

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
May 3, 2010
Regular Board Meeting

The Board Meeting was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven, CT on May 3, 2010. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Howard Horvath.

**BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Howard Horvath, Jr.
T. Sean Maher
Eric Murillo
M. Toni Paine
Dorinda Borer
Patrick Egolum
Rob Saley
Mark Palmieri

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew DePalma

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Brandon Patterson
Gypsy Garcia

Chairman Howard Horvath welcomed everyone to the meeting and said we would begin the meeting with a special award ceremony. Neil Cavallaro stated that Mrs. Ann Valanzuolo oversees the Spelling Bee Contest each year and she is here with us tonight. Ann stated that they held the 32nd Annual Spelling Bee this year and it was hard fought as usual. It was so competitive we had two fifth grade winners because it went on for about an hour. We have excellent spellers this year. All winners were given a small gift and had their pictures taken.

The winners from Grade 5 were: Paige Sheridan – Haley & Evelyn Fabian – Pagels
The winner from Grade 6 was: Ana Garcia – Bailey who was not able to attend
The winner from Grade 7 was Megan Quadarella – Carrigan who was not able to attend
The winner from Grade 8 was Carly Reynolds – Bailey. Carly was also the Citywide Winner who represented West Haven at the New Haven Register State Spelling Bee and did a great job.

Chairman Horvath asked everybody for a moment of silence for Brian Morris. We have lost one of our former students and we would appreciate a moment of silence. Howard thanked everyone and said we will keep him and his family in our prayers.

B. Public Session

Howard Horvath asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Lorraine Carr, Lake Street is a Seth Haley parent, homeowner, PTA member, taxpayer and a voter. We are here tonight for our children to give voice to their concerns and our concerns as parents. We are dissatisfied with the way you intend to handle our children. Times are tough cuts need to be made. I get that. What I don't get is that you want to send my children across town on a 45 minute bus ride to a place where they know nobody.

Plan C would keep my children in their neighborhood with no bus ride necessary. My concern with this plan is keeping the 5th and 6th graders separate from the 8th grade students. 5th grade students are in a completely different level mentally and physically. I am angry and disappointed by what is going on in this town. The infighting, rumors, questionable hiring makes her sick. She doesn't believe that the board is looking out for the children and the town's best interest. Show me that you care about the children, parents and all the taxpayers and not your own interests political or otherwise. You were voted into these positions and you can be voted out. We are united in this. Thank you.
The Board gave thanks.

Patti Rosete, 16 Harding Avenue read a letter that was sent by email to all board members, Superintendent and the Mayor on behalf of concerned parents and Plan C support. She also left a Plan C Petition that was signed by over 600 people from all districts. The letter follows:

Dear Superintendent Cavallaro,

We are submitting an FOI request for the following information.

We would you like you to provide us, in writing, the following information before the Monday, May 3rd meeting.

How many teachers and classrooms will Plan A need at Bailey and Carrigan?

Using plan A how many students do you propose to have in each classroom? And how many classrooms will you have per grade?

Given the fact that the 6th, 7th and 8th graders are already accounted for and the only difference would be adding 5th graders please answer the following questions:

Please provide us with any facts, figures and studies you have compiled in regards to putting fifth grades into their perspective Middle Schools.

How many students would be put into each Middle School if you were to take 5th grade out of the elementary schools and they were put into their perspective Middle Schools?

Please provide separately the number of classrooms, the number of students per class and the number of teachers that will be necessary to teach those classes in each of the two schools?

Please provide the number of itinerant teachers you would need at each school in Plan A versus the 5th grade move to middle school.

We would like a comparative cost savings statement on your purposed plan of restructuring Carrigan and Bailey versus a plan of placing 5th grades into their perspective Middle Schools.

If you are currently housing the 6th graders separately at each Middle School and given your objective of having 5th and 6th in self- contained classrooms, how would adding the 5th grade impact the set-up of each school?

Sincerley,

Patty Rosete, Ann Smith, Darcee LoPresti & Cheryl Santos

I would like to start with a letter that was submitted by email to all BOE members, Superintendent and the Mayor, on behalf of concerned parents and Plan C. We want to be sure that we are heard by all members, as some emails are coming back invalid, not read and deleted.

Letter Read:

Flat out your dealing with 1,000 students either way you mix the schools 5/6 – 7/8 or 5-8 in two schools. Upon closing two schools and having to remove 5th grade from elementary schools we would like to share what Plan C entails. It's moving 5th grade into their perspective middle schools one year early. If your child was to attend Carrigan or Bailey they still would, just as a 5th grader (this is an old set-up). We want 5th and 6th graders to consist of self-contained classrooms (as what Plan A entails at Carrigan. This will enable children to become acclimated to their middle school ahead of time, to gain self confidence and when it does come time to switch classes and use a locker. Self-contained means with one teacher, not wondering the hallways between classes and interacting with 7 and 8th graders. Instead of looking at them as a threat look at them as mentors or leaders. (subject to Administration)

We feel that this plan is a much gentler approach to a difficult situation. It's about too many transitions. By the time they get comfortable at one school it's time to move on to another. Comfortable children are more confident and confident children have a much better chance at a successful education. I have spoke with a variety of educators from past and present and from many cities and towns. All agree that the least amount of transitioning is best for children. My fight isn't just for all the children, but for one of my own who is struggles with transitioning. He has dealt with anxiety since a very young age. For him a long bus ride or a two middle school change would be very difficult, as I know it would be for other children as well. I have heard the superintendent and other board members say that children are resilient, well that maybe so , but we do not live in a third world country or a war zone, so why do we need to test our children's resiliency? Who will make it, who won't? We you do not have my permission to test my child's resiliency. Another point is bussing, if you choose plan A than that means I am forced to bus my child to school. Well busing is not an option for my child nor is the option of a family member to transport my child to and from school. I know what my child endures on a 5 minute bus trip home now. Changes had to be made and busing for 30-40 minutes to and from school cannot happen.

Mr. Cavallaro has stated that putting 5th grade together would great academically- for whom? You could still achieve a larger 5th grade group in two schools, instead of the 7 we have now or the one you're purposing at Carrigan. Another thing you want for all 5th, 6th grade is putting 28 children in a class – how is that going to play out? For 5th graders- packing them in like sardines – firing paras and have random teachers teacher our fifth graders. Fifth grade teachers do not have to leave their schools- and they have said they are not! So, now teachers from other grades will be doing lots of catch-up to be ready for September. Well a handful of Plan C supporters have spent 21/2 days surveying and petitioning the city of West Haven at soccer fields, baseball fields, door to door, schools and the beach. Where we knew we could gain insight and support from all districts and especially from those who have children in the public school system. I will hand you

proof and read for everyone the street names of all the people who support Plan C. Over 600 signatures were gotten.

Addresses were read:

So, I would like to ask the Board by a show of hands who believes that Plan C is a viable option and it should be put into consideration before you make any more moves and decisions. This isn't a vote just a consideration

Also, I am asking the board to openly discuss what you are doing to solve our current situation, why are plans being put into place before final numbers and why can't we save Malloy, a model school. You want Carrigan to be a model school to the state of CT, but we already have a model school and you are closing it. We want to know how and why restructuring our schools is beneficial to our children academically? Where are the cost savings? Seriously, this isn't a business, these are children we are talking about, please show some compassion. How have you looked into Plan A & C, have you truly listened to the parents and fully explained your research? Why do you have principals telling PTA's Neil isn't even considering Plan C? Why are decisions being made behind closed doors? Let's discuss this now! You should be reading your by-laws, I know we have. So, when you make the decision to restructure, you leave us with no options, and with no options you take away my freedom of choice. But there are two things you can't take away from me, might right to vote and my freedom of speech.

Cheryl Santos, 46 Hillside Avenue would like the board to consider the following details again. The implementation of Plan A means that every 5th grader in town and every 3rd grader at Thompson and Molloy Schools will be forced to attend three different schools in four years. Her child can not handle this type of transition; he has ADHD, sensory concerns. Given the time constraints the BOE has only 5 months to make major changes to the educational system in West Haven. This is not enough time. This includes the redistricting of 1,600 kids, a complete shift in the middle school structure and a major staff reorganization that is sure to create all kinds of issue for the staff with bumping and changing and being moved around. The teachers do not know where they are going to be teaching next year and what grades they will teach. Based on the research and studies available to us today how could anyone associated with the education of children consider a plan that requires class size of between 28 and 30 kids in order to balance a budget. It is mostly a lack of planning and research that brought us to these circumstances. Is Plan A being based on the assertion that as long as the city provides a good enough education it is fulfilling its obligations to its citizens. Do you believe that a good enough education is good enough. I do not believe that a good enough education is good enough for my kids. I do not support increased class sizes. I believe we are in this situation due to lack of planning and it is unfair to tax my children for the mistakes of this city's administration. It is unfair to take it out on these kids. I do not support the Superintendent's decision to make these changes for the upcoming year - whether Plan A or Plan C - there is not enough time to consider everything. If the board insists on rushing into a change that stands to impact the level of education for all the children of West Haven I would prefer it be done in the least disruptive way possible and I believe that Plan C is the least disruptive. Thank you.

Cebbi Waterfield, Seaview Avenue thinks it is a shame that someone is so passionate about what might happen to their child that they are brought to tears in this room. She does not think that any of the board members took their jobs to cause such disruption and she doesn't think it is their intention to upset anyone. There are tough decisions that need to be made however I don't know if the decisions are being made truly in order to balance the budget or is this redistricting of the 5th and 6th grade and the 7th and 8th grade in order to be eligible for the gap closure grants that are being available. Carrigan is a tier 3 school that is eligible for the grant that came out on the 15 of April from the governor. One of the eligibility plans was a restart model to convert or close a school and reopen it as a charter school under an education management organization and that is what this plan sounds like. I would rather know that this is why we are doing what we are doing. If this is the case, that is what we would like to be told. Betsy Ross in New Haven has 5 – 8 and manages to keep those grades separated on two separate floors. The 5th and 6th are self contained and the 7th & 8th change classes. I know you all have the best interests of the children at heart or you wouldn't be in the positions you are in. She talked about the time spent on the bus where students would be unsupervised. She walks her children back and forth to school for health reasons and now they won't be able to. Please consider this option as well. We want you to make the best decisions that will balance the budget and are in the best interest of our kids and hopefully we can come to a consensual resolution. The board gave thanks.

Rosemary Russo, 115 Pheasant Rd. addressed the board. Her presentation follows:

Once again I come before this board on behalf of the children of Molloy School. I would like to start by going over some of Molloy's Stats. Please keep these in mind while you are trying to make your decision on the future of this outstanding school.

1. Molloy School was the only school in the district to make AYP which is Adequate Yearly Progress.
2. Molloy is ranked second in the district for students meeting state goals across all subjects.
3. Molloy was recently honored by ConnCAN by placing in their top 10 list for CT public schools that are closing the achievement gap.
4. For the past decade or so minority children in Molloy School district have been placed in schools across town for the purpose of racial balance. No students from the other side of town were placed at Molloy. This caused Molloy's enrollment to plummet.
5. Other schools in West Haven had beautiful art and music rooms, library media centers, gyms and cafeterias added to their schools. When it was finally Molloy's turn to get a big addition it was cancelled. Molloy teachers, staff and students continued to work hard and surpass almost all of the schools in the district.

Now, it is time to close schools. Molloy is slated to be one of the schools to go because it is one of the

smallest. Send our students back to us, and then we will not be the smallest. Molloy is a high achieving school with a 74% minority population. Molloy has closed the achievement gap. They have the formula. They know what to do. On Friday April 30, CT State Department of e Education and SERC were some of the main sponsors of the recent 2010 Symposium on Closing CT's Achievement Gap. It was named the "Intersection of Race and Education". West Haven was represented by the performance achievements of Molloy School. Educators and administrators from across the state were there and they were greatly impressed by Molloy School. They were all eager to find out the secret of Molloy's success. Are you really sure you want to be the one to put an end to such a successful school?

In closing I would like to read reflections of two Molloy teachers. They were asked why they think Molloy School and its staff is so successful.

One teacher wrote and I quote,

"We are an indomitable force because everyone brings their expertise to the table. We cannot be defeated. We relate, trust, listen with genuine interest, and speak with each child everyday. We honestly stick with things with continuity and accountability."

Another teacher wrote,

“We are a small school with 2 rooms per grade. Teachers know the kids and the kids know the teachers. They enjoy school. The whole staff shows that they care and makes the students feel important. That might not be the same at home. There’s good communication between staff and it’s constant. Good teachers instill motivation like a coach and his players. Tell them they can do it. Don’t defeat yourself mentally. Fight through it be determined and you will succeed. Constructive support is given by peers and special area people.”

You know, we are all intelligent people here. If the West Haven Public School System was a business for profit organization, do you really think we would be talking about closing the #2 money maker. I don't think so. Please do not shortchange the children of Molloy School. Keep Molloy open next year and for many years to come.

The Board gave thanks.

Patti Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill spoke tonight as President of the West Haven Federation of Teachers and School Nurses. Tomorrow is National Teacher Day and the theme this year is Pink Hearts Not Pink Slips. Over 300,000 teachers from primary education to higher education will be laid off this year along with other support staff. Our educators put their heart and soul into their work and you see the results everyday. They make a real difference in the lives of our children. We are asking that people where a pink heart tomorrow to help recognize the importance and contribution of educators and to show your support for those who are laid off. Unfortunately due to budget cuts many teachers are not going to be able to continue in West Haven. Students need educators in their classroom and there is a bill before Congress now that was put forth by Sen. Hartman that proposes to put 20 billion dollars back into the education budget to help school districts avoid layoffs. Please visit www.pinkheartsnotpinkslips.com to learn more about the bill, to sign the petition, and to contact your legislators. Patti has contacted Sen. Dodd, Lieberman and Rosa DeLauro. They are on board but need to hear from everyone. I'm asking all of you to contact them as this may help us with some of the financial issues and some of the hard decisions that we have to make because of the budget. Thank you.

Don Burns, 86 Trumbull Street strongly opposes any plan that is going to bus the kids of this city entirely across town. The city is fairly large and it takes 25 – 30 minutes to cross without stopping on a school bus. This is a very long time. The kids will be getting picked up at the bus stop very early and they won't get home until very late. Something has to be done everyone knows there is a budget crisis but the idea of separating the kids from one section of town and bringing them all the way across makes no sense at all. His child attends Haley and he would not be opposed to her going to Bailey but would be opposed to bussing her across town to Carrigan. I would be adamantly opposed to anything that leads to that for any grade. She belongs in Bailey not in Carrigan. Too long of a time will be spent on the bus. The City has gone through tons of money during the good times and all sorts of new things have been put in but why doesn't anyone in this city every consider putting money aside for when bad times come. Why doesn't this happen does anyone have an answer for that. No, maybe if anyone stays here during the next five years times will be good again and when the times turn as they will don't spend all the money put something away. The board gave thanks.

Howie said just to clarify as to how the budget works at the Board of Ed we are not allowed to take any of the savings and put it in a rainy day fund. We need to turn that, any typically do, over to the City. Your question is best directed at the City Council and the Mayor. Mr. Burns said some plan needs to be developed.

Deena Robinson, 138 Winslow Drive said she knows we are trying to make room and if they close Thompson and Molloy we are trying to make room. Would you consider possibly pulling out pre-schoolers, from every grammar school that has pre-school and putting them in one school been looked at. I know there are issues with pre-schoolers needing bathrooms and all of that but if all the preschoolers are in one school couldn't we leave the grammar schools the way they are and take those from Molloy and Thompson across the other 6 schools and the Middle School wouldn't even have to be touched. I

don't know what the numbers are but then the middle schools might not have to be touched. This will open up more classrooms. The board gave thanks.

Al Hanson, 63 Central Avenue came to West Haven from Northford and North Branford. They had always considered bussing as an option to reduce costs. The study found that the expense of renting equipment and things of that nature were much more expensive. We have a similar situation here. What you are looking to create essentially is two intermediary schools and you may not reduce the expense you may increase expense. You also have several facilities such as this building that I know is on the block and should be liquidated. Sharpen the pencil, I know there are certain budget stipulations you are given but I think we can find things with the budget being as large as it is in West Haven there are other options for us to look at. The liquidation of the Stiles Building with the train station coming in makes that building worth quite a bit. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Dan Hebert, 82 Hillside Avenue bought a house several years ago so his kids could go to Haley I thought it was a great school and I want them to go to school in the neighborhood. I understand the budget is tough but I really oppose any plan that would drag the kids out of their neighborhoods to go to other schools. If you could find another way to do what you have to do I would appreciate it. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Javairia Sandiford, 241 Highland Street brought her three sons who attend Molloy School with her to the meeting. They previously lived in New Haven and her oldest attended Columbus and has learning disabilities and ADHD. When they arrived at Molly they invested a lot of time with her children and made them better children and students today. One son loves to read and understand it now. Another son loves math and does his numbers and enjoys going to school. The youngest just started in kindergarten this year and they are always together. Her oldest is not yet ready to be separated into another school with the 5th and 6th graders. He is nervous about going to the 5th grade already and is going to the same school. When he arrived at Molloy he was way behind and it took them two years to get him to the level he is now. At home I have MS and their father has a kidney problem and my boys know the people here have taken the extra steps to help us. When I'm having off days they give them extra time to get things done. They keep them active in sports and in the community. Molloy is a wonderful school with a wonderful staff and they really do help. Please keep that in mind when you are looking at closing Molloy. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Mr. Rosario said his English is not very good (Howie Horvath said that is OK just take your time). His son rides the bus to school now and what will happen when they will be on the bus for 45 minutes; they will fall asleep and get into trouble and I don't want this to happen to my kids. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

A gentlemen from the audience said that any consideration of savings that is going to be calculated in with the bussing program with what is going on in the Gulf of Mexico you should consider the price of fuel by the time school starts in September will be

dramatically higher. Calculate in you will be paying \$5.00 a gallon for diesel fuel to run busses. The board gave thanks.

Darcee LoPresti, 115 Bellvue said she went to the beach and talked with people and some many parents had no idea what is happening and letters should be sent home to all parents informing them. She thinks the board consists of smart people and that is why she voted for them. She hopes the board is here for her daughters and family members because we do not agree that a child should go on a bus for 25 to 35 minutes daily. It took her 19 minutes to get here from her house 4.9 miles. That is 8.2 miles a day that I am going to have to drive my daughter to school; 3200 miles a year I will put on my car just to drive my daughter to school. She is involved in school activities and PTA and do you think I'm driving here 3 – 4 times a week 15 minutes to take pictures for the yearbook. I don't think it is going to happen. Very said she is being put into this position of not being as involved as she is. Hope you look at Plan C and vote for our children and the people who elected you and do you job and not send our kids across town. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Jonata Kepler, 60 Lincoln Avenue supports Plan C and does not want her son to be transferred from one school to another. The school is close to her house now. We can drop him off now. There are a lot of Spanish speaking who support Plan C but don't want to come here because they don't speak English. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Mary Patterson, 119 Mohawk Drive moved her six years ago specifically to the West Shore Area where she is 2 minutes from her job and 1 minute from Seth Haley and 2 minutes from Bailey. My child has had so many problems on the bus this year and I don't know what the problem is but I don't want my child on the bus for five minutes let alone 45 minutes. I think Plan C is viable. Why is it always the children that have to suffer. School is so stressful these days; why put more trauma in these kid's lives. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Christian Hanson, 63 Central Avenue has children at Bailey and Seth Haley. She was on a field trip yesterday for 10 minutes as a chaperone and there were issues in the back of the bus with 2 parent chaperones and 2 teachers. What will happen when there are no chaperones or teachers on the bus and you are talking a long bus ride? Kids will be getting up earlier and getting home later. Homework won't be done until later if they have other activities they have to do. Both children do very well but her son does not like change. If you plan on doing this it puts a lot of kids in a very difficult situation. I don't want to have to consider pulling my kids out of the public school system because I don't want them riding the bus and taking all that added time away from what they should be doing and concentrating on their schoolwork and doing well. She knows the budget situation is tough but also knows it was thrown out awhile ago before the budget situation to have 5th and 6th at one school and 7th and 8th at another. Other options should be taken into consideration. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 8:00 PM

C.1. Administration

Neil Cavallaro said based on the Chairman's request in anticipation of a large audience tonight we put together a presentation regarding the budget. It is a summary of how we got to where we are which includes our budget request right up to what is my Plan A right now for the school district. This will answer some questions and we don't expect the board or public to go away completely satisfied if at all but it will give you an idea of what our plan is and how we propose to make it work and why we think it is best for West Haven.

Neil said he takes to heart all of the comments tonight and he would rather not be in a situation to close schools. It is not his first choice to move kids around and take them out of their comfort zone but something needs to be done financially in order to meet our budget. We are facing a six million difference from what we asked for and what we are presently going to receive from the City when it adopts its budget on Thursday. These are not easy decisions and my staff has worked diligently since prior to January knowing it was going to be a difficult time. We didn't have any anticipation as to how difficult it would be. We will recap what we previously talked about at some of our special meetings and tell you how we got to the plan that we have and answer any questions the board may have. Regardless of the plan there is a sense of urgency and we need to tell everyone about it and we need to transition teachers who are being disrupted and they will be disrupted regardless of the plan we develop. We must make a transition plan that kids will feel comfortable about doing.

The presentation is entitled Planning For The Future because not only do we think this budget year is going to be a difficult one but we anticipate the next two to three years will be extremely difficult ones. We are making a lot of moves now with the hope that we will not have to make so many drastic moves down the road. The entire presentation is available on the web site.

At the end of the presentation Neil said that he does not take this lightly and he anticipates that while we have done a lot of work the real work is ahead of us. We are going to do what it takes to make it successful. He feels strongly that we offer a good educational product and doesn't want that product diluted. I do not believe with this particular program that we are doing that. He is happy to answer all questions from board members and Thursday night is the night the council will adopt a final appropriation and whatever the board's decision is and he hopes it will be his plan please understand that I am committed as the Superintendent of Schools and a life long resident of this town to making whatever plan that we put into effect as successful as can be and to listening to the concerns as they arise because things will happen that we didn't anticipate for and we will address them to the best of my ability. He hopes the board will think about this and that the people in the audience realize that we haven't taken this lightly and are concerned about the money and do the best we can to create a good program. The board gave thanks.

Howie thanked Neil and said we are waiting to hear what the number might be on Thursday and then anticipates the time between then and our next meeting to continue to ask questions and start to develop what we want to do for the next meeting and will probably vote on it at that point during the meeting on the 17th.

Dorinda asked what our timeline as a board is. What is our schedule? What do you envision our schedule is going to look like to look at this budget? Howie said we have been looking at it obviously over the last number of months but as I suggested I think that what makes sense is to find out what the City Council has in terms of a dollar amount and then based on that continue to ask questions. We could have another meeting before the next meeting depending on what we hear and what you think is appropriate. I would like at the next meeting for us to be prepared to vote because there is a level of urgency relative to being able to execute whatever plan given the timeframe. This schedule is not something that we made; it is really something we live with. If you think about it we are waiting until May 6th to actually get the final number. I don't know who did come up with that schedule. Maybe there are things that we can do to try and improve upon it going forward relative to state laws and statutes. We are going to work with it. I think the good news is we spent a lot of time and I'm starting to feel as if I know many of you in the audience because we have had a number of opportunities to hear you speak and I think you have been able to hear some of our responses and that is a good thing. I'm very proud of the community and the way we have been able to come out and voice our opinions, concerns and ideas in a very positive and constructive way. I have been very proud of this.

Dorinda said so we will be setting up some kind of a schedule between now and May 17th for us to look at the budget and brainstorm. Howie said we can set up additional meeting and I think at least from my respective I feel we have been doing a lot of that over the last number of months. We have spent quite a bit of time looking at the numbers and working them through but we can accommodate some additional meetings if that would be helpful. Dorinda said her concern is that we had two plans Plan A and Plan B and as Neil said Plan B is not too viable. So I'm just concerned that we have one plan on the table that we are looking at and we are going so far down the road it is going to be hard to look at a number of plans. I'm hoping we can put together another plan so we can at least have some options so when we get together we can look at this. Howie said that he thinks Neil spoke to that a bit and I'll defer to Neil. In the presentation he spoke about some of the challenges that relate to the alternative plan that was presented. I don't know if we need a more formal comparison I'll leave that for you and Neil to discuss.

Dorinda said this is no reflection on the work you have done here I just want to make sure. Neil said we (my entire administrative team) have worked very hard to provide you with all the answers to all the questions and we respect the job that you guys ultimately have; to make the final vote.

Dorinda said in the presentation we have been saying that it is 5.7 million dollars we have to find but really it is 3.25 million dollars if we have two school closings the difference is those other teachers and staff being laid off. Correct. So if we break that down further

there is 1.75 for Thompson and 1.5 for Molloy so in my mind I'm still hoping we can get this down to one school and I think we understand we need to close one school, the enrollment is down and you recommended Thompson. I think if we could get it down to one school structure you would avoid this whole restructure. I think we need more time to discuss this. (Applause) So the 1.5 Million is what it comes down to for Molloy and we need to wait to hear back from the Council but some of the communication from the council members is that they possibly can come up with \$500,000 so now we are down to 1 Million. We are talking about moving to Yale and now we are down to \$850,000 right. I know the unions have proposed a salary freeze and five furlough days is hard to swallow, one furlough day for all is another 250 now we are down to \$600,000. I would like to see us work towards whittling away at the 1.5 million and keep Molloy open. That is an option on the table. I know your concern is moving around students from Thompson twice but you suggested if you close Molloy you are going to move those students to Pagels, Seth Haley and Mackrille. Thompson children will be moving to Forest, Savin Rock and Washington. So why would you have to move them twice if you close one school this year and we put off and rethink it why would you have to move Thompson twice. Neil said if you wanted to keep from moving the fifth graders out we would have to spread the Thompson kids out over more schools and if we were to close a school next year we would have to do some additional restructuring or redistricting. That would necessitate them moving more than one time - some of them.

Dorinda said that the enrollment is going down and is that the number of school age children in our city or is that the number in our district. What is the trend for kids in New Haven Magnet Schools. That has gone up. So really the enrollment has gone down but the number of children in our city that are school age has not. Correct and once our kids go to the magnet schools the trend is not to come back. A further discussion ensued. Dorinda is afraid that if we are not going to use the 500,000 for keeping a school open the council might say we are not going to give it to you because we don't know what you are going to do with it. Thursday is our deadline and I don't know how we work it out because we won't have a decision by Thursday.

Howie said he is not sure what the number will be there are a lot of variables. Toni Paine said that \$500,000 is not enough to keep a school open. Neil had communication with the council members and he said that any additional funds that we receive will be used to bring back staff that supports kids; mostly in the form of teachers. We will have to bring back some paras because we proposed cutting them at levels that are probably too low. I don't want to cut too low and then have to hire them back. Nancy Rossi is coming to the Board office tomorrow for a meeting. If we are fortunate enough to receive 500,000 which isn't enough to keep a school open it certainly would be enough to decrease class sizes where we are increasing class sizes. We are increasing class sizes by laying off teachers.

Rob Saley stated you spoke about the 5/6 grades and 7/8 grades and said you would have a principal and two assistants. You are reducing the workload if I am correct but you will continue putting two assistant principals in the 7th and 8th and also in the 5th and 6th you are reducing the workload there and it will operate as an elementary school and you

are putting in two assistants. Those are two administrative positions that are \$90 - \$100,000 can you explain that. Neil said one of the positions is funded through stimulus money Title 1 money for another year so we can carry that over. Rob said but do we have to do it. We don't have to do anything but we are going to have two schools with 1,000 students each and currently right now our largest elementary school has 500 kids and we will have a 5th and 6th grade school with 1,000 kids and it makes sense to have an additional administrator there. The same for the 7th & 8th. We are increasing it by 1/3rd so we are going to add another assistant principal. We are not adding to the budget we are shifting current personnel. We have a total of 5 administrators, 2 at one building 3 at the other we will continue that number of administrative positions but we will have three in the seventh and eighth grade model and two in the 5th and 6th grade. There will be 1,000 students in each building and now there are 700.

Sean Maher asked for a copy of the presentation and Neil said it is going out on the website.

Dorinda said with the Thompson and Molloy closing and the restructuring the 1,000 students around I can't understand how it is not going to cost us more. How are we going to fit 1,000 children on these busses?

Neil said one of the first things he did was to contact Mr. Winkle who said we will not increase other than what they are contractually getting. In typical Craig Winkle fashion said and by the way I will forego the increase if I get a contract extension which since we gave him one last year I didn't think we should pursue this so early on in the contract.

Eric Murillo knows the bus contract very well and asked what you foresee as the increase for the year after next if they let the contract run out.

Neil said in return for a contract extension Mr. Winkle would forego his raise for next year so I'm sure at some point we can renegotiate his contract at a reasonable rate if we chose to do that. We could let the contract run out and put it out to bid.

Eric asked what the average time is a child spends on the bus right now. Neil said it varies; about 20 – 25 minutes. Eric said if a child travel for 45 minutes from one place to another I think that is a lot of time. Do you have anyone on the bus with the students a teacher, principal or someone. Neil said we have none now. Eric said we don't have as many kids on the bus as we will have. Neil said we have 17 or 18 buses that go to Carrigan every day and there is no one on the bus there. We have buses right now that transport kids for racial balance purposes from the Forest School area (this area here and even beyond) to Mackrille and Seth Haley each day with no supervision. I anticipate that given the number of kids riding the busses across town they will pick up neighborhoods and whatever amount of time that takes then make one drive once the bus is filled from the last stop go right to the school which is an additional 15 minutes.

Dorinda asked if it was confirmed that the ECS Special Education money does come back to us. Neil has not confirmed this but the law is pretty clear. So that would be an additional dollar amount that we get. Yes.

Eric asked if the line items on the budget have been cut down. Neil said the discretionary money that we cut was about \$700,000; we cut right to the bone. Eric said he thinks that spending \$600,000 on IT to redo the whole thing is high. It has been three years now.

Neil said we can decrease that. They will work with the budget we given them.

Eric also feels that certain contracts should be negotiated. Neil said if the board tells us to do this we will do the best we can but contracts are not the easiest thing in the world to negotiate although given the times and the fact that people want to continue to work we can pursue it.

Howie thanked everyone for all the good questions and for all the effort that was put into the presentation.

C.1.a Status of Schools

C.1.b Student Representatives

Brandon and Gypsy talked about the following events:

West Haven Board of Education Meeting
May 3, 2010

The West Haven High School Chess Team defeated Amity High School on April 25th to win the State Championship. The Chess team has been state champs 12 out of 14 years.

The WHHS Mock Trial team had another successful year. At the quarterfinals at Westhills, the team defeated Fairfield and lost to Ridgefield. The team was led by senior Sarah Green. Special thanks to attorneys Sherry Cuomo-Shore, Jeff Mueller and Danny Lyons for their assistance in preparing the Mock Trial team.

The senior play, *Suessification of Romeo and Juliet*, will be held on May 6 & 7. We hope you can stop by the Little Theater to check it out.

The Senior prom was held this past Saturday at the Aquaturf in Southington and the junior prom will take place on Saturday, May 15th. A prom dress swap was held last Tuesday and was a huge success!

Buy your Mother's Day plants at the Asian American Plant sale on May 7 and 8th in the courtyard.

The Weststeppers are hosting a show on Friday night at 6pm. Teams from across the state will be competing and the WHHS Weststeppers will be performing in exhibition.

This morning, the sophomore US History classes attended an assembly with guest speaker, Dennis Mannion, about the Vietnam War. The topic complements the students study of the Cold War.

Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz will be at WHHS tomorrow to speak with some of the Issues in Government Classes.

Blue & White Devil Happenings this week include AP & NOCTI testing, National Honor Society Induction, Scoop Night at Rita's on Wednesday to benefit Blue & White, the blood drive on Thursday, and the GRAC Film Fest on Saturday night.

The First Annual Teacher Spelling Bee will be held on May 11th – come join us!

Mr. David Tremblay is the recipient of the American Chemical Society's Teacher of the Year Award!

Mr. Richard DeBiase designed the Centennial Book plate for the Library's Centennial Celebration.

Eric Pang, Caitlin Morrissey, and Brandon Patterson participated in a taped for CTV discussion on April 27th through 21st Century Conversations, a production of the One World Progressive Institute. This will be seen in the fall.

Congratulations to our 2010 Mr. Westie - Eric Pang!

Brandon said on a sad note he would like to recognize Brian Morris who was a big part of the high school. He was a graduate of 2003 and help us on drum line and he was a big part of Theatre; lighting and technical advisor. He was a good friend and a good person and always helped us. I think we should recognize him for all the good work that he did and the

good life that he led. Thank you. Howie Horvath said that probably deserves a round of applause and he thanked Brandon and Gypsy. (Applause)

Gypsy said the WHHS Theatre Workshop is going green so we are asking you recycle your old electronics to support the Theatre Workshop and bring in your electronics for a donation of 50 cents a pound. The Theatre Workshop is partnering with the reclaimed LLC and E Ways Recycling Event so there are certain items accepted. They accept anything that plugs in or uses batteries; computer monitors, TV's etc. This happens on May 8, 2010 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at WHHS. Handouts were distributed. Howie Horvath thanked Gypsy and said it was a great job as usual.

The board gave thanks

C.1.c Board

Dorinda thanked the public for coming out tonight and just for clarification we are not allowed to respond during the regular portion of the meeting

Mark Palmieri thanked Neil and his staff for doing an excellent job here. I agree with the parents here 110% I live in the shore area and grew up in this area and I know a few people here. When I went to WHHS it was double sessions and we had 650 kids in my class. I played football in the morning from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM and would go to school and get out of school at 5:30 PM. My three children went through this district and I would feel the same way as you do. My children are older now. No one wants them bussed but these are tough decisions. No one on this board is looking to hurt anyone's children by any means because I wouldn't want it do to mine. We have some tough decisions to make but we are open to suggestions but I feel as though these people that are here know what is best for our children and we are all going to do the best we can for anyone's child that is why we got involved and ran. I truly believe no one has any type of malicious intention or political we are going to do what is right for our children. In the meantime these are tough decisions and we can't do anything else; there is no "Pot of Gold" somewhere around here. I think by going to school with all the 5th graders and all the 6th graders by the time you get to the high school you will know all the students at the high school. Now by the time the students get to the high school 1/3rd in both schools have left our district to go elsewhere because they are afraid of the high school. This new design will take that fear away. When you get to the high school you don't have to worry so much about seniors because of Freshman Academy and Sophomore Academy. This is what this administration has done and their whole point is to do what is best for our children. You need to keep an open mind. Change is scary. I'm sure everyone here in their job every day during these economic times experiences change and no one likes change. The thing about change sometimes is if it doesn't work you get to change back. I have asked kids themselves from West Shore and the Center of Town and the only time they get to see each other is the weekend on the soccer or baseball field but they are friends through sports. Now when they go to school together it will mean a lot more and will keep the 1/3rd from Bailey and Carrigan from leaving our district. We haven't made our decision but please believe we will do the best we can for the children in this district.

Howie thanked Mr. Palmieri.

Sean Maher said to piggyback what Brandon said about our good friend Brian Morris I want to commend the children of WHHS for their maturity and their ability to deal with this tragic situation. They poised themselves as young men and women and they were exemplary in the way they handled this and the way they performed at all the events that happened. It has a good bearing on the parents of this city as well as the teachers in this city that students acted in such an unbelievably mature way.

Howie agrees completely and wanted to take a moment to thank Mr. Cavallaro, Dr. Druzolowski, Dave Cappetta, Matt Cavallaro and their team in putting the information together for us. I felt that was an important piece. I know this represents just one of the many things that they have done and likewise the board here. Mark spoke passionately about our intent; and that is to do the very best we can with the situation for the benefit of the students as difficult as the fiscal situation is. I thank all my colleagues on the board for their work up until this point and their continued work to the point of coming up with a decision. As Mr. Cavallaro said, very insightfully, that is when the real work begins; to implement the plan and make it successful. This is a community endeavor it will take everybody who works with the school system and all the parents and caregivers. I just want to reemphasize how important that will be.

C.1.d Committee

Dorinda said last week our PTA Meeting tour went to Thompson School and I wanted to follow up on a couple of things that came out of the meeting.

School Uniforms

One item was the school uniform. I did some research and I will send you all a package. We were asked to look at this. There are school uniforms in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Norwich and Waterbury.

Facebook

Dorinda said the Facebook policy also came up along with some good examples and I hope we can do more before September.

Rob Saley said he would like to schedule a facilities committee meeting before our next board meeting on May 17th at 6:00 PM. We have information on the Blake Building and I would like to talk with the Superintendent and whittle it down and get it disbursed to the board. I would like to have you look at some questions and once again, just to reiterate, what we want to do with this building and the move if we do decide to go to Yale which could be another cost saving measure. That is the first thing on the agenda. Rob also wanted to invite Alan Belchak, Director of Food Services to this meeting because there was some discussion on proposals that we may consider for food service. Ken Carney, Joe Yacono and Mike McGrath have already been sent invitations. In addition to the Blake Building the next thing would be what myself, Mr. Murillo, Mr. Cavallaro had a

few weeks ago to discuss facilities management. We interviewed three companies to at least look at the option of having them come in and manage our facilities. One of the things Superintendent Cavallaro talked about was the 5 Year Capital Plan which is something we did broach with these guys and I know we are in dire need of and whether we hire these guys or not we need to address this in the next couple of months. We as a board have to find out where we are going down the road so we don't have these kinds of cuts. I would like to discuss the RFQ which we would like to convert into an RFP and I'd like the board to come up with some ideas as to what you think we can do under facilities maintenance (an overall blanket thing).

The last thing is that we had some proposals for the rink and food service and I would also like to consider the pool and the stadium in there also. That was something we did discuss in that meeting if I'm not mistaken. This is being done just to understand if there is a savings; if there isn't then we don't do it. Please consider options and questions and put them together for me before the meeting. A notice will be sent out for this meeting.

Dorinda asked what happened with the Blake Building not being up to fire code. Rob said the Superintendent asked for an extension until July 1st. Neil said in the course of adopting an operating budget we would make that decision.

Dorinda said there was about \$55,000 that was... Rob interjected it was actually about \$90,000 that we had to do Dorinda said \$90,000 total and there was \$55,000 that experts from the outside needed to do; right. Rob said he saw Joe Yacono and he said even if we were to hire somebody from outside it would still take about 4 – 6 weeks just to get the doors done. That was one of the issues we were going to talk about because Neil did get an extension. There is not much we can do in house because if we take the doors off we have asbestos and it would cause a problem. We would rather have the special people in here that can deal with that. There is not a lot but there is asbestos and I don't want to subject the employees that are here – unless we can do it after work hours and I'm not sure that is where we are going with that. Dorinda asked if they do that work on a regular basis and Rob said he knows we have some guys in house trained to do asbestos but I'm not an asbestos guy so I can't really speak for them. Neil said the point becomes moot if the board chooses to go to Yale at a savings.

Howie said it is my understanding that you will focus on what you all discussed in that meeting interviewing those people in the maintenance area and you will focus on that. Rob Saley answered yes, what I would also like the board to think of what we can do with the food and rink and you can actually parlay those into maintenance and look at different facets. I would like you guys to look at what you think we can and what we should do. We will sit down and talk so I can expedite this at the next meeting. Questions can be answered very quickly this way.

Eric said so you are asking us to become part of this committee and come up with ideas for a proposal for the management. Rob Saley answered, right but I also want you to come up with ideas for the other areas food service, rink, stadium and pool. Just what you would like to see the board doing down the road that could be a cost saver. Eric

thought time was short and it couldn't be done in one hour and we should have a special meeting before then. Right that is why I'm giving you two weeks. Eric feels more time is needed. Let's see what happens, you can call me and we will have a nice long talk. Howie said there is time between now and then to discuss facilities and if it takes another meeting after that then we can schedule another meeting.

Howie asked if Ms. Leum was in the audience and wanted to give her presentation. He and Neil stated how sorry they were for not having her give her presentation earlier in the evening.

Ms. Debbie Leum the Pagels PTA President gave the following presentation. She thanked the board for having her here to speak on behalf of Pagels. Over the past years Pagels has gone through quite a bit of change in a positive way. As a PTA we have tried to increase the lines of communication by doing email blasts about up-coming events, outlines of the meetings, quarterly newsletters and recruitment of volunteers. Parents feel connected even if they can not attend the meetings. Each year the PTA subsidizes field trips and supplies. We try to have a minimum of four programs such as book illustrators, travelling planetarium, laser light shows etc. Traditionally we have done catalog sales to start our budget for the year. This year with Mrs. Prisco's support we changed that to a Rally-A-Thon. Much like a traditional Walk-A-Thon we collected pledges and for one week at school we had various events on a daily basis; the major events taking place on Friday. We decorated placemats for the elderly, braided a paper chain that drew us together, made bookmarks and had talked with the guest speaker. On Friday we had a tug of war, hula hoop chain, freeze dancing and can stacking which the kids really got a kick out of. Girls from UNH came and volunteered for the day and all the cans donated for the stacking were given to WHEAT. This was meant for team building and community involvement. We sponsor various fund raisers and family fun events such as BINGO, movie night, field day, spring fling etc. This year our spring fling is having a luau theme and we will be having pizza and make your own sundae with the price of an admission ticket. It is a fun night for all with music provided by Pagels alumni parent Vinnie Carr. Last year we hosted a fun night with the Harlem Superstars. We have family fun nights at such places as Wendy's (1st Thursday of every month) 5 Guys, Friendly's, Rita's Full Circle Pizza. Mrs. Prisco has created Family Read Out Loud Nights, Science Night, monthly guest speakers, has various sports teams from UNH and WHHS come and mentor the kids. This month the PTA will be helping Mrs. Prisco and staff with a used book sale for the kids. There are many more activities that the Pagels PTA sponsors and supports. We have tried to make the students and their families experience at Pagels a positive one. Ms. Leum thanked the board for allowing her to share some of it with you tonight.

Howie thanked her very much for being here tonight and said that was quite a long list of activities and shows how busy the PTA is and what great work for the kids is being done.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Special Board Meeting for the Budget
held April 14, 2010 at 7:00 PM at the Blake Building. (Enclosure)

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minute (D.1.a.)
Eric Murillo made a motion to approve the minutes
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Special Board Meeting for the Budget
held April 10, 2010 at 8:04 AM at the Blake Building. (Enclosure)

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minute (D.1.b.)
T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve the minutes
Dorinda Borer seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.c. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held April 10, 2010
at 7:05 PM at the Blake Building. (Enclosure)

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minute (D.1.c.)
Dorinda Borer made a motion to approve the minutes
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.d. West Haven Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held
April 5, 2010 at 6:05 PM at the Blake Building. (Enclosure)

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minute (D.1.d.)
Dorinda Borer made a motion to approve the minutes
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

10-22 Christine C. Latham, Elementary Teacher – Seth Haley
Effective: June 30, 2010
Reason: **Retirement (Correction)**

10-23 Rosa Richardson, JV Softball Coach – WHHS
Effective: April 5, 2010
Reason: Personal

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

10-24 Mary Malloy, Custodian – Washington School
Effective: April 30, 2010
Reason: Relocating

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Non-Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

10-25 Kevin Lipinski, 10 Stanford Lane, North Haven, CT 06473
Boy's Track Coach - WHHS
Effective: May 3, 2010
Salary: \$ 2,500.00

10-26 Joseph Trapani, 487 Jones Hill Road, West Haven, CT 06516
Girl's Softball Coach - Carrigan
Effective: May 3, 2010
Salary: \$ 1,950.00

10-27 Jared Stevens, 63 Pilots Point Road, Westbrook, CT 06498
Baseball Coach – Bailey
Effective: May 3, 2010
Salary: \$1,950.00

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

Mark Palmieri made a motion to approve items D.2. – Resignations (Certified) through D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified) inclusive.

Dorinda Borer seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

D.2. Resignations – D.6 New Hire inclusive are approved

D.7. New Business

10-28 Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)
West Haven Schools will not participate in the Healthy Food Certification Statement.

Alan Belchak explained that one year they did this and netted around \$50,000 the other years we didn't do it we took in \$90,000. If you do this you can't have fund raisers in school. We still follow the national standards and by not following this it doesn't mean you aren't serving healthy food in West Haven. We serve an extremely high standard of

healthy food. By not doing this parents have the ability to do the fund raisers at the schools. If we did sign you could not do cookie sales at WHHS during school time and the cookie dough can not be given to the student; the parent has to come in and pick it up after school time. That is how stringent the regulations are. Alan received an email from the State Department today stating that the extra money you would receive if you did sign up was cut from the budget so even if you do it you aren't going to get the extra money. A further discussion continued.

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve 10-28

Rob Saley made a motion to approve item 10-28

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

Discussion: Took place before the vote

Dorinda Borer and Howard Horvath were opposed

All other board members were in favor

Item 10-28 was approved

10-29 Theatre Group Tour to Italy. The tour will include Milan, Venice, Florence, Assisi and Rome during the February vacation in 2012.

Howard Horvath made a motion to approve 10-29

M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: T. Sean Maher answered Rob Saley's question that there are 27 registered students and the cost per student is approximately \$2,300 and if an adult wants to go it is \$2,500. The trip is two year's away with an approximate monthly payment right now of \$50.00 per student. This is the third trip the Theatre Workshop has taken; the first was to England and the second to Ireland and both were very successful. The trip is for seven days.

All board members were in favor

Item 10-29 was approved

10-30 Adoption of Findings of Fact and Conclusion and recommendation of Hearing Officer regarding Laura Langelo

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to approve to approve item 10-30

T. Sean Maher made the motion

M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: Eric Murillo abstained

All other board members were in favor

Item 10-30 was approved

F. Informational:

There were no other questions or comments. Howie asked for a motion to adjourn.

T. Sean Maher made a motion to adjourn

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

All were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary