

HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Public Hearing – April 16, 2013 Draft Minutes

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. The meeting was held at R.J. Kinsella Magnet Schools of Performing Arts, 65 Van Block Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06103.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Poland called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

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

II. Overview of Budget

Dr. Kishimoto provided an overview of the proposed 2013-14 budget. A copy of the presentation can be found in the official file for this meeting.

The budget presented continues to allocate 80% of all general budget revenue to the schools. 5% of the funds are allocated to Central Office; 15% are for centralized services such as special education transportation and buildings and grounds. Central Office and Centralized services make 20% of the budget.

The Budget also incorporates \$4.4 million of targeted alliance district funds that is part of the reform grant proposed by the governor. The proposed budget reflects general budget funds of \$284 million flat from the 2012-13 school year, and a special funds budget of \$130.6 million. The special funds reflect decreases on all Federal grants and most State grants; also includes a \$9.2 million increase of targeted and time-limited Alliance District funds.

Priorities are focused on the Strategic Operating Plan and the District Reform Framework. There are areas of needs that are priority in the budget. One area is English language services and increasing special education continuing services. Other areas are curriculum and assessment, communications and parent engagement.

Ms. Altieri, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed answers to a question previously submitted by Chairman Poland regarding the reduction in Adult Education budget.

The Adult Education Budget went down by \$305,528. The CEE pass-through represents \$269,106 and utilities were reduced by \$61,893 that reflects cost savings. The direct appropriation was increased by \$25,474. The CEE allocations are available to apply for during April. The entities that are confirmed to receive the awards will be known in July.

Ms. Altieri also reviewed the answer submitted by Mr. Wareing regarding the English Language Services budget. The allocation for the ELL budget for 2012-13 was \$6.9 million for direct ELL services.

The allocation for that budget was increased by \$2.9 million, totaling \$9.8 million for 2013-14. \$2.5 is committed from the Alliance funding and the additional \$386,000 from general funds.

III. Public Comments

1. Grey Sheport, Burns SGC member, congratulated the Board and superintendent for the improvements on the overall performance of the District. He also thanked for the support given to Burns over the last two years. He stated that the results are showing through the improvement of the academic performance and culture of the school. He also raised concerns for the reduction of the school budget by \$600,000 from the previous year; and raised concerns for the negative impact that a reduction could have on the performance improvement of the school.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the school was receiving a grant that is now sunset for this year. The District has prioritized Alliance District funds to ensure that the budget for the school stays as whole as possible.

2. Milly Arciniegas, Parent, raised concerns regarding the opening of a new Dual Language Magnet School. She stated that the Latino Academy has already a dual language component. Ms. Arciniegas also raised concerns for the community schools that are being populated by students with needs, while the magnet schools are capped and cannot take more students throughout the year. She also raised concerns for the difference in salaries between family resource providers and spoke regarding an earlier request to have cultural diversity training for teachers.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the Dual Language Magnet School is proposed through the *Sheff* negotiations and the State Department of Education. Hartford was invited to the conversation but that does not mean that it will be a Hartford School.

3. Ana Huertas, Family Support Provided for Burns Latino Studies Academy, spoke on behalf of Ms. Ruth Castro, a parent, and a group of parents from Burns. Comments were made congratulating improvements at Burns and in support of the school principal.
4. Larry Deutsch, City Council member, spoke in support of flat funding due to the City's limited budget. He also recommended balancing the salaries between school employees and eliminating bonuses for future contracts. Mr. Deutsch spoke regarding new construction and school building contracts, and capital improvements. He stated that the City Council will closely monitor requests for capital improvements and bonuses, and also raised concerns for the reduction of the budget for materials and supplies.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that despite the increasing cost of maintaining salaries, Hartford is still not as competitive as other districts that have high capacity. She stated that Hartford contracts have gone up by \$5 million. The District is relying heavily on special funds which are balancing the budget. The staff is going after grants and working with the City to ensure that the City contribution is not increase.

Mayor Segarra asked if the City's Education Committee has taken any position regarding the concerns raised by Councilman Deutsch.

Council Deutsch stated that the Council can raise concerns without going through the Education Committee and formalities, before the budget is approved.

Mr. Poland stated that the Board is aware that Hartford is not the most competitive regarding salaries for all employees. He also stated that there are some schools that have facilities problems that are

catastrophic. Cutting the budget for building improvements in order to increase materials in the classrooms may put students at risk and becomes a safety issue.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.