

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
October 16, 2012

Present: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt,
Superintendent List, Kendall Teare (Hall)

Absent: Ms. Brassil, Mrs. Brassil Spinella, Tyree Seymour (Conard)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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

Norfeldt School 3rd grade teacher Lindsay Thomson and 6 of the 60 members of the Norfeldt School Green Team gave a presentation on what they are learning about, and projects that the team has been working on at the school.

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., addressed the Board to express his opinion about the 3 minute time limit during the public comment section of the board meeting.

Kathy Wilson, 39 Montclair Dr., addressed the Board to discuss the Connecticut Mastery Tests, specifically the group of students who have not made progress, and questioned what was being done to help these students.

Mrs. Ma moved, seconded by Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez:

THAT the Board of Education establish Charter Oak International Academy Advisory Committee and appoint members to the committee.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Putterman read the names of the members of the committee, and thanked board members for reaching out to the community to recommend people for the committee. He also announced members of the WHPS staff who will serve as content experts and resources throughout the committee's work. He explained that the charge to the committee would be to manage a community input process regarding the decision to either renovate or build new at Charter Oak International Academy, make a recommendation to the Board, and ultimately make a recommendation to the architect based on the needs of Charter Oak International Academy and community input. He explained that the committee would need to make a recommendation to the Board as to whether to renovate or build, no later than January.

Board members expressed the importance of garnering as much

*Roll Call/Pledge of
Allegiance*

Public Communications

*Motion to establish a
Charter Oak
International Academy
Advisory Committee and
appoint members of the
committee*

community input as possible throughout the process, and discussed some of the efforts to reach all community members.

Dr. List expressed her regret for not being able to be at the meeting announcing the passage of the Diversity Schools Legislation, and expressed her excitement about the opportunity for the community and the investment to be made in Elmwood. She announced the Mentoring Program meeting on Tuesday, October 30, 2012, from 6:30-7:30 at the Town Hall in room 400 for any member of the community interested in becoming a mentor for students. She spoke about Calvin Terrell and the work that he is bringing to our schools the week of November 5th, including hosting a meeting for parents at Bristow Middle School on Thursday, November 8, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. The topic of the evening is “A Community Challenge – Collaboration for Safe Schools.”

Dr. List shared some information about the efforts of some of the principals, including Noam Sturm’s involvement in early childhood work in the district and his participation as a panel member at the Stone Soup conference, and Peter Cummings being selected by the State Department of Education to serve as the Connecticut Principal Representative at the Council of Chief State School Officers conference in Baltimore.

Dr. List spoke about her visit to a 5th grade classroom at Smith STEM School to witness their Virtual Vistas program, funded by the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools. The students were videoconferencing with a scientist from NASA discussing moons. Dr. List was impressed by the level of engagement of the students and the students’ high level of questioning.

Mr. Ward presented the annual report on enrollment and class sizes. He reviewed the overall comparisons between the projected and actual enrollment numbers. The major changes from projections were at the sixth and ninth grade levels. He discussed the elementary school enrollment numbers and noted that the numbers were relatively constant over the last eight years. He summarized the class sizes for the middle and high schools, and entertained questions from the Board.

Board members praised Mr. Ward for his projections and administrators for their work on scheduling. Student/teacher ratios in relation to enrollment number at the elementary level, and the variation in class sizes per subject matter at the high school level were discussed. The Board inquired about increasing the numbers of Open Choice

Superintendent’s Report

*Enrollment and Class
Size Analysis as of
October 1, 2012*

students. Mr. Ward explained the process, timeline, and challenges of selecting Open Choice students. Members expressed their delight in the present class size numbers.

Dr. Howley, Mr. Moore, Mr. Morin, Mr. Segee, and Ms. Stone provided a presentation on online learning. They explained that this initiatory conversation was driven in part by the Secondary School Reform Act, which has a provision for online learning as a part of a student's program, but requires that the Board have a policy. They laid out some key definitions of online learning, and detailed some of the district's current practices for using online learning, such as: credit recovery, remediation and acceleration or enrichment. Options for providing online instruction using outsourcing and in-house staff were discussed. Some of the questions that need to be explored are: What is the purpose of online learning? Where does it fit into the schema of the district's existing program? Should it be exclusive or blended? Should it be a graduation requirement or just an option?

Board members asked about the potential timeframe for making decisions/progress regarding online learning. Marketing a West Hartford brand of online learning was also discussed. Dr. List explained that part of reason for the discussion of online learning is because of the increased number of credits that will be required in 2020, and helping students meet the increased credit requirements. She noted that in her conversations with high school students, they are not especially interested in online learning, unless it involves blended learning. Student representative Teare shared her perspective on online learning. Board members are pleased with the conversation and the questions that are being asked. They spoke about online learning being supplementary, flexible, and useful in differentiating learning for students. Members also spoke about being more expansive in thinking with regard to online learning. Mr. Moore spoke about the socialization that occurs in high school and how some blended learning can be useful. Dr. Howley spoke about the way blended learning is currently being used in student's programs and the need for a policy.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez :

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Putterman announced that Ms. Ellen Brassil has submitted her resignation to the Board, effective October 13, 2012.

Online Learning

Approval of Minutes

*Announcement of
Resignation*

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Dr. List announced West Hartford's Cooking, March 23, 2013.

*Reports from Other
Board and Organizations*

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

*Announcement of
Meeting Dates*

1. Wednesday, November 7, 2012, Regular Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
2. Tuesday, November 20, 2012, Regular Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314

Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

Adjournment

That the Board adjourn at 8:37 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Bruce Putterman, Chairperson Naogan Ma, Secretary
Respectfully submitted by: Mrs. Susan Bassett

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