

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**  
**October 19, 2009**  
**Regular Board Meeting**

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on October 19, 2009. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:10 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Palmieri, Chairman  
Gerald A. Calabritto, Vice Chairman  
Eric Murillo, Secretary/Treasurer  
Patrick Egolum  
T. Robert Saley  
Howard Horvath Jr.  
M. Toni Paine  
Sean Maher  
Andrew DePalma

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

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

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRESENT:** Eric Pang

Mark Palmieri welcomed everyone to the West Haven Board of Education regular meeting for October 19, 2009 and stated that Public Session would begin.

**B. Public Session**

Public session began at 7:15 PM

Patti Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Road, West Haven, CT reminded us that the Teacher of The Year Dinner this year will take place on November 12<sup>th</sup> at Aldario's on Naugatuck Avenue in Milford. Tickets will be \$35. Dinner choices will be prime rib, stuffed shrimp or chicken sorrentino. Four people will be honored. West Haven's teacher of the year for 2009, Mary Sylvia who is a pre-school teacher at Mackrille, Rosanne Ferraro who is West Haven's teacher of the year for 2010 and is a reading teacher at Carrigan will be honored now as we only have a dinner every two years. Runners up were Peter Sulkis the

Library Media Specialist at Washington and Mackrille and Jessica O'Connor a first grade teacher at Thompson School. Patti has tickets for this wonderful event which is a chance to honor all teachers everywhere.

The board gave thanks.

Lynn Bonaldo, 67 Wellington Dr., Orange who is also a teacher at Carrigan and that is why she is here tonight. Lynn invited everyone to check out the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Murder Mystery Night on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 at Carrigan. This event is a family favorite which is written and put on entirely by the Carrigan staff. There will be a skit where a murder will happen; a life game of clue will then take place where they have to complete activities at five stations to receive clues as to who is the killer; the method and the motive. Most activities are CMT based including reading comprehension including reading comprehension, closed activities, math and science. There is fun stuff the lyric and gloom squad stations. The first five teams to arrive at the finish line received prizes that have been donated by local businesses. With the help of Ms. Maher and Theatre Workshop our allotment has increased and this year we have increased it to 400 people and currently we are over our capacity and 435 people will be attending. The only cost for attendance is a non-perishable food donation to WHEAT. If you have any further questions I encourage you to talk to the event coordinator, Ginny Bauer. This is a fun night and I hope you can stop by for a little while to see what it is about.

The board gave thanks.

Public portion ended at 7:25 PM

## **C. REPORTS**

### **C.1. Administration**

Superintendent Neil Cavallaro stated that board member Patrick Egolum asked at our last board meeting about our professional development and what we were doing so we thought we would bring some teachers here tonight to talk about the training and now what they are prepared to do.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski said that one of the things we need to pride ourselves on is that 23 teachers and administrators were chosen across the district to be trained based not only on their ability to understand the concept of common formative assessment writing but also their ability to present. This type of presentation requires in-depth knowledge of teaching and learning as well as a professional way of presentation. The presenters are prepared to give you an idea of what they learned and to give you their honest feedback about the training itself. They know that they will be training other teachers across the district and we are really valuing this resource. Larry Ainsworth said that this is probably the finest group he has worked with and he has trained quite a few across the nation. As part of their training they have to demonstrate their knowledge based on presenting to the group in order to get certified. They were outstanding. The three presenters introduced

themselves. The three presenters are Deanna Pucillo, who teaches 7<sup>th</sup> grade science at Bailey Middle School and has been in the district for 12 years, Ritamarie Bouchard is a reading consultant at Molloy Elementary School and has been in the district for 10 years, and Chris Pelatowski is a social studies teacher at WHHS and has been in the district for 11 years. They thanked the board for rewarding them with the professional development and said this will really help with student achievement. They passed out folders which included the presentation on the power point slide they would be discussing tonight and also passed around books that they have been using on common formative assessments. (Patti Fusco has all this information available to you on the West Haven Web Site).

With the training they have received as Common Formative Assessment Trainers they will be able to provide teachers with:

- The process and tools to develop quality Common Formative Assessments
- Support and feedback during implementation of Common Formative Assessments

#### Benefits

- Greater gains in student achievement
- Smoother transitions when students move within the district
- Builds Professional Learning Communities within the school and the district
- Collaboration amongst grade level/subject area teachers
- Assessments are teacher created, teacher-owned

Through the workshops teachers will recognize how Common Formative Assessments (CFA's) connect to other powerful instruction in assessment practices. The workshop will demonstrate to participants why they need to consider intentionally making connections between all the practices they are being asked to implement because we are going through a lot of changes this year. Lastly, teachers will receive tools for evaluating and improving the quality of common formative assessments.

Common Formative Assessments were explained. An analogy would be if you were to compare it to a basketball game. The coach (you) would have the schedule, then the practice games, scrimmage, and the big game. You would have watched the other teams play, know their stats and know their plays etc. You would use the information gathered to determine the strengths and weaknesses of all your individual players and give them the help needed to succeed now and in the future. The players now have the strength and confidence to win. Now compare this to CFA. Teachers use a Pre Common Formative Assessment to determine what students know about specific topics, concepts and skills and they use that information to design their instruction. When students take the pre CFA they use it as preview of what is coming next and what will be expected of them at the end of the unit. The basketball practice is like the instruction. The teacher designs and implements this according to the student's needs. Scrimmages are like dipsticks. A coach would play against a team to see how well they are doing; are they executing the plays correctly. In the classroom we use dipsticks to see if they get the concept. If not we use this information and adjust our instruction. The big game is like the post assessment and

this is aligned to the state standards. It is very important to align our post assessments to the state standards. The teachers use the information derived from this to determine if any concepts and/or skills need to be re-taught. An example was given of how this could be used in her science class.

A quote from Doug Reeves states “Schools with the greatest improvements in student achievement consistently use common assessments.” Howie Horvath asked in classroom vs. common does common mean that everybody in the grade uses the same; yes that is exactly what it means. All individual grades in each school are doing the exact same thing. 7<sup>th</sup> grade science at Carrigan is studying the same thing that 7<sup>th</sup> grade science at Bailey is studying.

The past practice is that teachers were given the state standard and they would have to teach the standards but there really wasn't accountability for all the standards. An example was given. There are 26 third grade teachers and they all teach the standards differently and there are also 42 special area teachers (Reading, ESL and Special Ed) and they really don't know what the 26 teachers are teaching or how to help them teach the standards. Then we have two different types of assessments. For elementary and secondary we had the formative assessments (which showed right away what help was needed to give a child). Summative assessments are taken after the unit is completed and whatever results you get will be used for future students; not current students. There is a lot of summative in secondary and very little formative. You then have your annual state Assessment at the end (CAPSS & CMT) and receive those results in July and the students have already left. The scores are looked at by the press as a district not as individual achievement. We are missing the boat on working with our children in the present and that is when we come in with Common Formative Assessment.

- Alignment of Assessments
  - ✓ Classroom, common, district, & stateProvides predictive value of how students are likely to do on the next level of assessment in time for teachers to make instructional adjustments!
- In this way, assessment is truly informing instruction.

Prioritizing Standards - We started looking at the state standards and said we really can't teach all of them we will focus on the most important ones. We won't exclude the other ones we will use them and they will be supported. This is called prioritizing the standards and these are the essential things a student needs to understand in school, life, and for the state tests.

Unwrapping standards – looking at the big ideas and essential questions (what are the essential concepts that children need to know for the rest of their lives.) How do you determine the standards to teach? What we want our kids to know in life, state standards and school.

School-based common formative pre-assessments

Data teams and effective teaching strategies

Conceptual Unites of Instruction with Classroom Performance Assessment Tasks and Scoring Guides

School-Based Common Formative (Post) Assessments

Regular Assessments

Annual State Assessments are aligned with the state now and the teachers don't feel isolated.

Patrick Egolum asked if the teachers have flexibility. Yes, teachers have their own way of getting there but come up with the same conclusion. Patrick asked if we are going in five different directions is there some way of getting the best way to do something. Yes, by building professional learning teams within the district. At the high school we are writing and adjusting the CFA which will be given in three weeks. We are trying to get everybody (with their own expertise) to incorporate all that understanding so that hopefully it will fall right into the big idea. It open the door for teachers to ask each other how did you get your kids to do so well on the CFA what strategies did you use.

Howie Horvath asked if the state realizes that you need a super set of standards that you can't test on all strands of the standards or all standards? Have they prioritized their standards – No. So we are really guessing or attempting to identify – No when the teachers look at that this is just a piece of the information that they use to align their assessments when they create them. They also look at the state standards, CMT CAPT and what that information told them about how their kids are learning. A further discussion ensued.

Teachers can adjust their instruction throughout the year. Dipsticks give teachers a sense of where their students in the classroom are within that unit and what their strengths are for the rest of the year. Students in the high school are on a one to a three day same page lesson plan.

Data – Driven Decision Making is the final piece and has occurred already and continuing to occur. This will achieve student success through the tests currently and in the future. No child is going to be held more accountable in this process than the adults. Parents have access to this information of what the child is currently learning in school.

Rob Saley stated how enthusiastic the three teachers were and the board gave thanks.

Neil thanked the teachers and said this is just an example of the teachers that went through the training last week. We will try to bring in teachers throughout the year as there is no better evidence of what is going on then to hear it first hand from the teachers.

### **C.1. a. Status of Schools**

Superintendent Cavallaro talked about the school visits he and board members have gone on and wanted to share his thoughts. He thanked the board members for coming on the school visits especially those that came to the high school. They were anxious to see what was going on and see some of the changes that were made. Toni Paine, Andy

DePalma, Sean Maher and Eric Murillo were able to attend and Neil thanked them and stated that this means a lot to the teachers and administrators.

I think both the inside and outside of all the buildings look great. There was a great deal of work done at the high school over the summer. They have really gone out of their way to keep the buildings looking as good as the first day of school. We have a great buy in from teachers and administrators on all the initiatives we are doing with regard to the curriculum, revisions, and training we are going through. You will hear more about this at the upcoming board meetings. At Molloy we saw how teachers were differentiating instruction and addressing the needs of students. We saw first year reading groups and we met with the principals and they talked about what a great program Ritamarie has set up and we were able to see that first hand. We saw examples of data walls in both administrative offices and classrooms. Teachers were talking about the assessments; what is working and what needs to be done. We talked to those piloting our new math program that has been very well received so far. We will begin a full implementation next year and training will begin in the spring.

We saw a high level of enthusiasm from teachers in the high school. We saw the essential questions on the board around the room and teachers went out of their way to point out to us we have our essential questions on the board and kids are saying to us we know what the big ideas are. We heard this first hand from both teachers and students. The collaborative meeting time is working out great. This is time that we have built into the schedule at the high school where teachers are actually talking about what is and isn't working. Why certain kids in certain classrooms are getting it or not getting it. We actually had the chance to go in and meet with the entire English department and heard that it is now no problem for a student to change from a first period English class from a sixth period class because the same things happening in one class are happening in the other class. Teachers are communicating and we are very pleased that we started all these initiatives and had the chance to see them first hand being put to use and being so well received. Neil thanked Anne Druzolowski for all the work she has done in getting this implemented and stated that without her guidance and leadership in this area none of this would have been possible.

Anne Druzolowski said she is pleased and proud to hear teachers understanding conceptually teaching and learning from a different perspective than their classroom; it is so exciting to see people making connections that are different than just reading it in a book. You will start seeing changes; it may take us a couple of years. Curriculum is also going to be changing and that is what it is about. Anne thanked the staff. We have a great bunch of people and they are all onboard and moving. Those that aren't - they know the bus is moving and they have to make a decision. I would say right now we have about 90% of the people riding the bus and the other ten % better run.

### **C.1.b. Student Representatives**

Eric Pang said the Homecoming Festival on October 10<sup>th</sup> was great. There were 62 clubs and organizations from WHHS. He thanked the board members who were able to attend

along with the Superintendent. The PSAT's were held on Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> for sophomores and juniors and were a success. Out of the 720 students who could take the test 620 did take the test. We previously had to take the tests on a Saturday but now you can take them in school so more students were able to take it. He thanked the board for their support of this testing. On October 16<sup>th</sup> the WHHS Band dedicated their halftime show to Anthony Crouse who died last week and was in the class of 2004. His parents are making a music scholarship in his name. He will be remembered and his family is in our thoughts.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade open house will be held Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in the cafeteria and you all are invited to attend. On October 31st WHHS student groups from 10:00 to Noon will be participating. The Children's Theatre is putting on a Pillow Time Theatre Performance of Harriet's Halloween Candy followed by Trick or Trunk in the front of the school sponsored by the WHHS Blue Flame.

Ms. Gardner and I will be interviewing 23 juniors who would like to serve as student representatives. We will choose two students to act as student representatives at board meetings.

The board gave thanks.

### **C.1. c. Board**

Eric Murillo attended the Homecoming Festival and it was very exciting seeing all the kids there; they had a wonderful time and there was great dancing. I went to the high school and was very impressed with the cleanliness and the teacher collaborative assessment plan. The whole program and idea is definitely the beginning of something that really makes sense. I hope this does succeed as well as we expect it to. Hopefully teachers will try to think about it in a positive way and that the 10% not onboard change their mind and embrace it.

Howard Horvath thanked Eric Pang because he not only shows up he comes well prepared and he knows this is not easy. Howie hopes Eric is excited about what he is hearing about the changes because ultimately he and his classmates will be the beneficiaries. Howie thanked Dianna, Ritamarie and Chris for a great presentation. He was very excited to hear what they had to say as he has been committed to this for a number of years and to begin to see it come to fruition is very exciting. There will be challenges and setbacks but with your steadfast commitment I know we will get there. I think we can be a model for the rest of the state and maybe even the nation.

Howie asked if there was anything to report about Race To The Top and was told by Neil that there is nothing new to report but there will be a CAUSE Meeting on Friday which he will be attending. They asked for volunteers from area superintendents and I did put my name in. Small districts like West Haven seem to get left behind because the big cities gets the majority of the pot. We thought if we would have the input we would reap some of the benefits.

Howie would like to see and hear more about this teacher collaboration and would love to hear some of that process and how it has changed. Perhaps have a brand new teacher together with a veteran teacher. Anne said we will have this during another meeting. Howie would like to hear two or three of the students who are in the Freshman Academy and the sophomores that were once part of the Freshman Academy report on how they feel about the program giving the pluses and minuses. Sure.

Toni Paine made the WHHS walk through and it was overwhelming. Immediately when you walk through the building you see that it just sparkles. There is an ownership with the administrators down to the teachers and the teachers transcend right over to the students. It was wonderful. Toni stated that she only saw three hats; all by the student's side. Everybody was excited and it was really wonderful to see.

Toni wanted to mention that we all knew Curtis Jordon and he passed away at the end of last week and she requested a moment of silence. He was a great guy and he spoke before us many times. Did I always agree with him – no; did he always agree with us – no; but he never once stood here and pointed a finger to inflate his own ego or his cause. He had respect for everybody's opinion; not that he agreed with you but he would listen to you. He would be the first to roll up his sleeves and offer to work side by side with you.

Mark Palmieri asked for a Moment of Silence for Curtis Jordon.

Andy DePalma agreed with what the previous board members said about the walk through at WHHS. He was impressed by everything. There was a high enthusiasm level from the kids that you could see just walking through a classroom. It wasn't like they were there because they had to be; they were there because they wanted to be. He was extremely impressed with everything.

Sean Maher went on the Molloy, Mackrille, Pagels and WHHS visits. He found it wonderful that the teachers were so excited. When we got to see kids do the lessons with the teachers the kids were almost twice as excited as the teachers were in the way they performed the assignments they were given. This was not a dog and pony show with the kids; what you see is what you get. This was just terrific and I was very impressed to see that what is being presented to us here is being applied and is working.

Sean also attended the Washington School 100<sup>th</sup> Celebration. He just knows how to put on a show. It was terrific from beginning to end and the students were so enthusiastic. It was a great way to celebrate the school's 100<sup>th</sup>. I'm very excited with the way things are working all over.

Toni Paine stated while at the high school she was so excited that she answered the question in one of the classes.

Jerry Calabritto stated he has sat in a lot of interviews and during the last two weeks I had the opportunity to sit in on two interviews. This is the third or fourth time I have seen the interview process that Dr. Druzolowski has come up with. She has by far one of the most professional interview processes that I have seen in all my years. The answers to some of the questions that came from the applicants impressed me even more because of the professional development that has been done this past year. This impressed me and needs to be said. In this past year this district has jumped ahead light years.

**D.1. Approval of Minutes**

**D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting** held  
October 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blake Bldg. (Enclosure)

Andy DePalma made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.a.  
M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present voted in favor

No one was opposed

Motion Carries - Minutes are approved

**D.2. Resignations: (Certified)**

**09-138 Robert Bohan**, Coach Boy's Basketball – Bailey Middle School

Effective: Immediately

Reason: Personal

M. Toni Paine made a motion to approve item 09-138

Rob Saley seconded the motion

Discussion: Howie Horvath commented that it is hard to see him leave. He is a good guy. Neil stated he has taken on a new role.

All board members present voted in favor

No one was opposed

Motion Carries

**D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)**

**D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)**

**D.5. New Hire: (Certified)**

**09-139 Richard Weber**, 65 Tulip Tree Court, Milford, CT 06461

Department Head Alternate Program-WHHS Academy

Effective: September 8, 2009

Salary: \$4,800 Stipend

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-139

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-139

Rob Saley seconded the motion

Discussion: M. Toni Paine Abstains

**D.5. New Hire: (Certified) Continued**

All remaining board members voted in favor  
Motion passes

**09-140 Virginia Bauer**, 24 Platt Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516  
Assistant Director Pupil Services – Blake Building  
Effective: October 20, 2009  
Salary: \$86,472.35 Step 1 WHAA Contract (without sixth year)

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-140  
Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-140  
M. Toni Paine seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members voted in favor  
Motion passes

**09-141 Taryn Driend**, 7 Mount Pleasant Road, West Haven, CT 06516  
Assistant Principal – Carrigan Middle School  
Effective: November 6, 2009  
Salary: \$86,181.75 Step 1 WHAA Contract (with sixth year)

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-140  
Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-140  
M. Toni Paine seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members voted in favor  
Motion passes

**D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)**

**D.7. New Business:**

**09-142 CWA Contract Ratification**

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve 09-142  
Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D. 7 New Business 09-142  
M. Toni Paine seconded the motion  
Discussion: A roll call vote was requested  
Eric Murillo: No  
Mark: No you don't accept the contract. Correct  
Patrick Egolum: Yes  
Howard Horvath: Abstains since he missed some critical conversations.  
Rob Saley: No  
M. Toni Paine: Yes  
Andy DePalma: No

T. Sean Maher: Yes  
Jerry Calabritto: Yes  
Mark Palmieri: No

Mark Palmieri stated we have a tie on this. Jerry Calabritto said the motion is defeated Mr. Chairman. Tie defeats the motion. Mark Palmieri said we will talk to Attorney Dugas. Neil Cavallaro said he thinks it is a matter of now finding out, the clock is ticking, where we are as far as the arbitration process. I'll get back to you and I'll get an answer. OK

**F. Informational:**

Howie Horvath had a comment to make. He said he came prepared to not vote on a couple of hires but didn't as I haven't stated a concern he has and now I'm going to state it. When it comes to school leadership positions, superintendent, assistant superintendent and department heads I would like to be a part of the interview process. I have been asked before and I know if I were to request this you would be glad to; but I don't feel comfortable going forward and I want to be clear now so that when it comes up next time, unless I have had the opportunity to really understand what is happening and to hear the answers to the questions I'm just voting blindly.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

T. Sean Maher made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All members were in favor

The meeting ended at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary