The Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by M. Toni Paine, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**
M. Toni Paine, Chairman  
Raymond Collins III, Vice Chairman  
George Monahan  
Eric Murillo  
Gerald Calabritto  
Robert J. Guthrie  
Howard Horvath  
Mark Palmieri

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**
Krista Pickering

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**
Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Toni Paine stated that there would be three presentations this evening and didn’t want to hold the children up so we will be doing the presentations before the public session.

Dr. Andrees stated she is very excited to have Tammy Perzanoski here with us this evening along with some of the students she works with. In a district with 7,000 students we only have one teacher who works with our students identified as gifted and talented. She has taken regular lessons and teaches it so that on either end of the spectrum students benefit not just those students identified as gifted and talented.

Tammy introduced herself and the three 5th grade students she brought with her this evening. The students involved in the presentation are Cameron Tucker, Yinxian Guo and Carly Reynolds.

Tammy doesn’t just teach talented and gifted students she has many opportunities to work with students in classrooms. She loves being in classrooms with whole groups of students. A bonus to her is being able to conduct lessons in fourth and fifth grade classrooms. She is able to sit down with classroom teachers to plan lessons and
differentiating instructional units. She went on to discuss the different facets of this program through a PowerPoint presentation.

Children are identified for the Talented and Gifted Program at the beginning of the school year with the Connecticut Mastery Test Scores. We look at those students who scored in the advanced area and then the teachers pool those scores and I receive recommendations from the teachers. All students must have scored in the advanced area top 10% in at least two areas of the Mastery Test and have a minimal goal performance in the third. All students selected scored in the advanced area and specifically in the top five percent in the district in these two areas and most of them in all three areas. We check their past performance and teachers fill out a rating scale which deals with the student’s motivation, learning and creativity. Tammy then administers the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test which grades verbal and non verbal performance. After looking at all the scores the students that fall in the top 5% are those students in this class.

TAG for fourth grade starts with warm up activities to enhance creativity and open the students mind to creative thinking. (Take a risk) The activities we are looking for are fluency, flexibility and originality. One of the activities is ranking most powerful to least powerful of the following: Ideas, Dreams and Knowledge. They begin to think which one would I rank as the most powerful and this results in some interesting discussions amongst each other. We might ask a question like when is enough really not? Thirdly they complete poems and rhyming activities such as Roses are red, Lilies are white and they are asked to complete it. One student completed the poem by saying the fighting in Iraq is just not right. This was an opportunity for this student to talk about this with his peers. They engage in problem solving activities and really challenge them to come up with ways to solve these problems. They engage in theme and research projects the topic will be natural wonders.

TAG for fifth grade is a little different they warm up with brain teasers and word puzzles. A lot of creative thinking is going on. We are looking for the fluency, flexibility and originality of ideas. We get into critical thinking. They do a lot with research skills. They learn about time management and organizational skills and they share. The three students then gave their presentations with a quiz for the audience at the end.

Cameron Tucker gave a presentation on Saturn
Yinxian Guo gave a presentation on Coral Reefs
Carly Reynolds gave a presentation on Lemony Snicket

Dr. Andrees thanked them on behalf of the board and asked for their parents to stand. Everyone in the room applauded.

Dr. Andrees stated that we have the Drama Department - Mr. Pedevillano and Mrs. Margi Maher here tonight. They are creating opportunities where high school and elementary students will have an opportunity to interact.
Mr. Pedevillano stated that this is basically a proposal for a pilot for the Theatre Arts to be incorporated into all the elementary schools in a partnership cost free to the City. We would like to have it approved as a pilot. Currently grants are being pursued from the National ‘Endowment for the ‘Arts, the Grants Coordinator’s Office and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism for funding.

He presented a very brief video and passed out informational sheets.

The piloted program will select approximately 100 fifth grade students form one elementary school each month and bring them to WHHS for a two hour workshop. This workshop will be highly interactive and involve hands on activities that utilize stage and theatre skills. The following areas will be covered: Acting, Reacting, Improvisation, Diction, Props, Layering, Blocking and Movement.

Dr. Andrees thanked Mr. Pedevillano and Mrs. Maher and hoped they received the grant and will be waiting to hear from them as to how it works out.

Dr. Andrees than introduced Lou Esposito who will present a program called SAF-T-NET which he would like to pilot in West Haven. He is here tonight to bring this to your attention and to gain your support.

Mr. Esposito stated that there was a brief demonstration for the administrators at the Blake Building about three weeks ago. This was an idea that was formed about four or five months ago and we bought it from the context stage to the trial and to demonstrate how it would work.

It is a safety program designed to eliminate the problems that have occurred in Pennsylvania and the Mid West when people come into the schools and hold the teachers and students hostages. The system is simple. I thought why can’t we have a system similar to the Life Alert where you press something and help would come. He has contacted some federal people and the former Deputy Police Chief of New Haven who is now with the security at the Knights of Columbus and we put together a system we feel is very workable. The system is similar to the Key Fob. This would be used only for something severe. It wouldn’t be used for a fight it would have to be something severe enough to warrant the police to come due to a dangerous situation to the students and/or teachers. The system that was designed would cover all West Haven Schools including all the parochial schools and would work on a system of monitors throughout the hall ways and stairways and places outside of the schools. The teacher would press the button and the system can tell where that button is at that particular time. There will be monitors throughout the schools and when you go from one monitor to the next it will pick up the signal and let the police know exactly where that button is. This part of the technology has been worked on so that if a teacher is taken hostage on the third floor of the Blake Building on the rear stairwell the police would know they are leaving through the rear stairwell and that area would be the one they would concentrate on.
He has been seeking federal funds and has received very good responses from Washington. He met with the governor’s staff last week and they are very interested. He has met with the teachers. We are trying to get this fully funded. We may have to come up with some money locally for the engineering of it. What price do you put on the safety of our students and teachers? He wants to start it here and then have it blossom out throughout the state. The cost is about one million dollars for all West Haven Schools. That would include the Key Bob to be given to each teacher and administrator. This will be monitored through the computer systems. The signals would go right into the Police Department. The response would be much quicker this way. Each Key Fob is customized to the individual person.

He is looking for the Board to give approval to go forward and would like to demonstrate this to the Board Members.

He asked if there were any questions.

Bob Guthrie stated he answered his question about where the signal went. It goes to the Police Department. He wanted to know if the system interferes with anything in the building such as the intercom system. No it is self contained and it has its own system. Is there a way to shut them off if they are lost or stolen? Yes was the response. The cost of one million dollars is for all the buildings and is a start up cost. Yes and the maintenance would have to be handled by the City. Right now he is pushing for as much money as he can get from the State and Federal side of it and is the federal legislators are very interested and feel the time has come for this. The only condition he put on the system was that if they were going to try it they try it here in West Haven. The only cost he can think of right now is the cost of replacing a battery.

Bob Guthrie asked Lou to come back with additional information and to bring a representative from the West Haven Police Department before moving forward on this. Lou stated that the Police Chief was here.

Toni Paine stated if there is another demonstration she thinks we all would be interested in attending.

Dr. Andrees thanked him on behalf of the Board for this very informative presentation.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

The public portion began at 7:45. Chairman Toni Paine asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Stanley Heller, Norwalk Street and teaches at Bailey Middle School and is a member of the PTA. The Speaker of the House called for Connecticut to start spending significantly more money on Health Care Prevention. One of the best things that can be done is to spend money to keep kids from smoking. Connecticut has the lowest average age of any U.S. State of kids starting to smoke – eleven years old. Connecticut spends over 300
million each year on Medicaid payments to treat smoking related diseases. The money should be there. Ten years ago the state won a settlement against the tobacco corporations. It gets 100 million dollars a year in that settlement. Almost nothing is spent out of this money on prevention. Last year only $40,000 from the $100 million was spent on prevention. This is a scandal. The Center for Disease Control that a State the size of Connecticut should be spending the minimum of $21 million dollars on tobacco prevention programs. The airways should be filled with commercials showing how the cool kids are non smokers. The schools should be decorated with posters of celebrities who are non smokers. The City should be sponsoring free athletic programs and gyms and swimming pools to keep young people busy. Money should be pored into school health programs, books, multi media events and give away items. The State should make medicines and patches to fight nicotine addiction free.

The State Teacher’s Federation, Eric Triffin, the Director of the West Haven Health Dept, Bob Crouto the Head of the Greater New Haven Central Labor Council and the West Haven PTA are trying to work to get the legislature to spend $21 million dollars this year on tobacco prevention programs. The PTA adopted a resolution to this effect in November. We hope the board members will support this initiative by contacting the press, West Haven representatives, the Governor and State legislative leaders. The governor’s budget will be presented very shortly. Let us insist that the State of Connecticut spend the tobacco settlement monies to keep the new generation away from this toxic poison.

Chairman Paine thanked him on behalf of the Board.

Chairman Paine asked if anyone else wished to address the Board.

Cebi Waterfield, 70 Seaview Avenue, West Haven, PTA President from Seth Haley wanted to offer support of school nurses. There are several students that utilize the school nurse on a regular basis. We have several peanut allergy students at our school and parents are very concerned about the possibility of loosing our school nurse. Parents are concerned if their child needs to be taken care of in an emergency situation.

For some of the students in our City the school nurse is the only health provider that they see. The school nurse makes sure they have their health screen done and make sure they get their minimal annual physical.

The other issue is with the school buses. Her child doesn’t ride the school bus but in the morning she sees how early some students are being dropped off. Some students are let off of the bus at 20 of nine and the teachers are not required to come out of school until 10 of nine and it is her understanding this is the time the students should be let off of the bus. One of the second grade students was standing in the driveway whacking the back of a bus until it was pulling out of the driveway. The bus driver behind the bus started blowing the horn and ushered the student out of the driveway. The principal has contacted Winkle Bus Company several times to discuss this. She wanted to bring this to the Board’s attention before someone may get hurt.
The Board gave thanks.

Chairman Toni Paine asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Stephen DeCrescenzo, 335 Captain Thomas Blvd. came to speak about a couple of things. He wanted to talk about Cliff Blackwood who is here tonight. There has been discussion on the news and articles in the paper about something that happened in 1985. Cliff made a mistake. We all make mistakes. This is just dirty politics at its best. Cliff volunteers in the community whether it be at the Community House or in many other areas that are not made public. I am proud to call Cliff my friend. It is so easy to point fingers but you have to remember when you are pointing a finger at someone four other one’s are pointing right back at you. Everyone deserves a second chance at life. The important thing is that you learn from your mistakes. Cliff is not just a hard worker and a loyal friend he is a wonderful person. If the previous administration had a real active qualified committee maybe we would not be in the debt we are in today.

As a councilman and member of the community it bothers me that we found out the Board of Education has 1.2 million dollars left over in the budget. 22 teachers retired in September so why not put the middle school sports back. It also has come to my attention that Pagels needs computers. Did anyone try to get these computers donated. Did anyone contact any companies? If anyone can get me some numbers I guarantee I’ll get some computers donated. I guarantee I’ll get a couple donated.

Lastly I am here tonight to speak on behalf of Stacey Farnen. Stacey is a lifelong resident of West Haven and was hired two years ago as a special education teacher at Bailey. This past summer Stacey was diagnosed with Hotchkings lymphoma cancer. Due to her illness and medical treatments she has not been able to work and has missed many days. Stacy is not tenured and is unable to utilize the sick bank. She has gone through all of her sick days and is not getting paid at this time. This financial stress has taken a huge toll on her. She is newly married with a house. She is receiving aggressive chemo treatments and experiencing every side effect there is and her finances are at a stand still which causes unneeded stress.

He has a suggestion that he feels the Board should consider. He proposes that the teachers and staff of the West Haven School system be given the opportunity to donate one of their sick days to Stacey which can be used during this trying time. It should be at the teacher’s discretion. The staff and teachers have already gone above and beyond. They have planned a benefit for March 24, 2007. Let’s come together and set a precedent to help a young teacher in need. Thank you.

The board gave thanks.

Darcy LoPristi, 115 Bellvue Avenue. She thanked the Board for their input at the Council Meeting in regard to the Budget.
She has some possible solutions. Sports are not as important as education. Parents have stated they would be willing to pay for the sports if they were asked. Sports should be started immediately after school due to the cost of electricity. You can cut some of the secretaries and staff at the Blake Building.

Another thing that bothers a lot of people is seeing the Board of Education cars at CVS and on weekends.

You should hire a company like Marriott to run the cafeteria. The food is not very good and they are serving two day old food at Seth Haley. She has talked to parents to get their opinions these are not just her own opinions. The kids’ education should come first.

The Board gave thanks.

Chairman Paine asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Tim Wrightington, 21 Susquehanna Avenue, West Haven, CT. One issue I wish to speak about is in regard to the nurses. There are so many allergies and sick kids we need at least one in each building.

He is a little shaken up about Cliff Blackwood. He knows him well and this is politics. Mr. Blackwood is making some serious dents into a serious problem that went on here for the longest time with regard to abusive use of funds and inferior repairs and construction in the system. In order to put smoke over here to get out of the fire over there they bring up a 20 year old felony conviction. If Mr. Blackwood’s felony was from 2001 to 2003 I would be very concerned but the track record that this man has since then and the things he has done not just in this community but across the country and outside this country are incredible.

There are other people in different areas with felony convictions. If you keep this up you will look stupid in the end.

Now regarding the 1.2 million dollars. Certain people on the board try to make the administration that is in here now look stupid by saying they didn’t leave enough money and our kids are short changed. Now all of a sudden 1.2 million dollars comes out of the woodwork. Why didn’t you go on Channel 8 with this. He commends Mr. Blackwood for going after what he is going after. He stated everyone’s background will be picked up because we are finding what went on and somebody is very afraid.

The Board gave thanks.

Chairman Toni Paine asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

There were no further speakers.

The public session closed at 8:05.
C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration:

Neil Cavallaro stated the Spelling Bee was held today and it was the fifth time he had the opportunity to moderate. We had four winners from the fifth through eighth grade who will compete in the championship on Friday. This will take place at 11:00 a.m. in the Board Room. The students were poised and acted very well under pressure. You are invited to come to the finals on Friday.

Three or four weeks ago we had a workshop with our principals and ESL Staff which was very well received by all who attended. On Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. we will begin at the high school and we will tour as many of the schools as we can. We will look over our program and hopefully be able to bring Mrs. Migliacci back as a follow up for all of you. We need a lot more support in professional development.

On Thursday Dr. Andrees and I are attending a Professional Development Workshop. Shortly after we come back from February vacation we start planning our staff development for next year.

We are in full gear for preparing for our CMT and CAPT Testing that begins the end of this month and the beginning of next month. We have done a good job of reviewing and preparing. We are building on our strengths and looking to work on our weaknesses and do some intensive review over the next three or four weeks. We have met with the Math Department at Carrigan and have come up with positive ideas to try especially in the area of math which is an area that needs improvement. He thanked Ann Valanzuolo and Frank Paolino for all their work.

Dr. Andrees stated that we are the recipient of a UNH Grant for Science Teachers to participate and work over the summer with the Math, Science, Engineering and Technology Staff at UNH. She is very excited about this and thanked Dave Russell and Raffaela Fronc for their efforts.

C.1.b. BOARD

Bob Guthrie had the opportunity to attend the journey day at Haley. The students all had fun and it went very well. Segment to segment was well organized. The kids certainly had a fun, interactive and learning day.

C.1.c. COMMITTEE

Howie Horvath stated we had a Technology meeting earlier tonight and we discussed our current status and identified a number of needs. We will come back in a subsequent
meeting to talk about the needs we want to address further. The minutes of the Technology meeting will give more detail.

D.1. Approval of Minutes D.1.a to D.1.d Inclusive

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Food Service Meeting, December 18, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Special Education Committee Meeting, January 16, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

D.1.c. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting, January 16, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

D.1.d. West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting Bd. of Ed. as a Whole For Finance and Budget, January 16, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes
Ray Collins seconded the motion

Discussion: Bob Guthrie stated last time we were asked to hold the minutes from Food Service. Has this been rectified?
Jerry Calabritto stated the minutes reflect the exact wording that took place at the meeting, even though there was no second, that is what took place.
There was no further discussion
All in favor
Motion Carries
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified) 07-05 – 07-08 Inclusive

07-05 Dianna K. Ball, Speech Language Pathologist, Molloy
Effective: February 9, 2007
Reason: Personal

07-06 Holly Turner, Science Teacher, Carrigan
Effective: February 16, 2007
Reason: Personal
D.2. Resignations: (Certified) 07-05 – 07-08 Inclusive (Continued)

07-07 William Kotowski, Principal, Pagels
   Effective: July 1, 2007
   Reason: Retirement

07-08 Susan P. Agnese, Special Ed Teacher, Thompson
   Effective: February 1, 2007
   Reason: Personal

Ray Collins made a motion to approve resignations 07-05 – 07-08 inclusive
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

D.3. New Hire (Certified)

07-09 Jason Stacoffe, 19 Cowpen Rd, West Haven, CT
   Boy’s Tennis Coach, WHHS
   Effective: March 19, 2007
   Starting Salary: $3,000.00

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve New Hire (Certified) 07-09
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

07-10 Leslie E. Morgan,
   Grade 1 Teacher, Savin Rock School
   Effective: Immediately for the remainder of 2006 -2007 school year
   Reason: Child Rearing Leave

Bob Guthrie made a motion to approve Leave of Absence (Certified) 07-10
Ray Collins seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries
E. New Business

07-11 Approval of Agreement between Workforce Alliance and West Haven Board of Education/West Haven Adult Education for Integrated Basic Education and Occupational Skills Training Customer Service

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve New Business 07-11
Ray Collins seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

07-12 Letters from Seth Haley PTA and Pagels PTA requesting to pursue a Grant from Lowe’s - Lowe’s Toolbox for Education Grant Program

Bob Guthrie made a motion to approve New Business 07-12
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

07-13 Correspondence from Stan Heller requesting Board Approval Support of the West Haven PTA Resolution regarding Tobacco Settlement Letter

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve New Business 07-13
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

07-14 Correspondence from Gary R. Palermo, Director of Pupil Services to Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent requesting a new paraprofessional position at Thompson School.

George Monahan made a motion to approve New Business 07-14
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries
E. New Business (Continued)

07-15 Approval of Memorandum of Understanding between WHHS and New Haven Sound School

Ray Collins made a motion to approve New Business 07-15
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

07-16 Superintendent Goals

Bob Guthrie made a motion to approve New Business 07-16
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion carries

F. Unfinished Business:

07-03 2007 – 2008 School Calendar

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 07-03
Ray Collins seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in favor
Motion passes

G. Informational:

Toni Paine attended the Spelling Bee this morning and the kids were phenomenal they are so poised. It really makes you very proud of them

Toni Paine asked for a motion to adjourn
Mark Palmieri made a motion to adjourn
Howie Horvath seconded the motion
All in favor
The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Clerk