

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Southington Town Hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

At 7:13 p.m., Dr. Erardi announced that there were two parts to the Celebration of Excellence. For the first celebration, Antoinette Delfino (SHS Teacher), Enrique Perez-Luno Robledo and Mercedes Tejera Suso (from Spain) were recognized for facilitating 30 Spanish high school students from Spain at Southington High School. Mr. Goralski presented a Certificate of Excellence to Enrique and Mercedes. For the second celebration, Mrs. Jill Chapman was recognized as the Southington 2010-2011 Teacher of the Year and as a semi-finalist at the State level. She was presented with an engraved glass apple and plaque by Mr. Goralski, Board Chairperson. Dr. Erardi noted that Mrs. Chapman is a Literacy Specialist at Kelley Elementary School, a Southington native, and a product of Southington Public Schools.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Brian Goralski. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Rosemarie Fischer (*arrived at 8:30 p.m.*), Ms. Michelle Schroeder, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, and Mrs. Kathleen Rickard.

Present from the administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations, and Ms. Frances Haag, Senior Special Education Coordinator.

Student Representative present was Mr. Christopher Amnott.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Amnott led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ SEPTEMBER 9, 2010

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

“Move to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 9, 2010.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Ms. Schroeder, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Rickard, Mr. Goralski. ABSTAIN: Mrs. Carmody. **Motion carried with seven in favor and one abstention.**

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

There was no communication from the audience.

b. Communications from Board Members and Administration

Communication from the Board Members:

Mrs. Notar-Francesco gave a CREC Report. She reported that the CREC Council held their first meeting of the new school year on September 15, 2010. At the start of the meeting, CREC held their Celebration of Excellence. The CREC Teacher of the Year was recognized and honored. Mr. Jerome Maas, who, like last year's recipient, is a teacher at the Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science, is the CREC Teacher of the Year. Bruce Douglas, CREC's Executive Director, described Jerome Maas as a dedicated teacher who helped found GHAMAS. He is credited with setting high goals and standards for his students, and uses humor and creativity to engage his students in the classroom. Mr. Maas was humbled with the accolades and said that he believes, as a teacher, he needs to be consistently challenging himself to come up with ways to challenge his students.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that at the CREC meeting, Denise Gallucci, General Director of the Magnet Schools, reported on the academic success that CREC has seen in their magnet schools last year. CREC magnet schools realized unprecedented student achievement gains in CMT and CAPT, in spite of significantly increasing enrollment. Additionally, and perhaps most significant, the test results of economically disadvantaged and minority students, again this year, greatly exceeded the State averages. CREC has realized great success in closing the achievement gap within these magnet schools. CREC is especially proud of these results, as they added more than 800 students to magnet schools in the 2009-10 year. Approximately 500 of these new students reside in Hartford and are enrolled as part of the Sheff remedy. When describing how they achieved these gains, Denise Gallucci pointed to increasing capacity, staff effectiveness, and achieving results that are sustainable. Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that Mrs. Gallucci said that professional development was a key factor in their plan. New teachers (defined as teaching less than three years) receive three days of professional development before school begins. All other teachers receive eight days of professional development throughout the year.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that CREC leans heavily on Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI), benchmark assessments and constantly revisiting data. They collect data and make every effort to unlock its meaning, and make it useful. They worked hard to build change that is reliable, as well as sustainable. She noted that Mrs. Gallucci believed that it was important to frequently revisit their targets to be sure their achievement aim was not too low, but that it is right and that the supports in place are right.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that CREC employs a skilled administrative team, committed to leading the “Expect more. Get more.” teaching culture. Teaching staff is intensely committed to excellence and focused on producing students who are college ready.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that, at the meeting, there was a roundtable discussion about ECS and the Jobs Bill. A few districts used their Jobs money for teachers this year. Everyone is in a wait-and-see pattern concerning the November election and, ultimately, what will happen with ECS next year.

Mr. Derynoski reported that he attended the Plantsville School Open House and he was amazed at the tremendous parent turnout. He thought that the large turnout of parent participation was a combination of parents wanting to meet the new teachers and also wanting to see the new school.

Mrs. Clark was very glad to receive reminder telephone calls from the principals the day before the various Open Houses were scheduled. She received reminder telephone calls from Mrs. Kamerbeek [South End School Principal] and Dr. Semmel [SHS Principal] and she thought that other parents were appreciative of it also.

MOTION: by Mrs. Clark, seconded by Mr. Derynoski

“Move to add a potential Legal Matter to the Executive Session.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Johnson, Ms. Schroeder, Mrs. Rickard, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Goralski announced that Attorney Mark Sciota contacted him last week about the SEED (Southington Economic Enrichment Development) appointment. He was forwarding Mrs. Carmody’s name, as he did last year, to continue to fill out the rest of the Board’s two-year term.

Mr. Goralski thanked the STEPS organization [Southington Townwide Effort to Promote Success]. He was unable to attend the STEPS picnic on September 19, but a large number of Southington students attended. He felt that it was a great partnership. He announced that the Community Forum at Hawk’s Landing would be held on October 26, 2010. They will be talking about the survey STEPS did and moving forward “Success with Kids.”

Mr. Goralski reported that CAFE was sponsoring a workshop on “Social Networking in Public Schools - How districts grapple with student and employee issues.” He thought that it was timely with the policy that the Board is working on. He planned to give Dr. Erardi the brochure to make copies for the Board members in case someone had an interest in attending.

Communication from Administration:

Dr. Erardi discussed the following (*Attachment #1*):

1. Middle School Feasibility: Dr. Erardi reported that this was a continuation of the Feasibility Study conversation that the Board had on September 9 with the Town

Manager weighing in on the \$40,000 request; it will ultimately go to the Board of Finance for action.

2. Rachel's Challenge: Dr. Erardi reported that he saw the Rachel's Challenge Program before, and this was very powerful. It will be brought to the high school student body and then to parents on September 29. He noted that Rachel Joy Scott was the first student killed at Columbine High School. He noted that the impact is enormous in a very positive way for young adults to witness, watch, and learn about sensitivity, diversity and creating a community that offers each other support. The September 29 program will be held at the high school at 7:00 p.m.

3. Paperless Progress Reports: Dr. Erardi reported that, at the close of the first quarter, they would continue with what they have traditionally done with the Progress Reports in the middle schools and high school with the students using a carry home document. Administration will be notifying all parents that, starting in the second quarter, due to access to the parent portal that allows parents to look at grades continually throughout the course of the school year, that the second quarter and beyond Progress Reports would be done electronically. Administration will offer any parent who does not have the opportunity to log on at home or at their worksite, to look at the second quarter Progress Reports in hard copy. He noted that they would be sending home a paper trail on it.

4. SHS Concession Stand Dedication and

5. Plantsville Re-Dedication:

Dr. Erardi reported that he was reporting on these two items together. He stated that the dedication for the SHS Concession Stand and the Plantsville School Re-dedication should be done before the first snowfall. He noted that Mrs. Helen Henne worked tirelessly on the concession stand for the past three or four years, and it is near completion. It is up, ready, and running and will be in operation on Friday evening, September 24, with the exception of water. He stated that would take place over time. He suggested that one or two Board members work with administration to create an early November date for the dedication before a Friday evening football game.

Dr. Erardi also asked that one or two Board members work with administration to create an early November date for the re-dedication of Plantsville. Mrs. Rickard stated that she would like to work on both committees. She stated that she has worked with Helen Henne eight or ten years on the new concession stand, not three or four years.

Mr. Goralski pointed out that, with any dedication, they have to have a committee of the Board make a recommendation to the full Board, but, with the Plantsville School re-dedication, it is not necessary. Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Carmody stated they would like to be part of the Concession Stand Committee. Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Derynoski and Mrs. Rickard volunteered to work with Dr. Erardi on the Plantsville re-dedication.

Mr. Goralski questioned if the dedication of the Concession Stand was for the Grand Opening or in honor of Helen Henne. He stated that they needed to name a committee to make a recommendation to the full Board and it would be part of the agenda for the next meeting. He announced that the committee would be comprised of

Mrs. Rickard, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Eric Swallow (Athletic Director), and Dr. Erardi. Mr. Derynoski thought that they needed another person, who was not a Board member, and was a member of the community. Dr. Erardi stated that he would work on that. Mr. Goralski suggested that it be a person from the Gridiron Club or a member of the public. Dr. Erardi remarked that he would bring that to the October 9 Board meeting. He added that they are ready to go forward for the Plantsville re-dedication.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked if it would be more beneficial for the Board members to attend the Rachel's Challenge presentation held for the students or for the parent presentation in the evening. Dr. Erardi responded that there was great value in both. If Board members were interested to watch the immediate student reaction, it would be the day program. Dr. Erardi thought that it would be a matter of convenience to the Board members' schedule when they attend. Attending either program works in a big way.

c. Communication from Student Board Representative

Christopher Amnott reported the following:

- Mr. Tony DiBeneditto is the new School Lunch Manager in the high school cafeteria. He is the owner of Pepper Jacks and will be highlighting new food items every Wednesday during the month of October. In the freshman cafeteria, he will be giving out free samples on September 27. The salad bar is now open.
- Rachel's Challenge will be coming to Southington High School. The mom of one of the students who was killed at Columbine has made it her goal to touch the lives of students all over the country to make sure that bullying does not happen any more. Mr. Amnott understands that the program is very good and very powerful.
- The Southington Police Department Explorer Post #57 is currently accepting applications for membership. They are looking for students between the ages of 14 and 21 who have an interest in Criminal Justice.
- Unified Sports has started at Southington High School, as well as all of the other sports programs.
- The Southington-Glastonbury football game on Friday night will be on MYTV9 as the featured game of the week.
- There will be a Blood Drive on September 30 and anyone over the age of 17 may sign-up in the cafeteria.
- Thirty Spanish exchange students touched the lives of Southington High School students over the past couple of weeks, and it was nice to see and learn about their culture.
- Mr. Amnott congratulated Mrs. Chapman for receiving the Teacher of the Year Award.
- The STEPS picnic was held on September 19 and was very successful. He noted that many clubs and organizations were there.
- The College Essay Writing Workshop was held the past week and there was a great turnout of many juniors and seniors.
- The SHS Open House was held on September 15 and the Key Club assisted parents on tours.

- Mr. Amnott thanked Board of Education members for visiting Southington High School over the past couple weeks. He noted that Mrs. Carmody came into one of his classes.
- Southington High School has a new announcer for basketball and football games. The announcer is a Production Assistant for ESPN. Mr. Risser, the previous announcer, is now the Athletic Director at Windsor High School.
- The football team won its first game 19-8 over South Windsor. The Quarterback, Jordon Chapman, had two interceptions, touchdowns and a victory.
- Brian Wilcox set a school record in Cross Country this week during the meet at Camp Sloper.
- Girls' Volleyball returned to the court this week to defend their state championship in the 2010-2011 sports season.
- FBLA hosted a car wash at Burger King on Saturday, September 18 and raised \$700. Ms. Davey is the advisor for FBLA and stated that, if the students raised over \$500, she would get a bucket of water dumped over her head. It happened! He stated that she is a great teacher.
- The College Fair was held Wednesday, September 22 in the high school cafeteria. Colleges from all over the country, including the University of Alabama, were there, along with Eastern Connecticut State University, Quinnipiac University and Syracuse University.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Council / Board of Finance Communications

Mr. Goralski reported that, earlier that day, he attended the second meeting of the Committee of the Chairs and it was attended by the Chairs of the Board of Finance, Town Council and Board of Education, Attorney Sciota [Deputy Town Manager] and Mr. Weichsel [Town Manager]. They discussed the activities and actions among the Boards. There was discussion on the Board of Education Feasibility Study request that just went to them. At that time, Mr. Goralski shared the Board of Education's offer to host a joint meeting. The Chairs told him that they thought it might be premature for a joint meeting; however, there was broad support for the Board of Education's request. They would seek a joint meeting after the formalities within their own Boards were completed.

Mr. Goralski mentioned to the other Chairs that the budget process starts at Board of Education meeting tonight with the School Board moving on the Assumptions and Priorities. Mr. Goralski announced that there would be meetings between the other Boards regarding the Finance Department being in Town Hall and prioritizing Capital Projects. They will be consulting with Mrs. DiNello regarding donation opportunities for their employees through payroll (similar to what Board of Education employees have). The Town Council Chair would like to mirror what the Board of Education does so that all the town employees can have the same opportunities.

Mr. Goralski announced that there is a Public Hearing on September 27 at 7:00 p.m. to talk about sewer interceptors on Spring Street and Smoron Drive.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Cox reported that, last Thursday evening, the Building Committee met on the Plantsville and South End School Projects. They continue to work on finishing the punch lists. The following meeting was on the VoAg Project and Mr. Derynoski made a motion to the committee to deem the project as complete, which passed unanimously. Once Mr. Cox gets all the final numbers from the Finance Department, he will bring it before the Board as an agenda item to accept the project as complete at an October Board meeting.

Mr. Derynoski noted that the Building Committee had a goal to at least close the VoAg Project before they closed the South End School and Plantsville School Projects.

c. Facility Committee Update

Dr. Erardi stated that there was no report. Mr. Goralski stated that, as the Feasibility Study request proceeds, he asked that they communicate with the School Board so Board members could attend the meetings. If need be, they asked that the committee remains intact in case there are other recommendations needed from them.

d. Curriculum Initiative ~ Spelling

Mr. Thiery stated that last spring the Curriculum Committee met and had a presentation from Ms. Betsy Chester, Language Arts Coordinator, on a new instructional initiative, which was a consistent way to teach spelling across Kindergarten through Grade 5 that fit into the Language Arts Curriculum, as it existed. This represents a way to balance out the language arts block at the elementary level. He stated that tonight Ms. Chester was going to present the new language arts spelling initiative.

Ms. Chester distributed some sample posters to the Board members. She noted that these are the posters that go along with the teacher resource for the Sitton material that are in every second grade classroom.

Ms. Chester explained that, in the packet that she had submitted to the Board members, the first page has the history of the study and that two years ago people shared their feeling that there was inconsistency in some of the spelling resources and practices that were occurring. It was part of the Anthology piece, but the way it was delivered and administered was inconsistent and not comprehensive enough. The Literacy Specialists undertook a study and came to the consensus that they wanted to pilot Sitton Spelling.

Ms. Chester explained that the posters that were being passed around were phonemics that are song, chanted, clapped and repeated and, when they start as early as possible learning some of those patterns, it is a study of "Word Work." The spiral-bound resource book that was being passed around was the Sitton Teacher Handbook, the only resource that the classroom teacher needs. In the handbook are all the lessons, materials needed, and the assessments. It is a one-time purchase and they are reproduced year after year. The other material being passed around was called "Words Their Way," which is the teacher resource for the Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers. Each lesson is explained and tells the teacher what the objectives are and the resources that they are going to need. There are a lot of kinesthetic manipulatives that go with the Kindergarten and first grade students working with words.

Ms. Chester stated that the article that she put into the Board packet was from the Teacher Training Manual that all teachers received when they had the training in August. She culled some of the important facts from that manual. The difference between a traditional spelling program and Rebecca Sitton's program has to do with "forever spellers" and that is about accountability. Many programs have lists of words; typically, the historical approach has been that the list was memorized and then the student took a spelling test. She noted that many children do well with that. What happens is that the student does well memorizing and on a spelling test, but when the real writing happens it does not always transfer on the paper. It is a study of how words work and their patterns. There is accountability because there is never a test on Friday that has a list of new words that need to be memorized. All the words are recycled all the time.

Ms. Chester pointed out that this was piloted last year by two people in each school and there were literacy specialists involved with the pilot. At the end of the year, they did an analysis with parent input and decided that they wanted to do this district-wide. They took this slowly and wanted to make sure that there was ownership from the teachers. There is a lot of editing and revising in it and it deals with capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling. The program is up and running and 100% of the teachers were involved in the training in August. So far, the feedback has been that the teachers like the comprehensiveness of it, consistency, and the user-friendliness of it. Most importantly, they say that the students really like it.

Mrs. Johnson noted that there was going to be Sitton Spelling in Grades 2-5, but Words Their Way in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and asked why. Ms. Chester replied that they studied what each resource had as the most important piece to it and they felt that Sitton did not have a strong enough phonics piece for Grade 1 and it does not have a Kindergarten piece. They wanted to make sure that they had a solid phonetic experience for students, as they are learning to read and access the language. They took both the scope and sequence of each of the resources and studied line by line which were the skills and strategies for each of the resources. They decided that they were going to have the Kindergarten and first grade students start with a stronger phonics experience. The second grade teachers who piloted it were so adamant about it, and petitioned and felt that there was enough there for the second graders to be able to excel, in particular, with the solid Kindergarten and first grade phonics experience.

Mrs. Johnson asked how Ms. Chester anticipated assessing the new spelling curriculum. Ms. Chester replied that they would actually see it in real writing. The assessments are part of this particular resource and are built in. They are built in by sentence dictation and by Cloze exercises. There are some activities where they are actually bracketing and assessing writing every day. As far as the success of choosing this piece, she thought that they would see evidence of the students work carry over.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that the program continues to Grades 6, 7 and 8 and asked if they were going to be following that through. Ms. Chester recommended that they want to have it move into Grade 6 next year. That way, the children who enter Grade 6 will have had a Grade 5 experience and then bring it into Grade 6. They want to wait until the children have had this for a few years. To start it in seventh and eighth grade is difficult; but, once they have had that experience, they will then determine where the students' progress is, and if there are other

vocabulary resources that can be used. Whether they use a spelling program in Grade 7 and 8 is debatable. Some school systems do and some stop in Grade 6.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that the material that Ms. Chester gave them speaks often about differentiation. She asked Ms. Chester to describe how that looks in a classroom. Ms. Chester replied that there are certain mini-lessons of basic principles that happen that all children receive. Then, a spelling list is determined. When they start writing, everyone has an individual list with the words that they can spell that they might not have to worry about and they are going to be able to have extensions. For other children, they are going to have the words that they are having trouble with and all of those words are recycled. It really lends itself to differentiation.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked what the program changeover was going to cost the Board of Education. Ms. Chester replied that it cost the one-time purchase of the teacher resource for the training and that is the end of the cost. Mr. Thiery replied that he had that number twice this week and he would forward that number to the Board by e-mail. Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that they asked for this in committee. Mr. Thiery stated that he would love to quote a number but Mrs. DiNello, who was not there, would “smack” him because he would have it wrong by some amount. He stated that one of the appeals of it was that it was a one-time expense. Mr. Goralski asked if that book was replaceable because they have new teachers coming into the district. Ms. Chester replied that they could.

Mrs. Carmody was very pleased that they were consistent in all the elementary schools with the spelling program and that it was a holistic approach to spelling words. She saw it in the second grade and was very pleased with it along with the teachers. Ms. Chester stated that the practice is accountability and she can't emphasize that enough. The primary goal is to become “forever spellers” who learn to spell for writing, rather than memorizing words for the Friday test. She noted that there are 1,200 core words. She stated that it was a lot of individual work with building words from root words, manipulating words such as prefixes and suffixes, etc.

Mr. Derynoski asked if there was a baseline to work from to make a comparison over this method versus what was being done in the past. Ms. Chester replied that they could look at that, but the spelling standard is not necessarily isolated as much as they think it is; it is part of the holistic writing. They will be able to isolate the spelling assessment with this particular resource. In the past, people have been inconsistent in how they assessed spelling. Mr. Derynoski remarked that, if they were going into another method of teaching or instruction, they would need to know if there is going to be an improvement using this method versus what they have done in the past. If there is no baseline to work from, how do you know what you are doing is better? Ms. Chester replied that the only answer she could give is when they look at student writing. When they look at student writing portfolios and when they look at their every day writing, they would be able to see their misspellings and their practices and how much they are applying their knowledge.

Mr. Derynoski questioned that, if they do that in Grade 2, are they going to be looking at Grade 3 to see if those same students have improved because you have a completely different mix of students going year to year. It is tough to make a determination on a program of whether it is successful or not because you have different groups of students. Ms. Chester replied that they always have different groups of students. Mr. Derynoski remarked that he understood that, but they are changing to a new method of instruction. Ms. Chester interjected that the outcome

would always be the actual artifact of the writing and the actual capability of how they present themselves as spellers in their writing. She would say that their assessments are grade level assessments, and they would use that data to measure success.

Mr. Thiery explained that the program integrates into both reading and writing, particularly in reading in Kindergarten and Grade 1 with the phonics approach. It integrates into writing in Grade 1 and moving on upward in Grade 2 and 3 and becoming more powerfully embedded in the higher grades. He totally appreciated Mr. Derynoski's cohort question, especially because it foreshadows the conversation they will have later in the meeting. He stated that Sitton Spelling is not an isolated program to a singular grade level. It is actually a comprehensive program where they could track the students' progress from Grade 2 into Grade 3 and into Grade 4 because they are working with the same banks of words with the same methodology. The hope is not just that they are better spellers, but that they are, in fact, more accurate spellers within their writing. All the assessments are around writing with a strong editing and revising component to it. He noted that editing and revising has been a statewide concern. It will show in the ability to recognize their own misspellings and the ability to build new words from prior knowledge, which all show up in the genuine artifact of the writing. The teachers keep writing portfolios for students, they track the progress of writing and there are assessments like the DAW [Direct Assessment of Writing] and Cloze activities that they track. Mr. Thiery did not believe that they would be individually looking at the spelling program, but they will be looking at the spelling program's effect on student writing in Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5. He was interested to see its effect on reading in Kindergarten and Grade 1. For the last nine months, they have had long conversations around an increased awareness of Pre-K, Kindergarten, Grade 1 strength and readiness that is impacting the school system downstream.

Mr. Derynoski asked if there was a grading mechanism on which a student would be graded based on either some type of activity or test. Mr. Thiery replied that, in the new report cards, spelling is a portion under the Language Arts Curriculum, under one of the conventions of writing. Students are graded in their progress using spelling, punctuation, etc., as a convention. The standard gets away from "How did you do on the spelling test?" to "How do you use these words in actual writing?" Ms. Chester added that the actual standard is "Spells grade level words appropriately."

Mr. Goralski summarized, if he put everything he is hearing together, that they should see something in student achievement. They should see improvement in the reading and writing scores in the CMTs down the road. There is one big change in this that he recalls as a parent; the writing initiative was based more on ideas, sharing and description, and spelling was not a huge piece of that. He felt that this was a huge change now. Ms. Chester replied that was correct. She saw it as the third piece or component. Typically, there is a lot of energy around reading and writing. It is about the process, ideas and word choice for writing and that is always emphasized. The reason that spelling often takes a backseat is because in many children's lives it inhibits their thinking. In Grade 1 or 2, they want to write the word "difficult" or a very sophisticated word, but they do not know how to spell it. If they are hindered from selecting a word because they do not know how to spell it, then it impacts the writing. The emphasis has always been about "the craft of ideas and your voice and what you want to say." There is a piece that needs paying attention to; we have conventions in the language and we have to be responsible to teach those conventions. It has a place in a balanced literacy block. You really want readers to read and

writers to write, but then they need to know that there is a time when they are held accountable, and, when it is published, it has to be perfect.

Mr. Goralski stated that he was all for spelling because he has a hard time with writing samples from children with misspellings in it. He was happy to see that they were going to have the 1,200 to 1,400 core words that are going to be the goal for all students. He felt that spelling was important and the main crux of editing and revising, along with grammar. If this program was going to expand spelling, then he was all for it.

Ms. Chester felt that it was a solid foundation for learning about how our words work. She stated that the DAW is meant to be a rough draft, so it is expected that there are errors. It is not evaluated at all on any of the conventions. She noted that it has not changed and, in the Mastery Test, is 60% of the score. On the State test, they assess the other portions of the writing process through the editing and revising portion and that is 40%. The message in the test is that writing is a process, so the writing prompt in the first 45 minutes is who are you as a writer and that is where organization, elaboration and fluency are assessed. The second part of the test is all conventions, and students are held accountable. They have to know their usage, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Ms. Schroeder stated that, in the last couple of years, they have been working hard with Reader's and Writer's Workshops. She asked if this would take them a step back with that. Ms. Chester replied that it would not. She thought what happens is that the balance in literacy blocks are considered reading, writing, and word work. It is about 10% or 15% of a balanced literacy block. Ms. Chester added that, whenever someone is learning something new, it takes a little bit more time in the beginning, but then the timing of it gets a lot better.

Mrs. Fischer arrived at 8:30 p.m.

Mrs. Johnson stated that she was uncomfortable with instituting a new process without a formal evaluative piece in place. Recently, they just went back from D'Nealian to Ball and Stick handwriting, and there was no evaluative process with that writing situation. She was very concerned that this spelling process does not have an evaluative piece other than "let's just watch and see how the children do on their CMTs." In fact, on the first page of the packet, when you talk about 2008-2009, you are talking about how investigation, analysis and evaluation takes place. Why will this not continue? Ms. Chester agreed with Mrs. Johnson and stated that they will plan to do that. Mr. Thiery replied that he thought it was essential. He noted that the only weak spot in it was the point that Mr. Derynoski had brought up. It was very difficult for them to get a baseline from a program that varied to a degree from school to school. Moving forward, they absolutely need to see improvement and need to be measuring improvement and looking for the outcomes of this program in student work and student assessments. He agreed that the handwriting was a great example of proceeding on with something where they never stopped, paused, and assessed.

Mrs. Johnson stated that it was her understanding that in 2009-2010, there were 16 teachers and four literacy specialists that assumed teaching of the Sitton pilot. There is already a whole year of students within a couple of classrooms. She asked if it was Grade 2 that was piloted. Ms. Chester replied it was Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the pilot. Mr. Thiery noted that there was absolutely some initial data that was part of the decision-making. Mrs. Johnson felt that, at

the end of the school year, Mr. Thiery could come back to the Board and talk about assessment of the program. Mr. Thiery replied that he would be happy to do that. Ms. Chester thanked Mrs. Johnson for the suggestion.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Budget Assumptions / Priorities for 2011-2012

Dr. Erardi pointed out that the Board members have a document that they started with last year after a great deal of discussion. Eight of nine Board members adopted the 2010-2011 Priorities with the ninth Board member coming onboard and working with the budget process. He brought to the Board's attention the last bullet on the Assumptions. He noted that it was the most difficult conversation that administration had as a recommendation coming forward to the Board. If they did not assume they would have a flat funded ECS, it would be a mistake as an assumption. They know where they are, they know the funding cliff, they know that stimulus money is going away; but what they do not know is November elections and the next step that would take place in the General Assembly in Hartford. What the Board has in front of them is a very similar document that they endorsed one year ago. Administration believes that not an awful lot has changed.

Mr. Derynoski agreed and stated that all the assumptions fit comfortably for their planning purposes, but the last bullet regarding ECS funding. He thought that the best they could hope for would be flat funding but, in reality, there may be up to a 3% reduction, which is a number that has been bantered around. It is too early to tell and it is going to depend a lot on what happens in November.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Ms. Schroeder:

“Move to approve the Budget Assumptions and Priorities for 2011-2012.”

Mrs. Johnson questioned about the fourth bullet that states, “Salaries will increase based on commitments incurred through collective bargaining agreements.” She noted that they are in the middle of collective bargaining with one of the union groups. Dr. Erardi replied that was correct and that they also have agreements in place for next year for 2011-12 such as the teachers. This states that those that are locked in they know they are going forward with.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Fischer, Ms. Schroeder, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Rickard, Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Goralski noted that, as they have in the past, they would immediately share this with the other elected boards so they know what the Board of Education is doing. They will also share it with the parent groups.

b. Report on CMT Results

Mr. Thiery gave a PowerPoint presentation on the annual CMT Report for 2010. Mr. Thiery pointed out that the symbol shown on the first slide is one that they are going to be seeing

throughout the district that represents the Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) in the district of planning improvement, implementing improvement, evaluating its success and deciding next steps. The CMT data analysis is part of the bottom step, which is program evaluation.

Mr. Thiery stated that the report always consists of a background section describing the basic test, the results, and some conclusions.

Mr. Thiery reported that the CMT addresses two basic analysis lines. The first question is, "How well do we raise student achievement to grade level achievement standards?" Each grade level has identified standards in five categories: below basic, basic, proficient, goal, and advanced. This is how the federal government determines Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the percentage of students at proficient or above. Within grade level analysis, they critically look for a quality control standard. How good are we at moving all students at a single grade level to those proficiency standards, regardless of where they were previously? Every year, they hope that they get better at moving students to standards and recognize that there will be some year-to-year cohort or "wobbles" up and down, but they want the general trend to go upwards. This is the school system's fifth year with this generation exam, which allows them to look at some long-term trends. The second question is, "How well do we, as a school system, "grow" student achievement from year to year?" They are tracking the same student from Grade 3 to Grades 4, 5 and 6. The State places them all on the same 500-point scale from a score of 200 to a score of 700.

Mathematics

Mr. Thiery explained that the mathematics test assesses mastery of skills, concepts and the student's ability to solve realistic problems involving mathematics. It is based upon five standards: 1) Number Sense, 2) Geometry and Measurement, 3) Working with Data, 4) Algebraic Reasoning, and 5) Integrated Understanding. Mr. Thiery explained that all of these standards exist at all of the grade levels.

CMT Scores – Grade 3 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery explained that Southington's mathematics scores continue to be outstanding. Their growth each year is getting smaller, but as they reach those highest levels of 96%, it gets harder and harder to squeeze out change.

- 96% of students at or above proficient, up 0.1%
- 86.5% of students at or above goal, up 1.4%
- Proficiency+: 6.4% increase over five years
- Goal+: 10.5% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery stated that the conversation in the district is no longer about proficient but about goal and advanced. He noted that the numbers are getting very small at below basic and basic.

CMT Scores – Grade 4 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery explained that there were similar results. He gave the teachers the utmost credit that, despite their high scores of 96% and 88%, they are still able to incrementally improve yearly. It is a compliment to their practice, consistency and their dedication, as well as that of Dale Riedinger, Math and Science Coordinator.

- 96.1% of students at or above proficient, down 1.1%

- 87.8% of students at or above goal, down 2.4%
- Proficiency+: 3.6% increase over five years
- Goal+: 7.5% increase over five years

In Grade 4, it is the first time they see Vertical Scale scores. The scale actually starts at 200 and, in this district, the scores of 200 and 300 happen in Grade 1 or 2. Southington does not test in those grade levels; therefore, you don't see those scores. In Grade 3 and 4, we have a growth rate higher than the State average. When you are heading for 700, Grade 4 Southington students are already into the 500s. It is a good upward trajectory to reach, called "Stage 5 or Fifth Level of Learning." The State describes the Fifth Level of Learning as a deep and comprehensive applied knowledge of that subject area.

For the first time this year, Mr. Thiery included some line graphs because he felt that the slope was going to begin to really matter, that Southington students are headed upward along with the rate that they are headed upward. Southington students in Grade 4 are solidly in Stage 3, which is considered a highly proficient level.

CMT Scores – Grade 5 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery explained that in Grade 5 continued the upward trend with small incremental increases.

- 97.7% of students at or above proficient, up 0.1%
- 91.3% of students at or above goal, up 2.8%
- Proficiency+: 6.4% increase over five years
- Goal+: 10.4% increase over five years

This cohort has been tested three times on the Vertical Scale. The State average is 531 and Southington is at 553, so we are higher to begin with as well as have a higher rate of growth. The district is solidly now in the middle of Stage 4, with Stage 5 as the highest level.

CMT Scores – Grade 6 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery explained that Grade 6 continues the upward trend.

- 97.4% of students at or above proficient, up 1.3%
- 88.8% of students at or above goal, up 3.1%
- Proficiency+: 9.1% increase over five years
- Goal+: 16.1% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery stated that no student was below basic, which is excellent. He noted that it speaks to the district's intervention practices. In the basic category, it went from 5.7% down to 2.6%, which was halved. On the Vertical Scale, they are approaching Stage 5 and they are only in Grade 6.

CMT Scores – Grade 7 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery explained that Grade 7 continued the upward trend.

- 96.5% of students at or above proficient, up 1.4%
- 85.5% of students at or above goal, up 1.5%
- Proficiency+: 6.8% increase over five years
- Goal+: 14.3% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery noted that below basic was 0.2% of the population, which is very low. Next year, the eighth graders will have been tested on the Vertical Scale in Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, which will give them the first full growth line for the district. In Grade 7, they are midway through Stage 5 with a score of 580 approaching 600.

CMT Scores – Grade 8 Mathematics:

Mr. Thiery noted that it was the same story for Grade 8 with an upward trend.

- 96.9% of students at or above proficient, up 2.1%
- 83.9% of students at or above goal, up 1.0%
- Proficiency+: 10.0% increase over five years
- Goal+: 14.6% increase over five years

Southington has gone from 7.7% at basic, down to 2.7% at basic, which are statistically significant decreases. Mr. Thiery stated that the average was at 600, but there were 100 points left on the Vertical Scale even though they are solidly within Stage 5. This is excellent, but there are 100 more points still to reach. He noted that Ms. Riedinger continues to push for better and higher practice because they are never satisfied as excellent as that is.

Reading

Mr. Thiery stated that the CMT Reading Test is made up of two different assessments. 1) Degrees of Reading Power [DRP]: During this test, the students read nonfiction passages with missing words and select the appropriate word to complete the text. 2) Reading comprehension: This test assesses students' ability to read and understand both fiction and nonfiction passages.

CMT Scores – Grade 3 Reading:

Mr. Thiery stated that last year was the first year that they were looking at the reading scores with the new Reader's Workshop program, and there was nice upward movement at most grade levels. In Grade 3, they saw another incremental gain. They have gone from nearly 14% below basic down to 8% below basic.

- 84.7% of students at or above proficient, up 2.3%
- 70.1% of students at or above goal, up 2.5%
- Proficiency+: 5.0% increase over five years
- Goal+: 5.0% increase over five years

CMT Scores – Grade 4 Reading:

Mr. Thiery explained that there was some "wobble" for the first time at proficient that they are going to have to watch. He noted that 1.6% in a given cohort is not necessarily statistically significant, but it will be if it is 1.6% again next year. Even though they know that they will get some "wobble," they want the general trend line to go up higher.

- 86.7% of students at or above proficient, down 1.6%
- 74.9% of students at or above goal, up 0.3%
- Proficiency+: 5.2% increase over five years
- Goal+: 4.6% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery stated that there was solid growth in the Grade 4 Vertical Scale in reading, with 29 points of growth in the matched students. In this particular exam, they actually eliminate

students who did not previously take the exam, so it only tracks the students who were in the district taking the exam the previous year. The students in Grade 4 are solidly mid-Stage 3 on the trend line.

CMT Scores – Grade 5 Reading:

Mr. Thiery explained that Grade 5 was at proficient and flat from last year. He noted that State scores in reading are flat. The Grade 5 reading scores continue to be among the flattest reading scores, and they are looking at the possible reasons for that.

- 86.9% of students at or above proficient, up 0.4%
- 72.8% of students at or above goal, down 1.9%
- Proficiency+: 2.5% increase over five years
- Goal+: 0.6% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery noted that they go from a 10% below basic down to a 6% below basic so the reading intervention appears to be having some effect. The matched end growth exceeds State levels. They are approaching Stage 4 by the end of Grade 5. He noted that, on the Grade 5 Vertical Scale growth in reading, there was the same shaped curve as mathematics in Grade 5. It is not flat and it is still definitely growing. He thought that it might be a developmental trend and that they would be watching and analyzing it.

CMT Scores – Grade 6 Reading:

Mr. Thiery stated that in Grade 6 they hit 90% above proficient in reading, which is a different range of achievement. They are up 7% over five years in both proficient and goal. They have gone from nearly 10% below basic down to 4% below basic.

- 90.9% of students at or above proficient, up 2.0%
- 81.1% of students at or above goal, up 0.9%
- Proficiency+: 7.1% increase over five years
- Goal+: 7.0% increase over five years

CMT Scores – Grade 7 Reading:

Mr. Thiery reported that in Grade 7 there was another uptick and again cumulative increases of nearly 5% and 6%. They go from 8% below basic, down to 4% below basic. They are 93% above proficient.

- 92.8% of students at or above proficient, up 1.4%
- 86.0% of students at or above goal, up 2.1%
- Proficiency+: 5.4% increase over five years
- Goal+: 5.9% increase over five years

The Vertical Scale scores are now solidly mid-Stage 5 approaching 600. For this cohort in Grade 7, despite some changes in their trends, their overall Grade 3 to Grade 7 growth appears to be where they want it; however, it leaves room to improve. They are going to be looking for the same 100 points that they are looking for in mathematics.

CMT Scores – Grade 8 Reading:

Mr. Thiery stated that he was extremely excited to see an 11% increase at goal; but it is a single year and he wanted to see what happens, particularly since they had a drop last year and Grade 8 was a cause for concern.

- 93.1% of students at or above proficient, up 3.8%
- 85.6% of students at or above goal, up 11.6%
- Proficiency+: 6.2% increase over five years
- Goal+: 8.3% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery stated that the Vertical Scale puts them right around the 600 mark. This group was not measured in Grade 3 and has a shortened track record. It leaves them another 100 points to look at how to grow the students even farther.

Writing

Mr. Thiery pointed out that the writing test is made up of two sections. 1) The Direct Assessment of Writing (DAW) assesses how well students can communicate by writing in a coherent, elaborated and organized manner. 2) The Editing and Revising Test assesses student skills in composing, editing, and revising a piece of written work.

CMT Scores – Grade 3 Writing:

Mr. Thiery stated that the writing scores are “spikey.” They have grade levels that moved upward and grade levels that moved downward. It does not speak to the program consistently across the breadth of the program, but it definitely raises some grade level questions.

- 86.3% of students at or above proficient, down 3.6%
- 68.0% of students at or above goal, down 5.4%
- Proficiency+: 3.5% decrease over five years
- Goals+: 7.9% decrease over five years

Mr. Thiery pointed out that a lot of the conversation around the district right now is around goal and advanced, and rigor. A lot of the work has been at the intervention levels, and the intervention numbers are going down. How do they now talk about those upper levels of moving students from proficient to goal and from goal to advanced? That is going to be a conversation, particularly when there are five-year trend lines that are downward in Grade 3.

CMT Scores – Grade 4 Writing:

Mr. Thiery noted that in Grade 4 the five-year trend lines are upward. Statistically, they are fairly flat. Again, rigor is a factor. There is a decrease at the below basic level. Interventions appear to be working, but the same question is what is happening on the upper end again. He noted that this is the analysis addressed in the School Improvement Plans.

- 93.5% of students at or above proficient, down 0.2%
- 78.6% of students at or above goal, down 1.8%
- Proficiency+: 2.4% increase over five years
- Goal+: 4.4% increase over five years

CMT Scores – Grade 5 Writing:

Mr. Thiery stated that they are seeing below basic numbers down at 1.7%, which shows that intervention appears to be working. There seem to be many students in the goal category and the question will be, how do they move them into advanced. Nearly 54% of the students are achieving at goal.

- 93.1% of students at or above proficient, up 3.4%
- 68.8% of students at or above goal, up 7.5%
- Proficiency+: 4.1% increase over five years
- Goal+: 7.6% increase over five years

CMT Scores – Grade 6 Writing:

- 92.9% of students at or above proficient, up 1.5%
- 76.2% of students at or above goal, down 0.4%
- Proficiency+: 4.7% increase over five years
- Goal+: 6.8% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery noted that there is no Vertical Scale in writing yet and there is no conversation on Vertical Scale at the State level either.

CMT Scores – Grade 7 Writing:

Mr. Thiery stated that there were some small downward scores last year.

- 87.8% of students at or above proficient, down 1.1%
- 71.8% of students at or above goal, down 1.4%
- Proficiency+: 2.6% increase over five years
- Goal+: 8.6% increase over five years

CMT Scores – Grade 8 Writing:

- 87.6% of students at or above proficient, down 1.1%
- 72.4% of students at or above goal, down 1.4%
- Proficiency+: 5.3% increase over five years
- Goal+: 9.2% increase over five years

Mr. Thiery stated that Grade 8 scores look very similar to Grade 7.

Science

Mr. Thiery explained that science is only assessed in Grades 5 and 8.

Grade 5 – Science Scores:

State:	Proficient – 82.5%
	Goal – 59.7%
Southington:	Proficient – 95.2%
	Goal – 77.5%

Grade 8 Science Scores:

State:	Proficient – 76.0%
	Goal – 63.1%
Southington:	Proficient – 86.0%
	Goal – 72.3%

Mr. Thiery stated that these scores are significantly higher than State averages. He noted that there was no Vertical Scale in science either, and that they would have to test science every single year to do that.

Celebrations

Mathematics Excellence

Mr. Thiery noted that mathematics continued to have incremental gains with more schools than ever either approaching or at 100% proficiency and approaching 100% goal. He

stated that mathematical excellence is a yearly celebration in this town. He continues to field calls from colleagues from all over the State as to how we achieve our scores, and he continues to forward those calls to Dale Riedinger. He stated that Dale and the teachers own this. The answer is consistency of practice and consistency of focus. The focus is never lost, despite that the scores are high; he never finds the math specialists, math coordinator or the teachers resting on that. They are always looking to see how they can do things even better.

Reading Gains

Mr. Thiery pointed out that there was continued incremental progress upward after the second year of a new approach to reading. They have some flat scores that they want to look at. Last year was the first year where they had 100% of the teachers embedded in the new model. They want to look at strength of conferencing. Conferencing within the Reader's Workshop model supplies the teacher with the one-on-one knowledge of where a student is and how to craft individualized instruction to move that student forward.

Adequate Yearly Progress – 2009-2010

Mr. Thiery explained that last year they had DePaolo Middle School who had not made AYP in the special education subgroup. This year, they reached AYP in the special education subgroup by quite a bit. They did not even reach "Safe Harbor" which is a middle category; they surpassed that category.

Mr. Thiery pointed out that for the first time in his tenure here he can report that Southington Public Schools made AYP at all schools and in all subgroups. He was proud of the work the administrators, teachers and students did for that.

Conclusions

Mr. Thiery noted that annually every school and the Curriculum Coordinators have developed Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) based upon the CMT data and other evidence of student achievement. He noted that these CIP target instructional practices based upon identified areas of weakness at the grade, class, and student level. Mr. Thiery stated that gains made in Southington have the district moving to the next level of student achievement as compared to districts across the State and region.

Mrs. Johnson had a couple of concerns about the middle school regarding the flat writing scores. She was surprised because that eighth grade was a terrific class last year. She wanted to know what they were doing in the middle schools because the scores of the grades that they tested in writing were flat. Mr. Thiery replied that the year before scores in Grade 8 were problematic, particularly around the area of reading. They are chronically looking for that balance because the pendulum has a habit of swinging. You see low scores in reading and suddenly all of the focus becomes reading. In eighth grade, they have a 45-minute language arts block and you are looking for where the balance is in what you do. When the previous year's reading scores were less than exceptional, a lot of time was pumped into reading. They may not have been as focused in the writing. In turn, it was a good class, and he thought that the perception was that they could do that because their Grade 7 scores were fairly strong and it would carry forward. They want to be responsive to previous year's scores, but they don't want to swing the pendulum so far that they flatten out other areas.

Mrs. Johnson asked if they have the flexibility to adjust emphasis based on the kind of class that they have. Mr. Thiery replied that they do, but sometimes they want to make sure that adjustment is not too far. They have to make sure they have a standard balance line. He pointed out that, in the middle schools, the August Professional Development days are looking at data and then looking at instructional practices. They are currently writing their personal objectives that come out of that. Mr. Thiery noted that Mrs. Carmody brings up in the Curriculum Committee all the time that writing is not just a language arts process it is across the disciplines. Last year, the disciplines were enabled to choose which area they supported and how they would support it. Administration may want to look at how they did that and did enough of them choose and support writing or did it end up an orphan.

Mrs. Johnson asked if he was going to let the Board know about the current ninth grade and how they are doing down the line. Mr. Thiery replied that he would. He stated that the Grade 8 to 9 Transition Committee met yesterday morning. He noted that Mr. David Germano, Chair of the Transition Committee, talked about how to correlate and track student achievement across the gap. They are looking at what they can use that is in Grade 8 that could carry forward that happens in Grade 9 to make those correlations.

Mrs. Rickard noted that Mr. Thiery said that they put a big push on reading and writing across all subjects, which is something the Board endorses. But, she does not want to hear a science teacher tell her that they can't do a science lab because they have to do a writing assignment or that the art classes can't paint a picture because they have to write about it. She stated that there has to be a balance, and they can't lose the essence of science and art because those are hands-on classes. There are students who excel in the hands-on classes and look forward to it. Mr. Thiery agreed and stated that the expectation is that the teacher becomes the best teacher in their subject area as possible. In turn, you can't be the best teacher if you don't have the students reading for understanding, writing with elaboration and specificity, or calculating with accuracy. He noted that, last Wednesday at a middle school meeting, Dale Riedinger stated that they have to have the students embedded in inquiry. The writing has to be authentic to the subject area.

Mrs. Carmody asked if the CAPT scores in writing at the high school are also flat. Mr. Thiery believed that this year they saw upward scores. She believed that every discipline should be engaged in writing. She knows that they have to do the hands-on, but they have to get into the writing. She listened to the spelling presentation this evening and wondered if the new program should improve the students' writing. Mr. Thiery agreed. He thought that, as students go through the spelling process, it is a more balanced approach to writing.

Mrs. Johnson noticed in the Grade 3 and Grade 4 scores in reading that Mr. Thiery commented that students who were below basic were becoming negligible because of so much emphasis on helping those children, yet the scores on the upper end were decreasing or flat. Her concern was how those scores were going to be increased. She knows that he has been working very hard on differentiation in the classroom with Professional Development, but maybe it was not working when they are talking about the upper levels of children. She asked how he was going to be addressing the differentiation with the upper levels. Mr. Thiery believed that it was an area as our practice around Reader's Workshop really blossoms. It is an area in which Reader's Workshop should excel and one of the reasons they chose the program. The open-endedness of Reader's Workshop is that every child reads at their own level, regardless of their

level, and there is no ceiling on the program. Students in the lower levels are reading anything from a picture book to multi-chapter books in the same classroom because they are at their level. He truly believed that is going to improve those upper levels. Along with them reading at those levels, we have to get good at the conversations they have about their reading at those levels. They are not just choosing to read at a higher level, they are being held to deeper discussions of their reading and that is really the core of differentiation. Mrs. Johnson asked how that was going to happen. Mr. Thiery replied that it was an element of Workshop, but he believed that it was like any new implementation of a program. When you first learn a program and implement it, the tendency is to implement it at the core level. Many of the teachers are now experiencing their second and third round of Professional Development around it, which has pushed them to the higher practices beyond that core level. The last year of Professional Development has largely been around the higher processes of book clubs, grand discussion of conferencing, and these are the practices that will help differentiate at those high levels. Mrs. Johnson summarized that they are just not evident yet.

Mrs. Rickard thought that human nature is to help those who need the most help. She did not want to see a teacher conferencing with a certain level of reader at a much higher frequency than another reader. There has to be a balance and every child needs to be challenged. She thought that some of the higher achievers in the class are not getting conferenced as much. Mr. Thiery replied that it was possible. Typically, conferencing does follow a pattern so they are not skipping kids. He noted that they have also in-serviced the principals, so that they know what the practices would and should look like. He stated that the principals could work to get fidelity.

Mr. Thiery noted that there was a lot of conversation in this district around enrichment and the higher levels this year, and he has never seen it this way. It has always been on the other end. He thought that some of that was because they were finally putting AYP in the "rear view mirror." When you are worried about AYP, which is measured by those lower levels, you tend to be firmly set in looking at those lower levels. For the five years that he has been in this district, he has stated that a solid curriculum includes a core curriculum that addresses 85% of the population and a strong intervention program for students struggling to achieve the core curriculum, and a no-ceiling enrichment program that allows kids to move at their own rate. The discussion around what that enrichment piece means in this district has been deep and long this year, and he would expect to report to the Board and the Curriculum Committee this year on what that looks like programmatically.

Dr. Erardi pointed out that in August the Board of Education took an extraordinary step to create an optimal learning environment for students and teachers. The questions are around numbers of students, numbers of interventions, and numbers of conferences that the one teacher could have in a given period. In the infrastructure that the Board has created last year and this year by bringing back six elementary teachers, they have created an environment of opportunity for all students and they are holding teachers accountable to that. He thought that it was important.

Dr. Erardi commented on where he thought they were as the school superintendent looking forward to CMT 2011. He noted that it was impressive to listen to this conversation because it was the exact conversation that he and Mr. Thiery had during the summer. They took a step back and looked at the big picture. He stated that there was extraordinary celebration in the report that the Board just saw. When Mr. Thiery spoke about the consistency in math, the

upscale in reading and in writing, and the solid scores in science, there are always places for improvement and that is what makes Southington a very fine district. However, when he took his step back and looked at a district this size, he saw the work that is taking place is down to the student. In the evaluative meeting administration has had with building leaders, they talk to the student and know the educational program to the student. They are holding teachers responsible to student outcomes, and administration is holding building administrators accountable to building outcomes. Although they are never satisfied, he was thrilled where the district was, and he was very glad that he was sitting in his chair tonight.

Mr. Goralski stated that CMT presentations are a celebration of the work that they all do as a collaborative group, and it is where Mr. Thiery gets to smile and talk unlimitedly and the Board sees his passion. He loves the excitement that Ms. Chester and Ms. Riedinger have because these results are what they are doing with the curriculum. He noted that it was a great celebration for the community. He thanked everyone for his or her work to make this happen.

Mr. Goralski stated that this year was a special celebration because he did not have to talk about how this test is unfair to children and that is a tribute to the faculty who work with the special needs students. There is no child in Southington within that group of students not achieving success by whatever standard the government chooses to put upon children. He thought that was a real celebration because our teachers worked so hard with those students that everyone in Southington is achieving. He was proud of that.

c. Paperless Meetings

Mr. Goralski explained that in November he made a comment about how he would love to do what they are doing with the PTOs and in the schools and wanted the Board to set the proper example. He stated that Dr. Erardi shares a similar passion in the way he interacts with his Cabinet and the Board of Education about paperless information. Mr. Goralski stated that he would like to pursue grants and opportunities for the Board to set the example for the rest of the community and school system to go down the paperless path. He was willing to do the legwork for it himself.

Dr. Erardi explained that the Board has talked about paperless meetings for a very long time. The background is that the Central Office Cabinet has experienced paperless meetings and it was a very interesting setting. It changed the face of the meeting. It is his belief that there may be grant opportunity to bring in laptops at no cost to the community for the Board of Education to use. There is software available that allows superintendents and Central Office administrators to put together paperless packets. He asked the Board members to envision sitting at the Board meeting with very few documents in front of them with the agenda on the laptop and, when they want to take notes, it is done electronically. He stated that, on the Cabinet level, they are in the process of their second experimental year. He noted that it would not be trailblazing because there are School Boards throughout the country that have gone this route. He asked the Board if it should be pursued to entice vendors or corporations to offer a no-cost opportunity, or would they rather pass and re-address it at a different time.

Ms. Schroeder felt that if it was at no cost, they should try it. Mr. Derynoski stated that, if they could have it ready for next week, he was all for it. He felt that it was very overdue. He

noted that, in the private industry, they have paperless meetings. He thought that it would have made life a little easier even for this evening's meeting with the presentation.

Mrs. Johnson suggested getting the iPad or a similar device because they are less heavy than a laptop.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that she considered herself a very flexible individual, but she has some difficulty continuously reading documents off a computer screen. She could foresee having a laptop at the meeting, but she still might print things out for those purposes. She questioned if she would be penalized for that. Dr. Erardi noted that the subtle difference would be the Board packet would be an e-delivery and not a courier delivery.

Mrs. Fischer agreed with Mrs. Notar-Francesco and understood what she was talking about. Mrs. Clark stated that she would go along with it, but that she, like Mrs. Notar-Francesco and Mrs. Fischer, likes paper and using her notebook.

Dr. Erardi summarized that what he was hearing was to pursue it and then the Board of Education would find a balance of how to do it. He asked Mrs. Carmody if she was comfortable with that. Mrs. Carmody replied that she can learn and will try it.

d. Snow Removal / Sand Services Bid Approval – Bid #2011-BID-03

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Rickard:

“Move to approve the Snow Removal / Sand Services Bid #2011-BID-03.”

Mr. Goodwin stated that they were looking for the approval of the bid package and wanted to make the Board aware that the current high school vendor was willing to hold his price for one, two or three years if the Board chooses to do that. He had discussions with Mr. Cox, Mr. Beliveau [Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds] and with Mr. Germano at the high school and they all agree that the current vendor was doing a good job. The Finance Committee recommends that the Board accept this proposal for whatever number of years the Board approves.

Mr. Goralski stated that the members of the Finance Committee approved this offline. He asked if the Board members on that committee have a recommendation for the Board as a whole to amend the motion to remove Southington High School from this. Mr. Derynoski stated that it was his motion and they would have to ask him.

MODIFIED MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Rickard:

“Move to modify the original motion by removing Southington High School from the original bid and accepting the proposal from the current vendor at Southington High School to extend his services for a three-year period at the current price.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Fischer, Ms. Schroeder, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Rickard, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR A STUDENT MATTER AND SAA NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Ms. Schroeder:

“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing a Student Matter, SAA Negotiations and a potential legal matter, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary

**SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION
SEPTEMBER 23, 2010**

Mr. Brian Goralski, Board Chairperson, called the Executive Session to order at 9:50 p.m.

Members Present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Rosemarie Fischer, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Ms. Michelle Schroeder, Mrs. Kathleen Rickard, Mr. Brian Goralski.

Administration Present: Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Ms. Schroeder:

“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing a Student Matter, SAA Negotiations, and a potential legal matter, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried by voice vote.

MOTION: by Mrs. Clark, seconded by Ms. Schroeder:

“Move that the Board return to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The board reconvened public session at 10:25 p.m.

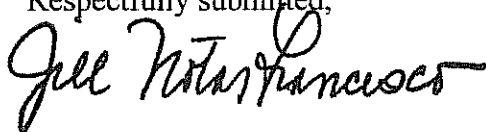
MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Board adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jill Notar-Francesco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Notar-Francesco, Secretary
Southington Board of Education

Administration: Board of Education Update September 23, 2010

- 1. Middle School Feasibility (Attachment #1)**
- 2. Rachel's Challenge – September 29th (Attachment #2)**
- 3. Progress Reports - Paperless**
- 4. SHS Concession Stand Dedication - Henne**
- 5. Plantsville Re-Dedication**

Handwritten signature and date:
9/23/10

Town of Southington



Town Council

Edward S. Pocock, III, Chairman
John C. Dobbins, Vice Chairman
John N. Barry
Anthony E. D'Angelo
Dawn A. Miceli
Albert A. Natelli, Jr.
Christopher J. Palmieri
Peter J. Romano, Jr.
Stephanie A. Urillo

Town Manager

JOHN WEICHSEL
(860) 276-6200
FAX (860) 628-4727

Item #1 Capital Fund

September 14, 2010

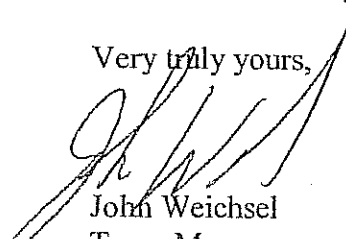
Board of Finance
Town of Southington

Gentlemen:

In accordance with the enclosed letter, I hereby request an appropriation of \$40,000 to an account to be known as "Middle School Feasibility Study" in the Capital Fund.

Dr. Erardi and Chairman Goralski will be available to answer any questions.

Very truly yours,

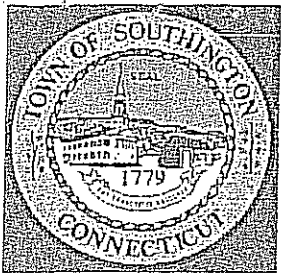


John Weichsel
Town Manager

JW:pb
Enc.

cc: Emilia Portelinha
Dr. Joseph V. Erardi

"City of Progress"



SOUTHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 13, 2010

John Weichsel, Town Manager
Southington Town Hall
75 Main Street
Southington, CT 06489

Mark Sciota, Deputy Town Manager/Town Attorney
Southington Town Hall
75 Main Street
Southington, CT 06489

Dear Gentlemen:

I am pleased to share with you that the Board of Education unanimously endorsed the *Facility Advisory Committee's* recommendation regarding the needed work at our middle schools. On Thursday, September 9th the board took action to ask the Town Council to support a two-school renovate-to-new feasibility study at a cost of approximately \$40,000. The study would be for the existing two middle schools with the funds to support the study being borne from the Town Council.

The Board of Education is appreciative of the work from all three boards that led to this recommendation. In addition, the Board of Education would also like to express thanks to both of you for your unyielding support to the recently completed work of the ad-hoc *Facility Advisory Committee*.

Dr. Erardi and I would be available to speak directly to the Town Council or the Board of Finance on this issue.

Please let me know what next steps the school board and central office administration should be preparing for as we move a decade plus issue closer to the finish line.

Respectfully,

Brian S. Goralski
Board Chairperson

c: Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools
Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance
Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent
Board of Education
Town Council Members
Board of Finance Members
da/c/goralski/weichsel91310.wd

SEPH V. ERARDI, JR., Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

HOWARD J. THIERY
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
OF INSTRUCTION & LEARNING

BOARD OF EDUCATION

BRIAN S. GORALSKI
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

TERRI C. CARMODY
VICE CHAIRPERSON

JILL NOTAR-FRANCESCO
SECRETARY

COLLEEN W. CLARK

DAVID J. DERYNOSKI

SEMARIE MICACCI FISCHER

PATRICIA P. JOHNSON

KATHLEEN C. RICKARD

NICHELLE L. SCHROEDER

49 BEECHER STREET
SOUTHTON, CT
06489

W.SOUTHTON.SCHOOLS.ORG

OFFICE TELEPHONE
(860) 628-3202

FAX
(860) 628-3205

JOSEPH ERARDI

From: BETHANY INGRISELLI
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2010 1:59 PM
To: JOSEPH ERARDI; HOWARD THIERY; MARY BETH NOTO; FRANCES HAAG
Subject: Rachel's Challenge Program comes to SHS
Attachments: doc20100920102911 (2).pdf

Rachel's Challenge is a program that will be presented to ninth and tenth graders at Southington High School on the September 29, 2010. The multi-media presentation is inspired by the life of Rachel Joy Scott, the first student killed at Columbine High School in 1999. Her acts of kindness and compassion, coupled with the contents of her six diaries, have become the foundation for a life-changing school program. This powerful event is designed to motivate students to make permanent, positive cultural changes in their school and community. The universal message of Rachel's story has been heard by over 1 million students.

Rachel's Challenge invites students to:

1. Eliminate prejudice- look for the best in others
2. Dare to dream
3. Choose positive influences
4. Start a chain reaction of kindness and compassion

The program also includes an adult version of **Rachel's Challenge** at 7:00pm on Sept. 29 in the SHS auditorium. All parents and interested adults are welcome to attend to learn how to support our students' positive choices and continue the chain reaction! We are encouraging adults who have an interest in high school culture to attend the evening presentation.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact the Guidance/School Counseling Department at Southington High School at 860-628-3229 x238.

Many thanks,

Rachel's Challenge Committee

Mary Anne Wysocki, SHS School Counselor, Dept. Chair

Sherry Russman, SHS School Counselor

Bethany Ingriselli, SHS School Counselor

Jessica Wallace, SHS School Counselor

D.J. Hernandez, SHS School Counseling Intern