

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: February 1, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Havemeyer Building

PRESENT:

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

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Kathleen Greider, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. John Curtin, Asst. Superintendent
Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Asst. Supt., Business Operations
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director, Human Resources

Other:

An attendance list is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Giambo, Chairman at 7:05 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson to suspend the rules to discuss recent proposals related to the Board of Education's proposed 2007-2008 Budget.

VOTE: 7 in favor, none opposed.

Mrs. Moriarty not present.

MOTION CARRIED

Dr. Sternberg briefed the Board that the First Selectman has recommended to the BET that the renovation of the Glenville School be deleted from the Board of Education's 2007-2008 Capital Budget. Instead, the First Selectman has proposed a budget resolution that the decision be contingent on the BET's acceptance of the RISE Committee's recommendations and that, if the decision were then made to proceed with the renovation, it would be financed with five year bonds. It was also noted that in the First Selectman's Budget, which was submitted to the BET for consideration, the Board of Education's Operating Budget had been reduced by \$500,000.

In response to these announcements, the Board reiterated that the renovation of Glenville School is its number one capital budget priority, followed by the Greenwich High School auditorium and music classroom space, and then the Central Office Building. In a response to a Board member's question as to whether the Auditorium project could be accelerated from the 2009-2010 construction date in the Board's capital plan, Dr. Wallerstein indicated that two years would be required for the feasibility study and architectural and engineering work because of the project's complexity.

The Board then discussed the budget submitted by the First Selectman that included a \$500,000 reduction from the Board of Education's proposed Operating Budget. It was noted that according to Town Charter, the First Selectman is to submit to the BET the Board of Education's proposed Operating Budget as adopted by the Board.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Bodson that the Board of Education request that Mrs. Giambo, as Board Chairman, contact the BET and request that a revised and proper consolidated town budget that reflects the operating budget approved by the Board of Education be presented, published and used as the source document for the BET Budget Committee.

VOTE: 8 in favor; none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

1. **Success System Arenas**

a. **Student Achievement**

Dr. Sternberg recommended making the following changes to the proposed indicators to more accurately reflect student achievement and to achieve better balance across academic disciplines and grade levels: 1) the elimination of Free/Reduced Lunch Gap at goal measures for writing and math, but the retention of this measure for reading grades 3-8; 2) the elimination of CAPT reading and math because the SAT reading and math is included instead; and 3) the inclusion of CMT advanced scores for writing and math in grade 8 as the measure of students' achieving at the highest level.

The Board discussed the importance of having a measure related to Advanced Placement tests in the Success System and reiterated the priority placed on increasing participation in these tests, while maintaining scores in an acceptable range.

A Board member questioned whether the 63% Vision level for the 10th-Grade Social Studies Research project was sufficiently rigorous. Mr. Curtin explained that one rubric, which reflected very high standards, was applied consistently to all students. With respect to the FLES assessment in 5TH grade, Mr. Curtin explained that this reflected a standardized assessment which was scored by two people. He also indicated that the District has developed standards to conduct a Visual Arts Assessment in Grade 5; the Board indicated that it would be helpful for Dr. Spector to provide a brief summary of this process at a future meeting.

Another Board member questioned whether inclusion of growth in test scores for students would be a more meaningful measure, particularly for students at the advanced level. Mr. Curtin explained that the State would be providing this information for districts as of this spring's CMTs.

Board members also questioned whether the Vision targets for the Free/Reduced Lunch gap should be set at a more aggressive level of 10% as opposed to the proposed below 20%.

b. **Resource Management**

Dr. Wallerstein introduced the Success System for Resource Management, noting that it should be regarded as a public policy tool, not a substitute for a monitoring report in this area.

In discussing the inclusion of the Net Current Expenditures per Pupil (NCEP) measure, Dr. Wallerstein explained that all districts must report NCEP to the State. However, because NCEP includes both operating and capital, it is more meaningful to look at a five year moving average. The proposed Intervention level was a greater than 7% increase in NCEP; several Board members questioned whether this was too high.

Related to facilities, one Board member questioned whether the measure, Facilities Condition, deserved a weight of more than 15%. For Elementary Facilities Utilization, it was agreed that two measures should be included: 1) the average for all the elementary schools and 2) a measure of significant variance from the average.

2. Monitoring Reports

a. E-080 Public Involvement in Schools

Ms. Eves provided a few introductory remarks about E-080, indicating that while the parent response rate to last year's Harris Survey was low, it was considered to be statistically valid. However, the District plans to work closely with stakeholder groups to improve participation for the Survey to be administered in the spring of 2008. She also indicated that the District is working on improving communication with parents via the School Improvement Team process as well as the report card initiative. A new report card template will be piloted in three schools, with full implementation scheduled for 2008-2009. Several Board member expressed concern about the Harris Survey results that showed that 38% of High School parents were dissatisfied with communication with the school when their child had a problem.

b. E-050 Management of Human Resources

Dr. Flanagan began by noting the steady improvement in teacher attrition rates: 9% (2006); 11% (2005); 11% (2004); 14% (2003); and 13% (2002). These rates are also more favorable than those of other Fairfield County districts. However, the teacher attrition rates have resulted in a reduction in the average years of service for teachers in the district. As a result, teacher retirement rates are expected to decline, which will, in turn, negatively impact the Salary Savings account for future budgets.

She also noted that to comply with the NCLB's requirement that all teachers be Highly Qualified, the District has been able to use the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) plan.

However, this is the last year that districts can use HOUSSE; and it will be more challenging to hire teachers in 2007-2008, especially in Special Education, without it. She also indicated that the District is continuing to work with the Town to address problems by the Town's Human Resources Department in processing payroll and in expediting the hiring of personnel. Finally, as part of the District's retention efforts, it is studying the possibility of implementing a self-supporting child care program (Monroe has already done this successfully), with a target start-up date of September 2008.

c. **L-002 Contracts and Agreements and L-020 Professional Personnel Practices**

Dr. Flanagan noted that a great deal of progress has been made in the development of the updated Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Plan (TEPD) and that the District intends to pilot it at one of the Houses at Greenwich High, as well as at a middle school and elementary school. In discussing nonrenewals of teachers, Dr. Flanagan indicated that some of those teachers who would be candidates for nonrenewal decide to resign prior to any action being taken. A Board member suggested that it would be helpful to categorize resignations into two groups: regrets and nonregrets.

d. **E-004 Graduation Requirements**

In response to a Board member's question about dropout rates, Mr. Capasso cautioned that the statistics can sometimes be misleading because some students who drop out in a given year may subsequently decide to return the following year. Mr. Capasso also discussed the portfolio process, which was used by 11% of the graduating class to satisfy the academic proficiency requirement, as opposed to passing CAPT, for graduation. Each department establishes their own criteria for the portfolio, and students are assigned a faculty member to work with to develop their portfolio. However, there is a disproportionate representation by students in subsectors (Free/Reduce Lunch; special education; Hispanic, and black students) who are completing portfolios to satisfy the graduation requirement.

In discussing possible future changes to graduation requirements, Dr. Sternberg cautioned that adding requirements may not always be in the students' best interests, citing the example of those students who enter high school with a demonstrated advanced knowledge of a particular subject area.

e. **E-003 Assessments Standards, Math**

In response to a Board member's question about the introduction of the Bridge to Algebra course at Greenwich High, Mr. Southworth explained that it had been a somewhat challenging transition because the course material placed some heavy reading demands on the students and the classes were larger than anticipated. In response to these challenges, the District has supplemented the course materials, offered additional staff development, increased teaching staff, and will consider deferring the introduction of Bridge to Geometry.

The decision was made due to postpone the more in-depth discussion of E-003 until the next Board meeting

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to move into Executive Session at 9:30 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Ellis, the Board moved back into Public Session at 9:50 p.m.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Gwynn, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Nancy Weissler
Secretary

