

## **WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

(For the February 26, 2007 Board Meeting - MINUTES ATTACHED)

### **COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Board of Education Committee meetings were held on Tuesday, February 20, 2006 at North End Middle School, 534 Bucks Hill Road, Waterbury, Connecticut, starting at 5:51 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Vice President Petteway, Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Geremia, Harvey, Stango, Sweeney, Uriano, and White.

**ABSENT:** President Hayes and Commissioner Theriault.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Assistant Superintendent Sequeira, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, Attorney Maurice Mosley (left at 6:30 p.m.), and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

Reports were submitted to the various committees of the Board and discussed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee meetings adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie A. Swain, Clerk  
*Board of Education*

## **WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### *MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING*

Monday, February 26, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Aldermanic Chamber, City Hall, 235 Grand Street, Waterbury, Connecticut

***PRESENT:*** President Hayes, Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Geremia, Harvey, Petteway, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, Uriano, and White.

***ALSO PRESENT:*** Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendent Cullinan, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, Attorney Maurice Mosley, and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

### **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:49 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 Flaherty-Merritt.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner Geremia.

GEREMIA: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Harvey.

HARVEY: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner Petteway.

PETTEWAY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Uriano

URIANO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner White.

WHITE: Here.

CLERK: President Hayes.

HAYES: Here.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

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

1. Copy of communications dated February 9, 2007 from Civil Service certifying Denise Feliciano and Wendy Cronk for the position of School Secretary.
2. Copy of communication dated February 13, 2007 from Maryann Thompson commending custodian Charles Walker.
3. Copy of communication dated February 13, 2007 from Civil Service certifying April Sinclair for the position of ABA Behavior Therapist.
4. Notice of Charge of Discrimination dated February 9, 2007 from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

HAYES: Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business to allow the public to address the Board at 6:52 p.m.**

**Kathie Schock, 18 Morningside Avenue, had the following comments:** I am the Parent Liaison at Bunker Hill School. Last time I stood before you I was holding a child's chair asking for new classroom furniture about six years ago. I thank you for making that happen. I want to thank you for all you do that help the children of Waterbury and we know that there are times when we wish we could do more. Tonight I'd like each of you to do something personal, I would like you to do it with me, I would like you to commit to take a half hour on March 2, 2007 to read with a child at Bunker

Hill School. March 2 is the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the birthday of Theodore Geisel. He's better known to most of us as Dr. Seuss the author of the Cat in the Hat and many more wonderful children's books. His books have led generations of children to discover the joy of reading. On March 2 to honor Dr. Seuss Bunker Hill School is sponsoring a celebration of reading we call Read Across America. Our goal is to have every child in every school read for at least 30 minutes with a caring adult that day. I would like you to personally join us by endorsing this program. We would like you all to personally commit to reading on March 2 at Bunker Hill School at 10:00 a.m. And we would like your help to publicize the celebration. Dr. Snead, President Hayes, I ask that you and the other Board members explore the possibilities of joining us in our goal and celebration with us on March 2 for Dr. Seuss' 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday. When we work together to encourage our children to read to quote Dr. Seuss "there's no limit to the places we can go". Thank you. I did put an invitation in the City mail for you.

WHITE: I know we don't usually interrogate the speaker but may I ask a question. You did state that we should be there by ten but some of us will be reading elsewhere, will you take us at another time?

SCHOCK: Yes, of course.

HAYES: I'll be there about 9:30 or so.

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to return to the regular order of business at 6:54 p.m.**

HAYES: All in favor, opposed.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** It's interesting that I return from 90 degree weather to the weather we have here. Thus far, two of our magnet schools are slated to receive honors at this year's Magnet Schools of Award conference. Rotella Magnet School has been selected for a Magnet Schools of America (MSA) Merit Award as a Magnet School of Excellence. The Waterbury Arts Magnet School has been named a Magnet School of Distinction Award winner. This was the first year WAMS was eligible as 6-12 school.

Several of our elementary schools will be holding Celebrity Reader events and other activities this Friday in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday and Read Across America.

Schools will begin CMT and CAPT testing next week.

We've had some good news and some bad news regarding the Governor's proposed legislative budget. As reported by various news sources, the Governor is proposing a half percent increase in the sales tax over a two year period to help fund increases in education spending. At the same time, however, she is proposing a decrease in the cost sharing formulas for new school construction. While we have some projects in the works already, this would adversely affect us in the future, if adopted. We will be meeting with our local legislators this Wednesday morning at 8:30 in my conference room to discuss these and other education-related legislative topics. I'm not going to read all of these, in fact I'm not going to read any of them, but I did include legislative

agenda items currently under consideration for your perusal, there's about two pages of them. Thank you.

According to CAPSS, some of the legislative items currently under consideration are: SB 1114 AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Education. This is a 79 page bill and includes:

- To increase state charter school payment per student from \$7625 to \$8000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, \$8650 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, \$9300 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 and \$9950 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011;
- To increase interdistrict magnet student transportation per student payment from \$2100 to \$3250;
- To increase the transportation grant to receiving districts to \$2500 for each out of district student;
- For each participating district whose magnet school program enrollment is greater than 55% of the total enrollment: \$6016 for FY 07-08, \$6730 for FY 08-09, \$7440 for FY 09-10, \$8158 for FY 10-11;
- For RESC interdistrict magnet schools: \$7060 for FY 07-08, \$7620 for FY 08-09, \$8180 for FY 09-10, \$8741 for FY 10-11;
- No participating district may withdraw its financial support from an interdistrict magnet school because the district determines financial support is too costly;
- No participating district shall deny enrollment to a student who wishes to attend an interdistrict magnet school if there is available space;
- For the school year commencing July 1, 2007 and each fiscal year thereafter, non-resident students enrolled in an interdistrict magnet school not operated by a RESC that enrolls 55% or more of its students from a single town shall not be counted as resident students in the determination of average daily membership;
- To administer through the Department of Higher Education, in consultation with SDE, a scholarship program for students in early childhood education;
- In conformance with NCLB, SDE shall prepare a state-wide accountability plan to identify schools and districts in need of improvement, require the development and implementation of improvement plans, utilize rewards and consequences and include benchmarks for academic and behavioral accountability, include standards for mastery test scores, grade retention rate, high school graduation rates, college acceptances, dropout rates, attendance, truancy rates, out-of-school suspensions and expulsion rates;
- Section 15 b, c, d and e include the SDE intervention strategies such as replacing leadership, redirecting funds so students can attend another district and take over of the school or district. (pages 23-24);
- SDE to establish and administer a preschool subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability and quality of preschool services;
- To commence with the graduating class of 2010, a graduating student must complete a minimum of 20 credits: no fewer than 4 in English, no fewer than 4 in mathematics, no fewer than 3 in social studies, no fewer than 3 in science, at least one-half credit in civics and American government, no fewer than 1 in the arts or vocational education and no fewer than 1 in physical education;
- To commence with the graduating class of 2010, a student shall achieve the proficiency level or higher on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade CAPT or an academically acceptable alternative approved by SDE;

- A board of education not offering full day kindergarten shall prepare a plan to implement a program that includes number of classes initially and number of students to be enrolled, how the board plans to expand the program, the number of teachers needed and any additional equipment, a description of any building project needed for additional space for full day kindergarten, information on the curriculum, information on the coordination between the full day K program and school readiness programs;
- SDE may require full day kindergarten if 30% or more of the students in a school do not achieve proficiency or higher on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mastery tests;
- SDE to award a certificate of achievement to any school that reduces truancy levels by 15% or more from the previous year;
- To require summer school for grades 1-3 students not proficient in reading;
- To require summer school for grade 2 students not proficient in math;
- SDE to establish a grant for textbooks and for deferred maintenance that will require each school district to have a minor facilities improvement committee that includes parents; maximum grant is the district student count as a percentage of the state's total student count;
- SDE shall establish an early reading success grant to assist boards of education for priority school districts or priority elementary schools;
- SDE shall award grants to priority school districts for summer school programs.

At the end of bill, pages 59-79 are the recommended changes for the ECS formula including the foundation from \$5891 to \$9687 for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2008 to June 30, 2012 inclusive.

#### SB 1205 AAC Interdistrict Magnet Schools

To provide that unused spaces in interdistrict magnet schools may be filled by any child, to require participating districts to maintain enrollment levels and to introduce audit requirements for regional educational service centers operating interdistrict magnet schools.

#### HB 7135 AAC the Foundation Level of the ECS Grant and the Minimum Expenditure Requirement.

To amend the ECS formula by increasing the foundation and linking future annual increases to the foundation to the consumer price index and to extend the minimum expenditure requirement.

#### HB 7136 AAC a Grant Program to Match Federal and Private Dollars to Promote Early Childhood Literacy in the Pediatric Care Setting.

To establish a grant fund to match federal and private dollars to promote early childhood literacy in the pediatric care setting.

#### HB 7175 AAC School Choice.

To increase the bonus available to receiving districts for having at least ten out-of-district students in the program.

#### HB 7176 AAC Special Education.

To establish that the burden of proof lies with the party requesting a special education hearing, to provide that a board of education's commitment to provide special education to a child terminates upon the child's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, to reduce the threshold for the

excess cost grant and to introduce a tiered process of increased reimbursement percentages, to establish a two year pilot program for students struggling academically and behaviorally and to integrate federal response to intervention language into the general statutes.

**Excess cost language:** for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2007 and each fiscal year thereafter, 70% of the per pupil costs that are in excess of 2 ½ times average per pupil expenditures but less than 3 ½ times such average per pupil costs, 40% of the per pupil costs that are equal to or in excess of 3 ½ times such average per pupil expenditures but less than 4 ½ times such average per pupil costs and 10% of the per pupil cost that are equal to or in excess of 4 ½ times such average per pupil costs.

HB 7177 AAC Family Resource Centers.

To provide for parents as teachers programs at family resource centers; to report to the General Assembly on the efficacy of the program in helping parents to aid their children to reach developmental milestones; to appropriate to SDE the sum of \$3,200,000 in each year of the biennium for the program.

## **REPORTS**

### **1. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**1.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Geremia and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve a transfer in the 2006/2007 budget totaling \$50,000 as attached.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion:

THERIAULT: One again I have to rise to oppose this because our schools are, they're falling down on disrepair again, and we're taking money out of the very place that we need to spend it. Just as we have taken money out of the student activity fund in the past and teachers are out there buying their own supplies and we have a surplus in our student activity fund. It's the same kind of thing; taking money out of maintenance – we have very few maintenance people, probably less than 14 people at this point. Where as other school systems such as Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport have a cadre of 90 people and yet our schools once again we're taking money out of our maintenance account to supplant something else. We should have spent this money in the first place and taken care of our buildings properly, there shouldn't be any extra money in there, it should have been spent and taken care of properly. We've been making inroads with regard to the building reports which I intend to get next month and personally inspect each one and go around with each principal and look at the buildings. And I suspect what I am about to find is not going to be good. We're doing a lot of, we're making a lot of inroads with regard to the summer projects and so forth but to take \$50,000 out of an account where our schools are still in disrepair is an abomination and I won't be voting for it. Thank you.

GEREMIA: I completely understand Commissioner Theriault's concerns, the way Mr. Guidone, we brought these up at the Workshop, obviously we don't want to see money taken out of our operations and maintenance fund, the way it was explained to us is every year, basically every month when we get our budget report there's always a

surplus in custodial on the line item and we always ask “why is there a surplus in the custodial when we have maintenance issues here and there?” and Mr. Guidone’s explanation is always and through Herb, and correct me if I’m wrong, is our inability to fill the positions. I do understand that. As of last workshop I think Civil Service did approve so many custodial people now so I think, I don’t know maybe Herb can correct me, but those positions were basically filled immediately through Paul and Herb knowing our lack of custodial staff. But being a high turnover and I think his inability to fill those positions because of multiple reasons we discussed, and I don’t want to drag out, but that is the reason there is always a surplus in this and it’s being transferred, it’s not being transferred to anything superfluous, it’s just being transferred obviously to the cost of transportation for these special needs children which was an unforeseeable cost.

THERIAULT: I think my point is this, as Chairman of the Schoolhouse Committee someone should have come to me and told me this is what we’re proposing to do, no one did. And I don’t think anyone came to this Board either and told them that they were going to change it. Of course maybe I missed this because I was not at the last Workshop but maybe I missed something in between. So that being said, I think Commissioner Geremia’s point is well taken; we are going to Civil Service and filling a cadre of people for our custodial positions. Have you looked at the maintenance positions? We have two or three maybe electricians for the entire school system, two plumbers, still, the same number of people nearly that when I came on the Board four years ago when I complained, same old thing. And I see you talking back there Herb and that’s okay, you can talk, because it’s the same old thing, same thing that it was four years ago, same thing that it is now, your buildings are falling apart in disrepair. I still maintain we don’t fix the roof until it’s in the basement. We’re doing better at it but then we get a little . . . and we don’t take care of business. Case in point, Bucks Hill, all kinds of projects put on the back burner to the summer that could have been taken care of here and now during the school year. Not necessarily all during the summer. You know when it is broke, fix it. And there is such a thing as being proactive in terms of preventive maintenance, taking care of things before they break down. We need to have our school system up with a full cadre of people such as other surrounding large towns have to take care of the maintenance of the schools. And I’ve said this before and I’ll say it again, you can go down to Derby School, some of the schools down there are over 100 years old, you can walk across the floor in the winter or summer and the floors are shining and sparkling. Yet in our buildings you’d be afraid to walk across the floor at all during the winter time. Sometimes the summer time too. We have this beautiful, beautiful machine that cost upward of 40, 50 thousand dollars at Crosby, a similar machine at Rotella and yet the machine goes around and cleans all of Crosby but won’t go past the famous demarcation line of going over to Wallace and cleaning the floors over there. What’s up with that? We still have a tremendous, tremendous lack of maintenance people and custodial people that’s why you have this big surplus in this budget. Go out and hire the people, put the money into the people and put the people on the job to take care of the disrespect and disrepair of our schools. How many glazers – two, all the windows. Two plumbers, it’s really ridiculous, I don’t know how we even take care of our buildings at all right now. So I certainly won’t vote for this because I think it’s just an atrocity. Thank you.

STANGO: I agree with Commissioner Theriault in what he’s saying in principle and practice and I also agree with Commissioner Geremia because I was at the Workshop last week when I asked that particular question to Paul Guidone and I received the

answer pretty much that Commissioner Geremia said before. So I think in fully understanding somewhat that the money was allocated towards help, help we didn't have, so now the money is going to go to waste, not waste but is going to go somewhere else unless we use it so now it is going somewhere else. Positions are going to be filled and hopefully we'll head in the right direction. So that's what I'm taking from this.

HAYES: Any further discussion?

THERIAULT: Roll call vote please.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Geremia, Harvey, Petteway, Stango, Sweeney, White, and President Hayes - 8  
Nays: Commissioners Theriault and Uriano - 2

HAYES: Motion passes eight in favor, two against.

## **2. COMMITTEE ON GRANTS**

**2.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve for Waterbury Public Schools to participate in various Interdistrict Cooperative Grants with ACES.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**2.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Uriano, it was voted unanimously to approve for Waterbury Public Schools to participate in various Interdistrict Cooperative Grants with Education Connection.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**2.3 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Uriano, it was voted unanimously to approve for Waterbury Public Schools to participate in CAPT-ivating Kids Project with West Haven Public Schools.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

## **3. COMMITTEE ON RULES & REGULATIONS**

**3.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner Uriano, it was voted unanimously to approve the new policy "Use of Metal Detectors (#5145), as attached.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**3.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner Uriano, it was voted unanimously to approve of the Student-Athlete Eligibility Checklist-High School (Athletic Eligibility Requirements Policy), as attached.**

WHITE: We received a corrected copy this evening and it's color coded.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

WHITE: I would like, there was a third policy that we discussed last week and I would like to add it to the agenda, the policy changes will follow the acceptance of this. **I would like to make a motion to add it to the agenda as item 3.3.**

SWEENEY: **Second.**

HAYES: Motion has been made and seconded to add item 3.3 to the agenda. Any discussion?

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: For the record, could she read off what she is adding.

WHITE: The policy that we discussed last week about changing the passing grade to 65.

HAYES: Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor of adding, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**3.3 Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to approve of the increase in the passing grade at the high school level from "60" to "65", effective with the 2007/08 school year. Adjustments to the quality point ratio, class ranking, etc. shall be made by the administration and presented to the Board for final approval by end of the 2006/07 school year.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion?

SWEENEY: Let's take a look at what a passing grade really means, if education is offering up 100% learning each school year a passing grade of 60 indicates that we consider mastering 60% of what education offers is adequate and acceptable. Getting an education is a child's job. I dare any adult to go to their employer and state that doing 60% of their job should be adequate and acceptable. Even a grade of 65 I question if we are doing our best to ensure our high school students take full advantage of the educational opportunity offered. While I continue to prefer a system-wide pass grade of 70, I am in full support of raising the high school passing grade from its current 60 to 65. While there are certainly concerns regarding a possible rise in retentions, I expect that will be a temporary and short-lived response largely to test the commitment

of the system to the new policy. We should not cave into the threat but rather embrace the challenge. We sell our high school students short by continuing to maintain that they can only master 60% of what we can provide educationally. Throughout childhood children look to adults to set limits and expectations and for adults to provide encouragement and support to achieve. This system has the willingness and the expertise to provide help and support to any of our students who may find they are struggling. Our students have what it takes to achieve and exceed – we owe it to them to set expectations that reflect that ability. Thank you.

WHITE: I would like to state that the Central Office Administrators did completely support the change in the passing grade but thought it was prudent to defer action until the details of the actual language changes could be resolved. We the Board felt that we should pass it and then worry about the other later. Just do it in reverse because as Commissioner Sweeney and as we all stated at the Workshop, the students will rise to the higher bar. Thank you.

THERIAULT: Just as a point of clarification – what do the other large towns do in terms of the passing grade?

SUPERINTENDENT: As a matter of fact this is one of my favorite subjects, thank you for giving me an opening to respond. It's mixed. There are some as high as 70, there are others at 60 and others at 65. I've always been keenly interested in this topic having been a teacher like yourself, principal. And I'm in full support of this. In fact, if I had my druthers I would push it to 70. However we sometimes have to take it a little bit at a time. I first did my thesis for my master's degree on this subject that was way back in 1970. And I found support in the research for this. And then in 1984 I did a dissertation on another subject related to grade-point averages and the grading process. And what I found in the research is that wherever it's been done in this country, the fact of the matter is, and I put this statement in my dissertation, the children are like bobbers in the water, when you raise the level of the water the bobber raises with the water. When you set high expectations for youngsters they will in fact achieve it. In addition to that the dropout rates did not increase in school systems when grade point averages and grade percentages were increased. You found more youngsters involved in study halls and assisting each other, teachers following, coaches following their athletes, counselors doing a better job of keeping up with the requirements, parents, what have you. So I'm in full support of this, it does in fact work.

URIANO: President Hayes, I back Commissioner Sweeney up 100% and the Superintendent left me a little waive too. **I'd like to put an amendment to this motion of 65 and in two years it should be raised up to 70. If I could do that I'd like to put that amendment on that motion.** I know students now they get a 95 to 100 on computers and all your technologies and Commissioner Sweeney is 100% right. So I will try to put an amendment onto the motion and in two years I'd like to see it up to 70.

SWEENEY: **I'll second that.**

HAYES: Okay, the motion is made and seconded. Any discussion on raising it to 70 in two years?

SWEENEY: My question would be, we're talking specific to the high schools, correct?

HAYES: Yes.

WHITE: I do think there should be some review and then, we may be proven wrong. I wanted it 70 from day one if you remember correctly.

HAYES: Well the motion has been made and seconded. If they want to withdraw we can refer it back to the Committee and take it from there but it's up to them, they put the motion out, they have to withdraw it.

URIANO: I made a motion let's vote on it.

HAYES: Okay, the amendment is out there, any further discussion?

URIANO: If they want to digest it they could digest it, I'll give them a break.

WHITE: You're going to give them a minute?

HAYES: Well what's the pleasure here? We still have a motion on the floor and a second. If you want to withdraw that we can take the Chairman on Rules & Regulations on her word that she'll bring this up in Committee.

URIANO: Keep the motion on the floor Pat.

STANGO: I just have one comment on that. I also think that it should be 70 too, I mean 70 also. If we go along with Commissioner Uriano's recommendation then we're bound to have to make that change in two years to make it 70. If we go with 65 and then in two years to look at it and perhaps increase it we're not bound until then to see how it works. That's my only concern, we kind of own it if we go with 70 without exploring it any further. Just a possibility. But I agree with you, I think it should be 70.

HAYES: Just for clarification Commissioner White, what is the current passing grade at elementary and middle school?

WHITE: It's 65.

HAYES: So if you do this amendment we'd be only adding the higher expectation at the high school level, just so everybody knows that that's what we're talking about here.

WHITE: Are you thinking then that maybe we should just have a whole new motion stating that the passing grade should be reviewed and brought to 70 for the whole school system in two years?

HAYES: The motion came from Commissioner Uriano so he'd have to.

URIANO: I want to keep it at the high school level.

HAYES: If we can't do that at the other levels going forward we can still do that. I just want to be clear on what he was proposing and he's proposing it just at the high school

level. So that's what we're discussing right now, just raising it at the high school level two years from now which would be 09/10.

GEREMIA: We are asking the administration to work up the details of 65 passing grade also, why don't we just add the discussion of increasing it to 70 with those items and we can come back to it in the following weeks and I think work out all the kinks and see if we want it city-wide or just in the high school or what not. I think it's a little encompassing to add, not that I'm against it but I'm just saying . . . some details that we're not thinking of right now. I think the administration can address while they're addressing the other issues that we discussed previously.

HAYES: Well again, the current motion gets us to 65; the amendment which we're discussing now would get us to 70 two years from now. And since the motion was made and seconded, it hasn't been withdrawn – any further discussion?

THERIAULT: First of all I think the passing grade should be uniform throughout the system. If it's 65 in the grammar schools it should be 65 in the middle and the high school. I think we need to proceed trepidaciously because I'm wondering with the increase that we've made in terms of more stringent requirements, eligibility requirements, thus casting aside some students may not be able to compete academically and thus may not be able to play sports and thus may not continue with school and that being said I know we want our athletes to be academics as well as athletic. But I'm wondering if we're raising the bar a little bit too fast and too frequently. I think we need to see what happens with the 65 before we go to 70. I certainly respect Commissioner Uriano's suggestion and I know it's well intended but I certainly don't want to lose students because the bar has been raised and they're not academically able to meet that bar and they fall by the wayside. We already know nationally that the number of drop-outs has risen dramatically over the last 10 years and will continue to rise as along with truancy and all the other social faux pas that go along with it. So while I'd like to see it be 80 but what would that do to the system. You know I have a little compassion here for the students that are struggling and just barely able to make it even at their best effort and I think we need to continue to offer remediation courses and remedial assistance to those students through the teachers through grants and so forth. But I suspect that we might be throwing some of these students right out of the very place that we're trying to get them into. So I just think that we need to go slowly on this rather than just go whole hog and say it's gonna be 70 throughout the system. You know the good intentions are a good thing but I think we need to have some foresight into what the repercussions of these good intentions where they might lead. Thank you for your attention.

HAYES: Again, the discussion is on the amendment and the amendment is to go from 65 to 70 in two years.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: While I agree with the amendment I ask that we vote this down and revisit it again as an amendment at a later point. I do think that us saying tonight to freshman in high school that by the time you're a senior to pass classes you need to be 10 points higher than you currently are is a big jump in one night in that I have no problem revisiting it again in six months, maybe a year, in doing it at that point but at this point without it written in front of us, seeing what the ramifications are, it would be a better idea to revisit it.

SWEENEY: I certainly at this point do not want to lose the 65 that Mary White for so many years has worked so hard to get and I applaud your efforts Mary and thank you for hanging in there. I would ask respectfully of Commissioner Uriano that we amend the amendment and that instead of compelling the grade to go to 70 in two years that we amend the amendment to read that we will review it in one year to possibly raise to 70 in 2009.

HAYES: We can't amend and amendment. We need to withdraw the original amendment and then make an amendment along the lines of what you're talking about.

URIANO: Okay, **I withdraw the amendment** and in two years we can review it.

SWEENEY: **I withdraw my second.**

HAYES: Are there any other amendments.

URIANO: I will take Commissioner Stango's advice.

HAYES: Is there an amendment? Right now we're back on the original motion.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: Can we move forward as a Board with the understanding that as a Board we will revisit this again in two years, that it's our intentions and in good faith that we will do this, we want to. That we don't necessarily have to put it in stone and paperwork that people can trust our word that we are going to do this.

HAYES: At the time there's no amendment to be done so we're back to the main motion. Is there any further discussion on the original motion? Hearing none, do we need a roll call vote? All in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously. And while we make that commitment I'm still looking for somebody, I talked to Carrie, we've done the revision for the student athlete eligibility, all extra-curricular activities is something that I hope would come out of the committee at some point. I think that's another thing that just sort of adds to this whole, another incentive for some kids.

#### **4. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

**4.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve the use of school facilities by school organizations and/or City departments.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**4.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve the use of school facilities by outside organizations with fees as outlined in their attached Use of Building Permit and subject to the receipt of all necessary deposits, insurance information, and/or lifeguard/CPR certifications, as listed.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**4.3 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Uriano, it was voted unanimously that the request of Waterbury Area Special Olympics Swim Team for a waiver of custodial fees in the approximate amount of \$2,178.00 for their use of Crosby High School's pool on various dates, be approved.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve items 4.4 through 4.6, as listed:**

4.4 Permission be granted to Mr. Forcucci, CHS and three chaperones to take 28 students to New York, NY on April 25, 2007 to attend a Broadway show.

4.5 Permission be granted to S. Valentino, NEMS/FOCUS, and eight chaperones to take a total of 90 students (36 NEMS) to Boston, MA on May 9, 2007 to visit the Museum of Science.

4.6 Permission be granted to R. Santovasi, NEMS/WHS Band, and five chaperones to take 35 students to Boston, MA on March 21, 2007 to perform at the Boston Gardens (Celtics Basketball Game).

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

## **5. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 5.1 through 5.3, Superintendent's Notification to the Board, as listed:**

### **5.1 Athletic resignations:**

Delaney, Robert – Head Track Coach, KHS, effective immediately.

Drewry, Paul – Assistant Baseball Coach, WHS, effective immediately.

Marcella, Jamie (Warren) – Junior Varsity Softball Coach, KHS, effective immediately.

Marino, Andrea – Varsity Softball Coach, KHS, effective immediately.

Piccolo, Alan – Head Baseball Coach, WHS, effective immediately.

### **5.2 Grant funded appointments effective immediately:**

Fitzgerald, Kristin R. – Part time Secretary II, Title I/Early Reading Success Grant, \$11.83 per hour, 19.5 hours per week, 12 months per year without benefits.

### **5.3 Retirements:**

Ascione, Anna – KHS Math, effective 6/30/07.

Gillis, Patricia – MMS Pre-k, effective 6/30/07.  
Louis, Waltraud – CHS Math, effective 6/30/07.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion?

STANGO: I just would like to make the note of the retirement of three veteran teachers with close to 90 years of total service. It's interesting within a span of 35 years a teacher gives excellent service to the district. Hundreds or thousands of students are quietly being taught and taught well. The teacher's name never comes before the Board and in most cases that's not a bad thing. However, at the time of their full and normal retirement I believe they deserve to have their name audibly called out and thank you's expressed for their service. Therefore at this time I would like to express thanks to – Anna Ascione, KHS Math; Patricia Gillis, MMS Pre-k; Waltraud Louis, CHS Math. As a former colleague I am proud to express my thanks. Your service is appreciated. Thank you very much.

HAYES: I'd like to make one comment under Superintendent's Notification. I'm a little concerned with the athletic resignations. It seems like it's almost a constant list of that. I'd like to get some kind of, I know, I'll say this as straight as I can say it, I know there are people who just take it to get the job for awhile and then move on. We need to get some stability in that. I wish we could look into that Dr. Snead a little bit more. I don't think that a month goes by that we don't have some athletic resignations. This means that we got that constant turnover. Here we're trying to raise the standards for the kids in the classrooms so they can participate; it would be nice if they had the same coach for a few years.

WHITE: Did we do an exit interview with them? Do we know why they're leaving?

HAYES: The AD's probably know why, we can find out if you'd like. But I'm concerned – we have a baseball coach, we've got softball, baseball coaches, hopefully we got other people in line.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: I know for some of them there were positions open in the winter time and sports overlap and they might have taken a position. And their season is still going on and yet baseball season, softball season is supposed to start up and it's kind of hard to coach two things simultaneously especially when you're in championships for one. So a lot of times that's what's happening here so you really have the same number of positions, you're just having people go and move to things that they prefer to do, that they were waiting to get.

HAYES: Like I said, they can resign but I'd like if they take the position they feel that they have some kind of a commitment for a few years to the students. You usually have kids for four years; you'd like to see some kind of stability in the sport. That's my only concern. I mean, obviously people have the opportunity to post for the job, take it, I just wish if they'd take it they'd take it and . . . I know there's a couple of positions on here because I go to see some of these games and those people weren't around very long. There were different people at Kennedy on the softball two years ago then the people that are here because my step-daughter played on it and now it's changed again. So that's the only thing, I just wish we can get some more stability with that. At least when we're interviewing for the job ask for some type of commitment, again a time

commitment, not just something to get a few extra bucks to get you through till something else comes along. All in favor, opposed. Anything under Unfinished Business. Anything under New Business?

HARVEY: Just a comment. I just want to mention, I was reading Sunday's paper, the sports section and the headline read All-time Starting Five and they mentioned Tony Hanson as being the number one player. And I look back at the year that this picture appeared, I hate to say it but I recognize most of the people in this picture.

HAYES: I think I was at that game.

HARVEY: And you know I said you know, they mentioned his hair, they mentioned the school that he went to, they mentioned his shooting statistics but they did not mention that he was a scholar. So it is possible to not only be an athlete but to also be a scholar. Thank you.

HAYES: He also represents maybe one of the first recruits that Holy Cross took from the public schools. That's where it all started.

SUPERINTENDENT: May I add something to that? I saw in the article that this gentleman over here, Attorney Mosley was listed on the All City Team in 1964, Crosby High School. And of course Rich Geremia played with Edmund Saunders; he was his point guard at Holy Cross. And he was a scholar.

WHITE: Under New Business I just wanted to let the Board be aware, I went to the inter-departmental health meeting and there will be new policies coming before us primarily because the federal government and the state government are bringing up new policies. So they will be coming before you - student wellness, special dietary needs which is now changed to food allergies, and a discussion on the school department providing physicals for athletes in a timely fashion. So all of those things will be coming before us. So is it possible if the Health Department contacts Carrie can they just be put on the agenda?

HAYES: Sure.

WHITE: Linda Franzese will be calling you and Pat Keisel and also our very own Mr. Gorman.

SUPERINTENDENT: Who was also a scholar athlete.

WHITE: And the other thing I wanted to say was we received an invitation to go to the Reading First Annual Meeting on February 22 and Commissioner Stango and myself went and it was an amazing, it was truly an amazing meeting, we learned, well I learned so much about the Reading First Program and the special parts that they were taking from Haskins. Learned about student tutors that come in from UConn. What a close knit group everything is, how it began in kindergarten and they, the machine broke down so they had to bring children in to demonstrate what they were all about and they brought them in, just on a moment's notice and I was told afterwards that some of our special ed students were there, the inclusion, and you wouldn't have been able to pick them out. Well you might of thought but you wouldn't be able to pick them out literally.

The students were well behaved, gave great answers, we were just so impressed.  
Right Charles?

STANGO: I agree with everything you said Mary, you're absolutely right. We were first exposed, or at least I was, to the reading program when we were at Bucks Hill and Mrs. Begley presented this in her presentation. And then we had the opportunity to go back and see it. It was a nice experience, I'm very happy to see kids in action and these were young, young students – kindergarten, first grade, who recited, sang phonics, wrote poems, and it was impressed upon how all of this preliminary work that they do goes into the ultimate goal and having the children read at an earlier age and read better. So it was really a good experience, I'm glad I went.

WHITE: Actually they did ask if they could come before the Board but I want you to know Commissioners I said no, it would be too long and we would be too aggravated to sit through an hour presentation. But I did make the suggestion that we utilize our recording studios and have them put these things out in 10 minute increments and either put them on Channel 16 or allow us to take them home and look at them. Because when you listen to what they've done and see the examples that they gave you can see if you are lucky enough to begin something in pre-k and build on it every year it really does work and hopefully, I hope I'm alive to see this when it's in fifth grade and these children have completed a wonderful cycle. Maybe they'll be the next generation of good marks. It was wonderful.

PETTEWAY: I just wanted to ask Dr. Snead if we could have a report on your meeting from Wednesday just to see and get a feel for where the consensus is on those particular bills that are up, there's a few of them that you know . . . especially the increase in the ECS money. But if you could just give us a report from your meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT: Following the meeting.

HAYES: I'm going to be attending too, we're all invited, so whoever can get there. It gets put together with short notice but those guys are so hard to nail down to get all of them together at one time so I'm sure it's the best we could do. But it's important for us to keep that relationship going. I appreciate the fact that Dr. Snead has done this. Like I said, I wasn't able to attend last year; luckily my schedule is going to allow it for this year. We have to have some discussion because I think, if you don't mind me just putting an opinion in quickly with that, the whole idea of additional dollars is supposed to be property tax relief so I don't know that we'd necessarily wouldn't get our own, if we get extra money from the State somehow that's supposed to be intended for property tax relief. So I don't think we're getting dollar for dollar on that. And when you look at our increase every year just contractually, that basically eats up what they have, that's the problem that we're facing here in the City. Just contractually the percentage that goes up goes about nine, ten, however many million we go, and there's going to be only so many more times we can cut and cut and cut. I heard something on the radio the other day, there's some other group going out there asking for more money and again I don't want to go long here but we got Rotella and we got WAMS getting this recognition, you know what they have, they have extra resources. But when we ask for extra resources we're accused of throwing money at the problem. We had success at Hopeville, success at Driggs when we had the additional literacy teachers. The fact of the matter is I think we have the staff in place and if we have those additional resources

we could be so much more successful and if those extra dollars allowed us to do that that would be great. But I think that's a double-edge sword, it's intended to reduce property tax so obviously if we get extra money from the State and the City reduces property taxes, we're not getting an extra nine million dollars a years. Still there's some equity issues regarding funding. There's no question we look at what we have, we look at the City the way we are when we go through this budget every year, there's so much more Dr. Snead could recommend and Mrs. Cullinan and Dr. Sequeira, that we know would help us achieve some success but we also know that the citizens of Waterbury can only pay so much. That's the quandary we find ourselves in all the time. I found it as a parent coming years ago. You can only afford so much but somewhere along the line there's supposed to be equal opportunity to an education in this country somewhere floating around, it would be nice if we could ever get to it so any student, regardless of where they live, gets the same opportunity as everybody else and we know that that doesn't happen. So, we have to talk to our legislatures, I think it's something we need to start looking at. I actually think there's some discussion the State should just fund all education but the formula that they come up with could be a problem because again ECS money has sort of flattened out over the years for us. I remember Mary when you were first on, that addition we had every year just about, contracts and everything was matched by ECS money and that leveled off. So it only comes from local property taxes so if in fact the intent here was to reduce property taxes I don't think we're going to get the nine million dollars a year into our budget.

WHITE: I do have to say that at this meeting at Bucks Hill one of the things that was brought up was the fact of the importance of obtaining grants. And they did include, they did send an invitation to our grants people also, and they were there, and they were very grateful to them for the way they work to get the grants and how they portion them out amongst all the programs. And the whole idea of this Reading First is to equalize education throughout and as you just said people think when they hear you're getting grants they think all this money is going to the teachers in extra salaries on a regular basis. What they don't realize is the amount of manipulatives you're able to buy, those other tutors from UConn that you can pay to come on a regular basis, the parent liaisons, I was amazed at the things the parent liaisons, they're worth every cent if they're doing all they say and those particular schools are showing the results. So I think that we, one of my suggestions was they go on the Ed Flynn show and tell them what the extra money is used for, that it isn't, I get tired of hearing people say "oh ya, just give it to the teachers". You're giving it to the teachers for specific reasons and those things are being used and they work and we're having great results. And that message has to get out there.

HAYES: That's the thing with the grants, I think we're doing a much better job over the last couple of years.

WHITE: Well we're going to have to depend on them more and more I believe with the way the State is going.

HAYES: But instead of just grabbing from everything we're picking out a few things, we try them and they work and then we try to implement them city-wide. That's one of the things we're doing now that I don't know that they always did in the past. So again, we have to be victims of our past sometimes but I know for the last number of years we've been doing things the way we should, we've been looking for results when we get the

grants, Dr. Snead, Dr. Sequeira, Mrs. Cullinan – they track the information, our supervisors track it, we're being responsible with those dollars and making informed decisions, not just chasing dollars.

SWEENEY: I just want to make sure I caution people on ECS money and it's a point that I will make on Wednesday, I am able to be there, that when you simply raise the ECS amount, it is not property tax relief. Without reworking the ECS formula each city is still responsible from their general fund for a certain amount of spending. Adding to the ECS money itself without reworking the formula is not property tax relief. Keep it in mind.

HAYES: That's the whole point, it's the formula, how do you determine how a kid gets an equal opportunity. If you say, you have all these state mandates and now No Child Left Behind to tell us we have to do this, we have to do that, and we don't have the tax base to support it, we're going to run out people who could afford to stay and ultimately we just, you know I say the whole point is somewhere along the line there's got to be some understanding that there's a certain amount of needs that are more pressing in the City. One thing we'll probably have to look at is a longer school day. We can't get these kids to come after school for tutoring maybe we can just keep them in school a little longer. But that will cost us cause we have to pay the teachers to be there. But then we'll be accused of throwing money at the problem again. But that's what we do.

SWEENEY: It's just way too easy to get all excited over that big ECS money that's coming without really looking at where it comes from and how it's formulated and it's the formula that's flawed, it's not the payout.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway, and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:49 p.m.**

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

Resolutions signed by Mayor Michael J. Jarjura on February 27, 2007