

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2008**

A Special Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Monday, September 22, 2008 at the Board of Education Administrative Offices, 1110 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes

PRESENT Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes, Secretary Ram Aberasturia, Robert Damaschi (left meeting at 8:30 P.M.), Anita Morrison, Marcus Oladell, IV, Dorese Roberts, Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien

ALSO PRESENT Dr. Marion Martinez, Superintendent of Schools
Debbie Kaprove, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources
Jody Lefkowitz, Director of Pupil Personnel
Pat Proctor, State Department of Education

Lesley Morgan-Thompson, PhD., Marcia Huddy, Supervisor, Secondary Curriculum
Catherine Ciccomascolo, Principal, Silver Lane School, Karen O'Connell, President, EHEA,
Linda Iverson, Ph.D., Principal, Pitkin Elementary School, Melissa Gavarinno, Department Head, Science

ABSENT Hank Pawlowski, Jr., Karen Howe

East Hartford Public Schools District Improvement Plan 2008-2011

Dr. Martinez thanked everyone for attending this evening. It is an opportunity to present a draft of the District Improvement Plan. She also thanked the Data Team for their investment in time. Dr. Martinez welcomed Pat Proctor, State Department of Education.

Dr. Martinez explained the process that will be used. An Executive Summary was developed on March 19, 2008. Dr. Martinez and Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes presented to the State. They recommended areas to be included in our Plans.

On October 2, 2008, we will be presenting this Plan to the full State Board. Our goal this evening is to ask for approval of the Plan. As a result of this Plan, principals will begin to use this District Improvement Plan. Dr. Martinez asked that questions be held until the end of the presentation.

Pat Proctor stated the primary focus of the Plan is due to NCLB requirements. Plans have been re-focused to encompass realistic goals. Mr. Proctor stated focusing on continuous improvement is our goal over longer periods of time. If we do, these Plans will achieve our goal. We are asking districts to narrow and prioritize and be specific and have monitoring in place. Mr. Proctor noted he is very pleased that East Hartford has adhered to the State Department's directive.

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Debbie Kaprove, Assistant Superintendent, gave an overview of the District Improvement Plan and noted we have focused on three areas: (1) **Curriculum and Instruction** -- ensure that all students receive high quality curriculum and instruction; strengthen professional development; (2) **School Climate** – ensure there is a positive social and emotional climate for all students; and work of the (3) **Data Team** – accountability at a high level of proficiency in instruction, building and district level teams. Data on student achievement is addressed as related to the Plan.

In-depth discussion took place from staff and administration in each of the three focus areas. Marcia Huddy addressed the integration of literacy in content areas at all levels; i.e. ELL; make sure it is embedded into all content areas. Action Plan strategies were discussed in all areas. It was the consensus that effective teaching strategies continue to be implemented.

Dr. Martinez noted at the last Board meeting we talked about effective teaching strategies, based on Robert Marzano. She stated Effective Teaching Strategies **is not** implying teachers need more effective teaching strategies.

Karen O'Connell stated Langford has begun using 90-minute blocks – teachers do not take students out of class. They are now looking for ways to go beyond 90 minutes to provide more intervention.

Jody Lefkowitz noted we continue to provide professional development opportunities; i.e. CALI workshops and others. Regarding CALI training, a survey will go out to parents. It is available on line and hard copy. We are also developing a model for East Hartford that addresses curriculum and instruction: Scientific Research-Based Intervention/Response to Invention (SRBI/RTI). She further noted we already have in place most of SRBI with current practices.

Regarding School Climate – It was noted we must decrease overall suspensions. Dr. Martinez stated we want to create a positive school climate for everyone. We have had many Courageous Conversations. We must also give added attention to students from minority groups to alleviate the high number of suspensions. Jody Lefkowitz noted we are already working on Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Regarding, Site Evaluation Team, Jody mentioned we have contracted with CREC in the past. We are looking at universal practices for PBS. Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer asked if all schools are using PBS. Jody stated, all but Willowbrook (there is no model yet). Jody further stated we must encourage parents to take part in the EIP process. Karen O'Connell stated we need to get parents involved. We need to have activities for parents and students. We will develop strategies to work toward that goal. Survey data is critical. We are looking to parents for input.

General Comments/Questions from Staff/BOE/Administration

Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien – re: what do we do with students that cannot read or write coming from other districts. It was noted we should identify transient students as early as possible and develop academic and behavioral support.

Ram Aberasturia – re: (1) we must get students engaged in the district; i.e., after school programs;(2) are IRT's teaching students – they should be in classrooms. **Lesley Morgan-Thompson** stated studies have proven literacy coaches have greater impact by **not** using them in the classroom. Mr. Aberasturia asked which ones are you referring to. Literacy coaches work with teachers and can only work in the classrooms. **Dr. Martinez** stated we are calling a meeting of all literacy coaches and principals regarding their use. Attendance will be mandatory; (3) has there been discussion regarding having an ELL supervisor. It was noted that all ELL positions have been filled. **Karen O'Connell** stated she would like to see IRT's work with more students; however, they are being pulled away from their regular positions.

Dorese Roberts – re: why aren't scores up in reading – Dr. Martinez stated the Plan is focused on Effective Teaching Strategies. We are making progress.

Anita Morrison – re: students not reporting to school. Can principals let us know what strategies are being used when talking with them. How do we hold parents accountable.

Cathy Ciccomascolo stated we make calls and meet with parents. She noted this is not a severe problem. **Jody Lefkowitz** stated we have a new attendance residency person that will address such situations. **Melissa Gavarrino** noted she is involved with an Attendance Review Committee and they are holding parents and students accountable.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes thanked all that were present and stated she was very impressed with the meeting.

MOTION By Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien
Seconded by Marcus Oladell, IV
To approve the District Improvement Plan.
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Ram Aberasturia
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To adjourn the Special Meeting (8:30 P.M.)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by:
Donna Fitzgerald