

LWV OBSERVER REPORT FORM

Board or Commission: West Hartford Board of Education

Date of Meeting: May 4, 2010

Members present: All (Bruce Putterman via speaker phone)

Nature of meeting Routine X

Special _____

Called to order (time): 7:03 p.m.

Adjourned (time): 8:50 p.m.

Action taken:

The main items on the agenda were introduction of the three finalists for Teacher of the Year, three revised board policies, the board meeting schedule for 2010-11, approval of a modular classroom addition at Bugbee, and a report on the evaluation and supervision of teachers and administrators.

The finalists for Teacher of the Year were introduced by Superintendent Karen List. They are Shannon Perotti, a fifth grade teacher at Braeburn, Tom Ledvorowski, who teaches math at Hall, and Scott Ferguson, an English teacher at Hall. The winner is expected to be announced before the end of the school year. The 2009 Teacher of the Year, Kristi Luetjen a kindergarten teacher at Whiting Lane, was honored as the Connecticut Teacher of the Year at the beginning of the current school year.

The board accepted unanimously as a second and final reading revisions to Board Policy 5670—Sports Accident Insurance, 5690—Suicide Prevention, and 5710—Questioning and Apprehension. All three had been discussed thoroughly at a previous meeting and passed with no debate. The policies may be viewed at <http://www.whps.org/whps/primary-offices/boe-page/documents>.

The board also adopted unanimously a final meeting schedule for 2010-11. This schedule combines on one night the public hearing on the budget with the third budget workshop and delays by one week adoption of the board budget. It may be viewed at <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20100504/Revised%20Board%20Meeting%20Dates%202010-11.pdf>.

The board unanimously approved plans for the addition of two modular classrooms at Bugbee, necessary to accommodate increased enrollment at that school. The plans will now be submitted for review to the State Department of Education in order to receive partial reimbursement for project costs. The project will then be put out to bid, with contract award expected in June and completion by the start of school in the fall.

In her Superintendent's Report, Karen List reported that the district increased its recycling volume by 14% during a month-long challenge in April. The district recycled nearly 30 tons, saving about \$2,000 in disposal fees and generating \$150 in revenue.

Assistant Superintendent Eileen Howley, Human Resources Director Rick Ledwith, Whiting Lane Principal Nancy DePalma, and English Department Supervisor Tom Paleologopoulos

presented a report on the district's model for evaluating and supervising teachers and administrators. West Hartford's plan for teachers is based on Section 10-151b of the Connecticut General Statutes and State Department of Education guidelines for teacher evaluation and professional development. The plan directly links effective teaching with increased student learning and is overseen by a Teacher Evaluation Review Advisory Committee (TRAC) composed of eight staff members, four appointed by the superintendent and four appointed by the West Hartford Education Association. During 2010-11, the committee will update and revise the plan based on the State Board of Education's recently adopted 2010 Connecticut Common Core of Teaching.

The district hires on average between 90 and 100 new teachers per year using a thorough screening and interview process. Successful candidates go through a pre-service orientation and goal-setting process, and then participate in the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program during their early years on the job. Non-tenured faculty are observed in their classrooms at least three times per year and undergo annual evaluation by the executive team. Tenured faculty are evaluated on a four-year cycle, which includes one year of assessment, similar to that of non-tenured staff, and three years devoted to a specific "professional growth option" linked to the instructional goals of the school/district and to improved student learning. Teachers who are having difficulties are provided intensive assistance that requires the setting of objectives for performance, weekly observation and conferencing, and evaluation after 45 days. A teacher who continues to perform unsatisfactorily may be terminated in accordance with Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

West Hartford administrators are evaluated using a parallel process; however, the standards used are the Connecticut State Department of Education Standards for School Leaders and the Code of Professional Responsibility for School Administrators. A more detailed summary of the report may be found at <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20100504/Teacher%20Evaluation%20Update%200410.pdf>.

The Financial Statement for the period ending March 31 showed no change in the projected year-end General Fund balance of \$29,384, a very small surplus in a \$121 million budget.

The board will hold a workshop on legal issues, including personnel issues and freedom of information, at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 11, in room 422 at Town Hall. The next regular board meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 18 in room 314 at Town Hall.

Observer name: Kathy Wilson