

**HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Minutes**

**Special Meeting – October 29, 2013**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, October 29, 2013. The meeting was held at Constitution Plaza Conference Room, 960 Main Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Poland called the meeting to order at 4:42 p.m. A quorum was present.

<u>Present:</u> Matthew Poland, Chair Lori Hudson, Vice-Chair Robert Cotto, Jr., Secretary Honorable Mayor Pedro Segarra Jose Colon-Rivas Richard Wareing	<u>Absent:</u> Cherita McIntye, Second Vice-Chair Elizabeth Brad Noel Luis Rodríguez-Dávila
Superintendent Christina Kishimoto	

**II. Workshop Session**

**I. Site for Achievement First Hartford Academy II**

Dr. Kishimoto explained that the Achievement First Model in Hartford is a model that the Board has approved for replication; the discussion will be around identifying a potential location for the Achievement First Hartford Academy II.

As a portfolio strategy, Hartford provides multiple choices for all students. The redesign process ensures that schools that are not performing at the proficient level are considered by the Board for potential redesign. The school design process is an important tool for the Board to improve the overall performance of students as well as to response to identified needs of the Hartford community. The goal is to provide high performing schools for every child in Hartford.

**Model Portfolio District**

**7 Components of the Portfolio Strategy**

- High-level options and choices for all families
- School autonomy
- Student-based funding
- Talent Management approach
- Theme-based partnerships
- Performance-based accountability for schools
- Extensive public engagement

Dr. Kishimoto stated that policy 6190 on School Redesign/Repurposing provides clear language about how the redesign/ repurposing of a school occurs. Policy 6190 states: “The Board may take action to direct the Superintendent to plan and implement the redesign or repurposing of any school meeting the criteria above by December 1st of any school year. Such schools shall cease to operate in their current form at the end of that school year, except for the purpose of transition or phase out in those instances where the new school model is initiated incrementally”.

## **School Design**

The school design process is a tool used by the Board of Education to improve the overall performance of students, as well as respond to the identified needs of the Hartford community. The goal is to provide high-performing schools for every child in the City of Hartford.

## **School Redesign/Repurposing Policy**

Per policy as stated by the Hartford Public School Board of Education, "The Board may take action to direct the Superintendent to plan and implement the redesign or repurposing of any school meeting the criteria of performing substantially below the proficient level for two (2) consecutive years without improvement and/or have failed to make adequate yearly progress under the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (20.U.S.C.Sec.6316) for five (5) consecutive years by December 1st of that school year. Such schools shall cease to operate in their current form at the end of that school, except for the purpose of transition or phase out in those instances where the new school model is initiated incrementally. (HBOE Policy 6190)

Mr. McCaskill, Director of School Design & Programming, reported the Process Timeline:

- Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> – Board of Education approves Achievement First model replication
- Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> – Superintendent meets with Principal
- Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> – Superintendent meets with School Governance Council and presents Achievement First as option for John C. Clark Elementary School redesign
- Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup> – Community Outreach Services RFP Released
  - Services will commence immediately upon the selection of a successful bidder and will continue to the end of January, 2014.
  - Ongoing schedule of partnership, elected officials and stakeholder meetings
- Welcome Center staff is also in constant contact with parents
- Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup> and Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup> – HPS holds community meetings at John C. Clark Elementary School and as a result, based on parental input, the following Achievement First informational sessions have been scheduled:
  - Wednesday, October 30 at 8:30 – 9:30 AM
  - Friday, November 1 at 11:45 AM – 12:45 PM
  - Monday, November 4 at 5:30 – 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> – Superintendent makes recommendation to Board of Education
- Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> – Community Input Period
  - The Superintendent will provide the Board a weekly community input report.
- Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> – Board of Education First Reading of Clark Redesign
- Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> – Board of Education Second Reading of Clark Redesign
- Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> – End of Choice process

Mr. McCaskill provided a report with data analysis of John C. Clark, SAND, and Simpson-Waverly Elementary Schools. A copy of the report can be found in the official file for this meeting.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that Clark and SAND meet the school redesign categories as outlined in the policy. Simpson-Waverly is a school with decreasing enrollment. The school is at highest performance level and

continues to raise that achievement. It is not fully enrolled, but the building is fully utilized with a school and a special education program. Simpson-Waverly does not fall as priority in the redesign category.

### **Summary of Clark Analysis**

- Elementary grades at Clark yielded lowest OSI over the past five (5) years
- Clark Elementary has over 200 open seats with declining enrollment
- Clark Elementary has the lowest student attendance rate in the Northeast Neighborhood
- Clark Elementary has the highest student grade retention
- Clark Elementary has the highest chronic absenteeism rate in Hartford

### **Community Assets**

The Village for Families and Children – Lead Community Schools Agency (City of Hartford, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, United Way, Hartford Public Schools)

#### On-Site Services:

- The Village for Families and Children
  - After School Program
  - Family Resource Center
  - Mental Health Services
  - Teen Outreach Program
  - Food Pantry
- Husky Sport – Community Renewal Team – PK
- School Based Health Center - HPS
- United Way
  - Volunteer Readers
  - Women's Council Family Literacy Center
- Girls Scouts
- GForce Martial Arts

#### Off-Site Services

- Hartford Public Library
  - Barbour Library Branch
  - Edgar L. Ropkins Branch
- Salvation Army
- Community Memorial Center
- Parker Memorial Center
- Brighter Futures Family Center at Parker Memorial
- Nelton Court

### **Readiness for Change**

- Improved School Climate
- Slight academic improvements show potential
- Waitlist for Achievement First - 1 seat for every 3 children that apply in North Hartford
- Community Assets
- Nelton Court Redevelopment

### **Rationale for Clark Elementary Location and Achievement First (AF)**

- AF Hartford currently serves North Hartford zones 1 and 2 as their student catchment areas
- AF has a waitlist that is exclusively of North Hartford residents
- AF High School is located in North Hartford and serves as a pathway for current K-8 AF students
- John C. Clark Elementary would benefit from an academic restructuring to advance academic outcomes for students
- AF's record of student achievement

## **Recommendation**

- Per analysis of the three (3) North End schools reviewed, it is recommended that John C. Clark Elementary School be considered for redesign due to:
  - Low school performance
  - Low enrollment (200+ empty seats)
  - Attendance factors
  - Need for improved student performance
- Consideration before Board of Education: Superintendent seeks directive on location of the Achievement First replication at John C. Clark Elementary School

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the recommendation is based on policy of Redesign and Repurposing, also based on data over five years. The Board directive to the Superintendent is to conduct community forums, collect data and respond to questions that the Board has around what is needed for a vote.

Mr. Poland stated that Clark has one of the highest rates for chronic absenteeism.

Mr. Cotto stated that criteria for the policy is at 40% OSI which is the threshold for closing and redesigning a school, however Clark has met and exceeded the 46% OSI.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that looking at OSI and performance gains overtime, there is very little growth. While the school is above that threshold, it is not meeting AYP which is why the Board wrote the policy as one or the other.

Mr. Cotto stated that the bar is being raised; that the policy does not mention a five-year rolling average. He also stated that Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) does not exist anymore, that the State requested a waiver for the No Child Left Behind to eliminate AYP. He raised concerns for how the school is being considered for redesign.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that looking at AYP and OSI is good practice. Clark has OSI that is above 40% in terms of cut score; AYP has not been met for five consecutive years. There is nothing yet approved at the State level that would keep us from looking at NCLB. The school still meets the criteria.

Mr. Cotto stated that there are several other schools that meet the criteria and that have been redesigned in the past. He also stated that the engagement is also a process for redesign, notification to parents and staff and engagement of parents and community in the redesign elements. He raised concerns for the process how this was decided.

Mr. Cotto stated that the school has physical needs that have not been met yet, maybe if these requests were met, the enrollment would have not been so low.

Mayor Segarra stated that the infrastructure is not acceptable, regardless of the model. He asked if capital improvements for the school are dependent of that model.

Mr. Wareing stated that recommendations made by the Ad hoc building committee around the schools, were made without conditions and not dependent of any academic or redesign model. These were recommendations made in terms of how the money is allocated in the schools regardless whether Achievement First takes the school. The commitment is to the physical plan of the school.

Dr. Colon-Rivas recommended providing the parents with ample information about Achievement First.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the scheduling of meetings with Clark parents was set at the request of parents, at a time when parents could attend. Those meetings are still ongoing.

Dr. Colon-Rivas stated that he met with Clark's parents and students and they are very appreciative about the extra curriculum activities they have. He asked for how the Achievement First (AF) model will

merge with the community school model. He asked that AF compromises to provide a curriculum that satisfies the community school concept. He also asked regarding the relationship between AF and the Village for Families and Children and asked whether AF understands the concept of community schools.

Ms. Hudson stated that parents raised concerns regarding the scheduling of the meetings and requested more options regarding timing for those meetings. Parents need to understand why the redesign is being proposed and what the AF model will mean for them. This needs to be communicated strongly to parents.

Mr. Wareing stated that this process will work only if people want this model for their school. He recommended being more aggressive in communicating the process and the model. He added that in order for this model to work, the school community needs to understand and support the model. He also recommended being more engaging with people and work with them. Between now and November 19, Clark community needs to be engaged and they should understand why this is a good idea for them.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that if the Board continues with the process, the work with parents will continue until January. She also stated that the redesign process is always a difficult process. Before bringing it to the Board, we need to have a discussion with community leaders. If the Board adopts the plans, the conversations will continue with parents.

Mr. Poland stated that the Board needs to find a way to approach this issue. Whether is Achievement First or other model, the students at Clark are facing a dark future because the academic achievement is so poor. Students there cannot read or write and if they cannot read or write, they will not be able to survive in society. We need to help the students at Clark. There are many kids who suffer because the Board is not addressing this issue. The Board needs to work to identify a model that will work for Clark. The improvements of the facilities will be great, but that will not help with the problems that these students will face if the Board keeps delaying action. Poor scores, poor achievement and another year will go way without doing anything for these children. Mr. Poland concluded stating that the key on this issue is clarity around what it is needed. We need to do more than just knocking on doors and help the community understand what needs to be done.

## II. Discussion on the replication of Capital Preparatory Magnet School

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the School Choice and Facilities committee had a conversation to consider Capital Preparatory Magnet school as a potential replication model.

Dr. Perry, Capital Prep Principal, provided a brief introduction.

- Capital Preparatory Magnet School is a year-round, college preparatory school with a social justice theme.
- Our students employ authentic applications of social justice strategies to improve our community and apply classroom skills which ensures success in college.
- Pre-K 3 to 12 creates a continuum of education.

### **Performance Data**

- Hartford resident students enter Capital Preparatory with skills equal to or less than their Hartford peers attending magnet and non-magnet schools.
- Through authentic instruction and assessment, students are able to improve skills, ultimately surpassing achievement levels of Hartford residents at non-magnet schools and matching success of Hartford residents at magnet schools.
- Hartford residents attending Capital Prep have decreased the achievement gap between themselves and non-resident students attending magnet schools after continued time in our system.

### **College Academic Experience**

- On average, 60% – 100% of our seniors attend college classes at Capital Community College, University of Hartford and University of Connecticut.
- Capital Prep affords students opportunities to take online college courses through Educere.
- Capital Prep students can enroll in Early College Experience (ECE) courses through the University of Connecticut.
- The average student graduates Capital Prep with 21 college credits or the equivalent of one and a half years of college

Dr. Perry stated that many parents and students have requested to be enrolled in the school. The school has the largest waiting list.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the Board is being asked to consider the replication of Capital Prep. The Board will take action on this at the November 19 meeting.

Mr. Poland stated that if Capital Prep is a solution for all the issues around public education, absenteeism, poverty, low performing, etc.; and if in fact all of these issues were addressed, why does Hartford keeps struggling to maintain schools that are not performing when there are successful schools that can be replicated.

Dr. Perry stated that the model is a design but the execution is the talent. He stated that he is the luckiest person in education with the most talented team. He asked the Board to be granted the opportunity to lead one of the schools. He stated that there is talent in the school and many of them have been invited to work with Dr. Perry's team.

### III. Business Agenda

1. Approval of Negotiations and Agreement between the Hartford Public Schools and the Lincoln Culinary Institute for Weaver Culinary Arts Academy (Supt et al.)

Mr. Wareing moved; Mayor Segarra seconded that the Hartford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to negotiate an agreement between Hartford Public Schools and Lincoln Culinary Institute for housing the Culinary Arts Academy during the construction period at Weaver High School.

Vote:

In favor: Cotto, Hudson, Mayor Segarra, Poland, Wareing

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Colon-Rivas, McIntye, Noel, Rodriguez-Davila

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

### III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.