WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
August 4, 2009  
Special Meeting Board of Education as a whole for the purpose of  
New Hires and Proposed Federally Funded New Positions

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole for the purpose of New Hires and Proposed Federally Funded New Positions was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board at 6:30 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:  
Mark Palmieri  
M. Toni Paine  
Gerald Calabritto  
Eric Murillo  
Rob Saley  
Andy DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:  
Howard Horvath Jr.  
Patrick Egolum  
T. Sean Maher

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:  
Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Asst. Superintendent  
Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:  
Mark Palmieri welcomed everyone to tonight’s Special Meeting of August 4, 2009 and stated that as everyone knows this meeting is crucial for us to continue to get ready for day 1 of school.

Neil Cavallaro thanked everyone on behalf of the entire administration for allowing us to have this meeting tonight. This meeting allows us to continue with the hiring for the beginning of the school year. This will give the new employees time to attend our orientation session as well as all the professional development which takes place before the school year begins. In addition to the teachers the paraprofessionals also are in line for staff development. It is very important to approve these new hires tonight and we can answer any questions regarding the federally funded positions that we are proposing. He said Jolene Barnes is here to give us an update as to where we are with the hiring.

Jolene Barnes thanked everyone for taking time out of their schedule to attend this meeting. New candidates are anxious and nervous until they get an official vote and can sign their contract. All the names on tonight’s agenda are in shortage areas. After
tonight’s meeting we will have hired 25 teachers and there are now 5 difficult positions left to fill:

Bi-lingual and alternate teacher at Carrigan
Library Media Specialist split between Thompson and Molloy
Spanish teacher at the high school
Tech Ed at Bailey

We have strong leads on each of the areas and hopefully tomorrow I will have some confirmations.

Jolene thanked the coordinators, principals, and department chairs that have been involved with her for the past two weeks during the interview process.

Neil said this was a tough year 25 in shortage areas and there were very few elementary. The resignations we are accepting are being filled tonight and they are all in shortage areas. They are not additional openings.

Jerry Calabritto moved to approve D.1. through D.4. inclusive
M. Toni Paine seconded the motion
Discussion: Rob Saley asked if these were the teachers on the current agenda. Yes and if there are any questions later regarding other teachers we can have Anne, Kathy Cassell, AJ Palermo or myself answer them. Rob agreed to this and wanted to know why so many people were resigning. He knows some are personal and understands and its money too. Neil said all of it is money. Some teachers have been lured to other districts by an increase in money. Rob hopes we can address this in our next contract. Neil hopes to have something more by Friday.

Eric Murillo asked if the newly hired paraprofessionals were hired with CIMA money. Anne Druzolowski said some are yes. He asked if the clause was included if there is no money etc. Yes. Anne said we are required by law to support these kids and without a paraprofessional there needs would not be met. The Pre-Schools are very needy in terms of the special ed population. There are very small classrooms and require intense support. For five or six kids you may need as many as three adults in that classroom for medical reasons and day to day operations. We are seeing increases in Title 1 regular dollars as well as IDEA both pre-school, special education and regular special ed. As we move toward a higher number of kids in need when the census is done we will start seeing a rise in that count which will bring more money in so I am not concerned.

Mark Palmieri said as far as getting not only the teachers but the paras up to speed with professional development before day 1 of school begins by bringing them in now. Neil said part of the last negotiation had that included in their contract.

Eric asked if we are replacing some of the ones that left or retired on this agenda? They didn’t think so – some are medical paras. Eric asked what monies are we using for these positions; stimulus money or the money we normally get for special education? Anne
Druzolowski said for this particular new program which is the intent of the legislation – using Special Ed AARA money. AARA money comes in two forms either Title 1 or IDEA which is Special Ed and you have to follow the laws for each; the guidelines were not changed. A further discussion ensued.

Rob Saley asked who decides what the salaries will be is it by contract. Neil stated it is the number of years of experience. Does the committee set this? Usually the committee will decide this is the candidate we want to recommend and Jolene will discuss it with Neil (shortage area, years of experience etc.) and I’ll say go ahead.

There was no further discussion.

All board members were in favor
No one was opposed
No one abstained
Items D.1 through D.4. inclusive are approved

Dr. Anne Druzolowski said the federal government has set up a quarterly reporting system with the State Department of Education. We recently received correspondence stating that mid September they are requesting us to submit the new positions that we funded under the AARA funding – whether Title 1 or IDEA. This money will be used to support efforts and initiatives that we have and to meet the needs of the kids with additional staffing to stimulate the economy. The positions we would be reporting would be similar to the proposed ones on the sheets. A discussion ensued about how this benefits us and saves us local money. When you replace a person with federal funds you end up with a less costly type of individual taking their place.

**The Early Childhood Administrator** is funded through three funding sources: State Readiness Grant, IDEA 611 Preschool, and Graustein (Community Center). We are trying to address the needs of the Early Childhood Students in our whole district. We are looking at promotion from within the teacher ranks - the feeder system. The total saving on this type of position is $38,475 which is the savings of a new teacher (BS plus 30).

Rob Saley asked how many kids were in the program. Kathy Castle said our pre-school special ed in June had 158 kids for just the special ed part and Neil said approximately 200 for readiness. A further discussion ensued.

Eric Murillo asked how they came up with an $80,000 salary as this seemed high. When you look at a person coming in with an 092 – Administrative Salary that is what you are talking about. More than likely you will be replacing a top step teacher who has to have a 6th year degree so they are making the most they can make and that person would move into the administrative ranks and replace him/her with a lower step teacher and there would be a savings. A top step teacher is roughly $80,000 with 6th year and longevity. This person could remain in the school district another 20 years. A further discussion took place.
**Response to Intervention** – if we have the right people in place we may not need this position. We are looking at all possibilities and this would be a position encouraged by the department as well as by the federal government. There are new guidelines. This is a huge legislative piece and this person will support what we need to do across the district. This would be a locally paid teacher with some experience coming in. Neil said a response to intervention is mandated by the stated to have all districts implement this by the beginning of this school year. Eric asked if this position would need an administrative certification. Yes we would prefer this and there would be a stipend involved. A further discussion about costs and benefits ensued. The net dollar savings would be: $13,930.

**Mathematics Facilitators** – Mathematics is the only area where we don’t have any support in the basic skill areas. We have science facilitators to support that effort, we have language arts consultants as well as the literacy teachers in the language arts area yet we have nothing in mathematics. Neil said last year we eliminated a classroom in Forest and we created a mathematics consultant for the building and there were very good gains made in the CMT scores. This type of position will support classroom teachers and will get an 092 administrative certification. This too becomes a feeder piece because our administrative ranks are getting older and people with 092’s are ready to start taking some positions. The mathematics is critical for the new curriculum we have written and for the implementation of a new series that is coming out. This is an area we have great need in and our district data on our CAPT and CMT support this. This is for two positions. These people will be in the classroom making sure that implementation is taking place.

Ann said these are all new positions, new initiatives based on data and if we don’t fill them by September 30, 2010 we will lose our money and have to return it – we can’t keep it.

Neil said that our enrollment is going down so if we see gains being made with these positions we may be able to eliminate a classroom somewhere so no one loses a job as people retire. We have enough time so let’s implement the positions and program and we can find out where we can take away later on.

Mark Palmieri said the way I’m interpreting this is that each one of these positions has an 092 attached to it and the point I’m trying to make is that we have younger people we are getting their 092’s and we are grooming these people to become administrators down the road so we will have someone to step in and this is not really costing our taxpayers money as we are using the state’s money on this and it is like getting free professional development and the main thing is that all these areas are used to help the children of our district, to bring our scores up, and to improve our district. This is a win/win situation. Neil said we want to put these positions in the elementary schools. The net local dollar savings would be $83,736 (savings to two teacher salaries @ $72,000 without benefits leaving $11,736 additional dollars).
**Alternative Education Program Manager** would have an 092; it could be a department head position. They would be teaching two additional periods at the end of the day as well as teaching in the beginning of the day. It is urgent to have this position filled with the program starting. It is imperative for us to have somebody there all the time to make sure these kids are getting what they need to be getting and all the wheels are moving. This is a very big year for us and I want to make sure it is successful. We need someone to manage the program day to day and there would be no replacement of any position.

Eric Murillo asked if the person with the 092 certification would also teach; yes was the response. Eric asked how many kids have registered so far; 23 and another group is being interviewed with their parents coming in that are incoming 9th graders that we are highly suggesting they get involved so we anticipate about 45 kids. If a kid needs it they can stay for four years but we are encouraging them not to. We want to give them a positive experience for one year and get them out into the regular classroom in the mainstream. Students come in for lunch at 10:25 and they start then at 5th period, 6th, 7th and 8th and then they go to two other periods after school closes.

Rob Saley wanted to know the difference between this job and Lester Hawley’s. This person would be the department head managing the department where the assistant principal would be responsible for overseeing the program in addition to other responsibilities.

**Assistant Principal** Originally we talked about having someone as an instructional leader at Carrigan but in talking with the union they felt it was more of an assistant principal position. Patti Fusco spoke and said they felt just to have a teacher go into classrooms and monitor curriculum and how teachers are delivering instructions would be difficult as they wouldn’t have the force behind them. If a teacher goes into my classroom and tells me I need to change x, y, and z well they aren’t my principal they aren’t my boss; they are just a peer. We felt someone who had the teeth behind them to make the changes that need to be made.

Anne said this school is going into its third year of improvement and will probably go to a 4th and 5th as each year that bar gets a little higher. As much support we can give that classroom teacher to give instruction to those kids the better off we are. They are making progress; but when you haven’t received enough support it stock piles right there. The more help we can give that school the better. This is the intent of the dollars; let’s do it.

Jerry Calabritto said the clock is ticking. Last year a letter went home and parents had an alternative on where to send their child. At some point won’t they come in and disband that school at year four or year five? Right now what happens is Neil and the board has a right to do whatever they want to do. You could dismantle the whole building, take all the staff out of the building, have everyone re-apply for jobs; Neil would say restructure and reorganize. Jerry said so it is still in our hands. Yes. Neil is confident we would be able to show them here is what we have done. Jerry misunderstood he thought that we would be taken out of the equation and he said these are our people and our kids and doesn’t want somebody sitting in Hartford telling him what to do. Neil said this is a good point.
and when we met with people they are pleased with the progress and programs we are putting in place. A further discussion took place.

Eric Murillo asked if they were saying that an assistant principal would be able to monitor and have more authority than a teacher would? Yes. A further discussion about salaries ensued.

Anne said that the longer we wait the less time we have to find qualified people to serve in these positions. To replace them is another issue altogether.

M. Toni Paine made a motion to approve the proposed federally funded positions as presented Item #09-100

Mark said there are three more positions. Neil said we already have job descriptions for the other positions. Toni Paine made the motion again to accept the proposed federally funded positions as presented. Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion All board members present but Eric Murillo voted in favor. Eric Murillo abstained Item #09-100 Acceptance of Proposed Federally Funded New Positions passes.

Mark Palmieri thanked Dave Cappetta for getting the OSHA approved 5 legged chairs for the board room.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn Andy DePalma seconded the motion All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary