

**Hartford Board of Education
Informational Meeting – Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Wish Elementary School – 350 Barbour Street
Hartford, Connecticut**

MINUTES

I. Dinner and Dialog with Wish Parents, Staff, and Community Leaders (5:30 p.m.)

II. Opening – Roll Call / Welcome / Overview

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

At 7:02 p.m. Mayor Perez called the meeting to order. Nancy Williams, Support Administrator for the Board, administered the roll call, and a quorum was present.

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

III. Workshop Session

Superintendent Adamowski welcomed the audience members and thanked the Wish parents and faculty for the dinner and warm welcome. Dr. Adamowski stated that there are translation services available for those audience members who would prefer to listen in Spanish.

A. Early Literacy Programs

Dr. LaVerne Terry, Chief Academic Officer, introduced the staff who would be presenting the new comprehensive literary instruction for grades kindergarten through three: Marge Swaye, Carol Shapiro Bernson, and Ellen Stoltz.

With the new K-3 early literacy program, the District target is to increase literacy by 4.3% per year in grade 3 as measured by the CMT (2007-2008); and, by SY 2019-2020, students in grade 3 will achieve the Connecticut State average, performing at proficiency or above in reading on the CMT.

As mandated by NCLB, the core reading programs have to be Scientifically-Based Reading Research (SBRR). SBRR involves the following:

- systematic, empirical methods
- rigorous data analysis

- valid data across researchers
- acceptance by peer-reviewed journal.

The following key elements of reading in SBRR programs must align to research findings:

- Phonological Awareness (rhymes, syllables)
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension.

Components of an effective literacy plan include the following:

- Leadership
- Language Arts Curriculum
- State Standards, Instruction, Assessment
- Professional Development
- Home, School and Community Connections.

There are key leadership beliefs, as well:

- All students can achieve high standards given sufficient time and support.
- All teachers can instruct to high standards given the right conditions and assistance.
- High expectations and early intervention are essential.
- Teachers need to be able to articulate what they do and why they teach the way they do.

A comprehensive literacy instructional plan must include oral language, comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, vocabulary, fluency, and writing. There must be measurable instructional targets for students and common formative assessments for each grade level.

The comprehensive literary program should include scientifically-based core program, intervention / supplemental materials, leveled books ~ fiction and nonfiction, libraries in every classroom with text at independent and instructional levels, and writing resources in fiction and nonfiction. All materials should be of high interest to students, culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate. A school wide K-3 delivery model has to combine assessment and instruction in making data based decisions about student progress. This will be done through continual monitoring of progress.

Response to the intervention process provides high quality differentiated instruction/intervention matched to the needs of each learner; uses the learning rate over time and the level of performance to make important educational decisions; and, the CSDE initiative is linked to HPS District Accountability Plan.

The core program selection process is as follows:

- Autonomous Schools
 - Core program
- Defined Autonomy Schools
 - Four program choices
- Intervention Schools
 - HPS Leadership for Literacy Academy/MONDO reform model
- Redesign Schools
 - SFA.

The Defined Autonomous Schools followed criteria for selecting programs:

- Organized a committee to investigate core programs
- Reviewed research about the programs
- Developed rubrics to evaluate the programs for:
 - Balanced Literacy Program
 - Reading-Writing Connection
 - Meets Individual needs
 - Program Composition
 - Comprehensive Assessment
- Analyzed program materials
- Obtained input from educators using programs
- Conducted a vendor fair with representatives from all 3 programs for site based literacy teams.

The Defined Autonomous Schools selected their core reading/literacy programs from Rigby - *Literacy By Design*, Houghton Mifflin, and Open Court – *Imagine It*. The other elementary schools selected from Rigby - *Literacy by Design*, Houghton Mifflin, Open Court – *Imagine It!*, Mondo – *Bookshop*, or SFA.

Intervention School Teams should work from a specific action plan that specifies (a) what needs to be achieved, (b) what needs to be done, (c) who needs to do the work, (d) what resources are needed to achieve the desired outcome, (e) when the outcomes need to be achieved, and (f) how progress will be monitored.

Assessments will be completed through the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2) for students in grades K-3, Programmatic Assessments linked to DRA-2, and by monitoring student achievement as 'growth over time.'

Professional development is an essential commitment to the implementation of an effective literacy plan. There will be on-going PD on: grade level expectations + standards, literacy instruction, and assessment. There will also be classroom walk-throughs, and data teams focused on improving literacy instruction.

To improve literacy there will also be home, school, and community connections. There will be encouragement of family learning by asking parents to read /write with his/her children everyday. Family literacy programs, such as Raising Readers, Mother Reads/Father Reads, and Read and Raise are encouraged, as well. There are also alliances with colleges and universities.

The expected outcomes include:

- Every student will be a reading/writing at grade level by the end of grade 3.
- Every student will have the opportunity to meet state and district performance expectations and standards on the English Language Arts Framework.
- Every student will be a critical thinker and learner.
- Every student's learning will increase in all content areas.
- Every student in grades K-3 will experience accelerated academic achievement.
- Every student will be a life-long learner.

Future action research is needed to ensure that the programs are meeting the needs of the students and will require:

- Evaluation of student achievement by cohorts

- Use of state-mandated assessment results: CMT and DRA-2
- Use of upcoming data points for comparison:
 - CMT Grade 3: 2007 to 2008
 - DRA-2 Grades K, 1, 2, 3: Jan 2008 to Jan 2009.

Dr. Terry explained that with the new literacy curriculum it will take approximately two years to see huge improvements. Gains are being seen this year because there is more enrichment than in previous years.

Mayor Perez asked how the staff development is measured. Ms. Swaye answered that walkthroughs will be done by principals, and professional development will include specific strategy and skill-modeling, so it becomes job-embedded. Ultimately, through student achievement, staff will be measured. Superintendent Adamowski added that professional development is currently weak. Coaches will be used to embed the approach in the classroom. Dr. Terry added that principals are being utilized as mentors.

Ms. Comer asked if the programs are implemented in the same manner for bilingual students. Ms. Swaye answered yes, depending upon the school program. The needs of each student are assessed in both English and their native language.

Ms. Comer asked if every school is required to have a family literacy plan. Ms. Swaye responded that Intervention schools have a strong plan. Dr. Terry added that every school has it as part of their literacy plan.

Ms. Comer asked how parents will be informed of the new changes. Ms. Swaye answered that through school orientations, displays at school, and books brought home to be read by parents to their child are ways in which parents will be notified. Superintendent Adamowski added that the message will be school-based.

B. Review of Policy Drafts

Mayor Perez stated that as part of the Reform Governance in Action program, the Board has to develop reform policies relating to: core beliefs and commitments, Board meetings and committees, and constituent service. He asked the chair of each committee to provide an overview of their respective policy.

1. Core Beliefs and Commitments

Ms. Richmond mentioned that the committee includes Israel Flores, David MacDonald, James Thompson, and Penny MacCormack. She reviewed the draft policy.

Our core business is teaching and learning; therefore, we exist to support the relationship between the teacher and the student.

- We believe all children can learn at or above grade level.
- We believe all children must reach their learning potential and that the achievement gap must be eliminated.
- We believe schools have an enormous impact on children's lives.
- We believe that all parents must be empowered to play an active role in their children's education.
- We believe our system of schools must be driven by performance, not compliance.

- We believe that the financial resources available to our system of schools must be focused on schools and classrooms.
- We believe that all children should be educated in a safe, health, and educationally appropriate environment.
- We believe that community collaboration is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.

2. Board Meetings and Committees

Ms. Noel stated that the committee, made up of David MacDonald, Andrea Comer, Sharon Patterson-Stallings, LaVerne Terry and herself, just had their last meeting to complete the draft policy. The policy revises the schedule and agendas for regular and informational meetings. It also includes a process for agenda development and delineates proper meeting conduct. The policy also streamlines the Board committees.

Ms. Comer stated that she did not care for the provision under the meeting conduct that forbids applause and cheering.

Mr. MacDonald clarified that during the first of the two public speaking portions of the regular meetings, parents will be allowed to speak, if time remains during that 30 minute session.

3. Constituent Service

Ms. Patterson-Stallings stated that Andrea Comer, Israel Flores, Pamela Richmond, Robyn Belek, Marta Bentham, and Jackie Hardy participated in the committee.

The policy includes the definition of constituent service and outlines a system for constituent service. There is a flow chart to demonstrate the correct process for the handling of constituent concerns. In addition, the policy requires a central database for the management of constituent calls, so as to determine trends and address areas in need. The policy also provides for a communications plan to effectively publicize the process to parents and the greater community.

C. Overview of District Accountability Plan

Dr. Thompson began the presentation by stating there are four accountability goals:

Goal 1: To accelerate the performance of students in PreK-12 by educating all students to the highest academic standards

Goal 2: To provide a safe effective learning environment

Goal 3: To provide highly effective and efficient operational systems with resources that support student achievement

Goal 4: To ensure strong community collaboration and family involvement to support increased student achievement.

In regards to Goal 1, Dr. Thompson reviewed the strategies for literacy and mathematics in regards to grades Pre-K through eight. Ms. MacCormack reviewed the literacy strategies for grades 9-12 and the strategy for mathematics in those same grades.

In regards to Goal 2, Ms. Cruz-Serrano reviewed the safety strategies. Ms. Fichtner went through the strategies to maintain a positive school climate.

As for Goal 3, Mr. Burr discussed the strategies in place at Central Office to support student achievement.

Superintendent Adamowski suggested that the meeting be continued at the next informational session given the late hour, and the Board concurred.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.