

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THURSDAY
APRIL 2, 2009**

A Special Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Thursday, April 2, 2009 at the Board of Education Administrative Offices, 1110 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes.

PRESENT Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes, Ram Aberasturia,
Robert Damaschi, Anita Morrison, Karen Howe,
Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien, Marcus Oladell, IV

ALSO PRESENT Debbie Kaprove, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Al Costa, Director of Facilities
Jody Lefkowitz, Director of Pupil Personnel
Donna Tyrrell, Manager/Accounting, Business Services
Joanne Zatarain, CPA, Business Services

ABSENT Dorese Roberts, Bryan Hall

SPECIAL MEETING FOR BUDGETARY PURPOSES WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated that state ECS dollars will be flat funded next year. We will receive the same amount of ECS funds in each of the next two years. Hopefully, we will also receive \$2 million from the Town that was set aside in their contingency account. If this happens, we may not have to make deeper cuts in our budget for FY 2009-10.

Mr. Mainuli noted that without the \$2 million from the Town, our budget will be \$77 million which will leave a \$2.7 million budget gap to close by July 1st. If the Town restores the \$2 million, we will be left with a \$945,000 budget gap to close. Regarding the federal stimulus dollars, East Hartford has been allocated \$5.9 million from the Federal Stabilization Block Grant. This is good news. The Governor and House Democrats are proposing that these funds be used to support education by keeping ECS funding at current year levels.

Mr. Mainuli further stated: regarding Title I – Grant, over \$70 million will come in to Connecticut to expand programs for disadvantaged students and school improvements. There are many restrictions on how these funds can be used. We can not use these funds to supplant existing programs. He further stated that the state had cautioned school districts to get all program approvals in writing before spending any federal stimulus funds. We also have been looking at the Early Reading Success Program as a possible program to be funded through the stimulus. This may not be supplanting. Mr. Mainuli noted that there were rigid audit requirements on all federal dollars we may receive. All programs will have to be accounted for on a quarterly basis.

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After two years, we will be held accountable to the State to show that programs are working and viable;

Regarding the IDEA funds, dollars must be expended over the two-year period – applications to secure these stimulus funds from the state will begin by April 15th. We may be able to use dollars for the summer school program and to build capacity of staff through continued professional development. We may not have the complete guidelines for this program until May.

Interim Superintendent Debbie Kaprove stated the State has been providing on-going updates and guidelines as to how we can use these dollars. Ms. Kaprove reiterated how strict the accountability for these funds will be. State and Federal auditors will be overseeing every aspect of the dollars being spent. Auditors may come in unannounced at anytime; i.e., in the first month of the program or any time thereafter.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated that next Tuesday the State Legislature will be voting on budget appropriations that will keep ECS flat funded. If the state takes this action, she will go to the Town Council and request that they restore the \$2 million in contingency funds back to our FY 2009-10 budget.

Mr. Mainuli reviewed the General Assembly proposal. He also noted the State is setting aside funding for a Student Information System that will have the capability of accessing records from all state school districts. It appears that most of our grant funding will remain at current levels.

Mr. Mainuli stated that both the state and federal governments have created web sites for the stimulus package. The web sites provide the latest information on funding and grant requirements.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Bonnie Granger – Payroll Department – re: how much of a guarantee can staff be given. Believes all should contribute. Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated we will be happy to work with the unions. We will be willing to negotiate. Management, staff and the board need to work together;
2. Karen O’Connell, President, Teachers Union – re: (1) has the Board looked at the budget since it was last presented. Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated we have and several scenarios could be explored; i.e., redistricting, sports programs, etc. We are waiting for the Legislature to act. (2) (Karen O’Connell):why did you cut only one administrator from the budget and more teachers. She stated she has been asked this question repeatedly and stated her people cannot think about givebacks as you have not cut any administrators.

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Mr. Mainuli stated that if we receive the \$2 million in the contingency fund from the Town Council, we may be able to close the budget gap. Further, the stimulus dollars may create additional funds that can be used to offset some costs in the operating budget next year. This would help close the \$945,000 budget gap.

MOTION

By Ram Aberasturia
Seconded by Marcus Oladell, IV
To adjourn the Special Meeting (7:45 P.M.)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald