

Hartford Board of Education
Special Meeting – December 6, 2011

Minutes

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, December 6, 2011. The meeting was held at Weaver High School 415 Granby Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06112.

I. Called to Order

Mr. MacDonald called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Present:</u></p> <p>Mr. David MacDonald, Chair Ms. Sharon Patterson-Stallings, Secretary Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Ms. Ada Miranda Mr. Luis Rodríguez-Dávila Mr. Robert Cotto, Jr.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Absent:</u></p> <p>Ms. Pamela Richmond, Vice Chair Ms. Lori L. Hudson, Second Vice Chair Mr. Israel Flores</p>
Superintendent Christina Kishimoto	

II. Workshop Session:

Dr. Kishimoto stated that the plan of action is being presented. This plan will be submitted to the State for a grant application for a construction project for Weaver High School. She stated that the first step is to complete the plan at the Board level to later submit it to the State. Weaver is an important school in the City and in the History of Hartford Public Schools; there has been two years’ worth of input and based on that input, a team was formed that agreed with the designs. There were also some concerns raised in the process, and the community requested to delay the process for a year, to be able to engage the community further to ensure that the voices of all constituent groups were heard.

Dr. Kishimoto introduced Mr. Lee Hunt, Executive Director of the Blue Hills Civic Association that partnered with the district to engage the community as a leader in the Weaver project.

Mr. Hunt stated that this is a great opportunity to bring back a great school back to the community. There is great excitement and also collaboration with the City of Hartford, the University of Hartford and Hartford Public Schools. He stated that the concerns are around who will come to the school, the curriculum, and how it will be maintained and operated.

A. Weaver High School Recommendations

Mr. De la Paz, Chief Operating Officer, led the presentation. He explained that there are two aspects, one is the construction and the second are the programs.

Mr. De La Paz explained that the original construction took place in 1974, which was also the year when the last major renovation occurred.

- o Year of original construction: 1974
- o Year of last major renovation: 1974
- o Total square footage: 382,250
- o Total site acreage: 28.80

- o Number of general classrooms: 111
- o Building Capacity: 2,125
- o Number of floors: 5

Mr. De La Paz explained that the vision is a Multi-Academy Early College Campus at Weaver High School. He stated that the renovation will open up educational and professional opportunities to the Weaver community; a strong and growing partnership with the University of Hartford creates exciting college-ready options for our students and families

Mr. John Butkus, Program Director for Arcadis/O&G Program Management, explained that the facility is approaching 40 years old with no major work done in its life. This is a facility that seats over 2,000 students that does not comfort with any of the standards. He stated that we need to properly assess the features that the building has and make the most of it; features such as the pool, the field house, and the auditorium are valued assets to the City as a whole as well as to the Weaver community. The efforts involved how to preserve those features and how to better condition the assets as we approach the renovation; but having also in consideration the realities of funding at the City and State level.

The State defines its contribution looking at the number of students per square feet.

Space Standards

Construction Parameters

- The State does not dictate what can and cannot be built, but limits what will be funded;
- Proposals considered preserve existing features while reducing the size of the academic core;
- Creative and multi purpose use of academic spaces will be essential to comply with space standards while retaining features.

Planning Considerations

- Total Grant-Eligible Building Area (1,600 students): **280,000** (square feet)
- Retained Features
 - Pool and Field House 73,000
 - Auditorium 30,000
- Academic Core
 - Proposed for 1,600 Students: 177,000
 - Total Renovated sq ft: **280,000**

Mr. McCaskill, Director of Secondary School, stated that the steering committee was formed from May through September 2011. He thanked the Blue Hill Civic Association and the leadership of Mr. Lee Hunt. He also recognized the important work of the leadership of North Hartford Education Task Force, and the work and commitment of the co-chair of the steering committee, Ms. Precious Ross-Ellis.

The Weaver High School Renovation Steering Committee process

Diverse Membership

- The Blue Hills Civic Association served as the Community Facilitator
- 22 member steering committee consisting of parents from Weaver High and its feeder schools, school personnel, central office personnel, community partners, HBOE board representation

Mr. McCaskill stated that ten meetings took place from May through September; they were very engaging and many things were accomplished.

Discussion Topics

- Grade configuration of academies
- Academy model
- Shared resources
- Appropriate staffing patterns
- Developing pathways to WHS academies

Mr. McCaskill explained that four school programs were considered, however three of them are being proposed:

Culinary Arts

- Legacy redesign school ("Anchor" Weaver Academy)
- Curriculum to be expanded to include Hospitality Services (NAF Academy)
- Target enrollment = 400 students

Architecture & Urban Design

- Desire for a Mathematics/Science academy in the North End
- A non-magnet pathway to the STEM theme
- Technical academy aligned with the University of Hartford's College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture
- Target enrollment = 600 students

Arts and Sciences

- First consensus decision by steering committee
- Decision based on strong response two years ago when Arts & Sciences was a school choice option at WHS
- Replicable model of HMTCA
- Desired academy by community for its focus on Mathematics, Science, and Arts
- Target enrollment = 600 students

Mr. McCaskill stated that a Performing Arts Academy was also considered, but the committee decided not to proceed because it would have been a competing model and a duplicate for the Kinsella program. One of the recommendations from the committee was that the performing arts will be a strong infusion and an embedded piece for the Arts and Sciences program.

Performing Arts

- Though high interest from students, would be a duplicative, competing program
- Hartt School's conservatory approach makes a UH partnership challenging
- Performing Arts will be heavily infused into the Arts and Sciences Academy

Mr. De La Paz stated that the proposed models are programs that have a very strong future attached to them, so students can get excited about their prospects once they graduate and then go to college.

Clear College and Career Pathways exist for these Academies:

Culinary Arts

- Related programs at Central CT State, University of New Haven, Manchester CC, New England Culinary Institute
- 2010 cumulative college enrollment of 460
- Projected job growth rate of 8% according to the BLS (1)

Architecture & Urban Design

- Related programs at UConn, Trinity College, University of Hartford, and Yale
- 2010 cumulative college enrollment of 318
- Projected job growth rate of 14-19% according to the BLS

Arts and Sciences

- Programs at most colleges
- 2010 cumulative college enrollment of over 20K state-wide
- The gateway major to careers in Law, Medicine, Business, and Education

Mr. De La Paz concluded stating that the education and design specifications need to be approved by the Board by February 2012. The capital improvement grant will be proposed by the Mayor on April 16. City Council has to approve the Mayor's budget no later than May 31, and if there are no changes, the grant application will be submitted by June 30, 2012.

A copy of the presentation can be found in the official file of this meeting.

Discussion followed.

Mr. MacDonald asked for the construction project and how will the construction proceed given the student population that is currently at Weaver.

Mr. De La Paz explained that there are several possibilities for temporary space. He explained that a decision is still too premature; one possibility is the space at MLK which is not fully enrolled as it could be and the building will not go under construction until after 2014; another possibility is the Lewis Fox building; and there are also other possibilities for space that will be available as constructions are finalized.

Ms. Noel congratulated the leadership of the steering committee and thanked Ms. Ellis and Mr. McCaskill for the collaborative work with the University of Hartford, with the Blue Hills Association, and others. She explained that four schools were recommended but many more were considered.

Ms. Noel also raised concerns for the financials and stated that the committee recommended a demographic study. She requested that the information from the study is shared with the Board.

Mr. MacDonald asked for the construction options and whether an analysis of the options was performed.

Mr. Butkus stated that a worst case scenario-budget was considered. The original proposal submitted a year ago was at \$150 million; it is now at \$127 million without knowing what themes will be endorsed by the Board, and that number may be brought down to close to \$100 million.

Mr. Cotto shared information from a report from 2005 that states that the Weaver building was built in 1974, and was not in the best condition but it was closed to it. He asked for what happened with the

facility since 2005. The report also states that the estimated cost for the renovation was \$90 million then, but it is now at approximately \$130 million.

Mr. De La Paz stated that he was not sure of what was proposed in that \$90 million project, whether it referred to mechanical systems and structure, or the condition of the roof that started to leak since then, and many other things that have happened to the facility. This can be explained by looking at that proposal and comparing it with the current proposal.

Mr. Cotto stated that the enrollment has declined over the last ten years; he asked for the enrollment projection and where it comes from.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that there are a couple of things that we are trying to accomplish; one is to ensure that we have a great high school option in the North End of town. The other piece is that we have a decrease of dropouts and an increase of retention of students in terms of progressing into high school and staying in high school. Data from an analysis performed three or four years ago shows that there is a group of 400 to 500 students who are accumulating credits at the high school level that are not dropping out and that are not being delayed. There is also a group of students that are not opting out to choices outside of Hartford. We need to remain competitive or make a decision that as a district we are going to decrease our enrollment overall.

As the work with the State Department of Education continues, which is aggressively moving forward in increasing open choice seats out of Hartford, we have requested that an equal number of seats is available to students in Hartford to bring students from the suburbs into Hartford, because there is not a request by this Board to decrease in size. We have the need to be competitive to keep our students and also meet the educational needs of the students in Hartford.

Mr. Cotto stated that there is a shift in enrollment and there are a number of factors involved. A demographic study will make possible to understand the enrollment projections given those different factors. He stated that we do have the need for a revitalized Weaver, and that he would like to ensure that the community understands that there is a decrease in enrollment due to several factors involved.

Mr. Cotto raised his concerns for over promising in terms of school development. He recommended being very clear and strategic about moving forward and putting resources for high school seats.

Dr. Kishimoto concurred with Mr. Cotto. The data from the demographic study needs to be analyzed and the school development plan needs to be revisited. We are at the end of the five year plan and there are some additional projects that were not completed. She stated that we are in agreement with the City that if there is a shift in enrollment, we need to look at the way in which the City is divided so we can have fully enrolled schools.

Mr. MacDonald thanked for the presentation.

Mr. MacDonald accepted a motion from Ms. Miranda to enter into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Ms. Patterson-Stallings seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

III. Executive Session (Superintendent's Evaluation Framework)

The Board entered into executive session at 7:14 p.m. A quorum was present.

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

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.