

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
February 7, 2017

Present: Mrs. Blanks, Ms. Exum, Dr. Greenberg, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Pauluk, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent Moore, Student Representatives Hugo Barrillon (Conard) and Sarah Berman (Hall)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

INDEX

<p>The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm</p>	<p><i>Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance</i></p>
<p>Students from the Smith Stem Robotics First Lego League presented with a slide show and discussion. Students gave brief description on how the Robotics team got its start, and who participates. Students also explained what they do to research and create solutions for their community. A short video on one of the competitions provided a look into what the students create and how well they compete. They were given a golden ticket to the state finals and came in in the top 25% of all competitors. Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez thanked all the students and commended them on their ability to work as a team. He also stated that they were very gracious and showed real professionalism on their presentation.</p>	<p><i>Student Participation</i></p>
<p>No Public Communication at this time. Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez took a moment to speak on the West Hartford Rally that took place at the Town Hall last week. He spoke about inclusion, and stated that the Mayor spoke about reassuring our students that we support them. Superintendent Tom Moore spoke on efforts to make every child feel at home when they are in school no matter their family situation.</p>	<p><i>Public Communication</i></p>
<p>Dr. Cheryl Greenberg moved and Ms. Blanks seconded: THAT the Board of Education adopt the Capital Improvement Plan for 2017- 2018 Andrew Morrow, Assistant Superintendent, Chip Ward Director of Finance were available for questions. Motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p><i>Unfinished Business</i></p>
<p>Mr. Sarzen moved and Ms. Exum seconded: THAT the West Hartford Board of appoint Mr. Jeffrey Kadison as the Board representative to the Risk Management Advisory Board for the</p>	<p><i>New Business Risk Management Advisory Board Appointment</i></p>

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
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period of January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019

Mr. Rick Ledwith, Director of Human resources was available to answer questions.

Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Tom Moore gave a brief update on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) testing stating that this is a national test where schools and students in grades 4, 8, and 12 are selected randomly for this test. This year Whiting Lane, Braeburn, King Philip, and Sedgwick were selected. Results on individual students are not given to parents or the district. Monday, February 6th was the Transition to Kindergarten meeting and attendance was exceptional. Superintendent Moore congratulated three Hall High School students who were nominated for the Presidential Scholar Award. Superintendent Moore noted that the Governor will present his budget tomorrow.

*Staff Communications
and Reports
Superintendent's Report*

Mr. Paul Vicinus, Ms. Roszena Haskins, Ms. Kerry Jones and Ms. Anne McKernan presented their staff report titled *Curriculum through the Lens of Equity*. This is the second of a series of three commissioned reports on curriculum. Mr. Vicinus pointed out the visuals in the presentation were the artwork of our students, collected and organized by Pam Murphy, Department Supervisor of Visual Arts. All artwork included provides examples as to how the Visual Arts Department is aligning instruction and artistic themes to support the integration of curriculum and cultural competence. Mr. Vicinus explained cultural competence and its connections to the district's mission. The definition of cultural competence is a "set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations." Mr. Vicinus noted that the curricular connections highlighted in the report emphasize humanities and most notably Social Studies, although there are connections across all content areas. Educational research identifies four necessary conditions for culturally responsive teaching and learning -- establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence. Each of these conditions is essential and also sensitive to cultural differences. Mr. Vicinus stated that opportunities do exist for all our West Hartford students. We achieve this by seeing and seeking personal relevance. Culturally responsive teaching helps to support students' self-efficacy and sense of belonging. At the elementary level this is done in part by increasing our school collections (working through Library Media Services) to increase works that reflect the diversity of our students.

*Curriculum through the
Lens of Equity*

Lessons and materials related to describing relevant cultural characteristics of self include formal lessons, teaching students how they are alike and how they are different, how differences can create positive relationships, and how to respect one another's unique qualities. At the secondary level, English Language Arts uses units that are connected to the theme of the human experience. Also included is our music program which hosts world music and pieces that are most often performed in the native tongue.

Ms. Roszena Haskins spoke on the systems and structures in place to support professional learning and staff development around the theme of cultural competence. An October kick-off professional development workshop focused on the need to incorporate a cultural competence lens across all areas of our work and take into account all district staff, the students we serve and the community members and school partners with whom we collaborate. It's a continuous effort to growing and building skills. Most professional learning takes place through the CSI structure built into the early release on Wednesdays. District-wide activities included laying the ground work of 'who we are' as a district and community, 'who we serve', and 'why this is important'. Outside educators also presented with personal narratives, practical research, and strategies. This was followed by small group breakout sessions with guided questions. Ms. Roszena Haskins noted there has been wonderful feedback from teachers including individual reflections and narratives of what they wanted students and principals to know. In total there were over 750 educators who participated. Since October there have been two cultural competence workshops based on feedback from October with more sessions to follow. Professional Development activities at the school- wide level include school study of demographics, family outreach programs, LGBTQ topics, student participation at the CSIs, and offsite professional development.

Ms. Kerry Jones spoke on Community Partnerships stressing the importance of working with the community. Ms. Jones highlighted the receipt of two grants from the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, one to our Great by 8 early childhood community organization and one to West Hartford Public Schools. Ms. Jones explained this is a year-long grant and money, in part, will go towards hiring a coordinator. Great by 8, Hello West Hartford and Town libraries come together to collaborate and see how to come up with a framework for how people can tell their stories. A trained facilitator will help in finding a way to capture the stories within the community so that people can share. Ms. Jones also highlighted the Curriculum Council.

The Board thanked the presenters for all the hard work that they put into

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Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
February 7, 2017

this report. The Board commented on such a comprehensive report stated this is very exciting work. Questions were asked with regard to how students are chosen to participate in the CSIs and the feedback from staff.

Mr. Sarzen moved and Ms. Blanks seconded

THAT the Board of Education approve the Financial Report for the Period ending December 31st , 2016

Motion passed unanimously

Dr. Greenberg moved and Ms. Exum seconded:

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education meeting of January 17, 2017

The motion passed unanimously.
There were four abstentions

Mr. Pauluk reminded everyone that on February 14th at 9 am at Conard High School, Mr. Chris Herren will speak in the auditorium on his personal experience with drug addiction. Parents are invited to attend. Dr. Greenberg gave a short presentation on the CREC Council Legislative and Budget session, closing the achievement gap, and the 'shift in the burden of proof'. Ms. Blanks made everyone aware that on March 23rd there will be a budget presentation at Sedgwick. Student representative Hugo Barrillon spoke on the Polar Plunge and the tie score between Northwest Catholic and Conard's ice hockey teams. He also made mention of the Blood Drive to be held on March 17. Student representative Sarah Berman highlighted the Mr. Hall Beauty Pageant with proceeds to go to Connecticut Children's Center. She also mentioned Hall's girls basketball team. She noted that the Black Box Theatre will be presenting a production of "All in the Family". Mr. Zydanowicz reminded everyone of the Hall/Conard girls basketball game to be held on Monday at 6:45pm.

Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez announced the following meeting dates:

1. Wednesday February 22, 2017, regular Board of Education meeting, 7:00 pm, Town Hall, 50 South Main Street Legislative Chambers, room 314.

*Financial
Report*

*Approval
Of Minutes*

*Information and
Reports*

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
February 7, 2017

No comments from visitors at this time.

*Comments from
Visitors*

Mr. Zydanowicz moved and Ms. Exum seconded:

Adjournment

THAT the Board adjourn at 9:10 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Mark Overmyer-Velazquez, Chairperson Carol A. Blanks, Secretary
Respectfully submitted by: Mrs. C. Rogers, Clerk of the Board

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