

West Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education  
Regular Board Meeting  
May 21, 2013

Present: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent List, Student Representative Kendall Teare (Hall)  
Absent: Student Representative Tyree Seymour (Conard)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

*Roll Call/Pledge of  
Allegiance/Revision to  
Agenda*

Mr. Putterman extended his appreciation to Ms. Katz for chairing the last Board meeting in his absence.

Mr. Michael Renkawitz introduced the students and teacher advisors from the King Philip Mock Trial Team. The students enacted a trial case based on bullying.

*Student Participation*

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

THAT the West Hartford Board of Education ratify the negotiated pension agreement between the West Hartford Federation of Educational Secretaries (WHFES) and the West Hartford Board of Education for the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2014

*Ratification of the  
Negotiated Pension  
Agreement Between the  
West Hartford  
Federation of  
Educational Secretaries  
(WHFES) and the  
West Hartford Board of  
Education*

Mr. Schmitt introduced the motion and expressed interest in understanding the contract as it compared to other districts.

Mr. Rick Ledwith reviewed the negotiated agreement and provided a reminder that it was the pension changes that required arbitration. The significant changes to the pension plan from a defined benefit plan to a hybrid plan were summarized. Mr. Ledwith, Mr. Tom Moore and Mr. Chip Ward were available to answer the questions of the Board.

Board discussion reviewed how the contract separates West Hartford from competitors in a positive way and attracts and retains a solid work force. The options presented to employees were discussed and the ongoing efforts to manage and modify the contracts to achieve a solid fiscal position were emphasized.

The motion passed unanimously.

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Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

THAT the West Hartford Board of Education ratify the negotiated pension agreement between the West Hartford Federation of Educational Personnel (Paraprofessionals) and the West Hartford Board of Education for the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2014

Mr. Ledwith stated the arbitration issues and the negotiated pension agreement was identical to the WHFES contract previously reviewed.

The motion passed unanimously.

It was noted the current contracts expire on 6/30/2014 and new negotiations would begin.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Overmyer-Velazquez:

THAT the Board of Education accept as a First Reading the following policy which was revised by the Board Policy Subcommittee:

4010 Affirmative Action

Mr. Schmitt acknowledged the changes to the policy were important and significant. Mr. Overmyer-Velazquez emphasized the significance and the historical meaning of the words *sexual orientation and gender identification* and their inclusion in the revised policy.

Board discussion inquired about any populations that may be omitted from the revisions and Mr. Moore emphasized the commitment to the inclusion of all employees.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

THAT the Board of Education accept as a First Reading the following policy which was revised by the Board Policy Subcommittee:

6330 Homework

Mr. Schmitt stated the reconstructed new policy reflects the significant changes in the approach to homework. Dr. List expressed

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*Motion by Bruce  
Putterman and Terry  
Schmitt to Accept  
Revised Policy 4010-  
First Reading*

*Motion by Bruce  
Putterman and Terry  
Schmitt to Accept  
Revised Policy 6330 –  
First Reading*

appreciation for the time extension to allow the inclusion of more perspectives. Mr. Tom Moore and Ms. Kerry Jones were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board discussion noted the omission of ‘parent/guardian’ from the policy and clarified their role and the use of communication and available tools. The various checks and balances and enforcement of the guidelines were discussed. The use of Team Advisory meetings to review actual time spent and enhance parent education and support for students and teachers was reviewed.

The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. List announced the appointment of Steve Woznicki to the position of principal of Braeburn Elementary School. She shared the positive feedback received from his current school community as well as the welcoming reception by the Braeburn community on his return to West Hartford. His qualifications, background and experience were summarized. An invitation was extended to Board members to meet a 1979 Hall graduate who is currently serving as U.S. Ambassador to Australia. She announced recognition of the district’s efforts towards energy efficiency, receiving a ‘Power of Change’ award for the ‘Energy Conservation Challenge’ and to Duffy Elementary School students in response to the Sandy Hook tragedy. Dr. List shared feedback received through her conversations with Hall High seniors regarding the special dynamic formed between regular education students and their special education classmates and their perspectives on the absence of bullying.

Dr. List introduced the presentation on the partnership with the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to integrate Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) into curriculum, assessments and the school improvement framework. Dr. Nancy DePalma, Dr. Peter Cummings, Ms. Joy Wright and Mr. Julio Duarte presented. The district’s commitment to ensure and enhance global opportunities for every student and the presence and interpretation of multiple perspectives was described. The focus on rigor and equity and awareness of the intent versus the impact of schoolwide implementation of cultural competence was described. The development of focus groups, meetings with SERC, classroom observations and the importance of creating opportunities to share individual heritages was emphasized. All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board members acknowledged the change in approach over the years towards increased openness and awareness and inquired about the

*Superintendent’s Report*

*Equity and Excellence  
(State Education  
Resource Center)*

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decision to collaborate with SERC. The integration of CRP into individual schools and incorporating into each school climate and professional development activities was discussed. The importance of awareness and acknowledgement of biases and the teaching of critical thinking skills was stressed. The Board expressed an interest in receiving reports on the data being collected on racial and cultural consciousness and college and career readiness trends.

Mr. Rick Ledwith provided the personnel report and summarized the retirements and resignations received to date. He stated the anticipated turnover rate of 4–6 percent was consistent with previous yearly averages. Mr. Ledwith provided an update on the Administrative searches and offered targeted timeframes for remaining openings. He was available to answer the questions of the Board.

*Personnel Report*

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Mr. Schmitt:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting of May 7, 2013

*Approval of Minutes*

The motion passed 6-0-1.

Mr. Putterman abstained due to absence.

Ms. Katz provided a reminder that she was speaking at the upcoming WHEA dinner.

*Reports from Boards and  
Other Organizations*

Mr. Putterman reported on the Unified Theatre production and fundraiser.

Kendall Teare (Hall) reported on the community garden and its successful program and special recognition received and announced upcoming events including the Spring concerts, art show and the burying of the Time Capsule for the Class of 2013.

*Report from Student  
Board Representative*

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

1. Tuesday, May 28, 2013, Board Awards, 6:00 p.m., King Philip Middle School (no BOE meeting)
2. Tuesday, June 4, 2013, Regular Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314

*Announcement of  
Meeting Dates*

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board and shared a story and reviewed the charges within the scope of the Board.

*Comments from Visitors*

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

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*Adjournment*

That the Board adjourn at 9:09 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

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Bruce Putterman, Chairperson

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Naogan Ma, Secretary

*Respectfully submitted by: Ms. K. Lawrence, Clerk of the Board*

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