

# Board of Education Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 4, 2007 7:30 PM

Town Campus Hammonasset Room, 10 Campus Drive , Madison, CT 06443

## I. Call to Order / Attendance

## II. Executive Session - 6:30 p.m.

## III. School Community Session

III.A. Recognition: Madison Public Schools'  
Teacher of the Year: Karen Kaufman, Mathematics  
Teacher, Dr. Robert H. Brown School

III.B. Public Participation

## IV. Superintendent's Report

**Speaker(s):** Dr. H.  
Kaye Griffin

IV.A. Overview: 2007-2008 "Back-to-School"  
Activities / Information

**Speaker(s):** Dr. H.  
Kaye Griffin

IV.A.1. Opening of School Update

**Speaker(s):** Dr. H.  
Kaye Griffin

IV.A.2. Student Enrollment / Class Size

**Speaker(s):** Dr. H.  
Kaye Griffin

IV.A.3. Student Transportation

**Speaker(s):** Arthur  
Sickle

IV.B. Overview: 2007 Connecticut Academic  
Performance Test (CAPT) Results and AYP Report

**Speaker(s):** Anita  
Rutlin

IV.C. Overview: On-Line District Calendar

**Speaker(s):** Arthur  
Sickle

## V. Board Member Comments

## VI. Distribution of Executive Summaries from Board Committees / Liaisons

VI.A. Policy Committee: 1st Draft Reading  
Policy #5170 Activities / Fees / Charges

## VII. Audience Response to Information Presented

## VIII. Consent Agenda (Items 8.1 - 8.4)

VIII.A. Bills Payable: \$68,209.11 (2006/2007  
Budget) and \$542,364.23 (2007/2008 Budget)

VIII.B. Line Transfers: \$118,584.02

VIII.C. Budget Expenditure Report as of 8.30.07

VIII.D. Textbook Adoption / Thinking About  
Psychology; Bedford, Freeman & Worth Publishing;  
Daniel Hand High School Human Behavior (Reference  
Policy #6100.10)

## IX. Action Item: Special Appropriation Requests

## X. Action Item: Line Item Transfers \$261,838.48

## XI. Action Item: Minutes 8.21.07 Meeting

**XII. Action Item: Minutes 8.28.07 Meeting**

**XIII. Old Business**

XIII.A. Discussion: Appointment of 2007-2008  
School Liaisons

**XIV. New Business**

**XV. Future Agenda Items**

**XVI. Adjournment**

Public Participation Guidelines:

Members of the community are invited to speak on topics of interest and / or topics to be addressed in the agenda. The Board of Education may choose to interact with participants, but will not act upon topics that require further study before action is taken. The participation time will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and fifteen (15) minutes overall to guarantee efficient operation of the entire meeting.

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Consent Agenda:

The following agenda items are designated as routine and appropriate for approval as a single action by the Board of Education, if so desired. A Board member may request removal of any item from the consent agenda for review and discussion.

Board of Education Meeting  
August 21, 2007  
Town Campus

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Robert Hale at 6:45 p.m.

Present: Becky Coffey; Debbie Frey; Harriet Gowanlock; Robert Hale; Kathleen Rossini; Holly Sellers; David Youngerman.

Also present: Dr. H. Kaye Griffin, Superintendent.

MOTION: by Youngerman, seconded by Gowanlock to enter Executive Session at 6:45 p.m. to discuss personnel issues.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

2. Executive Session

Personnel issues discussed

Legal issues discussed.

MOTION: by Rossini, seconded by Coffey to adjourn Executive Session at 7:35 ~~8~~ p.m.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

The public session of the Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Hale at 7:46 p.m. Chairman Hale led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Becky Coffey; Debbie Frey; Harriet Gowanlock; Robert Hale; Kathleen Rossini; Holly Sellers; David Youngerman.

Also present: Dr. H. Kaye Griffin, Superintendent; Anita Rutlin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; district administrators; faculty; staff; students; community members.

3. School Community Session

3.1 Public Participation

Chairman Hale commented that due to the length of this evening's agenda, he will stick to the fifteen minute time frame for public comments.

Dan Zaneski, 683 Green Hill Road, commented that that community strongly supports Mike Ciotti as Assistant Football Coach at Daniel Hand High School and he urged the board members to support the desires of the community.

Ronald Piombino, 5 Birch Lane, commented that he has two children on the Daniel Hand football team. He wanted to speak to address the issue of alleged disparaging comments made by Coach Ciotti to one of his children at a football game. He stated that he is not aware of any such comments. He added that he understands that the policy

of the board is that this is an administrative issue, but he feels the board should have a more active role in the decision on this issue and they should not defer the matter to the administration.

George Gerard, 279 Bradley Corners Road, addressed the board regarding their action on the issue relating to Coach Ciotti. He stated that he feels the board is more interested in serving the interest of Dr. Griffin than supporting the public desire to have Mike Ciotti serve as a coach at Daniel Hand High School.

Kevin Murphy, 64 Island Avenue, spoke in support of Mr. Ciotti and having him serve as a coach at Daniel Hand High School. He stated that the rationale provided to the public regarding Mr. Ciotti's non-renewal as a coach are certification, conflict of interest and disruption of a class. He feels that these are not the real issues but the fact the Mr. Ciotti publicly stood up in front of the board in support of Athletic Director Craig Semple.

Steve Lutz, 66 High Hill Circle, states that he feels it is clear that Dr. Griffin's handling of personnel issues in Madison are inconsistent and inequitable. He stated that the reasons explained for Mr. Ciotti's non-renewal as coach are certification and a supposed conflict of interest with his company that has served Madison for over twenty years. He added that he feels the board does not support the people that elected them and did not appropriately get involved in this situation. He stated that Dr. Griffin supported an Interim Director of Special Education that did not have the required certification. Also, Dr. Griffin supported the hiring of Rachel Weiss as Assistant Director of Special Education although her certification will not be in place until after the start of the school year. He feels that it is inconsistent as Mr. Ciotti was denied the position of Assistant Football Coach although he is pursuing his certification. He added that Mr. Ciotti did complete the certification course this past Saturday. Mr. Lutz further stated that conflict of business relationship has been stated as another reason for Mr. Ciotti's non-renewal as coach although there is no current policy on conflict of interest. He added that he believes that a conflict of interest exists as Jill Hale is an employee of the Madison Public School although her father-in-law Mr. Hale serves as Chairman of the Board of Education and that there is a current policy on this type of conflict of interest. He concluded that he feels the biggest issue is how Dr. Griffin handles the personnel issues at the Madison Public Schools.

Dr. Griffin exited the meeting.

Chairman Hale concluded the public participation session of the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

#### 4.2. Overview: Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Results

Anita Rutlin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment presented a PowerPoint presentation (on file) on the CMT results for over 1,870 students in Madison in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 from March 2007 in the areas of reading, mathematics and writing. Overall, the CMT scores showed increases from the previous year and exceeded both State and DRG levels. The scores are moving toward achievement of standards required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Mr. Youngerman requested the progress and percentage of advanced scores versus other DRG towns. Mrs. Rutlin responded that she will provide this information to the board.

#### 4. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Griffin apologized for leaving the meeting and stated that she felt she had no other choice and needed a "time-out". She feels at this time she needed to speak to some of the issues made by Mr. Lutz. The first issue related to Jill Hale and her father-in-law serving as Chairman of the Board of Education. Dr. Griffin stated that Ms. Hale has been an employee of the Madison Public Schools for over 25 years and she works everyday on behalf of the children of the district. She addressed the issue of Interim Director of Special Education and stated that when Dr. Fusco left that position after 17 years it was a huge loss for the district. A search was conducted for a replacement and although a replacement was hired this person did not fulfill the requirements of the position. The position was then re-posted and another credentialed person was hired as Director of Special Education. This person could also not fulfill the criteria of the position and left the district in November. Dr. Griffin stated that she needed to act quickly to fill this position in order to meet the needs of the children and that staff contacted the State Department to see if she could hire a current employee to fill the position on an interim basis. She added that we had the good fortune of having Ms. Hale, as a certified administrator, stepping forward to fill this interim role. The position of Director of Special Education was posted in late February / early March and after a long search the district has hired a new

person to begin on September 4<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Griffin added that the board authorized the appointment of an Assistant Director of Special Education that was to be filled internally in order to meet the needs of the students and Ms. Weiss was hired for this position because she had completed all coursework and test requirements. The State Department of Education has given full authorization to hire Ms. Weiss for this position under a Durational Shortage Area Permit while Ms. Weiss is completing on-site internship requirements to finalize her certification. She stated that this situation is similar to a Temporary Coaching Certification that was provided to Mr. Ciotti last year. This temporary certification is good for one year while the coach is fulfilling the requirements for full certification and cannot be renewed under the circumstances. Dr. Griffin added that Mr. Ciotti did not complete his certification within the one-year period.

Dr. Griffin further commented that she is not leaving the district because Mr. Lutz feels she should but since her career path is taking her in a different direction. She added that while she is here she will continue to work for the students of the Madison Public Schools and asked parents to open their eyes to the great school district and dedicated employees that they have and asked that the parents show some respect.

Mr. Hale commented on the conflict of interest bylaws of the board that was quoted in the public comments section. He stated that this bylaw indicates that if a person is employed by the Madison Public Schools prior to a person joining the Board of Education that there is no conflict of interest. Mr. Hale stated that he has recused himself from any issues involving his daughter-in-law. He added that he is proud of this community but not proud of the tactics that some community members have been using to get what they want. He further stated that the board works hard for the town on a local, state and national level and wanted the public to understand that it is a volunteer board that works a lot of hours.

#### 4.1 Overview: 2007 -2008 “Back to School” Activities / Information

Dr. Griffin summarized some of the activities that have been occurring in the district and at the schools in order to get ready for the start of the new school year. Some of these activities include the Blackboard curriculum software program; preparation of a theatre arts curriculum; hiring of theatre arts program advisors; installing new computers, updating computer systems; reconfiguring computer labs; a fiber optics project; a “back-to-school” employee benefits program; various facilities projects including tree work and updates at the Ryerson School; full implementation of the food services point of sale system; on-line bus routing and posting of bus routes on the website.

##### 4.1.1 Opening of School Professional Development Activities

Teachers and support staff will be returning to the district on August 27<sup>th</sup> when they will have 3 days of professional development training. Mr. Ken Kay will be conducting a special session with high school faculty on the 21<sup>st</sup> century framework. Mr. David Warlick will be conducting a presentation at the Opening Day event on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.

##### 4.1.2 Student Enrollment / Class Size

Dr. Griffin reported to the board the enrollment figures as of August 21<sup>st</sup>. The kindergarten enrollment is at 211 students. Grade 1 enrollment is at 235 students and being monitored as there are more 1<sup>st</sup> graders than originally anticipated. The other grades levels are at or near the projections with total district enrollment at 3800 students.

## 5. Board Member Comments

Mr. Hale mentioned the Opening Day activities and that he is looking forward to hear the presentation from Mr. David Warlick. He also provided the board with a draft document on a state plan for graduation requirements, course and core credits. He outlined the state versus local responsibilities in the draft plan. He expressed concerns regarding resources available to fund the plan and what would happen if these resources were not available. He added that if the state does not come up with a satisfactory plan it will be decided by the legislature.

Mr. Hale moved the public comment session of the meeting up on the agenda.

## 7. Audience Response to Information Presented

George Dayharsh, 156 Dorset Lane, stated that he feels it is obvious in town that parents have a passion regarding the coaching situation for football at Daniel Hand High School. He spoke of his prior experience in education and the importance of respecting and nurturing dedicated and respected employees. He stated that he feels there is a lack of understanding of the importance of athletics as part of developing the whole student. He spoke in support of Mr. Ciotti and the importance of having academics and athletics work together.

Dale Sweitzer, 25 Shepards Trail, stated that he was at the meeting because Mr. Ciotti got terminated. He feels that the community is behind the issue of his reinstatement. He knows that Mr. Ciotti is now certified and that the position has not been filled. He would like to see Mr. Ciotti fill that position without any rules or criteria that are not required of other coaches in the district.

Jon Golicz, 36 Liberty Street, stated that passion is the key to a good organization and that Madison residents expect the staff to be passionate about what they do. He demanded that the board fight to support the passionate staff and to work with them to address any deficiencies. He wants to see that the passion is kept in the organization and that process does not come first.

Pat Kerens, 107 Legend Hill, had three questions: 1) why is the district paying the retired Superintendent on a per diem basis when there is a certified Assistant Superintendent on staff that can handle the interim position; 2) if the Superintendent is leaving, should personnel decision be relegated to her; and 3) is there enough money to pay the attorney fees related to the issue of the assistant football coach and will this affect her taxes?

Charles Reardon, 42 Genesee Lane, questioned why the issue of the integrity of the Superintendent is a personal affront to the Chairman of the Board of Education. He also questioned why the Superintendent felt it was appropriate to address the issue of Mr. Ciotti's certification but would not address the other issues brought up in the public comments.

Joe Tenczar, 586 Boston Post Road, stated that he was a former teacher in Madison. He also spoke about passion and feels that the passion in the staff is being watered down, especially at the Daniel Hand High School. He feels that when the staff starts to lose their passion the morale becomes low and questioned whether the district was going to extinguish the passion in its staff.

#### 5. Board Member Comments (continued)

Ms. Rossini stated that the Board of Education stands for high standards, equity, a transparent process and integrity. She has never questioned the integrity of the Board Chairman, Board members or the Superintendent and that the system has always operates transparently. Ms. Rossini stated that she was troubled when people drag other staff members into a situation where they do not belong. As always, this matter related to personnel and the board has tried to maintain appropriate dialogue.

Ms. Coffey spoke about the due process of employees that needs to be respected.

#### 6. Board Committees / Liaison Updates

##### 6.1 Planning Committee

Ms. Rossini reported that the Planning Committee met last week and reviewed with the Director of Facilities the summer projects. She noted that a boiler leak at the Brown School has already used \$30,000 of the reserve funds. The Committee also discussed the refuse removal bids and the installation of interior stairs at the former Athletics building to allow for equipment storage. Finally, the Committee discussed the Academy School facility.

##### 6.2 Personnel Committee

Mr. Youngerman reported that training was completed today on a new process for teacher contract negotiations, interest-based bargaining. It is the hope that this new process will allow for a shortened and more congenial bargaining process. He noted the success of the program in Clinton and Guilford.

6.3 Policy Committee

6.3.1 Report: Revisions to Madison Public Schools Code of Conduct

Atty. Sellers reported that the Policy Committee met last week with the secondary administrators regarding proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct. The proposed revisions are based upon two public acts related to first time offenders (effective July 1, 2007) and suspensions (effective July 1, 2008). She reported that these will have policy impact also and it will take time to review both the policy and Code of Conduct. The school year will begin with the current Code of Conduct to allow for the review process time period.

6.3.2 Technical Revision: Policy #7120 Hazardous Material in Schools

Atty. Sellers reported that this a technical change only based upon a public act and the Policy Committee recommends action on the policy this evening.

Atty. Sellers added that the Policy Committee met this evening and discussed the theatre arts program and proposed funding methods. The committee is hoping to have a first draft for review at the next board meeting.

6.4 Finance Committee

Ms. Coffey stated that in the next few weeks the committee will review the reconciliation report following the hiring season.

6.5 LEARN Liaison

No report.

8. Consent Agenda (Items 8.1 – 8.3)

8.1 Bills Payable: \$234,048.26 (06/07) and \$1,746,528.17 (07/08)

8.2 Line Transfers: \$24,579.06

8.3 Donation: Brown School Planners (\$2,392) from Brown School PTO

MOTION: by Sellers, seconded by Rossini to approve the consent agenda.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mr. Youngerman thanked the Brown School PTO for their generous donation.

9. Action Item: Lease Agreement between Madison Public Schools and Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)

MOTION: by Rossini, seconded by Youngerman to approve the lease agreement for the Town Campus Learning Center between the Madison Public Schools and Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

10. Action Item: Appointment of Interim Principal, Island Avenue School

MOTION: by Gowanlock, seconded by Sellers to approve the appointment of Alexis Christina as Interim Principal of Island Avenue School effective 8.22.07 – 10.31.07

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

11. Action Item: Appointment of Interim Principal Dr. Robert H. Brown School

MOTION: by Sellers, seconded by Gowanlock to approve the appointment of Frank Henderson as Principal of Walter C. Polson School and Interim Principal at Dr. Robert H. Brown School effective 8.22.07 – 9.19.07.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

MOTION: by Gowanlock, seconded by Rossini to add to the agenda Action Item: Appointment of Principal at Dr. Robert H. Brown School and to approve the appointment of Julianne Phelps as Principal of the Dr. Robert H. Brown School effective 9.20.07.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

12. Action Item: Award Bid for School Refuse Removal Services

MOTION: by Planning Committee to award the bid for refuse removal services to American Carting at a bid price of \$59,224 effective 8.24.07 – 6.30.08.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

13. Action Item: Technical Revisions to Policy #7120 Hazardous Material in Schools

MOTION: by Sellers, seconded by Youngerman to waive the required three readings for Policy #7120 Hazardous Material in Schools.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

MOTION: by Planning Committee to approve the technical revisions to Policy #7120 Hazardous Material in Schools.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman  
NAYS: None  
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

14. Action Item: Academy School Renovation and Additions

MOTION: by Planning Committee to request that the Board of Selectmen appoint an Academy School building committee whose role would be to prepare cost estimates for those renovations needed to reopen the school for grades 1-4. These cost estimates are to include the addition of four core classrooms in preparation for a request for funding to the town.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mr. Hale commented that there is Public Hearing on Thursday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> that will include the Academy School project.

15. Action Item: Establishment of Community Outreach Community

MOTION: by Sellers, seconded by Coffey to approve a one-year Ad Hoc Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Board of Education.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

16. Action Item: Minutes 7.10.07

MOTION: by Gowanlock, seconded by Rossini to approve the minutes of the 7.10.07 meeting.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

17. Action Item: Minutes 7.23.07

MOTION: by Coffey, seconded by Rossini to approve the minutes of the 7.23.07 meeting.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Hale, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Gowanlock, Sellers

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

18. Action Item: Minutes 8.14.07 Meeting

MOTION: by Coffey, seconded by Rossini to approve the minutes of the 8.14.07 meeting.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Sellers, Youngerman

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

19. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

20. New Business

20.1 Textbook Adoption Preview (August 22 – September 4, 2007)

Thinking About Psychology

Bedford, Freeman and Worth Publishing

Daniel Hand High School Human Behavior

Ms. Rutlin explained that this textbook is for the current school year. At the end of June, this textbook was found to meet the criteria of the Human Behavior course. At that time, it was not available from the publisher while it is now available.

21. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were discussed.

22. Adjournment

MOTION: by Coffey, seconded by Youngerman to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 ~~8~~-p.m.

AYES: Coffey, Frey, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Submitted for approval at the 9.4.07 BOE meeting.

Board of Education Special Meeting  
August 28, 2007  
Town Campus

Meeting Minutes

The special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Robert Hale at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Becky Coffey, John Dean; Harriet Gowanlock; Robert Hale; Kathleen Rossini; Holly Sellers and David Youngerman.

MOTION: by Rossini, seconded by Sellers to enter Executive Session at 7:05 p.m. to discuss personnel issues.

AYES: Coffey, Dean, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

1. Executive Session

Present: Becky Coffey, John Dean; Harriet Gowanlock; Robert Hale; Kathleen Rossini; Holly Sellers and David Youngerman.

Also present: Consultant Dr. George Goens.

The Superintendent Search was discussed.

MOTION: by Coffey, seconded by Youngerman to adjourn Executive Session and the meeting at 8:15 ~~8~~ p.m.

AYES: Coffey, Dean, Gowanlock, Hale, Rossini, Sellers, Youngerman

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0