

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
July 19, 2010
Parent/Community/Relations Committee Meeting

A Parent/Community/Relations Committee Meeting was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven, CT on July 19, 2010. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Dorinda Borer.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

M. Toni Paine
T. Sean Maher
Eric Murillo
Howard Horvath, Jr., arrived at 6:30 PM
Dorinda Borer

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Patrick Egolum

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew DePalma
Mark Palmieri
Rob Saley

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

Dorinda Borer introduced Taryn Driend who discussed various things that have been happening at Carrigan Middle School. Her complete presentation is attached. (Attachment A)

Taryn stated there are three committees

- Parent and Community
- School Climate
- Teaching and Learning

There are teachers and parents on all committees except SRBI. She spoke about the PTA Agenda, the ordering of folders and setting dates for upcoming meetings which will be on the web site and after school activities. The school climate and mission statement was discussed along with parent volunteers, fairs, fundraisers and a get together for the staff.

Dorinda asked if parents often came to these meetings and was told they do and one of committee members has been at every meeting. The next Parent and Community Meeting at Carrigan is scheduled for July 21st at 6:30 PM.

Anne Druzolowski said there will be a Parent based school climate piece the third week in August and Taryn will attend that meeting.

Dorinda mentioned that they usually see the same parents involved and asked if there isn't something we can do as a board to get the message out to parents. She was told they use mass mailings and have a phone system which will leave a message if no one answers the phone. She asked if registration forms can be emailed and Neil said yes there has been a lot of success with this. Progress reports will be on the portal and this will also save us a lot of postage. Anything going home that is important will be put on the portal. The phone system lets us know if someone has answered or if a message has been left. This system has been started from scratch and Bailey has had one in place. Dorinda mentioned a garden and it was agreed they look nice but must be kept up.

The next meeting was going to be held at City Hall but it was decided to hold it at Carrigan so they can see all the work that has been accomplished. Dorinda mentioned holding meetings at all the schools and that way we can eliminate PTA Committee Meetings because they can attend when it takes place in their school.

Patrick Egolum thought it better to have meetings at a central location like City Hall. It is better than moving from one school to another.

Eric Murillo said we can bring this before the whole board and we can work it out.

Neil said he will make himself available to parents at the schools and Anne said she represents the board every Wednesday at the high school and feel like she is part of the fabric of the high school and will make herself available whenever needed. A discussion about setting up dates of availability followed.

Eric said since we closed two schools and are moving to Yale West if parents know you are going to be at the high school on certain days at certain times it will be helpful to them and will feel more at ease if given a time when the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent will be available to them.

Toni Paine said at the beginning of school parents could be given a listing of times when Neil and Anne will be available at their school unless an emergency should occur.

Patrick Egolum asked how often do you have parents walk in with problems now. Neil said about 3 to 4 times a week. Neil said the tentative date for the move is now August 9th and the reason for the delay is the phone lines have a 4 week turn around time.

Eric thought Toni's idea was good and perhaps they can laminate the dates and times and leave this in the school.

They discussed magnets and Dorinda thought she might be able to get someone involved who would sponsor this. A further discussion ensued. Dorinda would like to see more communication improvement in Savin Rock, Washington and Forest.

Anne Druzolowski said that sometimes in some of the schools if the principal's position is hard to understand there is less involvement. Anne worked at a statewide level with parent involvement and has seen a tremendous decline.

Toni Paine said that the decline in involvement can be due to the economic situation as now you have either the necessity of two parents working or a single parent raising their child or children alone. Toni mentioned that Washington School has great involvement and would like to have someone from Washington School come to a board meeting.

Dorinda asked about the Parent Liaison position that is funded through Title I. Anne said she expects a plan for all the schools next year from this person. Neil said this person is a 10 month person who also works with the homeless students to provide transportation to school. Dorinda asked if this person spoke Spanish and was told no but the successor to this position would be required to speak Spanish. Dorinda asked how it was handled now when someone who doesn't speak English has a problem. She was told we have at least one Spanish teacher (ESL teacher) or para at each school and we have the phone # for people who speak Spanish to call and they receive assistance and/or are guided to the correct person. She said the police department uses a language line. Eric Murillo has a parent who takes calls from Spanish speaking parents that call in on the Hot Line # and this has been very successful.

Anne said we are developing Turkish, Spanish and English cards with information on who to go to in order to receive the necessary information and help. She is working closely with Kathy Cassell on this.

Dorinda asked about Courageous Conversations and was told it was understanding different races and cultures and things you may say or do unconsciously; it may be a look or something like that. Neil said that Eric Murillo took part in this and he would be the person who could give her more information. Neil also said we haven't done much with this in the last year as it is not being funded.

Toni Paine thought that the first day of school at Washington was really something to see and to be proud of. She again said that she would like to see people from Washington attend an upcoming board meeting. Their first day of school it is such a welcoming one.

The moving of board meeting to all the various schools was again mentioned in order to avoid PTA Meetings. Neil said he will set up a schedule as to where he will be for parents.

The meeting ended at 6:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary