

AGENDA

ITEM # 13

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**Hartford Board of Education
Regular Meeting – Tuesday, November 20, 2007
Hartford Public High School Auditorium– 55 Forest Street
Hartford, Connecticut**

MINUTES

I. Opening – 6:00 p.m.

At 6:05 p.m. Mayor Perez called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

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

Mayor Perez welcomed the audience with an opening statement regarding the meeting proceedings.

A. Reports

1. Report from the Chair

Mayor Perez deferred his time to Superintendent Adamowski.

2. Report from the Superintendent

Superintendent Adamowski stated that he attended the Connecticut Teachers of the Year ceremony with Hartford's teacher of the year, Ms. Katharine Peet, Instrumental Music Teacher at Noah Webster Elementary School. He congratulated Ms. Peet for representing Hartford so well and for elevating the level of excellence.

One of the agenda items is the recommendation for the appointment of Miriam Morales-Taylor to Assistant Superintendent for Learning Support Services. She will begin on January 14, 2008. This date is significant because Bulkeley High School (BHS) will begin the second marking period split into two smaller academies: Lower School of grades 9 and 10 and Upper School of grades 11 and 12.

Superintendent Adamowski met with some Hartford Public High School (HPS) parents last evening to discuss redesign plans for the school.

3. Committee Reports

- Finance and Audit Committee
Mr. Flores, Chair, was not in attendance.
- Joint School Choice/Facilities Committee

Mr. MacDonald explained that the monthly meeting included a briefing from Dr. Kishimoto regarding the new design specifications for the various school models passed by the Board. The committee is pleased to hear that the teams are well represented by staff, parents and community leaders.

- **Policy Committee**
Ms. Noel stated that the committee is reviewing the entire policy manual to streamline the policies. The work continues and includes the efforts of staff and Board members. A communications plan will be used to announce the newly streamlined policy manual when it is complete.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Lynn Fidler, special education teacher at HPHS, stressed the need to look at students individually and meet their needs. It is discouraging to set standards that students are not ready to meet and cause frustration on the part of students and teachers. She suggested that vocational classes be offered in the ninth grade to keep students interested in attending classes and offer smaller class sizes at different achievement levels, so students can believe that he/she can achieve.

David Ianno, member of the HPHS PTSO, attended the meeting last evening that Superintendent Adamowski and Dr. Kishimoto spoke at in regards to the design specifications for HPHS. He suggested that the administration ask the teachers in the classroom for their suggestions. He congratulated the Superintendent's effort to meet with the parents but encouraged him to meet with the teachers. Contracts need to be honored.

Michael Downes, President of the Hartford Federation of Substitute Teachers, stated that inclusion needs to be improved through the redesign process. There aren't enough paraprofessionals to provide a successful inclusion program. He suggested that funds be raised, through grants, to hire more paraprofessionals and provide additional services.

Olga Flores, parent, spoke in favor of the union's resolution in regards to redesign schools. More social workers are needed in the schools. Support services are critical for the education of the whole child.

Cathy Carpino, President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers, presented a school redesign resolution signed by 1,500 school staff, parents, teachers, etc. The petition calls for more of a voice in the changes facing the Hartford schools. This is a collective call to collaborate to reach the goals of student achievement. Ms. Carpino used the acronym – RESPECT- to express the union's unmet efforts. Ms. Carpino submitted the signed resolution.

Joanne Tremblay-Jackson, school social worker, would like the social workers to be a part of the redesign process. Social workers do not see themselves as essential staff in the redesign plans. The notion of having support personnel visiting different schools will impair essential and comprehensive services needed by students.

Marcia Levy, school psychologist, asked if school psychologists will be part of the school redesigns. There is concern that staff that have left have not been replaced and that there hasn't been leadership to oversee the school psychologists.

Sandy Regal, resident and paraprofessional at Milner, stated that staff are feeling disrespected by administration. The staff at the five redesign schools has been told that they may not have positions at the end of the school year. Staff is being told that they will have to reapply for their positions. Staff would like to be involved in the redesign models.

Andrea Mitchell, student at Pathways to Technology and member of the Blue Hills Civic Association Youth Council, congratulated Mayor Perez on his re-election. The youth group supports the Amistad Academy school model and the Superintendent's redesign plans. She questioned how many teachers have talked to

their students about the redesign plans, encouraged students to speak up on what students would like to see for their schools, and why there are more teachers than parents at the meeting.

Donald Bonds, member of the Blue Hills Civic Association Youth Council, supports the Amistad Academy school model. The Blue Hills Civic Association sat down with him to discuss his future beyond high school. He encouraged the HFT to reach out to the parents and neighborhood organizations.

Steve Harris, resident and grandfather of three Hartford students, supports the Amistad Academy model coming to Hartford. He visited the program in New Haven, and he was reinvigorated. Change is difficult, but there is only one chance to provide children with a good education. Students need the best. He is worried that student achievement hasn't been mentioned by the prior speakers.

John Motley, resident, stated that students need to be prepared to compete and succeed in college. He supports the Amistad Academy model coming to the district. The state standards were surpassed by the students enrolled in the academy. He wants the children of Hartford to have a chance to succeed.

Hyacinth Yennie, parent and volunteer at HPHS, supports the Montessori program because it educates the whole child. Teachers need to be involved, so they feel that they are stakeholders. They should be valued and supported because they are teaching our children. The middle school students need more focus.

Carole Altman, social worker, encouraged the increased number of social workers in the schools to teach the whole child. Social workers service special and regular education students. Early identification and intervention can avoid belated and expensive identification. She encouraged the hiring of additional social workers to fully meet the needs of students. Ongoing communication regarding the redesign plans needs to be maintained with all stakeholders within the district.

Mayor Perez announced that the first public portion will include parent comments, as well as agenda topics, when the Board passes a revised policy on Board meetings and committees, which will occur soon after the new year.

III. Business Agenda

A. Items in Order of Importance

1. First Reading: New School Design Specifications – Incubated Schools (Supt. et al)

The design specifications for four new schools to be incubated in August 2008 and phased-in several grades at a time are presented for first reading. These four schools are in alignment with the Board-adopted An 'All Choice' System of Schools' five year-district plan and include: Achievement First, Breakthrough II, International Baccalaureate/Say Yes, and Montessori.

Mr. MacDonald made a motion; Ms. Miranda seconded the motion

Ms. Comer stated that the Board is trying to provide choices for the children and families.

Ms. Noel expressed her excitement with the four models because they provide choice. She hopes that these will become inter-district schools. In this global society, a global environment needs to be provided to our students. Staff has participated and needs to continue to participate, and she hopes that staff will step forward.

Mr. MacDonald stated this is an exciting day for the district. This levels the playing field and provides good choices for Hartford's families.

Ms. Richmond stated that the Board and staff involved in the redesign process have all of the stakeholders in mind, most importantly students. The plan is to include all stakeholders that affect the school system at every level.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

2. Redesign/Repurposing of Low Performing Schools for 2008-2009 (Supt. et al)

Pursuant to Board Policy for School Redesign/Repurposing (6190), the Board directs the Superintendent to plan and implement the redesign of the following schools for the 2008-09 school year:

- Burns Elementary School
- Hartford Public High School
- M.D. Fox Elementary School
- Milner Elementary School

The Superintendent shall follow the *Process for Redesign* as contained in Board Policy 6190.

The Board accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent to repurpose the Barnard-Brown Elementary School to serve as the future site of the Capital Preparatory Magnet School (CPMS) consistent with the Board's approval of updated educational specifications for CPMS and approval of the District's submission of the ED049R application to the Bureau of School Facilities.

All schools designated for redesign or repurposing by this action have performed substantially below the proficient level of student achievement having an Overall School Index (OSI) of 40 or below for two consecutive years without improvement and have failed to make adequate yearly progress under the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (20 USC. Sec 6316) for five consecutive years.

Ms. Richmond made a motion; Ms. Miranda seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

3. Approval of Construction Documents: Capital Prep Magnet School (Joint Committee of the School Choice & Integration Cte./Facilities Taskforce)

A grant application for Capital Prep Magnet School was approved by the State Legislature in 2005. The site selection committee concluded its search and determined that the Barnard-Brown Elementary School would be an adequate site for the school program. In order to move the project forward, an updated educational specification relating the revised program and project aspects, an ED049R requesting that site acquisition costs be reallocated to other parts of the overall grant, and a revised grade and student population structure need to be submitted to the Bureau of School Facilities.

Mr. MacDonald made a motion; Ms. Comer seconded the motion.

Ms. Miranda abstained from the vote. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Authorization of "Enrollment Management Plans" for Host Magnet Schools (Supt. et al)

The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to submit "enrollment management plans" to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for each host magnet school operated by Hartford. These plans shall be designed to achieve a minimum 26% white student enrollment in each school. This authorization is based upon the agreement of the State Commissioner of Education to provide Hartford host magnet schools up to three years to meet the goal of 26% white students as prescribed by the CSDE. As further agreed to by the Commissioner, this will be extended to five years for the three schools – Capital Prep, Kinsella and Fisher – where enrollment must be frozen until construction of their school buildings is complete.

The Board understands that the "enrollment management plan" for Simpson-Waverly School must stipulate the discontinuation of Simpson-Waverly's magnet status for 2008-09 and the return of its suburban students to their home districts at the end of the current school year. The Board further understands that the "enrollment management plan" for Annie Fisher School involves changing the theme(s) for this school in collaboration with the CSDE to be more distinctive and

attractive as a regional choice. The Board understands that meeting the percentage of white students prescribed by the CSDE will require increasing overall suburban enrollment to approximately 50% for each host magnet school operated by Hartford and enrolling approximately 1600 to 2000 additional suburban students within three to five years. This assumes a comparable number of Hartford students will be accepted by suburban districts, above and beyond the present level, under the "Open Choice" program. If a comparable number of Hartford students are not accepted by suburban districts participating in the "Open Choice" program or yet to be established suburban host magnet schools, the Board and City of Hartford must revise the School Building Program to provide additional facilities for the number of Hartford resident students currently enrolled in Hartford host magnet schools above the 50% level.

Upon submission of the eight "enrollment management plans" authorized by this resolution, the CSDE has agreed to release \$5.4M of 2007-08 operating funds it has withheld without prior year notice from the five Hartford host magnet schools with the lowest white student enrollment: Capital Prep, Fisher, Hooker, Kinsella and Simpson-Waverly.

Ms. Richmond made a motion; Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Mayor Perez stated that the CSDE notified the district after the school year began that it would be holding \$5.4 million because the district did not meet the enrollment targets. Superintendent Adamowski has been working tirelessly with the CSDE on a compromise. It is the expectation that for every suburban child that enrolls in a Hartford school, a slot will be available in a suburban district for a Hartford student.

Ms. Noel stated the withholding of funds will impact the schools because funds were previously budgeted.

Superintendent Adamowski stated that the staff has been working on the enrollment plans. Funds will be released within 10 days of submitting the plan.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings asked if the parents have been notified that Simpson-Waverly will no longer be a magnet school. Superintendent Adamowski responded that the member districts have been notified; however, the parents have not been notified formally, but there has been discussion with parents.

Mr. MacDonald stated that this effort demonstrates the Board's desire to integrate schools. It is up to the CSDE to devise a plan to have more suburban students attend Hartford schools.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Perez asked the Board to please recognize the newly elected PTO Presidents' Council. Milly Arciniegas, the newly elected PTO Presidents' Council President, thanked Sam Saylor and his team for all of the work he did to engage parents in the process. Ms. Arciniegas introduced the new PTO Presidents' Council' Executive Board: Maria Gomez, Denise Tillman, Ellen Wright, Theresa Linzy, Cheryl Perry, Hector Toledo, and Milagros Vega. She stated that the Council is ready to work with the Superintendent and administration in the best interest of Hartford children.

Mayor Perez thanked Sam Saylor for his commitment to Hartford's children. The Board will work with the PTO to increase student achievement.

5. Administrative Appointment (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Board of Education approves the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint the following individual:

- a. Appoint Miriam Morales-Taylor to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Learning Support Services beginning January 14, 2008.

Superintendent Adamowski introduced Ms. Morales-Taylor. She will oversee the Special Education Department, Prevention and Support Services Department, Department of Family Services, and the

Health Services Department. Her background is in special education, and she has excelled in the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Ms. Noel made a motion; Ms. Miranda seconded the motion.

Ms. Noel welcomed Ms. Morales-Taylor.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Morales-Taylor expressed her thankfulness for her family, staff at BHS and Barnard-Brown, and Dr. Adamowski and the Board. She assured the Board that she will be working on behalf of all HPS students.

6. Continuation of Acting Administrative Appointments (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Board of Education approves the Superintendent's recommendation to continue the acting administrative appointments of the following individuals through December 2007:

- i. Michael Lorenzo to the position of Acting Principal, M.D. Fox Elementary School
- ii. Janie Pertillar to the position of Acting Principal, Simpson-Waverly Magnet School
- iii. Paula Altieri to the position of Interim Chief Financial Officer
- iv. Freeman Burr to the position of Acting Executive Director, Human Resources Department

Ms. Miranda made a motion; Ms. Noel seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. First Reading: Building Lease/Acquisition Policy (Finance and Audit Committee)

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines by which leases/acquisitions will be entered into when the Board determines there is a need for additional space/buildings to address educational or administrative needs.

Ms. Miranda made a motion; Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. First Reading: Business and Non-Instructional Operations–Contracts Policy 3310 (Finance and Audit Committee)

The purpose of this policy is to amend the current Board policy by increasing the limit from \$25,000 to \$50,000 by which all contracts and consultant agreements shall be submitted to the Board of Education for approval.

Ms. Noel made a motion; Ms. Richmond seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

9. First Reading: Business and Non-Instructional Operations–Gifts, Grants and Bequests Policy 3230 and Regulation 3230(b) (Finance and Audit Committee)

Current Board policy 3230 states that any gift with a value of \$5,000 shall be submitted to the Board of Education for approval. This amendment increases the gift value to \$50,000 and aligns Regulation 3230(b) to the amount of \$50,000.

Ms. Miranda made a motion; Ms. Richmond seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

10. Contract Approval: Creative Interventions - \$139,500 (Supt. et al)

Creative Interventions, LLC provides services to forty-nine students with autism. Using the Applied Behavior Analysis program, a research-based program, specific strategies are provided for autistic students who exhibit severe behavioral and cognitive difficulties. Creative Interventions' services consist of direct student service, consultation, on-site staff training, technical assistance, professional development, parent training, and attendance at PPTs.

Ms. Miranda made a motion; Ms. Noel seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

11. Contract Approval: Institute for Innovations in Public School Choice (IIPSC) - \$127,000 (Supt. et al)

IIPSC will plan and develop customized student assignment pseudo-code (software), develop a strategy-proof school choice algorithm, and transition the pseudo-code and strategy proof algorithm to the HPS/MHIS system for the implementation of the All Choice Schools Plan in the 2008-2009 school year.

Ms. Richmond made a motion; Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Ms. Noel expressed her concern with the technical language used. She wants to ensure that parents understand that with choice, parents and students are not necessarily guaranteed their first choice of schools.

Superintendent Adamowski assured Ms. Noel that the language is the correct terminology.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

B. Consent Agenda

Consent Calendar I: Items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

12. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Special Meeting of October 18, 2007 (Supt. et al) (Pages 111-113)

13. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Special Meeting of October 17, 2007 (Supt. et al) (Pages 100-110)

14. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Regular Meeting of October 16, 2007 (Supt. et al) (Pages 94-99)

15. Approval of Minutes of the Hartford Board of Education Informational Meeting of October 2, 2007 (Supt. et al) (Pages 88-93)

16. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education for Hartford Adult Education Programs - \$2,855,476 (Supt. et al)

This grant provides funding for state mandated educational services, i.e., Citizenship, English for adults with limited proficiency, and elementary (basic skills) and secondary completion programs.

17. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education's Cooperating Eligible Entity Grant for Supplemental Adult Education Programs - \$244,976 (Supt. et al)

The Cooperating Eligible Entity Grant provides mandated adult education services through a collaborative relationship between the Hartford Public Schools Adult Education, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, Urban League of Greater Hartford, and YMCA Read to Succeed Adult Reading Clinic. This grant supplements existing adult education services through enhanced activities such as services to special populations, specific literacy education, additional support services or a unique academic curriculum.

Ms. Richmond made a motion; Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

18. Contract Approval: American Institutes of Research (AIR) - \$99,000 (Supt. et al)

AIR will provide technical assistance to the Chief Operating Officer and the HPS Implementation Team to identify options for a pro-active student assignment plan, framework for creating an All Choice System of Schools, and implementation plan.

Mr. MacDonald made a motion; Ms. Comer seconded the motion.

Ms. Noel stated that she is not concerned that Superintendent Adamowski worked at AIR previously.

Superintendent Adamowski stated that he no longer has any affiliation with AIR. There are two organizations that perform this task: IIPSC and AIR. It was a deliberate split of responsibilities.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

19. Contract Approval: Girls and Boys Town - \$75,000 (Supt. et al)

Consultants will support the principals and teaching staff at designated schools in the Well-Managed Classroom-Behavior Management Program by providing school administrators, teaching staff, and support staff with the tools to effectively manage student behavior in classrooms throughout the schools.

Ms. Miranda made a motion; Ms. Noel seconded the motion.

Ms. Noel stated that this program has been in the school system for many years and encouraged people to read the evaluation attached to the agenda item. She would like to see this program implemented in all schools.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Consent Calendar II: Items 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25.

20. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education for the Hartford Adult Education Young Adult Learners Program - \$70,000 (Supt. et al)

The Hartford Adult Education Young Adult Learners Program will provide transition to college services, a Pre-Accuplacer program, job readiness training, internships, and vocational training. To insure high attendance and retention rates, students will be provided with necessary supports in the form of case management, transportation support and stipends.

21. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education for Hartford Adult Education to establish a Family Literacy Project at Dominick F. Burns Family Resource Center - \$50,000 (Supt. et al)

This project will serve 30 Burns School families with preschool and school age children by reducing barriers to economic self-sufficiency (e.g., linguistic, academic, child care, transportation) and providing the necessary tools to parents to help them become more effective positive role models and first teachers for their children.

22. Contract Approval: Rainbow Transportation Services, Inc. - \$36,924 (Supt. et al)

This company provides transportation home for suburban students attending the programs of the After School Initiative at Hartford Magnet Middle School.

23. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education for Hartford Adult Education's English Literacy/Civics Education Program - \$19,850 (Supt. et al)

Hartford Adult Education aims to review the delivery of instruction and enhance existing curricula, both inside and outside the traditional classroom, to improve retention and achievement, as well as dedicate technological resources to ESL and Citizenship students.

24. Acceptance of Funds: Connecticut State Department of Education for the Hartford Adult Education Transition to Postsecondary Education/Capital Community College Placement Test Program - \$18,895 (Supt. et al)

This program will provide students at Hartford Adult Education the opportunity to prepare for the Capital Community College Placement Test. Students enrolled in this program will concentrate on Math, English and Reading skills necessary to meet the prerequisites to enter Capitol Community College.

25. Approval of Board of Education Meeting Calendar 2008 (Supt. et al)

Ms. Richmond made a motion; Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Topics

David Ianno, member of the HPHS PTSO, asked Mayor Perez to please consider stepping down from the Board chairmanship because there are too many tasks to be handled on the city side.

Michael Downes, President of the Hartford Substitute Teacher, expressed his interest in the idea of a regional district. He suggested that staff be considered for ideas to improve the district.

Debbie Greenspan, teacher at M.D. Fox Elementary School, agrees that a regional approach is needed for Hartford; however, she is concerned that some of the proposals unduly affect teachers and staff. This affects morale, which will be needed to foster the undertakings of the district. The mandated assessments undermine the teachers' ability to teach because teachers have to teach to the test.

Joanna Rios, parent and member of the Montessori design committee, stated that she would not have known about the design committee, if she had not inquired herself. Children cannot be enrolled in programs that have not been thought-out. Hartford students should not have to compete for seats in successful programs.

June O'Neill, resident and member of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, stated that chemicals in cleaning products have been shown to cause asthma, birth defects, and cancer. Asthma greatly affects absenteeism among students. Although the district has moved to use more green products, but a policy has not been passed. A promise had been made to retrofit the school buses, but it has not occurred.

Hyacinth Yennie, volunteer parent at HPHS, has been told that the school will be losing its mental health staff person and the assistant nurse to a medical assistant. This health center is working and has been for twenty years. She encouraged the maintenance of the health center, as it is.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.