

## LWV OBSERVER REPORT FORM

*Board or Commission: West Hartford Board of Education*

*Date of Meeting: October 20, 2009*

*Members present: All (Bruce Putterman via speaker phone)*

*Nature of meeting Routine   X*

*Special \_\_\_\_\_*

*Called to order (time): 7:02 pm*

*Adjourned (time): 9:25 pm*

*Action taken:*

The main items on the agenda were reports on the district's energy conservation efforts, plans for dealing with the H1N1 virus, and October 1 enrollment and class size.

In her Superintendent's Report, Dr. Karen List reported that Whiting Lane kindergarten teacher Christie Luetjen has been named the CT teacher of the year, and that recently retired Bristow principal Jeannie Camperchioli has been named the CT middle school principal of the year. Also, the CT Association of Boards of Education recently gave West Hartford several awards for communications materials, Stone Soup honored Early Childhood Partnership Coordinator Mary for her leadership of our preschool efforts, and the Mathematics Association of America has recognized Conard for its performance in math. Dr. List also noted that the schools will be closed on Election Day, November 3, though district staff will be present for a variety of professional development programs, and open on Veterans Day, November 11, with educational activities marking the occasion scheduled in all schools.

Assistant Superintendent Tim Dunn and Plant and Facilities Manager Bob Palmer provided an update on the district's green initiative, dubbed "Creating a Culture of Conservation." Plans are in place for another conservation competition among schools for November, and a steering committee composed of staff, parents, and students has been assembled to oversee long-term efforts focused on education and changing behavior. The district implemented single stream recycling in March of this year, has installed two small solar arrays at Hall and Conard, entered into a power purchase agreement in partnership with the provider of a 100 kilowatt solar system at Bristow, and has another solar deal pending at Smith. A source reduction program emphasizing paper use is also in the works.

Mr. Dunn and Bloomfield/West Hartford Health District Director Steve Huleatt reported on the H1N1 virus and plans for vaccinating district school children. Disease is present in Connecticut, but so far is not as severe as in other parts of the US. Vaccine is arriving slowly and is currently being provided only to priority groups, i.e. children aged 2-4, childcare workers, pregnant women, and health care workers. School-aged children are next in line, and vaccine should become available for them in the next week or two. The plan is to provide information to parents soon, along with a survey allowing them to indicate interest in having their children vaccinated. Clinics after school hours will be held in the elementary schools first, then at the middle and high schools. The program is free (federally funded) and entirely voluntary. Parents should accompany younger children being vaccinated. In the meantime, WHPS is monitoring illness in the schools daily and updating website information frequently (please see <http://www.whps.org/whps/h1n1>). School nurses are being especially vigilant, educational

posters have been placed in schools regarding good hygiene, and custodians are cleaning surfaces more frequently. The best defense against pandemic continues to be keeping children home when they are sick and until fever has been gone (without medication) for 24 hours.

Director of Planning and Finance Chip Ward reported on October 1 enrollment and class sizes. As of that date, 9,999 students were enrolled in West Hartford schools, 60 (.6%) more than projected and 103 more than a year ago. Elementary enrollment is up by 16, middle school down by 15, high school up by 102. Average class size at the elementary level is 20.3, only one section (a 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Smith) exceeds guidelines, and none is over 27 students. The total number of elementary sections came in at 231, exactly as projected. Middle school average class size is 20.4 at KP, 20.5 at Sedgwick, and 22.8 at Bristow, with only 11 of the 306 total sections numbering above 27 students. Average class size at Conard is 21.1, at Hall 21.8, with only 44 of the 911 total sections above 27, the vast majority of these in music and PE. Board member Claire Kindall expressed gratification that West Hartford has been able to maintain its class size standards so well in the current fiscal climate, but Diane Mudge voiced concern at the number of high school sections with 15 or fewer students (96, 10.5%). She asserted that reducing these small sections should be a priority because it would allocate limited resources more efficiently. Jack Darcey countered that eliminating many of these smaller sections would significantly diminish the richness of the high school curriculum. Please see <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20091020/Enrollments%20-%20Oct%2020,%202009.pdf> for Mr. Ward's complete report.

In the monthly financial report, Financial Examiner Claire Kindall reported that the district is projecting a \$5,983 balance at the end of the fiscal year. Overages in the salary accounts due to fewer retirements and slightly higher staffing (+2) than budgeted should be offset by savings in purchased services, supplies/materials, and capital outlay. Most of the savings were generated by prefunding from last year's surplus. The full report may be viewed at <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20091020/Financial%20Report%20-%20September%2030,%202009.pdf>.

The next board meeting will take place on November 17 at 6:30 pm in room 314 at Town Hall. The November 5 meeting has been cancelled so that members can attend a ceremony honoring Jeannie Camperchioli. The November 17 meeting starts 30 minutes earlier than usual because of a Town Council meeting scheduled for 8:00 pm.

*Observer name: Kathy Wilson*