

**REGULAR MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 3, 2014**

A Regular Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Monday, February 3, 2014, at the Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Jeffrey Currey.

PRESENT Chairman Jeffrey Currey, Tom Rup, Christopher Gentile, Marilyn Pet, Dorese Roberts, Valerie Scheer, Stephanie Watkins

ABSENT Superintendent Nathan Quesnel, Secretary Bryan Hall, Tyron Harris, Alyssa Crooks, Brian Calero – Student Representatives

ALSO PRESENT Debbie Kaprove, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum
Anne Marie Mancini, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum
Dr. Sharon Bremner, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Al Costa, Director of Facilities
Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources
Paul Mainuli, Director of Finance

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

MOTION By Tom Rup
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To **remove from this evening's agenda** the following:
Under Informational Reports: #4IGNITE presentation
#5 DMV Contest Videos
#6STAR Assessments
Under New Business: #2 Bid #1698-14 Transportation Services – Dattco
Motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Christopher Gentile
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of January 7, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Christopher Gentile
To approve the following Minutes:
Regular Meeting of January 7, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Christopher Gentile
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of January 27, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

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WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

- Chairman Currey received a CABE communication regarding the CABE Student Leadership Award Program. They requested that this be forwarded to our middle and high school principals for their review and submission.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT - None

Alyssa Crooks, Brian Calero

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Human Resources/No Action Required

- David J. Siwik, Payroll Manager – salary was incorrect; should read \$63,191.80

Chairman's Report – Jeffrey Currey

- Due to storm in January, we were unable to meet so a lot has gone on since...
- First I want to congratulate our high school students for successfully completing another round of mid term exams. I hope all of your hard work and studying paid off...
- With our renewed relationship with CABE, we have had a number of great opportunities to come our way as Board members:
 - Board Member Harris and I are currently in the middle of our 5 week Leadership Academy along with board members from around the state offering a great venue for networking and generally hearing about the concerns and opportunities other districts are encountering;
 - Board Member Scheer and I attended a forum sponsored by a number of organizations, including CABE and CEA, on Common Core and Smarter Balance assessment. This really gave an opportunity for educators, parents, administrators and fellow Board Members to voice their concerns and, in a way, have some of their misconceptions cleared up. As a Board, we always appreciate the hard work our educators are doing in the classroom to make this transition a success for our students and for the entire community.
 - I was also recently named to CABE's Board of Directors and attended the Directors' Retreat. The wealth of knowledge in that room was overwhelming and quite inspirational. The ideas and recommendations that were made show that we are a part of exciting times in our Town and in our State.
 - CABE Day on Hill coming up on 3/5/14 – chance to lobby House and Senate members on key education issues and discuss how they will impact your district. If you are interested, visit the site and register. If you haven't done this before, you will not be alone – they will pair you up with a seasoned Board member;
 - Last week, the Board approved the application submission to the SDE for O'Brien's inclusion in the Commissioner's Network. With this approval, a Turn Around Committee will be formed to include teachers, administrators, SDE and a parent appointed by the Chair;

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- I am pleased to announce that I have selected Jasmine Rivera-McNeil, the parent of a 2nd and 3rd grader at O'Brien, a member of the SGC, and the President of the PTO to be part of the Turn Around Committee. I spoke with Jasmine this weekend and am thrilled about her participation in this group, and I thank her for her service to our community;
- I also want to thank the teachers at O'Brien again for bringing their concerns forward to be sure that as we work through this TOGETHER that a plan is put in place, that all members of the Turn Around Committee, including teachers, will agree upon;
- The BoE interviewed and hired a new Assistant Principal at O'Brien School to replace Dr. Oliver. Corey Schram will be starting 2/18/14 and I believe I can speak for the Board when I say how excited we are for Ms. Schram to join the EH community;
- As the representative for the PBC, I attended a meeting to discuss the Asbestos Removal Item on our agenda tonight that Al Costa will be reviewing as well as the Window Wall Replacement project which is moving along. Dave Holmes from Capital Studio Architects presented a very preliminary sketch of one wing of the building and it's going to literally change the fame of EHMS;
- I mentioned a few months back that after a meeting with ChildPlan, The Hartford Foundation, and the Mayor, we decided that an audit of the CRC would be beneficial in deciding upon the direction we are looking to take. I, along with other district and town leaders will be meeting with the auditor later this month to discuss our vision for the Center as it continues to grow and service more and more residents;
- The Mayor recently announced a book amnesty program regarding overdue books from our public libraries. If you have any overdue items, bring them down to the library with a dry good, and they will remove your financial penalty. This program is good until 6/30/14. The libraries are currently open at Wickham and the Community Center;
- Reminders for BOE members:
 - 2/13 is Expulsion follow-up meeting and Special Ed "boot camp"
 - 2/18 is a Town Council meeting to discuss Health Benefits
 - 2/26 is our Budget Presentation to the Town Council.

Superintendent's Report – Nathan Quesnel (reported by Assistant Superintendent Anne Marie Mancini)

Superintendent Quesnel apologized for missing this evening's meeting; however, he is in Washington, DC at the National School Board Federal Relations Network, allowing us to advocate at the Federal level for much needed resources and programming. Tomorrow he will be meeting our Connecticut Senators and Congressman and sharing the great work we are doing together in an effort to continue to place focus on continued federal support.

Educational Programs: Teaching and Learning:

- **Expect Student Achievement:** We are in full swing in our schools and my visits have been great opportunities to see much of the important work we have started. There is

great debate at the state level regarding Common Core and Teacher Evaluation. I continue to be extremely proud of East Hartford Teachers and Administrators and their workmanlike attitude to get the job done and keep kids “front and center”. In response to the questions regarding flexibilities that have been mentioned regarding teacher evaluation, we will be closely examining each of these in light of our existing plan. As I have previously stated, I am incredibly pleased at this phase in implementation and reluctant to make any sweeping changes that could alter the results we are already seeing.

- **Expect Student Achievement: Commissioner’s Network Meeting(s):
Commissioner’s Network:**

Following your vote last Monday, we have continued to work on the implementation of the Network at O’Brien School. This process has involved working with our bargaining group to establish the representatives (2 teachers/1 parent) that will represent them as well as selecting a parent to represent the Board. Our Chair spoke to the parent the administration has put forward and we are very excited about her willingness to be a part of this important process. The SDE Audit will be conducted on February 12th and the meeting calendar with four beginning dates has been set. I look forward to participating in this process to bring welcome resources to O’Brien School in an effort to accelerate the work that will lead to student achievement.

Community Relations:

- **Community Communication:** We are in the process of working to develop a project sketch to forward to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving that will support a developed communications plan with our school community. Key within this plan are targeted messaging, high quality materials and an overall strategy to engage families in the work that is going on with the district. This important work will initially begin around the DIP action steps for developing a Neighborhood School Task Force. Moving forward, we will use this same strategy in the development of the Reconfiguration Project.

Business Matters:

- **Align System and Operational Efforts: Meeting with Town Regarding Health Benefits:** I attended an excellent meeting in the Mayor’s office regarding the status of our Health Benefits. This meeting answered many questions we have had regarding this important aspect of our budget. Most importantly, this meeting was an excellent opportunity to get on the same page with our town leadership regarding our budget position and the town wide challenge of controlling health care costs. While the issue remains, as we continue to work as a team, we can address this effectively. A full presentation of this meeting will be delivered to you on February 18th.

Next Steps:

- **Second Session School Improvement Plan Review**
- **Town Benefit Meeting 2/18**
- **Budget Development 2/26 Presentation to Town Council**

Second Quarter Financial Report

Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services

Mr. Mainuli presented to the Board a very detailed Second Quarter Financial Report for FY 2013-14. He noted the following concerns:

- Costs of health benefits over \$1.3 million; we will be able to cover the shortfall in this year's budget;
- Re: the operating budget – we have controls in place; we will make adjustments as we see fit;
- Facilities costs have increased due to snow storms.

Overall, we are looking at all of our accounts. Chairman Currey stated we are not overextending ourselves. We are expending \$5 million in Woodland Tuition revenues.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Retirements and Resignations

MOTION

By Dorese Roberts

Seconded by Stephanie Watkins

To approve five (5) **Retirements:**

1. **Joseph Giuliano, School Counselor, effective 6/30/14**
2. **Aphrodite Koutsares, Head Start Teacher, effective 6/30/14**
3. **Mary Nardelli, ELL Teacher, effective 6/30/2014**
4. **Pamela S. Syzdek, Secretary, effective 6/26/14**
5. **Deborah R. Dube, Human Resources Manager, effective 6/27/14**

and

To approve three (3) **Resignations:**

1. **Christina Z. Chae, Playgroup Facilitator, effective 1/31/14**
2. **James M. Shanahan, Behavior Manager, effective 1/17/14**
3. **Sabrina N. Miele, School Psychologist, effective 2/1/14**

Motion unanimously carried.

Chairman Currey congratulated all the future retirees. He thanked them for their dedication to the East Hartford Public Schools.

Approval of Bid #1699-14 – Award for Student Transportation Services – Out of Town Locations to

Access Transportation Solutions, LLC

MOTION

By Dorese Roberts

Seconded by Christopher Gentile

To approve Bid #1699-14 – Award for Student Transportation Services – Out of Town Locations and award to Access Transportation Solutions, LLC for a new three-year contract. The new contract will begin July 1, 2014 and run through June 30, 2017. The Board shall have two (2) one

(1) year options to extend this contract at rates mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Mainuli noted the daily rates from Access include fuel costs and do not increase over the three years of the contract and does not include a performance bond which will save us money.

Request for Overnight Travel to Woodstock, CT

MOTION

By Christopher Gentile

Seconded by Marilyn Pet

To approve overnight travel for approximately 78 fifth grade students From O'Connell School to attend the Discovery Center at Camp Woodstock, in Woodstock, CT 4/7-4/11/2014

Motion unanimously carried.

It was noted that the cost of the program is \$50 per person. We work with Discovery Center. We will not exclude any students due to monetary reasons.

Request for Overnight Travel – China – April 9-20, 2014

MOTION

By Chairman Jeffery Currey

Seconded by Christopher Gentile

To approve request for Overnight Travel to China on April 9-April 20, 2014 for eleven Connecticut IB students to travel to Shanghai, Xian and Beijing, China at a cost of \$1,500 per student.

Amended MOTION By Tom Rup

Seconded by Dorese Roberts

To approve request for Overnight Travel to China on April 9-April 20, 2014 for eleven Connecticut IB students to travel to Shanghai, Xian and Beijing, China, to include one additional male student, at a cost of \$1,500 per student.

Motion unanimously carried as amended.

Chairman Currey asked that those students traveling to China put together a presentation of their trip for a future BOE meeting.

Review Policy 6146 Graduation Requirements with Possible Action

MOTION

By Marilyn Pet

Seconded by Christopher Gentile

To accept revised Policy 6146 Graduation Requirements

Motion unanimously carried.

Thank you to Joan Landrum who was working on the graduation requirements. This policy was revised to align to the Common Core State Standards.

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Approve Revised 2014-2015 School Calendar

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Stephanie Watkins
To approve revised 2014-15 School Calendar as presented.
Motion unanimously carried.

Board Policy 3000 – Appropriation Transfers – Second Quarter 2013-2014

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Christopher Gentile
To approve the Appropriation Transfers presented to the Board 1/21/2014
amounting to \$1,130,649.00.
Motion unanimously carried.

It was noted these Appropriation Transfers are being done to balance the general budget program accounts.

Approve Asbestos Abatement Project – Barnes School

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Marilyn Pet
To approve Acceptance of Barnes School Asbestos Abatement Project and
authorize Signature of the State Education form ED042 by Board Chair
and Superintendent
Motion unanimously carried.

Local approvals are required prior to being able to go out to bid for construction. This project qualifies for a 76.79 percent of State reimbursement. Asbestos abatement will be planned for Summer of 2014.

Approve Appointment of an Ad Hoc Negotiating Committee and Appointment of Members

MOTION By Tom Rup
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve appointment of an Ad Hoc Negotiating Committee and
appointment of members
Motion unanimously carried.

This is being done for negotiations with Local 2727.

Approve Legislative Priorities for East Hartford Public Schools

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Stephanie Watkins
To approve legislative priorities for East Hartford Public Schools
Motion unanimously carried.

Superintendent Quesnel and Chairman Currey will meet later this month to meet with the delegation. Board Member Tom Rup believes we should look at a few items, rather than this “wish list”. Assistant Superintendent Anne Marie Mancini noted we will rank our priorities. Chairman Currey stated we will prioritize these items before meeting with legislators.

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Approve 2014-2015 Subcommittee Assignments

MOTION By Christopher Gentile
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve 2014-2015 Subcommittee Assignments as presented.
Motion unanimously carried.

Board Member Representative Reports

Dorese Roberts: (1) visited Willowbrook School; parents are concerned if we have added enough security measures – it was suggested that we consider panic buttons; (2) visited Woodland School – was very impressed with the knowledge of Kindergarten students;
Stephanie Watkins – (1) visited O’Brien School – attended concert during the day; (2) attended Mayberry School’s multi-cultural night.

Questions and Concerns by Board Members

Tom Rup – re: has concerns with the Board of Education’s “over spending” on their approved budget and being held personally liable for the difference.

Dorese Roberts – re: a parent wrote a letter and felt Common Core standards were not high enough. Assistant Superintendent Ann Marie Mancini stated she was not aware of any parent writing a letter. Regarding the letter from a parent, Mr. Gentile noted the letter came from a woman who was from Cheshire. Assistant Superintendent Anne Marie Mancini stated we are reaching out to parents. Assistant Superintendent Debbie Kaprove and myself will be going into schools to give presentations on Common Core.

Topics for Future Agendas

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Marilyn Pet
To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (8:15 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald