The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Harriet North Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut on March 17, 2014. The meeting was called to order by Patricia Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Patricia Libero, Chairwoman
- James W. Morrissey, Vice Chair
- Betsy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer
- Robert Guthrie
- Mark Palmieri
- Rosa Richardson
- Rosemary Russo
- Cebi Waterfield

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Patrick Egolum

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

- Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
- Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
- David Cappetta, Director of Finance

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:**

- Catherine DePino
- Alice Obas
- Jesus Yanez
C. REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Prior to the board meeting, since March is Board of Education Appreciation Month, Superintendent Cavallaro had Francine Coppola, Director of Adult Ed/Coordinator of Fine Arts, and Rachel MeKeel, Instrumental Music Teacher from Bailey, and some of her students (Clarinet Ensemble) play two songs for the board members while they enjoyed cake in their honor. Francine thanked Neil, Anne and the Board for their support of the Fine Arts. The students performing The Irish Washerwoman and the Scottish Song Loch Lomond were Daniel Lanziero, Charlotte D’Inzero, Arielle Marinduque and Nicole Gaston. Pictures were taken of the students and their teacher who stated how hard these students have worked and this was the first time they performed as a group together. The board gave thanks. (Applause)

Chairwoman Libero began the meeting by welcoming everyone and said we have several presentations this evening so we will start by asking Superintendent Cavallaro if he is ready to begin. Superintendent Cavallaro thanked Mrs. Libero and asked Lizeth Ramirez to come up with her Mom and Mrs. Libero. Lizeth entered a poster contest with the Secretary of State and the theme was good citizenship. From all the entries throughout the State of Connecticut Lizeth won an Honorable Mention Award. Superintendent Cavallaro said we had wanted to frame this poster for her but Lizeth just received it back today. (Applause) Mayor O’Brien who couldn’t be here tonight had informed me about the award and he has a proclamation from the City of West Haven in honor of your award. Superintendent Cavallaro read the proclamation and the audience applauded. Pictures were taken of Lizeth with her mother, Superintendent Cavallaro and Chairwoman Libero. Superintendent Cavallaro said we will now be able to have this poster framed for you Lizeth. Lizeth thanked everyone.

Pam Gardner, Principal of West Haven High School, said Aretha Rankine is the teacher of our Fashion and Fabrics Class and she has developed this class into a very productive group. Students make their own clothes. They go to JoAnne Fabrics and pick out their own fabrics and go right from a pattern and make their own clothing. There has been standing room only at two previous fashion shows so we moved to the auditorium where the students showcased all of the clothes that they made. Many of the students tonight are modeling their own clothing. Chairwoman Libero thought it would be very nice for you to share in some of the clothing that our students make in our classes. She said student are also taught how to refashion things by going to Savers or Goodwill and get a piece of clothing that they have to refashion it into something modern and up to date and some of the fashions they have they do without patterns and some they do with patterns. She stated that some of the boys in fashion design are incredible with some of the things they make and tonight you will see some of the clothes made by the boys and modeled by some of the girls. The fashion show was done in two parts with a quick change of clothing taking place. The students who participated were Niama Toupou, Annylssa Asare, Aneisha Green, Tashika Milford, Tatiana Gay, Kiara Monday, Davina Rigsbee, Natalie Perez, Aliyah Manning, Marjorie Kabemba Alina Tores and Xoilyn Rogers. Pictures were taken of the students during the fashion show. (Applause)
Superintendent Cavallaro stated we were honored that Leslie Cote one of our Art teachers in West Haven asked if she could come to the board and make a presentation because in addition to it being Board Appreciation Month it is also Art Appreciation Month. We had students from Bailey do a presentation for us and now we ask Leslie Cote to please come up. Leslie wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick’s Day and thanked the board for having them. Leslie stated that March is Youth Art Month and Dr. Druzolowski had come to the schools and said she would love to have some of this art work at City Hall. A couple of months later here we are. I have selected four talented art students and they are representing second, third and fourth grades at Savin Rock. This is a really a big thank you because we really appreciate the hard work and the hard decisions you make especially with budgets and finances and you have given us a good art supply budget and we really appreciate it. The first piece of art was from Miss McQueeney’s fourth grade class and our artist is Azucena Zecua-Herrera – inspired by the artwork of Georgia O’Keefe using concentrated liquid watercolors, an up-close flower. This piece of art is dedicated to Mayor Edward O’Brien. Mrs. Taryn Driend, Principal of Savin Rock received the award for Mayor O’Brien who was unable to attend. Applause. The second piece of art was from Mr. Kamkowski’s fourth grade class who was unable to attend tonight so Miss McQueeney will present the artwork done by Ashley Chinchilla and this is dedicated to Mr. Cavallaro because he is a fine Westie that Leslie has known for years and the drawing is a Long Island Sound seascape, using concentrated liquid tempera paint. Applause. Neil thanked everyone. The third piece of art comes from Ms. Plant’s third grade classroom and the artist is Dulcemaria Castillo – inspired by Claude Monet’s Japanese Bridge at Giverny, an impressionistic painting, and this was dedicated to Dr. Druzolowski who simply loves the arts. The final piece which is dedicated to all the board members, we would ask Pat Libero to come up and accept this, is from Miss Limaruo’s 2nd grade class and Malachi Calhoun is the artist of this fall water color scene which is especially dedicated to the board with a back to school theme of the fall. Applause. Ms. Cote said there is beautiful writing on these drawings and I would like a nice round of applause for the classroom teachers of these students. Applause. The board gave thanks.

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Tracy Morrissey, PTA Council President, 305 Country Hill Drive. Tracy Morrissey spoke about the high school grading system. She would like to challenge the board to speak with the teachers at the high school, the counselors at the high school, the current students at the high school and students who have exited the high school about the rigor of the courses at West Haven High School. Six years ago we had a meeting at the high school and Dr. Druzolowski was there and several parents were there and were very concerned over appropriate placement alleviating the levelling. In the past there were courses that were below academic standards for students and she is not in agreement with that. She thinks everyone should take a math class, Algebra class, and be exposed to geometry but they all are moving at a different pace. In speaking to my own children and their friends they are totally frustrated with the rigor at the high school. We would pick two to three honors classes for our children which are a lot more intensive and a regular academic English or math class or maybe an academic science class. In those classes
they will tell you they have gotten absolutely nothing out of it; it was a wasted year. There were too many distractions and this is nothing against the teachers because they are working hard but there are different ranges of what the kids know. A further discussion continued. She has heard that the higher students in the English classes will bring the lower students up and that is not working and if it is working she would like to sit down with the administration and see the improvement in the test scores because she is not seeing the improvement in the test scores and has been following the SAT Scores. The SAT Scores are really at the bottom. We don’t want to have anyone sit in a wasted academic class we need to get on target. Parents have seen the decline in WHHS when their older children attended but when it came time to enroll their younger children they pulled them from the school and that is not what I want to see. I want to see the rigor back in the classroom. I want to see these kids challenged. She has brought this up at School Governance and the students say I am absolutely right they are not being challenged. We need the rigor back at WHHS and that is the only way we will improve our test scores. Please take the time and speak with the teachers, students and students who have exited our schools because they are bright kids and they will tell you that certain classes are just a waste of time. They are getting A’s but it is not a true A. A further discussion took place. Appropriate placement is in all the surrounding schools and parents are pulling their children because the rigor isn’t there. They want their kids prepared and ready for college and so do I so please over the next month take the time and talk to the people I mentioned and let’s see what we can do to improve those classes. Thank you very much and Happy St. Patrick’s Day. The board gave thanks.

There were no other speakers. Public session ended at 7:35 PM.

C. REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Pam Gardner, Principal of WHHS, said what we would like to do tonight is explain to you our current grade scale and how we calculate GPA and talk to you about what the Honors Committee, the Faculty Council, the School Governance Council, Student Focus Groups and Faculty Focus Groups have looked at over the past 2½ years in terms of what we would like to see happen with grades at WHHS and what we are looking at for courses. The presentation material has been put on the website so everyone can see the information that was presented. Questions were asked and responded to.

Jim Morrissey thanked everyone for getting this program started and he thinks it has been long overdue over the years. He appreciates all the efforts that the teachers and administrators have made to get this underway and asked them to keep on working on this.

Tracy Morrissey said prior to this the Honors Classes and the AP Classes were levelled the same correct. Yes. When Tracy did her research she didn’t find them to be levelled differently. They said to her if a child took the AP class and received college credit that was enough for the difference. Are we now boosting up an AP Class when no one else is boosting up an AP CLASS? Dana Martinez said she was told Milford just changed and is
now. Our bigger concern is not boosting classes but making sure that students can take classes that they are interested in without seriously hurting their GPA. Students today will tell you exactly what their GPA is because they are very conscious of it.

Student Rep Alice Obas said this is true because I don’t like Science but am afraid to just take a regular Science class and I can’t just take an English academic class and I think it sets up a lot of the kids for failure by taking an Honors Class even though they know they can’t handle it.

Student Rep Jesus Yanez commented that he took Honors Biology in freshman year and is now taking AP Biology and can definitely tell you that the level of rigor is huge so I would actually appreciate it if the AP Classes were weighted more than the Honors Classes. He was told that a lot of schools are just going to this now. This was followed by a further discussion.

Neil said with the issue involving mold at WHHS we had the room examined and what I thought could get rather expensive turned out to be a minor fix. We are getting the plan from a company named Hygenix which is doing some work on the new high school; they did the abatement on the first stage of the project. This is a very inexpensive fix so we are working on that now. Neil will get the board the plan in a day or two.

Thursday Mayor O’Brien is submitting his first budget to the City Council so this is something we will be keeping our eyes on. We have had a couple of meetings last week with the administration and we talked about our needs and the Mayor talked about the city’s issues.

A copy of our 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan is in front of you and Joe Mancini prior to his departure asked that it be made part of the Mayor’s Budget when it gets submitted so he will have our facilities people at our next meeting to answer any questions. At this point it is a long term plan and nothing will be moving forward prior to any approval by the BOE. This is not a funded plan this is more to make the city aware of what our long term needs are and to make them aware that something could happen to affect the budget and expenses. We will answer any of your questions at the next board meeting.

Neil hopes to post Ann Valanzuolo’s job by April. Anne is the Language Arts Coordinator and will be retiring. We wish Ann a wonderful retirement and with any luck we would like to have this position filled by June 1st with a start date of July 1st which will be Ann’s official date of retirement.

Dr. Druzolowski complimented the high school staff because they have been working on this project for a couple of years. Part of the problem was Power School and trying to make sure we were equitable for all children so the timing was appropriate. We also felt we had to wait until we had continuity from the middle school and we changed the grading status on that last year.

The State Department of Ed received notice on Thursday night that Smarter Balanced Field Testing is delayed until next week. The testing will begin on the 25th and will run
through April 11th. We have plenty of time to do this and are probably one of the few districts that had enough days built in so we are not going to back pedal on anything. Youngsters in grade levels are staggered and the high school has three sessions and Carrigan and Bailey have four sessions and the elementary have three. We start with the high school then Carrigan, Bailey and the elementary schools. Everything is in place and teams have done a great job. There is a feeling of confidence among the teachers that they are able to move as best they can and there is no pressure. We want them to be familiar with the test that is the most important thing. In response to rigor that will resolve itself with this testing and the teaching.

Betsy Davis asked if with all the sickness going around will this affect the testing. Her daughter had been out and there was some training that she missed. Dr. Druzolowski said they have been doing it on an on-going basis and there are not going to be any individual scores it is going to be aggregated by grade level. You will not see the test scores on any of these youngsters. They have been doing a lot of the practice off and on through various classes. The most important part is to get the kids comfortable using the technology. A further discussion took place.

C.1.b. Student Representatives Report
Catherine DePino, Alice Obas and Jesus Yanez gave a report which is attached as (Schedule A) at the end of the minutes. The board gave thanks to the students.

C.1.c. Board
Bob Guthrie thanked Neil for the Capital Improvement Project information. In regard to the West Haven High School Project he wanted to know if the BOE could send a letter from the BOE (not from the administration) asking for a joint meeting between the BOE and the City Council so everyone’s questions including the public’s could be answered. This has been floating around for some time and it should be done sooner as opposed to later so we can get a clear direction for this project. The time has come to move forward with this project or admit it is not going to happen. If the board is in agreement with this perhaps we can get all nine signatures but I will leave this to the Superintendent and Chairman to work on.

Pat Libero said Bailey is looking for ads for their play Mulane April 10th and 11th. They are looking for sponsors and for people to support them.

Jim Morrissey said that Neil mentioned the mold at WHHS and said it wasn’t a major problem. Originally didn’t you have some company come in….Neil interjected he was very concerned when he first got the report. However we used two companies an asbestos company and a general testing company. They came in with Joe Falzone and Mike McGrath to look at the room. They reviewed the results we got after the original testing came back and they are in the process of developing a remediation plan which they believe to be very inexpensive. Neil originally had concerns about leaks if they went up on the roof where the water was going; that could get very expensive and they started talking about abatement which they said doesn’t need to happen. He was very concerned
about the safety involved as well as the cost to do any kind of abatement, but none is needed.

Jim Morrissey said what you are saying is that we had two companies come in and look at the same issue. Correct. So one company was saying it was a tremendous amount of money while the other said it could be done for much less. Neil said one company recommended we bring other companies in and they expressed a concern. He is giving Hygeniix the original report tomorrow and from that they will give a remediation report.

Jim Morrissey is glad we had a second pair of eyes look at that issue because if we only had the one company come in we could have spent a lot of money we probably didn’t need to spend and in the future that might be an issue with other problems we might have at the high school and around our city. Money is very, very tight and I’m concerned that one company can see it one way and another company sees it a different way. He is glad we had a second pair of eyes look at that issue and save the BOE a lot of money. Neil will get Jim and all board members a copy of the original report and the remediation report.

Jim Morrissey wanted to talk about the City Council vote last Monday night and the resolution regarding the West Haven High School Building Committee. The City Council with a split vote of 7 to 6 took it upon themselves basically to be in charge of the project and not allow the Mayor to make appointments to the high school building committee and they basically wanted to run the project themselves; it was quite contentious. He said he wasn’t there but did listen to the tapes and talked with several council members. Members were asked to table it for a couple of weeks to see if some sort of agreement could be worked out so it wouldn’t come to what we have right now. The vote was 7 to 6 as previously stated. Jim talked with the Mayor today and he is going to take this issue to court. He feels his authority was usurped. The city lawyers spoke with several Corporation Council members to cite state laws and state statutes and any mandates. Jim said quite frankly there aren’t any mandates or state statutes. When it is silent on state statute and mandates you go to the City Charter. The City Charter clearly states the Mayor has the right to appoint people there are no terms involved. The Council obviously felt differently and this will end up in court. He wanted to bring this up here because it was stated that it really doesn’t affect the board but I believe it really does affect the board. In Subsection e it says the City Council says the Board of Education shall provide the appropriate support staff for the Building Committee this includes, but is not limited to secretarial staff when needed, postage and copy fees. Quite frankly I don’t think we should tell the City Council what to do and I don’t think they should tell us what to do so I have an issue with this resolution. I applaud the Mayor for taking this to the next level and quite frankly the only thing I’m concerned about is that this will probably delay this project more; there is no question about it. He is of the opinion that if calmer heads had prevailed at that meeting they could have talked about it and within two weeks maybe have sat down and come to a solution but it didn’t happen that way. It is going to go to court and he is glad the Mayor has decided to take it to court. That is my comment and he thanked the board.
Cebi Waterfield said the Seahawks got the notification of the National Scholar Athletes for this year and we had 19 West Haven students that were named National All American Scholars which means that they are in the top 10% of the country. For their grades they have to have a minimum grade of 96% for the previous year plus they also have to have community service, participation in non-athletic activities; girl scouts, boy scouts, church activities and all of that gets looked at by the National Scholar Athlete Committee. The 19 students are Brannon Atkins, Alexandria Campbell Ferguson, Brannon Coggins, Zake Conlan, Alexa Davinson, Roy Elliot, Collin Eley, Sunea Henry, Tiffany Konig, Jennisis Maldinado, Derik Middy, Jillian Poiurer, Brianna Rivera, Betty Santos, Jean Shirdin, Kyle Tompkins, Healey Vought, Darren Warren and Riley Waterfield. Several of these kids participated in the National Cheerleading Championship at Pop Warner Superbowl in December in Orlando so not only are they athletically accomplished but they are also academically accomplished. Pop Warner Youth Sports is the only program in the country that requires a minimum grade point average to participate all of our kids have to have at least a 70% grade point average to participate. These kids were also New England Scholars. We also had one other New England Scholar Nisa Monday. She didn’t meet the rigorous criteria for National but she was a New England Scholar Athlete. Some of the kids went to Foxborough, MA and had a tour of Gillette Stadium and meet some players and they had a banquet and they have a National Banquet coming up in Disneyworld in April but I don’t think any of our kids are going. Cebi is very proud of the kids. They are in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 and above scholars are all together. They can get college scholarships once they reach grade 8 or 9. They gave out $30,000.00 dollars worth of college scholarships this year. Applause

C.1.d. Committee
Bob Guthrie said the Policy Committee met tonight and all the members were present and Rosemary Russo from the Board also attended. He thanked Donna Kosiorowski and Mr. Turcio for their presentations in for helping us understand these policies. The unanimous vote from the committee was to add two items to tonight’s agenda. The Homebound Policy which is 6173 and the Security and Restraint Policy which is 5144.1(a). They both have been reviewed by CABE and our legal staff and the Superintendent.

Chairman Libero asked for a motion to add these two policies to tonight’s agenda.
Cebi Waterfield made the motion
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members were in favor
Motion to add the two policies to tonight’s agenda was approved.

Bob said Rosa Richardson presented something to the Policy Committee about looking at other usage in buildings during voting time and the policy committee accepted the document and will be worked on through the Superintendent and CABE and will come back at a later date.

D.1. Approval of Minutes
D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Harriet North Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on March 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM.

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a
Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve the minutes
Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.4. New Hire: (Certified)

D.5. New Business

14-08 2014 Operating Budget Transfers

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve the Budget Transfers.
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members were in favor
Motion passes
Item 14-08 is approved

14-10 West Haven Department of Education School Calendar 2014 – 2015

Pat Libero asked for a motion to approve the calendar.
Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the calendar item 14-10
Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board member present were in favor of approving the school calendar
Motion passes. The school calendar is approved

14-13 The Homebound Policy 6173

14-14 The Security and Restraint Policy 5144.1(a)

Pat Libero asked for a motion to accept the two policies that the policy committee requested be added to our agenda tonight items 14-13 and 14-14.
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
Discussion: None
Motion passes. Items 14-13 and 14-14 are accepted and approved.

F. Informational

Pat asked if there was anything to discuss under informational.
There was nothing further to discuss.

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to adjourn.
Cebi Waterfield made the motion
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary
March 17, 2014

Ahmed Fikri Anuar of the WHHS Math Team has scored a 108 on the AMC (American Mathematics Competition). Students who perform exceptional well on the AMC12 (score 100 or better) are invited to continue participating in the series of examinations that culminate in participation in the International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO), the most prestigious and difficult secondary mathematics examination in the world. Ahmed-Fikri was one of 20 students from Connecticut who made the honor roll (scored 100 or better) He was ranked 9th.

The 200 Freestyle relay team of Gaelen Rhoads, Daniel Acosta, Geordann Daguplo, and Max Padro broke the WHHS School Record from 1997 of 1:36.72 with a record breaking time of 1:36.23 to make it to the Championship in Boys Swimming. Congratulations and good luck at Championships.

Saturday March 22nd is the annual Spring Campus Cleanup Day sponsored by VolunTEENS. All students are welcome to help beautify the campus.

The West Haven High School Theatre Workshop will perform "Willy Wonka" next weekend, March 27-29 and we hope you can all come. The annual 5th grade performance will be held on March 27th. Come and support the cast and crew and check out the fully recycled sets, which are made out of recycled materials, such as coffee cups, plastic Easter eggs, bottle caps, small water bottles and discarded fabric.

West Haven High School celebrated Pi Day on Friday – March 14, 2014 or 3.14. Students had to recite to their teachers Pi with as many digits as they could memorize. Freshman Kara Walker led all students with reciting an amazing 101 digits memorized and was able to "pie" her teacher in the face – Mrs. Yvonne Moore! In second place was Stephen Osei with 46 digits. He "pied" his health teacher – Mr. Ryan Knight. Mia Talamelli came in 3rd with 41 digits – she "pied" Miss Joanie Amato. And with 34 digits, in 4th place, was Amber Prion who "pied" Mr. Mike Golinski.

160 sophomores attended the CAPT Science Workshop on Saturday, March 8th in preparation for the Science CAPT test on March 13th. 96% of students participated in the test last week.

Alice Obas gave a special presentation today at the Connecticut Junior Sciences and Humanities Symposium. She discussed the research of the Cove River conducted by the WHHS AP biology class including how an invasive plant species impacted the environment. Alice was awarded a scholarship to Summer Quest at Talcott Mountain Science Center. Her teacher, Mr. Kevin Dickson, received the JSHS Teacher Award of $500 and an all-expenses paid trip to the National Junior Sciences and Humanities Symposium. Congratulations to both Mr. Dickson and Alice!

The WHHS Dance Team competed recently in Vermont, and placed 6th in their division and 11th overall. Congratulations to Tia Bonessi, Jocelyn Moscato, Catherine Przybylowski, and Megan Tottenham.

Last week, the School Counseling Department held their annual College Planning Night which includes the "Knowledge for College" presentation and a panel discussion will include representatives from colleges/universities of various competitiveness including Central Connecticut State University, Dean College, and the University of Connecticut.