

AGENDA

ITEM # 16

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**Hartford Board of Education
Special Meeting – Friday, January 25, 2008
MHIS Conference Room – 260 Constitution Plaza
Hartford, Connecticut**

MINUTES

I. Opening – 3:00 p.m.

At 3:20 p.m. Mayor Perez called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

<u>Present:</u> Ms. Ada Miranda, First Vice Chair Mr. David MacDonald, Secretary Mr. Israel Flores Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Mr. Luis Rodriguez-Davila Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings	<u>Absent:</u> Ms. Andrea Comer Ms. Pamela Richmond
Superintendent Steven Adamowski	

II. Work Session

1. Reform Governance in Action Site Visit

The Hartford Public Schools is one of six districts selected by the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) to participate in Reform Governance in Action (RGA). RGA is a comprehensive two-year training program for school boards and superintendents. The goal of the RGA program is to dramatically improve student achievement and eliminate the achievement gap by cultivating effective reform leadership.

Julian Trevino, CRSS consultant, led the Board and senior management staff in the work session. Mr. Trevino outlined the objectives for the two day site visit

January 25 session

- Core Beliefs and Commitments
- Board Meetings and Committees
- Management Oversight and Workshops
- Constituent Services

January 26 session

- Theory of Action
- Feedback and next steps

Mr. Trevino explained that the first day of the site visit will focus on finalize the policies: Core Beliefs and Commitments, Board Meetings and Committees, and Management Oversight and Workshops in order to schedule an adoption date. On the second day site visit the Theory of Action and deliverables will be review; Mr. Trevino stated the majority of the work was done in Houston.

Mr. Trevino asked the team to complete the Rubrics for Evaluating Draft on Core Beliefs and Commitments. Mr. Trevino reviewed the answers provided and applied the suggested changes to the current policy draft.

**Hartford Public Schools
Core Beliefs and Commitments**

Purpose: To significantly improve the performance of Hartford students, we the members of the Hartford Public Schools Board of Education commit ourselves to fundamental restructuring and reform of the Hartford school district, guided by the following Core Beliefs and Commitments. Our core business is teaching and learning; therefore, we exist to support the relationship between the teacher and the student.

1. We believe all students can learn at or above grade level.

The capacity to learn is not determined or limited by race, family income, native language, gender, sexual orientation, or area of residence.

- The District will provide rigorous instruction in a safe environment that allows every child to learn at or above grade level.
- All of our schools will provide an educationally supportive and appropriate environment to ensure learning.
- All children will graduate high school having successfully completed a career and college-ready curriculum.

2. We believe that the achievement gap must and can be eliminated, by each student reaching his/her learning potential.

Our district exists in the state with the largest achievement gap in the nation; therefore, we must provide equal access to rigorous instruction, regardless of race, family income, native language, gender, sexual orientation, or area of residence. Providing equal access to rigorous instruction for every child may require the investment of unequal resources to ensure an equitable outcome – readiness for post-secondary education and participation in a global economy.

- We will provide equal access to rigorous instruction to all children in order to eliminate the achievement gap.

- We will increase the financial resources directed to the classroom by alignment business operations and resources to support student achievement
- We commit to continue to work towards providing all students with access to a diverse and integrated learning environment, in order to properly prepare students for participation in the global economy and post-secondary education.

3. We believe schools have an enormous impact on students' lives.

Parents and caregivers are responsible for sending their students to school ready to learn. The School District is responsible for educating all students, regardless of family support or involvement.

- Students have an obligation to come to school ready to learn, but the District will not abandon those who do not and must search for ways to reach them.
- We will ensure a qualified teacher delivering rigorous instruction is in every classroom, and every school will have a qualified principal who is an instructional leader.
- The school leadership team will provide opportunities for all staff to contribute to and be accountable for improve student achievement.
- Hartford schools will be driven by student performance data, not by mere compliance with regulations.
- Specific incentive systems will be established to reward improvement. Schools demonstrating significant student achievement will be empowered and encouraged to be innovative.
- All of our actions will be driven by student performance.

4. We believe that all parents must be empowered to play an active role in their students' education.

- Our schools will develop effective partnerships with parents and caregivers – based upon trust and respect – that engage the school and the parent/caregiver in a plan of action to promote the “best interest” of the child.
- The District will provide parents/caregivers with quality choices of schools for their children.

5. We believe that community collaboration is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.

Improving the educational outcomes for our students will require support from all segments of our community including parents, caregivers, businesses, elected and appointed officials, civic and faith-based organizations, along with the District's leaders, staff, and students. Principals must dynamically engage parents/caregivers and community in the lives of our students and schools.

- The District will partner with business, civic and faith-based organizations to ensure support for achieving and sustaining excellence.
- Schools will be responsive and accountable to their communities, providing parents/caregivers and members of the community (and where appropriate,

- students) with formal, structured input into decision-making through school-based councils.

Mr. Trevino asked for the date when the Core Beliefs and Commitments policy will be presented to the Board for adoption. Ms. Noel explained that the first reading of the policy will take place on the February Board meeting; the policy should be adopted in the March Board meeting. Mayor Perez stated that the policy will be adopted, once the new Board is elected.

Mr. Trevino reviewed the communication plan and asked if there will be a budget discussion. Dr. Adamowski stated there will be an increase on the communication's budget for the next fiscal year; we need to increase the resources for communication, given the many changes that the district is undergoing. The new interim chief communication officer will start on February 4th.

Mr. Trevino asked the team to complete the Rubrics for Evaluating Draft on Board Meetings and Committees. He reviewed the answers provided and applied the suggested changes to the current policy draft.

Hartford Public Schools Policy on Board Meetings and Committees

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to streamline and clarify the structure of the Board meetings and Board committees.

Time, Place and Notification of Meetings

Members of the Board of Education may act officially only at regular or special meetings or workshops of the Board at which a quorum shall be present.

To comply with Connecticut General Statute 1-21, all meetings of the Board of Education shall be open to the public except that the Board may, by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting, and stating the reasons therefore, go to Executive Session to conduct such appropriate business as authorized in the statute.

Regular Meetings

The Board of Education shall file with the Town Clerk and Secretary of State, not later than January 31st of each year, the schedule of the regular meetings of the Board of Education for the calendar year. No meeting shall be held sooner than thirty days after such filing.

Special Meetings

Notice of each special meeting of the Board of Education shall be filed not less than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting with the Town Clerk and be posted in the Office of the Town Clerk, giving the time and place of the special meeting and the

business to be transacted. No other business shall be considered by the Board at that special meeting. Each member of the Board of Education shall be notified by the Superintendent not less than 24 hours prior to the time of the special meeting and shall be advised of the time, place and business to be transacted.

Workshops

The Board of Education may hold a workshop for the purpose of giving special study and consideration to items of importance upon which the Board may be called to take action. Such sessions shall be for work and study. The Board of Education shall file with the Town Clerk and Secretary of State, not later than January 31st of each year, the schedule of the workshops of the Board of Education for the calendar year. No meeting shall be held sooner than thirty days after such filing.

Annual Meeting

The annual organizational meeting of the Board shall be held on the first regular meeting of February.

Adjourned Meetings

Any meeting of the Board of Education may be recessed to any succeeding day by a majority vote of the members in attendance at the meeting.

Regular Board Meetings

Time and Place of Meeting

The Hartford Board of Education will hold a regular meeting session once a month, at 6:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Changes to accommodate holidays and special events may be proposed by the Board Chairperson and approved by the Board. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, subject to the posting requirements of state law (24 hours notice).

An agenda shall be furnished to each Board member and the Superintendent not later than four days prior to any regular meeting.

Executive Session may be scheduled at the discretion of the Superintendent or Board Chairperson.

Upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present, the Board may suspend the rules to add an item and act upon business not included on the agenda.

Agenda Preparation and Review

Agenda preparation and review will normally follow the process outlined below.

- Items for inclusion on the agenda shall be submitted to the Board Chairperson by the Superintendent or Board members not later than seven days prior to any regular meeting.
- The complete agenda will be delivered to Board members at their place of their choosing no later than four days before the Board meeting.
- Board members are encouraged to call the Superintendent prior to the meeting if they have questions about the agenda.
- All agenda items will conform to standard agenda item format, as proposed by the Superintendent.

Normal Schedule

The general order of business at each regular meeting of the Board shall be as follows:

- Public Session: 6:00 p.m.
- I. Call to Order
 - II. Opening Statement
 - III. Roll call
 - IV. Moment of Silence
 - V. Reports
 - A. Report from the Chairperson
 - B. Report from the Superintendent (recognize student achievement)
 - C. Committee Reports
 - VI. Parent Comment on Any Topic (limited to 30 minutes)
 - VII. Public Comment on Agenda Items
 - VIII. Business Agenda
 - A. Items in Order of Importance
 - B. Consent Agenda
 - IX. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Topics (limited to 30 minutes)
 - X. Executive Session (as needed)
 - XI. Adjournment

The order of business may be rearranged by a majority vote of the members of the Board.

Meeting Conduct

Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the Chairperson in a manner consistent with the adopted bylaws of the Board.

All Board meetings shall be guided by an agenda which has been prepared and delivered in advance to all Board members and other designated persons.

The conduct of meetings shall, to the fullest possible extent, enable members of the Board to (1) consider problems to be solved, weigh evidence related thereto, and make wise decisions intended to solve the problems, and (2) receive, consider and take any needed action with respect to reports of accomplishment of students or of school system operations.

Public comment at a regular Board meeting requires registration with the Board Secretary, prior to the scheduled meeting start time and requires the completion of a form including the speaker's name, contact information, issue, and nature of comments.

Provisions for permitting any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction shall be as follows:

- Each member of the public wishing to speak may address the Board for a total of three minutes, provided that a maximum of thirty minutes shall be allowed.
- While the Board and Superintendent will not respond to comments made in public session, they will consider such comments in policy deliberations and, where appropriate, will refer comments to school department personnel for review as part of their administrative functions.
- No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. If such conduct continues the Chairperson may suspend that individual's speaking privilege.
- Time limits will be strictly enforced.
- No personal attacks on individuals.
- No vulgar or indecent language.
- No signs allowed inside the Board meeting room.
- Speakers may not yield their time to another speaker.
- A speaker must refrain from naming employees.
- A person may address the Board no more than twice during a single meeting.

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

The Board may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place. If there is less than a quorum, the presiding officer may adjourn the meeting. If all members of the Board are absent, the clerk may adjourn the meeting. A copy of the notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously displayed near the meeting room door promptly following the adjournment.

Board Workshops

Time and Place of Meeting

The Hartford Board of Education will meet in a work session once a month, except for July and August, at 6:00 p.m., on the first Tuesday of the month, at a school site. Changes to accommodate holidays and special events will be the proposed by the Board Chairperson and approved by the Board.

Dinner and dialogue will be held from 5:15 – 6:00 p.m. with the respective school's parents and staff.

An agenda shall be furnished to each board member and the Superintendent not later than four days prior to any regular meeting.

Normal Schedule

The normal schedule for each work session shall be as follows:

Public Session: 6:00 p.m.

- I. Opening – Roll Call/Welcome/Overview
- II. Moment of Silence
- III. Workshop Session
- IV. Executive Session
- V. Adjournment

Notes

- The Board encourages the Superintendent to include at least one report on student achievement or issue closely related to student achievement at every regular Board meeting.
- The Board encourages the Superintendent to present at least one priority item for Board consideration at every regular Board meeting.
- Minutes will be kept according to the requirements of state law, prepare for Board approval no later than two meetings following, and preserved according to standards of professional records management.

Board Committees

Committees of the Whole

Committees of the Whole are posted workshops of the Board. The Board shall meet periodically as a Committee of the Whole to review board relationships and board processes, including all issues relating to board meetings, workshops, committees, constituent service, and other issues related to how the Board does its work. Actions

taken at these meetings, which must be posted and open per state laws, will come as committee recommendations to the Board for consideration in regular business meetings.

Standing Committees of the Board

The Chairperson of the Board of Education shall appoint the committee chairs and members by filing a list thereof with the Superintendent's office as soon as possible following the annual meeting. The Chairperson's designation shall be made public at the first board meeting subsequent to its filing.

The following will be standing committees:

1. Finance and Audit Committee

This committee will deal with matters pertaining to the development and recommendation of the school system budget to the Board, review and maintenance of a five year financial forecast, monitoring of financial affairs of the Board of Education, reviewing and recommending to the Board budget modifications on a monthly basis and overseeing and reviewing the school system audit.

2. Parent and Community Engagement Committee

This committee will review and assess indicators of parent and community engagement practices, review the results of an annual customer satisfaction survey, and review and assess constituent service reports.

3. School Choice and Facilities Committee

This committee will review and assess data related to the development and operation of the All Choice System of Schools; review related draft policies implementing the All Choice System of Schools; and, review educational design specifications for new incubated, redesigned, and magnet schools. The committee will also review proposals regarding facility usage and the siting of the new incubated schools and the annually updated Capital Improvement Plan, prior to submission to the City of Hartford.

4. Government Relations and Policy Committee

This committee organizes briefings and meetings, while serving as the Board's liaison and advocate with local elected officials and develops high level plans for Board of Education/City Council/Hartford Legislative Delegation collaboration. The Mayor will serve as Chairperson of the committee.

Each committee shall have, as near as can be; the same number of members, provided that each member of the Board serves on two (2) committees.

The duties of each committee shall be determined as the committee is formed.

Each committee chair, with the assistance of the Superintendent, will establish a schedule of committee meetings.

The agenda for each committee shall include any matter referred to that committee as well as any item submitted to the Superintendent by any member of the committee at least 72 hours in advance of the committee meeting.

Committee reports shall be prepared at the direction of the committee chair and shall faithfully reflect the discussion and the votes taken.

No committee shall have power other than to recommend to the Board unless specially authorized.

All committees of the Board shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Opening Statement for Board Meetings

- Good evening. As Chairperson of the Hartford Board of Education, I hereby call to order the (date) regular meeting of the Board.
- I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present and to our television viewers. The Board, Superintendent, and I are pleased that you have joined us as we celebrate achievement, review information, and make policy decisions related to the effective operation of the Hartford Public Schools.
- This is a regular meeting, and all items that will be discussed or voted on this evening have been posted as required by state law.
- As the Hartford Board of Education, we are here to set goals; listen to reports of the Superintendent; approve budgets, contracts and personnel appointments; and, make policy for the district. We are not here to make management decisions or solve the problems of individuals. Management is the responsibility of the Superintendent.
- The monthly meetings of the Board are open to the public. They are the time when the Board conducts its business of governing the school system in a public arena. The regular meetings are not meetings with the public. Therefore, comments from the audience will be confined to the time designated for the public to address the Board.
- Decorum and courtesy are important elements in effective public meetings. Please silence your cell phones or communication devices and refrain from talking while others are speaking.
- Since it is legally mandated that proceedings be accurately recorded, I may have to ask for order periodically, should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities.
- I am pleased that you have taken the time this evening to join us.

- We are very proud of this school system and thank you for your interest in the Hartford Public Schools.

Mr. Trevino recommended that the policy needs language for do's and don'ts to avoid micromanagement. Dr. Adamowski stated that the current Board and various committees have never attempted to direct the superintendent to do something; they may have made recommendations to the entire Board. Ms. Noel stated that may not be the case with the current Board but the language should be clarified for future Boards. Mr. Trevino stated the Committee of the Whole and Ad Hoc Committees should be discussed before it is embedded in the policy. Ms. Miranda stated there should be more discussion on the committee structure before it is presented to the Board for approval. Ms. Miranda stated that a list of do's and don'ts should be implemented to de policy. Mr. MacDonald concurred with Ms. Miranda.

Do's: Keep the superintendent inform, prepare (research and studying)

Don'ts: Direct, make decisions without Board approval.

Mr. Trevino asked the team to complete the Rubrics for Evaluating Draft on Constituent Services. He reviewed the answers provided and applied the suggested changes to the current draft.

Hartford Public Schools Policy on Constituent Services

Purpose: The purpose of the policy is to outline a process for Board member service to constituents. Board members must provide service to constituents but should not involve themselves in problem management.

This policy sets forth standards and describes processes. It is the intention of the School Board to meet these standards and follow these processes.

Compliance with State Law

The Hartford Board of Education and individual Board members will follow all state laws and regulations regarding the prohibitions of Board involvement in management.

Defining Constituent Service

As elected and appointed Board members acting on behalf of the public, Hartford Board members have a responsibility to be accessible to the public and assist citizens with suggestions, questions, or complaints regarding the Hartford Public Schools. The following definitions apply:

- **Constituents** are members of the Hartford school community who are represented by elected and appointed Public School District Board members or

- who receive educational services from our public schools. Constituents are receivers of public services and/or provide public funds for those services.
- **Constituent Ombudsman** Add definition from dictionary.
- **Governance** is the primary role of the elected and appointed School District Board member. Governance involves ensuring the delivery of required educational and support services in the district by providing oversight and policy to the Superintendent regarding those services and desired results. Governance is strategically based governance and policy focused on effecting system improvement.
- **Management** is the responsibility of the Superintendent who is an employee of the School Board and operates within district policy established by the School Board and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Management includes directing staff, allocating resources, administering programs and providing support services to improve school system effectiveness and successfully achieve district academic objectives.
- **Appropriate constituent service** ensures that management takes responsibility for helping citizens receive the services that the Hartford Public Schools intends to provide, using the systems and resources provided for those services.
- **Inappropriate constituent service** is defined as Board member involvement in management or delivery of specific services or desired result, even if the problem is serious and/or the Board member's involvement is minimal. This includes an obligation not to confer special advantage on employees, parents, students, vendors or any other person or entity outside regular management decision-making processes established by policy or management directive to guarantee fairness and equity.
- **Communication** The Hartford Board of Education will communicate with constituents in the appropriate manner, given the nature of the constituent issue. The Superintendent will ensure that all staff is aware of all Board policies and procedures, in order to carry out the Board's expectations and communicate them effectively. Board of Education news and announcements will be coordinated through management staff, and timely notice for optional participation will be given to all Board of Education members. Management staff will coordinate the gathering of feedback from the community, in order to gauge the effectiveness of Board of Education communications and present reports to the Board of Education. Board of Education members will communicate policies to the constituents at Board of Education meetings and will consider constituent comments at public forums. As Board members receive direct requests and concerns from members of the community, they will refer them to the Superintendent or appropriate management staff for resolution. In any case, when a Board member refers a matter, the Board member will be given

appropriate feedback as to the resolution of the issue by the Superintendent or his senior management staff.

System for Constituent Service

Recognizing the need to provide quality service to constituents, the Hartford Public School Board and Superintendent will together put into place a system for tracking and responding to constituent inquiries.

- The goal of the District is to respond promptly and professionally to any questions or concerns of the public. To this end, the public is encouraged to use published telephone numbers to contact the appropriate personnel at their school or department regarding issues or questions. Another valuable resource is the district website, www.hartfordschools.org, which contains policy, procedures, telephone numbers, and the status of various ongoing programs. The website also provides access to those who want to send questions and comments directly to the Superintendent using electronic mail.

If the above information sources do not provide answers, constituents may contact the District's Welcome Center. As appropriate, such inquiries will be tracked using a system with the following features:

- A Multilanguage protocol for handling constituent requests for information or assistance;
- A primary contact person in the Board Office who will refer constituent service issue requests to the Board Ombudsman, as directed by the Board member, following initial contact with the principal;
- A feedback system so that Board members know the resolution of requests;
- An information management system for storing, tracking, categorizing, and analyzing requests;
- Annual reports to the Superintendent and Board on constituent requests, their resolution, and patterns in requests;
- Annual reports on District systems improvements made, in whole or part, as a result of constituent service requests; and,
- Oversight of the system by the Superintendent's designee.

The attached flowchart tracks the recommended process flow for constituent service requests.

Protocol for Managing Constituent Requests

Protocol is based on a reliable information network between the Board Office and the Welcome Center for referring, tracking, and resolving constituent inquiries. Normally, electronic management of these requests will be done via e-mail or other electronic means, as the preferred method of communication and recordkeeping in the system.

The Welcome Center will manage the tracking system and coordinate with appropriate district staff. Requests will be tracked in the Welcome Center by the category of request; the person assigned the lead for responding, the date of inquiry, and the date of response. This information will be maintained in a consolidated database until reviewed by the Superintendent or Board, but no less than four years.

The district response will be forwarded to the Board Ombudsman for response to the constituent. The Board Ombudsman is responsible for ensuring that the respective Board member is advised of action on the constituent requests, as well as keeping the constituent advised of the status of the request.

As appropriate, and when requested by the Board Office, the Superintendent's Office or appropriate District staff member may respond directly to the constituent and copy the Board Office on the response. This shall be noted in the tracking system maintained by the Board Office.

Guidelines for Responding to Constituent Requests

The Board considers all requests to be important and warranting an expedient response. Response to constituent requests will be managed on a priority basis. Board Ombudsman and District staff will set priorities considering all requests. The priority in which requests are answered is based on the urgency of the specific issue and not the importance of each request for both academic and non-academic issues. In cases where extensive staff work is required to collect data or research information to respond, an interim response will be provided to the constituent by the Board Office within 24 hours.

Central Database Management

Constituent request data will be managed by the Welcome Center. As described in the section of this policy titled, "Protocol for Managing Constituent Requests," statistics will be collated for further review by the Superintendent. Constituent responses shall be maintained in an electronic database for a one-year period from the date of the response or until a briefing to the Board is complete.

Reporting and System Improvement

By annual, or as directed by the Board Chair, the Superintendent will present a summary to the Board, which will include constituent request data, trends, conclusions and recommendations for improvement. The Superintendent's report to the Board will be in a suitable electronic document and will include data and graphs portraying the results and processes involved. This report will contain the most current information, and will also include comparative data and trend analyses.

By annual reports will be presented to the Board on or about January and July of each year.

Mr. Trevino reminded the RGA Team that the second day would focus mostly on finalize policy on management oversight and draft the Theory of Action.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.