

HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – November 17, 2015

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, November 17, 2015. The meeting was held at L.W. Batchelder Elementary School, 757 New Britain Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut, 06106.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**

Mr. Wareing called the meeting to order at 5:44p.m. There was a quorum present.

<u>Present:</u> Richard Wareing, Chair Jose Colon-Rivas, Vice-Chair Beth Taylor, Second Vice-Chair Craig Stallings, Secretary Shelley D. Best Michael Brescia Robert Cotto, Jr.	<u>Absent:</u> Honorable Mayor Pedro Segarra Matthew Poland
Superintendent Beth Schiavino-Narvaez	
	Student Representative T.J. Noel-Sullivan

III. Public Participation

1. Ingrid Roche, parent at MD Fox School, spoke in favor of the new principal Ms. Corbett, and is excited about the new school year.
2. Deirdre Harwood, parent, spoke on Tim Goodwin, Principal of Weaver Culinary Academy, and feeling that he is causing harm to students by suspending them unnecessarily.
3. Jamilah Artis, parent, also spoke on being disappointed on the leadership of Mr. Goodwin.
4. Samantha Pacheco and Shawn Jackson spoke on SAND School, and there being no support from administration, and no answers in regards to the PTO and the elections.
5. Tynima Toney, parent at Milner School, spoke on City Connects and the parents not knowing what the program is, to determine what is best for their children. Parents have a right to know what is being brought into schools.
6. Beayanka Pinckney, Hartford Parent University and coordinator of the No Child Held Back program also spoke on City Connects, and that they were not involved in the process on that program being brought in.
7. Petra Mulero spoke on SAND school, and the sticker incident. She stated the parents felt disrespected. She also spoke on City Connects, and they are doing the same thing that their organization, No Child Held Back, is doing, and they have experience that City Connects does not have.

8. LaShawn Robinson, also spoke on City Connects, and that No Child Held Back is doing the same thing and better. She also spoke on the paraprofessionals, and her feeling they need better training.
9. Levey Kardulis spoke on the Sheff ruling, and that it causes segregation, and for SAND to put stickers on children and make an experiment out of it was disrespectful. He feels there needs to be a pink slip over this incident. He also spoke on the air quality and feeling they are better in magnet schools than neighborhood schools. Lastly he spoke on the Turkey Game and not knowing where it will be held, he feels it should be held at Dillon Stadium.
10. Sharon Douglas spoke on being an ABA Para at Rawson, and pleaded to be listened to. She then, along with Jackie Aviles, co-president of the Para union, gave her time to Shellye Davis, who spoke on the ABA program, especially at Rawson. The Special Education director moved ABA paras out of their positions, and placed them elsewhere; and placed other of paras in their stead, with no training. This has resulted in injuries and chaos. She feels it is an unsafe environment, and they will continue to speak up about it.
11. Tracey Carter, paraprofessional, also spoke on the ABA Paras.
12. Lee Hunt, who signed up to speak, had to leave, and Nicole Porter read a statement on his behalf. They are both with the Blue Hills Civic Association, and want to make sure Weaver is a comprehensive high school when it re-opens. Also, the need to look at all schools that feed into Weaver, and to that end they have launched a network to reach out to all north end agencies.
13. Lourdes Fonseca, from Blue Hills Civic Association, spoke on launching a parent education institute for parents of north Hartford.
14. John Tucker, Hartford resident and former Hartford teacher, came to share two recommendations from his nonprofit, "Educators for Excellence". They spoke to over 150 educators, and the result was the need for support for English Language Learners. Also for the School Governance Councils to increase transparency and publish their meeting minutes.
15. Victor Cristofaro, Hartford Federation of Principals and Supervisors Association, spoke on the sticker incident at SAND School, and that they were also shocked that this happened. He questioned what long term effect this will have on those children. He's also concerned over retaliation over people who did speak out against it as it was happening.
16. Milly Arciniegas, Executive Director of Hartford Parent University, spoke on parents being equal partners when making decisions for their children. She feels that Hartford Public Schools is continuing to exclude parents, and we need to tackle institutional racism.
17. Michael Downes, president of the Federation of Substitute Teachers, spoke on Clark and Weaver. He feels the indication in the neighborhood is to close that school. They will be watching Weaver closely, to make sure it re opens as a quality institution. He also feels we should sever our relationship with the law firm Shipman and Goodwin.

IV. Reports

1. Report of the Chair – no report
2. Report of the Superintendent

The Superintendent started out by addressing the SAND situation, stressing this is not a practice we condone at the Hartford Public Schools and issued a full apology.

Dr. Narvaez continued by speaking on Veteran's Day, and that the Board of Education voted to reinstitute the Holiday to honor this most important day.

Good work shout outs were next, and Dr. Narvaez honored School Security Officer Victor Rodriguez, who was invited to speak at the Office of the Secretary of the State for the State of Connecticut last month for Hispanic Heritage Month for the work that he has done in the community and our schools.

She continued with a transfer/Choice report, stating enrollment has changed from 21,405 to 21,018 students between October 2014 and October 2015, representing a net loss of 387 students.

She spoke on Hartford Public Schools being awarded planning and implementation grants to increase the representation of Black and Latino educators from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Finally she invited all to the Family Friendly Schools Community Launch on December 5th and spoke on the Boundless Partnership between Hartford Public Schools and Hartford Public Library.

3. Committee Reports

- Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. Stallings reported that the committee met and discussed the negotiations on the new Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield contract, since the City of Hartford elected to separate and go with Cigna; we now need to have our own health insurance contract. The committee also reviewed the preliminary enrollment numbers.

- Parent and Community Engagement Committee

Dr. Best reported that the committee met on strategizing a plan for family friendly schools, and invited all to attend the Family Friendly Schools Forum on Saturday, December 5th, being held at Hartford Public High School.

- Policy Committee

Dr. Taylor reported that the committee met on continuing policy updates.

- School Choice and Facilities Committee

Dr. Colon-Rivas reported that the committee met on drafting a new school choice policy.

V. Business Agenda

A. Items in Order of Importance

1. Approval of Academic Programming: Weaver High School (Supt et al.)

In 2012, the Weaver High School Renovation Steering Committee, the North Hartford Education Task Force, and the Blue Hills Civic Association recommended that when reopening Weaver High School, it encompass multiple academic themes: Hospitality and Tourism (formally Academy of Culinary Arts); Arts and Sciences; and Architecture and Urban Design.

However, after reevaluating the needs of the students and community in 2014, the Hartford Public Schools Administration is recommending the following changes: An expansion to the Arts and Sciences theme to include Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM); and that Architecture and Urban Design is replaced with High School Inc., Business, Finance and Insurance Academy.

This newly designed community high school will provide students the opportunity to enroll in challenging academic courses on and off campus, as well as participate in extracurricular activities and meaningful clubs.

Mr. Wareing made a motion; and Mr. Stallings seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education approve a change in academic programming at Weaver High School from the Academy of Arts and Sciences to the Science Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Academy (STEAM Academy) and from the Academy of Architecture and Urban Design to the High School Inc. Business, Finance and Insurance School.

Nicole Porter, from the Blue Hills Civic Association (BHCA), spoke in support of the item, and on the power of the community in making this happen. Trust is an ongoing issue, and will continually be addressed. She wants to make sure the BHCA continues to be an active partner and continue the good work.

Mr. Stallings asked how long the process will take to integrate the academies into one Weaver High School.

Dr. Narvaez answered we are not sure, we're not there yet.

VOTE

In favor: Wareing, Colon-Rivas, Taylor, Stallings, Best, Cotto

Opposed: Brescia

Abstained: 0

Absent: Poland, Mayor Segarra

The motion passed by voice vote.

2. Second Reading and Adoption: Various Hartford Public Schools Policies (Policy Committee)

That the Hartford Board of Education accepts the second reading and adopts the following policies:

- a. Policy 5136 - Smoking
- b. Policy 5151 - Student Health Services
- c. Policy 5153 - Health Assessments & Immunizations

VOTE

In favor: Wareing, Colon-Rivas, Taylor, Stallings, Best, Brescia, Cotto

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Poland, Mayor Segarra

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.