

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES ~ REGULAR MEETING

Monday, November 29, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

Waterbury Arts Magnet School, 16 South Elm Street, Waterbury, Connecticut

PRESENT: Vice President White, Commissioners D'Angelo, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, Stango, Sweeney, and Theriault.

ABSENT: President Hayes and Commissioner Flaherty-Merritt.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendents Cullinan and Sequeira, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, Attorney Maurice Mosley, and Education Liaison Mary Ann Marold.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Vice President White called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m. with a moment of silence and a prayer and Superintendent Snead led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner D'Angelo.

D'ANGELO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Flaherty-Merritt (absent). Commissioner Harvey.

HARVEY: Here

CLERK: Commissioner Morales.

MORALES: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner O'Leary.

O'LEARY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner White.

WHITE: Here.

CLERK: President Hayes (absent).

COMMUNICATIONS:

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the following communications:

1. Copy of The FUNdamental Charter School Application received October 29, 2010.
2. Copy of The Waterbury PAL Leadership Academy's Charter School application received November 5, 2010.
3. Communication dated November 9, 2010 from Nancy Gonzalez regarding her daughter.
4. Copy of communication dated November 10, 2010 from Civil Service certifying John Towle for the position of Maintainer I.
5. Copy of communication dated November 12, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Karen Flores-Gonzalez for the position of Library Page.
6. Communication dated November 15, 2010 from Bryan Baker regarding a part-time position at Waterbury Adult Education.
7. Copy of communication dated November 17, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Julissa Collado for the position of Library Page.
8. Copy of communication dated November 18, 2010 from New England Association of Schools and Colleges to Dr. Padua, Crosby High School.
9. Notice of Charge of Discrimination dated November 18, 2010 from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
10. Copy of communication dated November 19, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Vincent Vurchio for the position of Administrative Support Specialist II.
11. Copy of communication dated November 19, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Michael Scianna for the position of Maintainer I.
12. Communication received November 19, 2010 from Waterbury Teachers Association regarding the Board's vote to deny a bonus for teachers.
13. Copy of communication dated November 22 2010 from Civil Service certifying Katherine Christ for the position of Administrative Support Specialist II.

WHITE: All in favor.

PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD:

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business to allow the public to address the Board at 6:58 p.m.

WHITE: All speakers are encouraged to submit prepared written statements to the Commissioners. Comments shall be limited to a maximum of three minutes. There will be no responses this evening to any questions or concerns raised; they will be referred to the Administration for review and response.

Cindy Hill, PO Box 207, Waterbury, CT, had the following comments: I am here tonight to address our bullying policy in our City. As good as our district policy is, I'm asking our Board to see to it that it is being followed throughout our district, basically hands-off policy. Currently I am bringing the awareness of bullying to everyone I can. Nationwide, 18,000 students miss a school day because of bullying; that's too many. It is our job to ensure that all schools in our district are bully-free. We need to communicate to students and parents our district will be a bully-free district. I have a t-shirt on order that will be in by the end of the week that clearly says, "stop bullying, report it". That is the solution to ensure no bullying continues to ever hurt another child in any city. I have been contacted by parents and grandparents who believe that working together we can all stop bullying. Children need to understand school is for learning, learning is what they will get in our City. Waterbury offers our children art every week, music every week, gym every week, let alone all your academic subjects. They are there to learn and, yes, there are some fun things to do also. Again, our children know, should learn to stop and report, if it means going to the nurse's office and letting the nurse know another child was bullied, so be the case. Together we can get this done; we need to start communicating our message to stop it. Other districts will follow Waterbury. I know that Waterbury has plans to stop a major cyberbullying, I know they go into the schools at least once a year to talk about bullying, we may look to see if we can do it twice a year in some schools, accordingly, but just stop it so we can set the example in our City for other districts to follow, and that's what my message will be. I'm not trying to override the Board on anything, if there's anything I can help you to help ensure to stop it, I will. I've encouraged every parent and grandparent when they care about it, please try to communicate calmly with the school principals and if that does not work to contact Central Office but try to work together, let's not have any children hurt in our City; communication is key – stop, report. Thank you, have a good night, God bless.

Donna Vignali, WTA President, 26 Lakeside Boulevard East, had the following comments: Good evening Dr. Snead, Vice President White, and Commissioners, I'm here this evening because I want it on record, and the public to know, that approximately two weeks ago I, once again, reached out to this Board with a letter asking that you consider meeting with the WTA. We have tried and tried to sit down with this Board and our requests have gone unanswered. We brought request after request for open dialogue. Collaboration between this Board and the expertise of our teachers can only help to empower our students for success. I'm here because I think it's time that the teachers, parents, and community know that, once again, our request has been ignored. I want teachers, parents, and the community to know that the WTA has tried repeatedly to communicate the need for collaboration with this Board. I want them to know that contrary to how we are portrayed, contrary to the rumors that have been circulated, and contrary to the innuendos made against teachers, teachers in this district are highly qualified to teach students in this community and care greatly that their educational needs are met. An excerpt from my letter sent to you, "until you, as a Board, decide to respect and support teachers, collaborate and not dictate programs

and policy, look at what's best for our students, not personal agendas, things are never going to improve", just as you heard by the guests from New Haven. Thank you.

William James Wilton, Sr., 248 Moran Street, had the following comments: I just want to address briefly, and I do have a copy for the Board to circulate . . . not reading totally word for word from the paper, I will try to keep it under the three minutes. There was a question at last week's Board meeting asked by President Hayes to Principal Padua regarding the checking of homework and when I heard the question a million and one questions started twirling around in my mind particularly because one, I am a parent of two children in the Waterbury Public School System – high school and elementary schools, because I am a teacher in the Waterbury district at Wilby High School, and also because I am a product of this system – I graduated from Kennedy High School many years ago, had the pleasure of having one of the members of the Board as one of my teachers in middle school. So I'm quite aware of how important homework is. But what struck me when the question was asked is that the Board has policies in the student handbook and it's distributed to all the students, all the teachers, and all the parents throughout the district that the policy for grading assignments is as follows: 85% tests and quizzes, 10% classwork, 5% homework, and when that is communicated to students and to parents it kind of raises a question, and I know as a parent I would wonder, if I wasn't a teacher and if I didn't know all the ins and outs of what it takes to get students to achieve, it would raise a question well, if they're only assigning five percent, how really important is the homework? And what compounds the problem is different, the nature of different various subject matters especially when you get to the middle school and high school levels. I know for myself, as a teacher, I have manipulated certain homework assignments, certain assignments for the students so that yes, it is a homework, it is given as a homework assignment, however, when I go to assess them on that homework, I don't assess it as a homework assignment, I assess it as a test grade so that way, for example, as a social studies teacher they have to read chapter ten, section three, answer the questions. When they do that assessment to get the material that they need, then I turn around and test them. There are a few other questions – the purpose of the homework assignment, why is the homework a formative or a summative assessment, is it enough to check the assignments just to see that they're done, are we checking them to make sure that they're correct or are we just checking to see that they're actually attempting the assignment? Those are the type of things when homework policy is being discussed by the Board they need to take into consideration. Thank you.

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to return to the regular order of business at 7:07 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Snead read and distributed the following report:

Tomorrow morning I will be meeting with Governor Elect Malloy in Hartford along with a few other CAUS urban superintendents regarding education issues. I will update you on our discussion.

I sent each of you earlier this evening a copy of the communication between our Urban School Superintendents relative to our Urban School Superintendent's agenda, our priorities, and what we will be discussing with Governor-elect Malloy tomorrow evening.

We're going to ask each of our boards of ed after we fine-tune our CAUS agenda if you would be kind enough to sign off on it and support it.

We will be beginning the process of reviewing data and making changes to our District Improvement Plan this Wednesday.

I will be meeting this Thursday morning at 11 with Judy Carson from the Connecticut State Department of Education for an update on school governance councils.

We are continuing to experience some intermittent issues with our web site management. We have been told it likely has something to do with the involved ISP's or Internet Service Providers. We are working to resolve the issue.

There was an article about the Enlightenment School students assisting at ACTS 4 Clothing Ministry in Sunday's local section.

There were articles and pictures in Friday's newspaper about Wallace Middle School's participation in a food drive, the Crosby High School Robotic Team and Kennedy's DECA Club.

There was an article and pictures in last Wednesday's newspaper about West Side Middle School's annual tradition of gathering up food and donations for local food pantries and families in need.

WHITE: Thank you Dr. Snead. And I do think we should thank all the students and teachers who took part in all of those things because they're certainly putting a good face on the schools in the system. So to the people who took part in it and the students, again, thank you very much.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar, items 8.1 through 8.11, as listed:

- 8.1 With the approval of the Committee of the Whole, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval for the Waterbury Public Schools to host the 1st Annual Brass City Cheer & Dance Championship.
- 8.2 With the approval of the Committee on Grants, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to apply for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Innovative Professional Development Mini Grant.
- 8.3 With the approval of the Committee on Grants, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval to participate in the SDE Interdistrict Cooperative Grant "Cosmic Cultures I" with Talcott Mountain Science Center.

- 8.4 With the approval of the Committee on Curriculum, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval to add “Project Lead the Way” courses to the honor’s level course weighting.
- 8.5 With the approval of the Committee on Curriculum, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of College Career Pathways Articulation Agreements with Naugatuck Valley Community College for the following courses:
- COM*H173 – Public Speaking
 - MAT137 – Intermediate Algebra/Functions Beyond the Quadratic
 - BIO*H110 – Human Biology
 - PHY*H110 – Introductory Physics/Physics
- 8.6 With the approval of the Committee of the Whole, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the Board of Education’s 2011 Meeting Schedule, as attached.
- 8.7 With the approval of the Committee on Schoolhouses, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the ED042 for the Sprague School Roof Replacement Project (State Project TMP 151 VFCW).
- 8.8 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the use of school facilities by school organizations and/or City departments, as listed.
- 8.9 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the use of school facilities by outside organizations and/or waiver requests, as listed.
- 8.10 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to D. Cullen, Maloney Magnet School, and 24 chaperones to take 176 students to New York, NY on February 16, 2011 to attend a performance at the Gershwin Theatre.
- 8.11 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to D. Dunn, WHS, and three chaperones to take 20 students to Deerfield, MA on December 14, 2010 to visit the Yankee Candle Company.

WHITE: Discussion.

HARVEY: Madam President, I believe the first thing that should occur is to question if anyone wants to remove something from the Consent Calendar and then we approve it. We were not given that opportunity to do that.

WHITE: Did anyone want anything removed from the Consent Calendar. If not, I will entertain a motion to accept as presented, which is was and seconded, which it was. Any discussion. Thank you Commissioner Harvey. All in favor, opposed.

10. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- 10.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Morales and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted, with Commissioner White voting “no”, to approve that permission be granted to L. Fitzpatrick, WAMS High School, and one chaperone, to take 12 students to Germany and Poland from April 15 to April 23, 2011.

WHITE: Discussion? I had discussion on this last week so I won't repeat myself. All in favor, opposed, nay.

11. COMMITTEE ON RULES & REGULATIONS

- 11.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Stango and duly seconded by Commissioner D'Angelo, it was voted unanimously to approve the Department of Education's "Guidelines for Appropriate Appearance", as attached.

WHITE: Discussion? All in favor, opposed.

12. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 12.1 through 12.5, Superintendent's Notification to the Board, as listed:

- 12.1 Athletic appointments effective immediately:
Gavrillis, Diana – Assistant Swimming Coach, WSMS.
Lott, Phil – Varsity Girls' Basketball Coach, CHS.
Rivera, Natasha – Head Swimming Coach, WMS
- 12.2 Athletic resignations effective immediately:
Guisti, Rich – Freshman Basketball Coach, WHS.
Lott, Phil – Girls' Basketball Head Coach, WMS.
Pugliese, Gregg D. – Head Baseball Coach, KHS.
- 12.3 Grant funded appointments effective immediately:
Weisz, Shoshan – Title I Instructional Tutor, Non-public (Yeshiva K'Tana), four hours per week @ \$30 per hour, no benefits.
- 12.4 Extended School Hours (ESH) Program Appointments, salary according to individual's contract:

SCHOOL	NAME	ASSIGNMENT
Brooklyn	Lawlor, Ryan	Teacher
Bunker Hill	Guerrera, Maureen	Clerical
Bunker Hill	Jasiulevicius, Margaret	Lead Teacher
Bunker Hill	Labagh, Michael	Teacher
Bunker Hill	Salvatore, Steve	Custodian
Generali	Dunlap, Laura	Paraprofessional
Generali	Francisco, Roxann	Paraprofessional
Hopeville	Diorio, Christine	Teacher

12.5 Teacher new hires:

NAME	SCHOOL	SUBJECT	STEP	EFFECTIVE
Ferrer, Denise	Kennedy	Spanish	MA/1	11/30/10
Norcross, Stephen	Wilby	Math	6 th +15/1	9/14/10
Roach, Jessica	WAMS	Math	MA+15/1	11/22/10

WHITE: All in favor. Unfinished business of the preceding meeting only.

HARVEY: I don't know if this was unfinished business, I was looking for Mrs. Hill, she left. I just wanted to point out to her that we just approved a grant, Community Learning Center Innovative Professional Development Mini-grant. One of the topics that will be included in that grant, in that presentation, is cyberbullying. So I just wanted to assure her that this district is looking very seriously at this topic and moving forward with educating the students and teachers in our district. Thank you.

WHITE: Thank you Commissioner Harvey. I'm sure she'll become aware of it and glad that we've done that. Other unfinished, new, and miscellaneous business?

D'ANGELO: I'll be quick. I just wanted to comment, speaking only for myself, I agree, I guess there'll be no shock to anyone that I agree with the President of the WTA, at least on tonight's issue. They have reached out to this Board on numerous occasions, and I don't blame the Board members, but they have reached out to this Board and asked for dialogue and you know, I just think it's a slap in the face that we continuously say no. I just want to be on record for saying that.

O'LEARY: First, I'd like to welcome Assistant Superintendent Anne Marie Cullinan back. Her absence was missed and I'm glad that she's back and congratulate her on her first day back, I'm sure that it was quite a challenge, although I hear that she's been working at home every day while she was away so it's probably not much different. And lastly, my only other comment is, I do want to take a minute to recognize Commissioner Sweeney and thank her for her work that she's done on the issue of researching reform initiatives. I, for one, could have sat here all night and listened to those two folks from New Haven. I was disappointed that we ran out of time, but certainly, we had to get here because there's so much going on. Anyways, I want to thank Commissioner Sweeney for providing us the information, at least on what the City of New Haven is doing as far as school reform and/or teacher evaluations. I think that one of the most telling things of the presentation tonight, well there were several actually, but one was not only are they evaluating the teachers in New Haven, but they're evaluating the administrators in New Haven all the way up through and to the Superintendent. And I think that that is very telling and could be very telling to the success of that program. It's very clear to me that the supervisors and administrators need to be held as accountable as the teachers and I think that that was an important point. The other thing I think is a very important point, we've talked about this ad nauseam and it doesn't seem to change, and Commissioner D'Angelo brought it up, is the lack of collaboration between the Board, the WTA, and SAW. I know that every single one of these Board members has enormous amount of respect for every single teacher in this district as well as every single administrator in this district, there's no question about it, there's no question about it. However, there's a lack of communication there and it results in a, to me, it

has negative impacts on this district, negative impacts on teacher's perceptions about how we feel about them, negative impacts on supervisor's perceptions on how we feel about them, and I think that, you know, we talk about ways to improve, we want to do self-evaluations, we want to do this, we want to do that, but the fact is one of our priorities should be to improve our communication and collaboration with the WTA and SAW because as you heard from Donna Vignali tonight, and the two folks from New Haven, you have to have by-in all the way around the pie here if you're gonna hope to initiate reform for improvements in the district. I will say that I believe that it goes both ways. I believe that the WTA and SAW should, it's a two-way street, and I think that each of us has responsibility for the lack of communication. So I think we should, maybe, take a deep breath, get through the holiday season, and make it an absolute priority in January to try to rebuild the relationship there. I think it's something that has to happen to move this district forward. And that's all I have to say and thank you.

WHITE: Thank you Commissioner O'Leary. Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: As the Board knows, I have commenced my second tour of the schools and I am happy to say that I am just about half way there. I visited approximately 14 of the buildings; about 11 have seen very, very significant improvements. Three – Driggs, Walsh, and Bucks Hill still need a long, long, long way to go. And I mean long, long, long way. Some of the excuses are you know they're putting a new roof on; we're not going to do it until the roof is done. Maybe they're legitimate excuses, maybe they're not. I don't know what the excuse for Walsh is. I know we're gonna replace all of the dividers within the bathrooms. I've been in way too many bathrooms and seeing way, way too many disgusting conditions all the way over to Chase School where I saw a faucet left on full . . . for over a week. Enough water drained out of that pipe alone to fill up a swimming pool the size of Crosby. But, 20 minutes later after I called, it was repaired. But on a more positive note, in my tours of the buildings, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to personally thank the dedicated and remarkable staff that we have with regard to the teachers, the principals, all of the aides, all of the people involved within our classrooms that do an absolutely phenomenal job. Their displays of bulletin boards, motivational boards, small learning environments, student's work, student artwork, displayed every place from the walls to the ceilings, hung across the classroom, it's just an inspiration to see the tremendous dedication that we have with regard to these teachers, administrators, and staff, and kids. So kudos to all of the people that I visited in my 14 tours so far. I expect to spend another month in these schools and hopefully I will see some additional significant growth. I know all the bathroom dividers are going to be replaced and there has been a remarkable improvement with the removal of what looked like or what could have been mold, what could have been, and probably was, chipped and peeling paint that may have been lead paint, and overall disgusting conditions. In fact, I would say that 99% of the principals have thanked me for these tours in helping them to accomplish their mission of getting a clean, safe, healthy education environment. And I want to thank, personally, Paul Guidone, George D'Agostino, John Cross, who's worth his weight in gold. I ask him to get something done, he gets it done. And I personally want to thank all of the hard working custodians, the maintenance people, the painters, all the people that we have been very, very hard on for these past two years, I want thank them personally for all their hard work and I am going to mail letters out for these exemplary schools where I see schools in 95, 99 percent condition, you can literally eat from the floors. So I want to thank those people, personally. You know these are the people sometimes that

really we fail to acknowledge, we look at their achievements on a day-to-day basis and can I tell yah, it makes a world of difference in these schools as you go into them. So all in all, kudos to all those involved and I hope through John Cross' involvement and George D'Agostino's involvement, and Paul Guidone's involvement, we can continue to make further improvements in our schools. Thank you very much.

STANGO: I know we're not supposed to comment on the speakers as they come to the podium but since the door was open, I guess I'll jump in it myself. I agree with the speaker that this Board should include teachers for speaking about reforms and for school improvement and what we're gonna do as we proceed. I think the problem is we don't have the vehicle at this time to do that. The teachers seem to be vilified all along, no matter what they do, the press, on the radio, and that's not right, and they're willing to help. We need to find a vehicle, perhaps they can start and, hopefully, jump in with the ad-hoc on the school achievement gap and perhaps we can find a way to bring them in on other things too. And when all else fails, as we saw tonight, the podium is another place where they can express their views. We've seen it before, we've seen 200 of them, we don't need to see 200 of them but we could use to see two or three a night would be fine with ideas to put forth for this Board. But moving forward, hopefully we'll find another way to include them in our work, our important work here. Thank you.

SWEENEY: First of all thank you Commissioner O'Leary for those nice comments, I appreciate that. I also appreciate the interest that you have shown and the initiative that you have taken in reaching out to the people in New Haven and getting them here tonight to address us. One of the points that was made in that presentation tonight, Dr. Snead, was that New Haven looked at their district improvement plan and tried to meld that and craft it around what they hope their reform would be. And I do know that at our last meeting you mentioned that you were pulling the District Improvement Plan Committee together to start going through that, process of going through that District Improvement Plan. I would hope two things that you would keep in mind that we're at least having this discussion and that maybe there's some of that that you can pull into that District Improvement plan but also to use that as a vehicle for exactly what Commissioner Stango, Commissioner D'Angelo, Commissioner O'Leary, have all just spoke to, to get ideas from our staff, from our teachers, to hear what they have to say because I know they all sit on that Committee and that's just one place where we can hear their ideas, Dr. Snead, we need to really hear their ideas, we need to listen with an open mind and understand that these are the people who are in the trenches each and every day facing everything that goes on in the school, in the community, and at home, that affects student learning. These people know what they're doing and we need to hear them and we need to hear them loud and clear. So I thank all of you for the time that you took tonight to hear from the people from New Haven. I know everybody had questions, I know that we need to do it again because there are so many more questions and I will continue to facilitate and make sure that that happens so we'll have some more discussion on that. What I would charge this Board with, once again, is to think long and hard how about how urgent you think this district needs reform because, again, you heard from the people in New Haven tonight, their board decided that their situation was compelling and urgent and something needed to be done and then they stepped out and left it to the educators to craft something that would address the needs of that district and then that Board got behind them and supported them in their efforts. So please think long and hard about that because that's a tough nut to crack for this Board, to step back and bed hands off and let the people who know what they're doing

craft where this district goes in the future. So I would ask you to just think about that. At some point we need to make that decision. Thank you.

D'ANGELO: I just want to, I was gonna say some things similar to what Ann said but I just want to cement the importance of that because I think Ann's absolutely right, as this Board goes forward and looks at a proposal like the New Haven Plan, I think the two keys to even decide if we want to look at it, if the Board wants to look at it, is number one, we have to really admit that fundamentally we need change, not that we want change, but we need change. We're in the position where we absolutely fundamentally need to change the way we educate kids here in Waterbury. And I think if we haven't come to terms with that yet or if we're still hung up that the progress we're making is acceptable then I think you can throw it out the window. And I think the other limiting factor as Ann said so eloquently is we really need to have a fundamental change in our mindset, in Central Office's mindset, that we value, really value the opinions of the teachers, principals, and parents, and students in some cases. So I think if we don't really come to terms with those, and I don't think you can fake it, if you don't come to terms with those two things, I don't even think we should even think about the New Haven plan. And I think that's basically what Ann said, probably just a different way.

THERIAULT: Certainly we could have spent about five hours, I think, there tonight discussing the New Haven Plan. And I agree that we have finally taken our head out of the hole in the sand like the ostrich and we have finally woken up to incremental progress is not enough especially when we have some third grades in this system that have eight out of ten third graders failing reading. I'm talking about four third grades, I won't mention the school because I don't want to embarrass them but it's not just that school, it's many schools. Many, many, many of our children, by the time they get into third grade, if they're not successful in reading, writing, and math, they are doomed to failure because the achievement gap will increase more and more and more. By the time they get into eighth grade and by the time they get into tenth grade, they're gonna be lucky if they even finish high school much less graduate. Our graduation rate is dismal, we have approximately 400 students entering ninth grade and approximately 250 graduating. Actually, it was 200 for years and years and years. Fifty percent of our kids disappeared through the cracks, educational cracks. That being said, I was very intrigued by Dr. Snead's remarks in his Superintendent's Report regarding the District Improvement Plan. And I certainly hope, Dr. Snead, when you relook at that plan, that District Improvement Plan, you modify that 15% and make sure that the 15% is based upon 100%, not the base rate of what a particular school or class where they are at now because if we use that base rate, that third grade class that I'm talking about where eight out of ten kids are failing in third grade reading, it will take them 20 years at this incremental DIP five percent of the base to achieve proficiency which is 72.4% with the State. So we need to get hard, and as I said to the gentleman that came to us from the State, you need to come to us with a bigger hammer, not a ball-peen hammer but a 50 pound sledge hammer. And I would recommend that you get hard and fast with regard to the District Improvement Plan and that you demand of the teachers and of the administrators of a full five percent growth based upon five percent of 100%, not some menial amount five percent of 22.5%, that's what the score is in the third grade. So they would have to achieve 1.5 next year and so on. I'm not going to bore you with all the boring details and the mathematical calculations. But I really think that we, as a Board, and you as a Superintendent, Dr. Snead, and your successor that comes in here, needs to get hard and fast, we need to tell them, we need to warn them, this is what we want,

this is what the kids deserve, and if you don't do that then over a period of time, over a two year period of time or a three year period of time, we're not gonna wait for the State to reconstitute the schools, we're gonna do it ourselves, we're gonna take the bull by the horns. And I think the ball is in your court now, Dr. Snead, so you need to take the initiative and think the Board needs to support you 100%. Thank you.

HARVEY: First of all, thank you Commissioner Sweeney, for coordinating the efforts and Commissioner O'Leary. Through all of this, Commissioners, we have to keep the students first, alright, we have stakeholders, we have the union, we have the teachers, we have the administrators, but through all of this we must keep the students in mind, they must be first. I'm just, again looking at, I started thinking back to our discussions last week and talking about the SOAR Program and things of that nature, and the achievement gap, and I mentioned to Commissioner O'Leary that I was concerned because the committee, the ad-hoc committee for the achievement gap has not met since May yet we see these news stories, state test results, still show racial gap, various things about students not being prepared once they enter college. So we need to move, I'm not gonna say quickly, but we need to make sure that we're focused on the students. And I'm gonna just end with this, I still believe, I know that the union does not really fully support Project Opening Doors, but I'm gonna keep mentioning that as long as I can, if we're gonna look at SOAR Program and look at, which I think we should because that does aide our students, we look at SOAR then we have to also look at why minority students are not motivated to take AP courses. If we have something that works and we know, we have proof that it works, that is Project Opening Doors, then it should be in all three high schools. Thank you.

WHITE: Are there any others wishing to speak? Then before I ask for adjournment, I spoke briefly with Dr. Snead and he will speak with his cabinet tomorrow and we will start the collaboration process on the neutral subject of reform initiative with the teachers. One of us will contact Donna Vignali also and we will try to have it into at least a committee form and some form where we can get some good information in and out just to get the process started. So if anyone has any suggestions email me or call me and I'd be happy to listen to you, make a list, and see what can be put together. We all know what has to be done, but sometimes people just want to have input. So be my guest if you have something you'd like to say. Most of you call when you have something to say anyways so please feel free to do that on this particular subject. And hopefully we can get the ball rolling finally and begin the new year nicely.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:39 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education