

AGENDA

ITEM #1

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Hartford Board of Education Minutes Regular Meeting – Tuesday, April 3, 2007 Kinsella Elementary School – 65 Van Block Avenue

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – roll call / Moment of Silence

At 6:25 p.m. Chairman Perez called the meeting to order. Nancy Williams, Support Administrator for the Board, administered the roll call and a quorum was present.

Present: Honorable Mayor Eddie A. Perez, Chair Mr. David MacDonald, Secretary Ms. Andrea Comer Mr. Israel Flores Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings Ms. Pamela Richmond Mr. Luis Rodriguez Davila Superintendent Steven Adamowski	Absent: Ms. Ada Miranda, First Vice Chair
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B. Report from Student Representatives

- Adult Education and Hartford's Community Connections

Alicia Sagarra is a member of the Adult Education's Student Council. Ms. Sagarra reported that students from both of the North and South End Campuses attended the production of *Fences* at the Hartford Stage Company. Students from the North End campus are taking the Certified Nursing Assistant training, as part of the Young Adult Learners Program with Capital Community College.

A former student, who was an honor's student at CCC, will start her junior year at a four-year college to pursue a degree in Sociology.

A group of students from the Eastern Connecticut State University's Organization for Latin-American Students (O.L.A.S.) visited with the South End campus Student Council to discuss their experience in succeeding in college. The group plans to return and become more involved with the Adult Education students.

In honor of the National Women's History Month, Student Council members viewed a video on the life of Maya Angelou. A discussion was held afterwards to discuss her life and her well-known poems.

Lastly, 57 students completed their high school graduation requirements and will be receiving diplomas in June.

- Bulkeley High School

Fludiona Naka and **Eraldo Xhafa** reported that seniors are receiving news about college acceptance. Many students have been accepted to the college of their choice; others are still waiting and hope to have a response by the end of April. Ms. Naka and Mr. Xhafa announced the schools they were accepted to, such as: University of Connecticut, Boston University and The University of Hartford.

On March 24, twelve students from Bulkeley, who applied for the Fox Scholarship, were invited to an interview with the Fox Foundation.

Students in AP Courses are preparing for the AP exams in May. All of the AP teachers are providing extra study sessions after school and on Saturdays for their students.

The Hartford Courant Editorial writer David Medina held an after-school writing workshop for students. The students who participated gained a lot of valuable knowledge about writing, and it is hoped that it will become an annual event.

The entire school participated in Pi Day on 3/14. Students made posters, wrote songs, poetry and essays referencing Pi. There was a contest for who could memorize the most digits from Pi. The winner memorized 97 digits. The winners received gift cards and t-shirts celebrating Pi Day.

The Colt Poetry Contest is being held this week. A number of Bulkeley students are participating with the support of their World Language teachers. They hope to bring home many medals.

Several Bulkeley students performed and provided technical assistance for the production of the all female *Macbeth*, performed at the Black Box Theatre during the last week of March.

Lastly, a group of 15 students went to Italy as part of the International Club. Every year Bulkeley students go to a different country to experience the rich culture and history of that nation. This year the students will go to Florence and visited Venice and Rome. They will visit the Coliseum, the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps, the David by Michelangelo, Ponte Vecchio, Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore, San Marco Square, The Sistine Chapel and the Vatican. Ms. Naka visited these same locations last summer, as a lucky Wise Scholarship Winner.

- Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School

Raymond Fraser reported that the curriculum committee, which is made up of staff, students and parents, met on April 2.

So far this year, more than 60% of Classical's seniors have gotten into some of the most prestigious colleges on the east coast, such as: UConn, Boston University, Connecticut College, Fordham University, Wheaton College, Villanova University, etc. Currently, the lower grades are going on college visits to Providence, Yale, Wesleyan, UConn, and Quinnipiac.

Beginning this April, the National Honors Society will be hosting a recycling event. They will be setting up trash cans labeled for recycling cans, bottles, and newspaper.

Also, with the help of the school community, the senior class was able to raise \$2,875 so far this year to travel to Virginia Beach for the senior class trip. Students are also having car washes every Saturday until June, as long as it is over 50 degrees and not raining outside.

Saturday, April 21st is Classical Magnet Beautification Day. The staff, students, and parents will be working on the school grounds, planting bulbs and making the school property more attractive.

The 10th Graders will have their dance on April 27.

Track season is beginning, and the golf and tennis teams are off to a good start. Casting has begun for two school plays: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

- Pathways to Technology

Yashwini Nairdoo and **Joseph Wilkerson** reported that the FIRST robotics team has been competing around New England. They participated in the New England regional competition at the Hartford Convention Center in mid-March. Next, they traveled to the Mid-Atlantic Regional in Philadelphia, took home first-place, and became the first Hartford team in 10 years to claim such distinction. They received and have accepted an invitation to compete at the National Competition in Atlanta, Georgia, from April 12-14.

On March 29, Pathways junior Miguel Vazquez was awarded a \$1000 Carson Scholarship at a ceremony held at Fox Middle school. He was the first Carson recipient from Pathways.

Pathways student Miguel Vazquez also won the first City Entrepreneurial Competition on March 5. This competition is about making "human capital investment" by developing valuable skills needed for today's market place, as well as offering the city's youth the opportunity of being part of the city's revitalization. Miguel's presentation on his business - Pathways Publishing - received the highest scores. For his efforts, Miguel received a cash prize and internship opportunities.

The Entrepreneurial Club held its Business Fair on March 26 at the Hartford Expo Center. Students sold items such as chocolates, oils, lotions, and socks. Pathways was represented by 18 students who created three student run businesses. All groups were successful with their businesses and showed some profit at the end of the project.

Career Beginnings organized a dinner ceremony at Trinity College for parents and freshmen students who attained honor roll. With 30 students honored, Pathways had the largest number in attendance out of all the schools recognized.

Pathways successfully completed the after-school CAPT program, as well as the CAPT testing. Four students were selected from a lottery and won their choice of a brand new DELL laptop or a desktop for perfect attendance in the after-school program.

Science students have been busy working and presenting their science fair projects. Seven students entered the Connecticut Science Fair at Quinnipiac University on March 14, and eight students will be entering the citywide science fair on May 15.

The Bowling Club is happy to announce that Antonio Pierce, #58 football linebacker from the New York Giants, bowled with them on March 3. The students were excited and happy to have the opportunity to bowl with him and show him some tips.

The senior and junior classes will hold their prom on June 2 at the Rocky Hill Marriot. Graduation has been scheduled for June 20, 6:30 p.m. at The Theatre of the Performing Arts in The Learning Corridor; this is Pathways second graduating class.

C. Report from the Chair

- Parameters for School Planning: School Size and Grade Configurations

Mayor Perez asked Mr. MacDonald, Chair of the Board's School Choice and Integration Committee and the Facilities Review Task force, to please explain the process by which this proposed plan came to be. Mr. MacDonald stated that the plan represents a new vision for the district. It allows for the implementation of the balanced theory of action and provides for an "all choice" system of schools. This will guide the district with the facilities plan.

This proposal contains three models. Model 1 allows for PK-8 and 9-12 schools; Model 2 allows for K-5 or 6 and 6 or 7-12 schools; and, Model 3 allows for K-12 schools, which is campus-style. The proposal adheres to the plan of smaller learning communities in all high school grades.

D. Report from the Superintendent

Superintendent Adamowski reported that the Fifth Graders Go to College visit took place. It was a wonderful event to introduce Hartford's fifth graders to the college experience. It was a collaborative effort with the Consortium for Higher Education and St. Paul Travelers.

Superintendent Adamowski announced that the Birds of Prey Robotics Team won the Philadelphia Regional Competition and will move on to the national competition in Atlanta. The district will ensure that the team has full support, along with their corporate sponsor, United Technologies Corporation.

Superintendent Adamowski explained that a mandatory summer session will be held for students in grades K through 3 who have scored below grade level in reading. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to students. The daily session, held Monday through Friday, will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 11:30 a.m. More than 60 community-based organizations will provide activities in the afternoon to students, as well. Parents will be notified of their child's participation shortly.

Superintendent Adamowski reported that the Career Fair at Breakthrough Magnet was a huge success. Two-hundred and thirty candidates were interviewed, and 30 Hartford schools were involved. The Connecticut State Department of Education was on hand to assist candidates with the certification process. The district anticipates 300 vacancies, so this was a successful endeavor to recruit potential employees. Lastly, he thanked all staff involved in the career fair.

- Financial Report – Quarterly Report

Superintendent Adamowski stated that the quarterly report will be presented at the next meeting.

- Commendation Weaver High School Boys' Basketball Team

Superintendent Adamowski welcomed the members of the basketball team and their coaches to the podium. Superintendent Adamowski read the commendation of the Weaver High Boys' Basketball Team, which won the Central Connecticut Conference, Western Division; the City Series Championship; and, the Class L State Championship.

- In-School Suspension Pilot/Out-of-School Suspension Alternatives

Superintendent Adamowski asked Ms. Fichtner to please explain the pilot program.

Ms. Fichtner began the presentation by stating that the schools which volunteered for the pilot are very excited to be part of the program. The guiding principles of the program were developed by the School Safety and Order Task Force. In order to curb the trend of suspensions, in-school suspension centers will be created through the Comprehensive Student Intervention (CSI) centers, utilizing both academic and behavioral support to keep academics on track and reduce recidivism. A team-approach will be implemented: teacher, social worker, CSI staff, FRA staff, and principal. The student's family will be invited to the center, or a home visit will be arranged, so the family is part of the team-approach. Strategies will be developed to prevent future suspensions, and expectations will be clearly set.

As part of the program, classroom/school wide behavior management will be implemented, requiring training of all staff, not just teachers. In addition, the data system, SASI, will be utilized to track office referrals, which are the avenue by which most students are suspended. This will allow staff to track patterns and address them accordingly.

The evaluation of the pilot will: monitor fidelity of implementation in all 8 school sites (Burr, Clark, Kennelly, King, McDonough, Simpson-Waverly, Noah Webster and Wish); ensure guiding principles are followed; maintain data collection and analysis system; communicate across all constituencies (administration, teachers, support staff, families, CBO's); and, use evaluation results to plan district-wide model program criteria.

The out-of-school suspension program will include the development of 3 different model programs piloted at grade 9: premised on community service, structured academic center, and focused on expanded role of re-engaging youth. Community-based organizations will be utilized. The use of evaluation results will be used to select the appropriate community-based organization to provide out-of-school suspension.

Ms. Comer expressed her concern over the schools that were chosen for the pilot because they are not the schools in the top five in number of suspensions. She also does not believe that it should be a choice to participate in the pilot. Those most in need should be mandated to participate in the pilot. Dr. Adamowski responded that the purpose of the pilot is to work out the kinks, so it can be ready for unveiling next school year. Furthermore, there will be a threshold by which schools will be required to use their own funds to finance the program.

Ms. Comer stated that she still didn't understand why not one of the top five schools is in the program. She also asked to know why the high schools are not participating in the pilot.

Superintendent Adamowski explained that there will be an out-of-school suspension facility next year, so parents will have the option to send their child to the facility or keep them at home during the suspension. Other creative ideas have come forward; such as, mandating tardy students to make-up the time on Saturdays and community volunteering.

Ms. Noel stated that data is crucial to determining the reasons for suspension. The team working together is a comprehensive approach.

Mr. Flores stated that he is impressed with the program; however, the administration should work with the schools where the program is needed most, so the pilot will offer a true representation of the district. Middle schools should have been part of the pilot program.

Superintendent Adamowski explained that there will be an in-house suspension program in all schools next year. The administration is looking to add middle schools to this program.

Mr. MacDonald agreed that the pilot should include a mix of schools to identify success. He asked Ms. Fichtner how the pilot will be assessed. Ms. Fichtner answered that the pilot program is developed for the elementary schools. The program will be based on the team approach in the middle and high schools. UConn will conduct the data collection and assessment of the program. Mr. MacDonald asked if there was baseline data. Ms. Fichtner answered that all of the schools have CSI centers, so the data is available to look at the background.

Ms. Richmond asked if there would be a measurement of individual student success. If so, how would it be assessed? Ms. Fichtner answered that an individual plan of action is developed for each student. The process is to speak it, write it and show it.

Ms. Rodriguez-Davila asked for the number of suspensions delivered per day and the percentage of students receiving suspensions. Ms. Fichtner replied that there are 13,000 school days lost to suspension. The suspensions were handed to approximately 2,145 students. Superintendent Adamowski stated that it is likely that the students are repeat suspenders. Furthermore, he agrees with Ms. Comer's concerns and believes that the schools most in need should be part of the program.

Superintendent Adamowski expressed his concern with the upset around the pilot program and asked for direction from the Board. Ms. Comer responded that the pilot requires balance and should include schools with middle school grades and schools with higher numbers of suspensions. Ms. Richmond added that the leaders of the schools with the highest numbers should be held accountable.

Mayor Perez suggested the expansion of the number of schools in the pilot. As the purpose of the pilot is to tweak the proposed program, he would like the administration to move forward with the pilot. He stated that he doesn't question the intent of the proposal just the schools involved.

E. Public Comment Portion

Louise Simmons, Hartford resident and Associate Professor, UConn School of Social Work, asked the Board to please continue to support the Safe Schools Healthy Students Family Assistance Centers. UConn interns work in these centers, which provide ample opportunity for the interns to develop their skills and help many Hartford

students with anger management and conflict resolution and new arrivals from war-torn countries. The centers deal with issues that the teachers should not have to handle.

Lori Caswell, UConn MSW intern, works in Bulkeley's Student Family Assistance Center (SFAC). She asked that the Board please continue funding these centers, which provide a supportive atmosphere in which students can receive the help they need and deserve. Many students who receive help from the SFAC have experienced traumatic events, and the center brings hope back to their lives.

Darleen Vaga, Quirk Middle School student, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC. The center helped her to solve problems with other students and prevent her from getting suspended.

Amanda Gomez, Quirk Middle School student, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC at her school. Without the help of the center, she may have been expelled from school.

Nancy Diez, Quirk Middle School student, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC at her school. It is always open for students and provides a safe place for them deal with issues.

Jennifer Root, UConn MSW intern, works in Bulkeley's SFAC and asked that the program be continued because it provides a necessary service to students, who may otherwise not receive the care they need. It has served thousands of students with crisis intervention, mediation, anger management, etc. Efforts are aimed at reducing truancy and suspension by helping students to learn ways to deal with conflict without resorting to violence.

Maria Nieves, Bulkeley High School student, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC at Bulkeley next year. Students are treated with respect and without judgment. The center has been vital to her, since a significant trauma affected her life this past year. Without the help of the staff and interns at the center, she probably would have left school.

Mathew Bilodeau, Bulkeley High School student, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC at Bulkeley next year. It provides a safe environment for students to discuss the obstacles faced in their daily lives. Without the SFAC, he would not be as goal-oriented.

Kathy Havens, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, UConn School of Social Work, asked the Board to please continue the SFAC program. More than one-hundred, fifty interns have served hundreds of Hartford students at no cost to the district. They are often role models and mentors to the students. It is a national model and should be continued.

Hyacinth Yennie supports the SFAC program. She stated that the inside suspension program should be productive and not a babysitting center. Ms. Yennie referenced a recent newspaper article regarding magnet schools and asked the Board and Superintendent to please not focus on bringing in suburban students to the magnet schools but rather focus on the education of Hartford's children.

Joleo Wolory, Jennifer Moran, Jess Rivera, Crystal Ortiz, Jessica Ross, Erica Barrero, Armando Taco, and Marcos Colon of the Kennelly Student Health Leadership Team gave some background on the team, which meets and discusses issues facing teens, such as peer pressure, bullying, self-esteem, etc. They adhere to the code of discipline and bullying policy to ensure that they are doing their part to ensure that Kennelly is a safe school. Ms. Ortiz has an increased self-esteem since joining the group. Ms. Barrero asked that beverages, besides milk, be offered at lunch because some students are lactose intolerant. Ms. Moran read an inspirational poem.

Cathy Carpino, President, Hartford Federation of Teachers, spoke in opposition to the contract with Alternative Opportunities. Ms. Carpino stated that the union has attempted to arrange a meeting with Mayor Perez and Superintendent Adamowski to discuss their concerns, but the meeting has yet to occur. As for the union's concerns with the contract, it allows non-union contractors to do union work. In addition, Ms. Carpino stated that Alternative Opportunities is not on the list of state-approved contractors. Alternative Opportunities does not require teachers to be certified. As for statistical data on this program, there is none to be found. The time of the

contract and cost to the district, along with the use of the HTLA facility, are questionable. The union will file an unfair labor practice suit against the district.

Ms. Comer asked for a response from Superintendent Adamowski. Superintendent Adamowski responded that currently expelled students are not receiving an education and will most likely not be able to ever catch-up and graduate. At this time, the district has a virtually non-existent approach with these students. This is a pilot program to be evaluated at the end of the school year. It will then be determined if the program is worth continuing, but something has to be done to educate these youngsters. Dr. Dallemand stated that he will provide a more-detailed response in writing.

Mayor Perez stated that this is not the correct forum for discussion of the matter. He asked that the administration respond, in writing, to the allegations stated by Ms. Carpino. Superintendent Adamowski interjected that the administration meets monthly with the HFT to discuss issues, such as this. Sometimes, the parties disagree on matters, but they are discussed nonetheless.

Christine Smith, West Middle parent of 3 boys and a Special Education Paraprofessional at Bulkeley, spoke in support of paraprofessionals. She is concerned that her youngest son will not receive proper support if paraprofessionals are not adequately funded. She asked the Board to ensure that paraprofessionals are not replaced by private contractors.

Betty Gadson, President, Hartford Paraprofessionals Union, related her concern for special education students and the amount of funding available to provide special education paraprofessionals for students who have traumatic physical disabilities. She asked the Board to ensure that there is enough funding to provide the necessary number of special education paraprofessionals required in the schools.

Michael Downes, President, Hartford Federation of Substitute Teachers, reported to the Board that there is a lack of enforcement of the substitute teachers' contract. Grievances have been filed to enforce contracted agreements. There has been a failure on the part of the Human Resources Department to notify the union of complaints against substitute teachers.

Sam Saylor, President, PTO Presidents' Council, reported to the Board that he has concerns with the in-school suspension pilot. He asked the administration to be mindful of students who have trauma-based cognitive learning problems. In regards to the Alternative Opportunities contract, please do not ignore an agreement with a collective bargaining unit, but please look at new avenues to educate these students. Additionally, paraprofessionals are needed to assist in the classrooms. Mr. Saylor thanked Superintendent Adamowski for allowing the parents to be part of the RFP process for the parent engagement program.

Barbara Burke, PTO President at Fox Middle, reported to the Board her concern of a parent being banned from a school by that school's administration. It is insulting to parents and should not be allowed. There should be a policy on how to interact with parents.

Milly Arciniegas, member of the Kennelly School PTO, reported to the Board that there is a shortage of minority teachers in the district. The sustainability of minority teachers within the district is low. They have difficulty in attaining their certification. The district should assist minority teachers, through tutoring and training, so they can pass the PRAXIS exams and become certified to teach.

II. Consent Items

1. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Regular Meeting of March 20, 2007 (Supt. et al) (Pages 24-30)

Consent Items # 1- Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded, and the items were approved by voice vote. Mr. Flores abstained from the vote.

III. Action Items

2. Contract Approval: Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting, LLC (Supt. et al)

That the Hartford Board of Education approves the Superintendent's recommendation to contract with Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting for the E-Rate Funding Year 2007.

Items #2 – Ms. Richmond moved, Mr. Flores seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

3. Recommendation: Formal Name Change of Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School (Supt. et al)

That the Hartford Board of Education announce the Superintendent's recommendation to modify the name of the school to Classical Magnet School; finalize their decision on the proposed name change six months from this date, as required by Hartford Public Schools' Policy 3505; and, refer the proposed change to the City of Hartford's Public Buildings Dedication Committee, as required by Municipal Code, Chapter 2, Article V.

Items #3 – Mr. MacDonald moved, Mr. Flores seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

4. First Reading: Series 0000 – Mission-Goals-Objectives (School Choice and Integration/ Facilities Task Force Committee)

That the Hartford Board of Education accepts the first reading amended Policy Number 0100 setting the parameters for school planning: school size and grade configurations.

Items #4 – Ms. Richmond moved, Mr. MacDonald seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Noel asked if the item was to be approved today. She is looking forward to discussion on the item and seeing how it affects the existing schools.

Mayor Perez answered that this is the first reading of the item, and he asked Board members to please express their concerns to Superintendent Adamowski.

Mr. MacDonald explained that the joint committee tried to develop a plan that was more flexible, and the plan is needed to move forward with school construction.

5. Board of Education Representative Assignment to the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (The Board)

Items #5 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

6. Board of Education Representative Assignment to the Capitol Region Education Council (The Board)

Items #6 – Ms. Comer moved, Ms. Noel seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Receive and File

7. Receive and File: In-School Suspension Pilot/Out-of-School Suspension Alternatives (Supt. et al)

Items #7 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded, and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Adjournment

At 8:58 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.