

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**May 6, 2019**

**Special Board Meeting Minutes**

**Board's Meeting Room**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held on May 6, 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 5:45 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  
Patricia Libero  
Karen Pacelli  
Rosa Richardson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

James W. Morrissey  
Patrick Leigh

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent  
Matt Cavallaro, Director of Finance

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRESENT:**

Julia Walker  
Brendan Carew

**Seth Haley School and Forest School Presentations**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held on May 6, 2019 in the Board's Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT. Chairwoman Russo called the special meeting to order at 5:45 pm. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

Chairwoman Russo thanked everyone for attending and she welcomed members of Seth Haley School and Forest School. We usually go in alphabetical order if this is fine with you. Both schools were fine with this. Tom Hunt, Principal of Forest School started and he thanked everyone for allowing them this opportunity. They had a great year and are very optimistic about the data that they will be producing. They have a fourth grade

that all of his teachers want to retain because it was just that wonderful. The two individuals we chose to highlight have vital positions in our building and provide support, resources, not only to the teachers but to the students. The positions are critical to the execution of curriculum, the support of curriculum and those positions are reading consultant and math coach. By highlighting them we are almost highlighting the entire building. Our math coach is Jason Heffernan and our reading consultant is Heather Mazzone. Heather has been here nineteen years. She started out in the classroom and went on to be a literacy teacher and from there she went on to reading consultant at Forest. Heather spent the last three years immersed in researching dyslexia and studying dyslexia with the support and backing of Dr. Druzolowski she is going to be the certified expert on dyslexia for our district. This is a very misunderstood disability and she has been studying structured literacy as well as a methodology called Orton-Gillingham for instructing reading for students with dyslexia. She has been practicing this with our students and has brought that to our staff in professional development. This is good practice for all students not just students with dyslexia. A further discussion took place.

Jason is a twenty one year veteran teacher and he dates back to Thompson School and was one of the first staff members in the Carrigan intermediate school model. That was a pivotal year because it brought all students together at a very sensitive age. He then moved on to be the Forest math coach in 2014. Jason holds a 092 and he is our go to for technology and he knows Forest inside and out. He is my Go To when I am called out of the building for any reason. He supports curriculum instruction as well as working with students. Both Jason and Heather working together help drive the instruction through the data math review. They identify the grey level trends and develop the fix that is usually presented during collaborative time or a data team or a PD in order to meet our student's needs. Because of a technology problem slides were not available but a lot of the slides were on the board.

Heather and Jason talked about their positions which Heather said are very much the same but there are parts of the day where they stray. Throughout the day they both do a lot of PD but the way they handle the PD is a little different. Heather will take in the new teachers at the beginning of the school year along with some of the literacy paras and classroom paras and go over some of the things they need to be aware of in the classroom. We have a high turnover of students that are coming and going so not all of our students receive that tier 1 instruction so those teachers who are working with the tier 3 students get that same background that the classroom teachers are doing so that is where this kind of started. We started doing PD for our Special Ed teachers and the reading teachers and began sharing the information and strategies for working with the students.

Jason said other than the fact that Heather does Language Arts and he does Mathematics there isn't a great difference. Maybe in 2009 or 2010 most schools had a reading specialist and teams of reading specialists in their buildings but not for math. The districts started when Dr. Druzolowski and the coordinators did a top down approach where we gradually were able to put math specialists in all the buildings. Every school in West Haven has a Math Specialist and we also did the curriculum revision from the top down.

The revision is an on-going process especially at the elementary level where we have teachers that teach every single subject. It is very demanding of them to learn and getting updated with new curriculum and this is where one part of our job comes into play. We work very closely with Colette Bennett and Nicole Danishevsky in terms of curriculum, new teaching methods, best practices, and professional development sessions and from there we are able to bring this information back to our schools. The school calendar has various opportunities throughout the year where we work very closely with the teachers and we also work with Tom Hunt and he recognizes what our specific needs are at Forest and we take those district initiatives and work together to make sure they apply in the correct format. A big part of our job is working with the students, depending on the grade level or on the need; sometime both Jason and Heather will go in and do a lesson with the kids. These are called model lessons and we pass this along to the classroom teachers. We might also take a small group of students that are in the lower level and work with them to do some remedial intervention. A further discussion took place. The board gave thanks. Applause. Questions were asked and responded to.

Before the next presentation Superintendent Cavallaro said we have our CAFE Student Leadership Awards tonight and one of our Student Reps Julia Walker is receiving the award and we have to get her on the Lacrosse Field by 6:30 so if you don't mind we will take the liberty and present those awards now.

Jonathan Saier and Julia Walker came forward. Superintendent Cavallaro said each year at this time we are pleased to nominate and two students are selected from West Haven High School to receive the CAFE Leadership Award. They receive an award along with other student leaders across Connecticut. Superintendent Cavallaro read the letter each award recipient received from Robert Mitchell who is the President of CAFE the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and Robert Radar who is the Executive Director.

Superintendent Cavallaro said these students are really assets and make West Haven High School the place that it is every day; they are true leaders. Jonathan's mantra is try everything and that says a lot about him right there. We try to encourage kids all the time to try things not necessarily because you are good at it but you want to see if there is an interest. Jonathan tried football when he was a freshman and didn't like it but to be part of the team stayed on as the Equipment Manager for three years because he just enjoys the sport. He is an excellent student, is a member of the tennis team, is a member of the robotics club, the academic integrity committee, SAD and he spends his free period monitoring his peers and is the Vice President of the National Honor Society and he is currently attend UNH under the Outstanding High School Senior Program. Superintendent Cavallaro congratulated Jonathan. Applause.

Superintendent Cavallaro said Julia Walker has been a Student Rep for the BOE for two years and our student reps put in a lot of time and try to keep the student body informed as to what is happening here. Dana and the other administrators seek their advice and ask what the students think about things and in many cases the board members listen to the kids when they speak more than they listen to me and I think that is a good thing. Julia was the Varsity Soccer Captain this year and is a member of the Varsity Lacrosse Team

and a member of the Grass Roots Action Club and she has organized a lot of activities, a member of the National Honor Society and she received the Smith College Book Award which awards females in high school for service in the community and she was awarded the Rotary Student Athlete Award. She has a Southern Connecticut Scholar Athlete Award for academics and athletic achievement and she was featured as the Fox 61 Student Athlete Captain so congratulations. Applause. Pictures were taken of both Julia and Jonathan with Board Chairwoman Rosemary Russo and Superintendent Cavallaro. Superintendent Cavallaro appreciated the student's families for coming because they are a big part of their success.

AJ Palermo, Principal of Seth Haley School said you will be happy to know that Seth Haley's topic was technology ironically enough and I allotted myself about a minute in a half and Mr. McDermott the six minutes because our slide show was video's and unfortunately the problem with the technology equipment had not been corrected. AJ said Seth Haley is her alma mater and as of today we have 388 students and two of our three new additions come from Afghanistan. They were students at Seth Haley and moved to Far Rockaway New York and have returned to Seth Haley which happens a lot. We have approximately 73 students that receive English as a second language and we have about 70 students at Seth Haley that receive some type of special education services. We have 18 regular education classes, we have 4 special education classes and 3 out of those 4 special education classes are called district wide classes. This means it doesn't matter where you live, you don't have to be a Haley area student, if that class is appropriate for your child then they are in that classroom. We love to show off those rooms, one is a medically fragile classroom, one is a self-contained preschool, and one is a self-contained kindergarten so all are identified kindergarten students that need some type of support. We are very proud of those four classrooms and we are proud of all of our classrooms of course but those classrooms we are particularly proud of because we feel that we play a little part in helping West Haven students attend school in West Haven as opposed to having to be outplaced to other buildings so everyone is always invited and we like to show off those room so any time feel free. The next slide would have shown us celebrating. We love to celebrate things big and small at Seth Haley and we had eleven EL Students graduate from the program this year and we had a big ice cream party for them and Mrs. Fronc joined us and you were able to see their proud faces on the slides which are on the bulletin board next to Forest School's pictures. Academically one of the things we are very proud of this year is our mathematics achievement. We have been analyzing our SBAC Growth and have made great growths in math and we are always looking for ways to improve and refine the things we are doing. We have really been trying to become more sophisticated with and refine our use of technology in the classroom so to that end this is where my part would end and this is where Brian McDermott would begin.

Brian is a second grade teacher at Seth Haley School and what I have seen in Brian's classroom has been extra impressive so I chose to highlight his classroom tonight. We took videos of our students using some different programs and we will make sure that you get to see those videos sometime whether we put them on the web or we send them out in an email to the board you will get to see those but for now Mr. McDermott will tell

you a little bit about them. We have found that the technology we are beginning to use is real-time technology so by that Mr. McDermott doesn't have to circulate around the room to see what everyone is doing he can sit in front of his computer screen and see the children as they are working on a math program and see what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong and use the data to make small groups that may need enrichment or remediation. Some of the things he is using in terms of the QR Codes we were going to talk about tonight and you were going to see the kids cover their iPads right over the QR Code and they get to see if they are right. This is really neat and if you don't get to see it tonight and it doesn't look like you will (Laughter) Mr. McDermott can be found in room 24 so come over to Haley we would love to show it to you. Brian McDermott talked about Google Classroom which Dr. Druzolowski gave him access to because generally in the district it is for grades 4 – 12 but he thought his kids would benefit from them. We have about 10 Chromebooks and the district provided iPads that we also use. We use the Google Classroom for ELA and Math and the video I was going to show you tonight would be Spot and Dot. You would take the word rabbit and dot the vowels and take two red dots on the screen and pull them over the vowels and have a little line that separates the consonants and then they can drag the letters individually and break up the word and read the first half and then the second half and blend it together. We do that whole group first and then they break into their daily five stations and Brian normally uses this for the workroom stations so they do a lot of word work there through the Google Classroom and after they do the Google he uses Alexia. We use this a lot in math because it is very interactive and they really dragging the numbers but he also emphasizes they have to do all their work on paper also and you will never see a student in his room without a piece of paper and a pencil next to them because in math especially if you are not writing it out you will not do well. You just can't use technology alone you have to bring it all together. He also talked about his iPad station at Math SRBI. He has a program called reflector and they can take their iPads and put them onto the screen and he puts his iPad on the screen first with a problem and then they go on their iPads and they handwrite on an app and write the answer and they normally do this with a partner. He takes his problem off the board and their four iPads go on the screen so they can compare and contrast answers to see misconceptions, errors and talk about different ways that they solve problems and they really love using the iPads. We use this for ELA and restating in the second grade. A further discussion took place with more information about the Reflector Program, QR Scoop Professional Development use of our in house PD to expand to all classrooms. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo thanked everyone and said the schools are doing great and we really appreciate your coming on Teacher Appreciation Week so we can thank you for all that you do and we are very grateful for what you do for the kids thank you. Applause. Before you leave the Superintendent has provided refreshments so please help yourself and we will start the board meeting in about five minutes.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn  
Karen Pacelli made the motion  
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion  
All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary