

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: August 27, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Cos Cob School

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Nancy Weissler, Chairman
Mrs. Leslie Moriarty, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Michael C. Boson, Secretary
Mr. Steven B. Anderson
Mr. Jonathan Cohen
Mrs. Marianna Ponns Cohen (telephonically)
Dr. Susan S. Ellis
Ms. Natalie Queen

Administration:

Dr. Sidney Freund, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Susan Waller stein, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. John Curtin, Special Projects Manager
Mr. Rich Calcavecchio, Director of Budget and Systems
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications

Other:

Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mrs. Sue Rogers, Mrs. Bianca Kortlan-Cox, Mrs. Mrs. Patricia Jomo, Mrs. Jennifer Meridith, Mrs. Kelley Moore, PTA Council; Ms. Vikki Morrison, Mrs. Janet Stone McGuigon, Mrs. Kim Blank, North Street School; Mrs. Tara Burns, Mrs. Jill Bogaty, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Swift, Mrs. Gina Marino, North Mianus School; Mr. Dave LoParco, Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, Mr. Andrew Busani, Ms. Rocio Valdovinos, Mrs. Blakely Stinebaugh, Mrs. Janette Noddin, Mrs. Laurie Caputo, Mrs. Kathy Harrington, Mrs. Christina Russell, Eastern Middle School; Mrs. Nancy Kail, Mr. Peter Sherr, BOE Candidates; Mr. Colin Gustafson, Greenwich Time, Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Post, and various members of the community. An attendance list is on file in the Board Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Weissler, Chairman, at 7:10 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Queen to accept the Agenda.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Reports/Comments

Ms. Kim Beck, Principal of Cos Cob School, welcomed the Board to the school.

Mrs. Weissler welcomed Dr. Freund to the district. She also thanked the staff for the work done over the summer, citing Dr. Wallerstein, Mr. Byrne and the facilities staff for the excellent condition of the schools. She noted the current issues present at the start of the school including student transportation and class sizes.

Dr. Freund spoke to the Board about the recent Leadership Retreat and the use of data driven decision making and the challenges and benefits to this approach. He also addressed the issue of Eastern Middle School courtesy bus passes and the changes that have been put in place that impacted their usage. He told the Board that we are attempting to apply the policies and procedures regarding this issue consistently across all three middle schools. The number of courtesy bus passes used by the Eastern community is significantly higher than at the other two middle schools. He advised parents regarding the procedures for appeal and that the Administration is working with the Public Works and Police Depts. to undertake a study to examine the issue, especially as it pertains to safety. They will also use a traffic consultant to provide expertise. In the meantime, one bus stop has been added for the remainder of the school year at the corner of Lancer Road and Sound Beach Avenue Extension. They will look at this issue again after the second week of school. Results of the study will be made public to all interested parties.

Dr. Freund also addressed the issue of Class Size. At the moment, we are 126 students over projections, mostly in Kindergarten, 5th and 9th grades. On August 15, the cutoff date, we had 69 sections. Another look will be taken at the numbers after school starts to see what adjustments need to be made.

Mrs. Sue Rogers, PTA Council President, welcomed Dr. Freund to Greenwich and praised his knowledge and skills, open manner, and willingness to listen. She thanked him for all the time he spent this summer learning about all the stakeholders. She provided the Board with an overview of what certain school's PTAs have been doing over the summer in preparation for the near year as well as their focus for the upcoming year.

Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President, also welcomed Dr. Freund and explained how their first encounter was at the Greenwich Police Dept. bailing him out of “jail” – a fundraiser for the Silver Shield Association. She talked about how pleased teachers were to see the collaboration time component of the new curriculum.

PUBLIC HEARING

The following people spoke at the Public Hearing:

Mr. Dave LoParco, Eastern Middle School parent, spoke about the issue of the reduction in courtesy passes to Eastern Middle School Students and the ripple effect at North Mianus School and Perrot Library, congestion at Eastern, and ended with a request to add stops for all students who have now lost bus courtesy passes.

Mr. Bob Brady, RTM Education Committee Chairman and Riverside resident, spoke about the possible use of crossing guards for students who live within the walking distance of Eastern Middle School. He advised the Police may provide these guards but expressed concern that the cost of such measures be carefully considered versus the cost of additional bus routes. He urged the Board to revisit the policy on transportation with an eye toward student safety.

Ms. Joanne Steele, parent, spoke about the number of items that students need to carry to get to school (i.e, backpack, instruments, gym bag, etc.) and still walk a mile and a half to get to school.

Ms. Rocio Valdovinos asked the Board to reinstate the bus from Adams Garden to Eastern Middle School.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/SHARING INFORMATION

Reports of Officers, Committees and Liaisons

Mr. Bodson advised that the Glenville Building project is on or ahead of schedule. They hope to receive a TCO by the end of September or early October and are hopeful to move in for the end of the calendar year.

Mrs. Moriarty advised that the GHSMISA Building Committee has met three times over the summer and are near the end of the schematic design work. They are meeting with neighbors and will come back to the September 10th Work Session.

Mr. Anderson advised that the Negotiations Committee has conducted negotiations and mediation with GOSA and are heading for arbitration. All meetings have been very respectful and professional but differences continue to exist and he is looking forward to a conclusion in the next few months.

Enrollment Update

Mr. Curtin provided an update on enrollment indicating that at the moment we are 126 students over projections, and the most significant increases are being seen in Kindergarten, Fifth and Ninth grades. It is his assumption that these increases are a result of the economic situation and students not transferring out of the district. There was a significant gain of 44 students at Glenville School which was primarily caused by students who previously had opted out of the school returning. He advised that, consistent with the past, some reduction in enrollment is seen once school starts but he estimates that we will probably be over projection when September 15th arrives. Dr. Flanagan advised that we closed two sections at Cos Cob School, opened one section at New Lebanon, closed one section at Old Greenwich School and closed one section of Kindergarten at Parkway School. They are currently monitoring all schools to keep a close eye on class size. No adjustments to sections will be made until the students actually return to school. Middle schools have had no changes and the high school has added 2.0 FTEs for additional enrollment. Mr. Curtin also noted that PreK is below projection, but those numbers will be filled in from the waiting list, which currently includes close to 200 students. A request was made for an enrollment update, including PreK at the September 10th Work Session.

Academic Achievement Report

Mr. Curtin provided a powerpoint review of the academic achievement of the district in the DRP, CMT, CAPT, AP and SAT Tests. He started by providing background on the districts against which Greenwich compares itself including the differing demographics which Greenwich encompasses. Greenwich has a higher level of ethnic diversity, free/reduced lunch and English as Second Language percentages. He then provided a review of the scores by academic area and grade level, highlight both areas of achievement and of concern. Mr. Curtin also showed the new growth data which the State is now providing. This allows the district to look at growth for the same students which provides a measure of our teaching performance versus other districts. Questions from the Board centered on how does the District attempt to improve in one area without negatively impacting others, an apparent weakness in the reading skills of students entering high school, the flatness of math scores from grades 3 to 8, and the fact that the 08-09 numbers look a lot better than the 07-08 numbers. It was noted that the data showed areas of improvement in many areas including many new high scores however our results versus comparable districts were not performing well. Dr. Freund highlighted the need to focus on a smaller set of key initiatives. In his early analysis, he believes the District has over-stretched itself and may be suffering from initiative fatigue. We will need to dedicate resources on the key issues.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

a. Action on Monthly Financial and Staffing Report

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Bodson to approve the Monthly Financial and Staffing Report.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

a. Action on Secretary's Request to Approve Minutes of May 14, May 29, June 18 and July 24, 2009

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the Minutes of May 14, May 29, June 18 and July 24, 2009.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Planning – Discussion of the 2008-2009 Agenda Plan

The following item was added to the Agenda Plan:

December Work Session	Discussion on Hearing Officer
September Work Session	Executive Session to discuss litigation
September Work Session	Executive Session for personnel issues
TBD (before budget)	Update on modular's
October Board Mtg.	Facilities Audit
9/24 Board Meeting	GHS MISA (move from 9/10 work session)
TBD	Update on Administrative Vacancies
September Work Session	GHS Headmaster Search Consultant Discussion
TBD	Discussion on Improvement of Board/Community Relations
September Work Session	Discussion of GHS Student Rep on BOE
Monthly	Update from Dr. Freund re GDDT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Bodson, the Board voted to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Issues and GOSA Negotiations at 8:45 p.m.

Upon motion duly made Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Anderson, the Board returned to public session at 9:06

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Anderson, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael C. Bodson
Secretary