

## **WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*MINUTES ~ REGULAR MEETING*

Monday, March 15, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** President Hayes, Commissioners D'Angelo, Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, and White.

**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, Education Liaison Mary Ann Marold, and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

### **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:39 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.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: Present.

CLERK: 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.

HAYES: Here.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner White, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the following communications:**

1. Copy of communication dated March 2, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Mark Mailhot for the position of Maintainer I.
2. Submittal of a newspaper article from the March 3, 2010 Republican American entitled "South End group gets leeway in using city money" from Commissioner Theriault.
3. Communication dated March 4, 2010 from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding notice of discrimination.
4. Copy of communication dated March 10, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Mileidys Casillas for the position of Library Page.
5. Copy of communication dated March 10, 2010 from Civil Service certifying Danessa Marshall for the position of Paraprofessional.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. All in favor, opposed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the Sheriff Call Meeting of December 1, 2009 and Committee Meeting of December 7, 2009.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none - all in favor, opposed. Minutes are approved.

HARVEY: Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to recognize the winners of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Black History Jeopardy Contest and I'm going to ask those winners to come forward and stand in front of Dr. Snead and President Hayes.

The following students were presented a certificate: Andre Gary (Sacred Heart), Kristal Lewis (Crosby), Michele Saunders (WAMS), and Raven Watson (WAMS).

HARVEY: The reason why we are presenting these students with an award is because number one there wasn't that much publicity given on this contest and these students studied very, very hard. And not only that . . . it is kept, they are the comeback kids because they got a little nervous in the first round but they came back and prevailed in the end. So congratulations. Please give them a hand. Now I would like to also mention that Michele Saunders was unable to join us tonight, she is in the hospital, but we still wish her the best. She is in good hands, her mother is a nurse.

**PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business to allow the public to address the Board at 6:44 p.m.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. 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.

**Luisa Ramirez, 125 Johnson Street, had the following comments:** Good evening, my name is Juan Marrero, Mr. Hector Riollano asked me to read this letter, a translation of a letter wrote in Spanish from Mrs. Luisa Ramirez to the Honorable Board of Education because she cannot read, write, or speak English fluently. Mrs. Ramirez want to answer a memo that she received by mail dated February 9, 2010 from Mr. Michael Yamin of which we are . . . with this letter. As of today she does not understand why she received a memo instead of a formal reply to her two previous complaint letters written to the Principal of Kennedy High School Mr. Yamin.

HAYES: Excuse me sir, we have a copy of that communication the gentleman is referring to. Carrie gave it to us this evening if you want to have it in front of you.

MARRERO: This is her statement. I received a reply to my complaint after a long period of waiting time. I send the first complaint letter on November 5, 2009 and no one answered. In this letter I stated that I wanted a full investigation about an incident involving my son Yurkelin Montesino and his teacher Mrs. Martinez. After waiting for an answer that never came I decided on January 4, 2010 and I received the same answer - silent, no answer. It was not until I involved Mrs. Mary Ann Marold two months after the incident from my son that I receive a copy of a memo without no cover letter as an answer to my previous letter of complaint. I felt so disappointed. Don't parents have the right to have their concerns answered in a timely and properly manner or it is that the staff has double standards? As a parent I felt offended. Somebody should discuss this matter with the staff. The reply that I received has no apology for being late responding to my complaint, shame coming this response from a principal of a high school where the teaching of politeness and values are supposed to be principle teaching to create good human beings; amazing. Are we Hispanics second class citizen with no rights? As I was opening the letter my son looks at me touching my hand told me, mother, forget it, we are not going to win anyway, we are not going to win anyway and nobody is going to listen to us. I look at my son's eyes and at that moment I realize that I cannot let him down. I told him we're poor, we have no power but we have pride and dignity and nobody, nobody is going to step on us until someone listens to us. We have rights and we're going to fight this until the end until someone listens to us. I began to read Mr. Yamin's memo and I was mesmerized on how people distort information. First, by reading the first paragraph he used the word investigation when there was no investigation but a one side report. Mr. Yamin used the excuse that he could not interview Yorkelin because he was spelled from the Waterbury School System. This statement is completely false and Mr. Yamin knows it because he was in the Committee that recommended to transfer Yorkelin to a program at the Enlightenment Program and that my son could return to Kennedy High School next school year. It is hard to believe that Mr. Yamin forgot it but as a school principal and deciding a student future I expect much more from him. However, he did not forget to mention my son old record from last year on his behavior and disciplinary history. This is not relevant to my complaint. Why Mr. Yamin did not mention my son record of this year? After a rocky beginning my son behavior and attitude began to show some

improvement. Mr. Yamin did not notice it. Let work on the positive - my son had no suspensions this year, his attendance improved, he was doing more school work, minor behavior incidents, positive reports from some teachers, joined the Explorer Club and the YMCA. At the PPT the school psychologist made the following statement "Yorkelin problems are due because to his language barrier". This information never showed on Mr. Yamin's report. The description of the incident between Yorkelin and the teacher does not make any sense whatever or it is poorly described or it is completely fabricated. Every time that there is a conflict between people certain elements must prevail...

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: Mr. President, point of order, he's had twice the amount of the allotted time.

HAYES: If you want to give me the statement we'll take the statement.

**Hector Riollano had the following comments:** I'm here tonight to give us closure to the complaint which I think you should listen, you should give more time to these people to expose the problem because you didn't hear anything. . . . push out, Hispanics being pushed out from the system and this kid was almost pushed out until the mother get involved and fought for that. They used all kind of gimmicks, all kind of . . . just to . . . in the school. We are going to write you a letter with all the information because it's unfair for Hispanics because this is an example happening to us, our students. And because you have three minutes you're denying the Hispanic the right to show . . . not you, you are the Board, we are coming here to ask for your help, how could we alleviate this problem, it's a big problem, the push out of Hispanics in the system. And Yorkelin, almost a push out and today he got two accommodations from explorer – courage and independence. His work is fantastic. He was almost a push out. The minute . . . parent like her and that's why we decided to come here tonight but you have only three minutes to listen to us. The problem won't go away. Thank you.

**Carol Iacovone, 84 Newport Drive, had the following comments:** I am a parent of a Wendell Cross student and secretary of the PTA. I stand before you this evening on behalf of the students and families who will be affected by your redistricting plan in relation to the reopening of Gilmartin. It is our understanding that the Board's intention is to return to a neighborhood school idea. We understand these plans and as taxpayers and voters are generally in support of them as proactive. The issue becomes how we move forward in implementing the changes needed and minimizing the impact they will have on our children. We are aware that the current plan as presented will affect the lives of 58 students as they transfer to Gilmartin and other existing schools. We are also aware that 68 students will transfer to us for a net gain of 10. We know that you are working to reduce overcrowding, we are also aware of test scores, AYP, and the No Child Left Behind Act. Our concern tonight lies within our own walls with our own children and how the face of Wendell Cross will be changed. We would like to know why parents were not asked to participate on the redistricting committee. Why were schools not contacted to determine parental interest in being involved? We are the taxpayers, the parents, and the parties directly affected. Our voices should have been afforded the opportunity to be heard. Anyone who reads the paper knows about the Christmas celebration issue that has reached the front page of our local paper on more than one occasion. How is it that an issue that will affect so many lives in the eminent future does not receive the same? This issue has only been on the front page

of the local section of yesterday's paper. By outward appearance it would seem that this issue was kept out of the public eye for fear of an outcry and that the public has thereby been deceived by default. Another concern is the transition and its impact on our children. We would like to know if thought has been given to provide transitional counseling or services to help students who have had years, whether it be one or four, at an existing school and will now be uprooted from their environment and their established and trusted relationships with their teachers and friends? Our children are not ready. They are unaware and they are unprepared. It is unfair to assume that every parent will explain, comfort, and prepare their child for a smooth transition. We are speaking of young children as well as children with special needs or challenges. Our students have a routine, an expectation, a code of conduct, and are fully aware of our rules, the mantra, and what is expected of them. To move these children we fear has the potential for major effect. At what point do you suggest we tell them what's going to happen? How do you suggest we tell them? How do you suggest we deal with the outcome in our homes and in our school setting? How do we tell our children that their friends will no longer be in their school or class, on the playground or at their after-school activities? What consideration is given to the children who have a more than average difficulty with transition? We at Wendell Cross, the students, parents, PTA and school staff, have worked very hard to provide the best atmosphere and experience we can. Ladies and gentlemen please note that 252 of our students out of a student body of 374 were green in the PBS Program. This speaks to the outstanding leadership and teaching they receive and it also speaks to the level of respect and trust that has been attained. There are reasons too numerous to mention as to why we are a successful school in all areas, one of the very few who meet AYP, why our numbers and results are higher than others. To make this decision, especially one with so much at stake for all parties involved and affected without proof of thought, discussion, and reason beyond a map and lines, is difficult, at best for us to accept. If it is difficult for us please imagine how hard it will be for a child. You as Board of Education members were elected to your positions. I may be simplifying when I say our expectations as parents, taxpayers, and voters was that you were going to make decisions with public knowledge and input based upon the best interest of our children that you are hired to represent. It is unfair that their voices, no matter how young or small they may be, are not being heard. We, the Wendell Cross family, are here today to support them and speak for them and we hope you are listening. Thank you.

**Ed Bokowski, 370 Windy Drive, had the following comments:** May I first ask permission to present each member of this Board a copy of a document that is printed by the government of the United States entitled the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence because there are three sections in here I will refer to and it will be of help to you understanding what I am trying to say. As you know I'm a Veteran of World War II and what I have seen in December I've been waiting patiently to see in action by a principal that we as veterans, and I especially, I do not have prepared statements because I was asked once am I speaking for somebody else or myself. I am speaking for myself. What I've seen in that time what I consider as a Veteran an un-American act in violation of not only that a discrimination, a law against discrimination, and finally the denial of the protection of the Constitution of the United States with the Bill of Rights and our government for all children. As you know you took the oath of office, I mean the Pledge of Allegiance, and what was the last words – "a nation under God, indivisible, with justice for all" no exclusions. And I'm pleased to say Mr. Snead when you said your silent prayer you ended up with a symbol of a cross, congratulations, because in

this document, I will explain why that is so great, what I want you to look at in this document is page 1, and in that you will find the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. And what does it state – “We, the people”, and who are we the people, like you are colored, various nationalities, various languages and various ethnic traditions. And what was the founding fathers trying to tell us it was a time that we had tolerance and understanding, that is what made us the great union that we were and must fight to continue and if we do that we have violated the preamble of the Constitution. Next I would ask you to turn to page 21. And in that is the First Amendment to the protection what we call the Bill of Rights and Constitution of the United States. And it states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion”, now here’s the part that is interesting, “or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” that is exactly what the Superintendent of Schools did, he exercised his principle right to freely express that opinion. And that is what this one protection of this nation that we have freedom of religion no matter what we of the Veteran’s Association have no color. We do not worry about what the color of man is, what his religion is, what his politics is, all we know is he’s a Veteran that has fought with us to defend this document and protect it from enemies within and abroad. And I will ask you to turn to page...

HAYES: I’m letting everybody go long; I’ve got to adhere to the rules at some point. We’ve gone past our three minute limit and while I don’t like to cut anybody off we do have our rules here and we do have a number of other speakers. Could you wrap it up briefly?

BOKOWSKI: I only have a few moments to go. The Declaration of Independence on page 35 and if you read the second paragraph of that Declaration of Independence here is what it states “we hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal and they are endowed by their creator with these certain unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. It includes everyone, not an exclusion as what has happened to the children of Walsh School and one thing I’ve been waiting to see what your response is to that, what we consider a violation of the Constitution of the United States and the right of free speech. Thank you.

**Donna Vignali, 121 Danielle Drive, had the following comments:** Thank you for taking the time to listen to the teachers and their concerns that they shared with you at the last Board of Education meeting. I had the opportunity to speak to several Commissioners as well as the Superintendent and his staff. I am very optimistic that together we can work to address and alleviate many of the issues which have been brought to your attention. This evening I was going to bring you photographs of some of the deplorable conditions in some of our schools. I was going to reiterate the concerns about the attendance policy and the relationships or the lack of relationships between the administrators and the teachers. However, after conversations I’ve had this past week, I’m confident that these issues will be addressed and result in resolutions which are in the best interest of the school district. Once again thank you for doing what’s best for our teachers, our students, and the City as a whole.

**Sheila Ann Lee Calhoun had the following comments:** I’m wearing a t-shirt today because I attended an event that I guess most of you, if not all, were unaware of. And the event was called “Closing the Achievement Gap” and it addressed primarily the issues of African American and Latino students. But at the same time it said that failure is not an option and that’s what’s written at the top of the shirt, “failure is not an option”.

You know what was sad, not one of you was there. You know what was also sad, that I learned that most boards of education are ill prepared for their jobs and there's training available; have been available for quite some time, but you haven't gone to any of those trainings, at least that's what I've been told. To the parents, I am so very sorry that none of you were aware that there were thousands of students and hundreds of teachers in Hartford at the LOB today talking about closing the achievement gap and that failure is not an option. To those of you who voted against some of the issues that came up earlier this year about racing to the top, you were right, you're going to have to race to the top without the money and it's the Board of Education's fault. The teachers are going to have to teach within the small time frame that you've told me about because you have other things to do, things that are administrative and have nothing to do with teaching because your Board of Education has let you down. Dr. Snead, I don't know you, I don't know whether your hands are tied or not. Do I know anything at all; I know that I don't believe that one of you is prepared to administer an education program, a public education program in the City of Waterbury. Forgive me, I'm upset, I just couldn't believe there was one student, there was one student from the City of Waterbury, but there were no teachers. There were students from all over the State but not from the City of Waterbury. There were teachers, there were commissioners, there were superintendents, there were mayors, there were aldermen and women, there was state representatives there, senators, but no one from the City of Waterbury except myself and about five other people, my friend Athena Wagner was there as well. And we listened to the concerns that people had about education. One hundred and eighty-five schools in the State of Connecticut are failing and 22 of them are in Waterbury, Connecticut, out of 30 schools. And you people didn't think you should attend that meeting? What is wrong? I heard time, and let me just address that, in closing, you play by the rules when you choose, you give people three minutes when you choose, but when you're in the mood, it's all right for people to go on and . . . any kind of direction. But when you people finally decide to make some decisions about the education of children and not about the jobs of adults, I will be more than happy to applaud you, to support you, to endorse you in what you're doing. But until you make the education of our children who are the leaders of tomorrow your top priority, you do not have my support. You have my respect because we are all created human. Beyond that ladies and gentlemen, I'm very sorry for all of you.

**Athena Wagner, 1558 Highland Avenue, had the following comments:** Yes, we did attend the meeting at the LOB today and I got to tell you it was awesome. But I do have to say, I have to agree, we just kept looking around, we kept looking around. I do believe that the information went out to all the PTO's of the public schools in Waterbury, I saw to that, so I believe it went out. It was very disappointing not to see one face from Waterbury, Connecticut in trying to bridge the achievement gap. Not to reiterate, but 22 out of 30 failing schools, if that's the correct number, I believe it's 22 out of 30, that is so unacceptable, and I really don't understand how you could go on week after week after week after meeting after meeting after meeting. We just had CMT's; I don't know if they're over. Just had CMT's. I've been coming down here for a couple of meetings now pretty regularly and I've heard everything else and a lot of things needed to be discussed. There were other issues going on as well but what I haven't heard is how do we change the fact that we have 22 failing schools? That's what I haven't heard. That's what should be priority. That is just unacceptable. What do you expect these children to do upon graduation? What are your expectations? There's no hope for that. Everybody's failing them. And I'm not gonna point the finger, I'm not gonna point the

finger at the Board; it takes a village to raise a child. Everybody has a responsibility; that's why I'm here. My kids have graduated, they're grown, they made it through, they had me for a mother, so they got through. But it wasn't easy then either, I had to stay on them. Now a lot of these children, they may not have parents involved, as a matter of fact they don't have parents that are involved, that's evident. But it's not just here; it's all over the State. Regardless of anything people are in place to educate. I listen to the teachers come down here and fight for their raise, I don't blame them, I would have fought for mine too. But I wish they came down here and fought for the time they need to educate instead of everything else that they had to do on a daily basis. We have got to make education our priority. I didn't hear anything about preparing, better preparing for the CMT's when the scores are way below standard and have been, it's not new, it is not a new issue. Education, education, education, first. Thank you.

**Frank Perrella had the following comments:** I teach at Waterbury Adult Ed. I've been in the Waterbury Public School System for 41 years. I taught at Crosby for 30 years, I coached there, and I still have passion to teach and enthusiasm to teach. However, that passion and enthusiasm is being eroded by a many number of things. It's not my age; it's what's happening to the school system. And just to reiterate what these two young ladies said prior, things have to be done, unfortunately they're out of your realm, they're in the realm of everybody up here. They're out of your realm. They're in the realm of the people who have the children, who've thrown the children on the public schools to do everything for them. I want to congratulate the children that received these awards, they make me very proud of the fact that these young students were able to take advantage of the public school system and they weren't part of the problem that it has. I have only two things I wanted to say but I'm just . . . what other people were saying. In the past two weeks our State Board of Education, which you may be aware of, has given the 169 towns in the State of Connecticut the ability to abolish the tracking system. Now the tracking system when I went to the real Wilby High School on Grove Street and Pine, was accelerated, which was the student who had the ability to do that work, then there was the x, y, and z. Well I'm not ashamed to admit that I was in the "z" class in Algebra and I didn't want to be put into the accelerated class in Algebra because I couldn't do that work, it was overwhelming. But in English I was there, in the accelerated class. So don't fall victim to the stupidity of the State Board of Education that says we need no tracking. Ms. Harvey was involved in the martial arts as I was years ago and there was tracking there. You were a white belt and you didn't become anything else until you proved you could do the next level. JV teams in baseball and basketball allow that student the chance to progress to his ability to play at the next level, not just dump everybody together and then put the onus on the teacher to try to do this, juggle five different sets of students at one time.

The other thing I wanted to bring out is we're testing the waters for charter schools. I'd like to know what is a charter school? Does it have a mission statement? I have a very good mission statement that will help the problem that we seem to face in Waterbury. You have that charter school and the stipulation is you take from the public schools the children who need help, the ones who have been out 90 days. The ones . . . that teachers can't help. Have that charter school and then you'll see the CMT scores, you'll see more children like this being able to be successful because the teachers aren't burdened by everything that society has to throw at them. That's the real problem; not bigger schools, not better schools, not bigger books, and making teachers jump through



hopes. Make the student and the parent accountable for what's going on as well as the teacher. Thank you very much.

**Andre Michaud had the following comments:** I'm coming before you this evening because the high school basketball season is just concluded and I've been filming and announcing games for the last 15 years here in the City of Waterbury and I would have to say this is the best season that I've seen here in the public schools here in the City of Waterbury. The reason I say that is it's not based on performance although Crosby did very well and Kennedy made it to the quarter finals, and Wilby upset a championship team, but it's based on, it's not based on their performance that I say it's the best, it's not based on their ability to play defense, their ability to play offense, it's not based on their ability to shoot foul shots; it's based on the content of their character. This is the best group of kids that I've seen in the City of Waterbury if you lump them as a whole – Wilby, Crosby, and Kennedy. I spoke to Coach Alan Piccolo at Wilby High School the sixth game of the season, his team was one and four and I sat with him during the warm-ups and I said "coach, it looks like you have a really nice group of kids here". He told me, he said "Andy, I have better athletes walking the halls here in Wilby, but they're not on this basketball team because they couldn't foul the rules and they couldn't do what needed to be done". I commend Coach Piccolo, Coach Armand LeVasseur, and Coach Nick, 500 win, Augelli, for what they've done here in the City of Waterbury. By raising the bar, raising the level of the type of kids that they're allowing to play sports here on their basketball teams. Also what really surprised me, and I've seen it over the last several years and this year was the best, is the student bodies. Every time we go to a game we go to Wilby, we ask the kids to move, very polite, they move. Sometimes they even help us with our equipment. At Crosby they're standing in front of us we ask them to slide over, they do it without a problem, without any kind of answering back, very, very respectful. And Chief O'Leary said it at the PAL kickoff that he had for the fields that they're going to have next to the PAL Center on Division Street and he stated that crime for juveniles has gone down seven years in a row and I can see it in the character of these kids. I know that a lot of people are attacking this Board and the school system as a whole but I think overall this school system is very, very positive, it's moving in the right direction. And if I can Dr. Snead, I know you've said in the past and people have reprimanded you for it that you state that we're the best, our scores are the best of all the urban cities in the State, and I commend you for saying that. I think you should continue to say that because when the other towns, they send us their physically handicapped, their mentally handicapped, their poor, and then they say compete with everybody else. We're really a three legged horse in a four legged race. I mean there's a lot of disadvantages to this City and I think overall the system is very good. Thank you.

**Jimmie Griffin, 40 Dikeman Street, had the following comments:** I'm gonna surprise you tonight, I'm not down here to really criticize you but I'm down here to talk a little bit about what I think about education and the importance of education. Being a product of Waterbury schools growing up on Long Hill, going to Slocum School, going to Walsh School, and then spending one year at Wilby and one year at Crosby and eventually dropping out of high school because I only completed one year, I can attest to during those years just going to the ninth grade I had a better education than a lot of the students that are coming out of high school here in Waterbury today. I went into the military and during the military service I found out that I was further ahead just going to the ninth grade in Waterbury than most people that had went to urban school districts

other places. So there was an excellent school system in Waterbury at one time. I'm here because yesterday I woke up and saw the front page of the local section and I saw the redistricting of the schools and to tell you the truth I think it's a pretty reasonable plan from what I see. As a matter of fact I was pretty supportive of it when I looked at the fact that no matter what you do when it comes to trying to inflict the integration policies that have been imposed on the school system in a lot of urban areas, it's almost impossible these days because the way demographics are in the city. But based on the way these lines are drawn I can see a benefit and maybe good, in some places it may be a little unbalanced, some places it may be over populated by one group or another. I don't think we're ever going to get to a point where we're gonna ever be able to satisfy all these federal guidelines but I think we should be concentrating on the education of our children more than anything else at this particular time. So I just want to say that I support the redistricting plan that I saw, what little I did see of it. I could sympathize with the parents that were here in relationship to the fact that a lot of them didn't know about this plan but I think if you would have thrown the plan out too soon they would probably have ravaged it before you got it out in the public anyways so I think it's better maybe that you came with the plan and then if there's any revisions to the plan and people have any problems with it that they could discuss it. But I think from what I see that it's an excellent plan and I just want to see this implemented and moved on so that we could go and concentrate on the real areas like Athena and some other speakers talked to. The achievement gap is a real big problem and I want to say that you guys should have been in Hartford today. I didn't make it but I knew about it. Thank you.

**Joe Gorman had the following comments:** With your . . . I'd just like to take the opportunity to recognize twelve of my colleagues who are retiring. Angela Bergin, Gary Bergin, Annette Cassullo, Nancy DeVlyder, Lorrain Elsemore, Marlene Lindquist, Catherine Marano, Susan O'Connell, Marie Ann Ponzillo, Victoria Stemmer, Joan Thomas, and George Tirado. I've worked with all of these people. Edmund Burke once said that a teacher affects all eternity, you never know where their influence stops and I'd just like to thank all of them for their dedication and commitment to our kids, our district, because they made us all better, thanks.

**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 7:26 p.m.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. All in favor, opposed.

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

President Barack Obama has proposed changes to federal law that would essentially dismantle No Child Left Behind. If adopted, the changes would mark a move toward rewarding schools for progress rather than labeling struggling schools as "failing." The proposed changes would also ask states to adopt strict standards to assure readiness for college and career readiness instead of measuring against grade-level proficiencies and would ask states to consider subjects other than just reading and math as part of their improvement goals. The proposal will go to the House Education and Labor Committee on Wednesday. And I'm hopeful the new legislation that comes out regarding the Federal entitlements that we get will be much different and reward those

schools like Walsh Elementary and Wilson Elementary that have some high challenges, have a high degree of challenges, will reward those schools when they achieve and improve every year which is what they've been doing. Every single year those schools and those other 22 you mentioned have in fact improved significantly. So under the new legislation it looks like they will be rewarded instead of punished. Here in Connecticut, a bill that would require all schools buses to have seat belts installed on them was scheduled for a vote today by the legislature's transportation committee. Similar bills have been proposed before and failed to make it out of committee. This one has been watched closely by numerous advocacy groups, both for and against. It was prompted, in large measure, by the death of a student on a school bus earlier this year.

We are inviting the community to join us for a forum on the new Carrington School plans tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m. This presentation will take place at Carrington School.

Also tomorrow evening at 6:30, more than twenty North End Middle School teachers and other teachers and administrators from around the district will shave their heads for a good cause. The event, to be held at North End Middle School, will benefit St. Baldrick's Foundation, which raises money for research to cure childhood cancers. There was a nice article in the paper about the upcoming event on Saturday. As of that date, North End Middle School teacher Richard Atkins has raised the most funds thus far (\$1,165).

Flag-raising ceremonies will be held this week to honor St. Patrick's Day/Irish Mayor of the Day, Judy Curtin Rush on Wednesday, and with a Greek Flag Raising Day on Saturday. Both ceremonies begin at 10:00 a.m.

Last week I officially signed a memorandum of understanding with Post University regarding its Masters in Education program. Some Waterbury teachers have already signed up to take advantage of the 20% discount being offered for the online degree.

The Waterbury Prevention Policy Board has begun notifying parents and the public about its upcoming survey of students. A notice for 6th, 9th and 12th grade parents has been posted on both our web site and Channel 16.

A meeting and parent activity sponsored by the Title I District Parent Advisory Council went well despite the rainy weather Saturday. Parents are continuing to enjoy the new format which provides for parent / child interaction as a large part of the meeting.

We will be meeting with state legislators at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday morning to review our legislative priorities for this legislative session.

HAYES: Is there anyone wishing to remove anything from the Consent Calendar?  
Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: I'd like to remove Item 10.2 and 10.6 please.

WHITE: I don't wish to remove anything; I just wish to speak to Item 10.5. I'm hoping that you will allow this, it's on the Consent Calendar but a more detailed...

HAYES: Why don't we just remove it so you'll have the opportunity...

WHITE: It doesn't have to be removed I just would like that Commissioner Stango be allowed to make the statement at the appropriate time.

STANGO: I think then we should remove it, Item 10.5

## **10. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Flaherty-Merritt, it was voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar, Items 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.7 through 10.14, as listed:**

- 10.1 With the approval of the Committee on Finance, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of an Agreement with Ikon Office Solutions, Inc., for copy machine purchase, installation, supplies, and maintenance.
- 10.3 The Committee on School Personnel recommends the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to notify teachers of the non-renewal of their employment contracts in accordance with Connecticut General Statute's Section 10-151.
- 10.4 With the approval of the Committee on Legislation, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the following 2010 legislative Priorities for submittal to Waterbury's delegation:

The Waterbury Board of Education greatly appreciates your continued support and advocacy for the Waterbury Public Schools. We are acutely aware of the difficult financial condition of the state, both in the current budget year and for the next few years to come. We direct your attention to the below issues in the current session, as these are the issues of most impact to the Waterbury Public Schools.

### ***The Waterbury Board of Education supports:***

**Change in scope for the Carrington School Project** – We support the reclassification of this project to new construction.

**Increase funding for the Duggan School Project** – We support efforts to increase funding from the \$1.5 million increase recommended on the Priority List.

**Continued funding of ECS at least at current funding level** – Although level funding will not keep pace with rising costs at the local level, we appreciate that it may well be the best the state can offer at this time. We oppose any cut to current level of funding.

**Changes to the Excess Cost Grant for special education costs** – Changing the district load from 4.5 times per pupil expenditure to 3 times per pupil expenditure would give much needed relief to districts, as would removing the cap on the grants. Current projections are that state reimbursement will be approximately 82% of the excess cost for 2010-2011, down from the 100% for 2009-2010. We also support a shift of burden of proof for special education

services from the district to the parent/guardian (HB5425). Connecticut is one of only a handful of states that do not follow the federally allowed system that places the burden of proof on the parent/guardian. This change alone can save districts precious dollars without cost to the state.

**Family Resource Centers** – We are pleased that Governor Rell has backed away from cuts to funding for Family Resource Centers. Since this is one grant that has been targeted often over the last two years, we ask our delegation to watch for and oppose any cuts to this grant that may yet be proposed

**MORE Commission/in-school suspension** – We support the recommendation of the MORE (Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies Commission) to delay the implementation of in-school suspension for the next 3 years. The expectation is that the current adverse financial conditions, both at the state and local level, will continue through the next 3 years. It makes sense to relieve districts of the negative budget impact of this unfunded mandate, and is consistent with the MORE Commission's charge to examine and make recommendations regarding unfunded mandates.

**School Construction Grants** – Waterbury supports inclusion of heating and cooling system upgrades and replacements for grant funding.

***The Waterbury Board of Education opposes:***

**Healthy Foods Grant** – Under Governor Rell's budget proposal there is language that ties the level of funding for the Healthy Foods Grant to the previous year's appropriation resulting in a partial or total cut of funds under the Healthy Foods Grant. We oppose this language.

**CommPACT Funding** – Governor Rell's budget cuts funding for CommPACT schools. Waterbury's two (2) CommPACT schools have worked hard to implement the CommPACT initiative, and stakeholders pledged a five year commitment. Both schools are starting to show gains in achievement, and need to continue. We oppose this cut.

**Seat Belts on School Buses (HB5033)** – While there is no doubt that the recent event involving a school bus is tragic, this is an unfunded mandate that will cause severe negative impact on school budgets. The timetable for compliance is far too short and will further impact districts. Proposals to require seat belts only on buses that travel the highway is no help to Waterbury where highway travel is a way of life. There are numerous pros and cons to the issue that you have probably already heard. This should be a local decision made by districts after diligent research and thoughtful discussion.

**New Unfunded Mandates** – Waterbury opposes any new unfunded mandates this year when finances are so tight. While many are well intended, and have value, now is not the time for implementation:

\*Two (2) Years of Foreign language (SB279)

\*Increase high school graduation requirements (HB5156)

- 10.7 With the approval of the Committee on Building, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of Amendment No. 2 – second Renewal Term to the

Agreement with Waterbury Development Corporation for Project Management Services.

- 10.8 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools approval of the use of school facilities by school organizations and/or City departments, as listed.
- 10.9 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools approval of the use of school facilities by outside organizations and/or waiver requests, as listed.
- 10.10 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to V. Barone, KHS, and three chaperones to take 40 students to Orlando, Florida from May 26 to May 30, 2010, to visit Disney World.
- 10.11 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to L. Galanti, Kingsbury School, and 15 chaperones to take 70 students to Boston, MA to visit the Freedom Trail.
- 10.12 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to R. Haxhi, WHS, and four chaperones to take 50 students to Philadelphia, PA from May 26 through May 28, 2010 to visit various historical sites.
- 10.13 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted to K. Ludwig, KHS, and three chaperones to take 35 students to Cambridge, MA on April 30, 2010 to visit the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- 10.14 With the approval of the Committee on School Activities, the Superintendent of Schools recommends permission be granted M. Scialla, KHS, to take four students to Springfield, MA from April 9 through April 11, 2010, to attend the New England District Conference of Key Clubs.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. All in favor, opposed

## **11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT**

### **10.2 Committee on School Personnel:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve the following job descriptions for and positions of:**

- SDE After School Program Data Coordinator
- SDE After School Program Grant Coordinator
- SDE After School Program Lead Teacher – River-Baldwin Recreation Center

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Under discussion – Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: I'm becoming increasingly concerned about the situation with regard to hiring in general out of the general fund and hiring of personnel through federal grants. Recently I had the opportunity to attend a governing board session at ACES and I

spoke to several people who had attended A Day on the Hill and usually they come back with we have good news and we have bad news. We have good news or we have ecstatic news or fantastic news. But they came back the last time and they said we have devastating news. And this is what I'm really responding to when I see another job, another job, another job. I don't know where we get all the money from. I know we get money from the State and the Federal government but I just don't understand how these jobs were done before, how we keep creating new jobs. The news from the State was this, as you know the ECS was flat this year, was flat last year, it's gonna be flat next year and the State is looking at the possibility of cutting the ECS money by 50% in the year 2011/12. That being said, we are in for some very, very dire circumstances and we are going to have to learn how to educate our children on a shoestring budget. If we're getting approximately \$6,500 of ECS money and it's costing us \$10,000 to educate every student in the City of Waterbury, with the exception of the magnet schools which cost \$12,000 plus, that will leave us a shortfall of such magnitude that we will be looking at every single job in every single facility and everything that isn't nailed down. And quite honestly that's what the other communities are currently doing. But we seem to be, with all due respect, like an ostrich putting his head into a hole in the sand. The time is going to come when we have to pay the piper. The time is going to come when these federal jobs are going to come to an end. Yes we have the stimulus money for a couple more years so consequently the ECS money is safe but it won't be safe much longer. And when the legislature gets done with the ECS money and done with the possibility of regionalizing, we are going to be set for some very, very dire consequences in every single community; all 169 towns are going to be left looking for, like the communities around us right now. Look at Naugatuck, look at the other communities, they're scurrying around trying to find the money. I always wonder a town like Naugatuck that has about half of our budget is short seven million dollars and we're short three and a half. But that will quickly rise as the cost of Duggan and other costs quickly accumulate. So I think we're trying, we are doing a good job, there's no question, our teachers, our Board of Education, our Central Office, we're working hard.

And with regard to training, I had 32 years as teacher and administrator and I constantly attend workshops and training and other Board members here do the same so to have a speaker come up and say we're doing nothing is a bit disingenuous. So we're working hard. So I'll be voting against this and I'll be voting against every single job that comes forward from now on whether it be from the general fund or federal funds because sooner or later the bucks got to stop and it's got to stop now. Thank you.

HAYES: Any other discussion on item 10.2? Hearing none – all in favor...

THERIAULT: Roll call vote please.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Yeas: Commissioners D'Angelo, Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, Stango, Sweeney, White, and President Hayes - 9

Nays: Commissioner Theriault

HAYES: Motion passes nine in favor, one against.

**10.5 Ad-hoc Committee on Naming of School Facilities:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner D'Angelo, it was voted unanimously to approve the request of Wilby High School to name their basketball court in honor of George Tirado.**

WHITE: I wanted to have 10.5 removed so Commissioner Stango could speak to the reasons we are honoring Mr. Tirado in this way.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Under discussion, Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: It occurred to me over the week since the Workshop that we would vote on this and perhaps pass it on Consent and never being part of the permanent minutes of the meeting the reasons why we're going to name the court for George Tirado. So I'm just going to read the backup from the original application so it goes on file and is part of the permanent record honoring George Tirado. "George Tirado will be retiring from Wilby High Schools this year. George has been a Wilby teacher for 35 years as well as the Athletic Director for 20 years. George also served as a coach for 15 years. We, meaning the faculty and the principal and administration of Wilby, would like to name the basketball court in his honor for his outstanding years of service." I just wanted to place that into, the supportive comment, into the permanent record. Thank you President Hayes.

HAYES: Anyone else. If you don't mind I would just like to take a moment myself to add a positive comment as well. As someone who does attend athletic events and support our teams and our coaches, there's not a better gentleman than George Tirado. Simply stated, he represents us well, he's a wonderful role model, he's going to be missed greatly. He's the best advocate for our school system, for his school, for his kids. And he's gonna be sorely missed and I have asked Ms. Apicella to let us know when if there is, knowing George he probably wouldn't want to have any kind of ceremony, but if there is I'd like to be notified of that. Thank you. Anyone else? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed.

MORALES: I just want to make a comment that he was a great teacher, I was his former student.

HAYES: Anyone else? Ms. Apicella?

APICELLA: I just want to thank the Board. Yes, George did give us 35 years; he also raised his children and was an amazing role model for the Latino community as well as our own. So I just thank you so much. I'm very, very proud, sorry to see him go. I've been asking him to stay on for quite a while but thank you very much.

HAYES: All in favor, opposed, passes unanimously.

#### **10.6 Committee on Building:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner D'Angelo, it was voted unanimously, by roll call vote, to approve the Pre-k through 8 Redistricting Plan for the new Gilmartin, Duggan, and North End Site Schools.**



HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Under discussion – Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: I certainly want to commend the Committee that worked so hard on this and I do agree with the parents that they should have a seat at the table with regard to the planning. But I can assure you that there was nothing done devious or deceptive or trying to make this a secret from you. I attended a few meetings, I went there looking for any particular fault that I could find and at the time I didn't see any. After your remarks came forward I understand your concern and there are some concern of parents at the Hopeville district also. Hopeville in particular, and I know your school has done an absolutely phenomenal job with the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind and improving your school to Safe Harbor and AYP. And Hopeville, a school that I was in for 10 years as a principal actually achieved such phenomenal growth that they were recognized in the top six of the elementary schools in Connecticut for achieving such phenomenal progress. That being said, with many of their students now scheduled to leave and other students coming in, some of the students that will be leaving will be in one of the most stable neighborhoods that they're getting their kids from. There are always going to be growing pains no matter what we do but certainly knowing that your children are going to an absolutely phenomenal school now and going to an absolutely phenomenal school in terms of Gilmartin is some relief, I guess. I can understand the trepidation on the part of the children in terms of not wanting to leave their school, their friends, and their neighborhood and I understand that. And I think that should have certainly been addressed a little bit more than it was and maybe we can still do that. We have spoke about the possibility of maybe taking some of those fourth graders that are going into fifth grade and leaving them in that school to possibly graduate, but I think that's just in the talking stages. But that being said, no matter what we do with regard to the redistricting plan there are always going to be some particular problems and I think if you have problems or solutions or concerns that you should address them to the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent and let your voice be heard and ask for a meeting and come down and let your voice be heard. And I would suggest that the other speakers that came here, if they do want to speak more than three minutes, personally I think everyone who comes to the microphone should be cut off at three minutes exactly, no one should be allowed. We allow five minutes at the Board of Aldermen, if you need more time than that then you need to make an appointment with the Superintendent and possibly subcommittees of the Board of Education, I would encourage that. Just like when you go to parent/teacher conferences with the teachers, you don't want the parent in front of you spending 30 minutes of the time.

HAYES: Can we please keep to the concept of redistricting that's on the Agenda.

THERIAULT: Yes, I am.

HAYES: Thank you sir.

THERIAULT: Thank you for the sir, I appreciate it. Commissioner would have been better but that's all right. But I think when people come to the podium that the three minutes is so we can get our Board business done and with. So I think that with regard to your concern regarding redistricting, you certainly should have a place at the table and if it's beyond three minutes here contact our Board and our Superintendent and I think we should afford you the opportunity to let your voice be heard. Thank you.

HAYES: Anyone else. Do we want a roll call on this?

THERIAULT: Yes.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Yeas: Commissioners D'Angelo, Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, White, and President Hayes.

HAYES: Unanimous vote.

**12. COMMITTEE ON RULES & REGULATIONS**

**12.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner D'Angelo, it was voted unanimously to approve of the new policy "Ceremonies and Observances" - #6115, as attached.**

HAYES: Motion is made and seconded. Under discussion. Hearing no discussion – all in favor, opposed, motion passed unanimously.

**13. COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION**

**13.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney, and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted by roll call vote, *yet the motion failed*, to approve the adoption of the attached Resolution in support of Connecticut Districts for Diversity and Equity as submitted by CABE.**

HAYES: Motion is made and seconded. Any discussion? Roll call vote please.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Yeas: Commissioners Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, and White - 4

Nays: Commissioners D'Angelo, Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, and President Hayes - 6

HAYES: Motion fails six against, four in favor.

**14. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner D'Angelo and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the Superintendent's Notification to the Board Items 14.1 through 14.8, as listed:**

**14.1 Athletic resignations effective immediately:**  
Martinez, Carlos – Assistant Football Coach, KHS, effective immediately.

**14.2 Athletic appointments effective immediately:**  
Ring, Katherine – Assistant Girls Softball Coach, KHS.  
Rodriguez, Alberto – Softball Coach, WSMS.  
Thibodeau, Michael – Assistant Football Coach, WHS.

- 14.3 Grant funded appointments effective immediately:  
Gittings, Stacey – Substitute Teacher, MMS’s After School Program, effective immediately.  
Trawick-Speaks, Nancy – Non-public K-12 Literacy Facilitator, ten months per year, 18 hours per week at \$30 per hour, no benefits.

- 14.4 State Department of Education After School Program Grant appointments, 2 ½ hours per day, 4 days per week, salary according to individual’s contract:

**Bunker Hill:**

Andrew Gwiazdoski, Lead teacher  
Steve Cruess, teacher  
Vanessa Salvador, substitute  
Sonya Fleming, substitute

**Driggs School:**

Mardelle Ruffin, Lead teacher  
Charlotte Brady, teacher  
Mauralee Connolly, teacher  
Andrea LaFrance, substitute  
Stacey Gordon, substitute

**Regan:**

Karen Gaudiosi, Lead Teacher  
Amy Petruzzi, teacher

**River/Baldwin:**

Donna Phoenix, substitute

**North End Middle School:**

Michael LoRusso, Coordinator  
Miriam Wilson, teacher  
David Habersang, teacher  
Leslie DePaulo, Para  
Robin Andrikis, Para  
Roberta Santa Maria, Data Clerk

Grace Halloran, teacher  
Yvonne de la Vega, teacher  
Charles Vaughan, teacher  
Carole Maloney, Para  
Nydia Solla, Para

- 14.5 Teacher new hires:  
Taveras, Maria – Bilingual Grade 3, Hopeville School, MA/3, effective 11/04/09.

- 14.6 Resignations:  
Brinn, Pamela – Math Teacher, WSMS, effective 02/19/10.

- 14.7 Retirements:  
Bergin, Angela P. – Internal Reading Facilitator, Bunker Hill School, eff. 09/30/10.  
Bergin, Gary R. – Math Teacher, CHS, effective 06/30/10.  
Cassullo, Annette L. – Reading Consultant Teacher, Chase School, eff. 06/30/10.  
DeVylder, Nancy – Grade 5, Tinker School, effective 06/30/10.  
Elsemore, Lorraine – Readiness Kindergarten, Walsh School, effective 06/30/10.  
Lindquist, Marlene – Math Resource Teacher, RMS, effective 06/30/10.  
Marano, Catherine – Kindergarten Teacher, Bunker Hill School, eff. 06/30/10.  
O’Connell, Susan D. – Speech/Lang. Pathologist, Hopeville School, eff. 06/30/10.  
Ponzillo, Marie Ann – Family Consumer Science (Young Parent Program), Crosby High School, effective 06/30/10.  
Stemmer, Victoria – Pre-k Teacher, Sprague, effective 06/30/10.  
Thomas, Joan M. – Kindergarten Teacher, Chase School, eff. 06/30/10.  
Tirado, George – Bilingual Teacher and Athletic Director, WHS, eff. 06/30/10.

14.8 Leave of absence requests:

DiFronzo, Cathy – CHS English, requesting an unpaid childrearing leave of absence from February 26 through April 1, 2010.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. All in favor, opposed. Go into Unfinished Business of the Proceeding Meeting only. Anyone have any unfinished business? Hearing none we'll go onto Other Unfinished, New, and Miscellaneous Business.

D'ANGELO: Just two quick things under new business President Hayes. Just in light of tonight's circumstances I think we should either, as Commissioner Theriault said, strictly enforce the three minutes, and I know you try but you're in the unenviable position of having to cut people off and I know that's not attractive but I think either we should make it a firm three minutes and that's when it stops, when the Clerk of the Board says time and that all nine of us support President Hayes and say it's over or make it five minutes. But I just think allowing some to go four minutes, some to go six, some to go two and a half it's just not very equitable.

The other thing is a couple of our speakers mentioned a meeting that I guess most of us missed up in Hartford concerning the achievement gap. I was invited to one a couple of months ago in New Haven and I had the ability to attend and I did. And I think the speakers tonight, the two speakers that discussed the issue brought up some good points and when you consider in America with cities of populations of over 80,000 people - graduates, minority graduates in high school are reading at the seventh grade level, I think that's the kind of things they're talking about when they talk about the achievement gap. And I know it's not something that's very sexy to get involved in because a lot of the cities and towns under 80,000 obviously don't have this problem, but it is an issue that affects all of us and I think in Waterbury, I agree with the two speakers, on this issue anyway, that we as a Board and we as a community need to find a way to at least address this issue and try to do something. And I know obviously Central Office and Dr. Sequeira and Dr. Snead are working diligently on things like curriculum but I just think the Board needs to do more. Whether it's to hold forums where we get parents and teachers involved like they did in these other towns. I mean, the one I attended in New Haven they had teachers coming forward and college professors coming forward and parents coming forward and at least talked about the issues that affect the students, the minority students especially when we talk about achievement gap. But things like the home life, the abilities of teachers, because it's not just the home life, that's a big part of it, but also it's the abilities of teachers, it's curriculum, it's boards of eds, it's everything. I would like to see some type of a committee formed to at least look at the achievement gap and what we can do here in Waterbury.

HAYES: Just a quick response with the three minute rule. I'll do a better job of adhering to it but a lot of times I think they're just about done but it goes on and on. But there's no intent to let one go longer than the other, I just keep hoping that it's gonna end so I don't have to cut them off. We'll adhere to the three minutes and I'll explain it when people aren't happy about it. Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: I'd like to respond to Commissioner D'Angelo's comment; I really do feel we do need some sort of exploratory committee here, an ad-hoc committee, or some other component in terms of innovative programs. We've spoken about this before and

it's been kind of pooh-poohed and I think it needs to be addressed again. We heard speakers tonight telling us that we have 22 out of 29 failing schools and others would like to say that those 22 are schools in need of improvement. Well that may be so, that's . . . what you call them. It really doesn't matter in terms the No Child Left Behind guidelines there are 22 of our 29 schools that aren't making it so I would support Commissioner D'Angelo's efforts in forming an ad-hoc committee or some sort of exploratory committee for improved programs, academic programs, not that we're not doing a lot because I did get a large list from Dr. Sequeira when Commissioner Sweeney and I went on the Larry Rifkin show recently and we presented that list and we could have spoke one hour just about the things we're doing in Waterbury to improve education. Lots and lots and lots of things. But I think the achievement gap, you know I hear it said over and over again that many of the, our black students and our Latino students are failing and there are also white children in that mix, and I think we can agree that failure does not have a color, failure many times is a result of poverty and conditions that the children come from unfortunately. But that is absolutely no reason for us to give up, absolutely no reason for us to try harder, and I agree with many of the speakers that we need to be more proactive, have more initiatives, we're doing a lot of things but we need to do more. People spoke about charter schools, the spoke about CommPACT schools, we're doing two CommPACT schools right now. People don't know what a charter school is and I'm not going to explain that right now but I think we need to spend some time, more time in exploring that and explaining to the public what that is. And maybe even Dr. Sequeira could come to one of our workshops and delineate that list of all the things we're doing in Waterbury to improve education. And they are absolutely phenomenal and there's plenty of them.

My second response would be, President Hayes, with regard to the revamping of the rules. I've been very patient in asking when we are going to have the revamping of the rules and I was told it would be down the road and so forth. I'm wondering when we might see a revamping of those rules that the Board of Education actually discussed but didn't pass. Could you tell me when that might happen?

HAYES: If they come out of Committee we'll have a discussion when it gets to the Agenda.

THERIAULT: So is it filibustered in Committee or is it gonna come out?

HAYES: I answered your question Commissioner.

THERIAULT: When it comes out.

HAYES: When the Committee wants to bring it out they'll bring it out. If they want to bring it out.

THERIAULT: Who's in charge of the Committee?

HAYES: Vice President White.

THERIAULT: Through the Chair, can I ask Commissioner White when it might come out?

HAYES: Sure.

WHITE: You can ask. Are you referring to the Bylaws of the Board?

THERIAULT: Yes, with regard to the way we conduct business and the protocol and the way we establish the agenda and so forth.

WHITE: I think the easiest way to do that would probably be one section at a time because no matter how we do it there's going to be a problem. I think that our Committee could meet previous to it but I think we should take it one section at a time as a Committee of the Whole, set a time limit for that night to discuss it, and then bring it in and do it one piece at a time. It's too big a mission to do it all on one night.

THERIAULT: Thank you Commissioner White but I thought we had that meeting before, I thought we went through this thing and we actually delineated some of the changes we wanted to make but certain members weren't here so we didn't go forward with it so now we're going to go back and we're gonna reinvent all of the wheel and go back over the things that the Committee already, didn't approve, discussed.

WHITE: Through the Chair, we do have a list of all of those changes but never the less it comes one section at a time. I think that that would be the way to do it. If it's short enough we could do two in one night but I think that that's the better way to do it. That's my opinion.

THERIAULT: Through the Chair, when can we expect that process to start?

WHITE: Whenever the President and the Board in general decides.

THERIAULT: So it's not going to be filibustered in there, it's gonna come out of Committee and we're gonna start.

WHITE: I don't think it should be a filibuster, I think it should be just discussed and the changes that were written down put in, discussed, and voted on the following week.

THERIAULT: Thank you Commissioner White and Commissioner Hayes.

HAYES: Just for clarification, do you want Dr. Sequeira to come here and talk about all the things we're doing before we start talking about other stuff we're gonna do or do we want to have an ad-hoc committee for just particular things? I'm just trying to figure out what it is else we want to do since we're doing so much now. Do we want to talk about a particular item at a time or do we want to get a committee to look at other things?

THERIAULT: I think it would, you know I heard so many speakers tonight saying you know that we as a Board are failing and we're letting the kids down and we're letting the kids fall through the cracks and you know I think our staff and this Board is working very hard. And I think especially Dr. Sequeira, Dr. Snead, Anne Marie Cullinan and Paul Guidone and everyone in that Central Office staff, our teachers, our staff, our kids, our parents, we're working hard. Granted we're still falling down but it seems like we're not doing anything to address the situations so even if I'm not asking to Dr. Snead or to Dr. Sequeira to list, delineate, and discuss every single topic but if he were able to come

and at least inform the public on the TV these are the things, and it's a three page list of things that we're doing. So I mean to be punitive against this Board without having us have the opportunity to really defend ourselves in terms of being proactive and having innovative programs that are addressing the basic needs of the students and the improvement of the CAPT scores and the CMT scores I don't think is quite fair and I'm not gonna respond to it but I think our Central Office staff should respond to it and let the public know the things that we're doing and if there's anything else that we can be doing, bring it on, and tell us about it and if we have this innovative program here or ad-hoc committee it could come to them and we could explore it. Thank you.

D'ANGELO: Mr. President, through you, at the risk of disagreeing with Commissioner Theriault and his support for my comments, I don't think, with all due respect to John, I don't think we need Central Office to come and give us a delineation of the things we're doing and the things they're doing in the schools. I think the issue is of all the things we're doing why aren't we connecting with the certain percentage of students that we're leaving behind, that we're not helping, that we're not reaching, that we're not getting to? And all I was suggesting is maybe, just maybe, a committee of a few members of this Board, some teachers, the community, and Central Office staff, just maybe this committee could get together and do some brainstorming because I agree with John, we're doing a bunch of great things in Waterbury and they're doing a bunch of great things in Hartford and New Haven, but there's an element of the population that we're not reaching and maybe, I know some will say well because of the home life and because of the background or where they come from we'll never reach them. I'd hate to think that's the case but I know around the country there's things like PAL and there's charter schools and there's other programs that are reaching some of these students and that's my only comment - are we not finding the way to reach these kids and should we at least be talking about it? That's all.

HAYES: If anybody wants to bring something for discussion at the Workshop, I don't know how grand a scale or if we want to do particular items. Commissioner O'Leary.

O'LEARY: Well thank you, it's so nice to have a moment to be able to say something. I'll start with I was one of the Commissioners who did meet with WTA President Donna Vignali late last week. I found it to be a great meeting, very informative. Certainly after talking to Donna I have a few things to think about that I had already kind of formed an opinion on and I plan to try to work with her and try to iron out some of those things before getting back to you. But I just want to let the Board know that it was a good informative meeting.

Secondly, I do want to talk about the achievement gap. And this is what I've been trying to say. Apparently I'm not as eloquent a speaker as some of those here because it doesn't seem to be penetrating some of the minds of certain Commissioners of the Board of Ed. There's an achievement gap in Connecticut, it's a statewide epidemic, it's not unique to Waterbury, it's the whole State. This State is number one in per capita population and wealth and number one in disparity between achievement for poor and for wealthy. There's a problem. Yea, we're doing a lot of great things, but the fact of the matter is it's not just poverty. I love to hear people say oh, it's because there's so many poor kids, it's because of this, it's because of that, it's the demographics, it's this, it's that. Excuses, excuses, excuses. And that's what I'm talking about with the charter schools. Now I'm not saying that charter schools are the complete answer. I'm saying

that they are working in some areas with the exact same demographics as what you people are talking about – the poorest of poor; the at risk of at risk. Yet those kids are learning. So it's not about poverty, it's not about black, it's not about Latino, it's about programs, it's about innovative programs, it's about alternative forms of education that some people around here just don't want to grasp. So I'll just leave you with this and I've been dying to say this since I sat on this Board, and I wish I knew who's responsible for it, if you always do what you've always done you'll always get what you've always got. And that's what's going on here. So you can talk about the poverty and you can talk about all the other things you want to talk about but the fact of the matter is if you visit these schools that are successful in the Bronx, in Brooklyn, now in Hartford, in New Haven, they're working, they're working. I'm not saying that the charter philosophy has to be the philosophy, we're trying the CommPACT philosophy, it's a great idea, it's innovative, let's see what happens. But it's an alternative form of education that are out there that are working and quite frankly if the children in the poorest states of the country are able to learn then that argument about demographics and poverty just doesn't hold water, period. Thank you.

HAYES: Commissioner O'Leary, do you want to bring a particular item forward that we can look into and have the Board do some more work on it? A particular model that maybe we could try to look into?

O'LEARY: I would strongly support Commissioner D'Angelo's thoughts about putting an ad-hoc committee together certainly with some, we've been doing these tours and the people who have been the most vocal on this Board have been attending these different tours. Probably some of the people in the audience aren't aware of the fact that we've been on some of these tours and that's fine, that's totally understandable, I didn't know anything about the thing in Hartford today by the way. Anyways, the fact is I don't think it would hurt to put a committee together. I certainly don't think it would hurt to, you know we've got a lot of committees about a lot of other stuff that aren't doing much of anything so why don't we try something different and it might work, just from an idea point of view. Certainly we have some wonderful people in this district that could put their minds together and try to come up with some, whether it's a curriculum that we can experiment with, whether it's, we don't have to reinvent the wheel, maybe we could look, as a group together go around and visit some of these more successful programs, whatever, but let's do something.

HARVEY: (tape ended) . . . I am also in support of the ad-hoc committee. I believe that we've had committees, Commissioner D'Angelo, not committees but we've had meetings in the community, haven't seen any representatives from the Board with the exception of few, I remember Ann and Charles attended some at the WOW. WOW also had a recent community meeting, again no Board of Education members present. I would like to see this ad-hoc committee consist of community members. I'm not talking about two community members; I'm talking about a number of community members. Now I would like to see more community than Board of Education members because the ideas are out there. There's no need for us to go to New Haven to listen to different seminars, we know what the issues are here in the City of Waterbury. Commissioner O'Leary, I agree, it's a statewide epidemic but I wasn't elected statewide, I was elected to the Waterbury Board of Education and we know what the issues are and we need to act on it. Although I would like to hear about what we have done in the district, we need to get on this, we've wasted enough time not dealing with it and I think we just need to



do it. If we have this ad-hoc committee I would like to see the community members involved in it. We know what we're doing, we know we have the resources, all right, let's hear from the community and let's get this rolling.

HAYES: I'll just put it on the agenda and everybody come with their ideas on Monday and we'll try to put everything together and try to come up with some kind of scope on how to do it, who's invited. Maybe some differentiation from what we did with the Blue Ribbon Commission, maybe there's some leftover items from the Blue Ribbon Commission that could be carried on. There might be a way to look at that as well.

STANGO: Just a word, I think that if we do ad-hoc, and if we look at it, I think there ought to be a timetable on it. Sometimes I think things drag on too long and they lose focus. You mention the Blue Ribbon Commission, it did excellent work at the beginning and then we lost people because they felt that they did make an impact and they did make their point then how long could you drag it out. Many good things came out of it and I think that we need to do a time limit when we go into, if we go into ad-hoc. Say it's commissioned for "x" amount of time.

HAYES: Let's everybody bring their ideas and we'll put it all together on Monday and see what we could come up with. Anyone else under unfinished business, new business?

SWEENEY: I just wanted to make a comment that I had seen the post on the City website from the Prevention Policy Board notifying the students and their parents about the survey and I wanted to let them know that I greatly appreciate that they followed through with that. I know I was very passionate about making sure that parents were aware that that survey was taking place. And the one thing I can say about the Waterbury Prevention Policy Board is that they never promise on anything that they don't deliver and they never promise anything they know they can't deliver. So I appreciate that that they carried through.

O'LEARY: I'll bring that back to them Commissioner. Thank you.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously at 8:15 p.m. into Executive Session for discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health, or dismissal of a public officer or employee. Present were President Hayes, Commissioners D'Angelo, Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Morales, O'Leary, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault (arrived at 8:35), and White. Also present were Dr. Snead, Dr. Sequeira, Mrs. Cullinan, Mr. Guidone, Mr. Frost, and Attorney Mosley. The Executive Session ended at 8:47 p.m. with no votes taken.**

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carrie A. Swain, Clerk  
Board of Education