

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

TIME: December 7, 2006

PLACE: Western Middle School

PRESENT:

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

Absent: Mr. Michael C. Bodson

Administration:

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

Other: Mrs. Janice Richards, Mrs. Sue Rogers, Mrs. Anne Miller, Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, Mrs. M. J. Foti, PTA Council; Mrs. Nancy Chapin, Mrs. Lisa Savitz, Mr. Scott Saalborn, Mrs. Nipa Kumar, Mrs. Erynn Arnold, Mrs. Allison Kral, Mrs. Ginger Kauppi, Mrs. Tamy Livermore, Mrs. Cheryl Marino, Mrs. Kristin Luntz, Mrs. Bianka Kortlan-Cox, Mrs. Patricial McCarlsband Mrs. Kathleen McGinnis, Mr. Gregory Cartine, Mrs. Stephanie Cleary, Mrs. Tar Stone, Mr. James Hahn, Mrs. Erica Pumell, Mrs. Laurie Joseph, Advanced Learning Program; Mr. Tom Conelias; Mrs. Genevieve Krob; Mr. Mark D'Amico, Principal, Glenville School; Dr. Damaris Rau, Principal, Mrs. Deborah Cline, Assistant Principal, Hamilton Avenue School; Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Post, representative from Greenwich Time. An attendance list is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Giambo, Chairman, at 7.02 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to limit the time for speakers to two minutes per speaker.

VOTE: 6 in favor, none opposed
(Mr. Kelly not yet arrived)

MOTION CARRIED

1. Public Hearing and Board Discussion of 2007-2008 Board of Education Budget

Mrs. Janice Richards, PTA Council President, addressed the Board on the budget. Specifically, she supports the budget allocation for reducing class size. In the future, she hopes to have a better understanding of the long term initiatives so that PTAC will have a better understanding of financial implications.

Mrs. Nancy Chapin and Mrs. LisaBeth Savitz, Co-Chairs of the PTA ALP Committee, spoke on the ALP review and the fact that there are many unanswered questions relating to this review. They wanted assurances that the needs of all students will be addressed in this review. They asked that the study be independently verified and that the date be accessible to all, that the social and emotional learning of gifted learners be addressed, and that it allowed for parental response.

Mrs. Allison Kural spoke on the same issue.

Mrs. Tammy Livermore spoke on the same issue.

Mrs. Trish McCausland spoke on the same issue.

Mrs. Kathleen McGinnis spoke on the same issue, indicating that a study had already been done two years ago, and requested an open communication on this study with the PTA.

Mr. John Mileto, spoke on the racial balance at Hamilton Avenue School. He supports the full time preschool, ice skating, swimming, music and requested that the Board support all of these programs.

Mrs. Laurie Josephs spoke on strengthening the ALP program.

Mrs. Katie Bennett requested a five day program for second graders at Hamilton Avenue School.

Mr. Tom Conelius spoke on his support for keeping the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes at no more than 15.

Mr. Bill Robbins requested to see the data that supports Dr. Sternberg's position on the ALP program.

Mrs. Maureen Feuman supports the \$175,00 in the budget for additional teachers, and supports the proposed class size guidelines.

Mrs. Donna Maloney supports Suzuki Violin at Hamilton Avenue and views the other increases in program as necessary. She also support the ALP program.

Mrs. Marjorie Stone Rodriguez spoke on increasing guidance counselor time during the summer at Greenwich High School.

Dr. Sternberg introduced Mrs. Kathleen Greider, our new Deputy Superintendent. Mrs. Greider briefly addressed the Board and thanked them for the opportunity to work in Greenwich.

Mrs. Giambo gave an overview of the budget, indicating that we are around \$500,000 over the BET guidelines due to loss of salary savings, and institution of new initiatives to address closing the achievement gap and racial imbalance. She turned the meeting over to Dr. Sternberg. Dr. Sternberg and Dr. Wallerstein went through a slide presentation on the budget, indicating details of the improvements, staffing, implementation of the approved technology plan, and commitment to early childhood education. Dr. Wallerstein reviewed the impact of the increased costs of utilities, the anticipated budget reductions, and the comprehensive plan from January through September of 2007. Their presentation was followed by a question and answer period with the Board, including question on the Human Resources work flow study, the possible elimination of one PreK class, assured experiences, laptop initiative, and guidance counselor days. This was followed by a discussion of what you would like to see in the budget and which options were you leaning toward.

Mrs. Weissler is leaning toward Option 2. Dr. Ellis is also leaning toward Option 2. Mrs. Giambo favors Option 2. Mrs. Moriarty supports Option 2, and wants to discuss the details in the option. Mr. Anderson supports Option 3 with larger class size. Mr. Kelly is between Option 2 and 3, but does not want to increase class size at Hamilton Avenue. He does not want to break the promise the Board made to the Hamilton Avenue parents. Ms. Gwynn wants no Hamilton Avenue cuts, prefers Option 2, with a deferral of a change in class size for Grades 4 and 5. Mrs. Giambo reminded the Board that we did commit to small classes at Hamilton Avenue, but we did not commit to 15 per class.

This developed into a discussion of hard caps versus soft caps on class size. Mrs. Capwell, who has had extensive experience in other districts with this issue, advised the Board that in her experience, hard caps are far better both in terms of parents knowing what the limits are, classroom teacher knowing the limits, and administration for planning

purposes. After a question and answer period with Mrs. Capwell on this subject, Mrs. Giambo polled the Board for their positions on this issue:

Mr. Kelly prefers hard caps, with a cap of 15 at Hamilton Avenue School. Mr. Anderson prefers a soft cap at all schools. Mrs. Moriarty prefers hard caps, Mrs. Giambo prefers hard caps with the cap set at 15 for Hamilton Avenue if possible. Dr. Ellis prefers hard caps, but would like to see no hard cap at Hamilton Ave, with the cap at 16 or 17. Mrs. Weissler agrees with Dr. Ellis. Ms. Gwynn prefers hard caps.

Mrs. Giambo stated that the Board had a level of discomfort with the 5.2 items being eliminated, but looks to Administration to take a look at that. She hoped that there would be a better update on the technology plan in the next budget.

Dr. Sternberg advised that there was a need to take a closer look at Greenwich High School. Mrs. Weissler requested that in that process, a closer look should be given to core vs. non-core academics.

Mrs. Moriarty said we need to raise community awareness of how to use resources in a declining enrollment environment. She also stated that the ALP review should be a very open process.

2. Discussion of Revised Success System Overview of Achievement Arena

Leslie: Here are my notes:

Bill Kelly – AP Social Studies percentage 1/3 of enrollment

Colleen – participation rate and score

Nancy-summary CMT reading grade 3-p8 instead of targeting grades

Betty-melding together

Leslie-SAT guideline – advanced CMTs not a good measure – only below from general to advance

Susan-wants to know how you chose vision levels, explain how us chose.

Ginny-How do we know we are making progress or lack of progress

Ginny-SATs only science?

Colleen-Choices – OK, F&RL OK, SAT X-CAPT more indicative – add verbal

Stay with SAT reading, go to CAPT for math. Participation rate.

Benchmarking:

Colleen-advanced appropriate to measure gifted learners. Need further discussion of kids that are off the charts.

Ginny-growth model is coming

Colleen-outcomes-how do we know if we are successful here and I PPS Report? Ways to know SPED kids are growing appropriately academically.
Bill-timeline for ESL report on success of this system.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Gwynn and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to extend the time of the meeting by 15 minutes.

VOTE: Mr. Kelly, Mrs. Moriarty, Ms. Gwynn and
Mrs. Weissler in favor, Dr. Ellis and Mr.
Anderson opposed

MOTION CARRIED

Ginny – reasoning behind categories

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis to table this discussion to the next meeting, along with the Update on Data Dashboard and Review of the PPS Report.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Moriarty
Secretary