

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THURSDAY,
APRIL 10, 2014**

A Special Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at the Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Chairman Jeffrey Currey.

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

ABSENT Secretary Bryan Hall

ALSO PRESENT Nathan Quesnel, Superintendent of Schools
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
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Alyssa Crooks, Student Representative

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To amend this evening's agenda to do in the following order:
1st: CAS 2014 High School Principal of the Year; 2nd: IGNITE – EHMS
3rd: Spotlight Award-Facilities; 4th: Public Participation; 5th: Residency Report; then follow regular agenda.
Motion unanimously carried.

Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) 2014 High School Principal of the Year

In recognition of Principal Matthew Ryan being honored as the 2014 CAS Principal of the Year, Superintendent Quesnel accepted, in his absence, a citation from Representative Henry Genga, signed by The Connecticut General Assembly honoring Principal Ryan. Out of all the high school principals in Connecticut, Principal Ryan was chosen for this award. The Board of Education recognized this achievement with a plaque for Principal Ryan.

IGNITE - EHMS

Deborah Houghton, Assistant Principal presented the EHMS IGNITE video, following the core values of East Hartford Public Schools; (1) Expectations Matter; (2) Effort Matters; (3) Competence Matters; (4) Solutions Matter; (5) Relationships Matter and (6) Results Matter.

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Ms. Linda Chamberlain acknowledged Al Costa, Director of Facilities, and staff to receive the Spotlight Award. Mr. Costa and staff continue to assist with the opening of the ROPES program that began in 1988 for all nine elementary school 6th graders.

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ABC Program (Adventures Build Character)

Linda Chamberlain and Gloree Ronhke (High Five Adventure) designed a program entitled S.T.A.R. Soaring to Achieve Results. Policies were established by then principal, Dr. Fusco, at Sunset Ridge School as part of the 6th grade curriculum. Thank you again to Mr. Costa and staff.

Chairman Currey thanked Ms. Chamberlain for overseeing this program for the last 14 years and noted Ms. Chamberlain will be retiring after this year.

Residency Report

Thomas Dillon – Residency Officer

Mr. Dillon reviewed the year end Residency Investigations 2013-2014. Twenty expulsion packets were delivered to parents/guardians of students facing expulsion. There were 160 Magnet/Charter School registrations that were verified via LexisNexis Accurant, a database that performs an extensive residency search of all parent/guardians.

Mr. Dillon also uses e-School to verify student status and their registration history. Fifteen out placement checks were conducted for out placed special education students to see if they are still residents of East Hartford. Also received were approximately 700 Certificate of Residency (CoR) requests, all of which are verified to confirm that a student and parent reside with a third party. Approximately 110 Residency investigations have taken place, resulting in removal of approximately 50 students for residency violations.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following parents/guardians or interested parties spoke regarding concern over the possibility of Sunset Ridge closing at the end of the year. Board of Education Chairman Jeffrey Currey stated no decisions have been made and concern over the school's future is premature:

1. Rachel Hernandez, 345 Goodwin St.
2. Tina Rivera Rome, 26 Atwood Lane
3. Jennifer J. Alaimo, 91 Pendleton Drive
4. Walter Mamloa, 3 Joanne Drive
5. Kathy Neri, 15 Benjamin Way, So.Windsor
6. Erika Devins, 514 Goodwin St.
7. Bill Daley, 17 Foley Circle
8. Heather Armentrent, 17 Cravo Ct.
9. Kelly Gay, 133 Washington Ave.
10. Amy Curran
11. Rachel Hernandez
12. Debra Ivaldi, 52 Handel Ct.

Chairman Currey stated the Board is facing a \$5 million shortfall after the Town Council approved an \$87.27 million budget for the 2014-15 school year. This equates to no increase over the current year.

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Approximately 40 letters have been sent to school staff district wide, in preparation for possible budget cuts. If after the state budget is finalized, those staff reductions may no longer be necessary, some or all of the notices may be rescinded. The Board of Education has not met to discuss any potential reductions. If and when we do, the public and parents throughout the district will be notified.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Regular Meeting of March 17, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

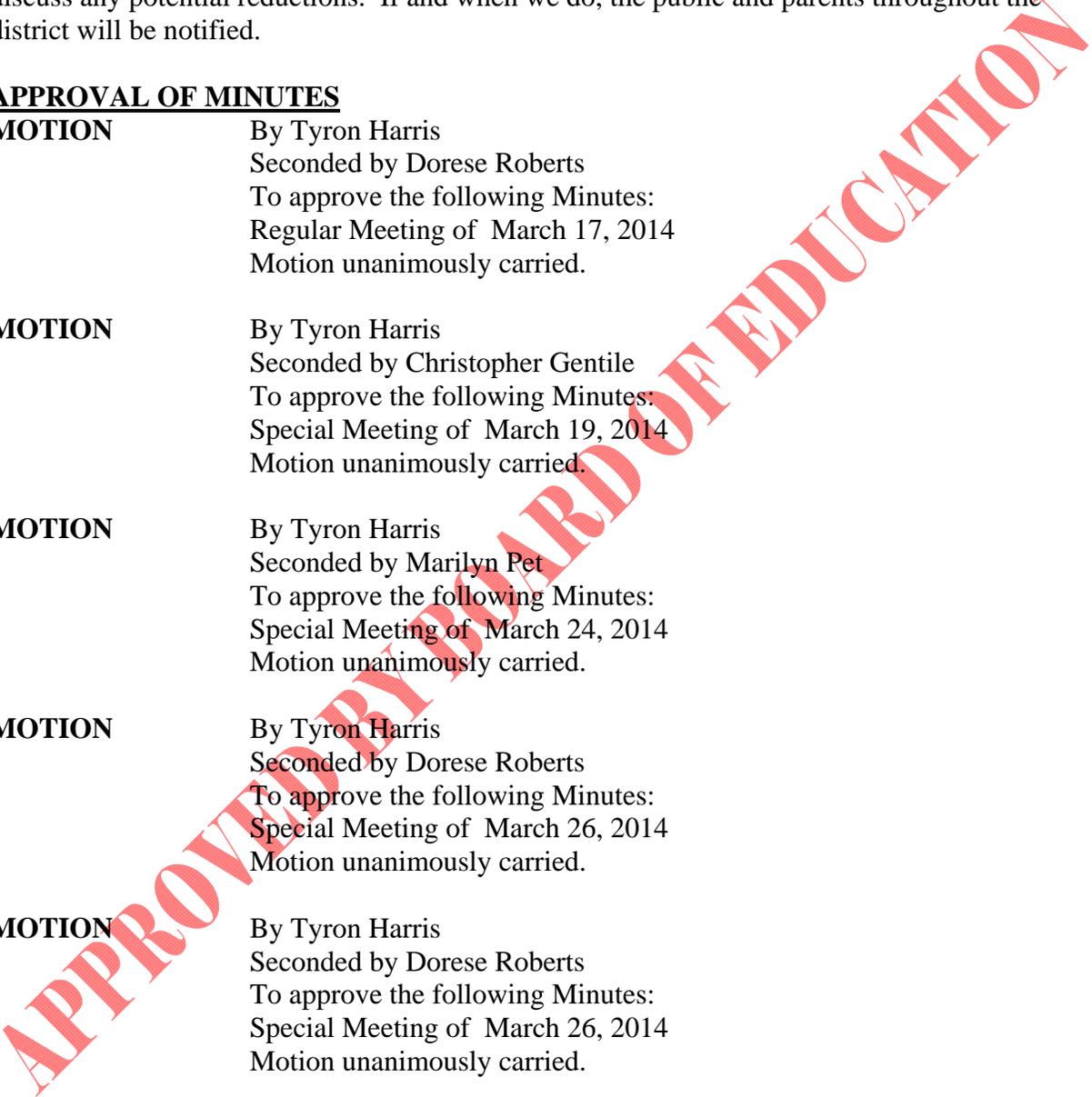
MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Christopher Gentile
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of March 19, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Marilyn Pet
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of March 24, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of March 26, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of March 26, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Meeting of March 31, 2014
Motion unanimously carried.



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WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

- 5/6/14 - Parent/Teacher Community Forum in the East Hartford Holiday Inn 1:30-4:45 or 5:30-7:30 PM. Please send this information to our principals and ask that they forward this to their PTO & SGC.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Alyssa Crooks Student Representative

- 4/11 - Senior assessments are due tomorrow;
- 4/11 - GSA day of silence;
- 4/12 - Bunny Breakfast - 9:30-11:00; egg hunt begins at 11:00;
- Week of April 14th – April 17th spring break;
- 4/22 – College Information Night in Library;
- 4/23 – Senior Citizen luau in student cafeteria 7 – 4 PM
- 4/26 – Junior Prom 6-10 PM at Rentschler Field.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Human Resources/No Action Required

Chairman's Report – Jeffrey Currey

- 4/26 – 9:00-11:30 AM East Hartford's 4th Annual Green & Clean Project will take place starting at the Town Green on Main Street. Town staff and volunteers will gather to pick up litter and other debris to spruce up the downtown area; if interested, please contact the Parks & Rec. Dept. (860) 291-7166. Lunch and refreshments will be provided at 11:30 to all clean-up volunteers. **This would be a great way for some of our students to earn hours for their graduation requirement;**
- Congratulations to the cast of Suessical for their performance last month. We had a chance to see the preview before our last Board meeting;
- The Board hired a new principal, Caryn Stedman, for CIBA who comes to us from CREC's Metropolitan Learning Center IB program. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and we are excited to see what she will bring to the East Hartford community;
- Congratulations to all the students who participated in the 27th annual Inter-El honors music and arts festival. It's always a pleasure to take time to enjoy the sights and sounds of the talented students we have here in East Hartford at all of our elementary schools.;
- I was invited, and attended, a SGC meeting at O'Connell last week where I had the opportunity to discuss the budget process that started back in November/December and still remains to be finalized. Thank you to the parents.

Superintendent's Report – Nathan Quesnel

Educational Programs: Teaching and Learning:

- **Expect Student Achievement:** As we move into our third week of SBAC testing, we continue to find our systems and preparation working efficiently and successfully.

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Students note that testing is very rigorous and challenging and I am very proud of the effort and approach throughout the district. We are extremely appreciative to our building leaders and district coordinator for all the work put into making this field test successful.

- **Expect Student Achievement: Commissioner's Network Meeting(s): O'Brien Commissioner's Network:** We are in the final phases of the Commissioner's Network with the PSA team and have drafted the initial budget. I'm extremely proud of the work accomplished by the committee and our principal. The PSA team plan adds over \$450,000 of resources and staffing to O'Brien School. In addition, nearly \$500,000 in bond monies are slated to be used for facility improvements, including bathroom upgrades, hallway improvements, the potential to add a portable trailer. In the staffing and resource component, the plan adds an additional Social Worker, ELL teacher, Special Education Teacher and Parent Liaison Specialist to the school among other items. This plan was presented by the union to the staff at the school tonight and we await their vote. The PSA committee will meet on Friday to approve the plan and it will be forwarded to you for review on April 21st. As introduced, the SDE has held to their commitments; this plan provides incredible resources that are otherwise out of sight for our kids.
- **Alliance Plan III:** Our Alliance Plan in draft format will be forwarded to the CSDE tomorrow. The BoE will see a draft on 4/21. The plan is in draft format but extremely strategic with the funding that is still available. This year based on our current budget scenario, over 37% of the grant has been used to supplement the operating budget (\$2.3 million). With the monies that remain, we have worked to strengthen areas of weakness and need in the district including the purchase of a K-6 Common Core Aligned Math Textbook, a K-3 Reading Program and a 9th Grade Reading Program. Assistant Superintendent Mancini has been the lead on this project and has done an incredible job moving this forward.

Community Relations:

- **Community Forum:** We are setting up a community forum for parent leaders on May 15th at EHMS. A letter will be going out to SGC/PTO parents to invite them to the meeting and we look forward to this opportunity. Our Chairman and Board Member Scheer have been involved in the planning process and we look forward to speaking to our parents regarding how we can continue to improve the district.
- **Parent Survey:** We are finalizing our annual parent survey at our individual schools. If you have not completed this survey, please log onto our website at www.ehps.org and go to your specific school. The survey link is at the top of the school page (red) and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Please be sure to do this!

Business Matters:

Align System and Operational Efforts: Budget Process: We received our budget from the Council of \$87.2 million which represents a 0% increase. We are diligently working at the central office level to design a plan to present to you that will take the district from a needed \$93.1 (BOE Proposal+Mayor's recommendation for Health Benefits) to the current funding level (\$4.9 million). As you know, this process will be a very difficult one for you as we eliminate programming or staff that we have built and valued over the years. We have been carefully reviewing all district programs and

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exploring areas for budget reduction. This process has been difficult and extremely challenging as reducing our budget means a loss of programs that we value and know are great for East Hartford students, In addition, beyond the work of developing a series of strategic cuts for presentation to our Board for a final decision, we have also been working with our legislative representatives to attempt to secure financial assistance and support for our town.

On April 2nd, I met with staff at Sunset Ridge and shared that Sunset Ridge School has been identified for potential closure for a one-year period to procure necessary financial savings. This school closure is being considered with the intention of saving the operational costs of running a building that has unfortunately also experienced a significant decline in enrollment over the past three years. My intention of sharing this with staff was to prepare them for the potential future – to be clear, no decision has been made. On April 3rd, I sent a letter home to parents clarifying our current process in an attempt to open the lines of communication and to provide transparency. Our parents have responded with multiple calls and e-mails to my office, all of which have been appreciated and valued.

We will be rescheduling Board meetings following the legislative session with the intention of making sure all available resources are on the table prior to making final decisions. These meetings are public meetings and your voice is always appreciated and always heard.

If the closing of Sunset Ridge is a decision that is moved forward, we will be working with our parents to place their child back in their neighborhood school. Our parents satisfaction and their child's sense of belonging in school is incredibly important to us and we understand the challenge this change will create.

This week we hand delivered 39 notices to our staff throughout the district and notified them that the Board will be taking action to provide these teachers with Reduction in Force (RIF) notices at the April 21st meeting. Our Human Resources Director, Chris Wethje has done an incredible job with this difficult process that continues to unfold.

As we continue to work forward, I appreciate your effort as a Board to preserve the resources our children deserve. I appreciate your courage and willingness to make difficult choices and do not envy the position you are in. If I can help provide clarification or information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Good News Report:

CIBA Recognized: The Washington Post just released its Most Challenging High Schools List for 2014. Once again, CIBA appears very high on that list. Nationally, CIBA ranked at #105 in the Northeast, along with some other solid IB schools in this region. **In Connecticut, CIBA is ranked as the top public high school, and our rating index is more than twice that of #2 Farmington High School.** As always these rankings are based on the level of rigor and challenge for the students, as measured by the number of IB or AP exams.

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STEM Teacher Recognized: Kara Levenduski, a teacher at O'Brien, has been selected by the CSDE to be a member to Connecticut's Dream Team of educators. Ms. Levenduski will attend the 2 ½ day TeachFest April 25-27 and subsequently work in an online Professional Learning Community (PLC) with other Connecticut Dream Team teachers through mid-June. This is an incredible recognition for an incredible teacher.

Goodwin School to Attend CSDE Schools of Distinction Breakfast: Goodwin School received a formal invitation for the principal and designee to attend the CSDE Schools of Distinction. Goodwin School received this recognition for the progress made by students on the 2013 CMT's. We are very proud to have East Hartford represented at this setting.

EHHS Athletics: Congratulations to all our winter athletes and coaches, as East Hartford Athletics was awarded with the CCC Winter Sportsmanship Award!!!

Next Steps: Session Closing May 7th
Budget Adoption Early May.

Third Quarter Financial Report

Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services

Mr. Mainuli noted areas of concern are the following:

- health benefits;
- student transportation; i.e., Special Education. This is a considerable cost to the district;
- HVAC services.

Good News:

- Superintendent thanked our senators for reaching out regarding our Alliance Grant dollars;
- Woodland School – revenue \$5.7 million; This will help!
- We received \$281,000 in e-rate funds from the Federal Government;
- We received over \$300,000 in Medicare revenue.

We will possibly have \$1.2 million remaining at year-end because we were able to transfer \$1 million in the budget to State & Federal grants.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Retirements and Resignations

MOTION

By Christopher Gentile

Seconded by Tyron Harris

To approve (6) Six **Retirements:**

1. **Perry D. Santese, Custodian, effective 5/13/14**
2. **Louise B. Pruchnicki, LPN 1 on 1, effective 1/5/15**
3. **Judith Belek, Sped Teacher, effective 6/30/14**
4. **May Lynda Goldkamp, Nurse, effective 6/30/14**
5. **Rosa B. Couvertier, Asst. Secretary, effective 6/27/14**
6. **Marlene R. Sheperd, Asst. Secretary, effective 6/26/14**

and

To approve (5) Five Resignations:

1. **Jacquelyn V. Jones, Sped Teacher, effective 6/30/14**
2. **Abraham Hilding Salorio, Bilingual Tutor, effective 4/4/14**
3. **Judith O. May-Lyn, Sped Teacher, effective 4/11/14**
4. **Beverly Blount-Lawrence, Principal, effective 6/19/14**
5. **Maria F. Guzman, Family Advocate, effective 4/4/14**

Motion unanimously carried.

Graduation Date – EHHS

MOTION

By Christopher Gentile

Seconded by Tyron Harris

To approve the graduation date for East Hartford High School to be held on Monday, June 16, 2014 at the Bushnell, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT at 7:00 PM.

Motion unanimously carried.

Food Service Management Contract – Bid #1697-14

MOTION

By Tyron Harris

Seconded by Marilyn Pet

To approve Bid #1697-14 Food Service Management Contract and award To Sodexo, Inc. representing a one-year contract with the option for four additional one-year renewals continuing through June of 2019, upon mutual agreement of both parties. The term of this agreement is one year, commencing July 1, 2014 and continuing through June 30, 2015. The contract does not include a Performance Bond, saving the district \$9,000.00.

Motion carried. Nay: Tom Rup.

Chairman Currey thanked the following Selection panel: Anne Marie Mancini, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum, Cindy Bennett, Risk Manager for Town of East Hartford, Joanne Zatarain, CPA for East Hartford Public Schools, Jenny Correa, Principal, Mayberry School, Joseph Leroy, Supervisor of Health and Physical Education.

Healthy Food Certification

MOTION

By Dorese Roberts

Seconded by Tyron Harris

The East Hartford Board of Education is authorized to “exclude from such certification the sale to students of food and beverage items as identified in Section 10-215f and Section 10-221q and detailed in Section 3(b) – Exemption Statement; provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of a regular school day or on a weekend, (2) such sale is at a location of the event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store.

and furthermore

The East Hartford Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in the state statute provided that the following conditions are met: (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; and (3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Motion unanimously carried.

Pool Safety Plan

MOTION

By Tyron Harris

Seconded by Dorese Roberts

To approve the District's Pool Safety Plan to insure compliance with Connecticut State Law.

Motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Joseph LeRoy, K-12 Supervisor of Health & PE, was present to discuss the Pool Safety Plan.

Board Member Representative Reports

Stephanie Watkins – attended the Invention/Convention at O'Brien School;

Christopher Gentile – attended a conference at Yale. The Commissioner was present and had many accolades for our Board of Education, as well as East Hartford as a whole.

Valerie Scheer – attended multi-cultural night at Pitkin School.

Dorese Roberts – attended Willowbrook Policy Committee. The Head Start New England Conference will be held at Waters Edge in Westbrook, CT.; attended money management seminar.

Questions and Concerns by Board Members

Topics for Future Agendas

MOTION

By Dorese Roberts

Seconded by Marilyn Pet

To adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board (10:40 PM)

Motion unanimously carried.