

AGENDA

ITEM # 21

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**Hartford Board of Education
Special Meeting – Tuesday, January 11, 2011
Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street, Hartford**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call and Call to Order

5:54 p.m. Ms. Miranda called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

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

II. Business Agenda

1. Resolution: Appointment of Superintendent's Search Committee members (The Board)

The Hartford Board of Education appoints the following individuals to serve on the Superintendent's Search Committee:

1. Ada M. Miranda, Chair
2. David MacDonald, First Vice Chair
3. Pamela M. Richmond, Second Vice Chair
4. Lori L. Hudson, Secretary
5. Israel Flores, Board Member
6. Sharon Patterson Stallings, Board Member
7. Luis Rodríguez-Dávila, Board Member
8. Robert Cotto, Board Member
9. Elizabeth Michaelis, Administrator
10. Vivian Rivera-Jeffery, Teacher
11. George Philip Waldeck, Jr., Community Member
12. Lillian Arciniegas, Parent

13. An additional member of the Hartford community who is a parent residing in Hartford with a child/children currently attending Hartford Public Schools.

Mr. Flores made a motion; Ms. Richmond seconded the motion. Mr. Rodriguez-Davila opposed.

Ms. Miranda explained that this item was tabled from the last regular meeting. She explained that there was confusion regarding the search committee due to the way it was listed. According to the policy, the Search committee is composed of all the members of the Board and four additional members totaling twelve members. Due to comments raised at the last Board meeting, one more parent will be added and there will be thirteen members.

Mr. Rodriguez-Davila stated that members who are HPS employees cannot be part of this committee due to conflict of interest. Ms Rivera-Jeffery is a teacher in a school that Dr. Kishimoto supervises and that could be a conflict on interest. Ms. Michaelis is also an administrator and that could be conflict of interest.

Ms. Richmond stated that the Board needs to rely in the integrity of the team members and depend upon everyone's ability to be objective. It is ok to utilize people from within our system because they are the ones who deal with our management and day to day operations. It is critical to have that component as part of the process.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings concurred with Ms. Richmond. She added that the policy calls for a teacher and an administrator. We should not go back to the beginning. This policy was developed in early 2010 and finalized in late 2010. We can not stop the process now. The search committee is in place and the Board should move forward.

Mr. Flores concurred with Ms. Richmond and Ms. Patterson-Stallings. He also added that the Board's Core, Belief and Commitments call for exceptional teachers in the classrooms and for exceptional administrators in the schools. Ms. Rivera-Jeffery and Ms. Michaelis are good examples of that and it is critical to have them in the search committee.

The motion passed by voice vote.

III. Workshop Session

Superintendent Adamowski and Ms. Miranda welcome the audience and the presenters, Professor Dr. Paul Hill and Ms. Yalsko from the Center for Reinventing Public Education.

- A. The Hartford Case Study – Paul Hill and Sarah Yatsko, The Center for Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington

A Different Vision of the School District

Traditional School Districts:

Schools as permanent investments
"One bed system" of schooling
Government as sole provider

Portfolio School Districts:

Schools as contingent on performance
Differentiated system of schools
Diverse groups provide schools

Dr. Hill explained that portfolio school districts open promising new schools, close low performing schools and make these decisions using high quality data. Hartford is one of a growing number of districts that are making use of this strategy. Center on Reinventing Public Education is studying 7 Portfolio Districts.

Six Elements of a Portfolio District

- Autonomy: Decisions made at school level
- Funding: Money follows the student
- Choice: Parents, students vote with feet
- Accountability: Poor performing schools closed
- Talent: New sources, types sought out
- Support: Provided by external entities

Dr. Hill explained that the reform under Dr. Adamowski has long been described as a portfolio district strategy. What Hartford is doing with regard to each, and compare to what other districts are doing.

Learning about Hartford

- Visits:
 - Spring and Fall 2010
- 16 interviews including:
 - District administrative staff
 - School board members
 - School principals
 - Invested community members
 - Critics
- Reviewed:
 - District reports and data
 - Media coverage

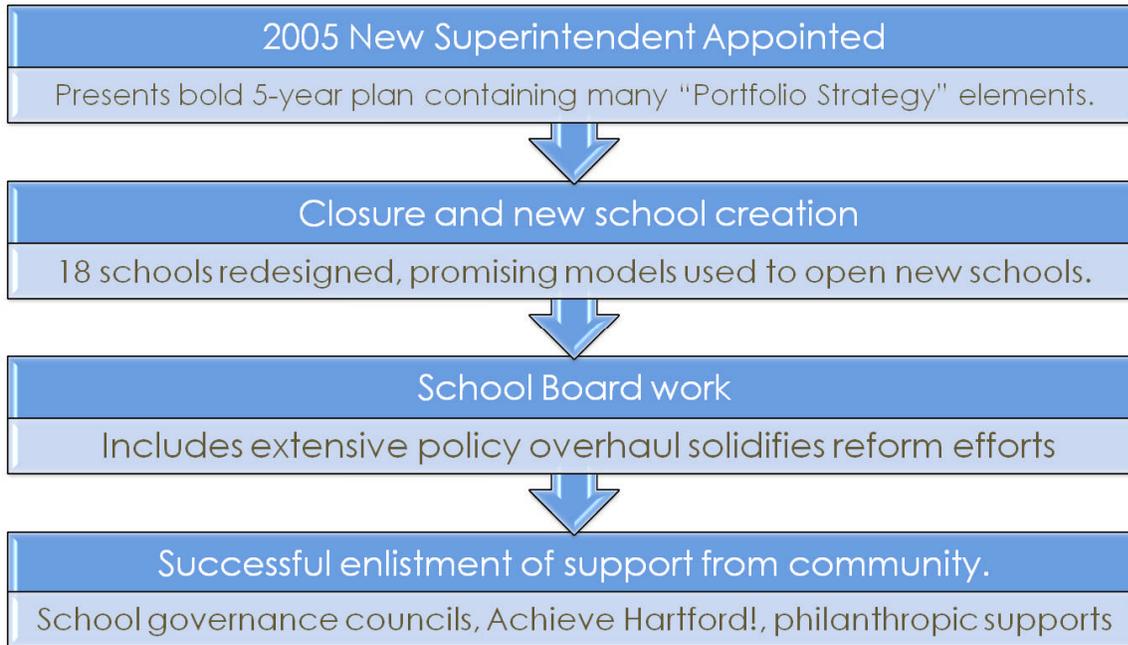
Ms. Yastko stated that she was impressed by the complete access given to them inside and outside the district.

Overall Impression

- Bold steps, remarkable progress toward Portfolio Strategy
 - Reforms have elicited national attention
 - Efforts can serve as a model for how smaller districts undertake this reform.

- More to learn from other districts who have taken steps Hartford has not.

Progression of Reform Strategy



Ms. Yatsko stated that to date, the data on performance is highly promising with a three year trend and strong gains. The reform under Dr. Adamowski has long been described as a portfolio strategy. Hartford is gaining National attention.

Portfolio Autonomy

- HPS rewards high performance with full autonomy (budget, hiring, curriculum)
- Low performing schools lose autonomy (if they ever had it)
- Exception is new schools which are granted full autonomy when opened and is theirs to lose.

Portfolio Funding

- Student Based Budgeting
 - Money follows student
 - Schools that fail to attract students will lose funding
- Implementation challenges
 - Difficult for principals
 - Early student count glitches

Portfolio Choice

- NEW District wide choice:
 - Students within quadrants given priority
- Pre-existing choice from Sheff vs. O'Neil
 - Magnet Schools
 - Intra-district choice
- Impact?
 - Only minimal evidence that parents/students voting with their feet

Portfolio Accountability

- “The Matrix”:
 - All district schools placed on a grid in order of performance.
- Impact:
 - Schools, staff and increasingly, parents know where they fall and that two years at the bottom will result in closure.
- Intervention and Closure:
 - Transparent closure that includes year ramp up to redesign.

ELSEWHERE

- Multiple factors considered when closing a school, from achievement data to school inspection reports.
- Increasingly, school closing process is formalized, out in the open for as much as a year.

The intervention specialist from the district works with schools that fail to perform for two years in the row. This person works with the school on site and is given the authority to make small or sweeping changes to the school. If this intervention fails, the school is closed.

Portfolio Talent

- Local barriers:
 - State teacher certification requirements limit how creative district can be when recruiting.
- Heavy focus on training:
 - Successful but potentially undermined by seniority preferences and “bumping”.

Portfolio Support

- District driven:
 - HPS provides majority of support to schools.
 - Almost no reliance on outside providers.
- Community Schools:

- Model where a local non-profit provides mostly non-academic support

Strengths and Supports for HPS' Portfolio Strategy

- Strong achievement data
- Community support
- A Board committed to sustaining current reform momentum.
- Principals and teachers who report feeling excited, supported and energized by reform
- Positive state-wide and national attention
- Achieve Hartford!

Barriers to a Portfolio Strategy in Hartford and Connecticut

- Imminent turnover and succession challenges – Superintendent, Mayor, Board members.
- School board support split in some areas of reform
- High levels of parent satisfaction in struggling schools
- Helpful change in charter school law lacked accompanying funding legislation.
- Stringent teacher and principal certification requirements
- Lack of outside organizations to supplement district's school support.
- Challenging union negotiations around key portfolio facets, including school based seniority.

Dr. Hill started discussion with members of the public.

II. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.