

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 18, 2019

**Regular Board Meeting
Board's Meeting Room**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on March 18, 2019 in the Board's Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order by Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 6:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer
Lauren Aceto
Patrick Leigh
Patricia Libero
Karen Pacelli
Rosa Richardson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: James W. Morrissey

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Matt Cavallaro, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Sumedha Chowdhury
Julia Walker
Brendan Carew

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairwoman Russo welcomed everyone to the meeting and was glad to see so many faces in the audience. She asked three times if anyone would like to address the board this evening during public session. There were no speakers. Public Session closed at 6:03 PM.

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro said the first item on tonight's agenda is the recognition of West Haven Junior Justin Bracero who is being recognized by the College Board for scoring in the top 2 1/2 % of all Latino students nationwide on the PSAT.

John DellaCamera said Justin is a great kid who is one of the student leaders in the high school. Justin is in UNH's Charge Ed Program, a member of the chess team and a great all around kid that a lot of kids look up to. We are really honored to have Justin in our school.

Superintendent Cavallaro said Mrs. Merced the school counselor said that she is confident that with your work ethic that you will qualify for a lot of full scholarships. Justin is currently a junior and he has scored over 1300 on the PSAT's which he took in December. Superintendent Cavallaro said that Justin is modest and is getting more self-confidence as he is completing those AP and Honors Classes and is doing very well. All of his core courses have been completed at the honors or AP level and that is quite an accomplishment. Applause. Mrs. Merced asked your teachers to describe you, and this is a tribute to your family as well. They said you are humble, cheerful, have a positive attitude, curious, bright, diligent, very conscientious, a role model and genuine. Neil is sure he has embarrassed Justin enough and won't read the whole list. Neil told Justin's family that they should know what a fine young man they have and we are very proud of his accomplishments. Neil congratulated Justin on behalf of the Board. Pictures were taken of Justin with Board Chairwoman Rosemary Russo, John DellaCamera, Assistant Principal of WHHS, and Superintendent Cavallaro.

Superintendent Cavallaro said for the last few years we have had a very successful Fine Arts Festival at the Savin Rock Conference Center but this year it wasn't available. Dr. Cordone made some backup arrangements and he did a really good job of organizing the events that are taking place this year. Next year we plan on using that grand entrance at West Haven High School and show off the new building. Superintendent Cavallaro asked Dr. Cordone if he would inform the board about where we are and why we had to make some adjustments.

Dr. Cordone thanked Superintendent Cavallaro and said as Superintendent Cavallaro said normally we have the festival at the conference center and that is the culmination of the entire Art Department and Fine Arts Department's work and the collection of student's exemplary art that shines on certain projects. The artwork is chosen by the quality and is presented at this festival. The parents and public are invited to come to see this and students are given awards for their accomplishments. We combined in the past the music part of it be it the vocal or the instrumental. Last year was the vocal and this year it was going to be the instrumental. As things have unfolded we were not able to use the facility so in collaboration with Dr. Druzolowski we tried getting a hold of Lou Esposito who said the facility was structurally unsound. We ran some things by Dr. Druzolowski that the Fine Arts Department suggested. We needed a facility to accommodate a lot of parking as parents, students and friends would be going in and out. The alternative was to come up with individual school sites. We chose the month of March to do the exhibit because that is when parent visiting takes place. Currently at the high school we have a fabulous exhibit going on now. Each school at the intermediate level, the middle school

and the high school will have it at their own school in the designated space chosen by the principal and the art staff. The music department gave concerts throughout the year. They had their winter concert and their spring concert is coming up along with some plays. The elementary schools were going to hold their own in each individual school but Ora Mason Library held Haley and Pagels last year and it was very successful. We discussed with Maria Zervos having all the elementary schools show their artwork at the Ora Mason Library and she graciously accepted. The art teachers from the elementary schools have brought their artwork there and the exhibit is running for the entire month of March at the Ora Mason Library. They had a reception there last week for the students' art that is being exhibited. Their relatives and friends were invited and the reception went off very nicely. A lot of the parents from all the elementary schools who attended were able to see the community coming together and supporting the arts and seeing some of the outstanding talent from kindergarten right through grade four. It was really remarkable so if you have a chance visit Ora Mason Library on Benham Hill Road.

We are hoping to bring the festival back again and West Haven High School would be the perfect location because they have the facility where they can display the exhibit and plus they have the performance rooms for the band and chorus to also perform and this would be a spectacular event.

The Fine Arts People do an outstanding job besides their talent and passion they really have an educational way of presenting information and knowledge of the arts and they are in need of a simple system which costs about \$2,000 each which is a lap top, an LCD, and a cart so that they can project in a room so students would have exposure to things that normally they just talk about and can't see and can't hear unless they are performing it. Superintendent Cavallaro said if you can get us exactly what you need, the plan and priority for the board is to upgrade our computers and technology. We are fortunate the new high school will take care of that building but based on the money we receive if we can make that part of the plan we will or even if we can do some of the schools this year and implement it over time. Dr. Cordone said exactly just phase it in and this is just the technology part and we need to talk about the instrument part that this board was so gracious in financing in the past. The musicians really have bloomed and there are a lot of students interested coming from Carrigan to Bailey and feeding into the high school and this is a plan that went into effect a few years ago. We looked into renting the equipment and subbing it to the parents. The technology would be the number 1 priority right now because in the elementary schools and middle school one student knocked over their keyboard so they are out of a keyboard right now. Superintendent Cavallaro said we believe we will be able to do something as far as implementing a plan and this will depend on what we get and we should be able to do something. Superintendent Cavallaro thanked Dr. Cordone for making the arrangements for the Arts and it was good because we really have made it a priority the last few years. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo said she was sorry she missed Dr. Cordone Thursday night but he was leaving when she arrived and she was sorry she missed the reception but couldn't get there on time. She really enjoyed walking through and seeing all the kid's drawings and art displays; it was very nice.

Pat Libero stopped at Carrigan and listened to the Jazz Band. These kids started playing instruments last year and one kid only started playing this year and they sound fabulous and they only practiced four times. There are six or eight kids that even do solos and it is pretty amazing. These kids are actually playing jazz and it was great. Dr. Cordone said right now it is a pull up program and it is hit or miss and if they formalized it more it will become even better. The board gave thanks.

Superintendent Cavallaro wanted to let the board know they did make one last minute change to the calendar. We took our full day professional development day and moved that to the anticipated primary date for the city so we will not have school in session while an election is taking place in September. Since we are looking to beef up security in the schools it makes good sense that we are not taking that chance this year. This is the only change from last year to this year.

Last Thursday we went before the MARB to discuss our budget. Matt and I thought it went very well. There were very few questions; it was more of a learning session in where we thought we stood. The new director of OPM was very helpful in explaining some of the issues. The Mayor will come out with her budget on Thursday and we expect to be flat funded by the city. However we are one of the 33 Alliance Districts and right now there is a possibility that we will receive about 2M which is more than what our request is. Some of the laws in place state we cannot receive less than what we received in the current operating budget so we should receive a decent increase all subject to the final passage of a budget by the legislature but the laws favor us as an Alliance District. The increase will come in the form of the Alliance Grant; directly to the Board of Education. If Superintendent Cavallaro's understanding is correct at least 50% of that increase does not have to go to our instructional improvement plan it can go towards operational increases which allows us to turn over some of our maintenance equipment and things like that and Neil is sure that the technology plan could be part of the instructional plan which would need to be approved but at least 50% would go towards operations which will be a huge help to us.

The Mayor has sent a letter to the MARB indicating that they are pursuing the State Employee Health Plan. Patrick Leigh said they will have to pay off Anthem first right. Neil said right now the state savings look pretty substantial and even if we wanted to go today we are still subject to review of MARB and MARB has asked for a lot of information. We have to provide the Director of OPM some information. Right now the way the savings appear with the savings we make from the health plan, if it is in the 4M range that would allow us to budget and payoff the Anthem run off. Patrick Leigh asked if it would be a clean wash. There may be some savings this year but once you do that then it's a pure savings down the road for years to come. Matt Cavallaro said it really depends when and if this was to take place and when the BOE or City would enter the partnership plan. If we can offer our employees a better plan and we could save money it would be to both parties' advantage. Matt said a lot depends on what information the state needs and a lot is going to have to happen in terms of education on the plan; really learning what the plan requires you to do and what you are getting. If this plan happens it is no longer an Anthem Network you are now going to a Net Health Care Network. Just

what disruption that is going to have for people with primary care doctors, in network and out of network are some of the things that need to be ironed out and the employee needs to be educated as it is not just a clean switch. He thinks there will be a heavy need of educating our employees so they know what to expect. Superintendent Cavallaro said Attorney Dugas didn't think it would be that big of an issue as he just completed it in the City of Bridgeport. There may be some in and out of network but he didn't see that as a major stumbling block. Patrick Leigh said most providers in this area probably take both. Neil said Matt talked about education and he is 100% correct because when we went from the original plan to the PPO there was a lot of confusion. However; when we went to the high deductible plan they did a really good job of explaining the plan to our employees and the transition wasn't that big a deal. The younger your staff is they don't mind the high deductible plan. The teachers may take a vote and the majority might say we are OK where we are right now and it will be up to them ultimately to decide whether they want to switch since we have a contract in place for the next two years. Patrick asked if it will be a high deductible plan again. Matt doesn't believe so it is almost like going to a fully insured plan which would really help us with budgeting but in terms of the actual plan design he is not sure. Superintendent Cavallaro will keep everyone informed once they receive more information.

Rosa Richardson asked what is being done with the Bailey roof issue. There was a leak in the cafeteria at Bailey. We have an engineer looking at the roof and we are getting a cost estimate. The roof has to be replaced and we have made the mayor aware of this and she understands that the roof has to be replaced. We also talked about some of our needs and some of the roofs and the City Finance Director was surprised that the roofs are eligible for full reimbursement. The original part of Bailey is the original roof. The original roof was not replaced in 1998 or 1999; that is when the addition was built. Part of the problem with the addition is they expanded the cafeteria and they didn't replace the whole roof on the cafeteria it was actually a seam where the majority of the water is going through. There is also plywood underneath, that we wouldn't do today, which is making the problem worse. We are getting a cost estimate and Neil believes we are going to get a commitment from the city. The city does have to do a bonding package and they are going to try to role all the things they have to do into one package and this will be part of it. We talked about the number of roofs in the district that need to be replaced. Savin Rock School was built in 1976 and that is the original roof. Neil's guess is that schools like Pagels, Mackrille and some other places where there have been additions, only the addition part of the roof has been done. The only roof we have under warrantee is Carrigan which we just did. We showed them our Capital Plan which the board passed last year and it hasn't changed much if at all. He is not going to speak for the mayor or city council but we specifically brought up Washington School and said it is not worth putting another nickel into that 110 year old building. Neil believes Mayor Rossi will talk to Mr. Carney and give him the go ahead to fill out the original forms while we have a 77% reimbursement to go forward with that project which was part of the capital plan that the board passed last year. Neil thinks they understand, the city is in the same boat, there are just a lot of things and you can't continue to do nothing and let your infrastructure deteriorate.

Pat Libero went to Bailey last week with Mike McGrath and the addition is not pitched right and not draining properly and that is why you need the engineering part. They are talking about building a pyramid thing. It is because they have half old and half new where the seam is. They have it all cordoned off and they also rearranged everything so the kids still had lunch. People were concerned about mold and there is fiberglass in the beam so it will not have mold. Neil went there on the snow day because they were working with Sodexo and we have some money we made from the food service program that we have to reinvest. We have some really nice ideas for Bailey and the last thing we want is a hole in the roof. We talked about doing a sandwich line and a subway type area. While we were there they were replacing tiles and making sure it drained properly. Our people did a really good job; they tarped it but the problem is the seam where the old meet the new. We will get there and hopefully have the engineering design and let you know how we will proceed. The board gave thanks.

Matt Cavallaro said the budget he just handed out was presented at the MARB Meeting in March in Hartford. This shows expenses through January 31, 2019. For the first six months of the fiscal year compared to last year we had less expended so we are in a very good spot. Our high deductible plan is working and we have less expended this year than last year. Matt is very confident in where we are at this current spot and it is a very good budget picture for the first six months. The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

The Student Representatives Report will be found at the end of the minutes.

C.1.c. Board

Pat Libero visited Bailey and listened to the Carrigan Jazz Band. The Jazz Band from the high school, Bailey and Carrigan will take place on April 27th. They will send out information to us.

Lauren Aceto went to the Black History Month Assembly at Carrigan which was nice; she had a good time.

Rosemary Russo said she, Bob Guthrie and Jim Morrissey participated in Read Aloud at Savin Rock School. She was lucky to have Nicole Guadagnoli who had a really nice bunch of kids and Rosemary really enjoyed reading to them. While she was at Savin Rock Taryn told her how much they appreciated the security guard and that it really made a difference so far as with the building just looking at things like doors that needed to be more secured and parents were receiving the security guard very well. Rosemary spoke to Neil before the meeting and hopes that next year, like Neil wanted to do in the original budget, to put them at all the schools. Rosemary thinks this is something that is really vital. Rosemary toured then toured Pagels which was really nice and was able to see most of the classrooms. She then went to the high school and saw the swing space and was told that it might be used for classrooms. Neil said we are going to have to and that is the nice thing about it is we can do some different things with it. Rosemary visited both shops and the kids were all busy; it was really a nice experience. She then went to Bailey and saw

the wood shop there and an art class along with a couple of academic classes. It is always fun to see the teachers and students at work in school. Cinderella is coming March 28th- March 30th at 7pm, with a matinee on March 30th at 2pm; she hopes everyone is able to attend. She is collecting for the year book ad \$10.00 and she appreciates this. The Carrigan Drama Club's performance of Shreck has been moved to Thursday night March 28th at 6:30 PM.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Special Board Meeting held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 5:45 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Special Meeting minutes D.1.a.
Karen Pacelli made the motion to approve the minutes
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: Pat Libero abstained because she did not attend the meeting
All other board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 6:28 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.b.
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes
Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
Discussion: Pat Libero abstained because she did not attend the meeting
All other board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

D.4. New Business

19-09 Approval of West Haven Department of Education School Calendar 2019 - 2020

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 19-09
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
Discussion: Rosa Richardson thanked Superintendent Cavallaro because she has been advocating for the schools not being open on primary days and is really happy that decision was made.

Bob Guthrie wanted to know how we were going to get this out to the parents. Neil said as soon as the board approves it we will get it out there on the website. OK just double checking thank you.

All board members were in favor

Motion carries item 19-09 is approved

F. Informational

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn

Karen Pacelli made the motion

Patrick Leigh seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola

Board Secretary

The Student Rep Report follows on the next page.

BOE Student Rep Report

March 18, 2019

1. WHEAT is holding a food drive at WHHS. If we raise 1,000 cans, WHEAT will be giving a \$1,000 scholarship to a WHHS senior.
2. Tonight is parent teacher conference night at the high school.
3. Juniors will be taking the SATs on March 27th. That day, freshman will have an activity day, sophomores will be seeing *The Green Book*, and seniors will be having their senior experience day.
4. The WHHS Theatre Workshop has the play Cinderella coming up. The show will be on March 28th-March 30th at 7pm, with a matinee on March 30th at 2pm. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door for adults.