

West Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education  
Regular Board Meeting  
**March 18, 2014**

Present: Mrs. Exum, Ms. Gilchrest, Mr. Putterman, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent List, Student Representatives Jordan Gelber (Hall), Randa Griffin (Conard)

Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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<p>The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><i>Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance</i></p>
<p>Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:</p> <p>THAT the Board of Education revise the agenda order to have agenda item VIII.B.1. Budget Outlook for 2014-15 follow item III. Public Communications</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p><i>Agenda Revision</i></p>
<p>Mr. Schmitt introduced Boy Scout Troop #12 in the audience as part of their work to achieve a Merit Badge.</p>	
<p>There were no Public Communications.</p>	<p><i>Public Communications</i></p>
<p>Mr. Putterman noted Mayor Slifka was not yet present due to a scheduling oversight and proceeded with the agenda order.</p>	
<p>Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Exum:</p> <p>THAT the Board of Education accept and approve as a Second and Final Reading one of the two proposed calendars for the 2015-2016 school year</p>	<p><i>Proposed Calendar for the 2015-2016 School Year – Second and Final Reading</i></p>
<p>Mr. Putterman summarized the previous discussions on the calendar and his participation at the CREC meeting. He shared the content of the meeting and the state guidelines for a regional calendar. Mr. Tim Nee, Assistant Executive Director, CREC provided background on the goal of the committee and explained the current legislation and the formation of the recommendations of the task force.</p>	
<p>Board members inquired about any preferences expressed by the Teachers' Association and parents and the recourse and potential consequences for individual districts not abiding by the mandate. The flexibility of the date ranges, allocation for weather related closings and</p>	

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year end dates and the anticipated benefits and cost-savings for the towns were discussed. Board members expressed their support and the reasons for option one or two.

Mr. Putterman called for a vote on Calendar Option One:

In Favor: Mrs. Exum, Ms. Gilchrest, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt

Mr. Putterman called for a vote on Calendar Option Two:

In Favor: Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz

The motion for Calendar Option One passed 5-2.

In Favor: Mrs. Exum, Ms. Gilchrest, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt

Opposed: Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz

Mayor Scott Slifka introduced his overview of the budget for the upcoming year with a notation that being his 13<sup>th</sup> year, he had a new interest in the school calendar discussion due to his child being enrolled in the school system. He expressed it had been an honor to work with Dr. Karen List and commended the positive and collaborative working relationship between the Superintendent and the Town Manager and their related administrative staff members. The Mayor described the balance sought to provide services based on need and affordability and the reliance on property taxes and other sources of revenue. The general composition of the budget and the breakdown of the increase percentages was reviewed. The strength of single family home sales, the grand list and the wide-spread recognition of the town's desirability was highlighted. The Mayor stated an invitation to the Board to participate at a Town Council meeting was being scheduled.

*Budget Outlook for  
2014-2015  
Mayor Scott Slifka*

Dr. List announced the appointment of Jennifer Derick to the position of principal of Norfeldt Elementary School. Dr. List reviewed the background and experiences that qualify Mrs. Derick for this position. Dr. List also shared special recognition received by a district QuEst teacher and the inspirational topics written about by students as part of a Rotary Writing Project.

*Superintendent's Report*

Dr. Nancy DePalma introduced Mr. Glenn McGrath, Director of Pupil Services and Dr. Jocelyn Bruton and Cheryl Ekenbarger, district physical and occupational therapists. The integrated functions, the Standards of Practice, licensure requirements and the school-based

*Physical and  
Occupational Therapists  
Supporting Student  
Learning*

therapies incorporated by the physical and occupational therapists (PT, OT) were summarized. The varied roles and services of the PTs and OTs including the specialized skills and expertise, screening and assessment, intervention, consultation and collaboration were described. The department goals and the recommendations and goals established by the CPDC Review were presented. All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board discussion began with an example of the occupational component of the therapy and the sensory room at Whiting Lane was highlighted. The Board inquired about the percentages of students receiving services and the range of types of needs and services required from basic to potentially beyond the scope available. The staffing, structure, distribution of providers and resources across all schools was described. The use of outplacement services and the considerations involved in that decision-making process were discussed. The requirements for license renewal and continued improvement and professional development opportunities and costs were reviewed. An explanation for educationally relevant services was offered.

Dr. List linked the next presentation as continuing the logical progression of providing updates on the Common Core, new assessments and the link to technological literacy and introduced Dr. Nancy DePalma, Kerry Jones and Jeri Van Leer. An overview of technology competencies and standards, the requirements and expectations for typing and SBAC testing and a definition of keyboarding was provided. Emphasis was placed on the techniques taught with the understanding that speed and proficiency build over time. The recommended progression through the grade levels and the increase in awareness, application and proficiency was reviewed. Recommendations and next steps and resources available for families on Keyboarding were provided. All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board discussion explored the expected standards and measurements of typing words per minute, the need to explore other competency issues and implications and the available accommodations for and differences in styles of learning. Board members raised concerns about preparing students for both SBAC testing and providing skills for life successes. The OT/PT connection and the potential correlation between keyboarding deficiencies and other deficiencies and any research linking typing capabilities with other learning patterns or information retention was reviewed. The existence of the digital divide and the resources available at the public library were examined.

*Review and  
Recommendation  
Regarding Keyboarding*

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Clarification that keyboarding is an essential skill and not one specifically driven by SBAC was stated.

Mr. Rick Ledwith presented the Personnel Report and offered an explanation for the increase in mid-year retirements. An update was provided on teacher recruitment efforts including the successful attendance and showcasing of the district at the annual Teacher Career Fair and participation at the CREC Minority Teacher Recruiting Fair. Mr. Ledwith reviewed the status of the search process and anticipated announcement date for the Assistant Superintendent for Administration position and the Assistant Principal vacancy at Hall High School. He was available to answer questions of the Board.

*Personnel Report*

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

THAT the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the regular Board meeting of February 26, 2014

*Approval of Minutes*

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Gilcrest moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:

THAT the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the regular Board meeting of March 4, 2014

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schmitt offered a reminder about the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools annual fundraiser, *West Hartford's Cookin'* and invited all to participate.

*Other Information and Discussions*

Jordan Gelber (Hall) reported on the science CAPT, the bullying presentation, a delay in SBAC testing and expressed appreciation for the follow-up with Nutrition Services regarding concerns. A reminder about the upcoming *Pops 'n Jazz* performances was given.

*Report from Student Board Representatives*

Randa Griffin (Conard) also reported on the science CAPT and the bullying presentation of *Rachel's Challenge*, the performances of *Shrek: The Musical* and the start-up of spring sports.

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

1. Wednesday, March 26, 2014 BOE Public Hearing, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314 followed by BOE Budget Workshop #3

*Announcement of Meeting Dates*

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2. Tuesday, April 1, 2014, regular BOE Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314
  3. **Tuesday, April 8, 2014**, regular BOE Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chamber, room 314 **Adoption of the 2014-2015 BOE Budget**

John Joyce, 170 S. Main St., addressed the Board regarding the budget presentation and offered suggestions and influencing factors.

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Exum:

That the Board adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

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Bruce Putterman, Chairperson      Tammy Exum, Secretary  
*Respectfully submitted by: Ms. K. Lawrence, Clerk of the Board*

*Comments from Visitors*

*Adjournment*

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