

**SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**APRIL 25, 2013**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular session was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Brian Goralski. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from the administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mr. Frederick G. Cox, Director of Operations, and Dr. Perri Murdica, Director of Pupil Services.

Student Representatives present were Miss Abigail Harris and Miss Whitney DiMeo.

There were approximately 8 people in the audience.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Miss Harris and Miss DiMeo.

Mr. Goralski called for a moment of silence in respect for the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ APRIL 11, 2013**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

**“Move to approve the Board of Education minutes of April 11, 2013, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried by voice vote with six in favor and Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Notar-Francesco and Mrs. Queen abstaining.**

**4. COMMUNICATIONS**

**a. Communications from Audience**

**Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue**, addressed the State of Connecticut shortfall to town and city governments with Southington to receive a loss in state funds of between \$400,000 and \$796,000. He thought that it would be nice if the state gave the towns and cities their budget first so the Town of Southington would know what money they had to work with in setting next year's budget. Mr. Cyr understood that in January there was a committee meeting to talk about capital bonding for a control room at the high school. He noted that the minutes of that meeting, which were legally correct, were not informative. He felt that anyone reading the minutes could not figure out what happened to the proposal of \$750,000 for a new control room that was supposed to be bonded and disappeared off the capital bonding list. He did not think that it was in the Town, Board of Education or Capital Bonding budgets either. Someone had called him and told him that there was a control room at the high school that is 30-40 years old and that they can't get parts for the system anymore. He asked if the Board was going to wait for it to break and not be able to supply air to the high school and then go to the Town for the \$750,000.

Dr. Erardi believed that Mr. Cyr was talking about the energy management system at the high school. In conversation with Garry Brumback, Town Manager, and Dr. Urillo, Chair of Capital Bonding, they are looking to fund that project this summer, without cost to the school district or the town, through an energy management performance bonus return. Dr. Erardi told Mr. Cyr to call him on Monday for the details.

**Shashwat P. Baxi, 427 Rockwood Drive**, pointed out that in 2004-2005 he was a student representative on the Board of Education. He recently moved back to Southington and toured the VOAG Center, which was a building project when he served on the Board. He thought that it was a wonderful addition to the school and town. He explained that he had a political science education at Loyola University and would like to be active in town government. He asked the Board what someone in his mid-20s could do to get involved. He asked the Board for direction to figure out what he could do to help better the education system. Mr. Goralski recommended that he e-mail the Board members and to reach out to Dr. Erardi. Mr. Goralski added that the Board liked to have people come back and make that kind of offer.

**b. Communications from Board Members and Administration**

**Communication from the Board Members:**

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mrs. Notar-Francesco:

**“Move to move Agenda Item 7.b. “Approval of K-8 Health Curriculum” to Agenda Item 4.d.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that she recently returned from San Diego, California where she attended the 2013 Annual NSBA Convention. She gave a brief report about her experience at NSBA. She stated that she attended 10 sessions over three days and was grateful to CREC for the opportunity of this experience because CREC paid for her to attend. The sessions that she attended included school safety, Common Core, Board governance, leadership, and initiatives for applying technology in education. She also attended a session about maximizing efforts when lobbying members of legislature. Several of the speakers addressed

school culture in their topics, such as in the school safety, instruction and learning, and Board governance. Mrs. Notar-Francesco highlighted how, within school safety, it was of critical importance to promote a culture within the school climate in which students feel that they are able to say something when they see or hear something and to treat the school as their “family.” The speakers believed that money is well spent on programs that empower students to protect their school “family” and give students tools to identify and report a threat. The speakers also encouraged Boards to lead the mental health discussions in their communities and to work to eliminate the negative connotations surrounding going for help with mental health issues. Within instruction and learning, culture was identified as staff needing to believe that change needs to happen for increased student achievement before schools can begin to change. Leadership must emphasize changing culture, and realize that culture trumps strategy for change. Within Board governance, Board culture is important as well, and it is the continuous affirmation of values and practices that the Board holds no matter what the circumstances. In that session, they suggested using retreats, conferences, workshops and work sessions to build a productive Board culture. Good Board governance drives achievement in school performance. Mrs. Notar-Francesco quoted the CEO of Costco as saying, “Culture, in any form, isn’t the most important thing. It is the only thing.” Presenters also spoke to Board governance as a key to student achievement. They believed that Boards should spend 75% of their focus and time on increasing student achievement, and that Board members focus on achievement like a corporate Board focuses on profits. Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that the presenters suggested developing a metric for evaluating the time that the Board needs to spend on student achievement and accountability.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco announced that CAFE is going to replicate the session on Board Governance with a webinar on April 30, 2013 at noon. It will be the same presentation that Gary Brochu (Berlin Board Chair and Shipman and Goodwin attorney) and Bob Rader from CAFE presented at NSBA. Mrs. Notar-Francesco distributed a folder to Board members that included a copy of the PowerPoint presentations on Professional Governance Boards and Maximizing your Meetings with Members of Congress.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that the CREC Council met on Wednesday, April 24. She distributed a letter from Dr. Bruce Douglas, Executive Director of CREC (*Attachment #1*). The letter is addressed to the members of the Connecticut General Assembly and talks about the severe inequity with the Hartford region for districts, such as Southington, who have to comply with the Sheff Stipulated Agreement paying for magnet schools. She stated that Dr. Douglas’ approach to the general assembly is that they should take this into account in ECS money for school districts. Mrs. Notar-Francesco added that Dr. Douglas strongly encouraged districts to replicate his letter and to send it under our own name.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that in the folder she distributed to the Board was a newsletter from Dr. Douglas that highlights, on page three, a Plantsville School student in the Open Choice program who was recognized and celebrated. The article was written by Mrs. Patricia Corvello, Principal of Plantsville School.

Mr. Derynoski reported that he attended the Technology Committee meeting and praised teachers Nancy Chiero and Justin Mirante. He noted that two manufacturing companies and a construction company in Southington are offering paid summer internships to high school students who meet certain criteria. He stated that the committee is working on a technology education curriculum that will support the manufacturing element because the current curriculum

is geared toward engineering. He emphasized that there was a need to prepare students, who are not going to an engineering college, for CNC machinist positions in manufacturing. There is a lack of training and interest in that area; however, there are some tremendous job opportunities for trained individuals in manufacturing. Mr. Derynoski noted that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee will be seeing something on this in the early part of next year.

Mrs. Queen thought Mrs. Notar-Francesco's summary of the NSBA Conference was excellent. She felt that the Southington school district was doing so many of those things already. Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that some of the things discussed in many areas, including school safety, were things that Southington was already doing. In regard to technology, there was one particular item called "iPossibilities," which she encouraged the Board, within her summary, to look at. This initiative put iPads in the hands of Kindergarten children. Mrs. Clark noted that she viewed the amazing video link and they were using technology that was age appropriate and level appropriate for the individual child. Mrs. Notar-Francesco thought that it was something the Board should consider.

Mrs. Queen addressed the school culture concept and the students being vested in their own health and the safety of their fellow students. She asked if the Board could pursue that more in terms of research. Mr. Goralski asked administration to look into this, and how it could be brought into the middle schools and high school.

Mrs. Johnson reported that Wednesday evening she attended the Grade 5 Transition Orientation for parents at Kennedy Middle School. She noted that it has been the goal of this Board to assist in easing the transition between fifth grade and the middle schools. She complimented Ms. Jennifer Discenza as the leader of that orientation and the team approach to it. Mrs. Johnson noted that the whole theme of the evening was buying into the school culture with "You are Eagles, we are a family, and you are part of the Eagle family." [The Eagle is the Kennedy Middle School mascot.] She noted that the DePaolo Middle School orientation was held the same night.

Mrs. Lombardi thanked Mrs. Notar-Francesco for her summary of the conference. She addressed the personal accountability as a Board member and that 75% of the Board's time should be spent on student achievement. Mrs. Lombardi questioned if the Board should keep track of a list of everything that they are doing as they go into the next school year and identify what things are in regard to student achievement. Mrs. Queen felt that the paperless CABA portal allows the Board to track and categorize types of agenda items and then produce reports at the end of the school year. Mr. Goralski thought the Board could incorporate that into the CABA system. Mrs. Notar-Francesco felt that consent agendas, for agenda items like field trips and the Personnel Report, could save Board time to be able to address student achievement. Dr. Erardi suggested that the Board consider this as one of their goals and objectives for next year.

Mr. Goralski would like to be careful about what they consider student achievement because he thought the budget was the most important thing that the Board does and that without accurately presenting, preparing, and following the budget they have no means to educate. He thought the budget was the core of what the Board does to educate the community.

Mr. Derynoski pointed out that everything that the Board of Education does was tied to student achievement. The real student achievement function is in the hands of the teachers and administration. Mr. Derynoski shared that his company was moving from one location to

another and that they have upgraded all of the internal systems and technology. His company had an outside consultant come in who looked at the technology hardware. The consultants anticipate that within five years the desktop computer is going to be a thing of the past. In two years, iPads might be outdated because technology is moving so fast. He thought that going forward the Board might not want to replace desktop units and may want to look into these new technological innovations and tools. Mr. Derynoski pointed out that the building he moved to is large and instead of wiring, everything in the building is now wireless, even with the security system. The wire savings was well over \$150,000.

Mr. Goralski announced that the Board members were invited to the Southington Education Association (SEA) Service Brunch on Saturday morning, April 27, 2013 at Strong School. He thought that it was another example of the relationship that the teachers have with the community. He complimented the SEA on that initiative.

Mr. Goralski announced that Helen Henne has been selected as this year's UNICO 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Gold Medal Honor Award recipient. He noted that she has done so much good for so many people, including the Southington schools.

#### **Communication from Administration:**

Dr. Erardi addressed Mr. Derynoski's technology remarks and noted that with the middle school projects they have every staff member wanting technology to be purchased as soon as possible. If they go that route, when the project is completed, the technology will already be two years old. He noted that is the problem with where they are with the furniture, fixture and equipment (FF&E) line item within that project. He will provide more information on that to the Board.

The administration reported on the following:

1. USDA Recognition – Food Service: Mrs. DiNello announced that all eight of the district's elementary schools have been awarded the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge Bronze Award. She read some of the excerpts from the press release that was sent to her. *"The HealthierUS School Challenge awards are a way for the USDA to recognize schools that have created healthier school environments through improvements in the quality of school meals while providing both nutrition and physical education to promote healthy lifestyles."* She noted that less than 6% of the nation's eligible schools have earned this distinction and all eight of Southington's elementary schools have received it. An award ceremony will be held on Friday, April 26 at the Second Annual School Breakfast Summit in East Hartford where Nya Welinsky, Food Service Director, will be presented the award along with a commemorative plaque, a banner, and a check for \$500 to the school district. Mrs. DiNello was not sure if it was \$500 times eight schools or a flat \$500 check.
2. Military Luncheon: In school partnership with our military veterans, Dr. Erardi announced that on Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at noon, they will be recognizing the graduates of the Class of 2013 who will be entering the military service at an Honor Cord Celebration. At this time, they will be presented their red, white and blue graduation cord. Dr. Erardi stated that details will follow.

3. Final Interview – Kelley Principal: Dr. Erardi reminded the Board that on Wednesday, May 1, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center, there will be a brief working dinner and the final interviewing of three candidates for Principal of Kelley Elementary School. He was very pleased with the extensive pool of very qualified candidates.
4. Leon Peschel, former student representative: Dr. Erardi announced that Leon Peschel will be attending a Board meeting in June presenting his reflection on the preparation from Southington High School to the Honors Program at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Erardi noted that Leon was recently presented the Emerging Leaders Finalist Award at UConn.

**c. Communication from the Student Representatives:**

Miss Harris reported on the following:

- The National Honor Society (NHS) Induction was held on April 9 at Southington High School with 41 students inducted. She was inducted and was looking forward to be involved with community service.
- The NHS held a Dodgeball Tournament on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 and the returning champions will be playing Cheshire High School on May 9, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. with all proceeds going to Relay for Life.
- Miss Harris stated that she had a great time at Junior Prom and that there were no discipline issues. She noted that Dr. Semmel was happy because the food was served early this year compared to past years when it was served at 9:00 p.m.
- She wished the Robotics Team good luck with their competition in St. Louis, Missouri and was looking forward to watching their competition live.

Miss DiMeo reported on the following:

- Miss DiMeo commented on the Spanish and French Exchange to Europe and the field trip to Costa Rica during the April vacation.
- Miss DiMeo noted that, for many of the students, it was their first time to Europe and that it was educational to experience other cultures. There were open-air markets every morning with Europeans buying their food fresh for the day. She noted that there were roundabouts everywhere, which was new to the students because Connecticut only has a couple. She thought that the cars drove in the strangest places. They also visited Paris, France and Versailles's beautiful gardens. She saw the Mona Lisa up close, which was a very powerful experience for her. The biggest impact was seeing the Eiffel Tower lighted up at night, which was very moving for the students because it was so beautiful and historical. She noted that all the students came home with wanderlust.
- Miss DiMeo pointed out that exchange students will be coming to Southington in October and she will not be able to house her student next year. However, she is going to school in Boston next year majoring in Linguistics and the exchange students will be arriving and departing from Logan Airport at which time she hopes to see her exchange friend again.
- Miss DiMeo stated that the favorite part was her Spanish class because it was taught in French and instructed in Spanish. She takes both languages at the high school and forgot English for a while because it was not used.

- Miss DiMeo thanked Dr. Adina Alexandru, Chair of the Southington High School World Language Department, for striving for a greater significance of languages at the high school through having these exchanges and also the creation of the National Foreign Language Society. Dr. Alexandru is also fluent in five languages.
- Miss DiMeo pointed that during the Spanish Exchange, the Spanish students knew more English than the Southington students knew Spanish. During the French Exchange, the French students knew more English than the Southington students knew French. She did not think that a five-year program was enough time to learn a language. She is taking UConn Spanish right now at the high school and it is the highest level of Spanish at the high school. However, this is the first year that she is not learning about grammar and conjugations. She is learning now about culture, architecture, politics and globalization and it took her five years to get to this point. By not implementing a stronger language program, she felt that they were depriving the children in the Southington Public School system the best education possible. She spoke passionately about integrating languages to students at a younger age such as Kindergarten. She noted that Glastonbury, West Hartford and Greenwich currently have K-12 language programs. She felt that to be able to acquire a second language was so powerful in today's world.
- Miss DiMeo parted with a quote from Nelson Mandela, *"If you talk to a man in a language that he understands, it goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, it goes to his heart."*

Mrs. Carmody was very proud of everything that Miss DiMeo said and took notes for the Curriculum Committee. Mrs. Carmody thought that Miss DiMeo made some very excellent observations. Miss DiMeo felt that the languages were treated as an elective at the high school and that every college wants to see more than two years of a language. She received scholarships because she took double languages and it looks good on college applications. She felt that it builds more opportunities for students in the workforce as well. Mrs. Carmody noted that Miss DiMeo's language teachers would be very proud of her tonight because she spoke so eloquently and passionately about the subject.

Mrs. Queen noted that what Miss DiMeo exhibited was what the Board wants to achieve in education and that is to create a passion. For Miss DiMeo it is clearly languages and connecting with people around the world. Miss DiMeo stated that she plans to study neuroscience and languages in college.

Mrs. Lombardi stated that she was bilingual, and that Spanish was her first language as well as being a Spanish teacher. She applauded Miss DiMeo and her convictions. She hoped that Miss DiMeo will come back to Southington and mentor other high school students. Mrs. Lombardi pointed out that languages were also addressed in the Vision 2020 work.

**d. Approval of K-8 Health Curriculum (formerly Agenda Item 7.b)**

Mrs. Smith stated that the Curriculum Committee carefully reviewed the Kindergarten through Grade 5 Health Curriculum changes, as well as the Grades 6-8 Health Curriculum changes, that they will be implementing for the 2013-2014 school year. She noted that copies

were available in central office and all the Board members were present when Mrs. Carmody gave her report. Mrs. Smith pointed out that Betty Lutz and Josie Rogala were in the audience and were two members of a very large K-5 Health Curriculum Committee. Michelle Andrews from DePaolo was present who, along with team member Claudia Ashline from Kennedy, worked on the Grade 6-8 Health Curriculum changes.

Mrs. Carmody thanked the Health Curriculum Committee for their presentations and the work they did following the state standards and the Common Core. She noted that the topics that they had to address were different from when she went to school, and complimented the committee on how they handled them. She noted that mental illness would never have been talked about before in curriculum along with some topics that would be embarrassing to students.

**MOTION:** by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mrs. Notar-Francesco:

**“Move to approve the revised Grades K-8 Health Curriculum.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting ~ April 22, 2013**

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee discussed access sidewalks and the fact that there is no language in the policies regarding this. Because it has become a public issue, the committee decided to set-up a meeting with Town Council representatives to discuss what the role of the Board of Education is on this matter. The committee will be adding language to the transportation policy regarding children walking to school as well as what the proposed guidelines would be after meeting with Mrs. Cheryl Lounsbury of the Town Council and her committee.

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee also discussed changing the job title and position of the Accounting Manager to Accounting Manager / Purchasing Manager to better reflect what the job responsibilities were going to be. As the committee looked at the job description that was provided by Mrs. DiNello, they felt that they would like to make some changes to it with the arrangement of the job qualifications and requirements that were needed. The committee is in the process of looking at the old job description of the Purchasing Agent versus this new position, and trying to make sure that everything is covered correctly.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Town Government Communications**

Mr. Goralski addressed the Town Council Public Hearing on the budget and how respectful the speakers were. He was excited that the dialogue was continuing regarding the restoration of funds to the Board of Education budget. He felt that the opinion of the public was what propelled it forward.

Mr. Goralski reported that he attended the Charter Revision Committee and was surprised to hear Mrs. Sandra Feld acknowledge that the last Charter Revision Committee, on which she



served, made a mistake regarding changing the terms of serving on the Boards. The former Charter Revision Committee changed the terms from four years to two years. Mr. Goralski encouraged his fellow Board members to send their opinion to the new Charter Revision Committee regarding changing the term back to four years.

Mr. Derynoski had a problem with the state legislature because the Board of Education and the Town are currently going through the budget process and by Town Charter the Town Council has to set the budget and the Board of Finance has to set the mill rate in May. If that is done and the state revenue stream ends, then there will be a problem. Mr. Derynoski stated that he was going to contact our new state representative to find out what the feeling is at the state level. Mr. Derynoski noted that the state is in dire straits because they have to make cuts someplace, but do not know where to cut. Mr. Goralski felt that the Board should reach out to all the Southington representatives.

Mrs. Queen missed the last Board meeting and read the minutes from a different perspective to learn what she had missed. She missed the presentation on the Teacher Evaluation Plan, and pointed to pages 5 to 9 in the April 11, 2013 Board minutes. She felt this was an excellent overview of the new Teacher Evaluation Plan, and of all of the inherent challenges and implied costs to each component of it. Because so much of the attention with the budget has been given to the All-Day Kindergarten program, the Teacher Evaluation Plan piece was getting lost in the uproar. She felt that the Board minutes were an excellent summary. She encouraged the Town Council members to look at the Board of Education minutes of the last meeting.

#### **b. Construction Update**

Mr. Cox had two communications with the new Director of the School Facilities Unit who assigned a new member of his staff to look at the close-out of the Plantsville and South End School projects. He apologized for the delays, which he stated were due to staff reductions at the state level.

Mr. Cox reported that DePaolo Middle School received the approval to go out to bid on Tuesday. The Kennedy Middle School project is lagging a little bit behind. They do not yet have the authorization to go to bid. Because JFK is on Route 10, they are still waiting for the State Traffic Control Commission in Hartford to approve it. However, everything is going as planned because the Building Committee wanted one middle school to be put out to bid a week before the other.

#### **c. Teacher Evaluation Plan**

Dr. Erardi reported that the School Board submitted on time the Teacher Evaluation Plan for 2013-2014, as directed by the State Department of Education. He learned shortly thereafter that, because so many districts did not submit on time, the State Department of Education moved the submittal date to mid-May.

Mrs. Smith explained that they could begin with the professional development training that is required for the Teacher Evaluation Plan now that it has been accepted and submitted to the state. The next step is that, on April 30, 2013, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, all administrators, including department chairs and assistant department chairs at the high school, are invited to an in-house professional development

opportunity. Regarding the Teacher Evaluation Plan, they will develop a script that will be followed in all schools at their Tuesday Faculty meetings during the month of May. She noted that it will be the birth of new language (acronyms) and the Board will be hearing about SLO's and IAGD's. Mrs. Smith stated that part of the Administrator Evaluation Plan is to develop consistency and fidelity of practice with the administrative team. It will be more than a three-hour workshop session and will be ongoing. Everyone will be using common language and have a common purpose and goal around this plan.

Mrs. Smith explained that via e-mail the teachers will receive a copy of the plan that was adopted by the Board of Education and the one-page summary and the PowerPoint presentation, which the Board members saw. The e-mail message would be that the information was for their reference and to read the one-page summary before the meeting in May. She noted that for the two professional development days in August they will be learning how to write good student learning objectives and how to write good IAGD's (Indicator Achievement Growth and Development plan). She invited the Board to join the professional development on April 30.

Mr. Oshana was concerned with the amount of time that the teachers would be spending out of the classroom because of this new mandate as there is already a lot of time spent out of the classroom. For the next school year, he asked if there was a way they could start tracking the amount time teachers spend out of the classroom for all meetings. Mr. Goralski thought that was an excellent idea. Dr. Erardi stated that administration would work up a tracking framework to bring back to the Board.

Mrs. Carmody was sickened by the fact that the Teacher Evaluation Plan was stated as mandated and that Southington complied with the timeline only to have many of the districts not turning in their plans on time and receiving an extension to May. Mrs. Smith explained that she and Mr. Rick Terino attended a workshop on April 15 with a variety of cohort representatives from across the state. Initially, she thought that Southington was behind in understanding the components of the plan; however, they left feeling good about Southington breaking out what needed to be done in smaller pieces.

#### **d. Proposed Operational Plan 2013-2014**

Dr. Erardi explained that the Town Council will take final action on the budget on Monday, May 13, 2013. The budget will then go to the School Board to take action at their Thursday, May 23, 2013 meeting. Over the weekend, Dr. Erardi planned to post on his Blog those two dates and the question, "if the School Board's proposed budget is ultimately cut, will All-Day Kindergarten be eliminated?" His response would be that administration will bring forth requested data that the School Board has asked for, and at this point everything is on the table with the hope that there is restoration; however, if there is not restoration in full, then there is a thoughtful discussion that takes place at the Board level on May 23.

Mr. Goralski asked Dr. Erardi to look into all the options available because the biggest discussion will be All-Day Kindergarten, and what needs to be cut to keep it or how would we be impacted if we cut it. Dr. Erardi stated that the past practice is that the Board does not speak about the reduction or elimination of programming or staffing until the administration has the opportunity to have those conversations with staff privately. He hoped that past practice would be adhered to. Mr. Goralski asked Board members to share their concerns and suggestions with Dr. Erardi at any point and at any time via e-mail, so it is respectful to the process. Mr.

Derynoski agreed that it was the best way to approach it and to follow past practice. His biggest concern was that they don't want to start pitting one program against another or they would be discussing it until June 30. He stated that the Board will need to do this very diligently and rely on the expertise of the administration.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Award Recipient**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

**“Move that the Board of Education approves the recipient recommended by the Leonard and Gladys Joll Scholarship subcommittee.”**

Mrs. Smith stated that last year she spoke to Leonard and Gladys Joll's daughter who lives in the Midwest. The daughter sent Mrs. Smith newspaper clippings of her father who was very involved in Southington and a supporter of education. Mrs. Smith heard the history of the family and how the daughter was happy to hear that the Southington was still giving “life” to her father and his passions. The daughter applauded the efforts of the Board of Education and the fact that the scholarship has continued for many years. Mrs. Smith stated that once the recipient's name is public, she will then notify the Joll's daughter to tell her about the recipient.

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**b. Approval of K-8 Health Curriculum** *(Moved to Agenda Item 4.d)*

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Notar-Francesco:

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Blanchard*  
Recording Secretary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Bruce E. Douglas, Ph.D.

April 9, 2013

Dear Member of the Connecticut General Assembly,

As you know, our state is facing a funding dilemma surrounding school district tuitions for Sheff magnet schools. A series of patchwork decisions around the Sheff vs. O'Neill Settlement Agreement has led to a funding approach that disproportionately and severely burdens a small number of Connecticut's school districts.

Under court-order, 22 districts are required to comply to assist the state in meeting the goals of the Sheff Settlement Agreement.<sup>1</sup> At a collective cost of more than \$22 million, this has had a significant and debilitating financial impact on those 22 school districts and their municipalities. Numerous school districts not named in the Sheff decree, but which participate in order to meet the Sheff benchmarks, also suffer a financial burden on behalf of the state. Adequately funding these programs in order to meet the benchmarks of the Sheff Settlement Agreement is the state's obligation.

Moreover, proposed legislation would require families of students attending early childhood programs in Sheff magnet schools to pay tuition. This would threaten the ability of Sheff magnet schools to maintain racial balance in programs that are essential for our state to meet the Sheff benchmarks. Neither of these funding structures is just or sustainable. The most viable, long-term, and fair solution is for the state to modify the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula to account for students attending magnet schools when calculating each school district's ECS grant.

Currently, each town's grant under ECS is determined by applying multiple calculations to Connecticut's per pupil "foundation" amount. Except for the foundation grant, which is currently set by state law, the basic formula incorporates various sub-formulas, each of which is calculated using district-specific factors, such as town wealth, the number of "need students", and identification as an Alliance District. We recommend that compliance under the Sheff Settlement Agreement be one of the factors that determine a school district's ECS grant amount. This change would acknowledge a school district's court-ordered responsibility to participate in Sheff programs by increasing their grant amount, thus reducing the disproportionate burden that these districts face on behalf of the state. Furthermore, any school district not required to comply under the Sheff court-order, which contributes to meeting the benchmarks of the Sheff Settlement Agreement, should be given the same consideration.

Meeting the state's obligations under the Sheff Settlement Agreement is a priority for our legislature and for our school districts. Modifying the Educational Cost Sharing grant to account for Sheff compliance is a just, long-term means of addressing this challenge.

We welcome a partnership in formulating the details of this plan.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Douglas, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director, CREC

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<sup>1</sup> The Sheff Stipulation and Proposed Order, dated April 4, 2008 reads: "Sheff Region: As defined in the original complaint, the Sheff Region includes the school districts of Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Manchester, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor, Suffield, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. The Desegregation Standard shall be the lesser of the Sheff Region's aggregate minority percentage enrollment plus thirty percentage points or seventy-five percent (75%). The Desegregation Standard shall be calculated for each year of the Stipulation based on that year's aggregate minority percentage enrollment figures but in no event shall it exceed seventy-five percent (75%)."