

East Haddam Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria  
March 11, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nick Iacovelli, Tracey Gionta, Bryan Perry, Mary-Beth Mordecai, Deborah Fiala, Alan Hyla, Robert Mather

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Everett Herden, Tom Miett

**STUDENT COUNCIL REP. PRESENT:** Kevin Staehly (departed at 9:00 p.m.)

**STUDENT COUNCIL REP. ABSENT:** Joseph Weaver

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ellen Solek, Bob Carroll, Linda Dadona, Chuck Rinaldi, Cindy Mello, Jason Peacock, Bonnie Butsch, Dave Scata, Ruth Ziobron and approximately 9 other staff, students and citizens

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Nick Iacovelli.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Communications

Mr. Iacovelli informed the Board there would be a brief recess after Audience of Citizens in honor of Board of Education Appreciation month. There was a cake in celebration of the event.

Ms. Mordecai requested Board suggestions regarding the Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment budget for the new middle school.

There will be a leadership training program for Board members on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Iacovelli congratulated Ms. Mordecai for being honored by the Board of Selectmen as volunteer of the month.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR (continued)

B. Report from Student Council Representative

Mr. Staehly reported on the following:

- CAPT testing for sophomores were last week;
- Progress reports went out last weekend;
- Chess club started last month;
- Mrs. Yantz gave birth to a baby girl;
- Shoreline Student Council will meet March 26<sup>th</sup> at a Power 1 conference.

C. Report from the First Selectman

First Selectman Walter was unavailable to report.

Mr. Iacovelli requested the Board go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting for purposes of discussions of personnel.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** Mordecai, Gionta; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 26, 2008 as presented.

**FAVOR (6): Mordecai, Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Hyla, Mather**

**OPPOSED (0): None**

**ABSTENTIONS (0): None**

**ABSENT (2): Herden, Mielt**

**MOTION PASSED**

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Ms. Mordecai informed the Board she was looking for guideline input regarding the FF & E budget. The FF & E budget will be presented at the March 12, 2008 School Building Committee meeting. Ms. Mordecai updated the Board on the progress of the school building project. The 6, 7 and 8 wing will be complete in April. The school is 75% complete. Very little of the contingency has been used.

Mr. Iacovelli questioned if the recent rain had caused problems to which Ms. Mordecai replied no.

Mr. Mather questioned the estimated completion time. Ms. Mordecai replied the school would be ready for opening day in September.

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES (continued)B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather had nothing new to report. .

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLSA. Amendments to the 2008-09 School Calendar

Dr. Solek noted amendments to the 2008-09 school calendar had been included in their packets. The Long Range Planning Subcommittee approved the proposed changes. Approval of these changes appears under the Consent Agenda. Dr. Solek stated administrative staff requested a later start time of September 3<sup>rd</sup> in order to move into the new middle school.

Dr. Solek informed the Board that State legislature mandated a start date of September 3<sup>rd</sup> this year for all schools.

Mrs. Fiala noted the calendar had the incorrect end date. Mrs. Fiala stated the date should be June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

B. SRBI Overview

Mr. Scata reviewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Response to Intervention in Connecticut, Getting Started*.

Responsive to a question by Ms. Mordecai, Mr. Scata replied the assumption, provided that the curriculum was appropriate, was that 80% of the students should be successful.

Ms. Mordecai questioned if the scientifically research-based interventions would be burdensome on teachers. Mr. Scata replied the teachers would be trained on this method. Mr. Scata stated differentiation was important because the teachers should be able to work with a large group of students and be able to work with a diverse population. Mr. Scata stated with some intervention, if the curriculum and instruction is appropriate, 80% of the students should be successful. Mr. Scata stated if it is found that there are a lot of students not successful, then the curriculum or instruction would need to be reviewed and adjusted. Mr. Scata stressed the importance of reviewing the interventions to make sure they work.

Mr. Hyla questioned if the Dibbles assessment tool would need to be purchased. Mr. Scata replied affirmatively. Mr. Hyla questioned if there would be need for more teachers, rooms, interventions, resources to implement the program. Mr. Scata replied he was unsure. Mr. Hyla questioned if there was a comparative study for a school our size to which Mr. Scata replied no.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)B. SRBI Overview (continued)

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Gionta, Mr. Scata replied the program would provide help for students struggling academically and behaviorally. Mr. Scata stated currently there were interventions for struggling students but that the new program was a more systematic approach, which better monitors interventions. Mr. Scata stated currently there were established benchmarks for subject areas with common assessments and accompanying data. Mr. Scata stated what wasn't known was how to use the data, how to monitor it, and how to store it. Mr. Scata stated the SRBI process brought a system to handle the data.

Mr. Iacovelli stated differentiated instruction provided every child with an individualized education plan. Mr. Iacovelli stated it appeared that the program provided a scientific system. Mr. Iacovelli stated he hoped that the student/ teacher relationship wasn't jeopardized in the process of the data collection.

Mr. Scata commented the SRBI was the biggest undertaking of the State in many years and it would change significantly how children were looked at. Responsive to a comment by Ms. Mordecai, Mr. Scata stated the purpose of the program was to intervene earlier with a scientific approach which would better monitor the interventions.

Dr. Solek acknowledged Mr. Scata, Mrs. Havens, Mrs. Mello and elementary school staff for their work in establishing the SRBI program.

Dr. Solek stated the strategic plan identified that there can't be measurable goals and objectives until there are relationships between teachers, students and parents. Dr. Solek stated these relationships were being fostered. Dr. Solek stated the SRBI had great promise and was an effective model.

Mr. Hyla cautioned about getting lost in the measuring.

D. Memorial Buy-a-Brick

Dr. Solek proposed that the Board purchased a memorial brick on behalf of Manny Misenti.

C. 4-8 Middle School Update

Mr. Peacock updated the Board on the progress of the new 4-8 middle school with a slide presentation.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning met March 6, 2008. Mr. Mather briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Long Range Planning Subcommittee meeting minutes. Mr. Mather noted the following change to the minutes:

- #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> line, strike “all companies who have bid on the project” and replace with “all companies who may bid on the project”.

B. Finance

Finance met March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Mather reported the budget had been presented to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mather thanked Dr. Solek, Mr. Carroll, and staff for their time putting together the budget.

Mr. Iacovelli questioned what the next step to the budget process was. Mr. Mather replied the Board of Finance had scheduled four meetings this month to review and approve the budget. It was noted that this was the first time the budget was presented to both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance at the same time. Mr. Mather stated this was a more efficient way to present the budget.

C. Policy

Policy met March 6<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Fiala briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Policy meeting minutes. A sample of the new program proposal form (Non-Academic) was included with the minutes. Mr. Hyla noted the submitted date was omitted from the form. Dr. Solek will make the change and forward to Board members.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported Transportation had not met and he had nothing to report.

E. Personnel and Negotiations

Personnel and Negotiations had not met. Dr. Mielt was unavailable to report.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Ray Board had not met. Mrs. Fiala had nothing to report.

G. LEARN

LEARN had not met. Mrs. Gionta had nothing new to report.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

H. Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Council Liaison

CIAC met on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Solek stated Mr. Scata reviewed the RTI and SRBI State initiative. Dr. Solek stated the progress of all of the curriculum area committees was reviewed. It was agreed that there will be collaborative meetings of all curriculum area chairmen to perform a collective assessment. Dr. Solek informed the Board that Mrs. Havens had agreed to facilitate the ongoing RTI and SRBI initiatives at the elementary school. Mrs. Dadona has agreed to take over Mrs. Haven's Math Committee seat.

I. Open Space Committee Liaison

Open Space met February 25<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Perry had nothing to report.

J. Local Prevention Council

Local Prevention Council did not meet in February due to inclement weather. Meeting minutes from the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were included in Board member's packets.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Yvonne Waters requested an update to the lice issue at the elementary school. Dr. Solek stated she would confer with Mrs. Mello and contact Mrs. Waters with an answer.

Mrs. Waters requested that the Board be cognoscente of moisture barriers at the new middle schools so that there would not be repercussions later. Mrs. Waters noted the need to remove tiles at the current high school for this purpose.

Commenting on the SRBI presentation, Mrs. Waters requested more attention be made for children needing to be challenged in the classroom.

Matt Colvis questioned why the track team proposal was rejected. Mr. Colvis strongly recommended funding for part of the proposed track team. Dr. Solek will provide Mr. Colvis with meeting minutes.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:32 pm.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

1) Warrant

a. To approve the warrant for 2007-08 in the amount of \$1,659,664.52.

2) Mrs. Kristen Bishop, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at East Haddam Elementary School, is requesting a fifteen month unpaid leave of absence beginning April 1, 2008 to the end of the 2008-09 school year for child-rearing purposes.

3) To approve Regulation #4114 (Transfer/Reassignment) as a first reading.

4) To approve the amendments to the 2008-09 school calendar.

**MOTION:** Fiala, Hyla; to approve the Consent Agenda items 1-4.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** Mordecai, Perry; to enter into Executive Session at 8:48 pm for purposes of discussing personnel.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:10 p.m.

**MOTION:** Hyla, Gionta; to adjourn at 9:11 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,

Everett Herden  
Secretary