

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES  
April 5, 2004

The Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Edith E. Mackrille School, 806 Jones Hill Road, West Haven. Chairman John Carrano called the Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

Chairman Carrano announced to strike Item G -Residency Hearing from the Agenda

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne Heffernan  
Krista Pickering  
Raymond Collins  
M. Toni Paine  
George Monahan  
Robert Guthrie  
Howard Horvath  
Paul Messina

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Superintendent Paul Tortora  
Assistant Superintendent Neil Cavallaro  
Mayor Richard Borer Jr.

A. 27th Annual Spelling Bee Winners

Superintendent Tortora, presented award to Amira Anuar, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner, Nicholas Lanese, 6th Grade Winner, Samantha Smith, 5th Grade Winner, and City Wide Champion Andrew Carrion -Grade 7. Superintendent Tortora introduced Ann Valanzuolo, the Language Arts Coordinator who also congratulated Andrew on his competing in the State Wide Championship. She said that he did extremely well, and everyone should be proud.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

Chairman Carrano thanked everyone for coming tonight.  
Chairman Carrano asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Sandy Hicks, 89 Coleman Road, West Haven, CT, I am a student at West Haven High School. Spoke of the students that walked out on February 26, 2004 when Jeffery Johnson spoke at West Haven High School. She also showed the Board some graffiti that was on the bathroom walls for two weeks before she reported it to Mr. Stancil who had it removed. She feels there is tension within the staff and students and that it needs to be dealt with, not swept under the rug. The school system need to step up and say they have zero tolerance for any kind of discrimination.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone would like to address the Board.

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Gary Gregory, 842 Avenue, West Haven, CT 06156, read letter to the West Haven Black Coalition: As students of West Haven High, we feel as though it is necessary to ask the help of the West Haven Black Coalition in order to accomplish the goal of racial equality in our school environment and community. We ourselves tried countless times to come to a resolution and diminish the situation, but our voices have gone unheard. Although it was Mr. Johnson's speech that brought these issues to the forefront, it has only revealed to us a deeper issue at heart. We the students are not asking for the West Haven Black Coalition to handle the situation itself, but rather establish a partnership with the students of West Haven High for we are striving for the same goals. It is our understanding that the right in the city of West Haven for the Black community. We hope the West Haven Black Coalition will support the West Haven Student body as we stand up for ourselves and the generations to come, or rather for what is right. Thank you for your cooperation.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone would like to address the Board.

Carroll E. Brown, 56 Highview Ave. West Haven, CT, President of the Black Coalition, Former Member of the West Haven Board of Education. I stand to inform the Board that we are happy that we have been to ask to support the students of West Haven High; you realize that letter did not say African-Americans. It said: West Haven Students, whenever we are called on, we will be there for the students. What we have tried to do for years is to bring the two West Havens together. All I'm asking for now is we have a problem at West Haven High School. It is a problem that must be admitted. We have a problem in this City. We need to admit the problem, so that we can correct the problem and move forward. Denying it means there is not resolution, denying it means that you don't ever have to address it. I ask you Board Members to look seriously at why these students have come to the coalition because there has not been another entity to talk to; they have come to us, because we have opened our hearts and our homes, and we have had meeting where they have been afforded the chance to tell us there is a problem. As I look back in scrapbooks over the years. This is a problem that has been on going for as long as I have lived in this city. But my concern is that it continues to be denied. I'm asking you as a Board that doesn't not even represent my community, Allingtown or African Americans. I'm asking you to understand that we have a problem in West Haven High School that we need to look at, be it Teachers, Administers or Students. Everyone must understand that there is a problem here, admit it so we can correct it and move on. We can no longer deny the situation. It is a critical one that is getting bigger. You can not understand what our students are going through. You can not understand what we as African Americans go through every day. So, listen to us try to understand. What we are going through, what these kids are going through. I say to some of my colleagues I have been fighting in this city for 35 years, and this is the first year in the history of West Haven that there is a School Board, a Mayor and a Superintendent of Schools who is looking at the possibility of doing some work in Allingtown for the children of Allingtown. So I ask you, let me play on your conscience to understand there is a problem in West Haven High, it must be

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admitted to, and it must be corrected so we can move forward. Thank you.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone like to address the Board.

Cynthia Jennings, 1 Campbell Ave, West Haven, CT. I am new member of the town of West Haven, I am also a NNACP legal research Chairperson I am a civil right attorney practicing out of Bridgeport, and also an Educator and I have worked with the assistant Commissioner of Education. I also spent two years as a consultant for the state of Connecticut in the area of testing. I rise in support of the students of West Haven High School. I am very concerned about the image of West Haven High School. People I know in Hartford are asking me about West Haven, they are watching it on TV. They are very concerned about what is happening with the Black African American Students and their relationships in West Haven. The Board needs to understand, if you're talking about racial discrimination. It is not difficult to understand. It is simply different treatment of similar situations of students. If you treat a Black student different from a white student or you allow it to happen then it makes the town liable, it makes the teacher liable, the administrator liable, everyone is can get sued for that and all they have to prove is they were treated differently. Arbitrary disciplinary policies are in fact discriminatory, if you don't have a policy for expulsion, suspension, for anything, then you are facing liability as a town. You see what happen in East Haven because the killing of an African American male, it was not over the killing; it was because the town did not have a policy of training the police officers properly. So the town got sued for two and a half million dollars. That could happen in West Haven. I represent one of these students here that goes to West Haven High School. My concern is she not be targeted, that none of the students be targeted as they oppose discrimination, it is not illegal to oppose discrimination. You have a right to peacefully address your government. What I am asking the Board Members tonight is to take a look at how the teachers are acting toward students, take a look at if most special education students are black students. Take a look at if the school policies are being equally enforced. And establish some training programs so you won't be liable as a town for not providing training for the teachers, administrators, secretaries, and everyone who comes in contact with the students. It is a tremendous liability to the town. I think West Haven is a beautiful town, my husband and I love it here, but we don't like the fact that there are institutions that are harboring this discrimination, that things are being placed on the bathrooms walls and theses things are staying up. That is direct discrimination. The Town is liable for that. I am an attorney, I don't want to sue. I want the situation resolved. Unfortunately, sometimes the only thing you can do is sue. If the Administration, the Superintendent, the Mayor, and the school board work together we can have equal opportunities for African American students and the white. I like what happened here. That this school is in the 90% percentile. All schools should be. Black, White, Latino, all students should have the right to be in the 90% percentile. They should not have to work in a racial discrimination institution. I also want to support a new middle school in Allingtown. Carrigan Middle School needs to be

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rebuilt and we need to have opportunities for students that the system has already failed, including vocational training programs that can be run at night in a state of the art school. But we need to do what we do for all students across the Board, not just because of the liability, but because it is the moral and correct thing to do. Thank you

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone like to address the Board.

My name is Bill Johnson, I am looking at 2004, I look at 1960, 1930, what went wrong? This stuff went out with high pointed shoes. This should not be happening. Young kids, all kids. I don't care where they are living they should all have the same things. We are not living in the dark ages. You should be ashamed of yourself, this is not 1920. This is 2004, times have changed, your wrecking the kids. That's what makes hoodlums out of themselves, because they can't figure out what to do next. You need to start doing something about it now. Teach your own kids how to be respectful of other kids, at home. Because this stuff starts at home, it does not start in school, watching TV and pointing out different types of culture. This stuff has to stop. In the home this stuff has to stop. This is 2004. I get very upset when I see what is going on. Most of these kids I see in the street, they are all right, they go to school, then meet the devil then they take it to the street. It starts in school then goes to the street. Get real, you can't be doing this stuff all the time. Every time I come here I get upset, because you don't listen, until something bad happens like this. Get real it's going to happen.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone like to address the Board.

My name is Randall Smith, I live at 76 Greta Street, I was born in Philadelphia, but I was raised here. I have a son who went to school here, who has decided not to go to college. That is breaking my mother heart. I can't make him go to college. He chooses not to go. I feel that my son did not get the same opportunities as other students. I have a daughter now attending West Haven Schools. He will do what ever it takes to protect her. I will make sure she gets every advantage that the other students get. I feel that racial issues start with some parents. Not the children. Children are taught this at home. I also feel that the City has nothing for these kids. They have no place to go. If we had a recreation center with cultural events for the children. They would have a place to go.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone like to address the Board.

My name is Winston, I live at 74 Savin Park, and I have worked 27 years for Johnson and Johnson Medical at large corporate company. I have lived in West Haven for 35 years. He has had his own experience with this system. But he paid very particular attention to how his children were treated in classes. He feels that a lot minority kids are treated differently. Children today don't even know how to behave or dress for a job interview. He said he looks at the school board and they are all Caucasians, no minority. We need to be a well rounded school system. Kids to not want to hear you don't have time. Black,

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Whites, and Latinos should all be able to exist together. Thank you

My name is Karrol-Ann Brown, Assistant Attorney General. First and foremost I see a lot in my job with a lot of children being taken out of their homes. She was upset about West Haven High when Mrs. Brown came to see her. Everyone should sit down together in good faith. Even if they don't believe the problem exist. People who think there are issues can express them.

Chairman Carrano asked if anyone like to address the Board.

Chairman Carrano asked for a second time if anyone like to address the Board.

Chairman Carrano asked for the third and final if anyone like to address the Board.

Public Session ended at 7:50 p.m.

C. Reports:

C.1. Status of Schools

Superintendent Tortora mentioned the letter from the State of Connecticut on the approval of project 156-0125 EC, phase 1 of 1 for West Haven High School

Superintendent Tortora said that the Board has not pushed anything aside, and they do respect their concerns. Also they will be having a meeting next week with a consultant

Superintendent Tortora had Ronald Stancil introduce the new Student representatives for the Board. Mr. Stancil said the three Representatives were Shari Farhana, who was not here tonight as she is sick. He introduced Jerome Calhoum and Robert Proto.

C.1.a. Administration

Assistant Cavallaro welcomed the student representatives and said that if they needed anything or had any questions, to just ask. Assistant Cavallaro also congratulated the Spelling Bee winners and said he enjoyed being a monitor. He would like Board to approve two field trips, Stated that there were two student representatives for DECA present to answer any questions. And that Jim Celone, Coach of the Chess Team was also present to answers any questions. Congratulates Mr. Stancil and Dr. Whitney on Prep and testing for Capt. Congratulated Anne Heffernan on the success of the sauce-off.

C. Reports:

C.1.b. Board

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Anne Heffernan wanted to thank everyone for making the sauce-off a success; she would also like to thank Alan Belchak, Marge Schenkle, and Larry Gandolfi, Beth Rossi they were completely dedicated to making the Sauce Off a success. I have to say the level of competition was astounding I had to give out several rulings. First place went to Mrs. Paine, Bob McGrath from the Mayor's Office to second, Ron Stancil, third and Pat Proto for most popular vote. We not only made enough money to send the entire team, but have a thousand dollars more. I would like to thank the entire community for its support. May 26 will be the Chess Team Banquet for the State Title. Congratulated Chris Everone on getting Fitzgerald ready. Ask Mr. Horvath to consider naming press box after Joe McHugh.

Mr. Horvath, graduate of Mackrille School, proud parent of two children, wants to congratulate parents, teachers and students, the entire staff at Mackrille. Education is about adults teaching kids. This is a highly diverse school, and the Blue Ribbon is an honor well deserved.

Mr. Guthrie requested copy of Itinerary for Choral Group field trip. Congratulated West Haven High School Marching Band for St Patrick's Day Parade. Went to Fiddler on the Roof at West Haven High School students and staff are to be commended on a great job.

Toni Paine went to see Fiddler on the Roof, it was wonderful. The students are so talented. As always the students and staff did a wonderful job and had a great performance.

#### C.1.c. Committee

George Monahan reviewed last Athletic Committee meeting. (minutes in agenda ) Still waiting on legal advice on advertising at Rink and Ken Strong.

#### D.1. Approval of Minutes:

- D.1.a Regular Board Meeting of March 15, 2004
- D.1.b. Athletic Committee Meeting on March 29, 2004

#### Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.1.a. and D.1.b  
MOTION made by Anne Heffernan and SECONDED by Krista Pickering, Motion passed unanimously

D.2 Resignations (Certified)

- 04-51 Marc Addorisio, 50 Tanglewood Road, Stratford, CT 06614, Science Teacher at West Haven High School, Effective June 2004, Reason: Personal (enclosure)
- 04-52 Rebecca Murrell, 50 Francis Drive, Bethany, CT 06524, Speech-Language Pathologist, Effective April 12, 2004, Reason: Personal (enclosure)
- 04-53 Mildred Kalison, 54 Northrop Road, West Haven, CT 06516, Library Media Specialist at West Haven High School, Effective July 1, 2004, Reason: Personal (enclosure)
- 04-54 Scott Benoit, 19 Carroll Street, West Haven, CT 06516, Assistant Football Coach at West Haven High School, Effective April 6, 2004, Reason: Personal (enclosure)

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.2.04-51 through D.2. 04-54 MOTION made by Raymond Collins and SECONDED by Anne Heffernan, Motion passed unanimously

D.3 Resignations (Non-Certified)

- 04-55 Chirstine Turcotte, 170 Lamson Street, West Haven, CT 06516, 5 Hour a day Production Worker in Food Service at Carrigan Middle School, Effective March 12, 2004: Reason: Personal (enclosure)

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.3.04-55 MOTION made by Toni Paine and SECONDED by Raymond Collins, Motion passed unanimously

D.4. Appointments: (Certified)

- 04-56 Peter Harrison, 318 Sarah Circle, Orange, CT 06477, Boy's Baseball Coach at Carrigan Middle School, Effective March 29, 2004, Annual Salary \$1,950.00
- 04-57 Tom Klien, 547 Melville Avenue, Fairfield, CT 06432, Girl's Softball Coach at Carrigan Middle School, Effective March 29, 2004, Annual Salary \$1,950.00

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.4 04-56 through 04-57 MOTION made by Anne Heffernan and SECONDED by Krista Pickering, Motion passed unanimously

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D.5 Appointments: (Non-Certified)

04-58 Mary Malloy, 21 Savin Court, West Haven, CT 06516, Assistant Custodian 3-8 at Washington, Effective April 6, 2004, Salary: \$14,087.58 - Step 1

04-59 Beth Creegan, 231 Second Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516, 3 1/2 hour day 10:00a.m-1:30p.m., Cashier at Mackrille School, Effective April 6, 2004, Salary \$8.50 an hour

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.5 04-58 through 04-59 MOTION made by George Monahan and SECONDED by Toni Paine, Motion passed unanimously

D.6. Leave Absence (Certified)

04-60 Lynnzi Esquilin, 61 Grove Place, West Haven, CT 06516, Special Education teacher at West Haven High School, Effective: April 4, 2004, Reason: Maternity Leave (enclosure)

04-61 Michelle Barile, 5 Chin Clift Trail, West haven, CT 06516, Special Education teacher at Mackrille School, Effective: May 14, 2004 for the remainder of the 2003-2004 school year. Reason: Family Medical Leave (enclosure)

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.6 04-60 through 04-61 MOTION made by Krista Pickering and SECONDED by Anne Heffernan, Motion passed unanimously

D.7. Leave Absence (Non-Certified)

04-62 Francine Stratton, 40 Morgan Lane, West Haven CT. 10 Month Clerk at Savin Rock School, Effective April 16, 2004, approximately 4 - 6 weeks without pay, Reason: Medical Leave (enclosure)

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve D.7 04-62 MOTION made by Raymond Collins and SECONDED by Krista Pickering, Motion passed unanimously

E. 4 New Business

04-63 School readiness and Child Day Care Grant application for 2004-2005

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve E.4 04-63 MOTION made by Anne Heffernan and SECONDED by Paul Messina, Motion passed unanimously

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E. 4 New Business (continued)

04-64 Request from DECA Club to attend the International Career Development Conference in Nashville, Tennessee from Friday April 30 through Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Two students from DECA explained conference and what the chance to attend would mean to them. The experience would be educational.

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve E.4 04-64  
MOTION made by Howard Horvath and SECONDED by Paul Messina, Motion passed unanimously

04-65 Request from Chess Club to attend the National High School Chess Championships in Dallas, TX from April 15 through April 19th

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to approve E.4 04-65  
MOTION made by Anne Heffernan and SECONDED by Paul Messina, Motion passed unanimously

F. Informational:

Anne Heffernan - No  
Krista Pickering - No  
Howard Horvath - No  
Paul Messina - No  
Raymond Collins - No  
M. Toni Paine - No  
George Monahan - No  
Robert Guthrie - No

Chairman Carrano asked for a MOTION to adjourn. MOTION was made by Anne Heffernan and SECONDED by George Monahan, vote carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:15 p.m.