

**HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting – May 16, 2017**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Hartford Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) met on Tuesday, May 16, 2017. The meeting was held at the Annie Fisher School, 280 Plainfield Street, Hartford, CT 06112.

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

Mr. Stallings called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. There was a quorum present.

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

**III. Public Participation**

1. David Ionno, Hartford resident, spoke on the lottery being a broken wheel. He understands it but it came with unintended consequences. If someone wins, someone loses, and education should not be a competition. He read a letter from a former student, as an example of the human interaction with the students and all the staff they encounter, and what a difference they can make.
2. Yostaltec Castillo, Co-Chair of the School Governance Council at Adult Education as well as former student, came to speak on rumors going around that Adult Ed was to be closed, and that some teachers were being laid off. There was a petition sent around, with false information, and a lot of the students who signed the letter were misled. He personally spoke with Dr. Jeter, Director of Adult Education, who stated the afternoon staff were being reduced for lack of student attendance in that time frame. Mr. Castillo produced sign in sheets for the afternoon classes for the last few trimesters that showed very low attendance.
3. Sheryl S. Russell, parent of students at Noah Webster, is concerned with the communication between the current principal and the teachers. There was an incident where 2 of her children came home crying, and she cannot get information from the principal as to why. She also stated her daughter was questioned by DCF in relation to this matter, and she feels that the administration is not aware of all of this.
4. Uniqua Mayo, parent of Noah Webster students, stated there were rumors that teachers were being let go, who in her opinion were some of the best teachers in the district. She said that because there are issues at the school with the teachers and principal, including an incident

where her daughter was one of 6 students questioned, without her knowledge. She wants this issue to be addressed.

5. Erica Pope, parent of 3 children at Noah Webster, started by saying she has been at the school for 3 principals. She also had a child that came home crying, in response to overhearing the threat of teachers being fired. When the parents go to the principal, they are told the school cannot release information on what happened. She also would like this issue to be addressed.
6. Aram Ayalon, professor at CCSU, came to celebrate the 2 year partnership with CCSU and the Simpson-Waverly School. He was there with a few of his students, and spoke on the many wonderful activities his students participated in with the Simpson-Waverly students, including a campus visit.
7. Christa Pizzoferrato, student at CCSU and a student of Mr. Ayalon, did her field work at Simpson-Waverly. She spoke of the wonderful experience it was, and that the students need consistency.
8. Meghan Westbrook, student at CCSU and also a student of Mr. Ayalon, also at Simpson-Waverly, spoke on needing to reinvest in the neighborhood schools, as there is no community without them. She also spoke against closing Simpson-Waverly.
9. Estela Morales, Hartford resident, employee at Adult Education, and also a former student there, stated she is concerned with the manipulation of the students. They came to her to say they heard the school was closing, and felt used and manipulated, as they were packed into cars to attend the last board meeting. If there is an issue, they should come to the administration, not use the students. Even State Representative Angel Arce came to visit during the afternoon, and saw that there were no students.
10. Richard Sugarman, president of the Hartford Scholarship Fund, came to announce the second class of the Hartford Promise scholars. There are 113 students being awarded, and they had to pass rigorous requirements to do so. He also noted that there were partnerships with companies that match the Hartford promise scholarships.
11. Michael Downes, spoke on the lack of accountability on many levels, with the schools, DCF and other State agencies, using the example of the student who was starved to death, even after he was checked on by DCF a month prior.
12. Deanna Sullivan, parent and guide at Annie Fisher Montessori, spoke on the lack of consistency over the years, with all of the cuts. She spoke against the cut of the school's behavior technician, in particular.
13. Teresa Chan, fourth year teacher at Annie Fisher Montessori, also spoke against the behavior technician being cut.

#### **IV. Reports**

1. Report of the Chair

Mr. Stallings announced the committee assignments as follows:

1. Finance and Audit Committee  
Chair: Craig Stallings  
Members: Julio Flores, Juan Hernandez, Kimberly Oliver, Richard Wareing

1. Family and Community Engagement Committee  
Chair: Julio Flores  
Members: Robert Cotto, Jr., Tiffany Glanville, Craig Stallings
2. Policy Committee  
Chair: Karen Taylor  
Members: Michael Brescia, Tiffany Glanville, Juan Hernandez
3. School Choice and Facilities Committee  
Chair: Tiffany Glanville  
Members: Michael Brescia, Robert Cotto, Jr., Karen Taylor, Richard Wareing

#### AD HOC COMMITTEES

1. Hartford School Building Committee  
Members: Brescia and Stallings
2. Human Resources Committee:  
Chair: Kimberly Oliver  
Members: Michael Brescia, Julio Flores

#### REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE): Craig Stallings
- Capital Region Education Council (CREC): Michael Brescia
- Hartford Public Library: Juan Hernandez
- Metropolitan Learning Center: Michael Brescia

#### 2. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Leslie Torres-Rodriguez reported on New Visions, and the continuing conversations with the State Department of Education regarding the programming and facilities. We are currently considering locating the program for a one-year placement at Lincoln Culinary Institute. We can begin moving the program once Culinary moves into the Journalism and Media Academy.

She moved on to the Culinary Arts consolidation with the Journalism and Media Academy. This strategic partnership is a structured approach that would include relocating the Culinary Arts Academy students to JMA to provide students at both schools more in-depth offerings in each of the core curriculum (Math, Science, Social Studies and English) and offer them a wider selection in each of the theme based classes. This partnership/consolidation will strengthen our footing towards the goal of one traditional and comprehensive Weaver High School and consequently upgrade the quality of education for all students at a major cost savings. Finally, this strategic partnership will begin our efforts to increase the enrollment needed to compete in the Central Connecticut Conference. Weaver is leaving the conference at the end of this school year due to low enrollment.

The Superintendent continued with an update on the audit of the State Department of Education concerning the magnet lottery process. Capital Prep was sampled to look at student admissions outside the lottery process. As stated by the auditors, Capital Prep's operations plan was approved by the State Department of Education. The plan allowed for admitting some students under special circumstances in addition to lottery admissions.

I have stated many times my commitment to be transparent and accountable for our efforts at the district. The possibility of students being admitted outside the formal State Department of Education RSCO Lottery process in any of our magnet schools is serious.

As it relates to Capital Prep, the data cited in the press coverage came from an audit of state practices related to student admissions in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. The audit did identify a number of students at Capital Prep enrolled through a special process. This process was, however, approved by the State Department of Education as part of the school's operations plan. It is very important to note that, while the Capital Prep audit highlighted a past practice, this is no longer the case. Current data from the 2016-2017 Capital Prep audit shows that NO students were enrolled this academic year outside of the lottery process.

Dr. Torres-Rodriguez recently sent out a memo to our principals restating her expectation that Hartford Public Schools students cannot be enrolled in a magnet school outside of the lottery process. We do know that there are situations where students with rare circumstances merit special consideration. I have an upcoming meeting with the State Department of Education for guidance on a process to address these extreme cases across our schools. In addition, I will seek clarity on the processes and protocols outlined in the Capital Prep operations plan that has caused some confusion.

In other news, Principal Julie Goldstein reports that Breakthrough Magnet School was named a National School of Character by the Schools of Character organization. A total of 84 schools were recognized nationally this year, and this is the first school in CT to receive this recognition.

Also, Alfred E. Burr Community School is among the top-performing schools in the Governor's 2016 Summer Reading Challenge.

Maria Colon Sanchez has been selected as one of two finalists for the Connecticut Association of School's Elementary School of the Year Award. A committee will be visiting the school tomorrow, Wednesday May 17 to complete the process of selection. I would like to congratulate Principal Redzic for the leadership of the school, and whether the school is ultimately selected as the CAS School of the Year or the runner up, we should be proud of this accomplishment.

We recently received the 2017 awards from Magnet Schools of America. Breakthrough Magnet and HMTCA were presented with awards as schools of Excellence, while Noah Webster and SMSA got recognized as schools of Distinction. We congratulate these schools, their leadership, teachers, and students for their resilient hard work and dedication.

On a separate topic, U.S. News recently released its 2017 rankings for the best public high schools in the United States. Highlighted were University High School of Science and Engineering which was awarded a Silver medal. University ranks as the 23rd best public high school in Connecticut. Meanwhile, Great Path Academy was awarded a bronze medal.

Finally, on the Office of the Child Advocate Report (OCA), we have submitted an RFP for the independent monitor to the Office of Child Advocate for review. Once we receive their feedback, we will release the RFP.

### 3. Committee Reports

Parent & Community Engagement Committee

School Choice and Facilities Committee

## V. Business Agenda

### 1. Management Continuation Approval: Great Path Academy (Supt et al.)

Continuation of management agreement between The Board of Regents for Higher Education on behalf of Manchester Community College and Hartford Public Schools for the 2017-2018 school year.

Mr. Brescia made a motion; and Ms. Glanville seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to extend the management contract with the Board of Regents through the 2017-18 school year.

#### VOTE

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

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Wareing

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

### 2. Contract Continuation Approval: PowerSchool Group \$283,509 (Supt et al.)

PowerSchool Group LLC provides the district with PowerSchool, a student information system which collects, stores and analyzes student level data, and is used to complete various state and federally mandated reports. It includes enterprise infrastructure monitoring, technical support and service, as well as access to professional learning for staff members.

This contract continuation is expanded to include tools for building systemic district-wide assessments aligned with Smarter Balanced and provides schools with detailed analytics based on these assessments to guide instructional improvements. The expansion replaces systems that are staged for phase out.

Mr. Hernandez made a motion; and Ms. Taylor seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to execute the contract with PowerSchool Group for the term delineated in the contract, at a cost not to exceed \$283,509 ending June 30, 2018.

#### VOTE

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

Opposed: Brescia

Abstained: 0

Absent: Wareing

The motion passed by voice vote.

An assessment will be done on the security layers, and who can see what on a student's historical data.

A workshop will be done on PowerSchool, so it can be shown how this data is being used to support the schools, students, etc.

3. Approval of Program Enhancement Project (PEP) Grant 40,000 (Supt et al.)

The Hartford Public Schools Adult Education Center has submitted a proposal to the Connecticut State Dept. of Education captioned "Vocations Exploration Institute" to receive a federal Program Enhancement Project grant in the amount of \$40,000. The grant proposal requires the approval of the Board of Education.

Mr. Brescia moved; and Ms. Glanville seconded, that the Hartford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to accept the Program Enhancement Project Grant in the amount of \$40,000.

VOTE

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

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Wareing

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. First Reading: Suicide and Intervention Policy (Policy Committee)

That the Hartford Board of Education accepts the first reading of the Suicide Prevention and Intervention policy.

No vote was required at this time.

**A. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Stallings moved; and Ms. Taylor seconded, to take the consent agenda up as one item.

VOTE

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

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Wareing

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Reauthorization of Healthy Food Certification Statement

The Hartford Board of Education reauthorizes the Healthy Foods and Beverages in Hartford Public Schools Policy and submits the Healthy Food Certification Statement for 2017-2018 stating "will meet said standards during the period of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 and will exclude from certification food items that do not meet the CNS, with the provisions stated, stated in the exemption criteria, for said period of time".

6. Approval of the Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2017-18 School Year (The Board)

The Hartford Board of Education approves the Board of Education Meeting Schedule for the 2017-18 School Year.

VOTE

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

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: Wareing

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**B. Executive Session (Potential Litigation)**

The board members agreed to the settlements presented in executive session.

**VI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.