

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: May 1, 2008, 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Cos Cob School

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Nancy Weissler, Chairman
Mr. Steven B. Anderson, Secretary
Mr. Michael Bodson
Mr. Jonathan Cohen
Mrs. Marianna Ponns Cohen
Dr. Susan S. Ellis
Ms. Natalie Queen

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Kathleen Greider, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Asst. Superintendent, Business
Operations
Mr. John Curtin, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. Chris Winters, Director, Curriculum & Professional Learning
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director, Human Resources
Mr. Anthony Byrne, Director of Facilities

Other: Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, Mrs. Sue Rogers, Mrs. Paige Davis, PTA Council; Ms. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mrs. Trish McGuire, Mrs. Le Ann Hinkle, Julian Curtiss; Mrs. Julie Nixon, Mrs. Sheyda Ardalon, Mrs. Lynda Carroll, Mr. William Booth, Mr. Ron Lake, Greenwich High School; Mr. Bill Robbins, Mrs. Kathy Coon, New Lebanon School; Mrs. Patricia Brennan, Mrs. Judy Petersen, Central Middle School; Mrs. Kimberly Beck, Principal, Mrs. Mary Rose Dymond, Asst. Principal, Cos Cob School; Ms. Hoa Nuygen, Greenwich Time, Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Post, Mrs. Anne Semmes, Greenwich Citizen and other members of the public. An attendance list is on file in the Board of Education office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Weissler, Chairman at 6:03 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Anderson to accept the agenda.

AMENDMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to amend the Agenda to eliminate the First Reading of Revision to Policy E-001 and move it to the June Board Work Session.

VOTE: 5 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED
(Mr. Cohen and Mr. Bodson
not yet arrived)

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Dr. Ellis to postpone Action on Revision to Superintendent's Contract to the May 22nd Board Meeting.

VOTE: 5 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED
(Mr. Cohen and Mr. Bodson
not yet arrived)

VOTE ON AGENDA AS AMENDED:
5 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED
(Mr. Cohen and Mr. Bodson
not yet arrived)

Scholastic Art Awards

The following students were recognized for their awards in the Connecticut State Scholastic Awards competition:

Lindsey Laney
Matthew Neuman
Sidney Beaty
Brooke Schiffman
Sophie Vos
Elliot Conte
Sara Joe Wolansky
Asuka Faruichi
Anne Aviles
Christian Rios
Charlotte Cline
Camille Chabrol
Rachel Brand
Sean-Andrew Pyle
Alexandra Metter
Guinevere Freccia
Cary Williams

2. Debrief of 2008-2009 Budget Process and Discussion of 2009-2010 Budget Limitations and Talking Points for 2008-2009 Capital and Operating Budgets

The Board and District Administration discussed ways to improve upon the budget development process, the presentation of materials and the practice of providing written answers to budget questions. Discussion centered on budget reallocation, efficiency, level services budgeting, historical analysis, shared services, transportation, benchmarking, budget transfers, and modified open choice. Dr. Sternberg stressed that on top of a 199 page budget, the Administrative staff also responded to 205 additional questions. She emphasized the amount of time needed to respond to and research the high number of questions. The Board also addressed the redundancy of questions and how to handle need to know vs. nice to know questions. A recommendation was made to divide the budget into sections and split the sections amongst Board members to have them accumulate, combine and prioritize questions.

Administration will present the 2009-2010 Budget Limitations based on this discussion at the May 22nd Board Meeting.

3. New Lebanon Magnet School Update

Mr. Gene Nyitray, Principal of New Lebanon School gave the Board a detailed review of the work of the New Lebanon Magnet School Committee, their review of options, and their group decision to focus on the International Baccalaureate Program and the Padea program. Mr. Eugene Mattea (4th Grade teacher at ISD), Tracy McKenna (a parent at New Lebanon), and Amy Rose (1st Grade teacher at New Lebanon), spoke about the attributes of each program and the importance of social and emotional learning in their discussion. Questions focused on staying sensitive to cost, the attractiveness to all Greenwich students, and academic achievement. Mrs. Weissler thanked the committee for their work and planning. This item will be presented for action at the June 19th Board Meeting.

4. Review of Haskins Lab Report – Reading

Mr. Chris Winters, Director of Curriculum, introduced Margie Gillis, from Haskin Labs. She reviewed the report and the teaching of spelling. She stressed the importance of professional learning for staff and the need to insure that all reading efforts are aligned with the Balanced Literacy program.

5. Update on Hamilton Avenue School Schedule of Completion

Mr. Bodson reported that the building is 95% complete and that they expect a temporary Certificate of Occupancy by late June. The Building Committee expects to go forward to the RTM in June with a \$200,000 contingency request to insure that the project gets completed in time.

6. Update on Elementary School Relocation Plan and Discussion of Alternate School Placement Procedure – 2008-2009 School Year.

Mr. Curtin led the discussion on this issue and presented a procedure that will be implemented to provide an option for either Hamilton Avenue and/or Glenville parents requesting alternate elementary school options for the duration of construction of their new building other than the modulars. At this point, it is premature to have a definite relocation plan in place, but he did advise the Board that we are not soliciting applications until the end of the school year. Mr. Curtin noted that available seats will be defined as the number of seats under the midpoint.

7. Review and Discussion of Grades 3-5 Spelling for Writers Pilot Report

Mr. Winters, along with Mrs. Libby Ross and Ms. Tressa Torre, a teacher at Riverside School, gave the Board an overview of the Spelling for Writers Pilot Program and the results of the survey done of the pilot teachers. They are requesting implementation throughout the district to improve the achievement of all students in spelling.

8. Discussion of Middle School Textbooks

The Board was provided with an update on the middle school core literature units of study by Chris Winters, Fran Kompar, Program Coordinator for Media and Technology, Pat Brennan, an English teacher at Central Middle School, and Judy Peterson, a Media Specialist. They presented the core literature selection for middle school students. The proposal represents a collaborate effort between the library media specialists and language arts teachers.

9. First Reading, Revision to Policy E-001 – Curriculum Review Process

Removed per the amended Agenda.

10. Discussion of Monitoring Report E-003 – The Arts

Mr. Winters opened the discussion by advising the Board that Connecticut has been ranked as the Best State for Music Education. He discussed the monitoring report and thoughts about making credits in the arts a significant part of graduation requirements. He addressed the issues of staff reductions and their impact on the programs.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to take a five minute break at 8:50 p.m.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

11. Action on Monitoring Report E-040 – Effective Learning Environment

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve Monitoring Report E-040 – Effective Learning Environment.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTON CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Mr. Bodson to extend the time of the meeting until 10:00 p.m.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

12. First Reading, Revision to Policy R-002 – Superintendent’s Evaluation

Dr Ellis reviewed the revisions to Policy R-002 – Superintendent’s Evaluation with the Board.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Ponns Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to add the phrase “The Board of Education reserves the

right to conduct qualitative assessment of the Superintendent for informational purposes.”

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

13. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Cohen to approve Budget Transfers, as presented.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

14. Discussion of Monitoring Report L-001 – Legal Requirements

Dr. Wallerstein and Dr. Flanagan presented this Monitoring Report, which requires Board, Administration and Staff to adhere to established law, statute, policy and procedures. This Monitoring Report will be presented to the Board for action at the May 22nd Meeting.

15. Discussion of Monitoring Report L-010 – Information, Assessment, Analysis

Dr. Sternberg presented this Monitoring Report to the Board, which discusses the cumulative dissemination of information to the Board, staff, Town officials, parents, community and media. Comments from the Board centered on questions related to the number of lawsuits, grievances, and a request for an update on CHRO complaints, FOI requests, and lawsuits as part of this Monitoring Report. It is scheduled for action at the May 22nd Board Meeting.

16. Discussion of Monitoring Report L-030 – Aligned Operations Management

Dr. Sternberg provided the Board with an overview of this Monitoring Report. It will be scheduled for action at the May 22nd Board Meeting.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Request for Interim Appropriation for 2007-2008 Operating Budget

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Cohen to approve going forward with Request for Interim Appropriation for 2007-2008 Operating Budget for \$500,000.

Dr. Wallerstein explained that, due to the situation with the modulars and the Hamilton Avenue School relocation, analysis showed a need to request this Interim Appropriation. Due to timing, the request would need to reach the BET tomorrow and be heard by the RTM on June 9th. Main discussion points from the Board included the fact that there are many variables in our budget, and what would happen if this request doesn't get approved.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

18. Discussion and Possible Action on Request for Capital Appropriation for Clark House Roof

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Ms. Queen to approve the request for Capital Appropriation of \$700,000 for Clark House Roof.

Dr. Wallerstein provided the Board with a history of maintenance staff work, outside vendor work and general work performed on the Clark House roof. She addressed that this item was in the Capital Plan, which was sent back to us three time to spread out our capital projects to future years. They have hired an outside consultant to examine the roof and there is the need for its replacement.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Queen to extend the time of the meeting by an additional ten minutes.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

19. Review of 2007-2008 Agenda Plan

Mrs. Weissler reviewed the changes to the Agenda Plan:

1. Superintendent's Contract Revision to May 22nd
2. Board Work Session from June 5th to June 12th

3. E-001, Curriculum Review to June 12th

It was moved by Ms. Queen and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven B. Anderson
Secretary