

concerned about students' diminished freedom to take large numbers of credits in the arts, a proud tradition in both West Hartford high schools. The delegation assured the board that the State Department of Education, as it develops guidelines for complying with the new requirements, will also develop a procedure for districts with distinctive programs to obtain waivers allowing such programs to continue.

Superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum Eileen Howley and Director of Finance and Planning Chip Ward presented detailed summaries of the new graduation requirements and how they will affect West Hartford. Currently, based on the class of 2009, 64% of West Hartford seniors graduate with 25 credits or more. Bringing an entire class up to 25 will require 4.4 additional teaching staff and would cost about \$300,000 annually in current dollars. In addition, the new distribution requirements will require that staff be distributed a bit differently over the various subject areas—more teachers in fine arts, health, and CTE; fewer in phys ed. Different, subject-specific classrooms may be needed as well, particularly for CTE courses, but no estimate of remodeling/construction costs was included. For the full report, please see <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20100518/secondary%20school%20reform%20Overall%20summary%20of%20new%20requirements%205.10.pdf>.

Superintendent Karen List presented the Memorandum of Understanding in support of the state's application for a Race to the Top Phase II Grant. She stated that West Hartford should receive about \$200,000 a year over 4 years if the state's application is approved, and in return the district will be required to implement all or a significant portion of the state's Race to the Top plan, which includes 4 broad goal areas: standards and assessments, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest achieving schools. (Note that, as cited above, the high school portion of this effort alone will cost more than our grant from the state.) The latter requirement would not apply to West Hartford, since we are not designated as a low achieving district and none of our individual schools are so designated. As of the afternoon of May 18, about 75 Connecticut districts had already signed the memorandum to participate. The board unanimously approved signing. To see a copy of the document, go to <http://www.whps.org/board/agenda-documents/20100518/RTTT%20Phase%20II%20MOU%20Final.pdf>.

The next board meeting will take place June 1, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in room 314 at Town Hall.

Observer name: Kathy Wilson