

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION Stamford, Connecticut June 23, 2009

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on June 23, 2009 at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Ms. Nabel, President, with the following Board members present: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade. Absent: Mayor Malloy, Mr. Mathews, and Mr. Rubino. Also in attendance: Dr. Starr, Dr. Hamilton, Dr. Nicholson, Ms. Gagne, Ms. Karwan, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Barbarotta, Mr. DiBlasio, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Jennings, Ms. Schaefer, representatives from the SEA, representative from the Advocate, and approximately 20 guests.

Salute to the flag.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak presented the mission statement of the Board of Education.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Ms. Heftman, to accept the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting – May 26, 2009 – pp. 294 - 300.

The minutes were accepted with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti, to accept the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting – May 28, 2009 – pp. 301 - 305.

Ms. Heftman made a correction on page 303, second to the last paragraph. Should read the motion “passed.”

The minutes were accepted with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, to accept the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting – June 5, 2009 – pp. 306.

The minutes were accepted with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, to accept the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting – June 6, 2009 – pp. 307.

The minutes were accepted with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

Ms. Wade moved, seconded by Mr. Polo, to accept the Minutes of the Working Board Meeting – June 9, 2009 – pp. 308 - 316.

The minutes were accepted with the following Board members voting in favor: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

STUDENT AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Students were honored for their accomplishments in the Stamford Public Schools Mathlete Projects. PTC gave scholarships to 1 AITE student, 3 Stamford High School students, and 3 Westhill High School students.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Starr reported that on the Advocate website there is an area that the college list appears. He thanked Carol Henderson for the Mathlete Program and PTC for the scholarships awarded this evening. Also, graduation was held yesterday and he thanked everyone for all their organization and leadership.

Several students qualified for the National History Day competition at the University of Maryland. Two students from Rippowam, Philippe Vibien and Sean Martin, won for their junior group exhibit on Eisenhower – The Man Behind D-Day. They also won a special award in the Military Category for their project. The advisor is Maryann McGuire.

On Wednesday, June 24, 2009 we will hold our first Day of Service. More than 100 staff members at all levels have signed up to work at two locations – Mill River @ Scalzi and Stillmeadow and will volunteer their time to weed, clean, beautify, and spread mulch in the playground. If it rains this event will be rescheduled to Thursday.

The Professional Development calendar is now on line thanks to Rebecca Thessin and the Curriculum & Instruction staff.

Dr. Starr indicated that in last Friday's Board package there was some information regarding the Literacy roll out. A Literacy Reference Guide developed by Mary Schaefer and reading teachers was distributed which Dr. Starr reviewed.

Ms. Jennings and Ms. Schaefer reviewed the Classroom Library materials that are being purchased for the targeted schools which are Davenport, Roxbury, KT Murphy, and Stark. Dr. Starr noted that SPEF is very eager to support our efforts to increase the number of books and is working with Borders for donations. Ms. Jennings noted that the materials that have been ordered for summer school are leveled materials that support the DAR skills which are oral reading fluency, comprehension, and phonics.

BOARD REPORT

Ms. Nabel acknowledged Carol Henderson for her hard work with the Mathletes Program.

Ms. Nabel asked both Ms. Heftman and Ms. Lorenti to report on the Strategic Leadership Council meeting they attended. Ms. Heftman reported that there is some exciting work being taken on by this group. Part of the group encompasses administrations, teachers, GE Foundation and facilitated by the Panasonic Foundation. A report was given by Dr. Judy Singer on a Balanced Assessment System which is being developed by Dr. Starr and his staff with input from the Council which will be used to adapt instruction to enhance achievement for all students, provide relevant professional development, and make curriculum modifications as appropriate. They are also developing a calendar to monitor the initiatives in the district and the calendar will begin for the 2009-2010 school year. The Council will meet again in late August. Ms. Heftman suggested that when the our Board meets the end of July that we discuss our monitoring requirements and that we do try to align our interests with the work that the Council is doing and in that way we can hopefully in the near future have an ongoing monitoring function institutionalized so that we know what reports we are receiving, when we are receiving them, and the Superintendent will know well in advance.

TIME FOR THE PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Seven people spoke to the following issues: budget cuts and the consequences, Westhill High School business classes and why they should not be cut, the position of Assistant Principal at Hart Magnet Elementary, walking access to Rogers, and support of the Mathlete Program.

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS/RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Nabel asked for a motion to move the Labor Relations portion of the agenda out of order.

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Mr. Polo to move the Labor Relations portion of the agenda out of order.

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

LABOR RELATIONS

Ms. Gagne reported under Negotiations that we have received a demand letter from the SEA and will be opening up teacher negotiations this summer. The commencement date for SEA negotiations will be August 3, 2009 with a mediation date of September 22, 2009, and the arbitration date will be October 17, 2009. She is working with her staff to prepare materials for the Board and the materials will be provided prior to the June 30th Special Board meeting. The Board agreed not to have legal counsel present at this meeting.

Ms. Gagne indicated with respect to the security workers that as of this evening she still has not had any contact or response to our phone calls to open with a "bump and run" with the new group that has been formed. In the absence of a successor agreement, which we are obviously not going to have, all the existing working conditions, as indicated in the current agreement go forward and whatever is negotiated in the future may become retroactive.

Under Staffing, Ms. Gagne gave an update on the HCD vacancies for HCD Manager and HR Generalist. The manager position was posted and closed and is hoping to schedule interviews next week. The HR Generalist position did not have to be posted by the City because a qualified list had already existed through the Civil Service exam. However, when this position was posted and tested by the City it represented an HR Generalist need that was identified by the City, as opposed to the school district needs, so the qualifications and experience that we are looking for is a little bit different and there may be some delays in filling that position.

With respect to the Transportation Coordinator position, which is a new position, Ms. Gagne is working with the City's Human Resources contact, Fred Manfredonia, to find out the status. As of tonight it looks like it could be October by the time Mr. Schneider receives the assistance that he needs. Some union concerns were brought to HCD's attention that related to the absence of filling the position and Ms. Gagne and Mr. Manfredonia were able to meet with the union and work out a reasonable remedy. Ms. Gagne will be staying on top of this so that Mr. Schneider receives the help he needs.

Ms. Gagne noted that at the July Working Board meeting she plans on presenting the Management Analyst position job description. The Board will receive a job description for this position as well as job descriptions for the Educational Assistants for discussion.

The Assistant Principal interviews for Stamford High School are still open and we expect to continue to move forward with those interviews next week.

With respect to the overtime account, back in May there was a vote regarding the Clerical Overtime account under Program 35 which was the 122.49 account. This year that account was \$75,000 and she noted that this is a district-wide account. Mr. Murphy had mentioned at the last Board meeting that the account was running at \$22,000 - \$23,000 above budget at that time. Ms. Gagne performed an analysis of her own department's use of the budget because of the two vacancies in her department, HR Director and Receptionist. Between July 1, 2008 and June 5, 2009 HCD incurred about \$31,000 in overtime costs. The costs were necessary in order to fulfill the necessary responsibilities that had to be performed, many of which were date-sensitive or contractually driven, in order to meet deadlines. Since she had funds available in her budget in the administrative line for the Director's position, she asked Mr. Murphy to approve a transfer from that line within her department of \$26,000. With or without the \$26,000 transfer into the overtime account she wanted the Board to be aware that HCD's use of the overtime account is running at about 5-6% of the allotted monies. Next year, cut will affect overtime on a district-wide level quite a bit.

Under Grievance/Arbitration, Ms. Gagne reported there is an SEA mediation hearing scheduled for June 24, 2009 and if we are not able to resolve this particular issue an arbitration hearing will be held on July 10, 2009. Most recently she has heard five Level II grievances and she has been working with the SEA to try and get to some resolutions. Ms. Gagne hopes that when the SEA receives their responses everything will be resolved at Level II, but she is aware that one of those items is expected to proceed to Level III. Ms. Gagne has two more grievances pending.

Resolution 06-23-09:116

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 personal leave(s) for the 2009-2010 school year for the following teacher(s): Tina Carpenteri, Amy Ofiero, and Robyn Spinner.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:117

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the filling of 1 Special Education Assistant at KT Murphy Elementary School effective June 24, 2009.

This position will be for the 2009-2010 school year.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:118

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 appointment of John Goetz, to the position of Interim High School Principal effective July 1, 2009.

This resolution was not reviewed by Committee, but the Board did meet in Executive Session prior to this meeting to have a conversation with Mr. Goetz.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:119

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 appointment of Brendan Fox, to the position of Middle School Assistant Principal effective July 1, 2009.

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

Dr. Starr noted that we may have to schedule a Special Board meeting in July if we have Assistant Principal positions to fill at Stamford High School.

FISCAL

Mr. Murphy stated that under the 2008-2009 Operating Budget we are still waiting for payrolls to be posted, but are still tracking for a \$250,000 end of year balance.

There was a discussion on the process that the district uses to obtain payment on outstanding accounts under the School Building Use Fund. Currently the Parks & Recreation Department has a large balance and there was a discussion on various ways to collect those funds.

Ms. Heftman asked what the process is that the district uses to obtain payment on the outstanding accounts under the School Building Use Fund. She noted that a lot of the outstanding items appear in the Recreation Department column. Dr. Starr noted that it is the City's recreation department. Mr. Barbarotta noted that there are some issues with the Parks & Recreation Department at this point. We did have an agreement that we would collect 10% of what they collected from camps that are for profit and at this point it is around \$45,000 and another \$20,000 owed for custodial overtime which they don't have money in their account to pay. We will have to meet with the Superintendent regarding this matter, but we do not have anyone else who has refused to pay. He is confident that we will collect the majority of all the money that is outstanding with the exception of Parks & Recreation. Ms. Heftman noted that there are many charge backs that the City extracts from us for work that they do and she asked why this amount can't be subtracted from what we owe them. Dr. Starr noted that this is a very legitimate point of conversation with the development of next year's budget. As it honors the commitment to return unexpended funds (through the good work of Hugh Murphy) to the City, the Board should consider that there are monies that are owed to us by Parks & Recreation. On the outstanding cost side of the \$250,000 that we promised the City there are Dolan's sprinklers, boiler issues or the Parks & Recreation. We can't give the money back to make the City whole on their revenue side if we

aren't whole on our side. We will have to review our policy on this since it does not address delinquent accounts.

Mr. Murphy reported that under the 2009-2010 Operating Budget that there are some position changes on the agenda this evening for Board approval that will amend some of the position counts.

Dr. Starr reported that we did go back and discuss with the First Student bus company regarding some of the changes in tiers. Essentially the statement we have been given is that there will be no negotiation unless we agree to a two year extension which, is not in the Board's financial interest. At this time we hold the contract we have and we are not going to be able to squeeze anything else out of this contract which is valid for another 3 years at which time we will do an RFP. Dr. Starr indicated that we will see how the landscape changes, but unless we significantly change some bus routes. Ms. Heftman indicated that the Board had agreed to a more comprehensive conversation regarding this matter outside the budget climate.

Resolution 06-23-09:111

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 5th year of the five year contract for Building Management Services for the Stamford Public Schools with AFB Construction Management of Trumbull, Inc. for the period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:112

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti:

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 June 23, 2009.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:113

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Wade:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the attached lease with HP for 150 computer tablets with a quarterly lease payment of \$25,909.46 for 4 years.

Ms. Heftman noted that these funds are from a grant and not the operating budget.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:114

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Wade:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Stamford Public Schools will not participate in the “Healthy Food Certification” program at this time.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:114A

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve payment to American Reading Company for the amount up to \$148,005.00 for a one time purchase of classroom library materials.

Dr. Starr noted that this purchase is from unexpended grant funds.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:114B

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Wade:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education amend the 2009-10 Operating Budget positions from 1,899.99 to 1,897.9 as outlined in the attached documents.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King to amend the resolution to approve the reduction of three positions at Scofield Magnet Middle School and transfer the \$180,000 savings from the Teachers Salary account to the Contingency Fund.

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

Ms. Heftman was not able to move the following amendment since on the previous vote she was on the side that lost and someone on the prevailing side needs to raise this amendment. She asked Mr. King who was on the prevailing side on the Fiscal Committee to move this amendment to the full Board.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Mr. Polo to rescind the vote to eliminate two assistant principal positions and fund those positions out of the Contingency Fund and fill those positions.

Ms. Nabel asked that going forward next year before we get to a budget situation where we are unfortunately “robbing Peter to pay Paul,” she asked Dr. Starr and Ms. Gagne to do a survey of how Assistant Principals are actually used across the district, what an actual position description is, and how Stamford Public Schools compares to other districts in the number of assistant principals, how our assistant principals are allocated from school to school. She asked for this topic to be taken up on a future Labor Relations agenda so we can make an educated assessment of where we stand regarding assistant principal positions.

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

Mr. Murphy noted a correction to #117 – should be clerical at SHS from teacher account, not security guard.

Ms. Heftman asked where we are with contingency positions. Mr. Murphy noted that there are 4.2 in the operating budget and 2.0 in the grants budget after all the changes and is indicated on the resolution attachment.

Ms. Heftman inquired about the reading teacher position at Stamford HS and asked for an explanation as to why there was not a reading teacher position at Westhill. Dr. Hamilton responded noted that one person was on a medical leave and the position was never filled and the other position there were no students who signed up for that class and they gave that position up. Ms. Heftman noted that on the resolution attachment it indicates restoring a reading position at Stamford High School. Dr. Starr will follow up with an explanation in the Board package.

Ms. Heftman inquired about the reclassification of the ESL to Bilingual at Stillmeadow. Mr. Murphy noted that this is in Program 28 and 2-1/2 positions were budgeted under ESL and none in Bilingual. We were corrected back in February that there should be a bilingual position.

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

Resolution 06-23-09:114C

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education increase the Magnet Grant positions at Rogers from 5.5 to 10.9 pending approval from the State Department of Education.

Ms. Heftman requested information on the program that is going to be delivered at Rogers next year.

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

CURRICULUM

Ms. Lorenti indicated that the Literacy Audit update was discussed under the Superintendent's Report. Ms. Lorenti asked if there was an update on the Middle School Transformation. Dr. Starr indicated at this time there was no update. She asked if Board members reviewed the GE Survey by American Institute for Research and if they had any comments. Ms. Nabel asked who else would see this survey and Dr. Starr noted that there was no real intention to publicize. Ms. Nabel thought that more information is always better and thought it would be great if there was a link to this document on the website. Ms. Lorenti thought the public would be interested in hearing and seeing some of the recommendations and what actually occurred at the Yerwood Center meeting. Ms. Wade referred to the bullet in the report regarding a Town Hall meeting to the topic of teacher readiness and offering differentiated instruction workshops

and thought this was a very good idea and that perhaps we should hold this type of meeting.

AD HOC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ms. Wade indicated that she did not have anything new to report.

POLICY

Ms. Nabel indicated that the Board Retreat was reviewed at the last meeting and we will be reconvening in August and will be focusing on a draft of our Equity Statement and our Curriculum Rationale and hopefully be able to hone in on isolating metrics and a timeline for evaluating the metrics in August.

Resolution 06-23-09:115

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

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education amend the 2008-2009 school year calendar to reflect that June 23, 2009 (an early release day) be the last day of school for students and staff. 2nd Vote.

Ms. Lorenti commented that there has been discussion on the calendar and a letter to the Advocate, but as a parent in the system she received her notification and did her job to know when the last day of school was. She thought that Ms. Arnold did what she was suppose to do and that we did everything we can do and sometimes parents need to do their job also. At the end of the school year we all know that there are parties, picnics, half days, etc. She was upset because she felt that we reached out as much as we can and was upset with Mr. Gonzales comment.

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

FACILITIES

Ms. Nabel, in Mr. Mathews' absence, indicated that there are no resolutions. She asked for the Working Board meeting on July 14, 2009 that Mr. Barbarotta invite Nancy Domiziano to give the Energy Report and to also to invite Mr. Casolo to provide an update on the walking access to Rogers.

SPEF/School Readiness Council

Ms. Lorenti noted that she would have more information regarding what Dr. Starr spoke about earlier regarding the book program that SPEF is working on with Borders. She had nothing to report under School Readiness. Ms Wade noted that a “draft” blueprint of Stamford’s Early Childhood Education was presented at a meeting last week. Ms. Nabel noted that the blueprint will be presented to the Board of Representatives Education Committee on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

CES

Mr. King stated that he did not have anything to report.

STAMFORD PARTNERSHIP/ STAMFORD ACHIEVES

No report.

Ms. Nabel indicated that many Board members will not be available for the Regular Board meeting scheduled for July 28, 2009. She suggested looking at Tuesday, July 21, 2009 as a new date.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak 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, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, and Ms. Wade.

Dr. Joshua P. Starr
Superintendent of Schools
Executive Office