

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: February 4, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Havemeyer Building

PRESENT:

Board: Mr. Steven B. Anderson, Chairman
Mrs. Leslie Moriarty, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Michael Bodson, Secretary
Mr. Jonathan Cohen
Mrs. Marianna Ponns Cohen
Ms. Nancy Kail
Ms. Natalie Queen
Mr. Peter Sherr

Administration:

Dr. Sidney Freund, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Robert Lichtenfeld, Interim Asst. Supt, Business
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications

Other: Mr. Ralph Mayo, Ms. Stacey Gross, and Ms. Shelly Somers, Middle School Principals; Ms. Diane Chiappetta Fox, GHS Student Activities Coordinator; Mr. Chris Winters, GHS Headmaster; Mrs. Sue Rogers, President, Mrs. Bianka Kourtlan-Cox, PTA Council; Ms. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President; Mrs. Paige Davis, SES,; Mrs. Camille Broderick, GHS PTA, Mrs. Nadine Longmuir, Cos Cob PTA,; Mrs. Maureen Boresenth, Old Greenwich PTA. An attendance list is on file in the Board of Education office.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Anderson, Chairman at 7:03 p.m.

First Reading, Monitoring Report E-002, Whole Student Development

Ms. Mary Forde, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, presented the E-002 Monitoring Report. The report contained significant levels of data regarding sports, other extracurricular activities as well as disciplinary issues across the district. The discussion by the Board regarding the report, highlighted both the increase in student activities as well as noting that certain groups of students are continually suspended, addressed social and emotional learning goals and possible policy implications.

Mr. Ralph Mayo, Principal of Eastern Middle School, provided examples of different approaches Eastern Middle School is using to engage students. As an example, the use of Advisor Base activities regarding how to demonstrate to students the impact of using or not using respect. He also advised that an Advisory Group made up of students and staff reviews all fundraising efforts to determine whether or not to move forward to further approval. They also use a kids helping kids approach, which includes peer tutoring two days a week, and how this process has been so effective from both the recipient and the tutor.

Dr. Stacey Gross, Principal of Western Middle School discussed in detail the discipline issues that were present when she came to Western and the procedures which were implemented aimed at addressing these issues. Suspensions in Western have had a marked decrease, indicating the success of these initiatives.

Ms. Diane Chiappetta Fox, Student Activities Director, addressed efforts being made at the high school to engage students in clubs. They have also started to do exit surveys at graduation of students to determine their involvement or reasons for their lack of involvement. Ms. Fox advised that they received 12 applications for new clubs in the past year, fairly consistent with prior years. She reviewed the process for establishing a new club including determining overlaps with other clubs, adequate levels of participation and the identification of an adult advisor.. Lastly, she discussed how the school attempts to connect with students through events such as Club Day group meetings.

Mr. Chris Winters, Headmaster at GHS, discussed ways in which he has been dealing with discipline issues. Steps being taken include making extra sweeps in the Student Center, posting a person at the entrance to the Cafeteria to intercept students that should be in class, leverage the success in reducing the amount of garbage in the Student Center, and trying to determine the way to track the number of students signing up for an activity versus the number of students that actually show up. He discussed the spike in arrests for drug issues and explained that the high school has a zero tolerance policy. They are talking to students about the impact of decisions that students may make. In response to questions related to the recent decision to utilize

drug sniffing dogs on campus, he indicated that there were mass emails sent to parents on this issue and he has generally received positive feedback. He noted that the dogs would not be used anywhere near students and the focus was on searching cars but not as an attempt to have students arrested but rather as a deterrent to students bringing narcotics onto school grounds.

Issues raised by the Board in relation to this Monitoring Report include:

1. The Monitoring Report should address progress and specific steps to increase engagement for Black and Hispanic students;
2. A request was made for the percentage of staff participating in activities;
3. Before the next meeting, a list of management and governance issues and expectations regarding how improvements will be implemented;
4. A request for a further discussion on how the educational objectives are being met and who is responsible for outcomes; and
5. Whether there is any policy issues to be proposed in relation to it.

This Monitoring Report will return to the February 25th Board Meeting.

Action on Revision to 2011-2012 School Calendar

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to approve the revision to the 2011-2012 School Calendar.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion and Possible Action on 2010-2011 Capital Improvement Plan

The Board held a discussion regarding the 2010-2011 Capital Improvement Plan. It was the general view that the MISA project will not be included in the Selectman's Capital Improvement Plan, primarily due to the need for the Fire House renovation project as well as the overall demand for capital expenditures across the town. There was a discussion regarding the Board's view on whether or not the Town should go forward with the current \$50 million capital budget or cut \$10 million from that number and utilize in next year, possibly increasing the probability of MISA being approved next year. It was generally determined that a majority of the Board was unwilling to agree to such a cut with no specific guarantee that any consideration would be given to improving the timeline for the MISA project. Mr. Sherr then indicated that fundraising for

the MISA project was essential going forward. Mr. Bodson was asked to lead the effort to create a Private/Public fundraising effort along with Mr. Sherr.

Review of 2009-2010 Agenda Plan

The Agenda Plan was revised to include a Capital Improvement Projects discussion on February 25th and the removal of the Science Monitoring Report from the same meeting.

The Whole Student Development report was deferred to Dr. Freund to determine when Administration will be ready for this report.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Bodson to move into Executive Session at 8:37 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to return to public session at 8:57 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to adjourn at 8:58 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Michael C. Bodson
Secretary