

AGENDA

ITEM # 1

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**Hartford Board of Education
Minutes Regular Meeting – Tuesday, August 15, 2006
Hartford Magnet Middle School – Learning Corridor
(The Lecture Recital Hall)
15 Vernon Street**

I. Opening

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

At 5:50 p.m. Chairman Perez called the meeting to order and Judith Fagan, Support Administrator for the Board administered the roll call. Chairman Perez then called for a moment of silence.

Present:

Honorable Mayor Eddie A. Perez, Chairman
Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel, Vice Chair
Ms. Pamela Richmond, Secretary
Ms. Andrea Comer
Mr. Israel Flores
Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings

Absent:

Mr. David MacDonald
Ms. Ada Miranda
Mr. Luis Rodriguez Davila

Acting Superintendent Jacqueline Jacoby

B. Oral Report of the Acting Superintendent

- Commendation Chanelle Adams – 2006 Action for Nature International Young Eco Awards, Fourth Place Winner, CT, USA

Dr. Jacoby recognized Chanelle Adams for her achievement as a young environmentalist and presented her with a certificate and a gift. Chanelle was most impressed with the technological advancements and the cleanliness of the streets during her visit to Japan. This was her motivation for the clean-up project she started in Hartford. Her group will be traveling to Malaysia this year.

Uniforms

Dr. Jacoby commented that everyone has worked hard to make sure that the uniform initiative gets off the ground for parents and students to be ready. She is hoping to be greeted by students in uniform on the bus tour the first day of school.

School Bus Tour

The Bus Tour will be unique this year with minimal disruption to instructional time. The celebration will begin at Breakthrough to Burr and will end at Wish School. The expectation is that all schools will begin instruction by 10:00 a.m. the first day.

Mastery Test Scores

Dr. Jacoby reported that the overall test scores results were not positive but there were a few areas of small success. She highlighted the areas where there were small positive gains. Eleven schools made positive gains in 6th grade math. About half of the elementary schools made double digit increases but not enough to meet the state goals in reading. There is a need to continue to raise standards from proficient to meeting goal in writing. At the September 6th meeting there will be a full report on the mastery test which will look at various schools, subtest scores and plans for the future.

Consent Items

Dr. Jacoby commented on the change in the format of the consent items to be more efficient.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant

Dr. Jacoby expressed thanks to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for a grant in the amount of \$844,256 to partner with the Haskins Reading Program in five schools. Richard Sussman from the Hartford Foundation was on hand and expressed the sentiments of the Foundation in partnering with Haskins and Hartford Schools for the success of students.

- Financial Report - June 2006

Dr. Jacoby reported that the end of the year transactions would be reported to the board at the September meeting. A small savings is expected in the general budget and special funds.

C. Oral Report from the Board of Education Chair

Chairman Perez congratulated Chanelle Adams who he joined in her first clean-up project and thanked the Hartford Foundation for partnering with the school system. He stated that the new leadership at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving contacted him and other Board members regarding an on-going commitment with the Haskins Program after the grant has expired.

D. Public Comment Portion

Dartanian Reed, Hartford City Ballet spoke to the board on his accomplishments and the need to give back to the Hartford community by providing a quality education for Hartford students in the performing arts through the Dance City Youth Campaign.

Rachel Rivera spoke in support of Item #9 – Safe Schools Healthy Students grant.

Steve Hillyer, Connecticut Coalition of Environmental Justice (CCEJ) spoke on his concern about the harmful effects of diesel pollution which contains more than 40 toxins that cause and trigger asthma and other respiratory health issues. He is concerned about the health of children who ride the school buses that are fueled with diesel and recommends that special filters be installed on the buses as a first step in lowering the asthma crisis.

June O'Neil – CCEJ - spoke in support of students wearing masks on school buses and extending the contract with Laidlaw Bus Company to enable the school buses to be retrofitted through a grant from the state due to the harmful effects of diesel fuel.

Kathlee Henry, Hartford resident and member of CCEJ, stated that she spoke to the board previously about the harmful effects of diesel fuel used by school buses in the city. She expressed disappointment that nothing is being done regarding the retrofitting of school buses and that funds are available from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to install filters on buses, but if not used will be given to another district. She asked the Mayor to respond to letters that was sent to him from the DEP and the CCEJ.

Geri Spano – Relinquished her time to Cathy Carpino

Cathy Carpino, President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers spoke on the discouraging results of the Connecticut Mastery Test scores and the previous warnings from the Union regarding the impact of Inclusion without the proper training and support to teachers. She also spoke on the disparaging treatment of teachers by the school system and a Courant editorial from a UCONN professor which was an attack on teachers. All of which she said received no response from the Board or the administration.

Sonia Talbert – Paraprofessional Union, spoke on behalf of the retroactive pay for paraprofessionals.

Sam Saylor - President of the PTO President's Council, reported on a successful Parent Power Institute. He asked that additional time be allowed for parents to be in compliance with the Mandatory School Attire policy.

II. Consent Items

1. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Regular Meeting of July 11, 2006 (Supt. et al) (Pages 105 -111)
2. Submission / Acceptance of Funds for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth - \$50,000 (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Public Schools is eligible for \$50,000 in funds to provide educational services to homeless children and youth. The goals of the project are to help homeless children succeed in school, improve attendance, assist families with school enrollment and accessing school support services and programs.

3. Acceptance of Donations from the YMCA of Greater Hartford for four Hartford Schools - \$20,000 (Estimated Value) (Supt. et al)

The YMCA of Greater Hartford will donate used strength training equipment to be used in various Hartford schools. The equipment will support development of school health/fitness centers at Connections Academy, Bellizzi Middle School, Bulkeley, Hartford Public and Weaver high schools.

4. Acceptance of Funds from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving for the Haskins Teacher Training Model for various schools as listed - \$844,256 (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving approved a three-year grant of \$844,256 to the Hartford Public Schools for the purpose of continuing a five-school project with the Haskins Laboratories of New Haven. Funds will primarily be used for professional development activities conducted by Haskins Laboratories; a private, non-profit research facility that focuses on reading. Haskins will continue the collaboration with Moylan, Rawson, Wish, Sanchez and Webster schools. The goals of this project are to reduce the number of kindergarten, first and second grade students who are at risk for reading failure and to increase the number of students who are proficient in reading.

5. Acceptance of Funds from the Connecticut State Department of Education for the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Program at various schools - \$1,000,000 (Supt. et al)

The State Department of Education has allocated funds for Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Programs to better the quality of education for all students as a direct result of the Sheff vs. O'Neil court case. Participating schools and programs include: Burns, Dwight, Fox Middle, Hooker, McDonough, Parkville, Quirk, Rawson, Sanchez, Twain Weaver, West Middle, the Equus Academy Summer Program, the Equus Academy Year-long Program and the High School Summer School Advanced Program.

6. Acceptance of Funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Act - \$6,153,045 (Supt. et al)

IDEA funds are dedicated for the purpose and intent of IDEA legislation. This encompasses programs and services that are required for students with identified disabilities as designated by legislation. Programming and services include designated personnel, instructional materials, parent activities, purchase of equipment for student use, assessment tools, professional development activities, transportation etc. In addition, 15% of this funding is dedicated to early intervention and pre-referral activities.

Consent Items # 1-6 - Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded, Mr. Flores abstained from Item #1 due to his absence from the July 11 meeting, and the item was approved by voice vote.

Discussion

Item #4 - Ms. Noel stated that the Haskins Program has been effective at Rawson School and will be for the other schools. Ms. Noel also spoke in support of the Interdistrict Cooperative grant Item #5 and asked that students in participating schools write about their experiences.

Item #2 - Ms. Patterson-Stallings stated that she hoped that one of the goals of the Homeless Grant is to help families find housing. She is concerned about youth that are not in shelters and not getting identified as homeless youth. Dr. Jacoby explained that about 200 students were serviced last year and the school system works with City agencies to assist in finding housing.

Chairman Perez clarified that items could be moved from consent to action items if any board member felt it necessary.

Item #4 - Ms. Comer stated that she is grateful for the Hartford Foundation donation for the Haskins program to support schools that are already involved with the program. She would like to see a cohort study that measures like schools that don't have Haskins to accurately see the difference in achievement and to track improvement.

Item #2 - Ms. Richmond stated that she is appreciative of the funds for the Homeless children and families but would like to see a heightened effort to partner with community and non-profit organizations to help the homeless. She suggested that a fair could be set up for non-profits to highlight their offerings which are sometimes underutilized and unknown. Ms. Comer added that homelessness is because of circumstances and parents should be educated about affordable housing to get them better situated.

III. Action Items

7. Contract Approval and Continuations for Special Education Department – (1) Dr. Eleanor Osborne – To develop an Early Intervention Manual for Hartford Public Schools (\$46,550); (2) Connecticut Consultant, LLC - To provide computer application support and customer service (\$12,000);– (3) Dr. Eric Cohen – To provide Psychiatric Services (\$126,000); (4) Creative Intervention – To provide strategies for autistic students with severe behavioral and cognitive difficulties (\$78,320); (5) Wheeler Clinic – To develop therapeutic services for students at HTLA (\$25,000); (6)Capital Region Education Council – To provide support services for students with disabilities in the general education setting \$222,400) (Supt. et al)

The Special Education Department seeks contracts and consultants who will advance the skills of educators with the expectation of improving instructional practice and increasing learning outcomes for students with and without disabilities. Individually, each consultant contributes expertise to address and scrutinize the learning, behavioral, and transition needs of at-risk students and the staff who serve them. Collectively, these external providers will ensure that students benefit from instruction, respond to intervention and are cost effective measures.

Item # 7- Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Comer seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #7 - Dr. Jacoby explained that the six items consists of a series of services for Special Education. All will be paid for by special funds and will be dedicated to refining the inclusion practice and the education of all students.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings commented that she received several complaints on some of the items, particularly the contracts on Creative Intervention and Wheeler Clinic which are continuation contracts. The complaints are from parents of children with autism who are not receiving the assistance that is outlined in the contracts. She asked if there was an evaluation of the services that was presented for the past year and a mechanism in place to correct deficiencies from the previous year of service.

Dr. Jacoby replied that assessments were done but there may have been cases where needs were not met and there should be a place where parents can come and express that a service was not provided in a way that was

beneficial to them and for staff to be able to pass the information on to the service provided. Dr. Jacoby said she felt comfortable recommending the contracts and there would be better monitoring of the services.

8. Contract Continuation Approvals for America's Choice Ramp-Up to Literacy I & II (\$158,000) and Ramp-Up to Mathematics and Algebra Programs - (\$216,000) (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Public Schools will enter into an agreement with America's Choice to provide service for professional development in the form of training, teacher instructional materials and on-site technical assistance for middle and high school English, Math, Special Education, and ELL teachers and administrators on Ramp Up to Literacy I & II and Ramp Up to Mathematics and Algebra Programs, throughout the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years.

Corrected Item # 8-1 - Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded

Item #8 - Dr. Jacoby explained that the item was corrected to clarify that the amount of \$158,000 is for the 2006-2007 school year only. Additional funding is anticipated for the 2007-2008 school year.

Ms. Noel stated that she is not satisfied with the results of Ramp-Up. She is concerned with the double Math and double English with no art.

Ms. Noel offered an amendment for Corrected Item #8-1 to be approved only for the 2006-2007 school year, to assess the program and return to the board for the 2007-2008 school year.

Dr. Jacoby agreed that assessment data is needed. The anecdotal data suggests that there is some success, however, it will be important that the assessment data be brought to the board as early as February to determine if the program will be continued in 2007-2008 school year.

Ms. Noel heard that the program was somewhat more successful this year than the previous year and attendance may have been an issue. She suggested that Student Support staff in the schools could help with attendance and in measuring the satisfaction of students in the program.

Chairman Perez asked that the Ramp-Up Program be discussed at the committee level for clarification and evaluation by next February. Dr. Jacoby added that as a newcomer whenever there are recommendations to continue a contract she would like to see assessments done. Moving forward a better practice will be established so that the board will have better information without having to schedule additional committee meetings. When asking for a contract renewal a template will be provided for staff to include an executive summary with anecdotal as well as assessment data and how the program best integrate with other programs in the school system.

The amended Corrected Item 8-1 was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item # 8-2 Ramp-Up for Mathematics - Ms. Richmond moved, Mr. Flores seconded.

Ms. Noel offered an amendment for Item #8-2, to be approved only for the 2006-2007 school year for the amount of \$108,000 and return to the board in February for the 2007-2008 school year.

The amended Item 8-2 was approved unanimously by voice vote.

9. Contract Continuation Approvals for Safe Schools Healthy Students Grant Program: (1)University of Connecticut School of Social Work – Provides an Internship Program which trains and provide social work services to (\$40,000); (2)Girls and Boys Town Well- Managed Classroom – Classroom Behavior Management Program (\$86,000); (3)Compass Youth Collaborative Inc.- Family advocate/early intervention programs at Bellizzi Middle School (\$48,000); (Supt. et al)

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative is an unprecedented effort to provide students, schools and communities with enhanced comprehensive educational, mental health, social service, and law enforcement services. It is based on evidence that an integrated community-wide approach is an effective way to promote healthy childhood development and to address the problems of school violence and alcohol and other drug abuse. The initiative is sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services. Funded sites are required to develop comprehensive, integrated community wide plans using nationally validated programs to address the six elements identified in the grant.

Item # 9- Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #9 - Dr. Jacoby gave an overview on all the contracts which will provide support to teaching and learning and that are all funded through the Safe Schools Healthy Student Grant. Dr. Jacoby mentioned that the Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services position is opened. She would like to keep the position opened but would like to hire someone internally for one year to streamline all of the support services activities and make a recommendation to be used to outline the functions of the position to support teaching and learning.

Ms. Noel commented that as Chair of the Student Learning Support Committee, there are three main components to help students learning, if they are hungry and if they have emotional problems. She was excited about the interim one year appointment. Ms. Noel further commented that the SSHS grant will be ending in 2007 and some of the programs need to be continued after the grant.

Ms. Comer asked for information on the safe schools grant personnel.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings would like information on the grant evaluations and statistics showing success of the interventions. Dr. Jacoby responded that the evaluation piece is a part of the grant and it contains a lot of data to be sorted through to see what is needed.

10. Contract Continuation Approval for University of Connecticut Evaluation of School Based Mentoring Program - \$40,000(Supt. et al)

The Hartford Public Schools is the recipient of an U.S. Department of Education School Based Mentoring Grant. As a requirement of the grant and through the bid process, the University of Connecticut School of Social Work was selected to conduct an external audit.

Item # 10- Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

11. Contract Continuation Approval: Virtual High School Inc. for High Schools Virtual Classrooms.- \$11,000 (Supt. et al)

Virtual High School Inc. is extending its contract with Hartford Public Schools for participation in the company's Virtual High School program, including delivery of online professional development courses and VHS NetCourses.

Item # 11- The item was withdrawn.

Item#11 - Dr. Jacoby explained that the item is being withdrawn; however the Virtual High School Program will be done through a consortium with CREC at a cost savings.

12. Contract Continuation Approval: MicroSociety for Webster MicroSociety Magnet School - \$17,235 (Supt. et al)

MicroSociety will provide on going services to Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School. The MicroSociety Program is an educational approach in which students build and run a miniature society within their building.

Item #12 – Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

13. Contract Continuation Approval: JRL Enterprises – I Can Learn Lab for Middle and High School Math and Special Education Teachers - \$160,000 (Supt. et al)

JRL Enterprises will provide professional development and technical support to eight middle and high school Mathematics and Special Education teachers in the I Can Learn Computer Labs. The agreement includes correlating the *I Can Learn* Courseware with the Hartford Public Schools Mathematics Curriculum, administrative training, technical training for teachers and successful best practice strategies workshops for teachers.

Item #13 – Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #13 - Ms. Noel stated that she remembers when the labs were given to schools from area business and there have been a lot of positive comments about the program. At this point it would help to have evaluations and information on how the program is administered in different schools. She wonders if the labs could be used to strengthen student's math skills after school.

14. Consultant Approval for Christine Pandolfe for Honors and AP English Teachers- \$30,000 (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Public Schools will enter into a contractual agreement with Christine Pandolfe to provide classroom coaching for teachers of English who will implement the new pre-Advanced Placement Grade 9 Academic and Honors English Curriculum, as well as to teachers of Advanced Placement English.

Item #14 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #14 - Ms. Noel commented that pre-advanced placements and academic honors are new this year after being dropped a few years ago. She views the courses being brought back in the schools as a positive. Ms. Richmond added that that the information received shows that more students are taking AP courses and she congratulates everyone who is contributing to the process.

Ms. Noel would like a report of the number of students who took the AP exams last year, including the exams that were taken and the passing grade. Dr. Jacoby will look at how to present the information.

15. Contract Approval: Heinemann Publishing Company for Primary Teachers K-2 - \$12,000 (Supt. et al)

Heinemann Publishing Group will be contracted to help primary teachers grades K, 1 & 2 and other literacy staff, develop, plan and teach a rigorous yearlong writing curriculum entitled "Units of Study in a Primary Writing Workshop," on August 30, 2006.

Item #15 – Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #15 - Ms. Noel referred to a report in the newspaper which claims that young women do better in writing than young men. She is hoping that this issue will be addressed in the workshop and that teachers will be more cognizant of these opportunities.

16. Final Reading - Approval Instructional Technology Plan 2006-2009 (Supt. et al)

The State of Connecticut is requiring all districts to revise their instructional technology plans in alignment with their newly updated template. The 2006-2009 Technology Plan builds on the Last Plan which concentrated on Libraries and computer laboratories. The 2006-09 Plan focuses on: (1) Finishing up the updating of all libraries and updating all labs (2) Installing classroom pods (4 student and 1 teacher) in every 4, 5, 6 grade classrooms and 7th and 8th grade classrooms. (3) Smart Boards particularly in 7th grade classrooms.

Item #16 – Ms. Noel moved, Mr. Flores seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #16 - Ms. Noel commented that it is important that students receive keyboarding skills at an early age and wondered to what extent was it a part of the curriculum.

17. Budget Allocation Approval – June 2006 (Supt. et al)

Item #17 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

18. Administrative Assignment (Supt. et al)

Item #18 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Comer seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Assignment of Carol Jackson-Lawhorn as Acting Principal of Simpson-Waverly Classical Magnet School.

Item#18 - Dr. Jacoby commented on the community meeting that took place at Simpson-Waverly School with staff and parents. Public officials and board members were on hand to offer support. It was shared with the community that although there was an aggressive search to find a principal there was not an appropriate match at this time. Carol Jackson-Lawhorn was mentioned as an interim principal and she agreed to come out of retirement for the task.

Chairman Perez thanked the Superintendent and expressed his support for the appointment.

Ms. Comer applauded the recommendation and considers Ms. Lawhorn-Jackson a mainstay in the community. Ms. Noel stated that Ms. Jackson-Lawhorn is well respected and a perfect choice. Ms. Noel applauded Dr. Jacoby for setting up the community meeting at Simpson-Waverly. Ms. Patterson-Stallings stated that she is happy that Carol Jackson-Lawhorn is coming back because she is very capable.

19. Administrative Appointment (Supt. et al)

Appointment of Christopher Leone as Principal of Pathways To Technology Magnet School

Item #19 – Ms. Noel moved, Ms. Richmond seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item#19 - Dr. Jacoby said she is excited about Christopher Leon's background in technology and recommends him for appointment.

Christopher Leone thanked the Board and Dr. Jacoby for the opportunity. He thinks of Pathways as a potential getting ready to happen. He said it will be a continual search to improve technology.

Ms. Jackson-Lawhorn stated that it was a pleasure to be back as a principal. She is very concerned about the education of students in the city and has a passion to step up to the plate.

20. Reappointment of Acting Superintendent (The Chairman)

That the Hartford Board of Education appoints Dr. Jacquelyn Jacoby as Acting Superintendent for a second term of up to 90 days, pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statute Section 10-157.

Item #20 – Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item #20 - Chairman Perez stated that it has been a real joy working with Dr. Jacoby she has stepped up to the plate. Ms. Comer stated that she has been pleasantly surprised at the way that Dr. Jacoby has taken charge and set the bar high for everyone. She thanked Dr. Jacoby for her openness and accountability.

21. Special Education Transportation Contract RFP#3981 (The Chairman)

That the Hartford Board of Education appoints the Acting Superintendent as the authorized signatory for this contract after full review and approval by City Procurement Manager and Corporation Council. General Statute Section 10-157.

Item #21 - Ms. Richmond moved, Ms. Noel seconded and the item was approved unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Adjournment

At 7:32 p.m. Chairman Perez reminded everyone that the next meeting would take place on September 6 at 6:00 p.m. at Quirk Middle School and adjourned the meeting.