

HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – March 21, 2017

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, March 21, 2017. The meeting was held at the M.D. Fox Elementary School, 470 Maple Avenue, Hartford, CT 06114.

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

Mr. Wareing called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. There was a quorum present.

<u>Present:</u> Richard Wareing, Chair Tiffany Glanville, Vice-Chair Craig Stallings, Secretary Robert Cotto, Jr. Julio Flores Juan M. Hernandez Kimberly D. Oliver Karen T. Taylor Michael Brescia	<u>Absent:</u>
Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez	
Student Representative, Alexa Marotta Student Representative, Giovanni Jones	

III. Public Participation

1. Milagros Vega, mother and grandmother, spoke on the lack of special education services in the district, and the need to go out of district to learn. Our kids have the potential to be and do great things. She thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for visiting her neighborhood and attending their meeting.
2. Luis Delgado, parent, came to speak about several incidents that he feels are unresolved, such as the S.A.N.D. sticker incident, New Visions, and the budget for Bulkeley. He also came to support Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for superintendent.
3. Ingrid Roche, came to support Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for superintendent.
4. Natalie Langlaise, parent, stated she was disappointed to read the article about the covert meeting with the Mayor and several BOE members where another candidate was considered, when we had established a search committee. Without their knowledge, another candidate was considered, after the committee had presented the 2 finalists. This goes to the issue of transparency, honesty, clarity and building of trust.
5. Jaavann Starks, Hartford student who recently graduated from Trinity, came to speak in support of Timothy Sullivan for superintendent. He spoke on making sure our kids know there is more than just sports for the students to go to college.

6. Abraham Fattouh, president of the Hartford City Wide Student Senate, spoke on engaging youth, and a program called Herbs of Vision. Spoke on the students and parents feeling their investment being taken for granted, they need to feel a sense of trust and feel empowered.
7. Raquel Calderon, asked the board to vote with a conscience on the new chairman. It should be someone that holds the values of the community and works as a team, not solo.
8. Oscar Padua, administrator at New Visions, came to speak on appropriate funding for New Visions. A report found the building inadequate for students and staff. He hopes that the new superintendent will pass a budget with the neediest students and equity in mind, equity.
9. Samantha Pacheco, parent, spoke on coming to board meetings for a long time, thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for making her feel that her kids are going to be safe.
10. Tynima Toney, parent, also thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez, for making her feel that she and other parents matter.
11. Deborah Braswell, thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for doing an incredible job so far. She also came to speak on her granddaughter needing a safety transfer. There was an incident at the school and she stated the injury was not documented correctly.
12. Andrea Johnson, president of the Hartford Federation of Teachers, spoke on the Hartford Courant article series "Left Behind" on the Sheff vs. O'Neill case. She honed in on comments made by the Milner Principal, where she was quoted as telling a teacher that she "didn't want to hear about copiers" after apparently they broke down. Ms. Johnson said a copier can be a teacher's best friend when there are not enough books. She questioned where our moral compass was?
13. Monica Brase, former educator in Hartford Public Schools, and resident, spoke in support of Tim Sullivan for superintendent. She stated he believed in all Hartford youth, of all races and sexual orientation. She stated that he is a white male, but is not afraid to have any conversation with anyone.
14. Milly Arciniegas, Hartford Parent University and resident of Hartford, thanked Dr. Torres for having the leadership, courage and honesty to move this district forward. It is harder when you have to navigate through political issues that serve no one, this is about the kids. She has a forum scheduled, and asked that the candidates be allowed to participate.
15. Deborah Horton-Bigelow, Hartford resident, and Program Coordinator for Hartford Parent University, thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez for coming to Hartford Parent coalition meeting.
16. Tracy Carter, paraprofessional, spoke on room 210 at HPHS, and the room being filthy. She stated there are rooms on the other side of the building that they could use.
17. Caitlin Bexley, theme coach at Wish School, came to speak on Hartford Performs, and advocated for them in the budget. She stressed the wonderful work they do at their school.
18. David Epstein, spoke in support of Tim Sullivan for superintendent. He feels that Mr. Sullivan is a visionary leader. He taught under him, and flourished, after starting out, in his words, as a mediocre teacher. He credits Mr. Sullivan for leading the school to one of the best in the country.
19. Rie Poirier-Campbell, Executive Director of Hartford Performs, spoke on arts making such a big difference in the education of our students. She also advocated for Hartford Performs in next year's budget.

20. Stacy Ann-Barrett, Hartford school bus driver, spoke against Specialty transportation. There is now a formal complaint against them, regarding discriminatory practices. She gave her own personal example of not being hired and given the run around. There is a trial set in June with Specialty Transportation.
21. Terrell Harts, spoke in support of Tim Sullivan. He is from the north end of Hartford, went to Martin Luther King School, Quirk Middle, and is now an electrical engineer. He credits Mr. Sullivan.
22. Brian Gallagher, Hartford graduate, spoke on behalf of Tim Sullivan, that he would not be who he was if not for Mr. Sullivan.
23. Sharron Riley-Seymour, spoke on behalf of Tim Sullivan for superintendent. Spoke on being a victim of assault and Mr. Sullivan supported her and her family, and proved trustworthy.
24. Paul Holzer, spoke on behalf of Hartford Performs. He wanted them to focus on their business model, they have a staff of 3 people facilitating hundreds of artists to leverage external resources to help students. HPS funds about half of their budget, and this program brings about great results.
25. Levey Kardulis, asked the board not to re-elect the current chair, Mr. Wareing, again. He also spoke on another student being murdered over the weekend, and letting kids fall through the cracks. Also spoke on the building and grounds department not doing good enough and he also spoke in support of Tim Sullivan.
26. Derrick Everett, Achieve Hartford, spoke on Hartford needing to get their act together, and work together. The board needs to realize the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
27. Michael Downes, spoke on the need to sever our relationship with Shipman and Goodwin. They are an artifact from the state board of trustee's takeover, and he says they are not good.
28. Jason Farquaharson, asked how the public comment was being followed up on. Spoke on having 2 great candidates, and feeling that we can use both of them in Hartford.
29. Evelyn Richardson, parent and grandmother, while she does not know either candidate, she did want to thank Dr. Torres, and noted that she had not heard bad gossip about her. She also spoke on the OCA report and the accountability piece, and the budget.
30. LaShawn Robinson, thanked Dr. Torres-Rodriguez, asked for transparency, to see that our students are graduating and going to colleges, and hoped that she becomes the next superintendent.
31. Francis Davila, Hartford resident and with an organization called 'Latinos Unidos'. He found that according to the US Census Data American Community Survey, Hartford had the poorest and least educated, and not getting the resources they deserve. He does not know either candidate, and hopes it does not become a race problem, as the ones that are most affected by that are the poor.

IV. Board of Education Annual Organizational Meeting

- Election of Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair and Secretary

Mr. Wareing made a motion to open the nominations for the office of Chair, and nominated Mr. Stallings. Hearing no other nomination, nominations were closed.

Mr. Stallings made a motion to open the nominations for the office of Vice Chair and nominated Ms. Glanville, and hearing no other nomination, nominations were closed.

Mr. Stallings entertained a motion to open the nominations for the office of Second Vice-Chair. Mr. Cotto nominated Ms. Taylor, and hearing no other nomination, nominations were closed.

Mr. Stallings entertained a motion to open the nomination for the office of Secretary. Ms. Glanville nominated Mr. Flores, and hearing no other nomination, nominations were closed.

All written ballots were collected. Ms. Cristina Santiago, BOE Liaison, and Ms. Julia Wilde, Assistant Corporation Counsel, announced the results of the written ballots:

Mr. Stallings was elected to the office of Chair, Ms. Glanville was elected to the office of Vice-Chair, Ms. Taylor was elected to the office of Second Vice-Chair, and Mr. Flores was elected to the office of Secretary.

V. Reports

1. Report of the Chair
2. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Torres-Rodriguez started by sharing some sad news, the passing of Mr. Leon McKinley. She continued by providing a brief update on the steps taken regarding the Office of the Child Advocate report. The Board will receive a very detailed report for the last 4 weeks, and this will also be available on our website.

The nine areas of concern have been organized around 5 major areas:

1. Policy and Compliance
 - Letter sent to all HPS staff from reiterating obligation as mandated reporters, the process for reporting, and the Codes of Professional Responsibility for both Teachers and Administrators.
 - Central repository function has been established with an OTM staff person and work is being done to document work flow in order to automate record-keeping using an online system.
2. Human Resources and Labor
 - Disciplinary action has been taken for several employees in relation to several different cases, including recommendations for termination made to the Board of Education.
 - Review determined that there are no staff currently employed by the district that have substantiated claims of abuse/neglect from DCF.
3. Special vulnerability of children with disabilities to possible abuse or neglect.
 - Conducted Crisis Prevention Intervention (Restraint and Seclusion) Training for Crisis Teams including Behavior Techs, Rise Academy and ABA staff.
 - The district executed a contract with the Center for Children with Special Needs (CCSN) to conduct a program review and needs assessment of district programs for students identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Initial activities have included the completion of observations and program artifact reviews in the STEP program and Multiple Disabilities classrooms at HPHS and program artifact reviews for two ABA classrooms at Rawson.

- The district began the program review/needs assessment with Dr. Mark Palmieri and the Executive Director of Special Education identify the scope of the district programming and touring some of the variety of programs at Hartford Public High School, Naylor and Rawson.
4. Professional Development Programming and Training:
 - Percentage of staff who have received mandated reporting training is 95%. The remaining 5% are staff on leave or newly hired and will be taking the training as soon as they have their access.
 - We reviewed options for school safety training and are recommending Safe Schools which aligns to CT DCF, SDE/RESCs recommendations
 - Offered Title IX training so all Title IX coordinators in the district have had updated training in the past 12 months.
 - Re-training for all school administrators on mandated reporting guidelines.
 5. Family, Student and Community Engagement is embedded in all that we do – gathering input from our communities, providing information during implementation, providing opportunities for student voice, working with our partners, hosting forums and ongoing communication.

As noted, we will work with an Independent Monitor who will hold the district accountable for implementing the HPS Action Plan and will provide progress reports to stakeholders and the community. I have had conversations with Child Advocate Sarah Eagan on the characteristics of an effective monitor, the role of and recommendations for a monitor and have reached out to several possible candidates to explore compatibility with and interest in the role. We hope to have the prospective Independent Monitor identified very soon. She invited the community to several OCA community forums.

3. Committee Reports

- Finance & Audit Committee

Mr. Stallings reported that the Board had a budget retreat, where they went over the financials.

- School Choice and Facilities Committee

Ms. Glanville reported that they spoke on facilities and maintenance, and the concern over budget cuts, and answered questions on the Weaver building project.

4. Report of the Student Representatives

Mr. Jones reported that at the last student senate meeting, they discussed child abuse and neglect, and the lack of support when it comes to reporting. He also spoke on the lack of explanation in regards to the OCA report, and it left them confused. Other items included their participation in the Herbs of Vision program, and their concern over lack of counselors in the schools.

VI. Business Agenda

1. Second Reading and Adoption: Graduation Requirements Policy (Policy Committee)

Mr. Hernandez made a motion, and Mr. Brescia seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education accepts the second reading and adopts the Graduation Requirements Policy.

Mr. Cotto wanted to raise a concern over online learning, and monitoring to make sure it has the same set of standards.

Mr. Jones also raised a concern over making sure students are on track for graduation, and not finding out at the last minute that they are behind on courses.

VOTE

In favor: Stallings, Glanville, Taylor, Flores, Brescia, Cotto, Hernandez, Oliver, Wareing

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 0

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

2. Approval of School Construction Plans and ED042 Submittal – Weaver High School (Supt et al.)

The State Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction Grants, (OSCG), requires that School Building Committees and Boards of Education certify that they have approved the final construction documents for school construction projects prior to OSCG review of the plans. Once the plans are reviewed and approved by OSCG, the projects are allowed to go out to bid.

At this time the Hartford School Building Committee, working through ARCADIS/O&G Program Management, have reviewed and approved construction packages for the below listed activities which will advance the construction project being performed at the following school:

Weaver High School – State Project #064-0307 RNV
Phase 2 – Construction

A cost estimate has been prepared and the scope is within budget. The project schedule calls for such work to be bid and implemented in the spring of this year to permit the renovations to proceed in 2017. The Renovations are scheduled to be completed by the start of the 2019-20 school year.

Ms. Glanville moved, and Mr. Hernandez seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education approve the final plans and authorizes the architect to submit the documents for the Construction phase of work for the above referenced school project, to the Office of School Construction Grants, for their review and approval.

VOTE

In favor: Stallings, Glanville, Taylor, Flores, Brescia, Cotto, Hernandez, Oliver, Wareing

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 0

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote

3. Approval to apply: Alliance Districts' School Buildings Grant \$2 Million (Supt et al.)

With the signing of Public Act 15-1 of the June 2015 Special Session, Governor Malloy has committed \$50 million to help maintain or repair school building in the Alliance Districts. The Governor revived and amended a grant program that had not been funded since 2002 to help districts improve the condition of their schools in greatest need of improvements.

Hartford Public Schools will be eligible for up to \$2 million in State grant funding. The application for the Alliance Districts' School Buildings Grant requires the local Board of Education approve the application request.

Mr. Wareing made a motion, Ms. Glanville seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to apply for the Alliance Districts' School Buildings Grant.

VOTE

In favor: Stallings, Glanville, Taylor, Flores, Brescia, Cotto, Hernandez, Oliver, Wareing

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 0

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote

A. Executive Session (Contract Non-Renewal)

Mr. Wareing made a motion; and Ms. Glanville seconded, to enter into executive session. Ms. Julia Wilde from Corporation Counsel joined them.

4. Contract Termination due to Non-Renewal (Supt. et al)

Mr. Wareing made a motion, and Ms. Glanville seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education adopts the findings of fact and recommendation of the Board subcommittee and authorizes the non-renewal of the employment contract of the non-tenured teacher identified on Exhibit A.

VOTE

In favor: Stallings, Glanville, Taylor, Flores, Brescia, Cotto, Hernandez, Oliver, Wareing

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 0

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.