

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, April 9, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

(For the April 16, 2007 Board Meeting - MINUTES ATTACHED)

COMMITTEE MEETING

The Board of Education Committee meetings were held on Monday, April 9, 2007 at Barnard School, 11 Draher Street, Waterbury, Connecticut, starting at 5:46 p.m.

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

ABSENT: Commissioners Geremia and Theriault.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendent Cullinan (left at 6:20), Assistant Superintendent Sequeira, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, and Attorney Maurice Mosley.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee meetings adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

Monday, April 16, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Maloney Magnet School, 233 South Elm Street, Waterbury, Connecticut

PRESENT: President Hayes, Commissioners Geremia, Harvey, Petteway, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, and White.

ABSENT: Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt and Uriano.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendent Cullinan, Assistant Superintendent Sequeira, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:48 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 – ABSENT.

CLERK: Commissioner Geremia.

GEREMIA: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Harvey.

HARVEY: Here

CLERK: Commissioner Petteway.

PETTEWAY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Uriano – ABSENT.

CLERK: Commissioner White.

WHITE: Here.

CLERK: President Hayes.

HAYES: Here.

COMMUNICATIONS:

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

1. Copy of communications dated April 9, 2007 from Civil Service certifying James Mann and Jeffrey Glenn for the position of Maintainer I.
2. Copy of communication dated April 4, 2007 from Civil Service certifying Jacqueline Dupre for the position of Administrative Support Specialist I.
3. Copy of communications dated April 3, 2007 from Civil Service certifying Michael Santos, Gary Owens, Mark Drewry, Steven Kathan, Evan Swain, Jonathan Benjamin, Marcus Powell, and Robert Vazquez for the position of Maintainer I.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner Geremia, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of March 12, 2007.

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

PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Geremia, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business to allow the public to address the Board at 6:51 p.m.

HAYES: All in favor. Is there anyone here from the public wishing to address the Board?

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 6:52 p.m.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded – all in favor.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Good evening. I hope you guys are staying dry and warm. Is this April? I'm happy to report that our students have done well in several recent competitions: On February 27, French students at the Waterbury Arts Magnet School participated in the annual National French Contest, which draws over 100,000 students from public and private schools throughout the United States. WAMS students did well, with eleven of our participating students scoring in the top 10% of the state. Cannea Ferguson scored in the top 1% of the state, and Ryan Powell scored in the top 2%. The other students scoring in the top 10% were Sammantha Dillon, Lisette Espinal, Kristen Albert, Peter Cora, Julie Albert, Hannah Zabarsky, Jonathan Plaza, Thomas Wrenn, and Ashley Tillotson.

Our Kennedy High School robotics team (Team Impulse) placed third in the FIRST Robotics World Championship this past weekend in Atlanta. One hundred six robots from eight countries made it into the finals. One of the referees told our team members they felt Team Impulse's robot was the best in the competition.

Several of our students did well in Quassy Amusement Park's Mother's Day essay contest. According to park officials, the contest drew an enormous response from throughout Connecticut. The winning Waterbury students are:

- Layne J. Carey, Grade 2, Rotella School
- Hannah Butler, Grade 2, Rotella School
- Lexi Sobireski, Grade 4, Rotella School
- Kayla, Palette, Grade 5, Carrington School
- Eisha Henry, Grade 5, Bunker Hill Elementary
- Jonathan Perez, kindergarten, Bunker Hill Elementary
- Xheklin Nano, Grade 3, Bunker Hill
- Alana Betancourt, Grade 3, Bunker Hill
- Inoj Eason, Grade 3, Brooklyn School
- Tyler Figueroa, Grade 5, Brooklyn School

Congratulations to all of these students! On Saturday I was invited to participate in the Litter Commission meeting, hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. Pat Hayes was there along with Herb Greengas. We spent about four hours with a number of community stakeholders discussing what each of us could do to help combat litter in the city of Waterbury. I was quite pleased with the turn-out and the discussions.

A number of our staff conducted presentations at the State Department of Education's Data Showcase event last week. Everything went quite well. I am happy to report that we had quite an extensive display relative to data and how it drives instruction here in Waterbury. In fact, we probably had more displays than any other school district participated. I want to commend at this time both Dr. Paul Sequeira and Mrs. Anne Marie Cullinan because they led the discussion along with several of other staff members.

I also had an opportunity last week to meet with our new Commissioner of Education. He had been invited to attend a session with the Litchfield County Area Superintendents. We had the chance to ask and answer questions relative to our many concerns in this area.

I represented the Waterbury Public Schools at a check presentation ceremony at Waterbury Hospital last week. The school district received a donation from the hospital to purchase 35 new sets of Pediatric pads to the district for our Zoll defibrillation units.

Last week I invited my son and my nephew to accompany me on visits to several schools. In addition to visiting Walsh, WAMS, Wilby, and Chase, we also attended the drama class performance at WAMS on Wednesday evening. They were both quite impressed at the caliber of our students' performance and talent.

We weathered (pun intended) this weekend's nor'easter with a handful of roof leaks which are being addressed. No major flooding in our buildings was experienced.

As you may know, the Board of Aldermen is conducting one of two required public hearings on the City's proposed 2007-2008 budget. Our Workshop with the Board of Aldermen's sub committee is scheduled for later this month.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: Hopefully we get notification of the time of the Board of Aldermen, do we have it already set?

GUIDONE: It's already sent to you.

HAYES: The date is set. It's the same time as our meeting.

GUIDONE: I just sent out a memo.

HAYES: I thought that we were going to discuss on April 30 what we were going to do when we met with them.

GUIDONE: They set up their whole schedule, that happens to be our date with them.

HAYES: Thank you. Just under my comments briefly, I want us to look into, I know Dr. Snead said he met with our new Commissioner of Education and I think he's from Massachusetts and I was somewhat interested, I was interested in the story that Randy posted, was it Sunday's paper, about those schools, considering he's our new State Department of Education Commissioner maybe it would be an opportunity for us to explore on a pilot basis something like that. I don't know how the Board feels about it I just wanted, I was just wondering about the possibility of us looking into something like that. I assume its going to be on his agenda if he set it up in Massachusetts. Did he have any discussion with you about that?

SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, we did, as a matter of fact. I explained not only to the new Commissioner but also to the Superintendents that were sitting around the table and prior to him coming, prior to last Friday's meeting I explained to Superintendent's who are members of the CAUS, Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents, that all

that glitters is not gold. I worked in Boston when that pilot school program was being implemented and while a number of my colleagues were principals and headmasters of pilot schools and still are, they thoroughly enjoy their experience, their colleagues in the neighborhood schools don't enjoy having their best and brightest and most energetic students leave their schools as well as their most active parents leave to go attend the private schools. And so there are two sides to this picture. Sure, you can almost instantaneously transform a school but you won't have the same students in the building that were there before nor will you have the same staff. So consequently what happens to those students and what happens to that staff and what are you doing with the other schools in the school system if you're draining the brain drain if you will, out of your neighborhood schools and sending them to these pilot schools. So I have mixed feelings about that.

HAYES: We can have that discussion down the road I guess. My main concern is it happened in Massachusetts and he's here I assume it's coming down so we should try to get, especially, you say you have that experience maybe we can try to improve upon the situation that they have before it's provided as an option for us. But I assumed that when it came from there it's going to be up for discussion here in the State.

SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, as a matter of fact our state legislatures are just about ready to pass it and it seems to be almost unanimous support at the state legislative level. So we will have pilot schools in Connecticut, I can almost assure you.

HAYES: When you come to Waterbury you've got to talk about although we have a letter out questioning the desegregation and all that, that's always an issue, that comes up with any schools. As we know, our magnet schools are out of compliance and our magnet schools are suppose to be there to implement diversification and we've got that already, diversity. But I saw that coming and like I said that's always my concern with any new idea is that we still have to follow certain guidelines and I'd like to have more information on that prior it being put in front of us. But the other point I wanted to make is I was able to visit Walsh, Kingsbury, and Driggs with Commissioner Sweeney and Stango on Friday and it was pretty uplifting to get in to see that. I guess we'll have a report from our reporters in the near future. It was pretty uplifting but one of the things that came to light when I'm going through these things and I know it's something we strive for but it's basically equity within the three schools. From what I could see the staffing at Driggs, Walsh has some short comings, and I just see, there's like certain needs that some schools have that others don't have and some advantages that some schools have. I think it's something we have to start looking at a little more closely. Just, again, it's a question I've raised, an argument I've had for years because my kids went to Chase School I always felt they didn't have adequate staffing, you have 800 kids versus a school with 300 kids. I think there's just something else that we have to, to make sure we have sufficient social workers, counselors and psychologists based on some kind of numbers as opposed to, some have a full compliment and some are lacking, some of it's because of sickness or whatever but I think we need to do a better job. It was really uplifting; I'll just give the highlights. At Kingsbury their model for keeping track and assessing data is something that they told us they've gotten letters from other communities - Simsbury in particular wanting to use it as a model. You know Walsh I was really impressed with the report that we got back about the number of people that have been coming out that we got an opportunity to sit with the Parent Liaison and they've had like 300, 400 people turn out for some gatherings there. We

got a chance to meet with the principals for the day and also got to meet with the security group that he's gotten. The kids that are now acting in the safety council, security types, they were very polite, they helped us, let us in and let me out, I had to leave a little earlier, but it was pretty uplifting. But then again I look and they need paint on the walls. There's always something that's out there. Overall I'm pleased with the staff and again for anybody that may be watching this that has a perception about our Waterbury schools, they can't like get the kids to behave extra special because three Board of Ed Commissioners are coming there. It looks like there's a lot of learning going on, it's quiet, there's no graffiti or all this other stuff that people have this vision of. There's no fights going on, I saw a lot of learning. Also, when we went into the class all the kids were polite, they stood up and when the principal asked them to be quiet or whatever they snapped right to it, they know the rules, they know the mottos and it was really a nice time to be spent. I didn't think I was going to have that much time, I ended up with a crazy day but I just couldn't leave there because it was really uplifting. And I've been asked that we have our next workshop, because I had already previously asked about having an update on the Comer Project and I think we should move our next workshop to Walsh School. Hopefully we can get some of those parents and kids to come. But the other thing that we have in front of us, as you all know, we're not gonna be able to use the Aldermanic Chambers any longer and I'm not really sure what we should do. Currently we go to every school at our workshop and then we go downtown. We can get to more schools if we continue to move from school to school and just have our regular meeting as the alternate meeting as opposed to having a regular set place to meet. I myself would prefer that. If anybody else has some ideas, as of right now we're working on next week at Walsh. If anybody has any different ideas, my idea would be that we continue, it will get us into more schools, we'll be in a different school every week and it will give us an opportunity to get to all of them. I think that's beneficial as opposed to having it at one particular one. The only other thing I would like to have that I think got lost in this process is that the principals, we always ask them to have the PTA people there and occasionally they came in but some others didn't so at least at the meetings we have at the schools, maybe get somebody to get somebody from the school, a parent or whatever, to come and tell us what's going on at the open mic so that week we're at a regular meeting, not a workshop, maybe get some kind of report from the parent group, PTA people, parent support group, whoever, what's going on. But little bit more from the users of that particular school.

STANGO: Well I was just going to comment that I enjoy going to schools, the workshops are working out at schools and I think they could work better at schools. Often times we walk into the school for the workshop and come to the table, we don't see the building. Many people work, they don't have time to see the building. So I don't know if that's an issue. I also like the idea of having a regular official Board of Ed meeting in a separate place, it's less confusing. Often times I'll remember what happens at a workshop, visualizing the school the workshop was held in. I think if that big room in the bank that we're leasing becomes our seat of government, I think then that's where the meeting of the official Board should be held. But we should designate one. That's only my personal feelings. We should designate one official place to have our official meeting. Every workshop, yes, go to schools and see if we can expand on a tour of the school and like you say, a presentation by the parent group or a teacher group. That's just my opinion.

HAYES: We sort of got off the agenda here. What I would ask is that you come up with some ideas and at the Workshop next week we'll kick it around and decide how we want to schedule the rest of our regular meetings that are not going to be allowed to be held at the Chamber and I'll follow whatever the voice of the group is. It's never been our meeting place anyway; it's always been the Board of Aldermen. Hopefully some day there will be some place where the Board of Ed is supposed to meet and get some kind of recognition.

REPORTS

1. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- 1.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Geremia and duly seconded by Commissioner White, it was voted unanimously to approve of a professional services agreement with Maxim Healthcare Services, Inc., to provide nursing services.**

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

2. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner White, 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.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve items 2.3 through 2.8, as listed:

- 2.3 Request permission be granted to L. Capolupo, KHS, and four chaperones to take 50 students to Tuxedo, NY on May 24, 2007 to attend the New York Renaissance Faire.**

- 2.4 Request permission be granted to D. Primus, Kingsbury School, and 12 chaperones to take 75 students to Boston, MA on May 11, 2007 to visit the Freedom Trail.
- 2.5 Request permission be granted to H. Maxen, WAMS, and four chaperones to take 40 students to Boston, MA on May 3, 2007 to visit Isabella Gardner Museum/Quincy Market.
- 2.6 Request permission be granted to R. Wise, Washington School, and 13 chaperones to take 120 students to Bronx, NY on May 23, 2007 to visit the Bronx Zoo.
- 2.7 Request permission be granted to SFC Rowland, CHS, and seven chaperones to take 75 students to Agawam, MA on June 1, 2007 to visit Six Flags.
- 2.8 Request permission be granted to D. Mancuso, CHS, to take five students to Orlando, FL from April 19 or 20 through April 25, 2007 to attend the National LifeSmarts Competition.

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

3. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner Geremia and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, with Commissioner Theriault "abstaining", to receive and place on file items 3.1 through 3.4, as listed:

- 3.1 **Athletic appointments effective immediately:**
DeVito, Larry – Interim Junior Varsity Baseball Coach, CHS.
- 3.2 **Grant funded appointments effective immediately:**
Auriemma, Jenna – Child Associate/Primary Mental Health Grant, Washington School, \$22.00 per hour, 19.5 hour per week, no benefits.
Hudson, Pennie – Child Associate/Primary Mental Health Grant, W. Cross School, \$22.00 per hour, 19.5 hour per week, no benefits.
Malinowski, Karen – Child Associate/Primary Mental Health Grant, Washington School, \$22.00 per hour, 19.5 hour per week, no benefits.
Montgomery, Lorenzo – Child Associate/Primary Mental Health Grant, W. Cross School, \$22.00 per hour, 19.5 hour per week, no benefits.
- 3.3 **Resignations:**
Boyce, Melissa – Bucks Hill grade 2, effective 04/05/07.
Cuevas, Ingrid – Hopeville Bilingual 3, effective 04/05/07.
Faber, Cheryl – Bucks Hill grade 1, effective 06/30/07.
Leder, Mark – CHS English, effective 06/30/07.
May, David – CHS English, effective 06/30/07.
Payton, Sharon – Walsh grade 3, effective 06/30/07.

3.4 Academic Achievements effective March 1, 2007:

Last Name	First Name	From	To	College
Altobelli	Maria	MA, Step 2	MA+15, Step 2	SCSU
Beshi	Medali	MA, Step 6	MA+15, Step 6	U of New England
Betkoski	Rebecca	MA, Step 1	MA+15, Step 1	SCSU
Blasavage	Michael	BA+15, Step 6	MA, Step 6	CCSU
Blazys	Deborah	6 th , Step 4	6 th +15, Step 4	U of Hartford
Bramble	Michelle	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	U of New England/CCSU
Celozzi	Aimee	BA, Step 3	BA+15, Step 3	NVCC(Has Prior Approval)
Coleman	Daniel	BA, Step 2	BA+15, Step 2	U of New England
Conway	Michael	MA, Step 12	MA+15, Step 12	Walden U.
Crane	Richard	MA+15, Step 5	6 th , Step 5	U of New England
Drewry	Ann	MA+15, Step 9	6 th , Step 9	UB
Elwell	Heather	MA, Step 2	MA+15, Step 2	U of New England
Ferrare	William	BA, Step 5	BA+15, Step 5	SCSU
Figlia	Jan	MA, Step 2	MA+15, Step 2	CCSU
Frageau	Patricia	6 th , Step 6	Ed. D., Step 6	SCSU
Gonzales	Lurdes	MA, STEP 2	MA+15, Step 2	CCSU
Griffin	Meghan	BA+15, Step 4	MA, Step 4	U of New England
Halloran	Laura	BA+15, Step 2	MA, Step 2	SCSU
Howard	Kathleen	MA+15, Step 12	6 th , Step 12	UB
Klem	Lisa	MA+15, Step 6	6 th , Step 6	SCSU
Knorr	Melissa	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	U of New England
Kolakoski	Jessica	BA, Step 2	BA+15, Step 2	SCSU
Mead	Christine	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	CCSU
Minutillo	Mary	BA+15, Step 4	MA, Step 4	UB
Mottillo	Sabrina	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	Sacred Heart
Padua	Louis	6 th , Step 6	PH. D., Step 6	CCSU
Park	Una	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	U of Hartford
Perez	Aurea	BA+15, Step 5	MA, Step 5	College of New Rochelle
Perugini	Christine	BA+15, Step 6	MA, Step 6	CCSU
Quesnel	Nina	BA+15, Step 4	MA, Step 4	SCSU
Reinhardt	Jill	BA+15, Step	MA, Step 4	CCSU
Rice	Amy	BA+15, Step 3	MA, Step 3	CCSU
Shagensky	Robert	MA, Step 2	MA+15, Step 2	U of New England
Shaker	Elaine	MA+15, Step 5	6 th , Step 5	UB
Stanco	Kate	MA+15, Step 7	6 th , Step 7	UB
Sullivan	Mariannina	MA+15, Step 2	6 th , Step 2	U of New England
Tenney	Jodiann	MA, Step 5	MA+15, Step 5	Plymouth State
Thomas	James	BA+15, Step	MA, Step 1	SCSU
Tirado	Alison	BA, Step 3	BA+15, Step 3	SCSU
Wilson	Maureen	MA, Step 2	MA+15, Step 2	U of New England
Zakowich	Andrea	BA, Step 2	BA+15, Step 2	UB

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

THERIAULT: I'm going to recuse myself and abstain.

HAYES: For the record Commissioner Theriault abstains. Anything under unfinished business – Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: You have before you a glossy Waterbury promotional magazine and a DVD of the marquee moments held at the Palace Theater in November. The magazine was given to all participants of the Connecticut Technology Education Association's Leadership Conference held recently at the Palace Theater and the Waterbury Arts Magnet School. The DVD is a product of the Waterbury Arts Magnet School's Video Production Class. I'm giving this very, very brief report because the Board granted permission for facility use with Alan Kramer, Scott Serafine and myself as sponsors. I was a member of the Council for many years when I was teaching and have maintained my membership. The Council consists of about 50 technology education teachers, department heads, supervisors, product reps and it's chaired by the State of Connecticut's Consultant for Technology Education. We meet five times a year at various facilities in the State. Some of the facilities are industrial, some are educational, some are commercial. Our last meeting was the 283rd meeting of the group in the last in the last 50 years and it was held at the Waterbury Arts Magnet School and the Palace Theater. There were about 40 participants at the event. We were given a backstage box office historical tour of the Palace arranged by Vanessa Logan of the Palace. The participants were amazed at what they saw. After that we were taken on a tour of the technology aspects of the Waterbury Arts Magnet School by Scott Serafine, the Video Production teacher at WAMS and Waterbury's Teacher of the Year for 2006. We toured the video lab, the set design studio and the stage . . . the technology areas. The Council was treated to a presentation by WAMS students Rebecca Bradshaw and Meghan Brophy on video production. In particular the DVD you have about the marquee dedication. These students created the video as a project in conjunction with the Palace Theater. The video was actually shown to the audience at the Palace that night and the students were introduced from the stage. Just as another aside, Scott told me, Scott Serafine told me he was told by professionals that if the Palace had to pay to have this DVD presentation made it would cost anywhere from four to five thousand dollars. After that the Council business meeting was held and a dinner was provided by the WAMS staff with the help of the Food Service Director Linda Franzese. Dr. Sequeira attended along with Attorney Mosley representing Dr. Snead. I believe that this event put Waterbury Schools in a very positive light with the educators who were present. We heard very good comments from the participants who were very impressed with the Palace and the technology programs at WAMS. They're all looking forward to returning for another visit and attraction in Waterbury. Watch this DVD when you get a chance and you too will be very impressed with what goes on in the Video Production Department at WAMS. Thank you very much.

SUPERINTENDENT: I need to let you know that I got a verbal report from somebody I know at the State Department of Education that said that the person in charge of the technology education, the consultant there, came back to the State Department and just raved about the technology we have here in the WAMS School in our school system.

STANGO: That's very good news, that's what we like to see.

HAYES: Anything else under unfinished business? New business?

THERIAULT: First of all I'd like to thank Commissioner Stango for all his hard work with regard to the Blue Ribbon Commission. I know I do that all the time but he does so many things, he's like a one arm paper hanger or a person you want in your kitchen cleaning the dishes, he's just there all the time. And all of the other people that

participated on the Blue Ribbon Commission. I thought it would behoove me to let this Board know a project that I'm working on currently and to give you a little bit of a pulse or a snapshot as the Board would like to say of what our attendance has been like for the past three years. In the school year 04/05 the students in Waterbury took approximately 237,000 days out of school - that's excused, unexcused, suspensions and tardies. The tardies being three tardies, the number of tardies divided by three equals an absence. In 06 the number of days out was 305,000, so approximately a 30% increase. That's the bad news. The good news is this year on the basis of what we currently have on the 109th day of school, which is approximately 60% of the time, it looks like if the projections hold true as to what we're doing right now, we may come in with 10% less or come in with 274,000 days out of school which is certainly a big increase from 04/05 of 237,000 to 274. We are making some progress but we need to hold the line with regard to absence, we need to hold the line with regard these doctor's notes that constantly come in at the end of the year. We need to hold the line in terms of the interpretation of the discipline policy and the attendance policy. And Commissioner Sweeney goes right along with me on this and I'm sure the rest of the Board members do also. The attendance policy is not an interpretation; the attendance policy is Board policy and the Board policy is not an interpretation, it's written in stone and it should be, I don't want to use the word interpreted, it should be used the same in all schools and utilized the same in all schools. There shouldn't be one policy in one school and another in another school. I'm looking at some of the schools that are extremely stringent on excused versus unexcused absences and looking at other schools that are very lenient. This should not be. If the Board says this is the way the policy is interpreted then this is the way the policy is interpreted. So I will give you a full report as I get the rest of those figures and I'll probably wait until June so we can compare the total amount. To project the actual numbers I took the numbers of 60% and extracted them and put them forward and came up with approximately a 10% increase, which is good, which is good, but in my mind not good enough not when you see a 30% increase from 04/05 to 05/06. So that's where we are right now and we are still working with the Blue Ribbon Commission, we have had many, many speakers. Commissioner Stango and I have attended a workshop recently regarding truancy and we gathered some more information. So we're still working very hard on that and we will give you a final report when the Commission is finished and that probably will be some time in October of next year. So we have worked very diligently and I want to thank all of the Board members for your help and your support. Thank you very much.

HAYES: Just to add to that Commissioner, I mentioned it before and I'd like it to be done, we don't need to wait until next October, but I'd like to see some positive rewards and awards given out in particular, something we did a few years ago. If we can get a report from the principals on kids that have had exemplary attendance throughout their, from kindergarten through 12, we'd like to highlight some of those kids and we should also do some yearly awards. I know it's going on in the schools but I think we should have something Board sponsored where they bring their families or whatever and have an opportunity to shine a light on those particular students. Just one point that I'd like to make, I know when Commissioner Theriault talks about the numbers, 237,000, if you calculate 180 days at 19,000 kids that 3,420,000 potential days that are there so subtract whatever he had and that's how many kids we have going to school everyday. So there's a lot of kids going to school as well. But the key component of it all to me is exactly what Commissioner Theriault said, I think what we need to do is have Doc, I know Dr. Snead is staying on top of it as well, we've got to watch those unexcused

turning into excused because I believe that was one of the biggest goals of that language change that we had because there should be a determination of unexcused within a couple of days, regardless. The point is once they've gotten past one unless it's some kind of a chronic illness where it's like the 12th ear infection or whatever, I still, we've got to tow the line this year and they have to feel the pinch and they have to know we stood by this and I think that's the only way we're gonna start to see the positive impact, at least that's what we're hoping for, enforcement of what we have, letting them know that it's not a game anymore that they can come in and play games to figure out a way to circumvent the intent of our policy. Commissioner White.

WHITE: . . . statement that it's a policy that should be worked uniformly throughout the system, it's not subject to interpretation.

HAYES: Right, that's where we need Dr. Snead to help us with that. That's part of what Dr. Snead does in his evaluations.

WHITE: I was just reiterating so he knew someone agreed with him, that's all.

HAYES: I agreed with him.

SWEENEY: I keep asking this question but can we get some kind of a report so we know what teachers and principals are calling an excused absence because I keep saying that there's an awful, in some of the schools there's a large percentage of excused versus unexcused and it's not similar to the rest of the district. So I would like to see what some of those principals and teachers are calling an excused absence just for exactly what Commissioner Theriault pointed out, that it needs to be applied the same everywhere. I've been concerned about that from September on, I've been asking, I just think we're showing too many in the excused column.

HAYES: I think what you do with something like that from Dr. Snead's perspective, look at the ones that show the variance from the normal type of thing, that's the way to evaluate that and maybe we could have some principals come here and explain to us how it happens. Not to grill them but maybe to come to light that there is this difference of opinion on how to do this.

HARVEY: President Hayes, you mentioned that you wanted to see some positive reinforcement with the attendance; I'd like to see that done, I'd like to see us reward those students for good attendance. So I would like to head that and organize that, talking to the principals, I don't know how you feel about that Dr. Snead, but I'd just like for us to do something about your idea.

HAYES: Sure. You can work with Dr. Snead.

PETTEWAY: The last Board meeting we had I brought up the point of our policy on discipline and I was told by Dr. Snead that he was checking with the Superintendent of Police on the answering of our calls to the police when we arrest our children and that type of thing and I was just wondering the disposition on that report because I'd like to attend some of those meetings in order to look at any type of possible change in policy as it relates to the treatment of our students.

SUPERINTENDENT: I'll call you or e-mail you tomorrow with the dates of the meetings. They have been set.

HAYES: I just want to be clear of what we're talking about, certain people get notified, if we're having a meeting about something notify all of us, that's all.

THERIAULT: Just one last comment here, just a point of clarification, I think that some of the remarks that other Commissioners have made are very germane but mainly to the end of the year and mainly to May and June when those unexcused suddenly turn into excused. And in the past two consecutive years about 70 to 75% of those unexcused days turned into excused days. So I hope there's going to be a sharp decline in that kind of tabula rasa, exoneration, that means a new slate, a clean slate. So I hope that doesn't occur each and every year and I hope we're going to be more stringent in interpretation of the policy this year.

HAYES: Get a report by mid May, which is like a month before the end of the school year, tell us how many kids have already been notified that they're done, we're not going to be going through, if we have kids that have 50 unexcused absences I don't think we need to have too many hearings on that stuff. Maybe by mid May we should know and then we watch and see what happens from there. So I'd like to have a full report, I appreciate Commissioner Theriault doing his own homework but his numbers should be the same as our numbers so if we can get a report Dr. Snead from the principals on what the status is by mid May and we can anticipate, there should be very little variation until the end of the year except for those kids who then go beyond at that point.

THERIAULT: Through the Chair, just for clarification, there is a report that comes out through Will Zhuta's office in terms of the number of students that have been absent 18 days or more and that is an Excessive Absence Report and if you look at that that could be boiled down to one of the pieces of paper that we received recently with excused and unexcused, that could probably be boiled to one or two sheets of paper and we can get a snapshot look once again at the number of students that are absent in May, 18 days or more and then at the end of the year. So now you could really take a pulse of the situation.

HAYES: I want the principals to take notice of it by middle of May and know that we're going to be looking at it at the end of June so they have an opportunity to look at this and know that we're looking at it and maybe there's, again, some intervention that could be made. I'm sure they're doing it anyways but just some reinforcement for us so that we know and also so the general public knows and the kids know that it's not going to be like it's always been. But at the same time as I mentioned and I'm glad Commissioner Harvey agreed to take the leadership role in that we also have to acknowledge those students who have had exemplary attendance, especially maybe most improved, all those type of things. I know, I don't want to talk about my visits anymore, but something happened at Walsh, I'll add it later as to what happened, but I love it when the kids came up to me and talked about what a great job or how they love their school and all that stuff and I asked him how many days had they been out and they all knew and some were proud of it and some weren't. They are tracking it there and it's another way, I think one of the goals of us going together and, I wasn't honored by getting a little pad and score sheet by the committee but...

STANGO: President Hayes, word has it that somebody really liked . . . and we'll have to report on that too.

HAYES: I think the goal I have and I appreciate what they're doing, it's something we all sort of did haphazardly, but the way they're doing it is a great way to document things – again, point out the positive of what's going on, point out the areas of improvement and there's some things we saw in some of those schools that should be at every school. I think that's, ultimately if we can do that, the positives that are happening, you see the results, those should go out. But there was some real positive stuff Commissioners will be reporting in the near future. Is there anything else under unfinished business? New business?

WHITE: Today is Commissioner Petteway's birthday.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner Geremia, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:34 p.m.

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

Resolutions signed by Mayor Michael J. Jarjura on April 17, 2007