

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**December 5, 2016**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
**Board's Meeting Room**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on December 5, 2016 in the Board's Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order by James Morrissey, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

James W. Morrissey, Chairman  
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair  
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mark Palmieri  
Patrick Leigh  
Patricia Libero  
Rosa Richardson  
Rosemary Russo

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Karen Pacelli

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent  
Matt Cavallaro, Director of Finance

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRESENT:**

Evelyn Fabian  
Andrew Gordon  
David O'Brien

**B. Public Portion of Meeting**

Chairman Morrissey welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone would like to address the board during public session.

Rose Silver, 3 Annawon Avenue, West Haven, CT. Rose volunteers with the Peer Advocates and has heard a lot about the meetings and thinks they are really interesting. Rose has talked with Evelyn and Andrew (student Reps) about what has been discussed about a new policy for midterms. Before addressing her concerns Rose asked if there will be two 90 minute chunks with 4 periods of classes. Superintendent Cavallaro stated that is correct. Rose asked if the reason for this was because of teacher contracts. No was

Superintendent Cavallaro's response and he asked if she had any other questions before he responded fully. Rose said everything stems around why this is being implemented. Superintendent Cavallaro said he feels kids need to be in school the entire day. Kids need more structure and 70% of the students are on free and reduced lunch and kids have a difficult time when they do get home or if they don't have a first period exam getting back to the school in order to take the exams or do after school activities if the second exam ends at 12:00 o'clock. You guys are the exception and we are trying to look at this from a whole student body perspective. The idea is that when you finish the exam periods hopefully you will be able to do study groups and we can prepare kids better for the exams and to allow everybody to have their lunch.

Rose said she has some concerns and some solutions she has thought about as well. Rosie said her concern is that it is really mentally taxing to have two midterms and then go on to four regular period classes. Other homework might be assigned if you already had your midterms as teachers do like to be progressive about these things. Cutting down the exam from two hours to ninety minutes might be hard to encompass everything we learned in class up until now. This will not be as effective a midterm as a two hour exam. Rose is taking a college class and has just finished with her midterm and finals will be coming up in two days. The midterm models what has been learned in class and there is a block of time where kids have the opportunity to study and prepare without having to go to class and with this new current system it wouldn't be preparing us for college because students would not only study for midterms but go on and learn things in other classes.

Rose's solution would be to go back to the two hour midterm and add more of a block between the midterm exams and maybe a block before the first midterm and set up maybe a 20 minute block between midterms; a longer period of time where students have the ability to go to lunch or use that period to go to a specific teacher and ask them specific questions so they can study more effectively. This would be a way that kids would be in school the entire time and get their lunch in but also it is more effective studying where people can go in groups to a certain teacher and utilize that teacher.

Superintendent Cavallaro stated he thinks that is a really good idea and that is where we are trying to get to. The idea is not to pile on different work for you. That is a very valid point about giving you opportunities to study and maybe we can work on some flexibility that would allow kids to visit certain teachers. Superintendent Cavallaro said maybe we can set something up at the high school with you, Mrs. Gardner and some other kids. Rose thanked Superintendent Cavallaro and the board gave thanks.

Chairman Morrissey thanked Rose and asked if there were questions from the board. Patrick asked the rationale behind eliminating a half hour from the exams. Was it just to facilitate the rest of the periods throughout the day? Superintendent Cavallaro said it was 43 and 43 and with the time spent passing it adds up to 90 minutes. We are trying to come up with more effective type exams where kids are working on SAT type questions; problem based learning and different types of questions. What we were seeing was a lot of multiple choice questions and we didn't want to do that. We wanted kids to be writing more and thinking more and doing those types of problems. We are reviewing the exams

now and we wanted the kids to be able to more SAT type testing and more State type testing. Patrick asked if they have a way of evaluating the effectiveness of the 90 minute vs. the two hours. Dr. Druzlowski said she thinks the length of it is not as important as the quality in terms of the thinking behind kid's responses and it is the application of all that information rather than the regurgitation of facts and it could be very possible to have an open book test where you have a variety of resources to address a very thoughtful type of response. The more we can get them thinking, reading, writing and listening will make them better productive members of society and more successful in life. Patrick asked more questions which were responded to.

Pat Libero commented that you are changing the type of test to be something more thought provoking and you are giving them 30 minutes less where when they were just filling in the bubbles you gave them two hours; it just seems opposite to me. If you have them writing essays it seems they should have two hours not 90 minutes. Dr. Druzolowski said that is what we will be looking at the types of exams we get you could have done two hours of nothing so now you don't need a thousand questions it could just be one question for an hour in a half response. Pat said Rose thought the whole semester should be reviewed so that isn't necessarily what the exam will reflect. Right. Pat said this needs to be explained to the kids then. A further discussion took place.

Rosemary Russo agrees with Pat about the kids needing to know what the changes are because as a student you study differently for an essay test rather than if you were studying for multiple choice questions. Will this be reviewed before testing? Dr. Druzolowski said she would assume that with teacher craft that is what they would be doing. This aligns so closely with the teaching and learning that we are doing now it should be that way. AP will be doing types of items traditionally found on an AP not necessarily all of them. We will review them and any comments we have will be talked about and addressed. We are trying to get people to a whole new mindset of assessing for future testing rather than assessing to say you are here, or here; it is not about that. Rosemary agrees with the long break because for a lot of the kids it is really taxing for them.

Student Rep Andrew Gordon said if the midterm system we are going into will last the whole day will there be after school programs and teacher meeting. Yes there will be that shouldn't change at all.

Chairman Morrissey said we have talked about this quite a bit about this the last meeting and there was a lot of concern. Superintendent Cavallaro said we have made some adjustments based on the concerns we have been hearing and we are open to whatever you guys have to say. Chairman Morrissey asked that they have a meeting with Pam Gardner, the students and some board members before the next meeting. The board gave thanks. Public Session closed at 7:20 PM.

## **REPORTS**

### **C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools**

Superintendent Cavallaro asked Valerie Cosenza, Nursing Assistant Teacher, Pam Gardner and Eric Rice to come to the front of the audience. Superintendent Cavallaro said we are honored to have Val here tonight because last week she was recognized by the state CTE Department because her students did so well on the nursing portion of the exam. They actually finished the highest in the state. (Applause). Flowers and a plaque were presented to Val. Pictures were taken. Eric Rice talked about Val and her accomplishments. He always knew Val had something special going on in the classroom since they taught together in the early days. She creates a family environment for her kids and every single one of her kids is part of that family and that is one thing special that Val does. It comes out in the Holiday Dinner she does with her kids in the cafeteria. All the kids bring their different foods from the cultures they are from and share stories. She participates on state level associations and is a leader in Connecticut in giving back and providing professional guidance in participation with the state nursing and medical careers. She is the consummate professional always. (Applause).

Pam Gardner said Val is an outstanding nursing teacher and that comes from her background. One of the things that strike Pam about Val is her connection with math and English teachers about how to bring those skills that are necessary for success not just for nursing but in all other classes and Val infuses that into her classroom. Her kids perform better because of those extra skills and extra thought processes that she puts into it. Val has been recognized in this level before but doesn't settle for it she is always looking for ways to improve her craft and improve the opportunity for students in her classroom. We are really blessed and honored to have you in West Haven. (Applause).

Chairman Morrissey stated that his daughter Jennifer had Val as a teacher and she loved you and you did a wonderful job over the years. Jennifer graduated from Quinnipiac this past May 22<sup>nd</sup> and on June 13<sup>th</sup> she became a nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital and I want to say thank you to you on a personal note. Jennifer sends her best regards and would have been here tonight but she works the night shift. You have done a wonderful job over the years and we can't thank you enough for your wonderful work. (Applause).

Superintendent Cavallaro stated that most districts have gone to two hour delay openings for inclement weather. We will be going to a two hour delay because ACES is on a two hour delay along with New Haven and other nearby facilities so the transportation is off when we are doing a 90 minute delay and everybody else is doing a 2 hour delay. A 2 hour delay will make for a safer environment as kids won't be waiting outside in the cold at bus stops. We will try this out this year and we think it will work out very well. It will give our maintenance crews more time to get the parking lots set up. Our biggest reason is to be more like the other towns considering where we are sending kids. We think this will work out better for everyone.

Gilbane Construction was hired as the construction managers for the high school and we must start planning on next year is if construction begins and the G Wing will go first I insist we do a weekly conference call with the architects and with Gilbane . We have to come up with an alternative plan and possibly using the smaller gym as swing space for the shop classes which hopefully will cause very little disruption in those programs.

Rosa Richardson asked if all the equipment would be brought into the small gym. You will take technical departments and move them into the gym? Neil said that would be for the first phase and when they move out another department may have to move in. Swing space will have to be created in all phases of the project not just for this one. Rosa stated you are going to be working on motors in the gym. Neil stated we will have to meet with the building inspectors, electrical inspectors to make sure we will be in code compliance. A further discussion took place.

Rosemary Russo asked if Molloy had been considered because you have an empty building. Neil said the problem is there is quite a bit of bussing that must take place during the day and there would need to be work on the toilets and bathrooms to make sure they are the right size and handicap accessibility is an issue at all of the buildings. We are starting to discuss all of this tomorrow. Neil's answer is he will do anything he can to get the project done. His desire is to keep the kids on the main campus if possible. Sodexo has received permission from UNH to use their freezers for storage areas.

Patrick said will the shops continue to be where they are now. No they will be part of another wing. How many phases will there be. Neil said that is still an open question it could be three or four. Gilbane has just come onboard and are currently working on cost estimates. Reducing the number of phases reduces the time which reduces the cost. Patrick asked what will be in place where the shops currently are. Neil will show him the plans. Patrick said can you give us a high level overview of exactly what the plans are and how the timeline will progress. Patrick said when you demolish the shops are they going to be built first. Yes that is the good news. When they build the new wing of the school those kids will be built first. A further discussion took place.

Bob Guthrie thought that the two hour delay was a good idea and it is important to get that message out quickly to the parents. In the class counts for grade 3 and 4 at Washington School with 25 to 26 kids are you concerned about this. Neil is but it is easier to move younger kids around who haven't been in the building. We did move some kids from Washington to other schools this year that were new registrations. Traditionally those classes have been high from kindergarten on up. You don't want to move a child from a class he/she has been in for three or four years. 28 is the maximum in fourth grade but we would try not to exceed the numbers where they are now.

Neil said the building committee is set for the roof project at Carrigan and money has been bonded. We will be contracting with an architect shortly to get this done this summer. We just need approval when the building committee meets. The lockers have been completed and the chairs are almost completed and will be installed by the 15<sup>th</sup>. We hope to have a board meeting there as soon as possible. We are also putting bids out to get the work done on the pool as far as the boilers etc. and this is paid for by the Alliance grant.

Eric Rice updated the board on the partnerships in the Dual Enrollment Program at WHHS. First he stated that Val Cosenza has been approved as a Gateway Community College Instructor to teach classes at WHHS. This has been a work in progress. Her

curriculum was approved and she went through a series of meetings with professors at Gateway and the Health staff and they asked many questions. Not only was she approved for one college course at WHHS through the nursing program but now students who take the nursing program at WHHS can receive if they opt to take those courses six college credits at Gateway Community College to successfully complete the nursing program. A further discussion took place about the courses. (Applause) A year ago today we began to send WHHS students to Gateway during our school day. This created a unique opportunity for our instructor Steve Shine to work alongside Gateway instructors and because of that initiative Steve was recently approved as an instructor and now work begins on trying to articulate our automotive program with Gateway. Now students can take the WHHS Automotive Systems Class and eventually, if approved, for Gateway credit. Steve went out and received an ASC Certification that positions us to offer these classes for credit. We are exploring the same for Culinary and the Early Childhood Program at Gateway. On the agenda tonight is what our manufacturing students took in the fall as an extended day program. This fall proved a regional challenge for the extended day programs where students take a class after school basically at Gateway Community College. Enrollment regionally proved to be lower than expected and because of this Gateway had to change what was originally planned for the manufacturing programs. Gateway instead is offering a class for two high school students to take so they are not absorbing an incremental cost. A further discussion took place.

Rosa Richardson asked how many students took the first class. We have two right now and one is interested in continuing. Rosa said we would have to provide transportation for that student correct. Yes. They would leave during period 8 and we have accommodated for that and additionally looking at an inexpensive transportation option. Rosa said she was just curious as to how it would interfere with the other part of their education. On Monday's and Wednesday's they would go to Gateway after completing their classes before period 8.

**C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report**

The report is attached at the end of the minutes. Thank you.

**C.1.c. Board**

Mark won't be here for the next meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year to you and your families. The board gave thanks and wished him the same.

Rosa attended Mackrille's Family Thanksgiving Luncheon. Parents and grandparents are invited into the cafeteria and share a turkey meal with the kids. Rosa has been there for a few years and has had a great time.

Pat Libero missed the last board meeting because her daughter had a baby boy. She congratulated the football coaches and team on an undefeated season. The coach did really well both his first and second year. Mark said they won 10 games and were in the playoffs; the quarter finals. Pat said they lost which was too bad but they had an undefeated season and she really thinks that is something to be celebrated. Pat also

congratulated the band and the cheerleaders who went to every single game. The dance team also went to a lot of the games in spite of the fact that Liz was sick. Pat said that Salah Oumorou is one of 40 kids in the United States that is an All-American and he is one of the only kids that go to a public high school. Most kids are from private high schools so it is really interesting. One of the teachers went down to cheer him on and that was really nice. He is from Toga so she went down to cheer him on and to be at the dinner with him. We may have everyone come to a board meeting in the future to celebrate with them. Neil said we may be able to have it at Carrigan when we find out it is ready.

Rosemary Russo asked if Neil checked up on the Marine Technology class. Neil called a gentleman from the state who oversees the Tech Ed and he is waiting for him to return his call. He did call the next day to get some information. Rose thanked Neil.

Susan Walker attended the encore performance of the half time show of the WHHS band, dance team and cheerleaders and it was wonderful and she congratulates them for a long season and a great season and congratulates coach Boshea who she remembers as a high school football player when she began teaching. Neil said he can tell she has a lot of pride by talking about former students. Sue said she is so happy to see when they turn out well. He was a great kid then and he is just as wonderful now. Sue said she would always tease Neil at the Honor Society Inductions and say something like you never know how your former students are going to turn out do you Mr. Cavallaro.

Bob Guthrie attended the same performance and it was a nice time with the dance team, cheerleaders and the band and he thanked band president Sheridan for the invitation.

Chairman Morrissey congratulated Ms. Cosenza and said he was very proud of her and stated she does a great job for our students. Jim also congratulated the football team on a great year. They put a lot of pride in their hard work and the city was a buzz here for quite some time.

Following up I hope we can get those seat in at Carrigan somehow or someway and to follow up on with the person from the State of Connecticut on the Marine Technology Class. Neil will make a call first thing tomorrow morning.

#### **D.1. Approval of Minutes**

**D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting** held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on November 21st at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

Discussion: Pat and Patrick abstained as they were not present at the last meeting.

All board members present were in favor.

Minutes are approved.

**D.2. Resignations (Certified)**

**D.3. New Hire: (Certified)**

**16-74 Joe Pisano**, 549 Cobblestone Drive, Orange, CT 06477  
Head Boys Basketball Coach – Bailey Middle School  
Effective: 2016-2017 Sports Season  
Salary: \$1,950

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

Item 16-74

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Pat Libero seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-74 is approved

**D.4. New Business**

**16-75 Approval of the Dual Enrollment Program Contract with Gateway**

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.4 New Business Item 16-75

Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

Discussion: Pat Libero thinks it is a really great program and she is glad we are pursuing it. It gives a lot of opportunities to our kids and she knows it involves a lot of hard work, time, and energy to go and get certified for Eric and to get all the work done and mapped out and ironed out. She thanked Eric for all of his hard work to keep improving for our kids; it is a great thing.

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-75 is approved

**F. Informational**

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mark Palmieri made the motion

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary

Board of Education Student Report – December 5, 2016

Good Luck to the West Haven High School Cheerleaders who are competing in the Empire UA Regional Competition on Saturday at Nassau Community College.

Please come out and support the WHHS Cheerleaders on Thursday night in their encore performance prior to their competition.

All Advisories in December will be writing letters/holiday cards to our service men and women and veterans and will be participating in a Holidays Around the World Door Decorating Contest.

The Peer Advocates are collecting for the Toys for Joy drive with toy distribution will be on December 21st.

The Junior Class is selling Westie ornaments for \$8. Contact Erin McCauley or Taylor Paredes to purchase.

Congratulations to senior Salah Oumorou on his selection as a Soccer All-American.

Congratulations to the Cast and Crew of "Only One Night, Maybe Two" on their amazing and talented production last weekend.

Friday night is the DECA Formal Crystal Ball Dance at Cielo from 7:00pm – 11:00pm.

Interviews for the Outstanding High School Senior Program at UNH are being held this week.

The Choral Concert is Wednesday night at 7pm. We hope many of you can attend. The Choral Department is also performing at Ronald McDonald Trees of Hope on Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Tonight is WHHS PTSA night at Chipotle. Please plan to stop on your way home and tell them you support WHHS!

Tomorrow morning, the School Counseling Department is hosting Coffee and Conversations with the school counselors for grade 9 parents in the Little Theater.

WHHS is happy to host the "Choices Matter" program which brings in speakers to share their stories about the impact underage drinking had on their lives to the student body for juniors and seniors on December 14<sup>th</sup>. This life changing presentation led by Chris Sandy has been shared with over one million students across the country. In addition, the program includes an opportunity for the students to participate in interactive demonstrations throughout the day with a safe driving simulator and impairment goggles.

The annual Band Holiday Concert will be held on Thursday, December 22nd at 7:30pm. Admission to the concert will be free, but nonperishable food items will be collected at the door for WHEAT and West Haven's Project Hope Soup Kitchen, as well as supplies for the West Haven Animal Shelter.

