

**REGULAR MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY,
MARCH 2, 2015**

A Regular Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Monday, March 2, 2015, at the Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Bryan Hall.

PRESENT Chairman Bryan Hall, Tyron Harris, Secretary, Tom Rup, Dorese Roberts
Valerie Scheer, Marilyn Pet, Stephanie Watkins, Shelby Brown

ABSENT Christopher Gentile
Natalya Robinson, Jazmin Rampassard, Student Representatives

ALSO PRESENT Nathan Quesnel, Superintendent of Schools
Cynthia E. Ritchie, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum
Anne Marie Mancini, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum
Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Dr. Sharon Bremner, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Stephanie Watkins
To create a Consent Calendar **Under Old Business to include items 1-6** on this evening's agenda:
1. Policy 6153 – Trips and Excursions
2. Policy 6153.2 – Student Participation in Election Process
3. Policy 6161 – Equipment/Books/Materials: Provision/Selection
4. Policy 6161.1 – Evaluation of Instructional Materials
5. Policy 6164.2 – Comprehensive School Counseling Program/Guidance Services
6. Policy 6172 – Alternative Education Program
Motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 12, 2015 (5:12 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 12, 2015 (5:25 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

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MOTION

By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 18, 2015 (7:00 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

- March 5th, 6:00 – 6:45 PM at the Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street, East Hartford, CT – “Taking the Mystery Out of the Smarter Balanced Assessment” - parents and community members are invited to learn more about standardized testing in Grades 3-8 and 11.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS – None

Natalya Robinson, Jazmin Rampassard, Student Representatives (absent)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Human Resources/No Action Required

Chairman’s Report – Bryan Hall

- I attended the presentation of our budget to the Town Council on Wednesday, February 25th. Thanks to our Superintendent as well as Tyron, Dorese, Tom and Val for attending. It was well received. Thanks also to the cabinet members and administration for their input;
- Deadline for school choice is March 6th to enroll your child into either EHMS or Sunset Ridge.

Superintendent’s Report – Nathan Quesnel

Status of the Schools: Our budget was presented to the Town Council 2/25/15 and was well received. Thanks to Bryan, Tyron, Dorese, Tom and Val for their attendance. In light of our current position, we are currently \$1.8 million from closing the budget. We will have an update in the next couple of weeks about using this year’s budget to pay for next year. 7-12 positions may have to be cut.

Updates from the District: Juvenile Justice Task Force: We hosted our first official meeting of the Juvenile Justice Task Force, composed of EHPD, and EHPS Secondary Administrators. Our focus point is to take a critical look at OSS, ISS, Expulsion and Arrest and develop through data recommendations for best practice. A great group of professionals working together on some very important work!

EH Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast: I attended this event and was joined by Bryan, Tyron, Marilyn and Shelby to hear the Chamber of Commerce speak to our legislative delegates regarding the town priorities. I continue to be impressed and appreciative of the focus of our delegates on the complete issue as well as particular attention to the costs of Special Education and Magnet Schools. Our voice is being represented in Hartford.

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Sunset Ridge Reconfiguration Meeting with Teachers: Our administrative team met with the existing staff at Sunset Ridge to continue to overview our reconfiguration plan as well as address any concerns. I am appreciative of all the hard work my team has done to continue to solidify, clarify and communicate this important work. Parents can pick up information on our website.

Commissioner's Network/Union Meeting: We continue to work with our Union leadership regarding the Commissioner's Network and the potential to add EHMS as a member school. Discussions have shifted to the building level where EHEA met with a group of teacher leaders to overview the plan. We look forward to earning the EHEA's commitment to putting together a committee that will in turn develop a plan that meets the needs of students and staff.

Administrative Council Meeting: We hosted our district administrators last week for our Administrative Council/Professional Development of leaders. Our focus this year has been building the technical skills of our Administrative team in regards to Common Core Curriculum and Smarter Balanced Assessments. This month, we hosted Dr. Shelbi Cole, Deputy Director of content at UCLA for Smarter Balanced. Shelbi is a former EH teacher and currently an EH parent and it was a fantastic opportunity to tap into her wealth of expertise. For clarification, students in Connecticut are required to take the state assessment despite the claims of parents' ability to "opt out." A parent and a student do maintain the right to refuse to take the assessment and will be of course given that right. However, students will enter the computer labs for testing and if they so choose not to participate, that will be their choice. As a district, we are accountable to the State for 95% participation. We will be hosting a parent forum on SBAC at CIBA on March 5 from 6:00 – 6:45 PM.

Good News Report:

Smart Start Grant: We are thrilled to follow-up on the Governor's announcement today that the EH Smart Start Grant was approved by the Office of Early Childhood. This state grant will offer an additional 30 free Pre-K spots for East Hartford children. These monies will also provide \$5,000/child and \$75,000 of facility monies per classrooms for PreK students. While the grant will not fully fund the program (we estimate the district contribution to be around \$45,000), this is a huge win for East Hartford Public Schools, the State of CT and the families we serve. Thanks to our Mayor and legislators. In our current Readiness and Head Start programs, we continue to fall short of reaching our current seat allotments. We were selected by the State of Connecticut for the Smart Start Program based on numbers of "unmet" need.

Next Steps:

- Mid March – Secure union commitment to Commissioner's Network and begin Turnaround Committee Work;
- March 6: SBAC Presentation CIBA;
- Design phase for Smart Start Grant;
- Design Completion for Facility and Grounds renovations at O'Brien School;
- Budget Process - ongoing

"What Matters" Presentation – Norris

Dr. Ed Orszulak, Principal of Norris and Joe Pearce

A PowerPoint presentation was given on "We Build Powerful Pandas!" This began as an idea for a gymnasium banner and then expanded into the halls and walls of Norris School. This has had a positive impact on the 4th grade fitness results. As a result, Norris is the only Connecticut school to secure Aetna's Recess Rocks grant totaling \$4,000.

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The “We Build Powerful Pandas” program has also impacted the Healthy Snacks Program and drawn a connection with the “Hornets”. “What Matters” Powerful Pandas Matter! Superintendent Quesnel recognized Tracy Stefano, Director of Physical Education and Health in the audience.

CMT/CAPT/SBAC Assessment

Marcia Huddy, Supervisor of Professional Development, Program Development and K-12 Curriculum

A PowerPoint presentation was given by Ms. Huddy that included Science CMT/CAPT and Smarter Balanced Assessments. Since July 1, 2013, State Policy is that each student enrolled in grades three to eight, inclusive, and grade ten or eleven in any public school shall, annually, take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, students enrolled in grade five, eight, ten or eleven in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a state wide mastery examination in science. A letter to parents was developed to educate them on the test assessments.

Smarter Balanced testing is aligned to Common Core and assesses student performance on grade level expectations. It is delivered on line and is computer adaptive. This is administered to students in 23 states. Testing is self-paced with no time limit.

Science CMT/CAPT testing is aligned to CT Science Standards and assesses student performance on mastery of strands. It is delivered by paper and pencil and assesses Science in Grades 5, 8 and 10. It is the identical test for all CT students and is administered in fixed time blocks.

Suggestions for parents to help their child prepare for testing is offered; i.e., encourage your child to persevere, work hard, and do his /her best. Parents should also communicate with the child’s teacher. The night before the test, it is suggested to help your child get a good night’s sleep. Avoid/resolve any conflicts. The morning of the test, get up early and avoid rushing; remain positive, supportive, and calm. Have a good breakfast. After the test, talk to your child about feelings and acknowledge the effort testing takes. Discuss what was easy and what was difficult.

Ms. Huddy noted in her presentation that an assessment is a snapshot of one point in time. Multiple measures are used to evaluate student success and needs to determine areas for growth. With high expectations and effort, every child can experience success.

Mid-Year Progress Report

Superintendent Nathan Quesnel

Superintendent Quesnel stated the purpose of this presentation is to continue to focus on our district vision, mission and core beliefs and appropriately celebrate and review our 2014-15 mid-year results. Superintendent Quesnel reviewed “our rating system” with the board and noted progress at this point in the year has been steady but needs attention to ensure completion. Not to focus on “celebrations”; i.e., a review of 2014-15 mid-year achievement data:

1. O’Connell Elementary School Exemplary School Climate Award (finalist for Elementary School of the Year)

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2. CIBA ranked 13th Best Public High School in the Northeast and 49th in the country by the Daily Beast (Newsweek);
3. Cara Quinn, teacher at Sunset Ridge selected as Connecticut's Teacher of the Year;
4. Principal Greg Fox named finalist by Connecticut Association of Schools for Elementary Principal of the Year;
5. Two CIBA students named finalists to the National Merit Scholarship Program, and
6. Forbes Magazine names EHHS Alumni a 30 under 30 Recipient.

Superintendent Quesnel noted the EHPS Vision: Schools that are the Pride of our Community: and the EHPS Mission: To deliver a high quality learning experience for every child, every day.

Superintendent Quesnel reviewed the following six expectations as outlined in the District Improvement Plan:

1. Expect student achievement;
2. Align system and operational efforts;
3. Foster talent and competence;
4. Nurture a solution based culture of safety and engagement;
5. Build family and community relationships;
6. Insist on results

Superintendent Quesnel noted the next steps looking ahead to Spring 2015:

- Budget Process;
- Sunset Ridge IB MYP Program Launch Redesign work;
- Facility Improvements: (a) district parking lot projects; (b) EHMS Window Wall Project;
- Commissioner's Network: (a) O'Brien; (b) New member school (TBD);
- Smart Start Grant Notification/Development of Smart Start Programs;
- Head Start Grant Notification/Development of the EHPS Early Childhood Center

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION

By Tyron Harris

Seconded by Dorese Roberts

To remove from table and approve the following items placed on this evening's Consent Calendar:

- 1 Policy 6153 –Trips and Excursions
2. Policy 6153.2 – Student Participation in Election Process
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Motion unanimously carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Retirements and Resignation:

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Tyron Harris
To approve the following two (2) **Retirements:**
1. Cheryl Larochelle, Secretary, effective 4/7/15;
2. Irene Turner, Teacher, effective 6/30/15;

And

To approve the following four (4) **Resignations:**
1. Amy Haber, Teacher, 3/6/15;
2. Sara Slogesky, Teacher, effective 2/16/15;
3. Anthony Gasparri, Tutor, effective 2/15/15;
4. Matthew White, Tutor, effective 2/20/15;
Motion unanimously carried.

Chairman Hall thanked the two retirees (Cheryl Larochelle and Irene Turner) for their many years of service to the school district.

Overnight Travel To Italy

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
Suzanne Kent & Robert Spiller, staff at CIBA, are requesting permission for 12 students from CIBA to travel to Venice, Florence, Rome and Pisa, Italy on April 1-8, 2015, to study the art and architecture of Italy.
Motion unanimously carried.

Board Member Shelby Brown asked if we check with the State Department on the status of any unrest in the countries where our students/chaperones travel. It was noted that this idea will be assessed for consideration.

To Approve the Revised 2015-2016 Subcommittee Assignments

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Tyron Harris
To approve the Revised 2015-2016 Subcommittee Assignments due to the vacancy created by Jeffrey Currey and the election of a new Board Chairman and Secretary.
Motion unanimously carried.

To Approve Certified Staff Member's Use of Employee Sick Bank

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Tyron Harris
To approve certified staff member's use of Employee Sick Bank.
Motion unanimously carried.

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To Approve Non-Certified Staff Member's Use of Employee Sick Bank

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Tyron Harris
To approve non-certified staff member's use of Employee Sick Bank.
Motion unanimously carried.

Board Member Representative Reports

Stephanie Watkins – attended U for Youth meeting at Mayberry School;
Valerie Scheer – visited Pitkin School and took part in the “Read Across America” program;
Marilyn Pet – visited O’Brien School and volunteered in the Book Club program, attendance has increased to 15 children;
Dorese Roberts – (a) will be attending U for Youth program at Langford School this Wednesday; (b) attended Langford School “Breakfast for Dads”, twenty Dads were present; (c) UConn interns came into Willowbrook School and gave lessons on healthy eating to students, we received a grant of \$785.00 for this event;
Tyron Harris – attended O’Connell School PTO meeting – parents and students are excited with all the offerings at their school.
Chairman Bryan Hall – attended the Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast at the Holiday Inn with several Board members.

Questions and Concerns by Board Members – None

Topics for Future Agendas – None

MOTION By Valerie Scheer
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (9:39 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald