

AGENDA

ITEM # 17

**Hartford Board of Education
Special Meeting – Tuesday, March 1, 2011
Ramon E. Betances School, 42 Charter Oak Avenue**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call and Call to Order

6:07 p.m. Mr. MacDonald called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

<u>Present:</u> Mr. David MacDonald, Chairman Ms. Pamela Richmond, First Vice Chair Ms. Lori L. Hudson, Second Vice Chair Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings, Secretary Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Ms. Ada Miranda Mr. Luis Rodríguez-Dávila Mr. Robert Cotto, Jr.	<u>Absent:</u> Mr. Israel Flores
Superintendent Steven Adamowski	

Mr. MacDonald opened the meeting with an opening statement.

I. Executive Session (Collective Bargaining)

Mr. McDonald accepted a motion from Ms. Richmond to enter into Executive Session; Ms. Miranda seconded. A quorum was present.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

<u>Present:</u> Mr. David MacDonald, Chairman Ms. Pamela Richmond, First Vice Chair Ms. Lori L. Hudson, Second Vice Chair Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings, Secretary Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Ms. Ada Miranda Mr. Luis Rodríguez-Dávila Mr. Robert Cotto, Jr.	<u>Absent:</u> Mr. Israel Flores
Superintendent Steven Adamowski	

The Executive session adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

II. Workshop Session: School Development

Dr. Immacula Didier, principal at Betances, welcomed the Board and the public.

1. Update on West Middle Renovation Proposal

Dr. Adamowski stated that the next project in the 10-year strategic operating plan is the West Middle project based on need.

Dr. Nardone explained that West Middle School was built in 1894, renovated in 1930, and it is considered a historic building with 86,000 square feet.

- Scope: Renovate as New.
- Enrollment: 750 students in grades PreK – 8.
- Special Considerations: Public access to a new media center; community meeting room.
- Cost \$55M at 80% State reimbursement.
- Timeline:
 - Board of Education approval of educational specifications: March 15, 2011
 - City Council approval for construction grant submission: April, May 2011
 - Bureau of School Facilities (BSF) Grant submission date: by June 30, 2011
 - State Funding Approval: July 2012
 - 2012-13 Design Phase - students in place at West Middle
 - 2013-14 Construction Phase – students in swing space (TBD)
 - 2014-15 Construction Phase – students in swing space
 - 2015-16 Occupancy in renovated building.

Mr. MacDonald asked if there was an analysis regarding the cost for the project. He asked if the project will impact the options regarding the Weaver project.

Dr. Nardone answered that the West Middle project has a relatively good community support and it is estimated at \$55M. The Weaver project was estimated at \$150M.

Dr. Adamowski explained that the original proposal for Weaver was \$150M. There will be meetings with the Board of the Blue Hills Association to receive more input. From the information received so far, we are looking at a good opportunity for Arts and Science. We are also looking at a much smaller project overall. Governor Malloy has proposals that favor reimbursement for renovation of existing buildings as opposed of construction of new buildings. It is also possible that there may not be a bonding for a period of time, so it is important to get in the queue. If we do not get in now, and based on the current timeline, we will be able to get in for a year or two until funding becomes available. And other districts would be in the queue ahead of Hartford.

Mr. MacDonald asked if the total cost for the project is \$55 million and whether the City's share is 20% of the total cost. Dr. Nardone answered that the State will reimburse 80% and the City will cover the remaining cost.

Ms. Noel stated that when the Board approved several projects, the Board also agreed to not pursuing more projects; yet, we are presented with more projects. She referred to Dr. Adamowski's comment on getting in the queue and raised concerns for the negative perception that other districts may have about Hartford. The State may turn other district's projects down because they have to fund Hartford projects at 80%.

Mr. Rodriguez-Davila stated that City Council already approved the construction project based on what it was submitted by Dr. Adamowski, but they have not come up with the money for this project yet. The State will fund 80%, but there is 20% more to cover.

Dr. Nardone answered that the City will cover the remaining 20%. The District made a commitment to not submitting any new construction project applications, but this project is in scheduled since last year.

Dr. Adamowski explained that this is one of the situations where we have a strong support from the community and from the City. A meeting with the Blue Hills Association was recently convened where Mayor Segarra had pledged to improve the neighborhood, take down the Capitol West building and do other things. The renovation of the school is a very much part of that. The building is in terrible condition and it has not been renovated in a long time.

2. Update on Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy Construction Project

Dr. Nardone explained that there will be a classroom addition to the existing HMMS building (50,000 square feet) and alterations to the Commons Building (12,500 square feet).

- Special Considerations: The addition should be near the Trinity campus.
- Enrollment: 480 students in grade 9 – 12.
- Cost: \$30.4M at 95% State reimbursement.
- Timeline:
 - Board of Education approval of educational specifications: March 15, 2015
 - City Council approval for Grant submission: April, May 2011
 - Bureau of School Facilities (BSF) grant submission date: by June 30, 2011
 - State funding approval: July 2012
 - 2011-12 Applications Phase – 9th graders housed in the Commons Building
 - 2012-13 Design Phase – 9th and 10th graders housed in the Commons Building
 - 2013-14 Construction Phase – 9th, 10th and 11th graders housed in the Commons Building
 - 2014-15 Construction Phase – 9th, 10th and 11th graders housed in the Commons Building; 12th graders housed on the Trinity Campus
 - **2015-16 Occupancy in new building for grades 9-112 as well as seniors on the Trinity Campus.**

Ms. Biggs explained that the transition time will be tight. We will need to separate the middle school model from the high school model. Teachers and families understand that the first few years of the transition are going to be a challenge. People are going to be sharing spaces. It is critical to keep the middle school model separated since we have been so successful with the middle school. It needs to be a separate entity from the high school model.

Mr. MacDonald asked for the plans set in place for the safety of the students during the construction phase.

Dr. Nardone explained that there are always concerns with safety. It will be challenging but it will be easy in terms of planning.

Mr. MacDonald stated that prior to the school start every morning, there are always activities in the open space. He recommended taking precautions.

Ms. Biggs answered that there are two places where parents drop off students in Vernon Street. Some of the kids wait in the front and there is supervision there. The 7th and 8th graders are typically housed in the middle area in the court yard. The 6th, 7th and 8th graders do not transition without supervision; there is always an adult. We have the bridge that goes into the commons, so the students will not have to go outside into the construction area. Dismissal and arrival in the morning will be a challenge, but we are sure that that can be managed.

Ms. Noel asked if CREC uses the commons building and whether the RSCO office will remain there.

Dr. Nardone stated that CREC currently uses the commons building, but negotiations are taking place regarding the common use of the space available.

Dr. Adamowski added that the RSCO office will be moving to the State Department Building. He explained that there is a lease between CREC and the City of Hartford with a map that clearly designates which spaces CREC has, and which spaces the COLT school has. If nothing else can be worked that is better, everyone has to abide by the lease. It is in the best interest of both to share the building and to be flexible.

Ms. Noel asked for the number of students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades, and in high school grades.

Ms. Biggs explained that the school has 200 students in each 6th, 7th and 8th grades. There are 197 students in the current 8th grade. Students had an opportunity to choose an early application which worked out well. We are at 115 students choosing to stay. Of those 115, there are 15 students that are waiting for results from applications submitted to other schools. Therefore, it is anticipated to have somewhere between 100 to 115 students. The other students opted to take other seats at other places.

Ms. Noel stated that the 6th, 7th and 8th groups are larger, but the configuration in the high school is expected to be a smaller population.

Ms. Biggs explained that the purpose of an effective middle school model is for kids to experience an array of opportunities so they can choose. There are so many opportunities out there. There are a number of kids opting to go to some of the academies at Hartford High; some are going to vocational schools, some others to magnet schools, etc. It would be a misjudgment to think that all 200 students would want to stay with this model when there are so many opportunities for them.

3. Design Specifications for Moylan Elementary School

Mr. McCaskill introduced Ms. Erin Doyle, Curriculum Specialist, and Ms. Ronni Weinstein, Literacy Coach from Moylan School. They co-chaired the design teams.

Ms. Doyle thanked all the members of the design team for their hard work.

Overview of the School Model

Characteristics of Expeditionary Learning

- Student Empowerment
- Student Connections to Community and Field Experts
- Integrated Curriculum/Project-Based Learning
- Infusion of Technology
- Real World Projects and Presentations
- Workshop Model Instruction

Mission and Vision

Mission

The community of the Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School is dedicated to fostering each child's unique potential and spirit of adventure. It will nurture the personal, social and

academic achievement of each student through rigorous interdisciplinary learning experiences that will develop students to be leaders in the 21st century.

Vision

- Accountability for educational and character development as a collaborative endeavor
- Robust student learning that moves from “what we know” to “how we come to know”
- High academic achievement, a sense of social responsibility and a love of learning

Research Basis

- In a national study of more than 11,000 students in 8 states, students attending EL schools with strong fidelity to the model experienced significantly greater test score gains than non-EL students on math, reading and language usage tests. (Mountain Measurement, Inc., August 2010)
- EL impact on student achievement is even greater for subgroups that have a history of low performance including economically disadvantaged students and students requiring special education services. (UMass Donahue Institute, September 2010)
- In a comparison between EL Schools in Rochester, NY and non-EL schools, researchers found that EL school students had substantial and statistically significant achievement advantages. (UMass Donahue Institute, September 2010)

Curriculum

Learning Expeditions – the Core of Curriculum Design

Required Criteria:

- Alignment with district and state standards
- In-depth interdisciplinary units of study (project-based)
- Student Engagement
- Higher-Level Thinking
- Differentiated Instruction
- Opportunity for All Students to Succeed
- Integration of Literacy, Inquiry, Technology and Basic Skills

School Culture and Community

“We are crew, not passengers.” (Kurt Hahn, Founder of Outward Bound, whose principles form the basis of EL)

EL “Crews” - students, staff, parents and the Greater Hartford community - build the culture and climate of the school:

- Physical and emotional safety
- Strong sense of adventure
- An ethic of service and responsibility
- Commitment to high quality work
- Strong adult/student relationship
- Rigorous expectation for behavior and achievement

Why Expeditionary Learning Works

- It energizes student engagement through high level tasks and active, hands-on roles.
- It understands that the most important assessment practices occur daily in the classroom.
- It engages parent, community and field experts in support of student learning.
- It builds teamwork, courage, craftsmanship, perseverance and compassion.
- It allows all students to succeed.

Dr. Adamowski explained that the Expeditionary Middle School at Moylan Educational Specifications were presented at the January workshop and those specifications were approved by the board at the February meeting.

We are currently looking at an opportunity for a K – 8 expeditionary learning pathway, in addition to Moylan being use as the site for the south side Montessori School. Moylan is a very large building and in this proposal, it will house two elementary schools.

Dr. Adamowski explained that there are a number of implementation issues in terms of the transition. One is to begin with three units in every grade level for the first year, or to concentrate in the primary grades and have students move as cohorts as they move up into a more complete expeditionary learning. An implementation plan will have to be developed for this program.

Ms. Noel asked for the swimming pool at Moylan School will be used.

Ms. Doyle answered that most of the resources available will be used. The school currently has someone who takes care of the pool; also, a physical education teacher who is certified to teach swimming.

Ms. Noel asked if McDonough School will be able to use the pool as well as the older students. Ms. Doyle explained that the staff is working closely with McDonough to lay out the plans, so the pool is an item that will be discussed.

Ms. Miranda asked if both schools will implement the same expeditionary learning model. She asked for McDonough's start schedule.

Mr. McCaskill explained that both schools will start implementation simultaneously during the next school year.

Dr. Adamowski added that there may be some differences because this implementation is a multi-year implementation. It may not be identical, but it will be simultaneous.

Mr. Cotto asked for the plans that are in place to ensure parent participation.

Mr. McCaskill stated that several informational meetings for parents will be held. Also, the design specifications along with information are available on the website. Once parents see the model, they will see that this is a hands-on-model, they will buy it once they see what the model has to offer.

Ms. Noel asked if the positions will be posted.

Mr. McCaskill answered that the positions have been posted. They are available for staff from both schools and there are also opportunities for others. The principal positions for both schools are posted as well.

4. Erdkinder Montessori Magnet School: Development Plan and Progress Update

Mr. John Freeman, Montessori School principal, and Mr. Tim Nee, Assistant Director of Teaching- CREC, started their presentation.

Mr. Freeman stated that the pathway already exists at Annie Fisher; we have primary lower elementary and we just started with upper elementary this year. The pathway also exists at Moylan Montessori, where they have primary only and next year they will be starting with lower elementary.

Overview of the School Model

- *'Child of the Land'*
- Continuation of *Montessori Pathway* in Hartford
- Ages 12-15 (traditionally grades 7-9)
- Mixed Age Groups
- Land Based Experiences
- Pedagogy of Place
- Occupations
- Creative Expression

The Montessori Erdkinder Model

- Based on Adolescent Research and Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy - *From Childhood to Adolescence* by Dr. Maria Montessori
- Hershey Farm School, Huntsburg, Ohio
- AMI Adolescent Orientation Teacher Training
- Future affiliation with AMI and NEASC accreditation

School Mission and Vision

Mission

This school will provide an exemplary public Montessori Erdkinder for a diverse student population that embodies the philosophical tenets of the Montessori pedagogy for adolescents.

Vision

The HPS Montessori Erdkinder vision will include:

- Valorizing experiences that lead to ethical and moral development of the adolescent
- Service-oriented experiences that foster a social consciousness leading to life mission possibilities
- Continued fostering of independence including academic, social and financial autonomy
- Authentic and hands-on land-based work experiences as a means to explore academic subjects and community through trust, collaboration and camaraderie
- Development of 21st Century skills
- Dynamic family/school partnerships
- Economically, racially and ethnically diverse teaching and student populations

Mr. Nee stated that the main ideas came from a brain storming session of the design team when the process started with parents, staff and community members. The ideas collected were embodied in the mission and vision statement and are supported by research based studies.

Research Basis

Based on the work of several noted researchers on adolescent, experiential and outdoor education, as well as the works of Dr. Maria Montessori, the Erdkinder concept has been developed primarily by North

American Montessori Teacher Association (NAMTA), an affiliate of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

This body of research can be summarized by noted scholar Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi who recently addressed the national NAMTA colloquium on Adolescent Education. Stated simply, schools should be addressing three main tasks in preparing adolescents for the future:

1. Allowing for **Autonomy** and **Initiative** leading to **Innovation**
2. Developing **Responsibility** for the planet and humanity
3. Fostering **Collaboration** to develop **Teamwork** and **Community**

A complete listing of the extensive research can be found in Appendix B of the Design Proposal.

Erdkinder Curriculum

Using the concept of **Pedagogy of Place** the integrated curriculum includes outcomes addressing the following domains: Social, Moral, Cognitive, Emotional, Physical and Creative.

District Benefits

- Provide the next phase of the continuum of the Montessori Pathway as described in the HBOE Operations Plan
- Provide a model that reflects current research on Adolescent Learning
- Provide valuable land based experiences for Hartford urban students
- The Montessori Model is a very attractive draw to both urban and suburban families thus continuing an integrated setting at both the middle and high school age level

Next Steps

- Survey current public Montessori families regarding their interest in continuing child in the Montessori Erdkinder Program
- HPS BOE preliminary approved design proposal specs shared with CT SDE
- Share Montessori Erdkinder Design Proposal with a partner district

Mr. Freeman stated that a survey will be conducted at both Fisher and CREC Montessori. The current elementary students and families will be surveyed to get their feedback regarding the next steps.

Mr. Nee stated that CREC already have the upper elementary students who have been aching to move into a middle school program, so the population is already there.

Mr. Freeman explained that another step is to find a site which it is a very important component for this model. Once that is identified, a partnership will be established with that district.

Dr. Adamowski stated that discussions with a suburban district have started. The intent is that the school is co-hosted by Hartford and a suburban district. The farm in Simsbury will be a partner in this model. The magnet aspect will involve the two communities; it will be a continuation of the Montessori. This is a new ground, a school that does not exist in the State.

Ms. Miranda stated that there is a State limitation regarding the development of new magnets. She asked if the Montessori magnet school model has been approved by the State.

Mr. McCaskill answered that this model has a strong support and State approval.

Ms. Miranda asked if other Montessori schools will be visited.

Mr. Freeman answered that there is a limited number of Erdkinder schools in the country. There is one school in Colorado which was visited and the Hershey farm was visited as well.

Ms. Miranda stated that when the model was developed, there was no technology in place. There was no computer, internet, etc. She asked for how the schools that are successful have integrated the technology in their programs.

Mr. Nee explained that many middle school and high school programs are facing the same difficulties on how to make good use of the technology. This is one of the areas that will be explored through the curriculum.

Mr. MacDonald expressed his excitement for the model. He stated that it is a wonderful opportunity for Hartford.

Ms. Noel stated that she has visited the Montessori Magnet School many times. She asked if the staff will have the Montessori training.

Mr. Freeman explained that independent work is fundamental to the curriculum; not exactly separated from the adult, but the ability to work in a group and to work independently from the instructor. The staff will need to have the Montessori training.

Ms. Noel stated that there are many districts that do not have the program, so it will be very attractive for suburban students.

Dr. Adamowski explained that the item will be presented to the Board for their approval and to move forward with the project.

5. Development Plan and Design Specifications for Capital Prep expansion to grades Pre-K through 5, and Capital Prep Innovation School Proposal

Mr. Steve Perry, Capital Prep principal, thanked the Board for the opportunity to introduce the Innovation School model to the Board. He stated that Capital Prep will send 100% of the graduates to four year colleges.

Mr. Perry stated that when Capital Prep school plans were developed, many adjustments were made. The initial plan was for a 7-12 grade school, but even before the school was opened one grade was added and started as a 6-12 grade school.

One of the reasons for this new school design is that around 40% of the sixth graders that come to the school are below grade level. Another reason is the State pressure to increase the school's suburban enrollment.

Overview of the School Model

Major Characteristics of the Capital Preparatory Magnet School:

- An Innovation Pre-K through Grade 12 School
- Focus on Matriculation at College for All Students
- Johns Hopkins & Capital Community College Affiliate
- Social Justice
- Hartford as Classroom

Social Justice Theme

- Students as Agents of Change
- Meaningful Community Interaction
- Infusion of Social Justice into Academic and Service Learning
- Integrated school

Mission and Vision

Mission

The Capital Preparatory Magnet School will motivate students toward a four year college education and a lifelong commitment to justice in society as a result of their participation in the school's 206 day academic calendar. By developing positive self-esteem through an academically challenging and culturally enriched curriculum, the Capital Preparatory Magnet School will meet the students' intellectual and social needs.

Vision

The Capital Preparatory Magnet School aspires to create a community of lifelong learners within a college preparatory environment who will provide society with citizens who work toward social justice. The Capital Preparatory Magnet School staff will provide an educational environment that creates opportunities for all students to realize and fulfill their social, academic, and civic responsibilities.

Curriculum

Cornerstones of curriculum and instruction

- Common Core of Learning as Referenced in the SDE's - *A Blueprint for Continuous Change*
- Common Core State Standards and Frameworks
- Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth
- Project-Based Learning
- Integration of Learner Expectations
- Social Justice Capstone Project
- Health, Wellness and Physical Fitness Program

The CPMS Culture

- High Expectations
- Individualized Education Plans
- Professional Learning Communities
- Professionals as Collaborators (Peer Pairs)
- Year Round Learning
- Wellness Committee

Unique Features

- Early College Experience
- Advisor/Advisee Program
- Self-reflection and Portfolio Development
- Seminar
- Academic Center
- Removal of Psycho/Social Development Barriers

Mr. Perry stated that Capital Prep is one of the top performance schools in the State. The real challenge is to take the children who are in the most dynamic years of their lives and getting them to do something as simple as their homework.

Ms. Noel stated that one of the places that Capital Prep students visit frequently is the Historic Center at the Hartford Public Library (HPL). As a member of the HPL Board, she hears comments from the staff about the kids' enthusiasm that suddenly discover the resources available regarding the history of Hartford and the material available there.

Mr. Perry stated that when Capital Prep started, it was one of the first schools to have blazer uniforms. The founders of the school were West Indians and uniforms were one of their requirements. We work hard to ensure that children understand that there is always someone recognizing them. Students are properly dressed for where they are supposed to be as young people.

Dr. Adamowski provided clarification regarding the talent development model. The program is considered a gifted program. The difference with the Renzulli model is that in the Renzulli model the student is identified earlier by a teacher after CMT results or by his parent, etc.

This model is appropriate for this school because in the magnet lottery you cannot give preference to students who have certain characteristics. The Talent Development Model is a model that seeks to develop talent early on. It is based upon the assumption that every child is going to have at least one area where they are going to excel in terms of talent. It is a very appropriate gifted program for this type of school.

Mr. Perry stated that every child has a gift. We expect that every single child can do something very well and the objective is to find out what that is. This is different from the deficit model which is finding out what the children struggle with and working on that. In the talent development model, their confidence is built based on what they can do and then work with the other things that they struggle with.

Hopkins is a program that has cap scores. The only way to participate in the program is scoring 5%. The children will be exposed to their curriculum. They will have exposure to the gifted and talented experience. The objective is to get as many children to that level as possible.

Ms. Hudson asked for the location of the school.

Dr. Perry explained that the Capital Prep building was an elementary school for 25 years. Part of the goal is to keep the school small. There will be the same number of students which is 740, but the classes will stay small. There will be individualized attention which is essential to their development. The building itself will accommodate that. It is very well suited for the exact need. The primary school students will be in the north wing.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings asked for the elementary school start date.

Mr. Perry stated that the elementary grades will start in July 6 as the rest of the school does. They will go until the second week in August and they will get two weeks off; the same as the upper school. They will return to school and will have two weeks off starting on December 24. This may represent a challenge for some families because they would not typically have that time off, but a number of schedules will have to be aligned; the college schedule, the middle school and the primary school schedule.

Ms. Miranda referred to one of the school features which is the removal of psycho/social development barriers and asked for the support set in place.

Ms. Monique Ethier, teacher at Capital Prep, stated that the school has an advisory model; each support staff member has an advisory team. Each advisor has a group of children throughout the year; it is like a family unit. It is not only the relationship that the advisor has with the students, but also the students with each other. The idea of having the lower school advisory partnering with the upper school advisory is that if a student is there from Pre-K through 12, it will be the same group of students and the same staff members for that entire time, so they are really building a family unit within the same school.

Mr. Perry stated that there are many families that are uncomfortable with calling the school because they do not know who to call. In this model, every family member knows who to call. Also, there are times when the students are sent to their advisor first instead of sending them to the principal's office. The research is very clear. The students need to have a fit, relevance, a relationship. Every child has a relationship with an advisor.

Mr. Rodriguez-Davila congratulated Mr. Perry for the presentation and the successes of the school.

Dr. Adamowski asked Mr. Perry to explain the Innovation School proposal. He stated that Capital Prep is one of the first schools in the "Race to the Top" application.

Mr. Perry stated that the staff was informed of the interest in becoming an innovated school. The staff received the legislation; they read it and made a decision for themselves. 100% of the staff voted in favor to go forward. It clearly aligns of who we are as an academic family. This allows the freedom to be able to respond to the needs of the children by putting the right people in the right positions, to be successful and to look at the curriculum as needed. This also allows identifying individuals who are the best fit for the school, people who want to work year round understanding the extended day experience.

Mr. MacDonald thanked the staff for the presentation.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.