

MINUTES OF THE WORKING MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION Stamford, Connecticut March 10, 2009

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on March 10, 2009 at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Ms. Nabel, President, with the following Board members present: Ms. Heftman, Mr. King (arrived at 7:35 pm), Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Polo, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade (7:22 pm.) Absent: Mayor Malloy. Also in attendance: Dr. Hamilton, Mr. Dunn, Dr. Nicholson, Ms. Swerdlick, Ms. Gagne, Dr. Singer, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Hanna, Mr. Barbarotta, Ms. Arnold, representatives from the Advocate and Stamford Times, and approximately 35 guests.

Salute to the flag.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

Ms. Nabel noted that the format of tonight's meeting is a working meeting; therefore, we will be having Committee meetings in the context of a regular meeting format with one exception which is that we will be discussing resolutions rather than voting on them. The one exception is a resolution that was discussed in Committee last week and is time sensitive.

Ms. Nabel indicated that Dr. Starr was not able to be here this evening and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Winifred Hamilton will be sitting in for Dr. Starr.

Dr. Hamilton reported that on Saturday at Stark Elementary School there was a memorial service for Beverly Eckert where the Stark community, along with the family and friends of Ms. Eckert, held a wonderful tribute to her. Also, on Thursday, March 12, 2009 10 students from Stamford HS and Westhill HS will be heading to China for the Jiangdu trip which has been an ongoing educational and cultural exchange. This past Saturday the Odyssey of the Mind was held at Westover Magnet Elementary School. Eight elementary schools and two middle schools participated. This event is held in collaboration with the Stamford Youth Foundation and PT Council. All of the students that participated will be involved in the State contest on March 28, 2009 in Bethel.

Dr. Hamilton announced that she had some special awards for this evening. She indicated that Dr. Starr wanted to make sure that we made special mention of the Stamford High School Boys Basketball team who won their first FCIAC Championship in a very long time when they defeated Trinity Catholic (65-63). They also defeated Newtown HS last night in the first round of the States. She noted that this was Head Coach Jim Moriarty's first FCIAC Championship in his 31 years of coaching. She read a statement from Dr. Starr which congratulated the coaches and team and wished them luck in the State finals. Mr. Bass accepted the certificates on behalf of the coaches and the team who were preparing for a game on Wednesday night.

Ms. Wade arrived at 7:22 pm.

STUDENT SHOWCASE

Five cast members from Westhill High School's spring musical, Beauty and the Beast, performed songs from the play. The show has a cast and crew of approximately 100 students and is being directed by George Vollano. The performances will be held on March 27 and 28 and April 3 and 4 at Westhill High School.

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS/RESOLUTIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Lorenti asked for an update on Rogers International. Dr. Hamilton reported the State has approved the operating plan as written which means we can begin the important work ahead. Ms. Lorenti reported under Curriculum Management Policy that she is working with Dr. Nicholson who is highlighting what was in the Literacy Audit policies that we need to review. We are in the process of reaching out to CAFE to get curriculum policies for us and have also reached out to Larry Leverett from the Panasonic Group for policies from Montgomery County and Atlanta.

Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Nicholson reviewed the Algebra I report which included information around what the work has been since 2006 and where we have moved today. This report also helped determine that in 2009 we do have common math content and baseline data and the data will help our district move forward and use the data for action. This will help us determine what concepts were most challenging for students, what specific professional development is needed and the necessary instructional strategies to teach the concepts, which students will need additional support, and teachers will need additional support in professional development to really have a standard based curriculum that all students have an opportunity to experience.

With respect to the students who failed Algebra IA on the mid-term exam Dr. Hamilton noted that between now and the time that these students take their

finals there is going to be extended opportunity for our high school department heads, who just met today with the Director of Math & Science, Mona Hanna, along with Dr. Nicholson, the high school principals and assistant principals, to look at what those results tell us and what the next piece of work from now until the end of the year is.

Dr. Nicholson stated that some students have already had Algebra three years in a row. Some of these students have not been able to get past the CMT's or CAPT at Level I. These students have been through the school system over a number of years and have not learned the requisite skills or they have not had the opportunity to learn those skills. We are going to have to come up with an additional course for students who repeatedly fail Algebra. The Committee is working on an academic course.

Mr. King arrived at 7:35 pm.

Ms. Wade asked if it would be possible for Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Nicholson to come back to the Board with some ideas about how they are going to address the students who have taken the test repeatedly and failed. Dr. Nicholson responded that this was a reasonable request and could come back to tell you the plan more specifically than this evening and by the end of the year to advise the Board as to whether or not they worked.

Dr. Hamilton gave an update on the Middle School Reform work and indicated that the work is moving forward. Dr. Starr presented a detailed view of what has happened over the years in Stamford at the Forum and what the parts of the Middle School Reform work initiative are and where we hope to be by September with our 6th grade group of students. She also reported that there is going to be extensive curriculum professional development, extensive instructional strategy professional development that will be incorporated into the content professional development and the math, science, English, and social studies.

Dr. Hamilton also mentioned that there is going to be a Leadership Associates program presentation on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm that we will be hosting at Purdue Parma. The work of that group is in looking at our priority areas in Stamford and building on a vision of dialogue and the possibilities that we as a community in Stamford will be part of.

Ms. Nabel noted that per se Middle School Reform doesn't require any action by the Board. There will not be a resolution that says we want Middle School Reform. We have already, by being a member of the Board, and participating and reviewing the Strategic Plan, we have basically gotten on board with the idea that change is necessary in the middle schools as well as at other levels. The three places we need to watch the reform for that may require Board action are:

1. In Policy as it feeds back into the Curriculum Management Policies.
2. It may lead to another look at High School Graduation policies.
3. There may be budget implications beyond 2009-2010 so we will have to be on the watch there and there may be contractual agreements that need another look in the context of what is going on in the building.

These items may require Board action, but in terms of the Strategic Plan and going back to the Cambridge recommendation of reducing or eliminating the number of tracks and ensuring the tracks that do exist are reflective of the district's diverse population we are right there.

Mr. Rubino asked if Ms. Nabel was talking about conforming the Board's policies and budget to the Middle School Reform plan that comes out of the Superintendent's office. Ms. Nabel responded no, that she was talking about conforming the Board's policies to actions that back up the Strategic Plan. Mr. Rubino asked that if this particular Middle School Reform plan that comes out of the administration is not something that this Board agrees with, we can certainly use the policy function to modify it. Ms. Nabel responded that she was not sure how that would happen because there are no policies existing at the moment that you would want to revise. Mr. Polo asked for further clarification on that the Board can ask for the reason behind parts of the policy or the plan and perhaps other ways of accomplishing the same thing or an array of other actions. Ms. Nabel responded that was absolutely correct and that the Board has the responsibility to ask as many questions as it would like.

Mr. Polo referred to the Literacy Audit that was discussed several weeks ago and inquired about the schools that were in need immediate of assistance and what was being done. Ms. Lorenti indicated she would add this to the agenda for the next working meeting.

FACILITIES

Mr. Mathews asked Mr. Barbarotta and Mr. Dunn for an update on the walking access to Rogers International School. Mr. Barbarotta reported that he met with Mike Freimuth last week and he is still currently in negotiations with the possible purchasers of the Clairol property. He also spoke with Lou Casolo and Ben Barnes and we are actually looking at some other access points around the Clairol property where we might gain access on the Cove side as possible alternatives. We are still considering having a shuttle bus, if needed, coming from the Cove gate up to the school. Mr. Mathews noted that there will be questions arising relative to the use of the van transporting students. He asked Mr. Barbarotta if he could have some real information regarding this process for the Board and when that might be. Mr. Barbarotta responded he could do this and also noted that there is a sidewalk there. The concern is that there are tractor trailer trucks that back in close to that sidewalk. Hopefully with the new tenants we won't have those same issues. On a long term basis, until they commit, we really don't know what we are going to do but would probably need a

security guard or crossing guard right at that gate. All agreed that a tentative plan would be in place by June 30, 2009.

Mr. Barbarotta noted that the school is moving along magnificently and the school is beautiful. There will need to be a meeting for the transition plan from Rogers, the modulars at Rippowam being moved to Rogers and how the City is planning on making the moves and how it will affect us. He will be meeting tomorrow at 2:00 pm with Ben Barnes, Lou Casolo, and Cathy Cummings. We will be looking also to see if the Board of Education will be using any part of Rogers and will be looking for those decisions in the very near future.

Mr. Dunn noted that the target date for completion of the new school is May 30, 2009 and he suggested that unless we have all the CO's we don't take ownership. Mr. Barbarotta noted that he is meeting with the union tomorrow to move the majority of the Rogers staff right into the new building.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak referred to the other walking access closer to I-95, and asked about the lease from the State and if we had received the lease yet. Mr. Barbarotta indicated that Mr. Casolo has been in communication with them and believes that is imminent and should have this at any moment. We would probably have to install gates which would be our responsibility.

Ms. Nabel suggested that for the March 24, 2009 Board meeting that we have an update on the current Rogers building for follow up.

Mr. Barbarotta noted that the Mayor's Capital Budget was just released and he and Mr. Dunn did an assessment and reviewed the numbers. For the next Board meeting we will assess the line items that were cut and what that cut means as far as what projects we had intended on doing as a department, what the Planning Board did, and what the Mayor's cuts did, and how it will effect our planning for projects. Mr. Mathews asked that after Board members review this document and that they forward questions to him and he will review with Mr. Dunn and Mr. Barbarotta.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Barbarotta that as EMG is doing the Facilities Audit, that we should now start looking at the money we probably will be given and start determining which projects at which schools and start categorizing.

Ms. Heftman asked if we had sent a letter to the Mayor regarding the current Rogers building and if the last Board had voted to give the building back or do we still have to vote. Ms. Nabel responded that we do not have to vote on that, but that we need to sign a letter returning the building to the city.

Mr. Dunn reported on the AITE Energy Consumption and indicated he has not been able to get a meeting with the Engineering Department who have been trying to close out a lot of projects. However, he has a 4 month track report of kilowatt hours at each school and we are down 9.5%. What is significant is that AITE, which was only tracked for 90 days, was down 224,000 kilowatt hours

which is a 41% improvement in electrical utilization at AITE which confirms what he was saying a year ago that this will give us recourse to go back to recover some of the costs. Also we received word today that with our "interruptible" rate we were able to purchase oil at \$1.64 a gallon so we started switching all our burners back to oil for the next two months and we are looking at a \$50,000 to \$75,000 savings.

Mr. Rubino asked Mr. Dunn what the basis of our claim would be against the vendors for cost recovery related to AITE. Mr. Dunn responded that he believes that since the energy management systems were not operating correctly from inception and they had to replace the vendor to get the climate and lighting controls working correctly. They currently have an \$80,000 claim in right now. Mr. Barbarotta also noted that they held the vendor's final payment.

Ms. Nabel confirmed with Mr. Mathews that as he receives questions on the Capital Budget material that will be in our packets, he will combine them and send them to Mr. Barbarotta, Mr. Dunn, and Dr. Starr. Mr. Mathews indicated that was correct

FISCAL

Ms. Heftman asked Mr. Dunn for an update on the 2008-2009 Operating budget. Mr. Dunn reported that there has been no change in the forecast and they are in the process of closing February and will have updates in a week or so. The shift from oil to gas will save about \$50,000 and he is checking to see if any of this was forecasted. Mr. Schneider picked up a \$16,000 savings by prepaying the First Student March invoice which represents a 1-1/2% discount. He also reported that by the end of March they plan on looking at the grants to make sure we are optimizing all programs. Mr. Polo asked if he have investigated any other vendors with prepaying. Mr. Dunn responded that he will go back and look.

With respect to the 2009-2010 Operating budget, Mr. Dunn stated that we presented to the Board of Finance last night and Thursday night we will be presenting to the Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee. We are currently working on a template that the Board of Finance has asked us to prepare, which is similar to last year, along with a "bucket" report. We will be running that report based on the changes and this should be ready in a week or so.

Ms. Heftman referred back to the 2008-2009 budget and noted that we had received a copy of the Safety & Security contract. She noted that the date was 2007-2008 and she asked if this is an ongoing contract or is there a 2008-2009 contract.

Ms. Heftman discussed alternatives for transportation costs. She referred to a letter from Dr. Singer that includes the list that she and Mr. Schneider will be looking at regarding the saving of transportation dollars. What is troubling to her is Item #3 which calls for relaxing the plus or minus 10% which she thought that

we as a Board had decided that we were not going to revisit this. Mr. Rubino indicated that there had been a series of e-mails which he had recommended reducing the number of bus stops and that is not on the list. Also, with respect to magnet schools, his suggestion was to have some parts of the City have transportation to a magnet school and some areas without it. Ms. Heftman thought that request would go more to Policy if we are going to change the policy on where you have to live in Stamford to attend a magnet school.

Dr. Singer reported that the list of possibilities to reduce bus costs came from a meeting with Dr. Starr, Mr. Schneider, and Mr. Dunn. This is a beginning place with thoughts and suggestions, not necessarily that would pan out, but to consider all possibilities. The item about increasing the walking zone is self-explanatory. Restricting busing to the magnet schools would take into account what Mr. Rubino is describing in terms of limiting busing as well as considering dividing the City into quadrants and conceivably geographically – if students living in this part of town they would have the opportunity to go to this magnet school and the other side of town to that magnet school at the elementary level and so on. Both the idea of restricting busing to selected groups of students, as well as considering quadrants to cluster students by geography, would be included in the second item. Relaxing the plus or minus 10% integration was a thought that was put on the table to explore. Ms. Heftman asked that this item be removed and it was agreed to have this item removed.

Dr. Singer continued noting that other items were the question on the desirable lengths of bus rides and eliminating after school buses and she understands there are some other thoughts.

Mr. Rubino stated that specific ideas are not listed. Ms. Heftman noted that she would not have a problem with “consolidating bus stops” being added to the list. She also added combining public and private runs where possible. Ms. Nabel indicated that by State statute we are bound to provide nearly equal busing service to private schools. Dr. Singer indicated that she is in process of doing this work now. Mr. Rubino indicated that he did not think that anyone on this Board ever suggested to restrict anyone from not going to a certain magnet school; it would just be that if you live too far away you don’t get a bus ride.

Ms. Nabel asked the members of the Fiscal Committee and other Board members to send questions to Ms. Heftman.

Resolution 03-24-09:85

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Mr. King:

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 March 24, 2009.

Mr., Murphy reported that this is being driven by vacancies in the part-time custodian staffing. It is driving some of our overtime costs and rather than fill some of the functions with overtime, it is much more cost effective to bring in temporary help from Spherion at a much lower rate. This is within the contract.

Mr. Dunn remarked that we are watching the Custodial Salary account as it is running very close in the forecast.

Mr. Polo mentioned an article in a New Jersey paper regarding the Mahwah School District and they started using outside vendors for their custodial services and they saved 23%. Is this something to look at for next year? Dr. Hamilton reported that Scofield did experiment with an outside contractor. There was a grievance filed and we lost the grievance. The school was satisfied with the work, but it was a labor violation and we had to cease and desist.

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

Mr. Polo moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino to move the Policy Committee agenda out of order.

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.

POLICY

Ms. Nabel asked Ms. Swerdlick and Dr. Singer to speak to the Out of District/Out of Attendance Zone policy. Ms. Swerdlick reported that the Office of Family & Community Engagement has been using information and data based on the interactions with our parents throughout the district who have requested out of zone placements for their children for a variety of reasons. We have tracked this information for a year very carefully and the types of requests have been reviewed with the policy that currently exists and then try to adjust this new policy to both serve the changing needs of our parents within the district and to also stay somewhat balanced and supportive of some of the district initiatives around consistency. The effort to revise the policy has been highly cooperative. We have been very deliberate in the way that we have gone about it and at every step we tried to consider what is best for parents so that at the end of the day when decisions are made, whether approved or denied, parents can move on and help their children move on academically.

Ms. Swerdlick reviewed the highlights of the policy which essentially revolved around decision making so that once the OFCE has offered or rendered a decision parents don't feel that they have to question the decision and don't feel that great consideration has not been given and therefore we are attempting

to minimize appeals or dissatisfaction. We have looked at areas based upon requests around baby sitting needs, transportation needs, what parents consider extenuating circumstances, and asked ourselves how we are going to categorize these and help parents understand the differences in these categories and help them find the support for any appeal or request that they are making.

Ms. Heftman asked who would make the final determination and Ms. Swerdlick indicated that we have a hierarchy and the OFCE is teaming. The final decision, if there is an appeal, would be the Board's decision. A screening team will make sure that applications are submitted properly with all the documentation needed. Then we have our social workers within the OFCE who would be the reviewers. There would be two people doing simultaneously. Then one or the other of the social workers with a third reviewer if there are questions. Then there would be a consult which would be the Superintendent's designee.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak asked about the Resident/Non-Resident Section and everything looks the same, but she was wondering that in that slight situation where there is only one opening left in the 3rd grade and you have a resident staff and a non-resident staff would both like that spot for that child. Is there any priority given to resident staff? Ms. Swerdlick thought that resident staff would probably take precedence. Dr. Singer mentioned that the main distinction between resident and non-resident is the opportunity to charge non-residents for our students participation in special programs and special education services and this is new.

Mr. Mathews asked if a non-resident staff member still pay a percentage of the per pupil costs. Dr. Singer responded that was changed a number of years ago and non-resident staff no longer pay any tuition and is part of the teachers contract. He also asked that it was always a concern that people could easily get a note from a physician or psychologist and it really wasn't questioned. How is that going to be handled if a physical or psychologist submits a note in reference to a particular child? Dr. Singer noted that what we have added is that a request based on medical or psychological need, we may go to the City's Health Director for a recommendation.

Dr. Singer mentioned that as this has gone through multiple iterations, we have provided the "drafts" to the attorney for review so whatever is in the policy now was approved by the attorney.

Mr. Rubino asked how many non-resident teachers are in our schools. Dr. Singer responded that 22 non-resident teachers had a professional courtesy. Mr. Rubino suggested looking at this during negotiations.

Ms. Lorenti asked how many out of placements there are per year. Dr. Singer responded that this year we had 373 applications and under 300 were approved. Mr. Polo asked about how to prove or at what level the paperwork is necessary under the child care issues as that seems to be a moving target in a way and it would be very difficult to prove one way or the other and would be

more of a judgment call. Ms. Swerdlick responded that this is one of the most difficult judgments to make. The office spends more time working as a team to find that balance where documentation was authentic provided, and in this particular area there probably was more one on one engagement and follow up by someone in the OFCE to try and make that fair judgment about documentation. We were able to help parents solve their own problems. If there was inadequate documentation or questionable documentation they seemed to be fine in finding another solution. Our goal is always to help parents stabilize the situation for their children. Dr. Singer that the idea that the parent explains, including the efforts to obtain child care within the attendance area in which they reside, is new and we see how that plays out. This was put in as a way of trying to tighten requests and reduce the numbers of requests. Ms. Wade expressed concern about the staffing levels in the OFCE and hopes that the need to understand how subtle and sophisticated the office is in handling these very emotional and personal requests.

Mr. Mathews asked that with the per pupil cost right now, what are we doing to make sure that students are not regularly coming in from Port Chester, Bridgeport, or Norwalk into our schools. If we are talking about roughly \$15,000 per pupil it is then being shifted away from other areas and what are we doing to control that. Ms. Nabel responded that she thought that was an important question and we should discuss it, but would like to keep the discussion on the policy that is in front of us. If you would like a review of how we review residency and our re-registration procedures she is happy to add that to the agenda. Dr. Singer noted that there are multiple parts and she would be happy to respond at the appropriate time.

Resolution 03-24-09:89

Mr. Mathews moved, seconded by Mr. King:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the revisions to the Out-of-District Policy 5117.1 which will now be known as the Out-of-Attendance Zone Policy 5117.1. 1st Vote.

The resolution was passed with the following Committee of the Whole 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. Nabel asked Dr. Singer for a follow up to the information provided in the Board package regarding the magnet policy and Rogers International and Toquam.

Mr. Polo indicated that the information received did not address the preference zone 2 which is essentially what he had keyed in on as far as the demographics coming from either students who did not apply or then could not simply because of the room available within Rogers and what that would do to

those students not necessarily from preference zone 1 and how that would affect the balance at Toquam and also class size.

Dr. Singer responded that the lottery applications were due on the 2nd and because of the snow date we extended the date to the 4th. Once you have all the applications we enter them into a lottery data base. In order to be part of a lottery families don't just have to put in applications, but they also have to pre-register with the Stamford Public Schools. Without that pre-registration a lottery application does not find its way into the lottery. The reason for that is that in selecting students through the lottery for the magnet schools we are classifying students as advantaged/disadvantaged and assigning lottery numbers to students in the two groups. For students coming into kindergarten we can't identify them as advantage/disadvantaged without some information namely their eligibility for free/reduced lunch and their eligibility for the English Language Learners program. While we have a lottery application we don't have it completely refined because we don't have all the pre-registrations completed.

Dr. Singer also noted that for Toquam she looked at streets that are now assigned to Toquam based on redistricting. With that there are a number of attendance areas that are assigned to Toquam, but there are also some attendance areas that have been assigned to Toquam that no longer are assigned such as Toquam 1 and Toquam 3. Taking into account all the attendance areas and assuming that Toquam is going to have in kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2, 5 classes per grade level which would be 20 and 21 students, but let's say its 20, that would be 100 children in K, 1, and 2 that we are planning for. Of those 100 children about half of them are going to come from the attendance areas and half will come from the lottery. Of the children coming from the attendance areas about half are educationally advantaged and half are educationally disadvantaged which means that students coming from the lottery can also be more or less half and half. Specifically to the attendance areas that are coming to Toquam one being Rogers 1, is the attendance area for Rogers. That area is assigned to Toquam and children need to apply to Rogers in order to go. If none of those children apply to Rogers they would all be at Toquam, but in fact they all from Rogers 1 have applied to Rogers. So Rogers 1 is not going to load many children into Toquam. To help to insure that most children from Rogers 1 knew to apply, we canvassed through the OFCE who went out door to door. So we are quite sure that Rogers 1 children have applied to Rogers and are accounted for at that school. Dr. Singer indicated that she felt very confident that having canvassed that we have accommodated for that population.

Dr. Singer continued and discussed Rogers 2 which is the area that had been assigned to KT Murphy and has been added to Rogers. That area has 77 students in grades K-5. That is just about the number of children who had been in Toquam 1 and 3 that no longer go to Toquam. What is being added to Rogers 2 to Toquam is what has been taken out of Toquam so it is kind of a wash. If all the Rogers 2 children were to go to Toquam it adds about 14 children per grade level. In looking at the various attendance areas she assumed that all the Rogers 2 children are going to go to Toquam and, even with that the number of

children that can come in through the lottery, it is about 50%. She did not expect that with the redistricting that the Toquam population is going to look very different than it has looked. We are going from 4 classes to 5 classes at Toquam. There were no further questions.

Ms. Nabel asked Board members to see if we could come to some agreement on dates for a follow up retreat. The dates she has that the Panasonic Group is available are: May 15 & 16, June 5 & 6, June 12 & 13, and June 26 & 27. It was agreed to try and arrange a retreat for June 5 & 6.

Ms. Wade asked if the Ad Hoc Public Engagement agenda item could be moved out of order. Ms. Nabel asked for a motion.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti to move the Ad Hoc Public Engagement agenda item out of order.

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.

AD HOC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ms. Wade reported that the Office of Family & Community Engagement was asked to look at the possibility of coming up with a 2 year school calendar. Ms. Arnold already has the workings of a calendar for the school year 2010-2011 and has some experience in a 2 year calendar and she asked Ms. Arnold to share that experience. Ms. Arnold reported that it is a limited experience, but there was one time when the Board asked to see a 2 year calendar and we did prepare it. She believes that it was around the time that Dr. Mazzullo left and Dr. Starr came on and although she did prepare it, the Board ultimately did not vote on it because the feeling was that there was a new administration coming in so it was never acted upon. There are a couple of districts in Fairfield County that have a 2 year calendar. Ms. Wade asked what were some of the challenges of a 2 year calendar. Ms. Arnold reported that in order to commit to a 2 year calendar we would have to have a pretty high degree of confidence that we could plan and commit to the schedule for professional development days and we would also have to be confident that we would have the funding for professional development going into the 2nd year. To a lesser extent we would also have to commit to the vacation schedule, but that is less of an issue. She also looked back over the last 11 years for professional development days and they have varied quite a bit. In the last 11 years the number of early release days for professional development ranged from zero to 9 in a calendar year.

Ms. Wade noted that if we decided to go with a 2 year calendar we would be driving some budgetary decisions. If we could come up with a new schedule for delivering a calendar for a Board discussion and vote earlier in the calendar year and provide the information earlier for the Stamford community to have in order to make their plans, would we then meet the concerns that the Board

shared over several discussions about the desire to have a 2 year calendar. Ms. Nabel referred to the book of the Board's calendar work and noted that we are supposed to start in October and vote in December. Ms. Wade thought we might be able to deliver on that promise even earlier. Ms. Arnold said that one of the possibilities would be to move everything up and work on the calendar over the summer, introduce it to the Board in September and have discussion, and then vote in October. Ms. Nabel thought this would be a good way to proceed especially if the conclusion is to recommend a big change like deleting a vacation, starting later, or starting earlier and suggested possibly a public hearing.

Ms. Wade noted that there is a survey that is being constructed and there is a question on the survey about people's perception of spring break. Ms. Arnold distributed copies of the questions that would be asked on the survey and noted that the wording reflects the conversation that we have already had.

Ms. Lorenti noted that the 2nd box concerned her regarding a one week period in February and eliminating the April break. She was thinking of eliminating the February break and having the long weekends with President's Day, but her concern is that if you eliminate the April break we have testing on all levels and where does that fall in and then where does that put us with the teachers. Ms. Wade asked if the group wanted to work on alternative language tonight or think about it and e-mail her alternative language. Ms. Arnold added that one thing Ms. Karwan mentioned is that time is of the essence to get the survey out as UConn is waiting for it.

Ms. Heftman suggested than rather to try and figure this all out because we don't know when testing schedules are that we let staff do this based on a scenario of a one week vacation and a couple of long weekends.

Mr. Rubino suggested rewording the 2nd box and put "the Stamford Public Schools consolidates the February and April vacations into a one week vacation" and then decide where to put that week and begin the school year one week later in September.

Ms. Wade asked if there are any concerns or considerations, even if it is not language, let her know within 48 hours so she can get answers to Ms. Arnold and Ms. Karwan.

LABOR RELATIONS

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak formally requested that for next month we change the order of the committees and Labor Relations goes first at the next working meeting.

Ms. Gagne, under Negotiations, reminded all that this Friday, March 13, 2009 we are having a Middle School Demand to Bargain meetings starting at 11:30 am and meetings will go back to back most of the day. Under Staffing, Ms.

Gagne advised the Board that we have 8 administrative vacancies for which we are recruiting. The vacancies are: Chief Operating Officer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, 2 elementary principals, 1 high school principal, and some assistant principals as well. We have started the pre-screening of candidates for the Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction positions. We anticipate having the interview process for the Assistant Superintendent position this week. With regard to the administrative vacancies as a whole, we hope to be able to identify successful candidates and bring them to the Board by the end of April.

Under Grievance/Arbitration, Ms. Gagne reminded the Board that on Friday, March 13, 2009 at 4:00 pm we will start the SAU arbitration hearing.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak noted that we had an information item which was on the School Safety Officer which was briefly brought up earlier. Ms. Gagne indicated that she had distributed a copy of this contract this evening and the dates of the last contract that was in the personnel file cover March 5, 2007 through March 5, 2008 period. She noted that there are some inconsistencies in the title. Going forward when we decide whether or not we are going to do a succeeding contract those items will be cleaned up. She noted that Mr. Dunn had mentioned earlier there are pros and cons to having contract. It is unusual in the private sector to sign contracts, but they do in the public sector. Mr. Rubino asked if this person is a contract employee. Ms. Gagne responded that this is an interesting question, but she was inclined to say that since this contract has expired there would be two things that we would have to rely upon. First and foremost, is how have we treated the individual and she would say that we continued to treat the individual as a contract employee under the same circumstances. The other circumstance is that you would have to rely on labor law in Connecticut and Connecticut is considered an At Will State. So there could be one of two categories that this would fall under. Mr. Rubino also noted that the contract distributed is a "vendor" contract and is not appropriate.

Mr. Rubino reported that he has been receiving anecdotal comments and complaints about the conditions, the safety, and bullying that goes on in bathrooms at the high schools and, to a certain extent, in the middle schools. He would like this to be a specific item on the agenda and perhaps collect some data. Dr. Hamilton mentioned that she spends at least one day a month in each one of the buildings and we visit classrooms and walk around and as a person who spent 15 years in high school, the smoke smell that would always exist in the bathrooms, she really hasn't come across this in the high schools or middle schools. She asked the high schools what kind of security checks are being made since this an area where we don't have regular surveillance. Both high school principals have informed her that they situated their cameras outside of the bathroom areas and they do have people checking certain times during the day when students crowd into a bathroom area in the high schools and if in fact there seems to be a time span like during the lunch area where bathrooms don't seem to be clearing they send in other security. There are regular checks and they are moving around as opposed to being situated.

Mr. Rubino noted that he is still receiving information that a lot of children are reluctant to use the bathroom and in fact it is a regular practice never to use the bathroom. It is a problem and we need more data and exactly what the practice is of security checks and we should ask around. His sense is that this is a real problem. Ms. Lahiri-Heftman asked if we could add this to the survey under the student part. Mr. Rubino noted that it is more bullying than it is undesirability, but the undesirability comes up to. Dr. Hamilton noted that this would not be just a yes or no question that will give us information that we can make a conclusion from. Mr. King asked for a report on any incidences for the last school year. Mr. Rubino and Ms. Nabel will discuss the wording of continuing this item on the agenda.

Ms. Wade did not think we should design what the question should say on the survey, but should design what we are trying to get at in the question and let the professional survey writers write the question. She is also hoping that in this survey there are some questions about students feelings of safety, security, and confidence.

Ms. Heftman noted that in Dr. Starr's weekly update to us there are several safety updates and the most important of which she thinks is that a process has been put in place for having substitute security guards if any are absent. She applauded that effort and thanked Dr. Starr and staff for putting this in place. Also, there is a proposal for increasing security cameras.

Ms. Lorenti asked for a follow up on the proposal from the Educational Assistants and if this could be an agenda item for our next working meeting.

Mr. Mathews asked if the Director of Safety & Security currently involved with the negotiations with the Security Officers. Ms. Gagne responded that he would be.

Resolution 03-10-09:84

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 descriptions for the positions of Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction as presented and dated March 10, 2009, version 2.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak indicated that this resolution was discussed last week in Committee and voted unanimously in support.

Ms. Nabel noted that due to the timely nature of the necessity of making the postings we took the Committee meeting out of sequence so that the

Committee could approve the resolution and the full Board can approve it tonight so the postings can be done.

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, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Resolution 03-24-09:86

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 filling of 1 Special Education Assistant at Northeast Elementary School effective March 25, 2009.

Ms. Gagne noted that this position is required due to a new IEP. Ms. Heftman inquired about the funding and where it would be coming from. Ms. Gagne noted that the account number is on the resolution and she believes it is the Special Education account.

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 03-24-09:87

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 a personal leave for the 2009-2010 school year for the following teacher(s): Daphne Teittinen.

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 03-24-09:88

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 that the contract of employment of _____ not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, and that the Superintendent is directed to advise such person(s) in writing of this action.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti to go into Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter at 10:35 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.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti to go out of Executive Session at 10:40 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. Lahiri-Hoherchak indicated that at the next Labor Committee meeting, Ms. Heftman would like information on the procedures that the district has in place for tenure and non-tenure teachers and what type of documentation is required.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino to table Resolution 03-24-09:88.

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

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak would like at the next meeting to have an update on staffing for the new Rogers School and when we will know whether staff is moving or whether we will be hiring new staff and also that information for teachers, educational assistants, and administrators.

Ms. Nabel indicated that we are going to waive reports from SPEF/School Readiness Council, CABE/CES, and Stamford Partnership/Stamford Achieves until the next meeting on March 24, 2009.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 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