

MINUTES OF THE WORKING MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION Stamford, Connecticut August 18, 2009

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on August 18, 2009 at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Ms. Nabel, President, with the following Board members present: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo (arrived at 8:15 pm), Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade. Absent: Mayor Malloy. Also in attendance: Dr. Starr, Dr. Hamilton, Dr. Bruno, Ms. Gagne, Ms. Karwan, Mr. Barbarotta, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Murphy, Dr. Johnnie Lee, Ms. Banks, Mr. DiBlasio, Ms. Shiavino-Narvaez, Representatives from the SEA and EASA, Advocate reporter, News 12, and 6 guests.

Salute to the flag.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

STUDENT AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

The Westhill High School Girls Softball team was recognized for winning their first FCIAC Championship in ten years. The team unfortunately lost the Class LL state tournament game due to a series of errors. The team was invited to Yankee Stadium in June where they met the Yankee players and escorted them onto the field.

H1N1 Report

Dr. Starr acknowledged both Sarah Arnold and Dr. Lee for the enormous amount of work that has been done since this virus started approximately 6 months ago. Stamford seems to be ahead of other districts due to questions that Ms. Arnold and Dr. Lee have raised.

Dr. Johnnie Lee, Director of Health for the City of Stamford, made a presentation on the H1N1 virus and how he is working with all groups within the City and State to educate everyone on how the virus is spread and what precautions need to take place. He noted that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) makes decisions and provides updates. He recommended that people visit the CDC website for all information and updates on the H1N1 virus.

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS/RESOLUTIONS

LABOR RELATIONS

Ms. Nabel asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak moved, seconded by Mr. Mathews to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation at 7:50 pm.

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

Mr. Polo arrived at 8:15 pm and went into the Executive Session meeting.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Mr. King to go out of Executive Session at 8:47 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. Gagne reported that we are prepared to begin our negotiations with the SEA and the final schedule for the meetings has been distributed to appropriate parties and two invitations have been sent to the Board of Finance to be present during the negotiations since they are entitled per statute. With respect to the Security Workers union, we heard from our attorney and are hoping to begin a schedule sometime in September. She has asked Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak to schedule an Executive Session meeting with the Board to prepare for the beginning meeting. We still have one more meeting before we are tied into final proposals.

Under Staffing, she noted that there is a two day New Teacher Orientation prepared. We have about 50+ teachers, but are still hiring. We have about 9 vacancies as of today and they are primarily in shortage areas. Dr. Starr announced that Michael Rinaldi, Assistant Principal at Dolan Middle School, will be filling the Assistant Principal vacancy at Stamford High School. This will leave a vacancy at Dolan Middle School which will be posted. A letter will be going out to Dolan and Stamford HS tomorrow.

Ms. Gagne reported that there had been an arbitration hearing scheduled for this Friday, but we were able to settle that grievance. The grievance was related to the middle school schedule, in particular for the 2009-2010 school year, and involved not only the change in the schedules from 8 periods to 6 periods, but the introduction of advisory periods. The result of the Memorandum

of Agreement is that based on a 6 period day that no more than 4 teaching periods per day plus homeroom would be assigned to any teacher. The teachers in the classes have to be taught by academic teachers. The math coaches assigned to middle school with 6 periods will be assigned no more than one class per day. The advisory period will be instituted by substituting a 25 minute instructional period, one day per week, on a rotating basis. No lesson plans or student assessments will be required related to the advisory. SPS will provide adequate time to review the materials and prepare for advisories so that they are prepared to deliver the advisory instruction. Basically, the purpose of the MOA was to codify the baseline going forward and depending on how this works during the 2009-2010 school year we may reopen and make some changes.

Ms. Gagne reported on one Level III grievance that the SEA has requested that we will place in advance since we will be scheduling another Level II at the administrator level and, in the event that goes forward, we will try and bundle them together so the Board will be able to hear multiple Level III grievances. There is one Level III SEA grievance pending feedback from the Board. Once she receives the feedback she will relay the information to the SEA on behalf of the Board for a Level III and the SEA can make the decision as to whether or not they wish to go forward to arbitration.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak reported that the Board had discussed the job descriptions for the paraeducators and will have further discussion under the resolutions for these positions.

Resolution 08-25-09:133

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve childcare leave(s) for the 2009-2010 school year for the following teacher(s): Francis Lenhart, Jaime Hoffman.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, and Mr. Rubino.

Resolution 08-25-09:134

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the revised job description for the position of Paraeducator – Special Education.

Ms. Gagne reported that this is the final version of the paraeducator job descriptions for Special Education and Instructional. There were a couple

of meetings with the representatives from the Educational Assistants union, Cathy Coppola and Mary Frycz, and their input was appreciated. We believe that this is an appropriate job description that reflects the job that this group performs at this point. This job started as a teacher aide position and has progressed to something that is much more comprehensive and we believe that this now reflects an appropriate skill level for the job that is being done. We also have 2 professional days scheduled for the paraeducators and have tried to connect the professional development to the job description so that it will be meaningful professional development. There are a couple of areas that will be covered under professional development this year which are:

- Caring for a child with special needs within a school setting;
- Blood borne pathogens which is required every year under OSHA;
- IEP guide;
- General safety and awareness in a school setting;
- Combative students; and
- Escalating conflict strategies.

The significant differences from the prior job descriptions really spoke to specific tasks in particular taking a student from point A to point B and not necessarily concentrating on the depth of knowledge or the skill set that would be required of a paraeducator today in order to really be able to help in the instructional process. We tried to look at skill set, caring, nurturing as opposed to just task oriented. We also tried to cover NCLB requirement in improving the skill set under this category. If the position is funded by Title I funds, if they work in a Title I program or if they work in a Title 1 school they are required to have a specific academic background which would either be 60 credits of college or an Associates degree. They have to pass the parapro exam and we tried to address this under the Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities section so it would minimize the potential for grievance.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, and Mr. Rubino.

Resolution 08-25-09:135

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the revised job description for the position of Paraeducator – Instructional.

Dr. Starr cited the leadership that both Cathy Coppola and Mary Frycz have shown. He said it is not the norm for an association to come to the Superintendent and others and say that they are extremely willing to work a lot harder and do a lot more because it will benefit the students.

Because of Ms. Coppola and Ms. Frycz we are increasing the level of professionalism, accountability, and responsibility that this group has. Without the leadership of Ms. Coppola and Ms. Frycz and the people behind them this would not have gotten done. This is not the type of thing that happens every day in public education and they deserve an enormous amount of credit and Ms. Coppola & Ms. Frycz deserve a lot of credit for pushing us on doing something that will help our students. Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak echoed Dr. Starr's appreciation.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, and Mr. Rubino.

Resolution 08-25-09:136

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the posting/advertising and filling of 1 Position Control and Payroll Coordinator, following approval by the City Personnel Commission.

Ms. Gagne reported that this position, which is part of the UAW bargaining unit, is an S15 level pay range for a position that previously was the HRIS Coordinator position in the UAW bargaining unit under S17 pay scale. With the retirement announcement of the incumbent, the director in charge of this position came to me with some recommendations to not only try and save some money in the future, but to align the position to what the needs are for this role and for the specific department. The salary range that is proposed for this position is \$73,300 to \$86,594.

Two changes were made to the job description which will be presented to the full Board for a vote on August 25, 2009.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, and Mr. Rubino.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino to go into Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter at 9:30 pm.

The motion 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. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. Mathews to go out of Executive Session at 10:00 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. Rubino left the meeting at 10:00 pm.

FACILITIES

Mr. Barbarotta reported that the Stamford High School project is 100% complete and the final close out will be done. Also, beginning tonight at 10:00 pm the modulars at Rippowam are being moved to Rogers which will take place the next three nights. By the end of next week the parking lot at Rippowam will be graded and a fence will be installed. The Sonitrol project at Westhill High School was the last school to have the transition and the installation of all new equipment in all schools is complete. The Dolan sprinkler system project which consisted of replacing all sprinkler heads and repairing the leaking pipes is almost complete. The solar energy project has begun at Rippowam and should be completed by October 1, 2009. We received the TCO today for Rogers International School so we can occupy the building legally. Teachers were there setting up their rooms and we are down to cleaning the cafeteria as the last area. The Springdale roof is just about complete. Mr. Barbarotta noted that the custodians and tradesmen have done a remarkable job getting the schools ready for opening day. Ms. Wade inquired if we have ever publicly celebrated the custodial staff. Ms. Nabel noted that she would acknowledge the custodial staff at Opening Day.

Mr. Barbarotta indicated that there are some concerns at the new Rogers International School with respect to the weeds on the roof and the pond in the front and how to maintain these areas. Also, everyone is being trained on how to use the new sophisticated equipment. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held on September 30, 2009.

With respect to the EMG report, Mr. Barbarotta reported that he has the final report and will put it into a summary report for the Superintendent. Also, Mr. Casolo will be presenting this report to the Board of Finance on September 10, 2009.

Mr. Barbarotta reported on the walking access to Rogers International School and indicated that the grass has been cut and the fence will be put up this week. We have an agreement that we can use this area until the final lease is agreed to by all our City boards which will happen in September. Mr. Schneider is still working out the bus pick up on the Cove Road side. Mr. Mathews noted an area of concern where there is direct access from Blachley Road onto the roof of the building. He indicated that further discussion is needed on how to secure that portion of the area particularly when the school is not in use.

Ms. Heftman asked if there was a date certain that we officially don't have any part of the old Rogers School. Dr. Starr indicated that in this week's Board

package there will be a resolution that was passed by the Board of Representatives to turn the building back to the City.

Resolution 08-25-09:137

Mr. Mathews moved, seconded by Mr. King:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve completion of School Construction State Project #135-0261RR for roofing at Rippowam Middle School.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Mr. King, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, and Mr. Polo.

FISCAL

Mr. Murphy reported under 2008-2009 that he had distributed a revised budget transfer from what was on the original resolution. Mr. Murphy noted that this is the end of the 2008-2009 budget. The City will receive back \$344,315 from the Board of Education.

The resolution for the 2009-2010 was pulled from the agenda.

Dr. Starr reported that with the closing of Wright Tech approximately 20 Wright Tech students from Stamford want to go to Abbot Tech in Danbury. Under State statute Stamford is responsible for the transportation costs. We are looking at potentially 2 busses in the morning because of the routes and possibly 1 bus in the afternoon. The potential cost is between \$160,000 and \$180,000. This is unbudgeted money and we can't get around the statute. Dr. Starr has talked to Norwalk to see where they are and they went out to bid yesterday and if they get a good bid we could tack onto it. He spoke with Commissioner McQuillan who indicated he would make every effort to make sure that we receive this money back. He also spoke to Senator McDonald and Representative Fox regarding this matter and there is legislation moving forward in the State to actually cover the costs for Stamford and Norwalk since it is a unique situation. He will be sending a letter to the Commissioner by the end of the week stating that this is unacceptable to us that we would have to pay this amount and fully expect to be reimbursed. There is a potential for an ongoing annual cost, but would probably not last more than three years.

The Permit Fee/Building use Fund account report, including rollover funds, will be given to the Superintendent on Thursday morning.

Dr. Starr reported that there was nothing to report on SRO Security officers. He has not heard anything from the Chief of Police. It will be discussed at the Board of Representatives Education Committee meeting on August 27, 2009.

Resolution 08-25-09:138

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Nabel:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the 2008-09 budget transfers per the document dated August 25, 2009.

The back-up information for this resolution was replaced at the meeting and will be presented to the full Board for a vote at the August 25, 2009 Board meeting.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Mr. Mathews, and Ms. Nabel.

Resolution 08-25-09:139

This resolution was pulled from the agenda.

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the 2009-10 budget transfers per the document dated August 25, 2009.

Resolution 08-25-09:140

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the above purchases of over \$100,000.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Mr. Mathews, and Ms. Nabel.

CURRICULUM

Dr. Starr reported under Rogers 6 to 6 that the school is ready to go. He noted that he had provided information in the Board package from Principal Cummings in July regarding the before and after program.

The status of the Rippowam IB program was reviewed by Dr. Hamilton. She indicated that they are right on target for their certification by the end of this year for both 6th and 7th grades and have certified staff in 6th and 7th grades. There will be 103 students in 6th grade and approximately over 100 in 7th grades. Principal Giberti has been in touch with the IB Headquarters to ascertain if they need to have a dedicated full time coordinator. The person who is now in charge of the IB program stated that he was at one point an IB coordinator before he coordinated the entire program and he was a part-time teacher. He suggested

that a teacher be a part-time teacher and part-time coordinator if we are not going to have a full-time dedicated coordinator. Mr. Giberti is in the process now of posting for an IB Coordinator through Human Capital Development and will hire someone to be a part-time coordinator at this point.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Wade to table the CMT/CAPT and Cloonan Pilot Results agenda items.

The motion was passed with the following Committee members voting in favor: Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, and Ms. Wade. Opposed: Ms. Nabel.

AD HOC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ms. Wade reported under Student Representation Committee that this item has remained on the agenda until she has the chance to speak with the various advisory teachers and administrators of the high schools when school opens to help identify students. Once she has a better idea of that she will then convene this Committee and hopefully will have a meeting at the end of September.

With respect to the School Calendar item, Ms. Wade thought that discussion about the calendar would be mute at this point and is waiting to see the survey results. She also asked if the Committee would be interested in discussing a longer school day, a longer school year, a 12 month school year and those kinds of conversations could take place in labor negotiations which are scheduled for the next calendar year. Ms. Nabel noted that the School Calendar is on the agenda because it is on the Board calendar of tasks to be undertaken and that we actually begin consideration of the school calendar for the following year in August. This is a marker for Ms. Arnold to start thinking about the 2010-2011 calendar. Dr. Starr noted that from the internal audits that were done there was some analysis of potential savings that we could gain by changing some things around by combining some early release time, report card dates, etc. which could save approximately \$80,000. The Board needs to identify who is going to work with Ms. Arnold on the calendar so we can start moving it forward and taking into account the Board's interest. Ms. Nabel indicated that Ms. Arnold should work with the Ad Hoc Public Engagement Committee.

POLICY

Ms. Nabel reported that we are waiting for the "draft" of the Curriculum Policy and Equity Statement which will be in Friday's Board package. There was no update on the School Building Use policy. Ms. Nabel indicated that the Curriculum Policy could wait until after the Strategic Leadership Team meeting on August 31, 2009.

Ms. Nabel indicated that the Board Retreat scheduled for Monday, August 24, 2009 starting at 6:00 pm and the agenda will be discussion of Superintendent and Board goals and the new structure of the Board meetings. A Special Board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 1, 2009 to discuss the Equity Statement and Curriculum policies.

Ms. Lorenti distributed an e-mail from Bridget Fox on the School Readiness program.

Mr. Mathews moved, seconded by Mr. Polo to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 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, and Ms. Wade.

Dr. Joshua P. Starr
Superintendent of Schools
Executive Office