WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
September 8, 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 September 8, 2009. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS  
IN ATTENDANCE:  
Mark Palmieri, Chairman  
Robert Saley  
Patrick Egolum  
Gerald A. Calabritto, Vice Chairman  
T. Sean Maher  
Andrew DePalma  
M. Toni Paine  
Howard Horvath Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:  
Eric Murillo, Secretary/Treasurer

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES  
PRESENT:

Mark Palmieri welcomed everyone to the West Haven Board of Education regular meeting for September 8, 2009. Mark asked the board if we could have the reports from the central office staff done prior to the public session. All board members present were in agreement.

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

Superintendent Neil Cavallaro stated that yearly by state statute we are required to report on our Connecticut Mastery Test and our CAPT scores. This year the process will be a little different. Not only did each school administrator attend the workshop at ACES
where we learned to read and quote the data to our staffs and make a presentation. Our central office staff also attended so they will make this presentation tonight.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski said as a team we have looked at all the data. We spent two days with the central office administrators, principals, assistant principals and their teams looking at the CMT/CAPT data and creating presentations. This information was presented to the total school staff in each of the schools. This is our effort to demonstrate and model using data to improve instruction. Tonight we have the district piece of this. The team of district representatives that worked together to present this presentation. This will give you an idea of what the data said and recommendations which were put in place to make a difference over time.

The team of district representatives who put this presentation together is: Ann Valanzuolo - Language Arts Coordinator, Raffaela Fronc - Science Coordinator, and AJ Palermo – Coordinator of Math/Fine Arts and Professional Development Coordinator.

Ann Valanzuolo said that the district improvement team meets to discuss the district improvement goals which usually span for about three years. The goals follow:

Goal number one is to increase math proficiency by a minimum of 10% as measured by the CMT and CAPT in order to meet or increase AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) targets that are established by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Goal number two is the same but for reading and writing

Goal number three is to actively engage parents with the educational process and planning for students because studies have shown that parents have a large impact.

Goal number four is the meet the AMAO (Annual Measured Achievement Objective) target established by the Connecticut State Department of Education for achievement in English proficiency.

AJ Palermo said the data comparison graph from 2007 to 2009 shows that our third grade is steadily climbing we are boasting the same level of proficiency for the last three years. For grade four we are making a steady climb or a very insignificant drop. We definitely expect to see this increase in the next few years due to our major focus not only on curriculum but on instructional strategy. In grade 5 we are making a steady climb. We are not where we want to be and not where we are headed. AJ also explained the information given on the bar graphs.

Raffaela Fronc gave some more of the highlights and stated that our slide presentation will look much different next year with our focus on curriculum and instructional strategy.
If you look at the middle school scores from 2007 to 2009 for grade 6 you will see an increase in every area for math, reading and writing. For grade 7 you have an increase in reading and for grade 8 there was an increase in science and also in writing.

In math grades 6 and 8 at Corrigan and grade 7 at Bailey had the highest % of proficiency in four years

Ann Valanzuolo said the 10th grade testing remained fairly level over the last three years. We have gone up somewhat in writing. Improvement is expected due to the new curriculum. There are definitely some things to celebrate.

In writing we are number 1 in the DRG in grades 3, 4, 5 & 6
In reading we have improved scores in all grades a
In reading we are in the top third of our DRG in most grades
In science we are number 1 in our DRG for grade 5 with Norwalk and grade 8
In science we are in the top third of our DRG for grade 10
In math grade 4 increased proficiency at each school
In math grades 3 and 4 reported the highest % of proficiency in four years

AJ Palermo gave an overview of what is happening next. She stated that:

Collaboration time has been increased for K-12 in order to address data, instruction and curriculum.

Teachers are deriving great benefits from the collaboration time and are very excited about it.

Ann Valanzuolo stated that:

There is an increase of non-fiction reading as the state is putting a high priority on this and half of the CAPT reading test is based on non-fiction.

We are developing the use of rubrics to access student progress. (Rubrics list the criteria and the number of points for different aspects and this gives students a fair shot of putting out the effort to getting a good grade). With rubrics scoring is done to set criteria and this increases the consistency of the scoring process.

The board thanked everyone for their hard work and for a fine presentation.

The entire overhead presentation will be placed on the web site and is also will be scanned in to these minutes at the end.

Board Questions

Toni Paine asked if rubrics are aligned with the way CAPT testing is done. Yes and it will reinforce the testing.
Jerry Calabritto asked if rubrics will be universal across the grade line. Yes they will be. Then every English teacher will be using the rubric system with the exact same assignment; it will be universal. Yes it will be the same for all.

Howie Horvath asked if reading and math were the only two courses used for measuring our CMT scores. Yes but the only exception to that is that for the CMT grades (3 – 8) the school as a whole has to achieve 70% proficiency in writing but it is not broken down by sub groups in writing. Howie asked if we have one more test at the same level. Yes one more at this level then AYP jumps again in spring of 2011. AJ Palermo stated that every single sub group improved at Carrigan. Rather than saying WOW you have really made some nice progress look how much better you are doing; we still had to go in and say - no we didn’t make AYP and this becomes very disheartening. If we had a growth model to show we were moving up it paints a better picture to show what we are doing here in this district.

Howie asked if we have data to show our growth on a year to year basis. AJ Palermo responded yes that one of our grade levels went up 20% but they still missed the AYP target. Howie said this might be something you want to include in a presentation at one of the upcoming board meetings as it tells more of the story. He asked why the writing scores are so much higher than the other subjects. Ann Valanzuolo said once you figure out the technique and respond to instruction it is a little simpler in a sense than reading. Some ESL students can not read all that well in English but they are able to put their thoughts together and write quite well.

Howie asked about Blue Ribbon – is there a good correlation between Blue Ribbon and the ultimate score? Ann said for reading we did not use the Blue Ribbon Test because we did not think that each test gave you a complete picture so we developed our own unit tests that replicated the CMT questions. Blue Ribbon software analyzed the scores to see which questions were flawed etc. This worked out very well.

Howie asked if other schools in different districts do very well can we sit down with them and see what they are doing? Anne Druzolowski said we can do this but until we get our curriculum in place we won’t be comfortable doing this. In the middle of the year the state offers data walks where you get to see how various schools in different districts are doing.

Howie asked if you had to identify two things that would bring our scores up what would they be. AJ said we are making a philosophical jump in this district and for a long time we had a very problematic approach and I think it is time that the teachers feel more comfortable using their professional discretion and really start to teach based on what they see surrounding them. There has to be a level of consistency and teachers have to know what the Connecticut State Standards are and given as many resources as they need but I am not going to tell you 100% on how you have to get there. Teachers are getting more creative and thinking out of the box and trying things they never tried before.
Neil thinks the big thing is the collaborative time that we built into the schedule at the high school along with the additional professional development that we put into our calendar adding some half days; shortening school days to allow teachers time to be able to do that is going to make a big difference.

Toni Paine said that with the economy being the way it has been she knows that less children went to private schools this year and asked if this will skew an increase in our scores at all. Anne Druzolowski said this could have an effect sure. Could this effect be we have a lot of new teachers – possibly. But you will see us moving up regardless of this. People will say you are changing demographics. Every kid will do very well.

Toni said she would hope it would expose these new students to our system with an appreciation and an understanding of exactly what we have. We have a lot of good things going on in this district. Anne Druzolowski said this has been said around the state already because other people have been saying this including Doug Reeves.

Jerry Calabritto said you have our teachers collaborating now and when you get the results do the results come down to a room. For example if you have an English teacher who has her students consistently scoring high do we share that with the other teachers? Yes we have to do it manually and we do.

Neil sees a lot of the principals collaborating and working together beyond the workshops. They put together presentations and analyzed the data. It is starting at central office and going to our administrators in the building and moving up to the teachers. I feel everyone is working together to make this initiative be successful.

Patrick Egolum said he wanted to commend everyone for their efforts and changes they are making to get things in place. You are actually doing something that I really commend and admire.

The Board gave thanks.

**B. Public Session**

Public session began at 7:40.

Joe Morrell, Sorenson Road, West Haven stated he has grown up in West Haven and started at the Edward L. Bennett Rink in 1972 as a player and when I walked into the Rink for the first time I said WOW this rink is great. I went from rink to rink and this rink is still the best. I played hockey and graduated in 1983 from West Haven and the rink was still unbelievable. I coached Youth Hockey at 19 and did that for 12 years and it was still the best rink. I coach high school hockey now for 12 years and went into the rink two weeks ago and it is by far the best rink and we are coming up to the rink’s 40th year.

The money that we put into the rink comes back to us. I have a daughter that plays high school hockey. I teach in the rink; I live in the rink. (laughter) He thanked the board for
always making the rink top notch. The new lights make the rink nice and bright and the rink will be used a lot again this year and he thanked the board again.

The board gave thanks.

Bill Norton, 99 Mohawk Drive, West Haven addressed the board. He is the parent of two recent graduates of WHHS. They were very successful academically, socially and athletically. I have a son in his junior year that is successful athletically and socially but not quite as much academically as his mother and I would like. (laughter)

I come before you as President of West Haven Youth Hockey. I have been the President for seven years and both my son and daughter have played in this league.

Obviously everyone has seen the article in the Register regarding the improvements at the rink. They highlight on the ceiling lighting, the doors in the locker room, the TV in the lobby and the flooring in the lobby. This is very beneficial as parents sometimes drop their kids off there for an hour or so for practice. The staff there is just wonderful.

Hockey parents travel throughout the state to 20 – 30 rinks; no rink is as clean as our rink. They do an excellent job cleaning the bathrooms and everything.

The ceiling and lighting adds brightness to the rink and is cost effective which has a trickling down effect. This enables us to reach out to children who want to play Youth Hockey so we thank you for that. He thanked Chairman Palmieri and each member of the board and everyone there along with Harry Conlan and staff members at the rink who treat them very, very well.

The board gave thanks.

Public portion ended at 7:55 PM

C.1. a. Status of Schools

Superintendent Neil Cavallaro stated we had a very good opening. Our enrollment is slightly up from last year. We have about 100 more kids; we are still registering some and taking some off the roster so it may go down slightly. There were very few busing issues and there is no over crowding and this is a result of good planning. I want to thank our coordinators for a great job tonight; they worked as a team which pleases me as the Superintendent more than you can possibly imagine. Everybody in the school system seems to be on board with all our initiatives. We look forward to sharing a lot more of the initiatives as we develop them; the math pilot program. I want to thank Howie, Jerry and Sean for coming to the presentation last week. It meant a lot to our administrators to see board members there. I look forward to seeing Doug coming back in January and hope that the rest of the board members will be able to join us. We have a lot of exciting things we are looking forward to and we have some administrative appointments tonight which I think will make our school district a much better place. The creation of a Pre
School Coordinator will address a need not only in our school system but in our community as well. You will see the results in the shape of improved scores down the road. He thanked the board for their support and looks forward to seeing up-coming results.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

C.1. c. Board

Howie thanked Neil for the invite to the Professional Development and asked Anne Druzolowski to consider at some meeting in the near future to present what we know about the new Federal Race to the Top Funds and how that compares to some of the initiatives that we are doing now. He would be happy to be on a committee for this. Anne said this is a little premature as they are just writing for the application now but she will keep him informed. Howie wants us to be ahead of the curve so we can utilize these funds when they become available. He also requested an update on alternative schools.

Rob Saley said with the Race to the Top Funds he believes we would have to embrace a couple of things that would be controversial to us. Two of the principals he read about were told they would be given the money but had to definitely consider certain options. Anne has heard that as well but nothing has come down in writing to guide people. As she gets more information she will share it. A further discussion ensued.

T. Sean Maher had the privilege again this year of spending Freshman Friday at the high school with the freshman and participating in their team building exercises: obstacle course, kick ball and other team building games they played. This year it was a terrific day all around. Kudos to Mr. Paul Cavanna and the entire team building team and students. The teachers worked with the students on their level and all the levels met; there wasn’t an odd kid out and everybody clicked. It was wonderful to watch and to be a part of.

Jerry Calabritto would like to thank Anne and the Coordinators for this presentation. I strongly urge the rest of my colleagues to attend when Mr. Reeves comes back in January. The thing I found most amazing was that it is just common sense, no half a million dollar program. This is just getting back to the old standards of teaching and sharing what you know with other people. I was so glad I had an opportunity to listen to this and recommend it to all board members when he returns in January.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting held August 18, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blake Bldg. (Enclosure)

T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.a. Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: Howard Horvath and Toni Paine abstained as they did not attend the August meeting.
All remaining board members present voted in favor.
No one was opposed.
Motion Carries - Minutes are approved.

Jerry Calabrito made a motion to approve D.2. – D.6. inclusive.
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion.
Discussion: Howie Horvath would like each area done individually. He doesn’t think it is a good idea to include everybody all at once. We are starting to get into the habit of doing it all the time.
Jerry retracted his motion and asked Mr. Horvath to make the motion. Howie would like it done section by section.

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

09-106 Jane Patton, Part Time Literacy Aide – Forest
   Effective: August 24, 2009
   Reason: Retirement

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.2. 09-106 Resignations Certified.
T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve D.2. 09-106 Resignations Certified.
Rob Saley seconded the motion.
Discussion: None.
All in favor.
Motion passes.

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

09-107 Addie Holmes, Part Time Cook – Mackrille
   Effective: August 19, 2009
   Reason: Personal

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.3. 09-107 Resignations Non-Certified.
Rob Saley made a motion to approve D.3. 09-107 Resignations Non-Certified.
T. Sean seconded the motion.
Discussion: None.
All in favor.
Motion passes.

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

09-108 Andrew Durnin, 10 Brown Street Apt. 2, New Haven, CT 06511
   Bilingual Teacher – Carrigan Middle School
Effective: August 27, 2009
Salary: $42,512.06 (Step 5 BS + 30)

09-109 Amanda Kivell, 28 Branch Lane, Stamford, CT 06903
Elementary Teacher, Grade 5 – Molloy
Effective: August 31, 2009
Salary: $37,411.34 (Step 2 BS + 30)

09-110 Nicole Cook, 48 Kohary Drive, Milford, CT 06460
Part time Kindergarten Teacher – Pagels
Effective: August 31, 2009
Salary: $18,035.02 (Half Step 2 BS)

09-111 Kathleen Cassell, 280 Country Hill Drive, West Haven, CT 06516
Director, Pupil Services – Blake Building
Effective: Per Board Approval
Salary: $113,866.05 (WHAA Contract Step 6)

09-112 Robert Bohan, 521 Wagon Trail, Orange, CT 06477
Elementary Math Facilitator
Effective: Board Approval
Salary: Current Teacher Salary plus $4,800 Stipend

09-113 Claudia Davis, 69 Wenham Street, West Haven, CT 06516
Elementary Math Facilitator
Effective: Board Approval
Salary: Current Teacher Salary plus $4,800 Stipend

09-114 Summer Cooper, 350 Weatherly Trail, Guilford, CT 06437
Elementary Teacher – Forest School
Effective: August 31, 2009
Salary: $37,411.34 (BS + 30 Step 2)

09-115 Jennifer Scott, 109 Maple Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450
Elementary Teacher – Forest School
Effective: August 31, 2009
Salary: $37,411.34 (BS + 30 Step 2)

09-116 Judy Drenzek, 384 Old Silo Road, Orange, CT 06477
Early Childhood Supervisor
Effective: Board Approval
Salary: $90,627.29 (Step 1 WHAA Contract Category 04)

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-108 – 09-116
Patrick Egolun made a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 09-108 – 09-116
Rob Saley seconded the motion

Discussion: None  
All in favor  
Motion passes  

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

- **09-117 Nedina Lima**, 58 Antrim Street, West Haven, CT 06516  
  Full Time Special Education Medical Paraprofessional – Mackrille School  
  Effective: August 31, 2009  
  Salary: $17,567.45 (Step 1 + Medical Stipend)

- **09-118 Sharon Tylinski**, 44 Cornerstone Drive, Derby, CT 06418  
  Title 1 Aide – Living Word Christian Academy  
  Effective: September 1, 2009  
  Salary: $16.09 hourly

- **09-119 Donna Mueller**, 7 Alexander Dr., West Haven, CT 06516  
  3 Hour Cashier – Mackrille School  
  Effective: August 31, 2009  
  Salary: Per AFSME Contract Step 1

- **09-120 Kathleen Ruggio**, 78 West Walk, West Haven, CT 06516  
  3 ½ Hour Cook – Mackrille School  
  Effective: August 31, 2009  
  Salary: Per AFSME Contract Step 1

- **09-121 Cynthia Reed**, 41 White Street, West Haven, CT 06516  
  3 ½ Hour Cook – Washington School  
  Effective: August 31, 2009  
  Salary: Per AFSME Contract Step 1

- **09-122 Rayma Frochlich**, 48 Clover Street, West Haven, CT 06516  
  3 ½ Hour Cook – Mackrille School  
  Effective: August 31, 2009  
  Salary: Per AFSME Contract Step 1

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.6. New Hire: (Non Certified) 09-117 – 09-122  
T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve D.6. New Hire: (Non Certified) 09-117 – 09-122  
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion  
Discussion: None  
All in favor  
Motion passes
D.7. New Business:

09-123 Middle School Team Leaders 2009-10 School Year

Move To Approve
09-126 Addendum included

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.7 New Business 09-123
There is an addendum on this 09-126 which is included where Dr. Anthony Cordone states that Stephanie Healy will be replacing Robert Bohan as Team 6 Leader at Bailey for the 2009 – 2010 school year.

T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve D. 7 New Business 09-123 & 09-126
Rob Saley seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion passes

09-124 West Haven Board of Education and West Haven Federation of Teachers Settlement Agreement

Move To Approve

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.7 New Business 09-124
T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve D. 7 New Business 09-124
Rob Saley seconded the motion
Discussion: Neil Cavallaro said that most people know that the teacher’s overwhelmingly passed this about 400 to 73. I think short term it will save some money for next year’s budget and also the board recognizes this and I am very pleased that it will help us retain our teachers.
Discussion: None
All in favor
Motion passes

09-125 Request from Dr. Whitney and Mr. Hawley to have 11th and 12th grade students in the Young Men’s/Women’s Leadership Groups visit six (HBCU) Historically Black Colleges/Universities from Friday, October 9 through Monday October 12th during the Columbus Day Weekend.

Move To Approve

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.7 New Business 09-125
Andy DePalma made a motion to approve D.7 New Business 09-125
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: Neil Cavallaro asked to have the students make a report during a future board meeting to talk about their experiences. Dr. Whitney would be happy to do this and said that she is here tonight to answer any questions the board might have.

Dr. Whitney said they plan on visiting a minimum of four colleges we would like to get to six but it depends on how much time we spend on individual campuses. They will be traveling in a tour bus and the cost of the trip is the responsibility of the individual participants.

It was asked what colleges will be visited. The colleges that are planned to be visited are:

- Delaware State University, Washington, DC
- Howard University, Washington, DC
- Hampton University, Hampton, VA
- Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA
- Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA
- Virginia Union University, Richmond, VA

All in favor
Motion passes

F. Informational:

Nothing to add

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Andy DePalma made a motion to adjourn the meeting
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
All members were in favor
The meeting ended at 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary