

AGENDA

ITEM # 14

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

MINUTES

I. Opening – 3:30 p.m.

At 3:42 p.m. Mayor Perez called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

<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	<u>Absent:</u> Mr. Israel Flores Mr. Luis Rodriguez-Davila Ms. Pamela Richmond
Superintendent Steven Adamowski	

II. Work Session

1. Presentation and Review of the New School Design Specifications

The design specifications for four new schools to be incubated in August 2008 and phased-in several grades at a time will be presented. 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.

Superintendent Adamowski asked Dr. Christina Kishimoto to please introduce the presentation. Dr. Kishimoto stated that these models will make the connection for students as to why they are studying what they are studying and the importance of what they learn in regards to college. These are smaller school models, and staff will be trained to the specific school model. Each school model will drive teacher and leadership recruitment.

Each design team has been asked to provide an overview of the school model, affiliation with a national model, governance structure, student roles and responsibilities, parental partnerships, teacher capacity, curriculum and instruction, community partnership, learning outcomes and assessments, college readiness, school climate and culture, and school schedule and support services.

Achievement First

Ms. Dacia Toll is the past principal of the Amistad Academy, which is an Achievement First (AF) school. They opened another school, Elm City Prep School. There are now eight schools in Connecticut.

She shared that the mission of the school model includes a strong focus on academics, character development, college readiness, leadership, and success and happiness in a competitive world.

The results have shown that the achievement gap has been closed in the Achievement First programs. In absolute terms, the Achievement First schools meet the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Of all Connecticut middle schools, 181, Amistad had the greatest gains on the CMTs.

Ms. Toll reviewed what makes the difference:

1. Unwavering focus on breakthrough student achievement - Saturday tutoring, mandatory summer academy
2. Central focus on recruitment and retention of great people. Great teachers have been accessed through recruiters – 4 weeks of professional development before the start of the school year, Friday team meetings, and professional development throughout year.
3. Consistent, proven, standards-based curriculum
4. Interim assessments (every 6 weeks) and strategic use of performance data
5. More time on task
6. Great principals with the power to lead
7. Increased support for quality instruction (15 teachers per instructional leader – principal and another staff person)
8. Disciplined, achievement-oriented school culture
9. Rigorous, high-quality, focused training for principals and leaders (each new school has improved upon the previous school.)
10. Proactive parent engagement

The Hartford Academy will open in the Fall 2008. It is organized as a state-chartered public school operated by AF in partnership with HPS and CREC. The Choice application process will be utilized. The school will begin with grades K, 1, and 5 with 252 students – 84 in each grade.

The Board now includes Bruce Douglas, Colleen Palmer, Steve Harris, James Willingham, and Andrea Comer.

Mayor Perez asked if it has to be a Choice application process. Superintendent Adamowski responded that it will be part of the Zone Preference, which will give neighborhood preference. It is not a regional magnet. Any other charter school beyond this will need to serve regional students. Dr. Kishimoto stated that the student population will be that of Hartford students only.

Ms. Noel asked how it will differ from Jumoke Academy, in regards to governance. Ms. Toll answered that the partnership with HPS started at genesis; Jumoke began independently without a partnership with HPS. Superintendent Adamowski stated that legislation was passed last Session to allow partnerships between school districts and charter schools, as long as the district provides the building.

Mayor Perez asked about the number of special education students in the Amistad Academy. In regards to the Amistad Academy, the number of special education students in the school is comparable to that of New Haven Public Schools, approximately 10%. The school has not attracted a comparable number of ESL students.

Mayor Perez asked about student mobility. Amistad Academy has a much higher rate of maintaining students in the school.

Breakthrough II

Ms. Neumann-Johnson presented the educational program specifications, which are the same as Breakthrough I. Breakthrough I began at McDonough and Moylan Elementary Schools and became a charter in 1998. In 2002, the school became a magnet school and moved into the new facility in 2006.

The governance structure has evolved. As a charter, it had a governing board. When the school became a magnet, the governing board became an advisory board. In the new facility, the board petered out; however, there has been an increased interest, so a governing board is being developed again.

The Leadership Team meets weekly to keep on top of what is happening within the school. There is a School Improvement Team, Team Leaders, Class Meetings, Community Meetings, and a School Compact.

Some of the classroom highlights include:

1. 20 students/class in grades PreK through 2

2. 22 students/class in grades 3 through 8
3. Teacher assistants
4. Authentic learning/real world applications
5. Teachers create 2 year curriculum maps
6. Summer school available by teacher recommendation
7. 6-8 computers / classroom; 1 laptop per child in grades 7 and 8
8. Character building lunches
9. Multi-aged classrooms
10. Interdisciplinary teaching
11. Classroom greeters
12. Field trips, sister school partnerships

The school contains students and families of 18 different countries and includes residents of Hartford and 29 towns.

The school is based on the BRICK model:

- B - Changing Breakdowns to Breakthroughs by applying problem solving strategies
- R - Taking Responsibility for being the author of their lives by mastering one's self talk and
- I - Learning how Integrity empowers relationships and goals
- C - Creating opportunities for students to Contribute within the classroom, school and community
- K - Increasing their Knowledge so that new possibilities for their lives can be created.

All staff is trained with the STEP method. Parenting classes are offered each Fall and Spring. Each course is 7 weeks. The course helps parents to identify their child's goals and misbehaviors. The course targets strategies that are used in the classroom and are transferable to the home.

The 2007 CMT results show that 78% of students scored proficient or higher in math, and 83% scored proficient or higher in writing.

The curriculum utilizes Spanish language, Visual Arts, Technology, Physical Education, and Music (general and instrumental). Enrichment programs are offered from 3-4 p.m. each day for students in grades K through 8, except for Fridays. Staff meetings are held every Friday at 3 p.m. Before and after school care is available. There is a required dress code for students.

Ms. Miranda asked how many parents participate in the STEP program. Ms. Neumann-Johnson answered that it is about 45%.

Only new students through 5th grade are accepted in the new building. The school will be growing by 22 students each year. 2,034 students applied for 40 spots this past September.

The student population consists of 60% Hartford and 40% suburban residents. There are about 33% black, 33% Hispanic, and 33% White students. Of the student population, 10-13% receives special education services inclusively. There is an early intervention process that is very effective. For ESL, the sheltered instruction model is utilized.

The staff works 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an 8% differential, as per the HFT contract.

Ms. Noel asked if staff has been identified within Breakthrough I for the new school. Ms. Neumann-Johnson answered that most of the staff has been maintained since the school was a charter. The weekly team meetings keep new staff informed and trained. Most new teachers have been hired through the graduate intern process. She suggested that the Assistant Principal and teacher leader start-up the new school.

Superintendent Adamowski stated that in order to meet the enrollment goal, the student population will have to be made up of 50% Hartford and 50% suburban students. The current level of 60% Hartford students in the school will have to be reduced to 50% to increase the number of white suburban students, in order to meet the enrollment goal.

Say Yes/International Baccalaureate

Ms. Connie Coles stated that the Global Communications Academy, a PreK through high school, will address the achievement gap through 2 successful entities. International Baccalaureate (IB) encourages students to be active learners, well-rounded individuals, and engaged world citizens. Founded in 1968, it currently works with 2094 IB schools.

There are three programs offered:

Primary Years Program (Grades PreK-5)
Middle Years Program (Grades 6-10)
Diploma Program (Grades 11 and 12)

The major partner is Say Yes to Education Foundation. Say Yes provides for, among other supports, a college education, after-school and summer programming, family services, tutoring, and mentoring, and support services through college.

There is a global affairs approach to academics. Every student has to take a second language. Students have to take 12 years of a language, with an option to take a 3rd language in the upper grades.

Ms. Richmond asked at what grade students will enter. Ms. Coles answered that students will enter in PreK. Superintendent Adamowski stated that IB experience in North American cities is that high school students do not have the prior knowledge needed to succeed in the IB program.

Ms. Noel asked if all students will attend college for free. Ms. Coles answered yes; Say Yes is building a consortium of colleges that students can attend for free.

Ms. Noel asked if there is a common campus. Dr. Kishimoto answered that the intention is to have one campus.

Ms. Richmond asked how many students will be enrolled when the school initially opens. Ms. Coles answered 216. Ms. Richmond asked if there is repository of mentors. Ms. Coles answered that a group of mentors will be developed with the Say Yes chapter in Hartford. The idea is to have 1:1 mentor/student relationships.

Montessori

Tim Nee stated that the program will run from PreK through high school. All together, there will be about 1556 students for the total Montessori pathway. Children will begin at 2 years, 8 months – 3 years. The Montessori model contains the elementary program, the erdkinder program, and the high school program.

Primary refers to 3-6-year olds; Lower Elementary refers to Grades 1, 2, and 3; and, Upper Elementary refers to Grades 4, 5, and 6.

Essential elements for successful Montessori schools include:

1. Montessori teachers
2. Administration
3. Recruitment/parent education
4. Curriculum/environment
5. Assessment
6. Professional development

The school governance council is similar to that of magnet schools.

The Family Involvement Card is used to define parental involvement.

Quality Montessori trained leaders and teachers are essential. A public Montessori teaching certificate is unique to Connecticut.

Teachers create albums aligned with state guidelines to become the curriculum guides. The general school day includes 2 hours of academics in the morning and 2 hours of afternoon academics. The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. with after school activities available. A social curriculum is followed, as well. Support services are also offered.

The enrollment rollout plan is a gradual buildup; the middle school will be open within 6 years and the high school within 7 years.

The birth to three program, with a corporate partner, may be something to look at in the future. The erdkinder program provides a farm school.

Superintendent Adamowski stated that depending on the location for the school, it could be a Hartford school or a host magnet school. The plan calls for three elementary schools, one middle school program, and one high school program. Mr. Nee stated that it would be ideal for the middle school program to be in a farm setting and the high school in downtown Hartford.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.