

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

TIME: November 16, 2006

PLACE: North Street School

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Colleen Giambo, Chairman
Ms. Virginia L. Gwynn, Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Leslie B. Moriarty, Secretary
Mr. Steven B. Anderson
Mr. Michael Bodson
Dr. Susan S. Ellis
Mr. William G. Kelly
Mrs. Nancy Weissler

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Mary Capwell, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. John P. Curtin, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Susan O. Wallerstein, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Anthony Byrne, Director of Facilities
Mr. Richard Calcavecchio, Director of Budget
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director of Communications

Other:

Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, President, Mrs. Rae Baczek, GEA; Mrs. Janice Richards, President, Mrs. MJ Foti, PTA Council; Mr. Steven Walko, Mr. Larry Simon, Mr. Jim Himes, BET; Mrs. Genevieve J. Krob, Mrs. Marjorie Stone Rodriguez, Mrs. Diane Corba, Ms. Brenda Friedler, Mr. Bill Booth, Mr. Frank Kovac, Mrs. Kathy Bryers, Greenwich High School PTA; Mrs. Laura DiBella, Mr. Vincent DeMartis, Mrs. Mina Bibeault, Dr. and Mrs. James Brunetti, Mr. Vincent Fiorito, Mr. Eugeni Mitkov, Mrs. Darlene Angotto, Dr. Damaris Rau, Principal, Hamilton Avenue School; Ms. Betty Burfiend, Principal, Mrs. Cindy Baird, Mrs. Linda LeBreton, Mrs. Dolores Kenny, Ms. Lisa Bentley, Mrs. Lucy Langley, Mrs. Catherine Gunthrope, Mrs. Kelly Fujitani, Mrs. Vicki Morrison, Mrs. Marilyn Kuper, North Street School; Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich News, and various community members. An attendance list is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Giambo, Chairman, at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the revised Agenda.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adjourn to a reception at 7:16 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order by Mrs. Giambo, Chairman, at 7:40 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mrs. Janice Richards, PTA Council President, acknowledged the clarity of the budget framework presentation at the last Board Meeting and the benefit of having the strategic school profiles presented side by side with the budget. She addressed the challenges faced in the budget decisions, but indicated PTA Council's strong support for reducing class size guidelines at both the elementary and high school levels. She also supported the BOE's position for maintaining budget flexibility with regard to the budget transfer approval issue with the BET.

Ms. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President, indicated that the GEA had submitted its report on the Knowledge and Skills Committee to the BOE Administration this evening. She summarized the GEA's viewpoint that they saw no evidence to link this change to improvements in student performance and their concern that its implementation would divide staff.

Mrs. Laura DiBella, Co-President, Hamilton Avenue PTA, addressed their support for all the proposed elements of the magnet school -- small class size for preschool, kindergarten and

first grade, the Suzuki violin classes, and other initiatives that will draw students from across the district to Hamilton Avenue.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson to limit the time for speakers to three minutes each.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Mina Bibeault, a parent at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke on the Hamilton Avenue Magnet and the need to make it attractive to parents and students from all parts of Greenwich.

Dr. James Brunetti, a parent at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke on the same issue.

Mr. Evgeni Mitkov, a parent at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke on the same issue.

Mr. Vincent DeMartis, a parent at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke on the same issue.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/SHARING INFORMATION

a. Reports of Officers, Committees, Liaisons, and Superintendent

Ms. Gwynn advised that the Policy Governance Committee had a meeting this month and the next meeting will be scheduled in January. The Committee will be discussing changes to the curriculum policy.

Mr. Bodson reported on the Hamilton Avenue Building Committee. The construction is progressing. Despite being about one month behind in the schedule, the building is still expected to be ready for school opening in summer 2007. 50% of the contingency has been used to date, but the expectation is that the project should be able to stay within the budget parameters.

Mr. Kelly reported that the Administration's report on the Knowledge and Skills Based Compensation Committee is developing its report which should be available at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Giambo provided the Board with an overview of the issue of Budget Transfers approvals currently being discussed with the Board of Estimate and Taxation. She advised that discussions are continuing and she will continue to provide updates as the issue progresses.

The Superintendent reported that she has visited every school to speak with parents and/or students.

b. Written Reports

- i. Dr. Ellis presented the Preschool Linkage Report and thanked Ms. Eves for her work in coordinating and documenting the linkage meetings.
- ii. Mrs. Capwell provided the Hamilton Avenue Magnet School Update. She presented the committee's proposal for a magnet school theme covering Academics, Arts and Athletics. The elements include two preschool classes which would have extended hours, class size caps of 15 in kindergarten and first grade, world language offered starting in kindergarten, a Suzuki violin program for preschool through second grade, and a physical education program that includes swimming and ice skating. The elements were chosen with the objective of drawing magnet students from other parts of Greenwich. She indicated that they are now working on a marketing plan, noting that the magnet elements may be modified subject to final approval of the BOE budget in May. The Board had questions about the cost estimates, scheduling concerns with Suzuki and offsite athletics, required parent involvement in a Suzuki program, data to support the effectiveness of these elements. The Board discussed the use of the preschool classes as a draw for magnet students versus the need for high quality preschool for students within the school's catchment area. The Board also discussed uncertainty over the impact on New Lebanon School, which is also in a racial imbalance situation.

c. Presentation on Board of Education Budget for 2007-2008

Dr. Sternberg and Dr. Wallerstein delivered a detailed presentation on the budget. Dr. Sternberg indicated the proposed budget is \$120,067,157, a 5.4% increase over the 2006-2007 budget. This increase reflects the costs for continuing the current programs, services and initiatives as well as adding six action items – standardized development of formative assessments, review of ALP program model, racial balance initiatives including funding for the Hamilton Avenue magnet program, accreditation for the preschool program, continuation of the balanced literacy implementation and continuation of the math curriculum implementation. The budget also reflects the significantly higher costs for

utilities and transportation. There are six items that are not included in the proposed budget which the Administration and Board have indicated interest in pursuing – changes in elementary class size caps, changes in GHS class sizes, middle school laptop pilot, additional funding for social emotional learning initiative, increasing preschool leadership due to expanding program, and funding for assured experiences and honor choir. Dr. Sternberg discussed the aims of the budget, the areas where funding was included for specific initiatives including closing the achievement gap, and areas where there might be possible reallocation opportunities. Dr. Wallerstein explained the details of the financial assumptions in the budget. She identified that the proposed budget exceeds the BET guidelines due to different assumption in utilities and transportation costs, salaries for existing employees, and the cost for the Hamilton Avenue magnet program.

Board members and the public were asked to submit their questions in writing by November 20 to enable the Administration to respond prior to the next Budget meeting, scheduled for November 28th.

Mrs. Giambo expressed her concern over the size of the budget, indicating the need to fully understand included initiatives and identify opportunities for efficiencies and reallocations.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. First Reading, Board Meeting Calendar for 2007-2008

There was discussion about modifying the location of the meetings to include Hamilton Avenue School and other community venues. The Board Meeting Calendar will be voted on during the December meeting.

b. First Reading, School Calendar for 2008-2009

There was discussion about the two proposals, with Board members indicating Option A1 being preferable due to the earlier end date. One Board member questioned the educational value of opening school on December 24th. The School Calendar will be voted on during the December meeting.

c. Review and Discussion of Strategic School Profiles

Mr. Curtin reviewed the report that is collected by the State compiling data from the prior year. He summarized the data indicating the following points: Greenwich is seeing increasing diversity however it is not occurring at equal rates in all parts of town; English language learners are increasing as a percent of the student population; Greenwich is a resource rich community; Greenwich places about the middle of our DRG for the required summative tests; Greenwich performs well on the SATs which are only taken by about 90% of our students; a challenge is to improve academic performance for this 10% of our students. Board members commented on the low performance in math in every grade, the lower Grade 3 performance in all disciplines, CAPT science results. The Administration indicated that the recent curriculum changes should improve our performance but it takes time. Dr. Sternberg indicated that the State is considering adding a science component to the Grade 5 and 7 CMT tests in Spring 2008.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

a. Action to Authorize Superintendent to Request Amendment to 2007-2008 Budget Resolution

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to Authorize the Superintendent to Request Amendment to the 2007-2008 Budget Resolution.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

b. Action to Authorize Superintendent to Seek Interim Capital Appropriation for Architectural and Engineering Services Related to Anticipated 2007-2008 Capital Projects.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to authorize the Superintendent to Seek an Interim Capital Appropriation for Architectural and Engineering Services Related to Anticipated 2007-2008 Capital Projects.

AMENDMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Kelly to set the amount of the request at \$250,000.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION, AS AMENDED

8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Month End Financial Report, 10/31/06
- b. Approval of Transfers Exceeding \$10,000
- c. Action on Secretary's Request to Approve Minutes of October 20 (2), and October 26, 2006
- d. Action on New Courses at Greenwich High School

Mrs. Giambo requested that Items a and b be removed from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson to approve Consent Agenda covering Items c and d.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to approve Item a, Monthly Financials 10/31/06.

The Board discussed the utility costs.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Gwynn and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve Item b, Transfers Exceeding \$10,000.

There was discussion about the rationale for the change in coding.

AMENDMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Bodson to correct the second item on Budget Transfer chart, changing the program code from 56 to 84.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION AS AMENDED:
8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

BOARD OPERATIONS PLANNING

a. Agenda Planning

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to approve the Revised Agenda Plan.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

b. **Meeting Debriefing**

Board members commented on the high quality budget presentation.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gwynn and seconded by Dr. Ellis, the meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie B. Moriarty
Secretary