

AGENDA

ITEM #3

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Hartford Board of Education Minutes of Regular Meeting – Tuesday, June 20, 2006 Bellizzi Middle School – 215 South Street

I. Retirement Reception – 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. (Main Lobby)

II. Opening

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

At 5:45 p.m. Vice Chair Noel called the meeting to order and Judith Fagan, Support Administrator for the Board administered the roll call.

Present:

Honorable Mayor Eddie A. Perez, Chairman (arrived at 6:00 p.m.)

Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel, Vice Chair

Ms. Pamela Richmond, Secretary (arrived at 5:55 p.m.)

Ms. Andrea Comer

Mr. Israel Flores

Mr. David MacDonald (departed at 7:15 p.m.)

Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings

Dr. Jacqueline Jacoby, Acting Superintendent

Absent:

Ms. Ada Miranda

Mr. Luis Rodriguez-Davila

B. Retirees Recognition - 5:30 P.M. (Auditorium)

Retirees were recognized by board members and Acting Superintendent Dr. Jacoby, they were greeted with certificates of recognition for their many years of service to Hartford Public Schools.

C. Oral Report of the Superintendent

Acting Superintendent Jacoby recognized Susan Matthews, Educator of the Year 2006. Ms. Matthews is a biology teacher at University School for Science and Engineering. Mark Goldberg of The Probst Club of Greater Hartford was recognized for contribution to the Teacher of The Year event.

Dr. Jacoby highlighted the Perfect Attendance Celebration which celebrates student's perfect attendance. She commented that the event is a great idea to help youngsters recognize how important it is to come to school and learn. The winner of this year's event chose to take the car as a prize instead of the \$10,000. Other prizes were U.S. Savings Bond and trips to Florida.

Dr. Jacoby stated that she had a chance to visit Rawson School and was very impressed with the beautiful building and the youngsters that escorted her around. She has been in the district for 11 days and has already identified things that need improvement. She indicated that she is happy to be in a community that is rich with caring, culture and opportunity; that is ready for someone who will be committed for at least 10 years to the education of young people.

D. Oral Report from the Board of Education Chair

Chairman Perez stated that the Search Committee will be holding a meeting to review applications locally and nationally. The search firm is very impressed with the quality of the applicants.

Chairman Perez encouraged that the momentum and rigor continues with summer school and in preparation for the opening of school in the fall.

Chairman Perez entertained a motion to suspend the rules.

Ms. Noel moved and Ms. Comer seconded the motion to suspend the rules to add agenda Item #5 - First Reading – Revision to the Mandatory School Attire Policy and the motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

E. Public Portion

Jose Velez of Hartford Organization for Power & Equality along with other students from Quirk Middle School came to the meeting to voice a complaint regarding a Teacher (Mr. Williams) and his derogatory and racial remarks to students. Mr. Velez believes this type of behavior is harassment and that this teacher should not be allowed to continue. Chairman Perez referred the student to give his documents to Dr. LaVerne Terry, Deputy Superintendent of Schools.

Samuel Saylor, President, PTO Parents Council welcomed Dr. Jacoby as the new Acting Superintendent. He is concerned about the paraprofessionals that will be unemployed this month and asked that the Board put them back to work if possible. He reported that parents are getting ready for the Parent Power Institute in which 24 parents will be attending a workshop at the University of Hartford to prepare themselves as leaders. Evening classes will be offered at the Parent Center on Elm Street for parents who are unable to attend the day workshop. Additionally there will be Lemonade Listening where the Parent Center will reach out to parents in their own neighborhoods to discuss their issues and concerns.

Michael Downs, President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers, congratulated the retirees and welcomed the new Acting Superintendent. He encouraged retirees to come back and help mentor new teachers.

Tanya Loconte a Hartford Attorney came to the meeting with students from Hartford Organization for Power & Equality reminded the board about the policy on harassment. She stated that departure from this policy exist when the conduct has the purpose of a negative effect on the individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Ms. Loconte indicated that there should be a central harassment team within the school district that conducts training in harassment for students and teachers. She would like to know if such a team exists. Chairman Perez replied to Ms. Loconte that someone would be in touch with her.

III. Action Items

1. Approval of Construction Items for Phase I New Building - Pathways To Technology Magnet School. (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Board of Education approves the construction documents dated June 12, 2006 prepared by Amenta/Emma Architects in association with Milton Lewis Howard and Associates for the Pathways to Technology Magnet School and authorizes submission of the documents to the Bureau of School Facilities for review and approval.

Item # 1 - Mr. MacDonald moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #1 - Chairman Perez asked Dr. Hinds, Chief of Building Operations to give an overview on the item. Dr. Hinds stated that the item is to approve the construction documents for Pathways To Technology which was already approved by the School Building Committee and asked that the board approve the item to be submitted to the Bureau of School Facilities for review and approval.

Chairman Perez stated that the site has been an item of discussion in the neighborhood and in his capacity as Mayor he convened a group made up of Council people and Farmington Avenue Business Association and NRZ's-- who are concerned about the traffic in that area. Arrangements have been made to address neighborhood concerns and will continue to work with these groups on a permanent solution including looking at alternatives.

Ms. Noel thanked everyone for their efforts in moving this project forward. She asked for a schedule date of opening the building. Dr. Hinds replied June of 2008 and mentioned that the state will be reimbursing 100% of the cost. There is also a \$700,000 difference in project costs that will be explored.

2. Approval of Funding Request for West Middle Annex - 875 Asylum Avenue. (Supt. et al)

That the Hartford Board of Education requests the additional funding in the amount of \$450,000 from the City of Hartford for the build-out of the 3rd floor of 875 Asylum Avenue for classroom space and related project costs for the modification of 2nd floor spaces because of functions reassigned to the third floor. The space will be in use for the next eight years or more.

Item # 2 – Ms. Richmond moved, Mr. MacDonald seconded, Ms. Noel abstained and the item was approved by voice vote.

Item #2 – Dr. Jacoby stated that she had a chance to walk through the building and was very impressed with the plan. The principal spoke to her about the work that had been done in planning programmatically and curriculum. There is commitment from both the principal and the community. Instructional materials have been ordered keeping in mind seventh and eighth grade. However, added funds are needed to make sure that this is a quality program. Dr. Jacoby said she asked the principal and lead principal to make a priority list of items that are needed. It was of concern to Dr. Jacoby that there was no computer lab. Even though there were computers in classrooms, a computer lab would allow students to do virtual experiments, which is an important piece in academic development at this level. The need for a computer lab will be accommodated with smartboards in the classrooms. As a result of this, a written document will be developed which will give guidance for quality programming to other schools that will be incorporating seventh and eighth grades.

Chairman Perez asked Dr. Hinds to give an overview on the construction end. Dr. Hinds stated that this is a leased property which has a lease for the years 2005-2012. Annual lease payments are made at \$8/per square foot for 29,310 square feet. In 2009 the square foot cost will be increased to \$10 per square foot. At the time of the signing of the lease a loan of \$450,000 was provided by the owner at that point there was no opportunity to do work and the third floor consisted of old small

office spaces that were not conducive to classroom space. The City also made a matching loan of \$450,000. Designs have gone out-to-bid and the request is for an additional \$450,000 from the City to make up the budget of \$1,350,000. The lowest bid came back at \$943,000 which is significant savings. Chairman Perez asked for the capacity of the building, Principal Michael Emmett replied that there are 688 students at West Middle School. There are grades 5 and 6 on the second floor of 875 Asylum and next year 70 sixth graders who are presently at West Middle School will be added; this is not taking into consideration the students that will come in as a result of Webster Magnet School capping and safety placements. Next year there will be three sections of seventh grade and it is anticipated that all will be filled. The seventh grade students would remain at West Middle School for phasing in eighth grade.

Mr. Flores asked for clarification on the budget impact, whether it will be affecting the general budget. Dr. Hinds replied that the additional \$450,000 from the City would come from bond monies and would not affect the Board's operating budget. The only thing that is in the operating budget is the \$765,382, once the note is paid off in three years that yearly contribution will decrease by \$65,000. Chairman Perez mentioned that this item was tabled by the Council, but it is expected that they will approve the \$450,000 in bond monies.

Ms. Noel spoke on the consultant's capacity study that is projecting that the district has more space than is needed for students and that there is space for West Middle students at Quirk Middle School until it is decided how the district will move forward. She mentioned that the building is a block and a half away from the main building and it is not conducive to winter weather. She has a concern that this is coming to the board after the build-out has started and students have been told that this would happen.

Ms. Comer commented that from the standpoint of the study that the district is projecting additional space and it is of concern. Even of more concern is the fact that this is coming to the board after the decision has been made.

Ms. Richmond stressed that it is time that the board be presented with items that have already passed the point of inception.

Chairman Perez stated that he was aware that school had been in this building with a problematic lease. It came to the Operations Management and Budget Committee and the City had to take over the lease four years ago. This is a City lease for the Board of Education. The only controversial matter is moving the middle age students into the building. The real estate negotiations are very straightforward and clean. He is comfortable that this is a short term solution.

Ms. Richmond asked how long will the school be utilizing the building. The lease expires 2012 with the option to purchase.

Mr. Flores asked what would be the ramifications of tabling the item until further study by the Facilities Review Committee. After some discussion on the ramifications Chairman Perez replied that the lease has already been entered into and this would affect the students that have been told they will attend 7th grade in that building. The parents and students have been preparing for this for three years.

Ms. Comer stated that she believes that the board members are at the table due to their priority of the education of children and does not want to hold up a process that penalizes children on a technicality. Moving forward --issues should be brought to the board prior to the fact. Chairman Perez stated that he is making sure that this type of thing does not happen under his leadership. This is why he thought it was important to bring the item to the board at this time.

Lead Principal Kathy Greider stated that parents are very excited about their children remaining at West Middle and to change that would have a major impact on the community. Dr. Jacoby added that they were very excited on the walk through.

Ms. Noel stated that the consultant's report also recommends closing schools and if she was a parent she would be upset that money is being spent to renovate an office building and not being spent on a school like Mark Twain which is recommended to be closed.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings added that she is not happy with the process and hopes there are no more surprises.

Mr. MacDonald left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

3. Authorized Signatory for Hartford Public Schools. (The Board)

That the Hartford Board of Education for the Hartford Public School System designates Acting Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jacqueline Jacoby, as the authorized signatory for the district on approved contracts, grants, etc. in compliance with district policy and in the absence of the Acting Superintendent, the Board of Education designates Chief of Administration and Operations Sandra A. Cruz-Serrano, as the authorized signatory for the district on approved contracts, etc., in compliance with the district's policy, as of July 1, 2006.

Item #3 - Mr. Flores moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #3 – Chairman Perez stated that the item was requested to add Dr. Jacoby as the authorized signatory as of July 1, 2006. He clarified that it is pass practice to have the Chief of Administration and Operations be the second signatory. Dr. Jacoby concurred that research reveals that this has been a practice since Mr. Amato.

4. Approval to appoint the Superintendent of School as Designee to Approve or Deny Requests for Exceptions for the Mandatory School Attire Policy. (The Board)

In accordance with Section 10 of the School Attire Policy the Board appoints the Superintendent of Schools as its designee to approve and deny exceptions to the mandatory School Attire Policy.

Item # 4 – Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Items submitted under the Suspension of the Rules

5. First Reading – Revision to the Mandatory School Attire Policy. (The Board)

In accordance with Section 10 of the School Attire Policy the Board appoints the Superintendent of Schools as its designee to approve and deny exceptions to the mandatory School Attire Policy.

Item # 5 – Mr. Flores moved, Ms. Comer seconded and the item was received as a first reading.

Item #5 – Chairman Perez asked Attorney Escalera to comment on the item. Attorney Escalera stated that this is a request to amend the School Attire Policy to allow schools to add khaki pants and yellow shirts. Based on the many requests for exceptions, 14 schools were already using Khaki

pants and six schools using yellow shirts. This will allow those schools to be within the policy therefore decreasing the requests for exceptions and allow more uniformity.

Chairman Perez had asked Dr. Jacoby to develop a brochure regarding uniforms and asked her to give an overview of the process. Dr. Jacoby stated that she views school uniforms as one of the ways to develop school climate through culture, but there are many steps. The first step is to send a simple one pager flyer uniform guide to parents saying that school uniforms were approved with an outline of what it is. The second step will be reviewing the process with school principals to be sure about cost. Schools that have enacted the voluntary policy will have a lot of advice so not to reinvent the wheel. The flyer will be posted on the website.

Attorney Escalera stated that a vote in July is sufficient there is enough confidence in the policy to wait. Chairman Perez stated that his office has received a lot of support. He added that if there are hardships in the future he is aware of companies that are willing to assist schools.

IV. Adjournment

At 7:25 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.