

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**West Haven High School**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held on October 7, 2019 in the West Haven High School Cafeteria, 1 McDonough Plaza, West Haven, CT. The meeting was called to order by Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 5:50 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  
Patrick Leigh  
Patricia Libero  
James W. Morrissey  
Karen Pacelli  
Rosa Richardson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lauren Aceto

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent  
Matt Cavallaro, Director of Finance

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mayor Nancy R. Rossi

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRESENT:**

Brendan Carew  
Mackenzie Gardner  
Anthony Vendrella.

Chairwoman Russo said we are lucky tonight to have both Seth Haley and Forest Elementary School here. Mrs. Palermo will begin the presentation with Seth Haley.

Mrs. Palermo said she didn't need the microphone but will use it because we are talking about technology tonight. AJ Palermo, Principal of Seth Haley, thanked the board for inviting her to tonight's meeting. She brought second grade teacher Brian McDermott and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher Greg Goldberg with her and said they will show one way that Haley students and teachers are utilizing technology. This presentation is not just a focus on chrome books and technology. We want you to understand how we are improving teacher collaboration, encouraging vertical conversations about curriculum, how we are building stronger student to student relationships, and this is what it is really all about. Mr. Goldberg's third grade class and Mr. McDermott's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class have partnered this year to work on different ELA and Math Concepts in projects and tonight they will be unveiling their new website which just went live for parents today. Two students that are

here tonight will be in the video Zaylene and Kai. AJ turned it over to the two gentlemen who showed a video. The complete video is on our website.

Greg Goldberg said he and his colleagues really were happy to have Chromebooks when the year started and wanted to utilize them. Brian McDermott really used them in his classroom last year and Greg approached him before school started to see if he wanted to partner up and he immediately agreed. Their video showed a lesson where students came in for a writing assignment and a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader was teamed up with a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader so they could share their ideas. Second graders could see what a third grade classroom looks like and third graders could be helpers and help the second graders. A video showed this.

Brian McDermott said they set up google slides where the top part couldn't be changed but in the text box they could add their own clip art which could be edited and get permission to finish the writing. The story requires that you use your five sentences for the descriptive part and they had to have a surprise. This can be linked right to their work after getting permission from parents. This keeps it nice and safe. A video was shown with Gillian from Mr. Goldberg's class and Zaylene from Mr. McDermott's class using different clip art and making sure all the sentences were included and they really worked hard on this. You can see that they are always focused when they are doing the writing and they did a really good job. There were many other slides shown. The entire video is on the website. The board thanked everyone for this wonderful presentation. Applause followed. Superintendent Cavallaro thanked Brian and Greg and said this is great work and we are really pleased that you are making use of the technology but still making sure that the kids understand the concepts; great work! Our second presentation this evening is from Forest Elementary School and I will turn it over to Tom Hunt the Principal of Forest.

Tom Hunt said we are very happy to be here to talk about what is new at Forest and what we will continue. You have heard me talk about the shared level of leadership in our building. Jason Heffernan our Math Coach and Heather Mazzone our Reading Specialist share that level of leadership in the building. They provide a comfort for the teachers because they are constantly getting PD as the year progresses from Jason and Heather to increase achievement in the classrooms so that student's needs are better served. During PD teachers are given coverage so they can go to the math or reading room where they are modeling lessons in the classroom so that tweaks can be made and the instruction more efficient. They have the level of expertise and we all have strengths and weaknesses and that is what we try to bid on big time. Our teacher goals this year were different than before. Our Tier 3 students are growing very well. The amount of growth we are achieving during the course of a year is really what put us on the map. Last year's preliminary results show we are very near what our Blue Ribbon Year was. We noticed some Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction isn't growing as much as Tier 3 so this year teachers will focus on Tier's 1 and 2 in their classroom because Tier 3 is working fine and we want to show more growth in those areas. We also will be engaging parents in what we are doing. The next thing is our school attendance initiative. To be sent home you have to be running a fever or very stomach sick. We do our best to keep children in school to receive the instruction they need because when they aren't here that is what creates the

gaps in learning. Approximately every 35 days we celebrate perfect attendance so every child can try at least five times during the school year to gain perfect attendance. We come together in an all school assembly and recognize those children in each of those 35 day windows. Children are given raffle tickets so they can win a prize; either lunch with the principal by grade level or a Barnes and Noble gift card all for coming to school. This generates a lot of excitement. These are things that are coming up that we are continuing and new things that you will hear about with the curriculum. The complete video will be on the website.

Jason talked about the changes taking place in curriculum and how they try to make students a little more efficient and to support teachers and students in increasing achievement across the grade level. It is very helpful that we can train others and share this information with schools in our district. In looking at SBAC scores we have been seeing a lot of growth within our school district so it is definitely a model for success.

Heather said last year she was going over the techniques they used and this year they have quite a few new staff members that are just out of school so it is exciting to see them come in because they are eager and excited to have their own classrooms but they do have a lot to learn about the different strategies we use. This year I have had two full days with some of the teachers and on the first day I pulled in our four new teachers and we spent the day together going through a number of different techniques and strategies we use in the classroom and going over some of the terminology. They do have questions and it will be an ongoing learning for them but it was exciting to see how excited and open they were to offer different techniques that we are using. A video was used to show the different things students are doing in the classroom and also walking/dancing in the hallway to the Jackson 5 ABC. The complete video is on the website. The board thanked everyone for this presentation. Applause followed.

Chairwoman Russo said she loved the ABC Bootcamp being a little kid's teacher what a great idea and this is district wide. She likes to see the families come back at dinners and have time to engage with them it is great thank you. Chairwoman also thanked Mrs. Palermo for the video showing everything that you did from the second grade. To both schools thank you very much for coming tonight. Applause

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn the special meeting

Karen Pacelli made the motion to adjourn

Pat Libero seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM

Chairwoman Russo said we will take a short break for people who have to leave and resume in about five or ten minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary