WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
March 19, 2007  
Regular Board Meeting

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  
Gerald Calabritto  
Robert J. Guthrie  
Krista Pickering  
Mark Palmieri

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Murillo  
Howard Horvath Jr.

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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Kimberly Barnes

Board Chairman, Toni Paine turned the meeting over to Dr. Andrees, Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Andrees stated that the month of March is Board of Education Appreciation Month across the country and this gives us an opportunity to say thank you to the board members who serve our children and making it possible for the many opportunities that our children receive. The reception tonight was an opportunity for you to interact with our Board Members.

Some of our students are here tonight and would also like to recognize the Board of Education Members. I am going to begin with a young lady by the name of Jilian Edmonds. Jilian is representing Forest School and the principal of the school Mr. Tom Hunt is here with her. Jilian presented the Board with a framed photograph in tribute to their service to the children of West Haven. The photo shows the Forest School Flag and Banner flowing over a military base in Afghanistan with former West Haven Teacher Sergeant Ed Shaw and his Unit.

The Board gave thanks.
Kim Barnes from WHHS along with the Principal of the school Mr. Ron Stancil were here to thank the Board. Kim thanked the Board for their continued support and stated that whenever students come before the Board they are listened to and always taken seriously. Many students in West Haven are involved in many activities such as sports, band, theatre, DECCA and so much more. These opportunities are made possible because of the Board of Education and because of this we would like to thank you for your continued support.

The Board gave thanks.

A group of students from Mackrille representing the fifth grade were present along with the principal of the school Mrs. Cathy Biagetti. Sydney Mursko, Christina Zaino and Jimmy Morrissey came forward. In recognition of Board of Education Month the children, staff and Mrs. Biagetti would like to share with you the following short poem and present these small gifts to all of you.

- A penny so you have enough cents to realize what a valuable asset you are;
- Hugs & Kisses so you remember how much we appreciate you;
- A lollipop to help you lick your problems;
- A rubber band to help you hold things together;
- A piece of gum for stick-to-it-iveness;
- A pin to help you pinpoint problems and solutions.

The Board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees stated that there are posters from every building here tonight; while all could not be here tonight they want you to know that they too appreciate every single decision the Board makes.

Students from the DECCA Club and their sponsor Mr. John McKee along with Mr. John Camara were also in attendance and displayed the trophy they had won. Dr. Andrees stated that this trophy represents the measures of our success and the wonderful things that happen to children in the West Haven Community School District. They won first place out of every community in Connecticut. Our students in DECCA scored NUMBER ONE!

The Board presented each of the following students with a pin and had a picture taken with them.

Alex Villar, President
Chae Phillips
Lindsay Eagles
Jill Collins
Dr. Andrees said this was quite an accomplishment to have our DECCA Group be number one out of all the DECCA Groups in the State of Connecticut.

The Board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees read a short poem taken from a book called Measures of Our Success regarding the responsibilities we have in terms of helping the children in our country. She then thanked the members of this Board of Education for choosing to serve the children and the community of West Haven Public Schools.

The Board gave thanks.

Neil Cavallaro stated that we originally were planning on having a Policy Meeting and Board Member Eric Murillo had been working closely with CABE and a representative from CABE, Vincent Mustaro is here tonight to update our Policy Book. Unfortunately Eric became ill and has spent some time in the hospital. I am pleased to say that he is on his way to recovery. We have Mr. Mustaro here tonight to talk about CABE’s overall policy service and when Eric returns we will reschedule our Policy Committee Meeting and talk about specific policies. He then asked Mr. Mustaro to speak to the board regarding the policy services that CABE offers.

Mr. Mustaro is a retired superintendent and enjoyed being here tonight with the students and the Board being recognized. It is through Policy that the Board speaks and indicates what they want to see happen in this community; or you indicate what you don’t want to see happen. CABE offers a lot of services and I will only highlight the policy services tonight and this is only one part of the services that are offered to you through CABE. He left a packet with some background information for Board Members in terms of Policy.

Mr. Mustaro highlighted the services offered by CABE to the Board as a member.

BASIC SERVICE

You have the opportunity to pick up the phone at any time and ask if there is a policy on anything you choose. This type of request happens all the time. CABE will get this information to you and if they don’t have it they will get it from other school boards throughout the country to give some model language to look at. This is the basic service.
There are other services which the West Haven Community has taken advantage of and has used. The CABE Website is available and has a member section called the Core Manual.

CORE MANUAL

The core manual is a reference manual if you want to see what a manual looks like it is there for you. It was updated annually in the past during the month of January. It is now updated continually and serves as a model for our newest service which is the Connecticut On Line Policy Service which will be discussed later.

The Core Manual provides boards the opportunity to look at sample policies that you need to have and states the recommended policies. It is not all of the policies that we have it represents approximately 25%. If you are looking for something and it is not there you can call them and they probably have it.

POLICY AUDIT SERVICE

When a board finds itself in the situation of not knowing what shape their manual is in and questions if they have everything they are supposed to have; i.e. are their legal references up to date etc. they may contract with CABE and Mr. Mustaro reads the manual. He looks to see if the policies are legal in terms that no laws are broken and is in concert with up to date court decisions. State Law says you must have a policy on homework but the law doesn’t state what must be in that policy. If the Board states they don’t believe in homework and none will be given to the students in West Haven. If he were to read the policy and was doing an audit of the manual he would have to say it is appropriate as written. He is not making a judgment on your position he is making a judgment on the fact that it is not violating any law. This is the policy audit service and many times if boards are not sure what to do next they will ask this to be done.

CUSTOMIZED POLICY SERVICE

Beginning in 1996 and continuing for the next four or five years the West Haven Policy Manual was completely redone. CABE started working with our existing manual and completely revised the manual which probably is the core of our current manual. This is a very popular service in the state and we have done close to 75% of the districts in the state. They provided many samples and clearly the whole idea is what fits each community.

The key thing that CABE provides is that they provide all the grunt work. His primary and almost sole responsibility at CABE is policy in terms of what is happening, in terms of key issues such as laws and judicial decisions. As a board and your administrative staff you can’t devote that kind of time. We do the grunt work and leave the decision making based on the material we provide as to what they want to include in the West Haven Policy Manual.
POLICY UP DATE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

The Policy Manual is like a curriculum guide; it is never finished as laws impact policy. The Policy Up Date Subscription Service is a publication that is sent out four times a year and West Haven is a recipient of that; they subscribe to this. In three of the four issues I am looking for current Policy Pockets and provide material in terms of background on that particular issue and provide sample policy language and or sample administrative regulations. Even with this a few years back he was receiving requests from boards that subscribe to that service asking for sample materials. He knew something was happening as they are subscribers and they have sent out materials to them. So they needed to provide another service. He is glad to say that this next service West Haven has taken advantage of. West Haven moves forward in their policy work. This new service is called the Custom Up Date Service.

CUSTOM UP DATE SERVICE

In the publications that go out he does write it and do the research and then sends it out but then it is up to the districts to work with it. With the Custom Up Date Service he is responsible for going in to our manual and our policy and makes the necessary changes and sends it back to the district for action at the board level. It then comes back to him for printing etc. He does the grunt work, he initiates the changes that need to be made – not using generic language but using our existing current language and this is called the custom up-date service. This is only offered to districts where they have done their manual because they have that manual on their computers. This brings him to the newest service which they just introduced this past fall and we are now at a point where it is ready to go. This new service is called COPS – Connecticut Online Policy Service.

COPS - Connecticut Online Policy Service

Mr. Mustaro knows our current manual is on line and he thinks they facilitated this for us because when they did our manual not only did we get it in paper format but also received it electronically on disc. It was given to us electronically because:

- This way you can facilitate any changes that you want him to make over time
- They encourage boards to put the manual on line if they have a website because the policy manual like the curriculum guide is worthless if it is not disseminated

Mr. Mustaro is sure that our manual as it is on line is only searchable by virtue of a table of contents. For many years he was not in favor of CABE offering this service because districts have their own tech people ad they can put their manual on line. They did a survey last fall of the membership and found there was considerable interest in their offering the service. Some of the advantages of the service is that if you are looking for a policy on administration of medication he knows it is in the 5000 series but he works with policy all the time. The public doesn’t. This is only searchable through a table of contents and you would have to hunt for it. They have a search engine which is very easy to search by word or phrase and you can exclude what you don’t want so that you can
narrow your search. This is one of the biggest advantages. In addition to its search ability is the fact that your manual is always current and up to date. If you were to revise a policy tonight or adopt a new policy this evening and were a subscriber to the on line policy service you would email it to his office and within 48 hours it is current and up to date and on line. You would be guaranteed that your on line manual is always up to date. The West Haven Board of Education has availed themselves of many of the above services.

The Board gave thanks.

**B. PUBLIC PORTION**

The public portion began at 7:30 p.m.

Denny Cox 70 Hines Street, West Haven addressed the Board. He is trying to organize an Art Show for elementary school students in West Haven during the Memorial Day Weekend at Washington School. This will be held under a tent for two days. He is asking for the Board’s support on this. He will send letters out the principals and the art teachers to help organize this. More details will follow which will be given at the next meeting.

Neil Cavallaro stated he had spoken with Lou Pershani who runs the carnival on Memorial Day Weekend and we are hoping to incorporate this as part of the carnival. On April 2nd they plan on giving a full demonstration at the Board meeting which will include the Art Show.

The Board gave thanks.

Patti Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Rd., West Haven addressed the Board. She was very upset regarding the Board of Education Budget as she is sure most people are also. We just need to work together to make it better by getting the City Council to add some money back.

She wanted to speak about a benefit being held this Saturday night, March 24, 2007 for Stacey Farnen Hawes who is a Special Ed teacher at Bailey Middle School. Stacey was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma which was very well progressed unfortunately. Stacey has not been able to work and because she is only a third year teacher she is not able to take part in the sick leave bank. Her friends organized a fund raiser which will be held Saturday night at the IA Club. The donation is $30.00 and there will be open bar and entertainment with lots of prizes and she encouraged all to attend or to buy a ticket if they are unable to attend. Stacey will be there and is looking forward to the support. Patti has tickets if anyone is interested.

Sandy McCauley, 86 Richmond Avenue, West Haven and Kathy Barra, 672 First Avenue, West Haven addressed the Board. They are here representing Thompson School and they are going to do the annual Walk For Diabetes on Friday, May 4, 2007. The
Walk will begin at 11:00 a.m. at the bath house and will proceed to Bradley Point and back to the Grove for a picnic lunch. Last year they raised over $5,000. They took the whole school to the beach, had lunch went for a walk and had a wonderful time and they will do it again this year. We are going to have great weather and we invite everyone to attend. Flyers were distributed.

The Board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road, West Haven addressed the Board. She congratulated the Board the artwork and festivities outside were very nice.

She wanted to thank the Superintendent and all the board members that voted to go ahead with the up-grades of the computers for the children; additionally she likes the idea of doing the fifth grade because it is fair. She likes the idea that everybody will be on the same page. Her concern was that she didn’t want to see it end up like the additions ended up and that is that one side of town gets done and the other does not. She is referring to Molloy School which didn’t even make it back into the Five Year Capital Plan. She likes the idea of moving ahead and the idea of the fairness of not just targeting one school but to upgrade all the 5th grades.

Curtis Jordan, 249 Malcom Rd., West Haven addressed the Board. He served on the Mayor’s Finance Budget Board and saw some of the budgets that came through and began to wonder what part of we don’t have the money we don’t understand. He supports teachers in our educational system but he has tracked it since 1998 and it is not a question of money it is a question of performance. Since 1998 he has not seen any significant increase in performance. A lot of people complain they are not getting enough money.

Milford has 53,000 people, West Haven has about 53,000 and Hamden has about 52,000. This information has been retrieved from the community. In 2005 Milford collected 139M+ and they spent 137M, Hamden’s budget was 134M+ and they spent 137M; more than what they collected. West Haven said they collected 126M+ and they only spent 124M but we know that is not true. One thing people don’t seem to realize is that we have three fire districts. West Haven said we spent 124M but the budget for the fire department was 21 M. If you take the 124M they said they spent and the 21M for the fire department that is 145M. Some of that money should be going to the board of Education so where is that money going?

The Board gave thanks.

The Public Session closed at 7:45 p.m.

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration
Dr. Andrees wanted to thank Alan Belchak, all the principals, students and parents who came out tonight to honor this Board of Education.

If we get out of here early enough the high school band will be at The Texas Road House and they are hoping you will come over and join them because 10% of the proceeds will go their band fund raiser. There are coupons here for you if you wish to attend.

Dr. Andrees also congratulated Carrigan Middle School. On Wednesday there was a problem with the transformer in the building and the students came out of the building and went back in. They received a call that gave them 20 minutes to get out of the building. They shut all the electricity to the building down and it was very dark. That staff at Carrigan School are second to none. Every child maneuvered in the dark, getting their equipment and Mr. Craig Winkle on a moment’s notice was called and had busses there to take all of the children home. The staff stayed until every child was on a bus and off the premises and stood around so we could thank them before they left. The leadership of the principal and assistant principal and the staff was exceptional during this project. So often we hear the negative when things go wrong but during an emergency they all rose to the occasion. We were all quite proud of their efforts and I wanted to thank them publicly for what they did.

The secretarial staff here in this building and staff from Carrigan came here to make calls to every parent letting them know what was going on. We called Jim Burns immediately after that and said we are ready for that system. The system we are looking at will allow us to make 1,000 calls in the matter of a half an hour or so. Channel 8 had it on the television very quickly.

Dr. Andrees reminded everyone that on April 4th there will be a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. at West Haven High School and on April 11th the Board of Education will make its presentation to the City Council at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers.

Neil Cavallaro also thanked all those who made tonight possible. This was really a nice event and he thinks most of the credit should go to Dr. Andrees who didn’t take any credit for organizing it. This was really well done and it was the first time since I have been here that we did it like this. The Board Members all serve without compensation and really work hard to make the school system a better place.

On tonight’s agenda D.4. Leave of Absence – Assistant Lacrosse Coach. Normally we would not do a leave of absence for a part time position such as this but this is someone who was working as the Assistant Lacrosse Coach and decided that she didn’t like what she was doing (she has a degree in the Science field) and is now interning at WHHS hoping to become certified as a teacher. It is our hope that we will be able to hire her as a teacher and she also will renew her responsibilities as a Lacrosse coach. We wish her well as she pursues her career.
The other agenda item is D-5 07-32. The woman we are hiring tonight has been teaching and doing a very good job since day one. She was working off a temporary certificate and has since passed all her qualifications to be fully certified so we are officially putting her on tonight’s agenda.

Dr. Andrees stated some may question why we are hiring people when we may potentially be laying off people. In our shortage areas come July we are scrambling so we hope to have people in place that we may be able to call upon as opposed to just letting them go an not have access to them. We hope this will work in our behalf.

C.1.b. Board

Bob Guthrie thanked the Superintendent for this evening and the students for their musical interlude. Along the lines of the musical presentation he acknowledged the band for participating in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and winning second place. We are extremely proud of them.

George Monahan echoed Mr. Guthrie’s appreciation from the Board for all their hard work. It is a good feeling I know for all my colleagues.

He asked the Chair if she had an opportunity to make any progress regarding a schedule to make presentations to the PTA’s. It will be forthcoming.

Ray Collins thanked Dr. Andrees for putting this together and thanked everyone for coming out. He appreciates this.

Jerry Calabritto thanked Dr. Andrees for putting this reception together and he also thanked the students that did the art work around the room and the students that made a presentation for us tonight. He commended the two ensembles that provided entertainment at the reception along with Mr. Guthrie’s sentiments about the band at the St. Paddy’s Day Parade.

Mark Palmieri is sorry he was late and does appreciate their appreciation. He also commended the PTA. He attended the Founder’s Day Dinner the other night and it was an excellent evening. The presentations were excellent and the food was great.

Krista Pickering thanked everyone for the wonderful reception and for recognizing the work this board does. She also stated that on February 28th she was part of a fund raiser for a family here in West Haven; Robert Fumiatti who we probably all know and have had some type of interaction with. She went into Seth Haley on the 28th looking for a screen and asked Ms. Pepe if she had one and she went to look for a screen. Mr. Iuteri walked by and she asked him and within two hours her cell phone was ringing and he had contacted Mr. Yacono and they had hunted down the screen for her. These gentlemen really stepped forward and the family was really grateful we were able to make this presentation. She thanked Ms. Pepe, Mr. Iuteri and Mr. Yacono for stepping up to the plate and helping with a good evening for all.
Toni Paine stated to board members, “I’m sure everyone has received their letters. If you haven’t, please let me know and I will make sure you receive another one.” She also stated she went to the Founders Day Dinner and it was wonderful. The presentations were very nice and the people they honored as the unsung heroes were quite impressive.

This evening was very nice. What it does is it renews the vigor and it makes you realize yes this is exactly what we are all working for so thank you all very much for this.

C.1.c. Committee

Nothing was stated.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting,
March 5, 2007 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve the minutes
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
All in favor
Motion carries

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

07-28 Salvatore, J. Bonito, Principal, Thompson School
   Effective: July 1, 2007
   Reason: Retirement

07-29 David C. Ortoleva, English Teacher, West Haven High
   School
   Effective: July 1, 2007
   Reason: Retirement

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

07-30 Lisa M. Voytek, Part-time Cashier, Mackrille – Food
   Service
   Effective: March 12, 2007
   Reason: Personal

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

07-31 Joanne Zuk, Assistant Coach, Girls Lacrosse Team
   Effective: Immediately for the remainder of 2006-2007
   school year
   Reason: Personal
D.5. New Hire (Certified)

07-32  Stacey Holmes, 351 North Main Street, Seymour, CT 06483
English Teacher, Bailey Middle School
Effective: March 20, 2007
Starting Salary: $34,553.36 (Step 2 B.S.)

E. New Business:

07-33  Approval of Field Trip for 60 students from WHHS to attend the Annual Performing Tour in Oahu/Maui, Hawaii on July 2 – 10, 2007

Dr. Andrees stated that Cassie Marcella is here in case you have any questions.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 07-33
George Monahan seconded the motion
Discussion: Bob Guthrie asked how you are doing with the student chaperones. Are you OK with the ratios for chaperones? Yes we have approximately 60 students and approximately 70 adults traveling. Within the 70 adults we have family members and 6 staff members who are the acting chaperones. Bob stated he knows the organization does the entire fundraising and raises the funds to go on the trip. Ball park figure what does it cost for a student to go on this trip. The cost for students is $1,760 and it is eight nights and two different islands and it covers air fare and inter island fare, hotels, and gratuities and breakfast. Based on the cost do we have students who would like to go but lack the funds? Fund raising was set up for anyone interested and we set up payment plans and put the option out there if they are waiting for tax returns we are willing to work with everyone. We also have individuals who have offered scholarships.

George Monahan said good luck with the trip and thanked her for all the hard work in order to do this. Some high school cheerleading squads won competitions this year and received invitations to competitions in Hawaii next year. He asked her to reach out to Mr. Cavallaro and Mr. Capone and share some of your trip planning experiences. This might help them a lot with their planning.

Cassie stated it is a wonderful experience it is one of the 50 states but it terms of culture it is completely a different world. One of the nicest parts of the trip is that we do a cultural exchange with a senior center and they learn a lot of the Asian and South Eastern Pacific Island cultures. She will certainly get them all the information.
The Board thanked her.

Toni Paine asked if there was any other further discussion and there was none.
All in favor
Motion carries

E. New Business: (Continued)

07-34 Approval of Adult Education Program Grant

George Monahan made a motion to approve 07-34
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
All in favor
Motion carries

F. Informational:

There was nothing shared under informational.

Toni Paine asked for a motion to adjourn.
Mark Palmieri made a motion to adjourn
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Motion carries

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Clerk