

WORK SESSION OF GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

TIME: October 12, 2006

PLACE: Havemeyer Board Room

PRESENT:

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

Administration:

Dr. Betty 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
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director, Human Resources

Other:

Mrs. Janice Richards, Mrs. Kristen Kratky, Mrs. Geri Fleming, PTA Council;
Mrs. Maureen Feuerman, Mrs. Rosa Sullivan, Parkway School; Mrs. Helen LaSorsa, Cos Cob School; Mr. Tom Conelias; Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Post. 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. She announced to the Board that Keach Hagey was leaving the Greenwich Time and thanked her for her coverage of Board of Education issues.

1. **Action on Revision to Hamilton Avenue Educational Specifications Regarding The Mural**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the revision to the Hamilton Avenue Educational Specifications eliminating any reference to "The Life and Times of General Putnam" Mural.

Mrs. Capwell, Deputy Superintendent, advised the Board that the Chickahominy Community Association voted unanimously on September 26th to support a new wall mural for display at the new Hamilton Avenue Magnet School. She advised that the Board of Education does not pay for the replacement, but that it will be paid for by a joint fundraising effort by the Chickahominy Association, the Board of Education, and the Hamilton Avenue Building Committee.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

2. **Action on Connecticut State Department of Education Healthy Food Certification**

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to decline participation in the Connecticut State Department of Education's Healthy Food Certification Program for 2006-2007, as the restrictive nature of the program will negatively affect the Greenwich Public Schools' Food Services program.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

3. **Board Development/Managing Changes in Enrollment and Demographic Patterns**

Dr. Sternberg led a discussion on this item. She addressed the fact that we are already racially imbalanced at Hamilton Avenue and New Lebanon School, and we have pending racial imbalance at Julian Curtiss and Old Greenwich Schools. She advised the Board, that a letter will be coming from the State citing us for these imbalances. The discussion involved solutions to these problems, including staffing projections, class size guidelines, magnet draws and possible solutions. Dr. Sternberg advised the Board that the options are 1) develop a magnet school, 2) offering a choice within the district for free and reduced lunch students, and 3) school class size.

The Board discussed the facilities utilization issue and the cost involved with smaller class sizes. It was suggested that New Lebanon be converted to a magnet school and some Board members requested Administration to come up with a theme for the school that would draw students from other areas in the District. Dr. Sternberg advised that a plan to remediate the issues must be submitted to the State within 60 days of notification of the imbalances.

Dr. Sternberg advised that staff needed to know if the Board is behind them regarding option choice, magnet, etc. and the need for the Board to give Administration some direction in which to pursue solutions. The Board was polled.

Dr. Ellis suggested free reign for Administration to come up with whatever options they feel will resolve the issue.

Mr. Bodson agreed – he also felt there would be more than three solutions.

Mrs. Moriarty agreed that Administration should have free reign to look at all solutions.

Mrs. Giambo agreed and discussed planning limitations for declining enrollment.

Ms. Gwynn requested Administration created solutions that involve parental decision making.

Mr. Kelly agreed. Mrs. Weissler agreed.

Mr. Anderson made a recommendation for 15 students per classroom, with 13 classrooms as a possible solution.

The discussion returned to facilities utilization. Mr. Kelly requested the cost of the work done in schools this summer, and the potential savings generated from that work. He asked if there was a possibility of relocation of some of our other out of building programs. There was consideration of the Alternative High School programs and merging ARCH and CLP at the same location.

Dr. Flanagan explained the staffing charts and responded to several questions regarding them.

Mr. Kelly brought up changing class size guidelines to be between 20 and 20.5. This suggestion brought about a lengthy discussion on class size guidelines.

Mrs. Capwell advised the Board that several communities have a set number of students per class and everyone knows the top and bottom, thus eliminating these types of issues.

Dr. Sternberg advised that inclusion students must be considered as part of the cap.

Mrs. Giambo suggested that the Board be polled:

Mr. Anderson suggested a class size of 21 with no caps.

Mrs. Weissler supports caps and would like a 20 to 1 average in the District.

Mr. Kelly supports a 20 to 1 ratio in elementary schools and 28 or 26 is OK at higher levels.

Ms. Gwynn prefers weighting and bringing caps in Kindergarten and First Grade to 21. She does not believe there should be a change in 4th and 5th grade.

Mrs. Giambo supports changing the recommended cap to 21 for Kindergarten and First Grade.

Mrs. Moriarty supports the changes but feels at fourth and fifth grade we cannot make the change now.

Mr. Bodson feels the changes make sense.

Dr. Ellis agreed with Mr. Bodson and Mrs. Moriarty.

Dr. Sternberg supports the cap and is concerned about the budget implications of these proposals. She would like to look at the budget impact, especially in Kindergarten and First Grade as part of the budget process.

It was agreed, after discussion, that the budget for 2007-2008 should include a contingency fund of \$325,000 for 5 teachers in support of these recommendations.

Mr. Kelly requested that if we are to consider school closing or redistricting, we must consider the effect on the neighborhood in our decision making.

4. Agenda Planning

The Board discussed the spacing of reports, security in schools and their desire to meet the new security officer. They want to know about his involvement in and out of the high school. They asked for him to appear to discuss his role at a work session.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Moriarty
Secretary