

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ERIN COMMITTEE MINUTES  
November 3, 2011  
Harriet North Courtroom**

The ERIN Committee Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Harriet North Courtroom of the City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on November 3, 2011. The meeting was called to order by Howard Horvath, Chairman of the Board of Education at 6:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**PRESENT: Howard Horvath  
Eric Murillo  
Rob Saley**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**ABSENT: Dorinda Borer**

**CABE OFFICIALS PRESENT: Lol Fearon  
Nick Caruso**

Howie Horvath welcomed everyone to the second ERIN Committee Meeting. It's titled 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evaluations. We will here about one type of evaluation and talk about another after our guests have left. He said he would have Lol Fearon and Nick Caruso introduce themselves and give a little bit of background. He told them to take up to 30 minutes and leave the last 30 minutes for the committee members. He cautioned his colleagues and said as you know we have done Superintendent conversations in executive session which is all confidential and needs to remain so. What we are talking about relative to Superintendent Evaluation here today is not specific necessarily to our current one but the kind of evaluation we might want to have for the current superintendent going forward and any other to come. It is really about how you do a good evaluation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century now that there is at least in my opinion and we will hear from our expert guests, a bigger emphasis on student achievement and student growth as it relates to the reauthorization of ESA which is known as No Child Left Behind and other things as you guys have been informed along the way; that and then we will talk a little bit about the other evaluation we have also been discussing for awhile. Howie turned the meeting over to Lol Fearon and Nick Mustaro and thanked them for coming.

Nick Caruso stated he has seen everyone there before more than once with CABB; Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. He said Lol Fearon will start and he will finish up. Lol said we met about a year ago when West Haven was first identified as a partner district and he came to a board meeting at one of the schools and spoke a little bit about the partnerships. Lol said he is the Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Accountability and Improvements at the State Department of Education and Nick and I are colleagues. The two of us go around the state doing work called Lighthouse which is a training program for various Boards' of Education showing how they can support the administration in approving student achievement. We have worked together in several school districts across the state and are happy to be here today.

Rob Saley asked if he could jump in and asked which districts. Lol said they are in eight districts right now; Ansonia, Shelton, Killingly, New London, and we have been in Westbrook. Rob said that is fine you don't have to go any further. Howie asked is there are about 18 or how many. Lol said there are 18 partner districts and we are working right now with 8 and have 4 more waiting. Howie said but there is a distinction, you get to be a partner actually by not doing so well. Yes, you are a partner district because you failed to meet AYP for three consecutive years as a district and we talk a little about that in my presentation.

When Howie asked us to come today it really was to be informal and he made that clear so any time you want to jump in anywhere please feel free to. Rob had a question. He asked if the whole district has to fail AYP for three consecutive years in order to be a partner district. Lol said yes because in some districts an individual school may not meet AYP for three consecutive years in Reading and Math. He wants to talk a little about this because some districts like what

happens with being a Partner District in terms of it opens up resources but at the same time NCLB is designed to identify failing districts and that is a terrible term.

He wanted to talk about how achievement can be a driver for evaluation. In fact there is a task force that is working statewide and is called PEAC and is the professional educators group that is looking at standards for evaluating teachers and school leaders. Their role is to come up with a set of guidelines that will probably be incorporated into some form of legislation. Governor Molloy has talked about putting together a legislative package and one of the things he said is it is supposed to address issues of teacher competency, teacher evaluation, professional standards and one of the component parts must be student achievement. A lot of districts have put on hold their work on Teacher Evaluation at this point waiting to see what will happen with this PEAC Group and what their recommendation will be.

Eric asked if that PEAC group has been formed yet. Yes it has been working now for about a year and its deadline is the spring of 2012 to bring forward these guidelines to the General Assembly. This will obviously be a legislative issue.

Howie said and that is a critical question about waiting or not waiting; some districts can afford to wait; some may not. You look at New Haven and what they have done. I don't suspect PEAC is going to turn around and say no you have to undo everything you have done because it doesn't reflect...Lol interjected it more than likely is going to be something looking like New Haven's model. He said if he were a betting man he would think that with this particular governor we will probably see a recommendation for a statewide evaluation instrument. Right now for 166 school districts there are 166 evaluation instruments so we are moving towards a much more standardized approach. The reason it is called the next generation of assessment is because this is the terminology that is being used now with the reauthorization of ESEA which is the old name for No Child Left Behind. Here is what we do in current practice and this is why it is a good time for you all to be thinking about this. Under the current No Child Left Behind approach to student achievement the State Department of Education Association (SEA) has to set annual measurable objectives AMO's and this is an accountability system through AYP. If you meet those AYP AMO's then you are not a district in need if you fail to meet them three years in a row you become a partner district and that brings in some requirements like a district improvement plan, school improvement plans, participation in CALI, executive coaches and lots of different resources that are available to the district.

The problem with AYP is that it is a moving target. A good example of that is when AYP as a result of No Child Left Behind came in, if you looked at those numbers in 2003 AYP for reading on the CMT was 57% proficient by 2010 it had risen to 89% proficient and by 2014 it is 100% proficient so you can imagine that a school district that currently is at 90% proficiency which you would agree is pretty good right and in 2014 unless it gets to 100% it will be a failing school district. That is why this concept about failing school districts doesn't make an awful lot of sense. It is more punitive than it is anything else.

The second number in 2003; the 62% proficient is the CAPT score so if you had students coring 62% on the CAPT then you were a proficient school you were not a failing school. By 2010 that

number meets 91% proficiency so you need to have 91% of your students scoring at proficiency to become a failing school district.

Howie said just for clarity sake the theory behind it originally flawed as it might be was when they started back in; when did they start. They started back in 2001 with No Child Left Behind but this was the first year of the targets. Howie said so from 2003 to 2011 they wanted to graduate the bar so they didn't say you have to be up here even though we would like you up there. What we are saying is that it might be unrealistic at the very end to say everybody but ultimately and he will talk about how it probably will change but the way it works is when the kids take CMT they can get a below basic, a basic, proficient, goal and then advanced. Howie said so proficient is in the middle and you are basically saying those kids can read and are proficient at math in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and if not that is when you start to see the issues. Lol said yes and they are purely proficiency rates they are not equivalent to grades so being proficient on the third grade CMT does not necessarily mean you are reading at a third grade level; they don't equate. If you look in the area of Math the original proficiency rate was that 65% of your students have to be proficient in order to be successful and by 2010 it gradually went up to 91% proficiency. (At this point Dorinda Borer tried to call in to listen to the program on a speaker phone but was not successful for very long).

The other set is the CAPT scores 59% to 90%. You could be a district that started at 50% proficiency in Math. If you were a school district in 2003 and had 60% of your kids proficient on the CAPT then you were OK. If that had risen over the years to 85% you have made a 25% percentage point growth in terms of the percentage of kids at proficiency but you are still below the target so the issue is it doesn't reward growth.

Eric asked what the remedy is. Lol said the Waiver is happening now. The State of Connecticut has indicated to the Department of Education that we will apply for a Waiver. The application will be due in February and this takes off the sanctions of No Child Left Behind. Now under ESEA the Elementary Secondary Education Act it allows the local board of education flexibility in setting these meaningful goals so it is no longer just a score a number. It's now a case of saying what do we want as a state. It lifts some of the federal requirements for restructuring. For example if you have a school in year four of being in need of improvement you must restructure that school and there are four or five models for restructuring.

Rob asked what was meant by restructuring. Replace the principal was the response. Rob asked if this was mandatory. Yes. You replace the principal in one of the models in another model every teacher has to reapply for their position; you have to replace 50% of your staff. Rob asked if there is any way out of this. No. Eric said even with the waiver. Howie said he means federal law stays the same unless you get one of those (waiver). Howie said let me ask this critical question since we have two schools in that boat. Can we afford to gamble that we are going to get a waiver? Oh yes the state will get the waiver more than likely and politically it looks that way. One of the things you can do with a school in that type of a position is that one of the remedies is for greater oversight on the part of the central office. For example the Superintendent could put together a management team that works with the principal; there are lots of different remedies. Howie said what about the school governance council related to this. Lol said that is more of a state initiative not a federal initiative. Howie said but as it relates to a

school that has to be reconstituted. The school governance council was mandatory for the lowest 5% performing schools by January 15<sup>th</sup> of this year. For all low performing schools which are about another 100 to 150 schools you have to have a governance council in place by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Howie asked if they would have a say in what happens to reconstitution. It is an advisory position and it has to be majority parent. He thinks 7 parents and 5 staff members, the principal and community. Rob wants to get a clarification on this so in year four for the two schools that have not made AYP we need to restructure. We are in year four right now so there has to be a plan in place. The next board has to have a plan in place to restructure these schools and in year five we have to restructure these schools. Lol said in some way and if you don't restructure the state can come in and restructure. Eric said but that is the old way and if they get a Waiver which is most likely going to happen that means that they are going to be able to come in...Lol said but there are two things that are happening. Connecticut General Statutes 10-223 is what will govern the interventions and that goes back to 2008/2009 and was reorganized under Section 10-111 which gives the state authority to intervene in districts that don't meet standards and remember the state is going to set those standards with the Waiver. Rob asked what the chances of them actually doing that. Lol said about 100%. We reconstituted Bridgeport's Board of Ed and we put a special master in Windham. They are pretty serious and this new commissioner is even more serious.

There are a new set of assessments that will be in place and this CEBACK is called the smarter balance assessment consortium. Smarter balance is a consortium of 37 states, and there is a second consortium move a smaller group but they are working on assessments that can be accessed by districts that will be tied specifically to the common core standards. Lol said West Haven is ahead of the game because of the work that the district has done with Larry Ainsworth and developing the common core. These next generation assessments will be geared specifically towards those common core curriculum standards. The expectation will be that the state will set meaningful goals based upon those new assessments. These will be statewide by grade tied specifically to the curriculum. Howie stated he always said the common standards are really more about common assessments and a lot of them will be done on line so you can get the data right away. Yes there will be a data bank. Eric said so they (the state) will be ready for this if we get the waiver. Lol said they will be ready to meet the curriculum issue of it but the assessments are still being developed. Up until 2014 the CMT will be the measure. Sometime between now and 2014 these new assessments will start to creep in. Howie said but there is a chance that even though it is CMT as it is now that rather than look at are you proficient, you will be looking at a year over your growth. Now progress is measured on the CMT by status and what that means that is what you did in 2011 is compared to what you did in 2010 with different sets of kids. You take the third grade from 2010 (at 50% proficiency) in 2011 (55% proficiency) so in grade three we grew five percentage points but those are with different kids. You are not measuring the same thing over and over time and it is year to year. He then discussed matched cohort growth and how to read the charts which will be put on the website. What Mr. Fearon recommends you look at is matched cohorts, progress over time and your third area should be what target do you want to set with your administration. The state sets proficiency but that may not be what you aspire to. You may aspire to goal as a measure of improvement not just at proficient. The implications over the next couple of years as we move towards changes in evaluation procedures and changes in assessment is a transition to the growth model away from a status model. The use of Vertical Scale Scores (bands of scores that kids are

within) as opposed to just pure proficiency or goal scores can be discussed with the administration. One of the things about Vertical Scale Scores which are available through [reports.com](http://reports.com) is that you can actually start to look at individual students and the growth that they have made over time.

Howie said the other thing that is important when we talk about the next step of evaluation after they are done is that teachers are right to say don't judge me on my CMT scores. I think in an attempt to be more accountable and transparent we started the year by having the principals bring up the CMT scores by teacher over years comparatively; they can say this is the case. What is ultimately better and we are working towards this is to say don't worry we are looking at how your group of like students grow. If your kids stay in the proficient band but grow 35% we need to recognize that and need to know what you are doing. We need to say great job. To the contrary if that child usually scores 200 in the CMT reading and now scores a 150 and the kids in that class that get a 250 are getting a 200 that also throws up a red flag to say what is happening when they get to this class at the end of the year. That tells you more about what is going on in the classroom the other tells you more about the student. Lol said the other is the curriculum work that you are already doing and he is sure Anne and Neil are aware of this but what types of assessments are you using that are aligned with common core. If you are thinking of student achievement as a driver then it is a mutually agreed upon goal. Howie said this is a good segue to.....Rob interjected that he would like to ask a question. We have done everything that you have talked about; CALI, the professional development, the core assessments but our scores are still not doing as well as he thinks they should be doing. What is the next step that we can do? I think it is teacher evaluation and parental involvement. We are doing everything right but the results aren't there. Lol said that most of the work that even we are doing which will probably change is focusing more on the teaching and learning aspect and one of the things we are not paying attention to is the structure; for example where your resources are targeted. You won't get any more money but if you have identified a particular area of need are you targeting your resources toward that particular area of need. An example would be if you targeted your test scores over time and saw that the third grade test scores were depressed but between fourth and fifth and fifth and sixth good progress was made then maybe your areas of need are the Kindergarten to second grade or Pre-K to second grade level. You might think that structurally should we be targeting our resources K – 2. That is not abandoning the other but it is saying we need to target this area and if you are a priority school district for example with school readiness monies you might say do we need to address some needs specifically in that area. If issues are around the high school the secondary level is the structure of the program meeting the needs of kids. This is not to say in your district but sometimes it comes down to issue around leadership. It may be within the administrative structure at the school leadership level; if there is a lack of leadership in moving the school forward. The district sets the target.....Howie interjected in our case because we are a district in need of improvement you set it. Lol said the target is something that is in your district improvement plan...Howie said yes it is. Lol said you are going to improve the percentage of students scoring at proficiency by 15%...Howie said ours is 10%. Then say 10% over those three years. Every school must have a school improvement plan that is aligned with the district improvement plan so school X because of where they started has to move their kids 15 or 20% so now what you are looking at over that three year period is have they met their goal.

Eric said so that 10% is not in general. No Lol said you might have another school that only has to move it 2 ½%. Howie made the point that we have had that for eight years and it doesn't really matter but now that we are a partner district they actually and may provide us a report back on how we have done come July when the data is available. Lol said we do a monitoring report and are working with you all along with our technical assistance team. They come in during the spring and review all the data including when the CMT and CAPT data come our and a report is written which comes back to the district. Howie said so that is not something we have ever seen even though we have had the goal.

Rob asked if he could ask one more question. CABE has come down I have to ask them questions. Rob asked why we had to leave at 7:00 PM. Howie said another meeting needed the room. Rob thought Planning and Zoning was cancelled. Howie said OK then we aren't in a rush. Rob asked if we get any money because of that partnership from you. Lol said the money is in the form of professional development. Rob said he understood and thanked him. There are executive coaches for the principals, there is technical assistance to the district and professional development has a cost to it and it is free.

Howie said the segue I wanted to take you to was when you said if we are going to use student achievement and I think the ERIN Committee believes it should be in there and it should be mutually agreed upon and should be a reach but reasonable and what he printed out and handed out (Schedule A) is what he thinks might make up a pretty comprehensive evaluation. He asked Nick Caruso (as a former superintendent) if this starts to address the kinds of things that all superintendents need to pay attention to. Does this start to address the kinds of things boards should be asking and evaluating superintendents on? If not what would you take out or what would you add or what would you suggest. Nick said some of these things you can break down for example Personnel Development. If what you mean by that are things like A. a recruiting, induction and retention program for staff. Do you have a clear recruiting, induction and retention program for staff? That is kind of a one shot deal you set that up and it just functions it is a business as usual kind of approach. So you could evaluate your superintendent on a check list that went through this or you could zero in on some very specific areas that you want to focus in on and that becomes sort of a carve out of a general check list to Lol. If he were being evaluated on this there probably wouldn't be enough time in the day or days in the week for him to do a highly competent job in all of these things. Howie said I wanted to start big and work our way down. Lol said some of these are structural issues that a good system should have in place. Howie asked Lol to identify which is which. Lol said Personnel Development for example if you separate out professional development for that it is the process you have for hiring staff. Howie said OK. So that should be a policy in the form of a policy. You have Policy Development and Support that is kind of a board function that might be an area there. Lol definitely would take those two out. He doesn't know what Howie means by Performance Management; is that the evaluation system. Howie said it would be how do you know you are getting the best out of your people, how do you know where they are against their goals and objective and how do you know where you are against your goals and objectives. Lol said what he would say there is it becomes then a case of having a system in place and what you are judging your superintendent on is whether or not they are following and that becomes a kind of a check list with a narrative that says here is what is being done. Do you want all your staff evaluated every year? Do you want only staffs that are in need of improvement (which is sort of the model of New Haven for

example). So if you put that in place what you are doing is judging your superintendent on whether or not that is being fully implemented. The part named Strategic Planning and Use of Resources is one of those things that every superintendent should be thinking strategically...Howie interjected every year that is an ongoing...Lol said so what you might want to say is Do you have a strategic plan and if you do how is it being monitored. Who is doing the monitoring and are there procedures in place. Lol said what you have here in all honesty is a kind of a systems approach to whole district improvement so what you need to do is identify in here what standards you want to see in a superintendent and carve out those areas that meet those standards. Howie thinks he is absolutely right and asked for an example. Lol said leadership. There are specific leadership standards and some cover these light a vision, like community engagement, like teaching and learning instructional practices. All of those are part of leadership. So what you are doing is you are judging when you judge all of these things you are judging leadership so there is no need to really have a separate leadership. Finance and Budget Oversight are operational kinds of things and if you went through this and pulled out the kinds of things that are operational and those that had to do with teaching and learning then you would cluster them and you would be looking at teaching and learning and then the subsets of that and you would be making some judgment and you might be looking at operations of management as a subset of that. Howie said OK that is great. Howie thought this was just a comprehensive over arching view to get this kind of conversation going. A further discussion continued.

Nick Caruso said Light House kind of consumes a lot of the work he does now because it is very powerful work and it relates to boards creating the conditions where high student achievement can take place. An educational term used in Light House is reciprocity of accountability; this is pressure and support. The board has an obligation to provide pressure to make sure that work gets done so it is done through accountability, through setting expectations, goals, district improvement plans etc. and then it is looking at the data as you have looked at to insure that in fact we are doing what we said we were going to do. That really, to him, is to where we need to refocus evaluation in general. Do we have a clear expectation of what needs to be done? Is it clearly articulated. Do we understand what plan or direction we are taking to get there and last but not least are we getting there. The other side to this pressure and support is and that is an obligation of the board, superintendent and staff is do we provide the resources whatever those may be to do it. It is one thing to say we are going to improve student achievement by 20%, 30%, or 40% but if nothing else changes shame on us. If in fact we have higher expectations for literacy what are we going to do different to make sure we are going to get there. Setting the most grandiose goals in the world is going to get you nowhere if nothing else changes.

There are very creative ways to define leadership but most of them aren't just taking over the reins and just go; it is collaborative, bringing people together, setting goals and working toward them. Frankly he is very unhappy with the evaluation tools he sees including those that they give out because they don't focus on student achievement; they focus on tasks. His goal and it is not one that he can just sit down and do in a week is to align board evaluation and superintendent evaluation to better meet those seven conditions. To him getting away from did I do a specific task to is our culture one where we allow learning to take place staff wise whatever.

Lol said you have a district improvement plan and if you use that as the basis for how you would judge the effectiveness of leadership in the district then you might take something like the performance issue and that is tied in with high quality instructions; high quality teaching. So one of the things you are talking about within your plan is in order to do this curriculum we need high quality teachers. What do we have in place in our district that insures that we have the highest quality instruction going on. That becomes an item that you want to use to sort of evaluate the leadership.

Howie said just to let you know that there is like thinking in the room this is our district improvement plan shrunk to fit on the paper pass out and the second page is the same thing for the board to your point about a team effort here. How are we doing 3 might be great 2 is OK and 1 is we need to do something. Isn't so much of this can we come up with the right plan and strategies applying the right resources (as Lol was telling Rob) in the right way, in the right areas, execute that plan and get the results, which isn't whether we save \$1,000.00 on that building's heat; the bottom line for the plan should be we have grown student's achievement by X% in all areas. If that is the bottom line then that is the best way to go about evaluating anything. Can you put the plan in place and execute it and are you getting the results.

Nick said one of his jobs at CAFE is to help board's right goals. Since his involvement with Light House he gets more and more frustrated because boards are setting goals based on nothing. They are basically on supposition. Typically when I do that I spend a little time on one of these up here and say if you made your goal based on the way we have traditionally looked at data you know draw that line across; that doesn't give him enough information to decide what we need to do next. Frankly even looking this way may not be enough because it will raise other questions which we need to get answers for which will raise additional questions. The point he is trying to make is when his district improvement plan was written because that is the work of the district; you can't as a board say we will set that aside because we want to go here. The district improvement plan is the work of the district. A further discussion ensued.

Howie said if you sum up what you are saying is and it is interesting; use data to inform decision making. Yes. Nick said if you know that your district improvement plan was put together after careful scrutiny of the data then that should support the work that comes out of it. Howie said yes the results should be there. Lol said and that is what you are going to judge your leadership on. Howie said that is what it is all about and that is what everybody else is judged on. There are other variables certainly. Eric stated isn't this something we should be getting together on now. Howie said that is a good question and we will talk about this in the next little piece of our conversation about teacher evaluation but the state offered to help us with the growth model in a small pilot. We have had a problem getting anything passed that but help is there and he thinks ultimately right now teacher's can go to ctreports.com as can you and get a lot of CMT stuff; the status stuff by every variable. If you want to get how the students have grown you need an Id and a password. That is understandable because that is student identifiable. Howie said what we need as a board I think is classroom data that doesn't identify students that says how did that class grow year after year and over the last three years. He doesn't know if they can ask for that yet or not. Lol said the new CEDA is having process with the portal for that but is supposed to be able to do that. Some districts don't have the data platform to do this kind of work so that may be where some of the resources go. Howie said he happens to know that our administration has

been looking at just that and will be getting there soon but in my mind not soon enough because we have kids that would benefit as would adults in knowing this kind of stuff. Nick said the technology is catching up slowly not as quickly as we would like but it is getting there.

Howie said this was excellent and we might have you back if you could stand it.

Rob wanted to ask another question. He stated we go through all this data and do all the work with Larry Ainsworth and do CALI and school climate all of this and at the end of three or four years our test scores are still not there. Parents are frustrated because every five or six years there is another thing we are throwing out. We took the fifth grade out and put it into the middle schools a while ago. Then last year we took the fifth and sixth moved it to Carrigan as the Intermediate School and seventh and eighth grade went to Bailey and became the Middle School. This is frustrating as a parent and the point is we are doing everything every five or six years we do something different and we don't get any better results. It seems like the bar is always raised and I am for raising the bar because he has two college educated kids and another graduates soon so we want our children to do better.

Eric said in his personal opinion he thinks what happens is the educational system has changed so much not just changes in curriculum but also with the people who attend school. We must be able to keep up with this change in demographics. Lol said you are absolutely right about demographics. Eric said this is what is going on. Lol said there is a cultural shift. Nick gave an example and said in his district the top 10% of the kids were moving out and the kids coming in matched (the same number) but the average kid coming into the district was five years below grade level. If you think about it we maintained our test scores and to him that is something that if you really think about we actually weren't doing as bad as we thought we were but how can you tell the federal government or whoever. The reality is if you are doing things properly it shouldn't matter whether the child comes in lower or higher whatever. It gets back to the fidelity and he thinks that is part of what the evaluation; whatever you use for an instrument has to get back to. Did we set the right plan in place, is it being implemented properly and consequently did we get the results we are looking for and if we aren't getting the results we are expecting we have to keep asking why not. Los said one item on the board's agenda every month should be the district improvement plan. It is not like you are trying to micromanage the plan but what you want to know is what is happening with it. In professional development it is not just that everybody is being trained it is what evidence do you have where the training is being turned into instructional practice. Is there a process in place so that a principal can go in and say we have been working with data teams for example so if we got data teams and we trained all of our staff in data and data teams now what process do we have in place that insures data teams are meeting regularly and what type of data are they looking at. One presentation might be that a representative of a school data team come to the board and talk about the process they are using to look at data to change instruction. Howie said so they are learning data team work and the protocols but the rubber meets the road when it comes to implementation. Lol said does it change practice. Howie said does it change practice and is the practice better than it was to improve student achievement. Because if it doesn't change practice and it is not good then you are going to get lousy results and you can't just say did we do all the professional development. You have to say how it is being implemented. Is it being implemented with fidelity, effectively with results. Lol said and what are those measures. One of the things about data teams is how do

you know what is the measure for an effective data team. The state has developed a set of rubrics for effective data teams. One of the things might be a measure is that once a quarter or the beginning or end of the year every data team completes the standards for an effective data team and checks off areas; it is a self assessment. You do that and then a principal if it is an instructional level data team or the central office if it is a school data team comes in and does an assessment of that data team and then the two of them compare. One of the measures of an effective data team is that you are measuring their effectiveness so that could be reported to the board.

The most critical variable in order to have effective data teams is time; time to meet. What are you doing to create time as a district for those data teams to meet. Some at the elementary level it may be common planning time that is devoted to data teams, some districts it is early release, others it may be a shift in the schedule or lengthening of the school day; some are no cost some have a cost. As a board what is our role in supporting that initiative of the data team. Nick said then you say are we using the time effectively for data teams.

Howie stated he knows that our leadership has worked very hard enhancing that capability and insuring that it works well. They are as frustrated or more than my colleagues here and I know that their next area of focus is the leadership, the principal leadership, the building leadership to say what is your role, how do you support it, what do you need to know, how do we need to support you to be able to support them and that makes great sense so I know we are doing a lot of great things.

Howie said this has been great and he wishes that more of our board meetings were conversations like this. Nick said this is kind of what we give boards in Light House. You may have the one business meeting a month and maybe the second meeting is less formal. Howie said that is an interesting thought. You can ask for a chart like this for your fourth graders in reading and ask that it be split up by children on free and reduced lunch or if you have a particular minority group that you are trying to make sure you are not leaving behind. Break them out separately and then instead of having someone present the data to you hand it out to everybody and break it up into groups of two or three and have them spend 20 minutes and then everybody report back: what did we see from this. Don't tell us what we saw that can be part of the conversation after the fact. You are intelligent folks and will look at different things. That is what we have found to be the most valuable at Light House; we let people get their hands dirty.

Lol said when the district presents its CMT scores it is not going to say we are doing a bad job it is going to say last year we were at 40% proficient and this year we are 45% proficient; we are growing. But it is really about where kids start and where kids end up because ultimately it is about college and career readiness. The issue has to be how do you guarantee success for 100% of your kids; however you define them. Nick said the research does show that a lot more kids can learn than we expect to learn. There is a physiological reason why 3% or 4% may not reach a level that we consider successful but that leaves a whole lot more that have been falling through the cracks. This means changing what adult behaviors are. CAPS is coming out with a proposal and one of the things they say very clearly is that in the old system time in the constant and achievement is the variable. So if we send all the kids through the same classroom, same teacher but some learn at a different rate so at the end of the year they are all over the place. What we

have to do is change it so learning is the constant and time is the variable. So no matter how long it takes them or what process from which they learn the expectation is they will learn. Howie said he thinks that is so true and said if some percentage of kids are coming in three years behind how is it you think you can catch them up by giving them the same education as the kids that are at grade level or even if you give them just a little more. The reality is part of it is that it is the nature of our industry or world because if Sikorsky got an order for 100 helicopters they don't turn to the people on the first shift and say good news and bad news there will be a little bonus but you will have to work around the clock for the next month. You just can't do it. So they put on a second shift so that is a different approach to solving a different problem. Howie stated that he believes we need to figure out more creative ways to provide the right kids with the right amount of ...Nick interjected we don't have to figure it out in one sense we know what works there is enough research out there already...Howie interjected to allow it to happen.....Nick said but then it is how do you get it into your culture; what do you need to.....Howie interjected a lot of times it is just will; it's money it's will it's leadership. Nick said it starts with a sense of urgency and that is again when we talk about the role of the board and in essence your chief executive officer your superintendent. Are we transmitting to our community enough the sense of urgency of where we are and where we need to be? Howie said that is a good segue to the next section and he thanked them very, very much.

Rob had one last question to ask. As a district are we better off building a brand new high school and bonding thirty million dollars which will end up being sixty two million dollars after 25 years or are we better off implementing all day kindergarten for all of our elementary classes which would probably cost us \$800,000.00 a year. Lol said here is the question what are you going to put in that new high school; are you going to put the same programs in there. Rob said no we are changing some things. We are getting rid of a lot of our industrial arts and courses like that. Nick said it is really more about what do we want to do because Oxford was the only high school in this century to build a truly new high school because every one else is putting up new buildings but is taking the old stuff and putting it in a new façade. Oxford took it seriously when they did it and asked what do we want the high school of the future to look like. When they had that conversation it got down to wait a minute if we design the 21<sup>st</sup> century high school but don't change the academics in the kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade program these kids are going to walk into something they aren't prepared for so it actually helped transform the entire district to say what do we want our graduates to look like and what skills do they need. Part of this would be to look at the data and if your data shows reading scores or math scores where they are really pretty low in my mind I would be thinking what do I need to offset the kids starting at a lower level and maybe that means more early education. He would turn back to see what the data shows. Lol said in the next four or five years you are going to be faced with the secondary school reform. That is not going to go away but that has been put on hold right now. Rob asked what that entails. It is an act of the legislature with one component part stating to increase the number of required credits for graduation. It was put off because of the financing a money issue at the state level. There is a task force right now at the legislative level that is looking at implantation of the new high school graduation requirements. There will be pressure at both ends with Molloy an Early Childhood person and universal pre-school of some form will probably come along. We have just gone for a fifty million Race to the Top application on October 19<sup>th</sup>. He would say it is better than 50/50 that we get awarded and we will know about that in the new year so that will have an impact on Early Childhood Education in the State. At

the other end you have this high school reform going on that will come into play so you are kind of caught between the two things. Lol said a good thing about the building is there may be some off set in terms of state monies. Rob said well we are getting 74 cents on a dollar but we still have to bond the thirty million. Lol said but in the grand scheme of things you are looking at a 75 year building. Rob said he hopes so because the building we have is only 45 years old. Lol said but think about the changes that have occurred. A further discussion continued. Howie the board members thanked Lol and Nick for coming.

West Haven Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Development Pilot 2011-2012-(Schedule B) Howie said lets talk about the other 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evaluation we have been talking about for a long while and we have asked these experts a little bit about it along the way and I think it ties significantly to this idea of looking at student growth is essential. You need to understand what is really going on and you need to be able to understand it so that you can help either as a board member, as a teacher, as a principal or as a superintendent or assistant superintendent. I think we are lucky we have leadership that is really pushing everybody hard but this ERIN Group education reform innovation and new grant monies was formed to try and look at new and innovative, outside the box approaches to improving student achievement and we have been doing that to support in addition to what has already happened relative to CALI, to Doug Reeves training, data driven decisions making, school climate and all the stuff we talked about and mentioned earlier. I think and let me ask you again this particular committee believes that there is another critical cornerstone that we are not there yet with and that is teacher evaluation and support. Really, how do we support teachers better tied to student growth and other potential variables so that they have a better sense of what is going on year to year, we have a better sense of what is going on year to year, we know where to identify strengths of teachers that might be master teachers based on the way their students grow, can be recognized and identified and used to help support teachers that may have more difficulty for whatever reason. They might be new, they might have some other challenges but this kind of a system allows you to take a look at that and address that more directly. So let me ask you are you still feeling like teacher evaluation and support is an important ingredient and something we need to see happen sooner rather than later. Rob said he believes because we have done all the things that we have talked about previously that there are still some components of this district wide improvement that he would like to see, and teacher evaluation is one of them. He thinks this is one of the biggest issues along with more parental involvement. He knows we do many things to get the parents involved. We don't really reach out enough to parents who are Latinos or Spanish speaking people because a lot of those parents don't have computers or lab tops so we can't reach those parents through the school portal and there has to be a way to reach those parents. Howie said there has to be a way but Eric what is your feeling about teacher evaluation and its role. Eric said he is definitely in favor of student growth. Howie said looking at it from a student growth perspective. Eric said absolutely that is the whole key to everything we are doing. Obviously one of the components is teacher evaluation for that to be successful to work. The timing and the time for teacher evaluation; what are we talking about; how long does it take, how we implement it, and who gets involved in doing it. Howie said those are good questions and my hope had been to take the idea of doing this and if you remember about a year and a half ago we brought it to the overall board in our subcommittee meeting when everybody was here; the superintendent and assistant superintendent, the union was there and a number of community members and we said this is something we would like to start working on and the answer was fundamentally we agree it is important; this is Howie's interpretation I should say of the answer, that it is important but right

now we are focused on CALI and some other elements and we would like to ask you to wait until the school year is over. So I felt like that was the appropriate thing to do give them their request and I do know they have been working very hard. So as soon as that end of year came I started the conversation. The end of year is here so let's start thinking about what we might be able to do to facilitate a thoughtful, reasonable, non-threatening but valuable pilot. So that conversation started up again over six months ago and has been progressing. He handed out evidence that it has been progressing and a sample of what a group of people came up with relative to a pilot. Howie said we can talk about this a little bit and in answer to your question Eric about who, what, where and how. Howie said he has sent the committee members lots of information over the internet. He said to look first at the matrix that is basically a 12 step program. He said on the one hand we don't want to get a lot of people engaged and involved but on the other we need to get everybody at some level involved so the conversation was how about we select and offer it to ten teachers on a voluntary basis. At that time it was the superintendent, the teachers union, the assistant superintendent for some of the meetings, Howie and occasional some other of the executive council. We said lets think this through as to what makes sense so ten teachers, some number of administrators and some number of the executive council did. Just think for a moment of a team of 16 just to use a number. The teachers would start the year like now and sit down with their principal and talk about who is in their classes based on demographics, based on volatility are these kids that will stay, based on Special Ed needs, based on ELL and most importantly based on student growth data that they have access to. So, how do my kids typically grow year after year in this grade level or in a class like this in their English, Reading and Mathematics? They would have that conversation so everyone would have the same starting place. They would then set the teacher one goal tied to student growth between now and the end of the year in reading and math and one other goal tied to student achievement but not tied to the CMT score. This is what the committee members were talking about and there has been back and forth talk about this and that is fundamentally what we have talked about. Somebody would prepare the data for them to have that meeting and another important step along the way is that you need to have a common definition of effective teaching. There are a number of them out there and Charlotte Danielson has one, Robert Marzano has one, the state has one, and we as a district has one. It would be what am I looking for as a principal or master teacher when I walk into a classroom when I observe one of these 10 teachers. What kind of strategies are they employing, how are they engaging the students; there is like a checklist or a rubric and once you agree that is what you are looking for and that is what you should be striving for across the district ultimately it will be just for the ten teachers you will have some strength in setting up some standards like they were talking about. You will then start conducting these observations; just three. It was agreed that none of what comes out of this pilot would be binding, none of the teachers that participate would get any kind of a rating other than satisfactory; no risk. The intent of the whole pilot was just to get going and engaged in the process instead of just talking about it in theory, experience it and start to reflect on it every month. Eric said there is no real consequence to this. Howie said there needs to be a commitment to do it but no consequence. The next thing they would commit to doing in addition to these observations is that they would hold two meetings once a month so there would be a meeting in November, December, January right through May and that meeting would be of that core group of 16 people and they would be talking about: how is it going just like we talked about tonight when we talked in our subcommittee meeting; how is that going, we thought this would be good its not good, we thought that would be no good it is good, this is what we would

recommend changing lets capture that thought now so it May when we do a summary we have that information. The second meeting of that same month and this is very critical and this came from the President of the New Haven Teacher's Union David Chiccarelli who made a great point and said everybody needs to weigh in on this and express their concerns, everybody needs to have their questions answered, everybody needs to have a vehicle and an opportunity to make suggestions or provide input. That would be the second meeting every month that would be held at the high school in the biggest auditorium depending on how many teachers wanted to come and find out what is this pilot all about. People would have it explained to them but they would have a chance to come to a meeting once a month and say how is it going, what is it, I have a question, does this mean this, does that mean that, here is what I suggest, these common formative assessments are great but I have five different subjects and can't keep up with the data and I need help; like he said a technology platform; whatever but that would give a chance for everybody it wouldn't be just a small group deciding, it wouldn't be the board deciding, it wouldn't be the superintendent deciding, it would be this team talking to all teachers which at the end of the day coupled with all principals are really the most important group. Along those lines they would be getting professional development on how to do effective observations. The teachers would learn what they will be observed on, they would get training on that effective model of teaching, they would get general PD and also specific so each teacher might have an area of weakness that kind of information will be captured and they will be provided that kind of PD because we have the money for PD. So that is the observation over the next seven months so three over seven months, it would have been over nine months or eight months but anyhow it would start and at the end you would come together and you would say OK now let's put together a summary of the experience so we can share it with everybody in written form; the community, the board of education, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, principals and other teachers what we felt happen and how we felt about what happened and make recommendations on how to go forward into next year as we prepare to gear up for the following year which could be moved up depending on what happens with these labors to actually do it system wide. We can start now, learn now, inform next year, have a much bigger pilot so you can really get ready for when the whole school district has to do some version of that. It would be just a summative report as you would expect in any kind of project over the course. There would be no summative rating so at the end nobody would get you are a 1 or you are a 5 but they can start talking about that if that is a part of what needs to be done. That should be in their hands to discuss. It could be a rating of 1 to 4 ultimately this PEAC group is going to weigh in on this as will the state because a lot of this is driven by the fact that this will become law in the year 2013/14 and that the new commissioner really wants it and the governor has really spoken out on accountability. Finally you have some kind of celebration to say OK this was excellent and we learned a lot. Rob said and it produced the results we want. Howie said who knows but unless you start getting involved in a process like this you are just kicking the can down the road. Eric said what happens if we don't do something like this and wait until the waiver if it is going to happen. Howie said the waiver only helps you relative to reconstituting a school. Alright so another way to present this or ask that question let me just say might be do we have a problem in this district that needs to be addressed using this. The reality is I hate to say it because I know a lot of good work is being done and a lot of pressure is being applied and we have a lot of great teachers and leaders and a lot of great students and parents but the bottom line is unfortunately that our district has been in district improvement for the last eight consecutive years which means we have missed as a district AYP for nine years. When you think about that the bar is

high we have our challenges. The reality is we are only one of 18 districts in that category out of 169 that means we are in the bottom 10%. I don't think we really are the lowest 10% district. With all due respect to the large urbans we are not and do not have the challenges and problems of Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury or even Stamford. We are relatively 50/50 as it relates to poverty or economic challenge a balanced district. We are not all the fluent and we are not all poor. We have more capacity to do these kinds of changes I believe and the district we have to go to get off of these lists is far shorter than Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury they have a long way to go. We have to push to get off this list and we have to push now in my opinion. No school this year for the first time in my eight years on the board, and it had to do with raising the bar I agree but no school made AYP and all buy one school is in need of improvement which means they missed AYP at least two years in a row. The high school has been in need of improvement as long as the district. Only schools that are receiving Title I funds are at risk for reconstitution so that means right now Forest and Savin Rock if they are one more year in need of improvement have to go through dire consequences of reconstitution. This year they have to put that reconstitution plan in place. A waiver might change some of that but who knows for sure. Nonetheless here we are with two schools on the precipice and we have one more that is a year behind that all of which are Title 1 recipients on the precipice in a high school that has been in need of improvement for eight years. I think by adding this last piece and adding it well in a thoughtful way with buy in from the teachers will make the difference and I'm not alone the President of the United States, the Secretary of Education, CAFE and there is a whole list of people.

Eric said to implement a pilot program like this what do we have to do with the teachers and unions. Howie said that is a good point we have been working with them so look at the memorandum of understanding. They have actually agreed to what we were going to do for them as related to them going through the process I just described. Howie read into the record: (Memorandum of Understanding – Schedule C)

- \$500 as a stipend for every participating voluntary teacher
- One extra personal day
- Additional release time once a quarter
- Evaluated only by the principal or person from central office as determined by the Board
- Participating teachers will have a letter in the file acknowledging their service in developing the program and that is as it should be

Secondly and this speaks to the bigger picture. The parties to this agreement agree that none of the results, outcome, or findings of this agreed upon teacher evaluation pilot shall serve as the precedent of any kind in the future and such results, finding(s) and/or outcome(s) may not be introduced in any proceeding or forum whatsoever including but not limited to any future contract negotiations, as governed by the Teachers Negotiation Act (TNS), or interest binding arbitration proceeding(s) and/or hearings(s). The only exception to the section shall be that either party may seek redress in the appropriate forum to enforce the terms of this agreement and the terms of the agreement are we do this and they do this those 12 things we just went through. They have already said yes twice. Eric asked what is holding them up. Howie doesn't know every time it comes down to signing it with this attached the answer is we are already doing that or the answer is there is something about it that we don't want to do. Well what about it; I don't know. There is no reason we shouldn't be doing this. Eric asked who wrote this. Howie said the

union wrote it a month ago maybe two months ago. We have been getting this close but for some reason stops so that is why I thought it was important for us to have this meeting to talk about this and to say is it urgent well ask the parents; ask the community if it is urgent. This has an impact on our schools and what we have to do with them, on our children and where they can graduate and go to. This matters and it is not to say we are not working hard, its not to say that people don't want it to get better. It is to say though there is one more thing that we as a group believe should be done. A small, non-threatening but valuable and thoughtful pilot with no consequence to get us to a point where we can answer the questions about what teacher evaluations should look like for West Haven because we have to do it; ultimately it is already a law. Even the AFT President, Randy Weingarten has said the current system is broken it doesn't give us the kind of information. When 98% of all teachers across the country not just in West Haven are rated satisfactory and 2% are rated unsatisfactory how can we have all that satisfactory work going on and be in need of improvement for eight years in a row; there is a disconnect here. The AFT is saying we should move to a system with multiple measures once of which should be student growth, maybe student status are they proficient but at the very least student growth with four or five other things. We are saying in a teacher evaluation that is just one part there are other parts there are multiple other parts that can be used to make for a full picture to help insure that the teachers feel that this is fair and more importantly that this is helpful. Eric said so the 16 members that you spoke to ...Howie said we haven't gotten to that many we have had an executive council conversation so we are talking four or five people. Eric said so they are pretty much in agreement with what you have said. Howie said at this point the union president won't sign it and brought it to the executive session the other day and I heard that they didn't want to go forward. We re really in agreement that needs to be done and hear is the bottom line: When and How. I am saying when is now not next year don't push it off another year and how is with a small thoughtful step that isn't created by a small group of people and implemented for everybody but rather implement it with a small group of people that has everybody weighing in. Eric asked why not wait another year. Howie said because what are you going to tell the schools next year if they don't make in need of improvement and we have to reconstitute their schools and half of their teachers can't come back. Well this might have been helpful but we needed to wait another year. No how many years...Eric said so what you are saying is if we have to reconstitute a school if that waiver doesn't come next year we will be in trouble. Howie said even if you are not you have kids that might be helped by a system like this and teachers who will be supported. Eric asked Rob what he thought. Rob said he is obviously in favor of it because we have done everything and I know it is a three to five year plan and test scores were average last year and they stayed average and I know the bar keeps getting raised but that is what we want for our kids. The bottom line is that I think this is a component of the whole test score thing. I don't feel it is going to raise scores completely but I think it is going to help us. They wrote this us and I have no clue why they won't do it and I think the longer you delay it the averages of the kids in our school system are just going to go by. Eric said he thinks this is non threatening and there is no consequence and is very simple and makes a lot of sense. What do you suggest we do. Howie said the reason we had this meeting was to make sure we were in agreement and this is all going to go into the record and will be reported out to Monday's meeting under sub committee if people don't call and say they aren't coming in. The bottom line is we need to press the issue because we are parents, we are BOE members and we are taxpayers and we need to see this component implemented. Again the list is long of people that are saying this should happen, President, Secretary of Education, Commissioner of Education, our

Governor, CABE, CAPTS, the Administrator's union, the AFT nationwide is saying this, New Haven who is teaching 1,000 of our students have implemented it system wide. Eric said we are talking about doing just a pilot program here. Howie said we are talking just about a starting step but after we were told to wait a year in a half to wait another year. Our kids can't wait we are kicking the can down the road and we are now out of road. How many years do we need to wait it would be one thing if we weren't in need of improvement for eight consecutive years and if we weren't in the bottom 10% and if we weren't one of only 18 districts out of 169; that matters. It is not a true picture of everything that is going on here. We have what it takes to get off that list and we should do it this is an important way so I would ask you to speak out on it on Monday and all we can do is the best we can do and if there are any other ideas or suggestions on how to improve it and move it forward Howie is all ears and would love to see that happen as well. Eric said it seems like a very simple plan we are talking about for this pilot program without consequences basically with no threat to anyone. Howie said but there is a big value in that as you start this process and invite all teachers and principals to weigh in we get lots more information about what is concerning them and what they like about this and what they don't like about it and the questions that they ask and the input and suggestions that they make and we are going to say no we don't need to hear any of that from all you 500 teachers until next year and I think that is very dangerous for a district that is in need as much as we are we need to move this ahead right away. Thank you. Howie asked for a motion to adjourn.

Eric Murillo made the motion

Rob seconded the motion

All were in favor

Howie said we will get this to Marylou and go from there.

The meeting ended at 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary