

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Stamford, Connecticut
May 26, 2009**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on May 26, 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, Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak, Ms. Lorenti, Mr. Mathews, Ms. Nabel, Mr. Rubino, and Ms. Wade. Absent: Mayor Malloy and Mr. Polo. Also in attendance: Dr. Starr, Dr. Hamilton, Dr. Nicholson, Ms. Karwan, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Barbarotta, Mr. DiBlasio, representatives from the SEA, representative from the Advocate, and approximately 150 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 Special Board Meeting – April 27, 2009 – pp. 273.

The minutes were accepted 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.

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak moved, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to accept the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting – April 28, 2009 – pp. 274 - 285.

The minutes were accepted 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.

Ms. Wade moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti, to accept the Minutes of the Working Board Meeting – May 12, 2009 – pp. 286 - 292.

The minutes were accepted 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. Rubino moved, seconded by Mr. Mathews,
to accept the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting –
May 19, 2009 – pp. 293.

The minutes were accepted 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.

STUDENT & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

The following were acknowledged for their achievements: Robert Augustyn of Stamford High School was named State Coach of the Year 2008, students from Stamford High School were honored for top awards at the State DECA Career Development Conference, AITE students were honored for placing first in the High School division of the Stock Market Game, Westhill's student newspaper, The Westword, won 1st place with Special Merit in the American Scholastic Press Association's annual newspaper competition, 32 students took top honors at the Regional and State History Day competitions, and 16 students from AITE were honored for volunteering their time to work with Hart Magnet Elementary School students.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Starr reported that on swine flu that we are in constant conversation with Dr. Lee who we take direction from if there is any indication in our schools. Scofield Magnet Middle School received a \$265,000 grant to improve student interest and achievement in math and science.

Dr. Starr reported that he, Ms. Karwan, and Ms. Lorenti went to the State to meet with the State Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee on Accountability. Two things they have instructed us to do are 1) develop a more explicit plan for the elementary, middle, and high schools elimination of tracking and, 2) develop improved connections and articulation between City run Pre-K education programs and the Stamford school system.

Dr. Starr gave an update on the 2009-2010 budget and reviewed the cuts made by other Boards. The reduction of staff is the last thing that we have sought to do, but unfortunately at this point it is one of the only places we have to go. He gave comparative information for other school districts with respect to number of teachers per 1,000 students. He reviewed conversations with the bargaining units (SAU & SEA) and he asked both units and Educational Assistants to have a more formal discussion and he did have one formal

discussion with each group. The SAU agreed to increase their health insurance by 2% which gives us \$20,000. Nine non-union central office members agreed to donate their salary increase (includes Dr. Starr and his cabinet) which is equivalent to \$34,000. The Educational Assistants – 330 members agreed to give up \$200.00 per member which came to \$66,000. If the SEA had agreed to give up .8% of salary it would be \$576.00 per teacher times 1,375 would be almost \$800,000. If anyone had agreed to giving up the last day of school it would be \$71,000 in transportation and utilities. If all labor groups gave it up it would be \$680,000. If the SEA agreed to the same thing as the SAU agreed to in terms of insurance coming up 2% it would give \$374,000. If every teacher and administrator in the district gave up \$200.00 it would be \$287,000. If the SAU gave up .8% it would be \$1,100.00 per member or \$70,000. Again, the non-union central staff gave up 2.7% of salary, the Educational Assistants gave up .8% which comes to \$66,000, and the administrators unit has agreed to increase insurance by 2% which comes to \$20,000. The meeting to vote on the budget will be held on Thursday, May 28, 2009 and he will provide information on the analysis of the assistant principals and not filling those vacancies and the analysis of the consultants and then there will be a vote.

Dr. Starr reviewed the document on Middle School Reform and indicated that a copy will be available at the Community Forum scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2009 at the Yerwood Center.

BOARD REPORT

Ms. Nabel waived the Board report with the exception of letting everyone know that there will be an agenda for the Board retreat in Friday's package. The meeting will start at 3:00 pm on Friday, June 5, 2009.

TIME FOR THE PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

36 people addressed the Board regarding middle school reform and budget cuts with respect to teachers.

Ms. Nabel commented that it is part of our By-Laws that neither the Board nor the Superintendent responds to individual speakers. We obviously have been listening and taking great care with the feelings and thoughts that were expressed this evening. She did state on behalf of her fellow Board members and thank all of you who came to speak, pointed out that we have been listening for almost 2 hours. At no other elected Board meeting that she has attended in the last 2-3-4 years has there been close to 50 speakers in the course of a regular meeting has another elected Board accorded the kind of attention and respect to its constituency which is you and she thanked her fellow Board members and all of the guests. She encouraged the guests to attend other Board meetings and speak up on behalf of education.

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS/RESOLUTIONS

FISCAL

Dr. Starr reported that we are tracking the same on the 2008-2009 budget and previously discussed the 2009-2010 budget earlier.

Ms. Heftman inquired about agenda item Magnet School Busing and asked for an explanation of what would happen if we had Bull's Head as a demarcation line for Scofield and Westover. Mr. Rubino thought we should keep it in Committee and discuss at the next Working Board meeting. Ms. Nabel noted that we did receive a legal opinion on what the ramifications would be of possibly changing magnet school bus pick up and that opinion made it seem problematic at best. Dr. Starr will obtain the information.

Ms. Heftman asked for the following items be added to the Fiscal Agenda for the next meeting:

- Information on RFP process
- Permit Fee/Building Use Fund Account
- Transportation
- Breakdown of \$100,000 cut to ARTS Program
- Possibility of Changes to Special Ed Program In House Students

Ms. Wade asked for a comprehensive review of Special Education programs over the last 5 years. It was decided this item will go under the Curriculum Committee for the June meeting. Ms. Nabel noted that this will be part of the Curriculum agenda for June and would like to begin a possible discussion about the Special Education with a review of programs for the last 10 years. Also, per Mr. Rubino's requested for a history of the number of students who go out of district and Ms. Lorenti asked for a Medicare reimbursement report.

LABOR RELATIONS

Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak indicated that she did not have an update on negotiations or arbitration. A grievance was heard last week and she will advise the Board on how it resolves itself when it comes to a definite conclusion.

Dr. Starr gave an update on staffing and indicated that we are in the final part of interviewing for the Stamford High School principal position and will be bringing a recommendation to the Board for Executive Session on June 9, 2009. We will then begin the process for an Assistant Principal for Stamford High School. We have done the Assistant Principal interviews for Turn of River and will bring that to the Board in June pending any Board action that may occur on Thursday, May 28, 2009.

Resolution 05-26-09:106

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): Viviana Toure.

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. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

Resolution 05-26-09:107

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves a one year contract extension with Dr. Joshua Starr, Superintendent of Schools, for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012 as discussed in executive session, and be it further resolved that the Board President is authorized to sign said contract extension on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mr. Rubino indicated that the resolution does not say specifically if it continues the salary and benefits as in the last year and we might want to say this in the resolution. Ms. Nabel responded that we could include that, but when we approve a one year contract extension that it is assumed that means the terms of the current contract. Mr. Rubino responded that the terms were different every year. Ms. Nabel noted that the increase and benefits terms are the same which is a CPI.

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. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Lorenti indicated that Dr. Starr gave the Curriculum update in his Superintendent's report earlier this evening. She asked her Committee if they had any other questions or concerns regarding Middle School Reform that they would like Dr. Starr to address prior to the June 2, 2009 meeting. Ms. Heftman indicated that she thought there was going to be two curriculums – honor and CP and did not think she heard two groups and requested clarification. Also for the presentation on Tuesday there needs to be a better understanding of its not heterogeneous what does a classroom look like? Dr. Starr indicated he would put the charts in the Board package. Mr. Rubino noted that he was not clear on next year what happens at Cloonan. We have Middle School Reform starting in the 6th grade now; will it continue only in the 6th grade next year or does it

progress to the 7th grade at Cloonan? Dr. Starr responded it would be 6th grade only. Mr. Rubino stated that you will then have heterogeneous group students then going back to tracking and Dr. Starr indicated that is correct. Ms. Wade asked for some feedback on the Cloonan pilot program. Mr. Mathews asked if there was a final report on Algebra I. This will be on the agenda for the June working meeting. Ms. Heftman would like to understand what is different about Scofield and what has changed that is making parents so concern. Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak about how the IB programs at two of our middle schools will fit into the Middle School Reform. Ms. Wade asked that there be some examples of what Middle School Reform so parents have a better understanding at the Middle School Reform meeting for Tuesday's meeting.

Resolution 05-26-09:105

Ms. Lorenti moved, seconded by Mr. Mathews:

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approves the Educational Technology Plan – July 1, 2009-June 30, 2012.

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. Rubino, and Ms. Wade.

AD HOC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ms. Wade reported that the students are collecting the names of individuals or organizations that they have considered. Ms. Lahiri-Hoherchak expressed concerns that very often when committees are put together they may give an aura of exclusiveness and would not want to do this with a new initiative and thought it would be wise to put up some flyers in the school. Ms. Lorenti noted that this was the challenge that was put to the students who did attend the meeting. Ms. Nabel noted that the WHS guidance counselors have an e-bulleting that they send out and maybe this would be a vehicle to have a notice placed there. Mr. Rubino suggested the school newspapers also have a place to put a notice.

POLICY

Ms. Nabel noted that we did not get very far on our Curriculum policies and reminded all to read the sample policies and look at the curriculum section in our policy manual since about two thirds of our retreat next week will be on the curriculum management document and how best to support that with our own policies. She will PDF the sample policies to everyone again.

FACILITIES

Mr. Barbarotta reported that technically the move to the EMS building will be July 1, 2009. Work on the modulars at Rogers will not start until staff is out of the building. The move will be handled in-house and any overtime would be charged to the project. He is working with Mr. Gross and Mr. Gilberti to review the 42 spaces that will become available with the move of the modulars. Mr. Barbarotta stated that next month he will give a report on all projects ahead of time in the Board package. Mr. Mathews reported that Nancy Domiziano will attend the June Board meeting with a detailed report relative to energy consumption.

Mr. Mathews stated that he attended a Board of Finance Operating Committee and discussion included the recouping of monies we may be entitled to with respect to the boilers, the refreshment stand at Westhill High School that has been broken into 7 times, and the settlement on the Stamford High School generator in the amount of \$25,000 where we had to expend approximately \$49,000 to Camsan to remedy the situation. Mr. Mathews mentioned another break-in at Westhill High School where I-pods were stolen and if there is an issue with Sonitrol not picking up the break-in. Dr. Hamilton will provide an update on this matter. Mr. Mathews also asked for a reporting device when break-ins are happening on a regular basis.

SPEF/School Readiness Council

No report.

CABE/CES

No report.

Stamford Partnership/Stamford Achieves

Dr. Starr attended a strategy meeting last week where information was presented regarding current context that Stamford is facing and solicited ideas from participants on what the partnership should be focused on.

Ms. Heftman referred back to a Policy issue and noted that a couple of months ago Steve Schneider gave us a proposed regulation on the appeals policy. Dr. Starr noted that this regulation is now being followed.

Ms. Heftman moved, seconded by Ms. Lorenti to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m. 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.

Dr. Joshua P. Starr
Superintendent of Schools
Executive Office