

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

TIME: April 26, 2007 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Riverside School

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Colleen Giambo, Chairman
Mrs. Leslie B. Moriarty, Vice Chairman
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
Ms. Kathleen Greider, 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. Janice Richards, President; Mrs. Sue Rogers; Mrs. Celia Fernandez; Mrs. Gerri Fleming, Mrs. Jackie Johanson, Mrs. Julie Farynarz, Mrs. Nancy Chapin, PTA Council; Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mr. John Grasso, Principal, Mrs. Patti Jomo, Mrs. Laura Erickson, Mrs. Christine Downey, Mrs. Liz Dagnino, Mrs. Wendy Barker, Riverside School; Ms. Genny Krob; Ms. Betsey Frumin, RTM District 9; Mrs. Helen LaSorsa, Mrs. Thordis Smith, Cos Cob School; representatives from Greenwich Time, Greenwich News and Greenwich Citizen. 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 Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Dr. Ellis to adjourn to the reception at 7:25 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson to return to public session at 7:50 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

The following people spoke at the Public Hearing:

Mrs. Janice Richards, PTA Council President, advised the Board and Administration to carefully consider the implications of introducing new magnet or choice options at the elementary schools on the curriculum at both the middle schools and high school. She also indicated that the PTAs would like additional detail on what items will be reduced in the 2007-2008 operating budget to reflect the BET's \$500,000 reduction.

Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President, offered her congratulations to this year's Distinguished Teachers. She noted that the teachers were favorably disposed to the following initiatives and programs: the adoption of hard caps for class size; the proposed revisions to the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Plan; and the increased emphasis on professional development.

Annie Merrill, Nicola Traynor, and Lindsay Erickson, Riverside School students, spoke on a program that they have launched at Riverside School to recycle lunch trays and water bottles. They have established a Recycling Committee, which aims to promote environmental best practices among the other elementary schools; it is also advocating that the District switch to a biodegradable lunch tray, made of bamboo, an effort supported by a petition signed by 275 students.

Mrs. Gerri Fleming, parent, expressed her concern that the costs associated with complying with the recent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests would negatively impact the funding available for instruction and meeting the educational needs of students.

Ms. Genny Krob, Co-Chair of the Friends of High School Performing Arts, addressed the measures for evaluating facilities in the recently adopted Success System. She noted that while the Success System included measures of the condition of the facilities and student and parent satisfaction with facilities, she thought that it should also include some measure that reflects the adequacy of the facilities in meeting students' educational needs.

Ms. Betsey Frumin, Chair of RTM District 9, expressed her concern that the delay in the Hamilton Avenue School construction would negatively impact the Glenville School students.

Ms. Celia Fernandez and Mrs. Sue Rogers, Glenville School parents, expressed their disappointment with the news of a delay in the Hamilton Avenue School construction and requested that the Administration work with the parent community to generate options for the students.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/SHARING INFORMATION

Reports of Officers, Committees, Liaisons, and Superintendent

Mr. Kelly reported that negotiations with LIUNA, which had begun, would be put on hold while the lead attorney for LIUNA recovers from a heart attack. Negotiations with GEA on the contract reopener will begin in June.

Mr. Anderson reported on the results from an online survey of the teachers (324 of whom participated) on housing. Over 80% indicated that they would like to live in Greenwich and that the availability of affordable housing in Greenwich would benefit teacher retention. The Board requested that Mr. Anderson work with the Housing Authority to explore programs and options that would address the availability of housing for teachers.

Mr. Bodson, who was a chaperone on the Greenwich High School Band trip to China, commended Mr. Yoon and Mr. Walker, Band Directors; Ming Hua He, from China Cultural Exchange; and Arlene Zimmer for their hard work and dedication in organizing the very successful Band trip to China, which involved over 190 students.

Dr. Ellis noted that Cooperative Educational Services (CES) will sponsor a lecture by Dr. Dede of the Harvard Graduate School of Education on May 17th.

Dr. Sternberg advised a draft of the revised School Improvement Planning process is now available. She indicated that Ken Kay, a consultant from Infotech Strategies, will speak on 21st Century Skills on May 17th. She also indicated that the District is talking with the State about its educational exchanges in China. Dr. Sternberg, in conjunction with Mr. Mazza, chair of the Building Committees for Hamilton Avenue and Glenville Schools, provided an update on both projects and discussed the implications of the delay in the construction of Hamilton Avenue School.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Monitoring Report: E-003 – Academic Mastery and Whole Student Development – Secondary Reading

Mr. Capasso, Greenwich High School (GHS) Principal, updated the Board on initiatives to improve reading skills at GHS. GHS has two dedicated reading specialists who provide assistance to teachers across the various disciplines who are working with students with weak reading skills. These specialists also work with identified students in small groups. In the past year, one of the reading specialists has worked closely with 10th grade English/social studies lower level classes; and proficiency has doubled to from 36% to 71% during this time period. GHS has prepared Individual Student Intervention Plans (ISIPs) for the 9% of students who have not achieved proficiency in reading.

b. Discussion of Changes to the 2007-2008 Budget

Dr. Wallerstein discussed the planned changes to the original 2007-2008 budget to accommodate the BET's \$350,000 reduction in the BOE budget, excluding utility charges. Dr. Wallerstein indicated that while it would be challenging to implement this reduction, the Administration was committed to doing so without negatively impacting priority programs and services and the new class size caps. One Board member suggested that it would be helpful to have some examples of the specific items being reduced.

c. Discussion of the RISE Charge

The Board discussed amending the RISE Charge Results, as follows, to reflect the fact that any plan to address racial imbalance will most likely require a phased implementation: “b) offer a plan that demonstrates a good faith effort to comply with State statutes and regulations regarding racial balance.”

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Kelly to accept the amended language for the RISE Charge.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

d. Update on Facility Utilization

Dr. Wallerstein addressed Board members' questions on the work done by the Geddis Partnership on Greenwich elementary school utilization. She explained that Geddis recommended that the acceptable range for facility utilization be increased to 90%-100% from 70%-85% because rooms for “specials” were now included; and she indicated that utilization could exceed 100% for some of the existing older

facilities. She also indicated that in its future refinement of this analysis, Geddis would aggregate pre-K classes (excluding the four dedicated ones at Hamilton Avenue), rather than attribute them to a specific location in calculating facility utilization. The Board expressed support for Geddis' methodology and approach in assessing elementary school utilization.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Mr. Kelly to extend the meeting until 10:15 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

a. Action on Month End Financial Report – 3/31/07

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve the Month End Financial Report 3/31/07.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

b. Action on Transfers Exceeding \$10,000

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to approve the Transfers Exceeding \$10,000.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

a. Acceptance of Monitoring Reports

- i. E-003 – Academic Mastery and Whole Student Development – Elementary Reading and K-12 Writing**
- ii. E-070 – Monitoring Reports**
- iii. L-010 – Timely, Accurate and Complete Information, Assessment and Analysis**
- iv. E-040 – Effective Learning Environment**
- v. E-060 – Administrative Code of Ethics**

- vi. L-001 – Legal Requirements**
- b. Action to Authorize Acceptance of Vanguard Schools Grant to Hamilton Avenue School**
- c. Action on Secretary’s Request to Approve Minutes of March 30 (2) and April 10, 2007**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve all of the Consent Agenda Items.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Weissler
Secretary