #9130 it is the President's responsibility to name Committee chairpersons.

- Curriculum - Angela Lorenti, Chair
Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Wade
- Facilities - Ed Mathews, Chair
Mr. King, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Polo
- Fiscal - Jackie Heftman, Chair
Mr. King, Mr. Mathews, Mr. Rubino
- Labor Relations - Monica Lahiri-Hoherchak, Chair
Ms. Heftman, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Rubino

Ms. Nabel stated that the Board will discuss all ideas for committee meeting structure at its January retreat.

With respect to the Policy Committee, she has discussed this with several Board members as well as with Dr. Starr and for the time being our Policy Committee will remain a Committee of the Whole. The discussions and deliberations that occur in Policy are always Board decisions and they are almost always major Board decisions and it seems counter-productive to be having committee meetings that are attended by all Board members and then follow on to a Board meeting that is also attended by Board members. For the time being we will operate as a Committee of the Whole on Policy and any Board members who have issues that they would like to raise for that agenda, please let her know. Mayor Malloy asked that it be listed as a Committee of the Whole of the Voting Members. Ms. Nabel responded that she would, but asked a question in return why would we need to make a distinction. Mayor Malloy responded that because he is not a voting member.

Ms. Nabel stated that there will be one additional Committee that we will be establishing which for the time being will be called the "Ad Hoc Public Engagement Committee" and she asked Ms. Wade to chair this Committee. Prior to appointing members to the Committee, she asked Ms. Wade and Dr. Starr and herself to have a formative meeting at which they outline a mission statement, a purpose, and a more concise explanation of what the Public Engagement committee will do. She is hoping that the work of that Committee can be attuned to the work that the Board is already doing. For instance, on Thursday morning we have a posted meeting with our Legislative delegation and

when we get to Fiscal on the agenda we can discuss what kinds of talking points or agenda items we would like for that meeting. She is hoping that the Public Engagement Committee can also focus on the major goals outlined in the Strategic Plan and align its activities to the Strategic Plan. Also, work on what is also a part of the By-Laws for the Board itself which is to engage the Stamford community at large in a meaningful conversation on educational issues. One thing that comes to mind is the State initiative to change the high school graduation requirement. This may be something that the Committee might want to bring to a public forum or discuss at various schools.

Ms. Nabel continued and indicated that there are in the meantime lots of opportunities for public engagement coming up. There is the Legislative Delegation Breakfast on Thursday, December 4th at Dolan at 8:00 am. She hopes that all members of the Board, voting and non-voting, will be there and members are welcome. Dr. Starr has asked her to ask Board members to attend a meeting on December 18, 2008 with the Cambridge Group, who is doing the district assessment, would like to meet with Board member from 8:45 to 10:00 am. Mr. King and Ms. Wade have volunteered and she asked for a third volunteer and an alternate. Ms. Heftman volunteered and Ms. Lorenti will be the alternate. On December 12, 2008 there is a legislative breakfast of Southern Fairfield County Superintendents at CES in Trumbull. Dr. Starr has asked for one Board member to attend and Ms. Nabel indicated who ever e-mails first will have the honor.

Mayor Malloy reported that the City had a meeting and we went over educational funding issues with all the State representatives and senators. He thought everyone was there, but Mr. Tong who was away. They are fully in a defensive mode with respect to funding for Stamford. They understand there is going to be a lot of pressure. As everyone here knows there is a vote being taken tomorrow by the State Board of Education that would cut very substantially ECS, but more importantly in some sense to us because we receive a disproportionately large share of the Priority School grant money and that is coming up for a vote tomorrow by the State Board of Education. CCM which the City pays through dues which is the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities have been active and will appear at the meeting to oppose the State cuts. This is under the direction of the Governor to find 10% reductions across the board. That all happened since we had met with the State delegation, but they are all fully aware of what is going on. Ms. Nabel thought that the fiscal crisis and the reduction in funding issues are obviously uppermost in everyone's minds, but there are other issues like the high school graduation requirements, in-school suspension, and a couple of other things. Mayor Malloy stated that he wanted to make sure that everyone understands that both the City and CCM are working on those issues and have been in contact with the State representatives.

Ms. Nabel suggested that in the next month or so that we organize a legal tutorial which would be a session for all Board members, especially new Board members, with our attorney at Shipman and Goodwin. She will contact Mr. Mooney and try to set up this meeting in the very near future.

Ms. Nabel noted that in preparation for our retreat scheduled for January 23 and 24, 2009 she will be sending an informal anonymous survey to Board members to get a feeling for not only what topics are uppermost in your minds for the treat, but also a general sort of touch base on the core issues of trust among Board members, respect, feelings about the code of conduct, and so forth so we know where we are starting from when we have our Board retreat.

Mr. Polo inquired about a date for reviewing the budget at some point. Mr. Dunn responded that they are in the process of setting up a date. Dr. Starr stated that this would be a tutorial session on the two different budget books.

TIME FOR THE PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

No one signed up to speak.

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS/RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Nabel asked for a motion to take Policy out of order on the agenda.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Ms. Wade to take Policy out of order on the agenda.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

POLICY

Ms. Nabel stated there were no updates on the bulleted items under the Policy agenda and moved right to the resolution.

Resolution 12-02-08:62

Ms. Nabel moved, seconded by Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the naming of the Inter-District Magnet School as “Rogers International School” with a tagline of “The Green School for Global Citizens.”

Mr. Rubino indicated that he would be voting against this resolution. As he said at the last meeting he thinks this name from a marketing perspective should be aimed at the 30% from out of district because that

is really what the success of our school will rise and fall on and determines whether or not we get our funding. He thought we could do a better job from a marketing perspective and, unfortunately, he thinks he would rather have the name Rogers come out and pick a more thematic name that will catch people's eye in the Westport, Darien, or wherever students will come from.

Ms. Heftman asked Mr. Rubino that rather than having this go back again for another round of discussion, is there a suggestion that you have that you would like the Board to think about including in our recommendation to the Board of Representatives. Mr. Rubino responded that he did think that maybe he should come up with a name as an alternative, but he is not a marketing professional so he decided against it. We are making a big decision here and he was not satisfied with the process that was used.

Mayor Malloy commented that Rogers would be deemed a rose no matter what we name it, but there is a reason to keep the name Rogers and that is because it is an award winning school which has built a reputation within the market place as a school that faculty and administrators from throughout the area have come to visit or taken time to learn about it and Rogers Schools is part of Stamford's history. Of all of the considerations that Mr. Rubino rightfully raises were in fact undertaken by the Committee that met and ultimately they determined that keeping the Rogers name was actually part of the marketing strategy for this school.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak indicated that she is happy to keep the name Rogers as part of this school. She agrees with the Mayor in that Rogers has done a lot to really develop a strong reputation and keeping the name tied to a school where most of the program will stay intact can only be useful marketing wise. She is sad to lose any concept of the environment from the name of the school. She did not think tag lines really do much for marketing. Nobody really knows what a tag line is. Also, we had asked for three suggestions and we came up with only one and that was a disappointment to her.

Mr. Mathews endorsed the use of the name Rogers. Rogers has a long history on the east side of Stamford. He was able to a part of that history both as principal and as a student.

Mr. Rubino stated that he would agree with all if in fact we did what the State Board of Education wanted and kept it a true magnet, but we didn't. It's not really a magnet for Stamford students even though maybe it is in name, but in reality if you are in a certain district you are most likely going there. So there isn't really any marketing purpose within the City of Stamford and is all outside the City of Stamford and that is what determines whether or not we get the grant money.

Ms. Nabel asked if we vote in favor of this resolution and pass it onto the Board of Representatives, what happens then to the old Rogers building. Does that become a candidate for renaming and who does that? Mayor Malloy responded that the City would do it. She asked if they thought it would be likely that the City would rename the building since one of the arguments we heard from people in favor of naming the new school Rogers International is that it will eliminate some confusion on the part of people who are just looking for the Rogers School that their child goes. She thinks it is important that we take into consideration that we don't have two buildings named Rogers. Mayor Malloy responded that he does not have a final answer for that other than the naming authority of all City assets is the Board of Representatives and clearly he has anticipated that it might be a question that will be raised one which we will get to until they either approve or reject the naming of the new Rogers.

The resolution was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade. Opposed: Mr. Rubino.

Ms. Nabel indicated she would send a letter to the Board of Representatives regarding the naming of the new school.

Ms. Nabel noted that she is thinking about having two meetings in January on the 13th and 27th.

Mayor Malloy left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Lorenti reviewed the agenda items and indicated that Middle School Reform and the School Improvement Plans we should be a full Board. She asked Dr. Starr if he had dates of when the SIP's are due to the State. Dr. Starr responded that it was 45 days and we could wait until January. Ms. Lorenti noted that she would like to have the SIP agenda item be a Committee of the Whole meeting especially with Cambridge coming in and the process being different. Ms. Nabel confirmed that for the January 13, 2008 Board meeting the two curriculum agenda items will be Middle School Reform and School Improvement Plans.

FACILITIES

Ms. Mathews asked Mr. Rubino what he felt would be pertinent. Mr. Rubino indicated the most important thing is the Walking Access and dealing with the EMS. Update of Current Projects stays on since there are several going on, Facilities Usage always has an update. Future Use of Rogers Building will be something that will be deliberated by the Board of Representatives. It was decided to leave this on the agenda until the Board receives the letter from the City. Dr. Starr indicated that the Mayor will give a letter with reassurance

regarding the request and the procedurally the Board has to vote to turn the building back to the City. You then have a decision to make based on the request you made to the Mayor for that letter and this would be a Committee of the Whole discussion. This item will be moved over to the pending side of the agenda. Mr. Rubino noted that with respect to the portable units it has been pretty much decided they will be used at Rogers. Dr. Starr noted that leaving this on is important because there is the reconfiguration of the space. Mr. Rubino noted that there is a Facilities Audit that is ongoing and Review of Recycling can go to pending since it is up and running. Mr. Rubino suggested Mr. Mathews monitor Climate Control Problems at AITE since he is not sure that this has been resolved. He also noted that district wide measures to conserve energy is something the Committee should be working on. Ms. Heftman inquired about the reconfiguration of the space at AITE and if there was money in the Capital budget. Dr. Starr responded that there are funds in the AITE project which is State funds and there will be some procedural aspects to that given the fact that it was closed out in 2007 or 2008. Ms. Heftman wondered if we could add something to Facilities to look into how we can make our buildings more green. Ms. Nabel asked Dr. Starr if this is something he can ask Mr. Barbarotta to give us some thoughts on this suggestion. Dr. Starr responded that when the Committee Chair and Mr. Dunn have a review one thing you will want to do is invite the City Engineering to come before the Board to discuss different approaches to that.

FISCAL

Ms. Heftman stated that she would like to have the Fiscal Committee meet in December and thought it would be a good opportunity, certainly for the new members, and any of the older members who wanted another budget review. Also, she would like to have this out to the public that we are going to be doing a tutorial on the budget.

Ms. Nabel asked if dates have been set for the quarterly meetings with the Board of Representatives and Board of Finance members. Dr. Starr noted that the meeting will be Tuesday, December 9, 2008 at 7:30 am in the Superintendent's office. Ms. Lorenti asked that when Dr. Starr has these meetings if he would give an update at the monthly Board meetings.

Ms. Wade made a comment on the budget tutorial for this month, not that she would expect them to come, but she would like to extend that invitation to other Boards if they so desire to participate in the budget tutorial because that would only make them more knowledgeable in their own budget deliberations. Ms. Nabel noted that once our fiscal calendar is set, we have also made it a point the last couple of years of inviting the Board of Representatives and the Board of Finance to attend our Fiscal Committee meetings for budget and we will do that again.

Ms. Nabel referred to the Thursday morning meeting with State Legislators and noted that Dr. Starr mentioned to her that we do have a posted

agenda, but if Board members would find it helpful to have a list of talking points we can work something up and have it distributed tomorrow. Dr. Starr noted that he would e-mail out the CAUS and the CAPPS, but usually CABE and CAPPS are consistent with their legislative agendas. Everyone recognizes there are going to be cuts so one of the things we are asking for is a reduction in mandates. Dr. Philip Streifer, Superintendent of Bristol, is testifying tomorrow morning to stop standardized testing for a couple of years.

LABOR RELATIONS

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak asked Ms. Nabel to guide her. Ms. Nabel indicated that all three items, Staffing, Negotiations Discussion, and Grievance/Arbitration are actually full Board items.

Ms. Nabel asked for a motion to move to take Steering out of order on the agenda. We will then return to the Labor Relations agenda.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King to take Steering out of order on the agenda.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

STEERING

Ms. Nabel went back to the idea of two complete agenda meetings on January 13, 2009 and January 27, 2009. Ms. Heftman noted that the Fiscal Committee meeting would have to be moved on January 27th in order to hold the Board meeting. A Special Board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Board room for the budget tutorial.

LABOR RELATIONS CON'T.

Ms. Nabel asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a confidential negotiation.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino to go into Executive Session to discuss confidential negotiation at 8:13 pm.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Ms. Wade moved, seconded by Mr. Mathews to go out of Executive Session at 9:00 pm.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Ms. Heftman to go into Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter at 9:03 pm.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Mr. Mathews moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino to go out of Executive Session at 9:25 pm.

The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: The motion was passed with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Wade to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Dr. Joshua P. Starr
Superintendent of Schools
Executive Office