

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
April 5, 2010
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular Board Meeting was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven, CT on April 5, 2010. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Howard Horvath.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Howard Horvath, Jr.
Rob Saley
T. Sean Maher
M. Toni Paine
Mark Palmieri
Eric Murillo
Patrick Egolum
Dorinda Borer

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew DePalma

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Eric Pang
Brandon Patterson

B. Public Session

Howard Horvath asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Beth Dougherty, 68 Holcomb Street, West Haven, CT. She has been a 5th grade teacher at Washington School for the past 26 years and is speaking for the 5th & 6th grade children. She is sure the best decision for the children will be made but is requesting that they stay on an elementary format rather than a middle school format. They are 9 and 10 year olds and I believe that their education will benefit from this.

The board gave thanks.

Carroll E. Brown, 56 Highview Avenue, West Haven, CT. Mrs. Brown has a concern that is really bothering her. As a former school board member I attended all meetings. Certainly not during the time when there were issues on the table like the issues we have before us tonight. I was disappointed to know that during the last four PTA Meetings I only saw five board members and we have nine who were elected. She pointed the five out who she saw because it is important as there responsibility is to be at board meetings, to be at public hearings that are affecting our children and our interest. We elected you to do that and when decisions are being made for our community we need to know that we have elected responsible people not rubber stampers. In my opinion that is what we have before us. Mr. Murillo, Mrs. Borer, Mr. Saley, Mr. Maher and Mr. Horvath were the ones that I saw at Board Meetings and at public hearings. It's important that you care as much about our interest as you do our children that is why you were elected. We don't want to see a full house when there is a vote. We want to see you all the time and know that our children are your first interest.

Howard Horvath stated that he knows for a fact that everybody on this board is very committed and has spent a lot of time and in many cases years in support of the children of this school district and the adults. He would ask that she think long and hard before pointing fingers. The purpose of the open public session is not for pointing fingers it is for discussing the issues at hand so. Mrs. Brown interjected that she mentioned the people that she saw at the meetings so if the shoe fits wear it. HH – That's a few events out of many so I would ask the public to consider that.

Mrs. Paine asked that a note be made in the minutes that she is very hard to miss.

There were no other speakers.

Public Session closed at 7:12 PM

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

Neil Cavallaro said there will be four reports tonight. Two individuals from two PTA Groups will come up and give a presentation of the kinds of things going on at their school. Tonight Molloy and Mackrille PTA representatives are here. We will start with Mackrille and will have Mr. Lopes come up with the Molloy representative.

Michelle Caprio stated she is the PTA President from Mackrille School. We had a Merriment Festival in November. We had lots of vendors, raffles, lots of shoppers brought together by Ms. Borer and her committee. We had a basketball game last week with Seth Haley and parents and teachers played. It was well organized by Dave Hawley and his committee. We played in honor of Mrs. Debbie Hutchinson. We had Founder's Day in honor of Mr. Hutchinson as well and she was very happy for our support. We have great parent support for our 5th grade play Blue Suede Paws and they are going to see the Lion King next week in NYC. They had a laser show. Our building is always very clean having great credit for Mr. Voss and his support staff. There is great open communication with Mrs. Biagetti and the great staff at the school.

The board gave thanks.

Steve Sanders, PTA President from Molloy and Steve Lopes, Principal at Molloy spoke next. Mr. Sanders was kind enough to have his presentation typed for the minutes and it is included on the next two pages.

Mr. Lopes displayed a certificate that Molloy School received from the ConnCAN Organization for being #10 in the State for students of low income student performance in elementary schools on the Connecticut Mastery. Applause. We have an average of 65.5% at goal. He enlarged the actual certificate so everyone would be able to see it. We came in 10th out of 266 elementary schools.

Howard Horvath asked that all the faculty members from Molloy in attendance please stand. Applause

The board gave thanks.

Mr. Sander's presentation follows on the next page.

Good evening Superintendent Cavallaro and members of the West Haven Board Of Ed. I thank you for the opportunity this evening to update you on some of the things that have been going on at Molloy School.

We have had some wonderful family events so far this year. In January we held our annual Bingo night. It is a great chance for all of our families to get together and just have a great time shouting "Bingo" with every across, diagonal, or letter X they find. The PTA provides hundreds of prizes, so every child goes home with one or more at the end of the evening.

Then in March we had our International Potluck. Given the number of different ethnic cultures in our student population, we have a wonderful assortment of food, not to mention tasty deserts. This year we also raffled off themed baskets, put together by each classroom to raise money for an in-school presentation on bullying later in the year.

Most of the money the PTA raises with our fundraiser at the beginning of the year goes towards helping to pay for class field trips. It is a great chance for the kids to learn and experience things outside of the classroom. The trips may be to the garbage museum, science expo, or a local farm. But whatever it is, our teachers at Molloy do a great job of putting together a fun and educational day for the kids.

The PTA also works all year to put together a yearbook for the students. It showcases pictures of the Molloy events throughout the year as well as pays tribute to the major news stories that occurred throughout the country. It is another special piece of memorabilia that our children can take with them at the end of the year.

But of course, the year is not over yet. Coming up we have our Mother's Day Flower Sale. This is always a great success as it makes the kids feel good to have something to give Mom on her special day. To honor our hard working Molloy faculty, the PTA provides a catered lunch served at the school. We also have our 5th Grade Graduation Luncheon giving an opportunity to honor our graduating students. And the highlight of the year is our annual Molloy School Picnic. We have had over 200 people attend in past years. We grill hot dogs and hamburgers and we even have a DJ so the kids can dance.

We may be a small school, but we work very hard to provide a well rounded school year for our students. Not only do they get a first class education, as is evident by our high CMT scores, but they also develop lasting friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. And in the six years that our son has been at Molloy, we have seen all of these activities continue to flourish year after year. Our son looks forward to them, as do all of his friends. We hope that we will get the chance to continue these traditions in the years to come - not just for the current student body, but the future Molloy students of the future.

Thank you.

Neil stated that in the informational section of the agenda there is a letter addressed to Mrs. Gardner, Principal of WHHS, regarding a status report and what is expected next as far as accreditation. Mrs. Garner and some of the people on the NEASC team are here to give the board an update on this very good news. She was excited to receive this letter because some of the letters are telling you what you really need to work on and don't often emphasize all of the good things that are happening like this one does. I want to draw particular attention to one statement before we start. It says they want to commend the completion of an especially thorough report that details significant progress in completing evaluation report recommendations. This is not a standard line in letters and she wanted to thank Trish Robles and her team who worked very hard to get this information but I also want to thank the department heads, district coordinators and everyone at the board level and all of the district administration that provided the information and really bought into the types of things that the high school needed to do; it was truly a team effort to get us to this point. The high school teachers have embraced the initiatives in terms of curriculum, instruction and assessment and it is through their efforts that we see a lot of these commendations. We were cited for all of our efforts in the following:

- through the CALI initiative which we have seen from Doug Reeves and Larry Ainsworth
- scheduling and providing teacher collaboration times
- the training of all teachers on the Connecticut Accountability Initiative, including topics of standard-based curriculum, common formative assessments, and differentiating instruction
- the steps taken to ensure students have regular opportunities for reflection and growth
- the improvements of \$15,000 made to existing science labs as interim steps prior to completion of a new building.

These were some of the highlights. We do need to submit a special progress report November 1st of this year that will report on progress to date, funding and timeline for renovations for a new high school. We also need to submit a Five-Year Report that details where we are with the new high school and the plans for that. It talks about the need to work on some NEASC recommendations.

Overall we want to commend the team effort that went into this and it was a very nice commendation to the staff of WHHS for the efforts they are making and the commitment of the board and district administrators to making the high school a better place.

The board gave thanks.

C.1. a. Status of Schools

Neil addressed Mrs. Beth Dougherty's concern. If we were to move the 5th grade we do anticipate it to be an elementary setting understanding that we are a long way from any

type of decisions. Tomorrow Anne and I are meeting with our elementary principals and we will continue our dialog to prepare for those kinds of what if it happens. We anticipate taking away from that meeting not only setting up meetings with principals but also with teachers and other parent groups that would be interested in being part of that process.

Dorinda asked if the hiring for the two principals at Washington and Mackrille have been put on hold. Yes they are on hold while going through this budget process. She also talked to the Governor's Prevention Program regarding Bullying and they will come in and evaluate our Bullying Policy and our procedures and offer training free of charge. Anne Druzolowski said on May 4th we are beginning work with JoAnn Frieberg who is the forerunner in Bullying in the whole state and more importantly she really addresses the bigger issue which is school culture. Bullying is a piece and systematic of other issues. She will be working with the administrator's team principals and assistant principals on the 4th to start outlining exactly where are next steps will be and where we have to go. We worked together on 17 high schools across the state. She shows the importance of using data which will be that survey for students, parents and teachers. We will then look toward September planning on what we will do on a concerted effort. This will be well planned out just like everything else in this district. We decided that the culture was critical and it was around CALI that we had to get the curriculum positioned. JoAnn Frieberg is part of the program that Dorinda was talking about from the State Department of Education and they operate together. Not many school districts take advantage of this service because it reveals things that you don't necessarily want to know.

Dorinda stated that at one of the areas brought up at the PTA meetings was a possible policy about teachers corresponding with students through face book. Is that a policy we can start to look at? Neil said he has some preliminary research our attorneys did about 6 months ago that he will try to get out to board members. Dorinda said there is no reason we can't be a model district.

Dorinda said the other area she would like to talk about would be the school bus seatbelts. She thanked Neil for sending the school bus contract. Since the last meeting the seatbelt potential of the Governor's law passed the transportation committee and is going to the House. She would like a synopsis from Winkle as to what they are doing to be proactive because if this law goes through in 2012 school buses have to be retrofitted. I am curious how many buses we have and how old are they. Neil will try to get it to them in their packets at the end of the week.

Dr. Druzolowski spoke about professional development which was posted on the web site. We had a trainer of trainer's session for teachers and staff who were trained and can now begin on Friday. There are three sessions set up. The increase of teacher knowledge base relative to the content of math not delivery of math instruction but understanding mathematics we have started professional development in that area for all grade levels with particular emphasis on elementary. The group working on revising the entire curriculum and establishing curriculum in that area had their last session with Mr. Ainsworth and me last week and we are moving into performance based assessment.

Most of those teams are in the area of the trade technology areas as well as in physical education and health. They will be completed no later than September and some of them have already started working in the area of common formative assessment. The physical education area is being bragged about. There is a clearly articulated growth between kindergarten and 12th grade. We have had nice developments in a short amount of time

The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Eric Pang and Brandon Patterson gave a report which follows.

Board of Education Student Report – April 5, 2010

1. There was overwhelming support for WHHS student Keisha Vernon who passed away in March. The entire school district, NH magnet schools, and the West Haven community raised over \$3000 for the family and hosted a free reception in the high school café after the funeral. Kudos to the coordinating efforts of Mrs. Martinez, Mrs. Curran, and Mrs. Rivera.
2. Congratulations to the West Haven High School Marching Band who marched IN THE RAIN at the New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade and earned Second Place Honors.
3. **The Mock Trial team is headed to the semi-finals...good luck to the entire team.**
4. We hope you can join us for the Mr. Westie Pageant this Thursday night in the high school auditorium...Eric is a contestant!
5. Senior Sarah Green was the recipient of the South Central Area Superintendents' Association \$500 scholarship. She was honored recently with a luncheon at Laurel View Country Club.
6. Senior Maegan Hemstock was named February Student of the Month from the West Haven Rotary Club.
7. **Michael Cobb, from SportsWorld will be here on Wednesday morning to speak with the Freshmen Academy. His message is "Choices in Life".**
8. Wednesday is opening day for all of the WHHS Spring sports – we hope you can stop by to cheer our spring athletes on.
9. Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors are nearing the end of registering for classes for 2010-2011 school year. New this year, students were registering online through the parent portal window of Powerschool. This process is almost complete at the high school.
 - a. **Members of the high school scheduling team met with the 8th grade teams at both middle schools and students will be registering for their courses online next week. 8th grade parents are invited to an Course Information Night on Wednesday at 6pm in the cafeteria.**

The board gave thanks.

C.1. c. Board

Howard Horvath said he attended the wake for Keisha Vernon and was very impressed that there were so many students and faculty members there. It was a very sad occasion and I would like to now take a moment of silence to honor her and her family. A moment of silence was taken.

Dorinda wanted to congratulate Molloy School for a job well done. The students, teachers and staff worked very hard. I certainly want to thank the leaders of the school also. I thank the PTA members from Mackrille and Molloy for showcasing the great things happening at their schools. I want to thank everybody who has come forward in the last couple of weeks to speak before the board and council. Your input has been very valuable. We take all your comments very seriously and if there is any silver lining it is that parental involvement is at an all time high. Everyone is looking for vision and I am confident that during Howie's leadership we are going to be putting together a plan that tells us where we are going to be in two years and in five years. I think this is important so that parents can make informed decisions about what they want to do with their child's education.

Sean Maher agrees with everything Mrs. Borer had to say and wants to add his congratulations to the NEASC Committee and all the accomplishments that they have made. It is not only on paper it can also be seen and that is most appreciated.

Rob Saley said everyone from the facilities meeting received a report about the Blake Building and the cost of what we have to do to be ADA Compliant. Please read it and one way or the other we have to decide what we will do.

Rob asked Mrs. Gardner to come back and elaborate before the board about the camera and dog issues. She stated they went through the school to see all the camera; ones that work, ones that focus on certain locations, cameras that isolate blind spots and I put together where we needed to replace cameras for better vision and where we needed additional cameras. Three people came in to look at what would help facilitate using the camera system in putting us all on the same page with the security cameras in my office and another office. A bid was recently awarded and the work will begin this week to replace 6 of the existing cameras that do not provide a clear picture for identifying anything, 2 additional cameras for blind spots and they will hopefully be installed the end of this week. There will be an updating of the software of the cameras which will help facilitate the identification of where we need to find certain things.

Toni Paine asked if this will eliminate blind spots and do cameras scan back and forth or are they stationary. We have many cameras that are just stationary. We do have some that are being installed that do move and will be able to zoom in on certain areas. Does it eliminate all blind spots no but it eliminates most. Even in places well covered if kids are savvy enough to know where the blind spots are in a camera they are savvy enough to determine where the blind spots are. A further discussion on camera ensued

about the pros and cons on the moveable cameras. Patrick Egolum asked which type is better. It depends on the use I'm using it for. If kids are going off school grounds the moveable cameras that zoom would be better in other situations a stationery camera would work just as well you have to look at the area of the school. Rob Saley said that is also one of the areas we are looking at in facility meetings; the security of the schools and people in them.

Sean would like a copy of the bids that came in. Neil will supply it.

Ms. Gardner met with the police department to talk about bringing dogs into the school on a periodic but regular basis to put money where are mouth is for having zero tolerance for drugs and having a drug free school. The next newsletter will let parents know this will happen. Neil said we want this to be preventative we want to keep drugs out. Pam said we are willing to make sure that there are no drugs in our school. We want to make sure this will be least disruptive to the educational process. Over the April vacation they will come into the school to assess the school size. Dogs get tired. We talked about when they would come in and if they would come into the cafeteria and lockers etc. The dogs get tired and need to rest so we want to have all the answers prior to doing this.

Dorinda thinks it would be a better idea to send information about this home in case parents don't read the newsletter. Phone messenger may be up and running and this could be another method of relaying this news.

Brandon asked if this was a permanent thing with the dogs coming in. No it's random. Some districts do this once a marking period once a year it varies.

Howie wanted to congratulate Neil, Anne, Pam and her team relative to NEASC. It reflects a lot of things but most certainly this new initiative in the area of curriculum and professional development which I can't say enough about. It has been a lot of work which Mrs. Fusco reminded me of today. We are at a pretty torrid pace to move ahead with all the curriculum changes and I know it's not been easy. I'm very excited about all that labor. The feedback is a sign of things to come.

Molloy is another fantastic example of what we can do. He would love to see them start the trend for all of our schools that need to get in the top 10 that would be fantastic. Congratulations to you, your community and Steve with his leadership.

I was proud at the last board meeting at Carrigan. To be a West Haven resident and see the community come up with the high level of passion and respect along with an interest in proposing solutions, asking tough questions and wanting to understand more are all good things and it was a very productive 2 ½ hours. Thank you for that and this is what we need. On that note we are going to have a few more budget meetings. We will have a budget workshop and a 7:00 PM board meeting on the budget after that. On the 15th we are at the council talking about the budget. This is an attempt to be proactive. I think in year's past sometimes it gets to the point where you wait for the council to come back with the number. Under Neil's leadership and his team together with the support of the

board we have decided to really be proactive and think through all the scenarios because these are very important decisions and challenging times. I want you to know we have worked hard up to this point and will continue to work hard to try and understand everything we can relative to the scenarios and the possibilities in the budget.

C.1. d. Committees

Dorinda Borer said that Early Childhood had a very productive meeting. We are looking at ways to get out all of the information of resources we have to all of the residents of the city.

We have traveled to all the PTA meetings which happened to work out to be very good timing because of budget discussions. The next PTA meeting we will be attending will be held at Mackrille on the 13th.

Two other areas under parental communication are that we are trying to get more electronic communication out to students to get rid of all the paperwork in the backpack so we can notify parents what is going on. The other thing was trying to get improved communication by providing the community with what is going on at our board meetings. Meetings were taped years ago so we reached out to the AV department to ask if they would tape these for TV but some of these meeting run a little late and I called UNH's AV department but they want to be paid. If anybody knows of anyone with a video camera that would be willing to do this two nights a month please let me know so we can put this on cable.

Eric said he know the city has a camera installed for the council meetings in the council room there and they do give it to public TV perhaps we can have a camera installed here. Dorinda will find out about this.

Toni Paine asked Dorinda if she were looking for something in addition to the Parent Portal and Board of Education Website. This is for each individual school and you wanted something in addition to this. I'm talking about the notes being sent home in the student's backpack about bingo night where a clerical person at the school could send out a notice. Toni said she thought this would be on the website because she has gone onto the schools website and all the schools list items and send internal blasts. Dorinda said but you can't respond or send back and if you think you can do that let me know. Neil said some schools are better than others with keeping up notices but we can definitely do a better job of what you are alluding to.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting held

March 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Carrigan Middle School. (Enclosure)

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.

M. Toni Paine made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.a.
Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: None
Mark Palmieri abstained
All other board members present voted in favor
No one was opposed
Motion Carries - Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Non-Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

10-21 Shannon Torpey, 14 Horseshoe Lane, Madison, CT 06443
Assistant Girls Track Coach
Effective: March 22, 2010
Salary: \$2,500

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve item D.5. Item 10-21
Toni Paine made the motion
Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present voted in favor
D.5. item 10-21 is approved.

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

D.7. New Business

F. Informational:

Nothing was added under informational

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Mark Palmieri made the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor.

The meeting ended at 7:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary

