

**AGENDA**

**ITEM # 16**

**Hartford Board of Education  
Special Meeting – Wednesday, March 2, 2011  
Hartford Public High School, 55 Forest Street**

**MINUTES**

**I. Roll Call and Call to Order**

5:35 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. Sharon Patterson-Stallings, Secretary Ms. Elizabeth Brad Noel Ms. Ada Miranda	<u>Absent:</u> Mr. Israel Flores Ms. Lori L. Hudson, Second Vice Chair Mr. Luis Rodríguez-Dávila Mr. Robert Cotto, Jr.
Superintendent Steven Adamowski	

Mr. MacDonald opened the meeting with an opening statement.

**I. Executive Session (Personnel Matters)**

Mr. McDonald accepted a motion from Ms. Miranda to enter into Executive Session; Ms. Richmond 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 6:23 p.m.

**II. Business Agenda**

1. Appointment of Hartford Public Schools Superintendent (The Board)

The Superintendent Search Committee has identified a candidate for the position of Superintendent of Schools. Connecticut General Statute Section 10-157 authorizes the Board of Education to elect a Superintendent of Schools by a majority vote of all members. The statute also directs that the Board enter into an employment contract with the Superintendent of Schools for a term of no more than three years.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Hartford Board of Education, after receiving the recommendation of the Superintendent Search Committee, hereby elects Dr. Christina Kishimoto to the office of Hartford Superintendent of Schools pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statute Section 10-157, and that the Board further authorizes the Board Chairman to negotiate and execute an employment agreement with the new Superintendent of Schools on behalf of the Board, to include a beginning date and term of office.

Mr. MacDonald provided a statement: "it is with great enthusiasm that the Hartford Board of Education considers Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, the candidate recommended by the Superintendent Search Committee, as the next Superintendent of Schools for our 21,000 students and families attending Hartford Public Schools.

The selection of the superintendent is one of the single most important decisions that the Hartford Board of Education will make over the next few years. Therefore, the Board appreciates the contributions of our students, parents, community members and staff in helping to define the essential qualities of our next superintendent. Mr. MacDonald thanked Achieve Hartford! for kicking off the process with community input sessions and providing transparent reporting throughout the search. Finally, we appreciate the time and attention devoted to the process by the Superintendent Search Committee, a knowledgeable and diverse group backed by the expertise of Dr. Jacquie Jacoby as the facilitator of the process through CABC, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

Dr. Christina Kishimoto's extensive successful experience, both as an administrator and a thoughtful and effective educational leader behind major changes and improvement in policy, curriculum design, data analysis and accountability, new school designs and school choice work was noteworthy; this, combined with three consecutive years of achievement growth for students were essential elements for the next superintendent recognized by the 13-member Committee who interviewed her.

Key stakeholders who interacted with Dr. Kishimoto have provided a strong testimonial tapestry about her proven skills and knowledge. For example, they said that she has approached the monumental task of school redesign with confidence and humility for she recognizes her duty and trust to educate all children so they can reach their full potential. She epitomizes this deeply held belief and devotes innumerable hours and talents, and proved she is a dedicated champion of the students in Hartford Public Schools.

Ramani Ayer, member of the CT Commission for Educational Achievement 2010, has firsthand understanding of Dr. Kishimoto's work and shared, "She supervised a portfolio of 25 daunting and challenging schools ranging from elementary through high school and the strategies undertaken corresponded with some of the best thinking we observed in some of the leading states. Dr. Kishimoto was a key figure in the creation of this strategic architecture adopted by the system and she can stay the course...to make a dramatic difference in student achievement".

Walter Harrison, President of the University of Hartford said, "I believe that Christina Kishimoto is the person to sustain the process begun and surpass it for she has the intellect to understand the complexity and the character and quality of mind to make the tough decisions and stand by them". The Board is also impressed with her critical thinking about the reform process and will continue to identify areas which may need closer attention. Her strength and knowledge of finance and grant acquisition was noted by the Board.

Additionally, she has committed to strengthening relationship building with Mayor Pedro Segarra and all constituent groups as a critical element of moving the reform process forward and to higher levels of student achievement."

**Ms. Richmond made a motion to move the item; Mr. Flores seconded the motion.**

Mr. Rodríguez-Dávila expressed his concerns for the absence of consensus among legislators and City council members regarding the selection process. He stated that Dr. Kishimoto is entering the superintendence position in one unnecessary way. No one has a question regarding Dr. Kishimoto's credentials, but there are questions around the process. He stated that change always brings resistance and the most effective way to deal with resistance is consensus. He advised Dr. Kishimoto to start looking for that consensus and wished her good luck.

Mr. Cotto recommended reconsidering some of the issues that have been going on for the last few years; issues including listening to parents, supporting educators and people who work in the schools; and transparency regarding the data that is being reported. He expressed his support for Dr. Kishimoto and congratulated her for the nomination.

Ms. Noel stated that the process started in April and she did not only support an internal search, but also an external search. If an external search would have been conducted, there may have raised less questions and concerns. Ms. Noel explained that she recused from the process because a family member was a candidate. She abstained from voting for that reason and because she did not participate in the selection process.

Ms. Miranda expressed her support for Dr. Kishimoto. She stated that the Board is not only voting for Dr. Kishimoto's appointment, but also for the future of the students and the entire school community.

Ms. Hudson stated as a new Board member, she received training about reform and learned about the gains that the District is achieving. She also learned about the importance of sustainability. One of the charges of the current superintendent was to develop talent within to ensure sustainability. The community is tired of the absence of continuity and new people coming and leaving, changing everything in the system and starting again. The policy was developed with that in mind and the process started with an internal search. The search committee followed the process with integrity and the best candidate was found.

Ms. Richmond stated that the superintendent search process was collectively designed, was publicly shared and the community was involved in every step of the process. The Board was very public in everything that was done. Unfortunately we had a small slate, but there are some people who are associated with the school system that should be held accountable for scaring people away. Dr. Kishimoto has what it takes to take us further than we have already done, and she has been an important part in a number of the successes that this district has achieve under the leadership of Dr. Adamowski.

Mr. MacDonald expressed his support for Dr. Kishimoto. This has been a very intensive process and has required a lot of hours and dedicated work. He thanked the Board for their involvement in the process. He also thanked Ms. Miranda for her leadership throughout the selection process.

Ms. Patterson-Stallings concurred with Ms. Richmond and Ms. Hudson. She expressed her support for Dr. Kishimoto.

Mr. Flores stated that he participated in the selection process for Dr. Adamowski and has witnessed his accomplishments. He expressed his contentment for being participant in the selection process for Dr. Kishimoto. Dr. Kishimoto has the strength to bring the school forward.

Mr. Richmond recognized the work and participation of the parent group and community stakeholders who participated during the selection process by providing their feedback.

Ballots were distributed. Ms. Dorfman collected the ballots and read the results.

**The motion passed by six votes. Ms. Noel abstained. Mr. Cotto and Mr. Rodriguez-Davila opposed.**

Dr. Christina Kishimoto provided a statement. She thanked the Board and the community for the privilege and opportunity given to continue moving the reform forward to its ultimate goal of closing the achievement gap. "This is an enormous task, but it is one in which we must stay the course because every student and parent in this city is putting their trust in us to deliver on educational quality.

We must come together across constituent groups as thought-leaders to make this district a state-wide and national model of excellence. With the help and collaboration of parents, teachers, administrators, corporate and philanthropic partners and our city and state governments, I expect to live up to your faith in me.

Five years ago, Hartford Public Schools faced skepticism; we prevailed. And today we have much to be proud of in our schools.

Under the leadership of this Board and Superintendent Steven Adamowski, with the leadership of parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders, we accepted the challenge of redesigning our district into an all-choice system of high performing schools. We adopted the fundamental belief that we could raise student learning expectations, prepare all students for college and compete with any district in this state. Dr. Kishimoto highlighted a few accomplishments:

- 22 new school models implemented;
- High School, Inc - partnership with the Travelers for students interested in business, banking and finance;
- HPHS Nursing Academy - partnership with UConn School of Nursing for students interested in the medical field;
- Achievement First - successful charter school into our city;
- STEM elementary - first K-12 STEM continuum in the State introducing our youngest elementary aged students to science and engineering;
- Gifted and Talented Academy to meet the intellectual needs of our students who "ace" the CMTs.

In addition:

Cohort graduation rates - from a 29 percent low to more than 50 percent  
CMT and CAPT scores have increased for 3 consecutive years

State and National Recognition:

- HPS reform has been studied by ConnCan – think tank.
- HPS was named by Arne Duncan as a national model of urban school reform – a model that other districts are now borrowing from.
- HPS has been the subject of a book on school reform published by Harvard University Press.
- Center for Reinventing Public Education counts Hartford among only 16 portfolio districts nationally.

This is an incredible legacy; the Board has much to be proud of. Our teachers and students have much to be proud of. This community has much to be proud of.

Although a strong foundation for school reform has been laid over the past five years, there is much work still to be done; the reality is that we are just getting started.

Dr. Kishimoto stated that her charge as Superintendent is to close the achievement gap. Her vision for the Hartford Public Schools is that we become the State Capital's model district. This can be accomplished by ensuring that every school in our City is successful. Every student in our district needs to walk into school each and every morning knowing that they will be engaged as learners in a way that captivates their intellect and curiosities.

Students must graduate from our school system prepared to answer "Who Do I Choose To Be." This requires a wealth of positive experiences with the people and society around them. Those experiences are our collective responsibilities as parents, educators, leaders, citizens and community friends.

We might not always be in agreement, but we can agree to work as a collaborative community focused always on student achievement. Our focus must remain on our students and their high academic achievement and college readiness. I believe that we will agree that student achievement will not be turned around by one leader, nor one individual. It takes a dedicated team and a dedicated community working together to create a successful school system where all children are ready for high school and all high school students have the skills and preparation to enter and succeed in college.

I want every student's experience at Hartford Public Schools to be one that opens the world to them; I want our graduates to be leaders in every field, across our country and in global markets. As the leader of this district, I promise to lead with integrity and to commit myself to working collaboratively placing Hartford's children and youth at the forefront of every decision.

Over the next few months, I will be meeting with a variety of constituent groups and individuals to get input on where we are and where we need to go as we prepare the next three-year strategic operating plan. We have some significant issues that need to be addressed in the next SOP:

- Middle school curriculum & design for 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade within our K-8 model
- Accountability measures for high schools including PSAT, SAT, AP and course completion results
- Hartford Compact in partnership with local universities that guarantees tuition for students with a B average or above and excellent attendance

- Infusion of the Betances PK-3 early reading success guarantee into all of our elementary schools
- Student leadership development formalizing student voice in our reform work

We will remain focused and sustain our reform, particularly during these next few financially difficult years. We will pause and reflect on lessons learned. We will collectively be unstoppable in creating a great public urban school system where our students accomplish more in their lives than even we can currently imagine.”

Dr. Kishimoto thanked Dr. Adamowski, David MacDonald and the Board Members, Mayor Segarra, Ada Miranda, the search committee, Jackie Jacoby and her office team. She introduced her parents, husband, daughter and other relatives.

### **III. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.