

**REGULAR MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY,
MARCH 16, 2015**

A Regular Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Monday, March 16, 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

ABSENT Christopher Gentile, Shelby Brown
Jazmin Rampassard, Student Representative

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

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA - None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 25, 2015 (5:10 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Valerie Scheer
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 25, 2015 (5:22 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Valerie Scheer
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 25, 2015 (5:37 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Valerie Scheer
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, February 25, 2015 (5:57 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

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MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve the following Minutes:
Regular Board Meeting, March 2, 2015 (7:00 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Valerie Scheer
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, March 5, 2015 (5:22 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION By Dorese Roberts
Seconded by Valerie Scheer
To approve the following Minutes:
Special Board Meeting, March 5, 2015 (5:35 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

- Kindergarten registration is taking pace. Central Registration is located at 734 Tolland Street, East Hartford and open Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Please call f860-622-5080 for information;
- April 24th – Arbor Day Celebration 9:45 AM at O’Connell School – West Gym

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS – Natalya Robinson, Student Representative

- March 18th, CAPT testing;
- March 18th, Pep Rally – celebrating winter and spring athletes for students who have general honors or appropriate amount of service hours;
- March 19th through March 21st – Annie, the musical at EHHS;
- Saturday, March 28th, 9:30-1:00 Bunny Breakfast with Peter Cottontail and Spring Egg Hunt at EHHS, 869 Forbes Street, 11:00 free egg hunt, EHHS Gym. For further information please call (860) 291-7160;
- March 23rd, first day of Spring sports;
- April 2nd, end of the quarter, families are encouraged to use Home Access Center
- EHHS had two winter scholar athletes: Shawn Murdzek and Tara Peng (identified by The Hartford Courant;
- The school is using more e-mail notifications – parents are urged to check frequently for more information about the school and district. Information can also be found on Twitter (search EHHS).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Human Resources/No Action Required

Chairman's Report – Bryan Hall

- Nicole Nalepa, Traffic Reporter for WFSB Channel 3, was a guest at O'Brien STEM Academy on March 8th for The Rally of Receiving a Special Guest for purchasing numerous equipment for gym and recreational health activities; this event was featured on March 9th on the 6:30 AM news. Nicole gave a great "shout out" with pictures showing the rally and explaining it is a great grant to receive. She ended by thanking the O'Brien STEM Academy for inviting her and the great time she had – again, another great media exposure showcasing the awesome schools the Board of Education has established in East Hartford! Kudos to Dr. Leslie Morgan-Thompson and her staff. We also want to thank the parents who see the value of a quality education and the many outstanding choices right here in our phenomenal school district;
- It is appropriate that Caryn Stedman, Principal of CIBA is here tonight – The Connecticut IB Academy is unveiling its new school logo, along with its first school motto "To know is not enough". It was then translated into Latin, which I will let Ms. Stedman reference during her forthcoming presentation this evening;
- All parents, guardians, grandparents or anyone raising a school aged child – there have been numerous studies done on proper sleeping hours for learning success. The average adolescent needs ten hours of sleep to be alert to learn; teens need 8-9 hours to also have the necessary energy to be more effective as students retaining their learning in school. That pattern should continue in college. Also, a healthy breakfast contributes to the success of having well educated students. These are just two reminders that the home is an important foundation for the development of successful students;
- The East Hartford Board of Education is dedicated to providing a challenging learning curriculum for every student, every day! Help us in assisting you in achieving the quality learning district that the East Hartford Public Schools promises your student. Together it is a path that leads to a future to be proud of.

Superintendent's Report – Nathan Quesnel

Status of the Schools: Our schools are thriving and moving into our annual assessment season with the launch of Smarter Balanced Assessment Testing. At all of our districts' schools, our teachers principals and students have worked hard to both master content as well as work through the logistics of our annual state assessment. We have hosted several events regarding Smarter Balanced as well as posted pertinent and vital information for parents. We look forward to our students doing their best and learning more about what the data tells us. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you to all teachers and students.

Updates from the District:

Sunset Ridge MYP/IB Launch: On a first review of parent requests submitted so far, and if all current requests are granted, including if all students attending O'Connell Grade 5 go to Sunset Grade 6 and all Sunset Grade 6 stay for Grade 7 (when no other request has been received) we have collected the following data:

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- EHMS Grade 6 – 113
- Sunset Ridge Grade 6 – 124
- Sunset Ridge Grade 7 – 113
- Undecided/no placement request
- Grade 6 – 170
- Grade 7 – 65

We are thrilled to see the appropriate level of enrollment at Sunset, to have a viable program and look forward to next steps. Over the next few weeks, our Central Office team will be reaching out to parents who failed to submit a request and verifying placement. In addition, a confirmation letter will be sent to parents in the next two weeks letting them know of their child's placement for next year as well as orientation dates. We look forward to continuing the next step in the development of the Sunset Program.

Commissioner's Network/Union Meeting: We continue to work with our teachers and union regarding their willingness to participate in the Commissioner's Network at EHMS. Last week, our team and CEA attended a whole staff meeting at EMHS led by Mr. Menard where he overviewed the plan and openly answered questions. This week, the union will be meeting again on Wednesday with staff and we hope to take the next steps towards forming the Turnaround Committee and beginning the opening audit. On a separate note, we were notified by the SDE today that after a successful mid-year audit, the department has invited the O'Brien team to increase their year II network plans to \$500,000, as well as request an additional \$200,000 in bond funding for facility improvements. We are extremely excited by this great news and the resources we are able to provide for students at O'Brien. We hope in the near future to be able to extend the same opportunities for EHMS students. We are asking for teachers to form a Turnaround Committee.

Smart Start Grant: In light with last month's grant announcement, we are moving forward to begin to prepare Hockanum School to house two new Pre-K classrooms (30 slots). The SMART GRANT included \$150,000 of facilities money and we are working hard to be strategic with our investment considering the potential that if the HeadStart Grant is successful, Hockanum could become an Early Childhood Center (decision not final). Our Facilities team has been busy with space planning and a critical look at the upgrades our facilities need.

Budget Development: The town passed the budget last week and as projected, the BoE received the 1.1% increase for a net budget of \$88,266,419. This means that we are \$1,899,562 short of our BoE proposal and our team is hard at work on finding ways to close the gap. This week, we prepared 17 letters going out to teachers over the next month regarding the Reduction in Force (RIF) necessary based on the potential of the HeadStart Grant to go through – These letters and RIFs will be approved by the BoE per our policy. In addition, we sent out a district memo effectively freezing our budget for the end of the year in Mr. Mainuli's annual close out memo. As a result, any needed expenditures must go through Mr. Mainuli. Our goal as stated is to accumulate as much money in our 2014-15 adopted budget to prepay Debt Service (\$718,831) and possibly OPEB (\$670,000).

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Sub-Committee Update: As a part of our new Chairman's direction, we are looking to continue to work with our BoE sub-committees to set a more routine schedule of meetings to discuss important work. Over the next few weeks, you should expect your administrative liaison to reach out to you via a phone call to discuss scheduling and sub-committee work. We are looking forward to working with you to develop strong sub-committees and deliver presentations that can in turn be brought back to the board for a full discussion. As always, your input and support is appreciated.

Next Steps:

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

Third Quarter Financial Report

Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services

Mr. Mainuli noted the Town passed the budget last week notifying the Board that we will receive a 1.1% increase for a net budget of \$88,266,419. We are \$1,899,562 short of our BoE proposed budget for FY 2015-16. A memo was sent to all administrators stating the budget is frozen and if requisitions are needed, you must go through Mr. Mainuli. By putting a freeze on spending, we are planning to accumulate funds by fiscal year end to cover Debt Service (\$718,831). Any remaining funds will be used for OPED payments and facilities.

Other budget concerns are the cost of Health Benefits, utilities and setting aside monies for Facilities. There are projects previously identified to be completed including (1) Silver Lane School parking lot paving, and (2) EHMS HVAC repair of ductwork on the roof.

Mr. Mainuli added that Facilities Director, Mr. Costa, has requested a heavy duty truck for buildings and grounds maintenance. He also stated that the Business Service Office is working with the town on the sale of two Type II Vans that were purchased from Greater Hartford Transit. The Type II Vans are old and not practical for use by the school district. We will work with Access Transportation, one of our bus contractors, on the possible purchase of two used mini vans. The mini vans will be used by Synergy and EHHS.

Mr. Mainuli noted that Medicaid revenues will go toward Special Education costs. We expect additional revenue from E-rate reimbursements for voice and data communications.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Retirements and Resignation:

MOTION

By Tyron Harris

Seconded by Valerie Scheer

To approve the following (1) **Retirement:**

1. Judy Brown, Secretary, effective 6/30/15 **And**

To approve the following five (5) **Resignations:**

1. Craig Fair, Network Technician, effective 3/20/15;
2. Kheri Lusain, Para Educator, effective 2/27/15;
3. Mark Plefka, School Psychologist, effective 6/30/15;
4. Tawanda Hurdle-Jackson, Tutor, effective 3/20/15;
5. Therese Shanks, Tutor, effective 3/20/15.

Motion unanimously carried.

MOTION

By Tyron Harris

Seconded by Dorese Roberts

To **table for First Read** Policies 3-12:

3. Policy 1330 – Use of School Facilities
4. Policy 5113 – Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal
- 5 Policy 5121 – Examination/Grading/Rating
6. Policy 5123 – Promotions/Acceleration/Retention
7. Policy 5141.4 – Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect
8. Policy 6146 – Graduation Requirements
9. Policy 6146.2 – Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations
10. Policy 6163.3 – Live Animals in the Classroom
11. Policy 6163.32 Live Animals in the Classroom – Service Animals in Schools
12. Bylaw 9325.2 – Order of Business

Motion unanimously carried.

SERVIS – International Exchange Program

Caryn Stedman, Principal of CIBA

Ms. Stedman presented to the Board CIBA's 2014-15 International Exchange students. Eight students participated in the program. Many of the students were in attendance and stated the valuable learning exchanges that took place while being in the United States. Most students came here without knowledge of the English language. All that were present spoke English and shared their experiences while being here.

Exchange students are here for a cultural experience and do not expect to graduate or complete the IB Diploma. The U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor J-1 visas are offered. No tuition is permitted to be paid to the school and no stipend is to be paid to homestay families.

Mr. Robert McKay, a South Windsor resident and host family, spoke to the Board and expressed what a wonderful experience this has been.

Ms. Stedman has offered a proposal for F-1 students. F-1 students (organizations) must pay school tuition less service fee. Organizations pay homestay families monthly stipends; CIBA must be certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). To become certified, an on-line application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is needed. The application fee is \$1,700.00; site visit \$655.00, for a total of \$2,355.00 for each student. Ms. Stedman would like to have approval to submit an on-line application.

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MOTION

By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To submit to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
an application for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information
System (SEVIS)
Motion unanimously carried.

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

MOTION

By Marilyn Pet
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve certified staff member's use of Employee Sick Bank –
O'Brien School
Motion unanimously carried.

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

MOTION

By Marilyn Pet
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To approve certified staff member's use of Employee Sick Bank –
Sunset Ridge School
Motion unanimously carried.

Board Member Representative Reports

Marilyn Pet – (1) attended the School Readiness Meeting; attended the STEM job fair at O'Brien School;

Valerie Scheer – (1) attended family night at Pitkin School; (2) attended grant celebration at O'Brien School;

Stephanie Watkins – did a walk-through at Synergy with the Superintendent, Tyron Harris and Valerie Scheer;

Chairman Bryan Hall – thanked Mr. Costa and the entire Facilities Department for the winter clean up.

Questions and Concerns by Board Members – None

Topics for Future Agendas - None

MOTION

By Tyron Harris
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (8:30 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald