

**Southington Board of Education
Southington, Connecticut
Regular Meeting
December 8, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at Flanders Elementary School, 100 Victoria Drive, Southington, Connecticut.

Prior to the start of the Board of Education meeting, the Board members, administration, and audience were entertained with a Seasonal Celebration by a group of Grade 4 students from Flanders Elementary School who sang three songs.

At 7:15 p.m., Dr. Erardi deferred the meeting to Mr. Cox who recognized Mr. Roger Jones for his dedication to the Agricultural Science Building, Plantsville Elementary School, and South End Elementary School building projects in his position as the Building Committee Chairperson. Mr. Derynoski and Mr. Goralski presented Mr. Jones with a Certificate of Excellence for his work with the projects and thanked him for all of his work and dedication.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Board 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 V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mrs. Perri Murdica, Senior Special Education Coordinator; and Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations.

Guests joining the administration and Board of Education were middle school teachers, Mrs. Dorothy Potter and Mrs. Kelly Nichols, who were shadowing the superintendent for the entire day.

Student Board Representatives present were Leon Peschel and Whitney DiMeo.

There were approximately 45 individuals in the audience.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. Goralski requested that they have a moment of silence in honor Ms. Bette Armor. She was a former Board member who served on the Board of Education for eight years. She was first elected in 1954 for a two-year term and was re-elected in 1956 for a six-year term. She recently passed away and was a Southington resident for her entire life.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ November 10, 2011

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

“Move to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education meeting of November 10, 2011 as amended.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from the Audience

Mr. Edward Pocock, 119 Pattonwood Drive, Southington

Mr. Pocock apologized for not being able to attend the first Board of Education Meeting in November. It's at those meetings that he presents Town Seal pins to new Board of Education members and was disappointed that he was not able to attend. He then presented the Town Seal pins to the new Board Members, Mrs. Terry Lombardi and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

He congratulated Mrs. Lombardi and Mr. Oshana and stated that he, too, had the privilege of serving on the Board of Education many years ago. He was honored to have served with Mr. Oshana's father, Mr. Zaya Oshana. He then approached both Mrs. Lombardi and Mr. Oshana and gave them their well-earned Town Seal pins.

He also took a moment to compliment the efforts of Dr. Erardi who did a great job in passing the Middle School Referendum. Dr. Erardi's informational meetings throughout the town of Southington made a difference in that referendum passing. Mr. Pocock wished the best of luck to the Board of Education.

Mr. Steve Pintarich, 282 Loper Street, Southington ~ Retired Army, 20-Years, Active Duty

Mr. Pintarich stated that on Monday, December 5, he had the honor of visiting Kennedy Middle School to see the Builders Club. The students in this club have been making wooden ribbons which they paint yellow in honor of the service members who are serving overseas. The money raised is given to the American Legion of Southington who forwards laptops and Web cameras to the troops serving in combat and those who are recovering from their wounds at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval. He picked up a check in the amount of \$1,525. The total amount that has been donated from Kennedy Middle School is over \$3,000. Not only the Builder's Club has donated, so has the Peer Group. Over the summer, the Kiwanis Club of Southington, who sponsors the Builder's Club, cut out 350 of the ribbons and presented them to the schools. The students worked on preparing those ribbons and sold them at the Apple Harvest Festival. He stated that there are many students in Southington who are doing really great things.

That morning, five veterans met with Dr. Erardi and Mrs. Carmody to discuss Veterans Day and Southington Schools. He asked how the Southington Schools remember September 11, 2001. He was informed that the principals made an announcement that morning and they have a

moment of silence. Over 3,000 people lost their lives that day. That was the start of the current wars that the country is involved in. Thousands more have lost their lives because of that day. Even more have been injured; some slightly and many maimed for life who are missing arms and legs. This is remembered only one day per year with a moment of silence. To Mr. Pintarich, that does not seem like enough. He was led to believe that Southington wants to have classes on Veterans Day. When they met that morning, it was suggested that Southington do more to teach their youth about Veterans and what their service means to the country. Today, he expressed that he was against opening schools on Veterans Day. Next year, Veterans Day will be on a Sunday. In the past 15 years, Veterans Day has always been celebrated on the actual date of November 11. This year, because it's on a Sunday, they don't have an objection to the students going to school on Friday or Monday. There is not a need to change the calendar for the coming year. He would like to continue working with the Southington administration and Board of Education to teach the youths of Southington what it means for the Veterans and what those people have done. He posed the question, "What would our country be like without the Veterans who have given their lives for your freedom?" They have commitments from the members of the Elks and American Legion to work with the school district to set up a program to remember the Veterans. He asked that the Board of Education please keep Veterans Day.

Leonard Marcheselle, 108 Sandra Lane, Plantsville

Mr. Marcheselle shared that he was in front of the Board of Education three years ago about the same topic of transforming Veterans Day, November 11, into just another school day. The day would include a few frills with a morning assembly where everyone is patriotic for the day, sing the National Anthem, students would read essays about *what a Veteran means to them*, a 15-minute video about who George Washington was, and then the parade of Veterans were introduced. Following the frills, if it didn't take too long, they would have some coffee and cake. Students were then herded to their classrooms to proceed with their regular class day and everyone was happy. He asked:

Is that what Veterans Day was really all about? Has anyone bothered to look up the history of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier? Has anyone talked about December 7, 1941? If it was on a school day, maybe they did. But, what if December 7 fell on a Saturday or Sunday? What about June 6, 1944 or February 19, 1945 or August 6 and August 9?

These are all important dates that made and molded the United States of America to what it is today and he prays to God, it always will be.

There were many wars after World War I and World War II. There was Korea just five years after the end of World War II, but that is now known as *The Forgotten War*. There was the unpopular war of Vietnam. There were many conflicts such as Panama, Grenada, Iraq, and now Afghanistan. With everything Mr. Marcheselle said, they had one thing in common; they all produced over four million Veterans and are still producing more. The United States wasn't only war bound; the U.S. is probably one of the few countries that doesn't go to war just for the sake of going to war. The United States of America has inherited the title of *Policemen of the World*. Whenever a country needs help of any kind, the United States is there. This produces missionaries, Peace Corps personnel, national disaster aide, and many more trouble spots. But always behind the civilian workers, there are the GIs ready to protect them. A Veteran is a man or woman, in or out of uniform, that has signed a document that pledges their lives in defense of their country and all of her citizens whether within the borders or outside of the borders. So he asked:

What do you think a Veteran is? Is it the body of a 19-year old sailor forever entombed in the bowel of the United States ship Arizona? There are 1,800 others there with him. Is it the soldier running up Omaha Beach at Normandy? Did he make it or didn't he? The marines who crawled, crept, and wept for five days in a vicious battle to capture a hill called Mount Suribachi, the Island Iwo Jima, their losses, 6,821 men. The paraplegic who lost his limbs in a roadside bomb in Iraq doing what Uncle Sam told him to do. Are they Veterans?

He hoped that now the Board of Education and the administration may no longer feel that a day honoring those men and women should be dismissed. We need to honor and pay respect to fallen heroes who came back in a body bag, a flag-draped casket, or are buried overseas in one of the many lonely cemeteries in dozens of countries.

He continued by asking about the Veterans who made it home, served their time, made a career of the service, and are now retired. He would like to believe that maybe the people of the United States of America will respect, honor, and feel a certain sense of gratitude to all Veterans, living and dead. The word God has been taken out of the school vocabulary. They have forbidden the practice of Halloween in the schools. Valentine's Day can no longer be celebrated because some children may get more valentines than others; besides, it is named after a saint which is a sin. They cannot play kickball because a student might get his knees hurt. The most severe blow of all, the flying of the flag in the classrooms, the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem, and other patriotic songs, like America the Beautiful, are barred in many districts throughout the United States because they might offend someone. He asked, "Can you imagine the National Anthem offending someone?" All of this is done in the name of political correctness.

He stated that it was their understanding that the Board of Education is taking the meaning of Veterans Day out of the school calendar and considering making it another regular school day. This was originally Armistice Day, which was then changed to Veterans Day. Armistice Day was the end of the war that was to end all wars. The Peace Treaty was signed on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. They are moving from Armistice Day, to Veterans Day, to a regular school day. He hoped that what he shared had meaning to those in attendance. If he said anything to offend anyone, he apologized. If Southington doesn't fit into the mold, they should be proud. There are many school systems changing the meaning of Veterans Day but, just because they are doing it, it doesn't make it right. He ended with a quote that was relevant to the topic, "*Sure I wave the American flag. Do you know a better flag to wave? Sure I love my country with all her faults. I'm not ashamed of that. Never have been, never will be.*" By John Wayne.

Mr. Goralski thanked the Veterans for their words. He stated that at the meeting that evening the Board members will have the opportunity to share their opinions about the calendar and those opinions will reflect back to the administration. The formal action on the calendar will be at the first meeting in January. He expressed that their words were heard by the Board of Education and that, later in the meeting, they will have the opportunity to give some direction and comments.

Dr. Erardi mentioned that there was a follow-up to the morning meeting that was referenced. That afternoon, there was a Professional Development Steering Committee meeting that took place and the information that was shared in the morning meeting with the Veterans was shared with that committee and heard. They put together a committee of five educators who

are looking forward to meeting with Mr. Bill Richter, Mr. Walter Hushack, Mr. Igino Torone, Mr. Leonard Marcheselle, and Mr. Steve Pintarich. They want to work together and do their best work. They are looking forward to creating a K-12 program that recognizes the freedoms that they, the Veterans, have allowed people to continue going forward with. Dr. Erardi is pleased with the positive outcome from their morning meeting.

b. Communications from the Board Members and Administration

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

“Move to add a Personnel Matter to Executive Session.”

Motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to move agenda item 8 c, Board-level decision on Grievance filed by AFSCME Council 4, Local 1303, to follow Executive Session.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

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

“Move to move item 8 c, Out of State Overnight Field Trips to 5 c.”

Motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Queen attended the National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony at DePaolo Middle School and it was very well done. Mr. Pepe, DePaolo’s principal, described the group as an outstanding, elite group of students achieving at the highest level. The Star Spangled Banner was sung acapella by the eighth grade choir. The students were very prepared for the evening. Student Nick Frega gave a light-hearted speech and Mrs. Queen shared a quote from Nick who was making reference to the service and that it, *“reminds you, all the time, that everyone needs help and things can change in a heartbeat.”* She enjoyed watching the students walk across the stage and noticed how proud the students were.

She also attended the Hatton Holiday Concert which was wonderful. At the end, it was a moment to remember, when the pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 students left the cafeteria while toe-tapping, clapping, and head-bopping to the song, Jingle Bells.

Mrs. Queen attended Course Night at Southington High School which is for incoming Grade 9 students. The format was great. They started in the auditorium and moved into the cafeteria where all the departments were represented. She reiterated that the Program of Studies for 2012-2013 is out, and Dr. Semmel encourages everyone to read this in its entirety. It includes everything that every high school student needs to know about course selection. It’s currently available in paper format, but will soon be on the Southington High School Website. Students who presented that evening had some powerful messages to share with that incoming

group that included: *Start strong and stay strong. Set the bar high. Try new things and don't be afraid. Only if you challenge yourself will you elevate yourself to a new level. Take pride in being a Blue Knight. Be open-minded.*

Mrs. Notar-Francesco thanked Mrs. Smith for giving her and Mrs. Clark the opportunity to join the Hartford Region Open Choice Book Club. They are reading the book, *Creating the Opportunity to Learn*. There were approximately 20 representatives from Southington who joined the CREC Book Club. There will be three separate sessions facilitated by CREC as they navigate the book. This will relate to understanding the students who are enrolled in Southington's Open Choice Program, and the different environment that those students are coming from. There is a final meeting that will take place and the author will present to the group to talk about the achievement gap and what districts can do about that gap.

Mrs. Lombardi embarked on what she referred to as her "individual learning plan (ILP)". This was her effort to get up-to-speed in preparation for various items as they approach the new year. Her efforts included getting a global view of the curriculum, visiting the facilities across the district, reviewing the state of technology, and the challenges of the principals. She thanked Mrs. Smith for gathering the School Improvement Plans so she could review them and learn more about the goals of each school. She is honored to be part of the town and it has opened her eyes to things that have been done in the past and what plans are in the future. She thanked the principals for meeting with her to share how they are dealing with every day challenges.

Mrs. Johnson has been busy and there are so many wonderful things happening in the school system. One of the events she mentioned was the fabulous Alta Thanksgiving Feast which was held at the Plantsville Congregational Church. It was a wonderful opportunity for Board Members to meet with the Alta students, staff, and parents. There were many people who were interested and concerned about the success of Alta. There was great food and they all had a wonderful time.

She had the pleasure of attending the National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony at Kennedy Middle School. It was conducted with great decorum and the students were attentive. The students approached this with a great seriousness and you knew that these students were going to make a difference in all of our lives.

She attended the Holiday Concert at Derynoski Elementary School and there were over 100 Grade 4 students who did a wonderful job singing multi-part harmony. The instructor, Mrs. Williams, offered the use of puppets and it was an excellent program. The audience truly enjoyed the show.

Mr. Goralski thanked the Southington High School Girls' Volleyball team for representing the district in the State finals. An email was shared with the Board of Education and administration from a parent in Newtown who stated the pride he had while watching the event. He explained that the Southington athletes gave him the same level of pride that he had for his own child. It was a great compliment to the coaching staff and Southington students. It was a great way to represent the community.

Mr. Goralski also thanked Mrs. Notar-Francesco for representing the Southington Board of Education at the CABA/CAPSS Convention. She shared a great deal of information with the Board members and he appreciated her time and efforts.

Mr. Goralski acknowledged the retirees who sent thank you notes to the Board. Those notes were their way of saying 'thank you' to the Board of Education for acknowledging them at a previous meeting.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco made the suggestion to invite Connecticut's Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor to present to the Board of Education and asked if they would prefer this to take place at a Board of Education meeting or if they should hold a workshop on a different date. It was the consensus of the Board to hold a separate workshop. Dr. Erardi will make the contact with Mr. Pryor and would get back to the Board of Education with more information.

Communications from the Administration

Dr. Erardi shared his administrative report (Attachment A):

1. **Dates to Remember** ~ this document included a list of events and meetings that are currently scheduled for the months of December and January.
2. **RFP – Update: BOE Green (Paperless) Meetings** ~ this attachment included the proposal that was returned to Southington for paperless Board meetings. All bids that were submitted were slightly different. The preparation work for the Board was to share the information and he was hoping that any Board members interested in representing the Board at large could do so offline and they can have conversations about each vendor. Following that, they could then add this to a future Board of Education meeting. There is also a large variance in cost. They are pleased with the number of vendors that bid on this opportunity.
3. **Technology Infrastructure - External Scan** ~ Dr. Erardi asked that all Board members take some time to become familiar with this information prior to the first budget meeting. It will give them an external scan of what other districts, which may or may not look like Southington, do to support technology.
4. **Article – The Resilient Leader** ~ this article was recently distributed to the administrative team by Mrs. Smith. Dr. Erardi thought that it was a great article to prepare the administrative team for a business meeting that they will be attending on December 9. He thought that it was also a great article for the Board to read as it's particularly timely with the work that will be forthcoming in February and March with the 2012-2013 budget.
5. **Board of Education Retreat** ~ Dr. Erardi reminded the Board that annually they look to attend a Board retreat. It's their time to begin to share information and agenda items through the Board Chairperson. Dr. Erardi's office will assist in putting together a morning of value for the Board of Education.
6. **Cool Schools – Southington High School – WFSB 3** ~ details surrounding this item will be given during the student representative report. However, Dr. Erardi's expectation was that, after the Board members see the television clip, they will send him a message telling him how much they enjoyed what they saw.

7. **Safe School/Healthy Student Grant** ~ this is an informational item for the Board of Education. They will be putting together a number of resources to support Ms. Christine Boulanger and they feel they want to put together their absolute best application for a \$6 million, four-year grant. The grant is for a K-12 initiative that will offer the district the opportunity to enhance their school resource officers in the middle schools and to enhance counseling and security. They are excited about this and are in the process of putting together a team to accomplish this task.

Dr. Erardi also put out a public well-wish to Perri Murdica who will be defending her doctoral dissertation on Tuesday, December 13, 2011. He is confident that, when they return in January, it will be Dr. Murdica moving forward for the Southington Board of Education.

He also recognized Mrs. Dorothy Potter and Mrs. Kelly Nichols. They both are administrative aspirants and middle school educators who spent the day with central office shadowing the superintendent. It had great value for Dr. Erardi. They spent quite a bit of money at the Southington Education Foundation Gala when they bid on the opportunity to be Superintendent for the Day. Both Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Nichols thanked the Board of Education for allowing them to be part of the meeting and shared a special thanks to Dr. Erardi for allowing them to opportunity to shadow him. They presented some thank you gifts to Mrs. Smith, Dr. Erardi, and Mrs. Carmody.

c. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Reported by Leon Peschel

- Mr. Peschel was excited to report that WFSB, Channel 3, was going to be highlighting the high school and some of the great programs they offer. Programs included Project Lead the Way, DECA, Robotics, and the Preschool Class. It's an exciting way for the high school to showcase itself. Southington High School offers such a wide variety of programs that would allow every student to find something that interests them.
- They are holding a College Basics 101 course on January 5, 2012. Last year, they had a similar course and, this year, it will include graduates from the Class of 2011. It will be an interactive session with juniors and seniors who are able to ask questions to these new college students. They can ask for advice of what they should know going into college or helpful hints about college in general. This has proven to be helpful for juniors and seniors who are planning on applying to college.
- They also had the Course Fair and Dr. Semmel asked that they emphasize how proud he was of the three individuals who spoke at the Course Fair. They are seniors John Foti, Leah Petrucci, and William Queen.

Reported by Whitney DiMeo

- The Spanish Exchange Program began on December 8 and will end on December 22. This is the first time that the students are hosting Spanish students and, in February, the Southington students who hosted a student will be traveling to Spain. They are excited and have many events planned. Mr. Art Secondo will be giving a tour around Southington, which included a visit to both middle schools. There are trips planned to New York City and Boston, and the Southington host students will have the opportunity to join their exchange students on those trips.
- Last week, they had two theater productions that were a huge success: Unified Theater and Drama Club. Unified Theater had a terrific class of students across the building and

it was very well attended. The Drama Club was also well attended and the name of that show was, *I Remember Mama*.

- The Powder Puff Football team played two games this year and their record was 1:1. Unfortunately, they did lose to New Britain. They all had fun and were happy with the opportunity to play more games.
- The winter sports teams have begun their practices.

Mr. Goralski asked that Miss DiMeo report back to the Board about her experiences with her Spanish Exchange student.

5. Committee Reports

a. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting ~ November 17, 2011

Mrs. Carmody reported for the Curriculum Committee.

Extended Day Kindergarten Update ~ there are 60 seats available for the extended day kindergarten classes at Derynoski and South End Elementary Schools. Three of the spots are being held for Open Choice students. Until they arrive, the spots are being filled by students from Derynoski and South End who will benefit from short-term intervention. As a committee, they will be visiting Derynoski on January 18, 2012. The Board of Education received a report from Mrs. Smith on the progress of the students attending this program and they are very proud of the work being done and the progress of the students.

Writing ~ the committee received a report on how the district writing goals are integrated with building-level and teacher-level improvement plans.

Upcoming Curriculum and Instruction Meetings ~ the committee is scheduled to meet on December 16 and the topic will be Middle Schools and Grade 9 Transition. Additional topics planned for future meetings are: Common Core Standards, Standards-Based Report Cards, Alternative Education Program, and Leveling at Southington High School.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Mrs. Smith for her communication with the Board members surrounding these topics. She has been very helpful to the committee.

b. Policy and Personnel Committee Meeting ~ November 21, 2011

Anti-Bullying Policy ~ Mrs. Clark reported that the committee had a lengthy meeting and the majority of the discussion was about the anti-bullying policy. She explained that they would normally review policies line-by-line to make adjustments and language changes that are appropriate for Southington. However, after a lengthy discussion, it was decided that they would make minimal, if no changes, because there is a time constraint associated with this policy. This policy needs to be in effect by January 1, 2012. Because of the language and how it was presented to the committee from legal counsel, they felt that it was in everyone's best interest that they pass the policy as presented. They will certainly be revisiting the policy and plan to make changes. Not only will the committee be making changes, the state will also be making changes. In the interest of time, they will be bringing back the policy in their future Policy and Personnel Committee meetings, and felt that it should be presented with minimal changes.

Future Meeting Dates ~ the Policy and Personnel Committee plans to meet monthly and will communicate future dates with the full Board.

The Wellness Policy ~ this policy was reviewed by the prior Policy Committee, but it hadn't moved forward to the Board of Education for a first reading. They made minimal changes and it is being presented as a first read to the Board of Education.

The committee will also be delving into the Homework Policy, which they feel is a very important policy to review.

The meeting was labor-intensive in length, but they managed to accomplish a lot during that time.

c. Out of State Overnight Field Trips (Formerly agenda item 8 c.)

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

"Move to approve the Out of State Overnight Field Trips for the Robotics Team."

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Goralski thanked Dr. Semmel and the representatives from the Robotics Team for their time. The expenses will be raised through fundraising and he wanted to thank them and wish them the best of luck.

6. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

a. Personnel Report

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

"Move to approve the Personnel Report as submitted."

Mrs. Queen asked about the appointment for a head coach for ice hockey. She asked if that meant that they were moving their status from a club to a sport. It was explained that they are a varsity sport now, but in a cooperative with West Hartford. Southington pays for the coach and West Hartford provides other services. Mrs. DiNello stated that the only expense they have in regard to ice hockey is the payment for the coaching salary.

Mrs. Clark mentioned that the resignations that were listed for July 1 reflect people who have spent many years in the district and have done phenomenal work. She wanted it noted that their efforts will be missed by the district.

Mr. Goralski shared that, when he was a student, he never had the opportunity to honor a teacher that he thought was influential in his life, and one of the retirees that was included on that list was that teacher, Elizabeth Scirpo. She shaped his life, shaped his education, and shaped his

future. She was his fifth grade teacher and he wanted to take that opportunity to publicly thank her and tell her that she was very important to his education.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, and Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski and Mr. Derynoski attended the first Turf Committee Meeting. It was held on December 5; there is another meeting scheduled on December 19. That committee plans to report to the Town Council in February with recommendations of pros, cons, and the potential for the future regarding turf.

He also recognized the individuals that were appointed by the Town Council for Ad Hoc Committees. Those committees and representatives from the Board of Education are as follows:

- Education Capital Bonding Committee ~ Mrs. Notar-Francesco and Mr. Derynoski.
- Self-Insurance ~ Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, and Mrs. Notar-Francesco. Mrs. Notar-Francesco was asked by the Chairperson of the Council to be the Vice Chairperson of this committee.
- Blue Ribbon Parks Committee ~ this is a new committee and Mrs. Clark will represent the Board of Education.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Cox reported that the energy management server installation and programming was completed. Therefore, the project is completed.

The Plantsville Elementary School project will be reviewed and they expect that it will be closed out by the Building Committee when they meet in the near future.

At South End Elementary School, the landscaping vendor has guaranteed their work. They will return in the spring and make any necessary adjustments. They don't believe that adjustments will be necessary. The only thing remaining at South End School is the review of some roofing details. Mr. Cox believes that this project will also close out in the very near future.

c. North Center School Project Update

Dr. Erardi plans to bring the conversation of the conceptual design of the North Center School meeting room to a January Board meeting. He would like the Board to weigh-in on what the plan looks like so they can have an active voice on what direction that is going. Mr. Cox continues to represent Dr. Erardi and the work of the Board with weekly meetings that he has with the Borghesi group. The tentative date as they look to move from Beecher Street to North

Center is March or April. The conversation has begun to move forward about what they plan to call the building. That is something that the Board should begin to think about.

Mrs. Johnson asked for an update on the Beecher Street building and Dr. Erardi stated that they met with the Town Manager and the Town Attorney. The environmental study that they were waiting for was brought back to Mr. Cox in full and they will be reconvening meetings with the realtors and commercial realtor. Now that they have the information on the study, they will be meeting and bringing an update to the Board of Education and the Town Council.

Mrs. Lombardi asked for clarification on the date that they were planning on moving into the new building. She asked if the original month was January and Dr. Erardi confirmed that was correct. Mr. Cox shared that one of the biggest problems was getting the Department of Transportation in Hartford to agree with the alignment on Hobart Street and the configuration of the light and the turning lanes. Most of the sidewalks and pavement are in. However, the last remaining connection to the street is waiting for the spring because the Department of Transportation has not given the Board of Education their choice of the four different plans that were offered to them. The contractors will be working inside the building. They had a meeting with Borghesi and the roofing part of the project will commence one week later than planned which is next Monday. Mrs. Lombardi asked if they will be saving money because of the delay. Dr. Erardi stated that they have money budgeted for the months of rent that they expected to be in the North Center Building. That money will be used, if need be, as a contingency fund for that plan moving forward. There is a savings and they are holding onto that money.

Mr. Goralski mentioned that he would like to see the new meeting room allow for the accommodation of student celebrations. Their "traveling road show" to different school buildings may come to an end when central office moves into the new building and the Board would like to continue the practice of having students be part of the celebrations prior to regular scheduled meetings.

d. Project Update for the Middle Schools

Dr. Erardi spoke to the acquisition of 1043-1045 South Main Street. They expected to close in December and, most likely, the Town Attorney will be closing in the month of January. It's been moved back approximately one month.

As recently as Wednesday evening, they met with the Werking Street neighbors. He thanked Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Goralski for attending that meeting with Dr. Erardi. There were approximately a half dozen neighbors who received the best information that they had, and they assured them that they would continue to include the neighbors with future conversations as the project moves forward.

The expectation is that the Town Council will move on the Public Building Committee at their next meeting. The document that he passed to the Board of Education illustrated those people that will be involved once the Public Building Committee is selected. The review committee and the people responsible for bringing back a recommendation to the Town Council will include the Town Manager. When looking at the list, there is a reference to a department head. The department head is the Superintendent of Schools or his designee. Dr. Erardi plans to lean heavily on his expert, Mr. Fred Cox. In addition to the Town Manager and the Department Head, it would be the Town Attorney, the Town Council Chairperson or his designee, and the

minority leader, Mr. Christopher Palmieri. Their timeline will continue to be aggressive because they believe that being aggressive will save money. There will be a decision made on what is first. Do they hire the construction management or architectural team first? That decision will be made in the future. He wanted to bring the information to the Board so they have an idea on how to move forward with the Town Council with the middle school project.

e. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy ~ Second Reading

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

“Move to approve the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy as presented by the Policy and Personnel Committee.”

Mrs. Johnson stated that this will be on the Website for the public, but asked if the Executive Summary to this policy that Mrs. Smith developed would also accompany this policy on the Website. Dr. Erardi stated that, if the Board took action that evening, both documents would be posted. Mr. Goralski explained that Mrs. Smith developed a one-page summary for the Board of Education that would be easier for parents to read and understand due to the complexity of the way the policy was written by legal counsel.

Mr. Oshana stated that, as that policy gets implemented, it's important to say that there is more work that needs to get done. The executive summary will be important as the training begins for those that will be using the policy. It's much easier looking at the summary than it is to read a document that is full of legal words. It's a great summary, but it's still important for people to read the full document.

Mrs. Johnson stated that the summary sets the tone for the work that the Policy and Personnel Committee does. The committee works hard to ensure that the policies of the Southington Board of Education are written in a language that everyone can understand.

Mrs. Lombardi asked if there was a process by which all the incidences are recorded and Dr. Erardi explained that the practice is driven by statute. Any recorded bullying incident needs to be available to anyone that comes forward in any office of any building. They keep a running record of the incident and the outcome. They have a running record and it's part of an annual state report. Part of their open microphone night a few weeks ago included the administrative team reporting on the frequency of reported bullying incidents for the last school year.

Mrs. Lombardi asked how this plays out in the classroom or in the school. She wasn't looking to get into details, but asked if there's a program or safety piece of the curriculum and how it will be implemented on a daily basis. Dr. Erardi stated that the conversation took place that afternoon with the Bullying Committee and it is part of their K-12 Character Education program. They have three silos of work that they continue to review and move forward with.

1. They remain concerned about bullying on buses.
2. They will work to ensure equity with programming throughout the K-5 schools and equity with the programming in the two middle schools. Dr. Erardi is confident that the high school has programming specific to their school. This was part of their NEASC presentation.

3. The last piece is that this is an administrative and business meeting conversation with the administrative team. The team needs to realize that, when there's a bullying incident reported, it's placed on the top of the pile and requires immediate action.

Dr. Erardi acknowledged that there is still work to be done and he will be returning to the Board in January with a K-12 anonymous tip line.

Mrs. Johnson stated that the bullying policy draft was presented to the parent leaders at their last meeting. Dr. Erardi presented the leaders with the plan to bring the bullying policy to their PTOs and discuss it with their parents. He asked that they find out any information that the parents can offer about supporting an anti-bullying policy. Whether it is about information or training, they were looking forward to hearing from those parent leaders.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, and Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Goralski thanked the committee for their work.

f. School Calendar Update ~ 2011-2012

Dr. Erardi shared that he sent a letter to all staff and it included putting everyone on notice as requested by the Board of Education at the November 10 meeting. He's pleased to share that they have not missed a school day since that last meeting. They had a copy of the updated 2011-2012 Calendar with no changes from the last conversation in November.

Mrs. Lombardi shared that she will not be at the January meeting and wanted to express her thoughts. While in the schools in the month of June, some of those schools were so hot that the learning environment was subpar. As the temperature rose, the teachers were looking for relief so they could conduct instruction. That leads her to suggest, personally and speaking to staff and parents, that there is a common theme of planning and wanting to know. She knows and respects the information that the union and administration provided at the last meeting. Her point is that she does not want to see school going beyond June 19. If history is a factor of what we predict for the future, the weather in Connecticut will suggest that we will have snow days. If after January 12 there are snow days, they will have to add those days to the end of the school year. Those are her thoughts and she felt that it was important to share her concerns.

Mr. Goralski referenced the letter that Dr. Erardi sent to staff and parents, which included that, if a late winter arises, it would impact the April vacation. At that time, the Board would then have the choice to impact that April vacation. It was agreed that the Board could decide what to do about the February vacation at the January 12 meeting. They also could do so on January 26. Mrs. Johnson stated that she also expressed the same opinion as Mrs. Lombardi at the last meeting and she concurred at this meeting as well.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco requested that Dr. Erardi put together a document, such as the one he provided last year, that shows what direction they would take in the event there are additional snow days. For example, if the district misses two more snow days, they would lose the back end of the February break (Thursday and Friday). Dr. Erardi stated that he will put together a document in the very near future and send it to the Board.

Mrs. Clark also asked about something Dr. Erardi mentioned at the last meeting which was in reference to the State of Connecticut making any announcements about possibly lifting the 180-day requirement for schools to be in session. Dr. Erardi shared that a general announcement was communicated from the Commissioner's Office stating that all districts must exhaust every possible opportunity prior to making an appeal.

Mr. Goralski asked that the administration reiterate to staff the clarity of what happens if they purchased a vacation: they can go and there is not a consequence to them. There were spouses of two staff members who were planning to speak publicly because they were concerned about the impact on their spouse if they went on their planned vacation.

Dr. Erardi stated that their expectation is that they created a culture of integrity and honesty and that they expect all staff to be honest with the plans that they have. If there is a monetary payment that cannot be recovered, there will be no discipline to any staff member. However, there may be a loss of income. Mr. Goralski stated that was the conversation he had with those spouses and he asked that he express that clarity with the district.

Mrs. Carmody stated that Dr. Erardi's letter addressed those concerns very clearly.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. CAPT/SAT/AP/College Report

Dr. Semmel began with a PowerPoint presentation including a number of reports. Ms. Crowley, Mr. Bayer, and Mr. Germano were also in the audience in support of the reports being presented.

Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)

There are four tests on the CAPT and there are five score bands which are *below basic*, *basic*, *proficient*, *goal*, and *advanced goal*. Proficiency has always been the state's standard, but Dr. Semmel holds a higher standard and believes that Southington High School students should all be reaching goal.

From all the data, including the SAT and AP, they are looking across the years beginning with 2007. In 2011, it shows that in mathematics 5.9 percent of the students were basic or below basic, and this number has decreased over the years. The number of students who were proficient or above was 94.1 percent of the students, with 68 percent at goal or advanced goal.

The science scores show a significant jump over one year. They went from 53 percent at goal to 63 percent of the students at advanced / goal. That is a nice one-year jump, but they like to watch for trends and look to stay at that number or continue to move higher in the future.

The reading scores are generally flat. They are not impressed with the 10.3 percent in the basic / below basic band. That shows that 10 percent of the students are in that level. Even though 89.8 percent of the students are at or above proficient, there are 57 percent who are at goal. This shows that they still have work to do. They hired a literacy teacher at the high school which they never had before. They have assessments for learning that are being used to identify students who need additional support. Through their SRBI and the EIP models, they are

beginning to work with those students in and out of the classroom with the literacy teacher. They believe that this is a more focused approach with reading that will result in a higher student learner outcome in this area.

The writing scores show that 89.6 percent of the students are at or above proficient. This is relatively flat data without significant increases. They put an improvement plan into place that focused on this area.

The last slide for the CAPT results shared that there are *CAPT Scholars*. Those are students who earn goal or advanced goal on all four CAPT tests. This past year, they had 38.5 percent of their students who were identified as CAPT Scholars. Therefore, 181 out of the 466 tested earned at least a four or five on all four tests. He also identified students who are called *High Flyers*. Those students have reached advanced goal on all four tests and, this year, that number was 9.4 percent. Therefore, 44 of the 466 students reached the High Flyer category. They will be looking to increase both of those numbers as they move forward.

SAT Report

The first slide indicated a significant increase in the number of test-takers from 2010-2011. He believes that, when you look at 2009, 2010, and 2011, there are more students taking the SAT. There were 69 percent last year and 77 percent of the class of 2011 took the SAT.

Reviewing the scores for SATs, there are three areas of the SAT which are Math, Reading, and Writing. They show the data from 2008 through 2011. The class of 2010 had a fantastic year. When you look at four years across, you see 515, 516, 527, and back to 518. He wasn't sure what the jump was in the year 2010, but stated that, when you look across the four years, there is an increase. There are similar results with the SAT Critical Reading. The class of 2010 had the highest scores that they have had in a long time. The class of 2011 and previous years were relatively flat. Dr. Semmel stated that they would be looking to increase those numbers. He was surprised to see that the national data was so much lower.

When reviewing the writing data for the SATs, he believes that this was the only area where the state was higher than Southington High School. They will continue to work on that aspect of student preparedness.

Advanced Placement (AP)

They currently have twelve AP courses. Last year, the CEEB recognized Southington High School for having a significant increase in the number of students taking AP classes and, at the same time, having students score a three or higher.

In looking at the 2012-2013 school year, there have already been some changes in the AP courses. Junior students will now be able to take an AP English class. They are moving the Literature and Composition class that their seniors take to Grade 11 where it makes more sense within the curriculum. The seniors will now be able to take English Language and Composition. This will allow them to take two AP courses in English.

They also added AP Environmental Science and the UCONN courses (Spanish, French, German, and Italian) have added an AP component. Those courses are now UCONN and AP. Students will have a choice to do one or the other or both. Dr. Semmel is excited about where they are going with AP.

Reviewing the data, when a student takes an AP exam, a student can receive a score of 1 to 5. Five is the highest and one is the lowest. When they review the data, they typically look at students who receive 3, 4, or 5. As a reminder, students are not required to take the AP tests. There is a fee to the students who take the test. Across the years, Southington High School has increased the percentage of students earning a three or higher. This year, 86 percent of their students earned a three or higher.

Dr. Semmel stated that there was an error in the handout versus what was presented on the screen. The number on the handout for biology and chemistry were much higher. The correct information is that 25 students were enrolled in biology and 22 students took the test and, of the 22 students, 77 percent earned a three or more. With the chemistry data, the numbers were 36 students were enrolled and 33 students took the test. By making these changes, there were a total of 369 students taking AP tests, not 392 as shown in their handout.

The last two slides indicated all the AP classes they had and, over the number of years, their outcomes. For the current school year, there was another increase from 369 last year to 403 enrolled this current school year. They continue to see an increase in the number of students taking AP courses. They expect that, next year, the number will be significantly higher with the AP junior English class, environmental science, and world language classes.

College Acceptance Report (CAR)

Dr. Semmel shared the number of students who are attending post-secondary educational institutions. The data shows that 88.3 percent of the class of 2011 is attending post-secondary educational institutions; 58.9 percent of them are attending a four-year college, and 29.4 percent are attending a two-year college. The Alta class of 2011 received their high school diplomas and that number was 19, which was every senior in that class.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Dr. Semmel and shared with him a concern that a parent has regarding the number of school days missed due to the weather and how that was going to affect students being prepared for the AP test in May. Dr. Semmel stated that, anytime you lose that number of school days, the teachers are well aware of where they need to be by that May date. He believes that they can reach the goal because AP courses typically have a significant amount of independent study required and students need to have the motivation to read and do the pre-reading before class. It will certainly make it more intense for the students, but they can do it. Mr. Peschel shared that, last year, they had several sessions after school where they sometimes stayed after school for five hours to study and review the materials. He stated that it's the dedication of the student that makes the difference. Dr. Semmel stated that they also provide them with the opportunity during the CAPT testing days. While students are CAPT testing, others are prepping for AP.

Mrs. Johnson pointed out that it would not help those students at all to add school days to the end of the year. In support of how she and Mrs. Lombardi feel, it would be far better for those students who are in the AP courses to make up their days in February as opposed to the end of June.

Mrs. Johnson asked about the College Acceptance number of 88.4 percent that is not quite as high as in other years and she is concerned about the lack of post-secondary preparation for the graduating students. She realized that the economy is a factor, but this is going to become

so necessary for students and she wants to ensure that the students get the message of how important it is that they continue to study after high school. She asked Dr. Semmel how he plans to advance this concept. Dr. Semmel stated that, in order to advance this, the most significant things they are doing are the PSAT, which shows them exactly where they are. They take it during their sophomore and junior years. Students who typically don't see themselves going to college won't take the PSAT the first time, so this connects them. In addition, because they gave the PSAT to all Grade 10 and 11 students, math and English teachers will bring students to the computer labs to see how the program, My College Quick Start, connects to the PSAT scores. The students will go into the lab with their teachers to see how that program will further prepare them for the SAT. They believe that this will have an effect on the students and the teachers. It's a very powerful program that dissects the individual student's PSAT and basically plans an individual prep session for the student on the computer. In addition, they are working with Naviance. They are looking at the career profiler and the do-what-you-are piece of the program and going through that process. His final comment is that there is a significant group of employers who are not looking for students to be going to a two- or four-year college. There is a skill set that they can get other ways, and he believes that we need to remember that aspect as well. His job is to make sure that students are ready to go to college.

Mrs. Carmody also commented that there could be financial constraints affecting families.

Mrs. Lombardi commended Dr. Semmel in the trend that is taking place. On the subject of success, she noticed science was in that category and, even though it's only one year, she asked what he thought the huge leap was a result of. Dr. Semmel asked the science department chairperson what she attributed this increase, and she stated that they had a significant focus on making sure that students were prepared for the CAPT test. They believe that the CAPT test is a very good test of skills and they need to prepare students for that. She believed that the teachers had a more articulated approach to ensure that the students are taking the labs that they must take; it's been a more strategic process. However, Dr. Semmel would be careful to say that the science scores represent a trend. When you look at those numbers, they were that high five years ago and then declined and are back up again. The proof will be in next year's numbers with a different group of students. Do they attain at the level they reached this year or will they surpass it? That is what he will be looking for.

Mrs. Lombardi asked what Dr. Semmel believed the reason was for the increase in participation rate of the SATs. Dr. Semmel believed that it's from the conversation and communication that takes place in the guidance department and the classrooms. This happened prior to their giving the PSATs to all students, but there is a great deal of conversation about students being prepared for college. He isn't sure if it will drop next year. You don't know what students will do.

Mrs. Lombardi asked if the 19 Alta students were included in their percentages. She also asked what the numbers would look like if those students were not included in the numbers. Dr. Semmel believed that they all were in the percentages, but would confirm that information and get back to the Board.

Mrs. Queen appreciated that Dr. Semmel would like all students to be at goal and not just proficient. She asked about his overall desire to have more students be at goal and what would be the general approach to get them there. Dr. Semmel put a number of initiatives into their

school improvement plan. One initiative was getting someone on board who has background training in literacy; this is why they now have a literacy teacher at the high school. As part of her work, they developed common formative assessments. Those assessments are non-fiction reading assessments that are similar to the CAPT assessments. They use all the types of questions and reading levels that the students will encounter. The teacher then goes over the assessments with the students to show them where they are making mistakes. This is improving the student's ability to access the non-fiction reading. Even though they are getting the skills to do better on the CAPT, the real purpose is to get students to access the non-fiction reading. In addition, the literacy teacher has been spending a significant amount of time co-planning and co-teaching in Grades 9 and 10. She is teaching them how to use explicit literacy strategies. Through the common planning time, she and the teacher are planning the lessons, and then she goes into the classrooms and models the teaching.

Dr. Semmel explained that they are also taking students who they believe would be reaching goal and advanced goal and identifying those students who are weaker readers, and they will try to connect them. The goal is to begin this in January. They hope that it would have a positive effect on both sets of students.

The literacy teacher will also be offering one-on-one support for students who are reading at very low levels. The literacy teacher is a part of the plan, and she is very busy.

Mrs. Queen asked about the AP classes. With the additional AP classes, she asked where they stand with the number of AP offerings for a high school of their size. Dr. Semmel stated that they will be offering 18 AP courses. There is some discussion about having an AP course for freshman called *Human Geography*. It is another possibility. In the business department they are also looking into possibly teaching either a macro or micro economics course. He has reviewed other programs of studies across the state to see how Southington compares. They don't have as many, but they aren't far behind. There is a point that, if we continue to offer more courses, staffing would become an issue.

Mrs. Queen also pointed out two areas where 100 percent of the students took the tests in English and US History. The data indicated that 100 percent of the students took the AP English exam and scored a 3, 4, or 5, and 96.6 percent of the 100 percent of students that took the US History scored a 3, 4, or 5.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked what the administration is doing to encourage the students who take the AP classes to also take the test. She does realize there are financial considerations that come along with taking the test, but she wondered what they do at the high school. Dr. Semmel stated that the teacher in the classroom encourages their students that they can take the test. There are some students who don't have the confidence level and they choose not to take it. Mrs. Notar-Francesco wondered if parents are apprised that, if those students take the test, they could be given college credit. She would like to be sure that the message gets across to the parents that this is a possibility, and it will certainly save dollars in the long run from the college tuition bill. She noted that in psychology, there were 97 students enrolled in the class, but only 58 took the test. She would have liked to see that number closer together. Dr. Semmel looked at the data and noted that, in previous years, the number of students who took the test was closer.

Mr. Peschel shared with the Board that information surrounding the SATs is advertised at the high school on a daily basis. There are announcements about SAT practices and deadlines.

The teachers strongly encourage the students as well. In math, there is not a month that goes by that they don't receive an SAT practice packet. The teachers work very hard to help the students practice so they can do better on all areas of the SATs.

Mr. Peschel also shared how busy the literacy teacher is at the high school. He stated that they have already had some assessments; they received non-fiction pieces and they had to answer questions. She also talked to the senior politics and government class about literacy techniques and it has been implemented throughout.

In reference to encouraging students to take the AP exams, Mr. Peschel stated that the teachers really do encourage the students. At the beginning of the class, they set the goal that they prepare for the AP class. The teachers encourage students to take the exam and they have after school practice sessions during the CAPT testing.

Mr. Peschel also explained that many seniors who take the AP Psychology course haven't taken any previous AP courses. This is often one of their first AP courses. When they go into the course, it's overwhelming for some causing the lack of confidence that Dr. Semmel mentioned. Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that, as time goes on, she would like to see that corrected. She hopes that seniors will not be taking their very first AP course at that time and they will have taken more than that one along the way. Dr. Semmel shared that he would like to have every student take at least one AP course. Data has shown that students who have taken at least one AP course do much better in college.

Mrs. Carmody shared that she has heard wonderful things about the literacy teacher at the high school and they need additional literacy teachers for such a large school.

Mr. Goralski thanked Dr. Semmel for his report and thoroughly answering the Board's questions. He likes the direction in which the high school is going, and the expense of the literacy specialist is clearly justified. He challenged the administration to show a connection between elementary and high school. He believes that, at some point, they need to see why the reading scores haven't gone up. He is tired of the scores being flat.

b. Wellness Policy ~ First Reading

Mr. Goralski thanked the policy committee for their work with this document. Mrs. Lombardi thought that it was great that they have this policy. However, when she observed the menu at the schools for lunch and breakfast, she sees high calorie breakfasts, fried mozzarella, and French fries. She then wonders where the nutritional guidelines are for those items. She has seen apples, but there are also chips and she wonders if there is a disconnect between the cafeterias and the policy implementation. Mrs. DiNello stated that all of the meals sold in the school system are required to meet the federal nutrition guidelines in order to be reimbursed for the free and reduced lunch students. They sell a variety of a la carte items at the schools for snacks. She will get additional information from the Food Service Director, Nya Welinsky. The district struggles with keeping the program viable and having the right balance between the nutritional items to meet the guidelines and supplement the overall revenues of the program by having some of the a la carte items that will actually sell.

Mrs. Queen asked about the Corner Café at Southington High School and Mrs. DiNello shared that the program is not associated at all with the school lunch program. Mrs. DiNello also

mentioned that she is impressed with the breakfast program. When the students go through the breakfast line, they have to take the requirements of that meal. They might choose to take the pancakes, but they are also required to take a protein and a fruit.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco mentioned that some of the items in the policy are appearing to align more with the Healthy Food Certification that the Board has waived in the past and asked Mrs. DiNello if she could speak to that. Mrs. DiNello explained that Nya Welinsky and the District Nursing Supervision, Marie Bordonaro, were on the committee and have been part of the conversations that have taken place. Mrs. DiNello shared that there will still be a number of items that they would not be able to include in the school lunch program if they move toward the healthy certification. The federal government is still reviewing their policies. The administration was anticipating new guidelines to be introduced for school lunch from the government this year that would have had an impact on the current program. They have yet to see those guidelines and, if they change, that would likely put them in alignment with what they are going to be required to include in the meals. Some of their best selling items would have to come off the menu and that would jeopardize the revenue and the viability of the school lunch program.

d. 2012-2013 School Calendar Review

Mr. Goralski asked that opinions, insights, and questions be forwarded to the administration. In turn, the administration will organize the information into a document that will be distributed to the Board prior to their next meeting, which is when they will take action on the 2012-2013 Calendar. Mr. Derynoski agreed that was a great idea and they should wait for the input from the PTOs and other groups. They could feed any direct data or questions to the administration, and the administration would get them information to review. They could have a healthy discussion at the next Board meeting. Dr. Erardi stated that he would put together an executive summary of the Veterans meeting that took place that morning as he believes it's an important narrative to have for the Board. He also created a second venue, the Superintendent's Blog, for the community to weigh-in. This currently has nearly two-dozen responses from parents and community members. He believes that is the best strategy moving forward.

Mr. Oshana asked what we actually teach in regard to Veterans and service to this country. It's critical that students are taught this information. The district needs to continue to keep this information available so students know what that meant to this country. He wondered what is offered in the curriculum and is it just a one-day event. He believes that it needs to be incorporated into the curriculum. Dr. Erardi will do a K-12 analysis for the Board. Suggestions will go through the superintendent who will feed back information to the Board.

Mrs. Queen mentioned that there are other districts that start their school year earlier in August. The calendar being presented is more in alignment with some of the country as a whole. The need to keep our students competitive is important. She believes that it makes sense to move the end date up. Mr. Derynoski made mention that everyone needs to keep in mind that the end of August can be just as hot as the end of June.

Mrs. Lombardi expressed her view on Veterans Day. Many of the values of our society are dwindling away. The Veterans have served us and she thinks it's admirable that Dr. Erardi spoke to having the different groups come together as it will make the programs in the schools even stronger. However, in her opinion, there is no other substitute for the recognition and

respect of the U.S. Veterans than to honor them with a day off from school. She believes that, if a conversation is triggered between a child and their parents, that conversation is a learning conversation about the greatness of this country and the people that served this country.

e. Board-level decision on Grievance filed by AFSCME Council 4, Local 1303, Employee Discipline

This item was moved to follow Executive Session.

f. ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

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

“Move to authorize the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Business and Finance as the designated signatories for the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs.”

Motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move that the Board go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Litigation Matters and a Personnel Matter and, upon conclusion, return to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Passamano

Michelle Passamano
Recording Secretary

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

EXECUTIVE SESSION

DECEMBER 8, 2011

Mr. Brian Goralski, Board Chairperson, called the Executive Session to order at 10:05 p.m.

Members Present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mr. Brian Goralski.

Administration Present: Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance, and Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations.

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

“Move that the Board go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Litigation Matters and a Personnel Matter and, upon conclusion, reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move that the Board return to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The board reconvened public session at 10:18 p.m.

e. Board-level decision on Grievance filed by AFSCME Council 4, Local 1303, Employee Discipline

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

“Move that the Board of Education upholds the recommendation of the sub-committee.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Board adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

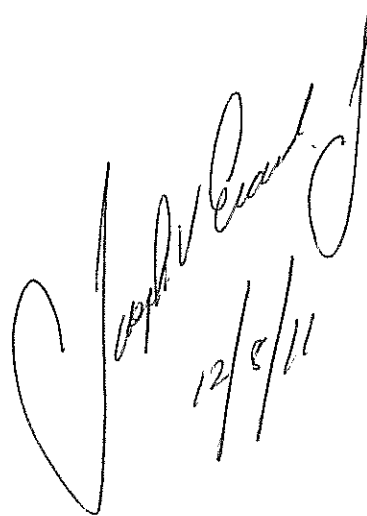
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "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 December 8, 2011

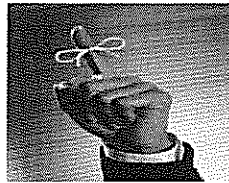
1. **Dates to Remember** (Attachment #1)
2. **RFP – Update: BOE Green (Paperless) Meetings** (Attachment #2)
3. **Technology Infrastructure – External Scan** (Attachment #3)
4. **Article – The Resilient Leader** (Attachment #4)
5. **Board of Education – Retreat**
6. **Cool Schools – SHS – WFSB -3**
 - a. December 9th – 5:12 a.m. / 5:42 a.m. / 6:12 a.m. / 6:42 a.m.
 - b. Ag-Sci / Robotics – Pre-engineering / STARS – Supermarket / DECA / Credit Union / Corner Café / Pre-school
7. **Safe School / Healthy Student Grant**
 - a. K-12 Initiative
 - b. \$6,000,000 over four years



Handwritten signature and date: 12/8/11

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 8, 2011 - January 31, 2012



Day	Date	Time	Event	Place
Thursday	December 8, 2011	7:00 p.m.	Board of Education Meeting	Flanders
Monday	December 12, 2011	7:00 p.m.	South End School PTO Meeting	South End
		7:00 p.m.	JFK Orchestra Concert	JFK
Tuesday	December 13, 2011	7:00 p.m.	JFK Grade 6 Band & Ensemble Concert	JFK
		7:00 p.m.	JAD Grade 6 Band & Chorus	JAD
Wednesday	December 14, 2011	7:00 p.m.	JAD Grade 7 Band & Choral Concert	JAD
		7:00 p.m.	JFK Band Concert	JFK
		7:00 p.m.	Flanders PTO Meeting	Flanders
Thursday	December 15, 2011	7:00 p.m.	JAD Grade 8 Band & Choral Concert	JAD
Friday	December 16, 2011	9:30 a.m.	Curr. & Instruction Mtg.	JFK
Monday	December 19, 2011	6:00 p.m.	BOE Finance Comm. Mtg.	Hatton Library
		2:00 & 6:00	PES Holiday Concert	Plantsville
		7:00 p.m.	JAD Grade 6, 7, & 8 Select Strings	JAD
Tuesday	December 20, 2011	5:30 p.m.	Policy & Personnel Mtg.	JFK Library
		7:00 p.m.	JFK Choral Concert	JFK
Wednesday	December 21, 2011	11:00 a.m.	AFSCME Mediation	BOE Conf. Room
		7:00 p.m.	SHS Holiday Concert	SHS Auditorium
Thursday	December 22, 2011	1:30 p.m.	Flanders Polar Express w/ Dr. Erardi	Flanders
December 26-January 2 - Holiday Recess Happy Holidays!				
Monday	January 9, 2012	6:30 p.m.	Hatton Instrumental Concert	Hatton Cafeteria
		6:45 p.m.	JFK PTO Meeting	JFK Library
		7:00 p.m.	South End PTO Meeting	South End
Tuesday	January 10, 2012	1:45 & 6:30	Flanders Instrumental Concert	Flanders
Wednesday	January 11, 2012	6:30 p.m.	Thalberg PTO Meeting	Thalberg Library
		6:45 p.m.	SHS PTO Meeting	SHS Library
		6:45 p.m.	Derynoski PTO Meeting	Derynoski
		6:45 p.m.	Plantsville PTO Meeting	Plantsville
		7:00 p.m.	Strong PTO Meeting	Strong
		7:00 p.m.	Flanders PTO Meeting	Flanders
		7:00 p.m.	Kelley PTO Meeting	Kelley Library
Thursday	January 12, 2012	7:30 p.m.	Board of Education Meeting	Town Hall
Tuesday	January 17, 2012	7:00 p.m.	BOE Budget Workshop #1	Hatton
Wednesday	January 18, 2012	10:00 a.m.	Curr. & Instruction Mtg.	Derynoski
		6:30 p.m.	Strong Winter Instrumental Concert	Strong
Thursday	January 19, 2012	7:00 p.m.	BOE Budget Workshop #2	Hatton
Monday	January 23, 2012	7:00 p.m.	Hatton PTO Meeting	Hatton Library
		2:00 & 7:00	Thalberg Instrumental Concert	Thalberg
Tuesday	January 24, 2012	6:30 p.m.	JAD PTO Meeting	JAD Library
Wednesday	January 25, 2012	6:30 p.m.	Plantsville Instrumental Concert	Plantsville
		7:00 p.m.	Derynoski Instrumental Concert	Derynoski
Thursday	January 26, 2012	7:30 p.m.	BOE Meeting - Budget Adoption	Hatton

PAPERLESS BOARD MEETING SOFTWARE

	Provax	Destiny	IQM2	WebSchool	CABE*	BoardDocs LT*	BoardDocs PRO*
Searchable	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Database	MySQL	MySQL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Server(s) or Hosted	2	2	Hosted	Hosted	Hosted	Hosted	Hosted
Minutes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Support	yes	yes	yes (24x7)	yes	yes	yes	yes
#of users	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited
Multiple Sec Levels	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bookmark	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Take Notes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Ability to work with other devices (Ipad, tablet, etc)	yes	yes	yes (limited with ipad)	yes	yes	yes	yes
Multiple types of attachments	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Price year 1	\$ 14,860.00	\$ 14,950.00	\$ 10,680.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 10,000.00
Renewal	\$ -	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 10,680.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 9,000.00

12/6/2011

*did not participate In RFP

Not included in the prices above: Servers, software licenses (Windows OS), Laptops/tablets for BOE Members



SOUTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

KAREN G. VEILLEUX
TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

MEMO TO: Dr. Erardi

November 15, 2011

Attached is a spreadsheet detailing the Technology Staff at many Connecticut Schools. This is very difficult to compare from school to school for many reasons. Some schools take care of the town's infrastructure, and in other cases the town is providing support for the school. When comparing the ratio of computers to technology staff, Southington is somewhere in the middle 13 out of 23 districts (388 computers per technology staff member). However, when comparing the number of students to technology staff, we have one of the highest ratios of students to staff which puts us near the bottom at 19 out of 23 districts (approximately 1,000 students per technology staff member). Since the number of students typically correlates to the number of staff, this is where it becomes difficult to work with staff on individual lessons or projects and technicians are mainly limited to fixing what is broken and moving on to the next ticket.

What is not displayed in the numbers is the amount of technology that we now have in our buildings including SMARTBoards/Tables, Projectors, Document Cameras, iPads, Kindles and various assistive technology devices. In addition, our teachers are now required to have a "web presence", use the SMARTBoard in their room and integrate technology into their lessons.

The way that education has now embraced technology, it would benefit the district to add a technology assistant to each site. Currently, we have one person in this position that provides support at the elementary level which includes:

- Assisting teachers with finding websites to enhance their lessons
- Change/clean filters on Projectors (twice a year)
- Provide professional development to staff
- Design activities for the SMART Tables
- Assist teachers with website questions

Because we have so many buildings, it is difficult to provide adequate coverage to all sites. In the high school and middle schools we could also use additional support. Currently, both middle schools are woefully lacking in updated technology and are able to be serviced with approximately thirteen hours of support each week. Once the new buildings are done, this support will need to increase significantly in order to make this project successful.

I believe my department provides excellent support with minimal downtime. This probably does not help us plead our case for more help when staff are "getting the job done" no matter how much is piled up. Most tasks are completed within one to three days. Having support on site will decrease the frustration staff experience when having issues with technology and allow Southington staff and students to fully utilize the investment we have made in technology.

Ratio of Computers to Technology Staff

	District	# of Computers	# of Students	Ratio of Comp to Staff	# of Schools/ Bldgs	Total # of Support Staff*
1	Avon	891	3546	104.8	6	8.5
2	Glastonbury	2500	6000	119.0	11	21
3	Canton	900	1830	124.1	13	7.25
4	Windsor	1747	3490	166.4	8	10.5
5	Newtown	2180	5260	167.7	8	13
6	Region 10	1300	2800	191.2	4	6.8
7	Stonington	1327	2401	221.2	7	6
8	Region 14	900	2400	300.0	4	3
9	Wallingford	2500	6346	333.3	12	7.5
10	Granby	1200	2200	342.9	6	3.5
11	Suffield	1486	2500	371.5	4	4
12	Plainville	1535	2427	383.8	6	4
13	Southington	2717	7000	388.1	12	7
14	Bloomfield	1600	2500	400.0	9	4
15	Somers	800	1635	400.0	3	2
16	Stratford	2800	7500	400.0	16	7
17	W. Hartford	5425	10140	417.3	16	13
18	Farmington	1753	4300	438.3	7	4
19	Manchester	3707	7071	446.6	16	8.3
20	Bristol	2800	9000	466.7	17	6
21	Vernon	2100	4000	466.7	8	4.5
22	Wilton	1500	4400	500.0	4	3
23	Berlin	1700	3200	523.1	5	3.25

Ratio of Students to Technology Staff

	District	# of Computers	# of Students	Ratio of Students to Staff	# of Schools/ Bldgs	Total # of Support Staff*
1	Canton	900	1830	252.4	13	7.25
2	Glastonbury	2500	6000	285.7	11	21
3	Windsor	1747	3490	332.4	8	10.5
4	Stonington	1327	2401	400.2	7	6
5	Newtown	2180	5260	404.6	8	13
6	Region 10	1300	2800	411.8	4	6.8
7	Avon	891	3546	417.2	6	8.5
8	Plainville	1535	2427	606.8	6	4
9	Suffield	1486	2500	625.0	4	4
10	Bloomfield	1600	2500	625.0	9	4
11	Granby	1200	2200	628.6	6	3.5
12	W. Hartford	5425	10140	780.0	16	13
13	Region 14	900	2400	800.0	4	3
14	Somers	800	1635	817.5	3	2
15	Wallingford	2500	6346	846.1	12	7.5
16	Manchester	3707	7071	851.9	16	8.3
17	Vernon	2100	4000	888.9	8	4.5
18	Berlin	1700	3200	984.6	5	3.25
19	Southington	2717	7000	1000.0	12	7
20	Stratford	2800	7500	1071.4	16	7
21	Farmington	1753	4300	1075.0	7	4
22	Wilton	1500	4400	1466.7	4	3
23	Bristol	2800	9000	1500.0	17	6

EDUC
LEADERSHIP
Dec 2011 / Jan 2012
The Resilient
School

The Resilient Leader

In the face of change and crisis, the resource we need most is our resilience.

Elle Allison

Budget cuts, program closures, pink slips, workforce reductions, school closures, changes in teacher and administrator evaluation processes, and accountability. These issues came up during a recent webinar for leaders in education who signed in to talk about failure, loss, and the need for resilience. With the world economy in dire straits, educators have never faced more changes and challenges day-to-day. As a result, thoughtful leaders in education are eager to learn how to be more resilient.

This interest in resilience could not be better placed; effective leaders of sustainable change are highly resilient. Imagine what it would mean if all our schools had effective leaders as they confront the current climate. What if most school leaders were happy and believed they were doing meaningful work, even during times of loss and change within schools?

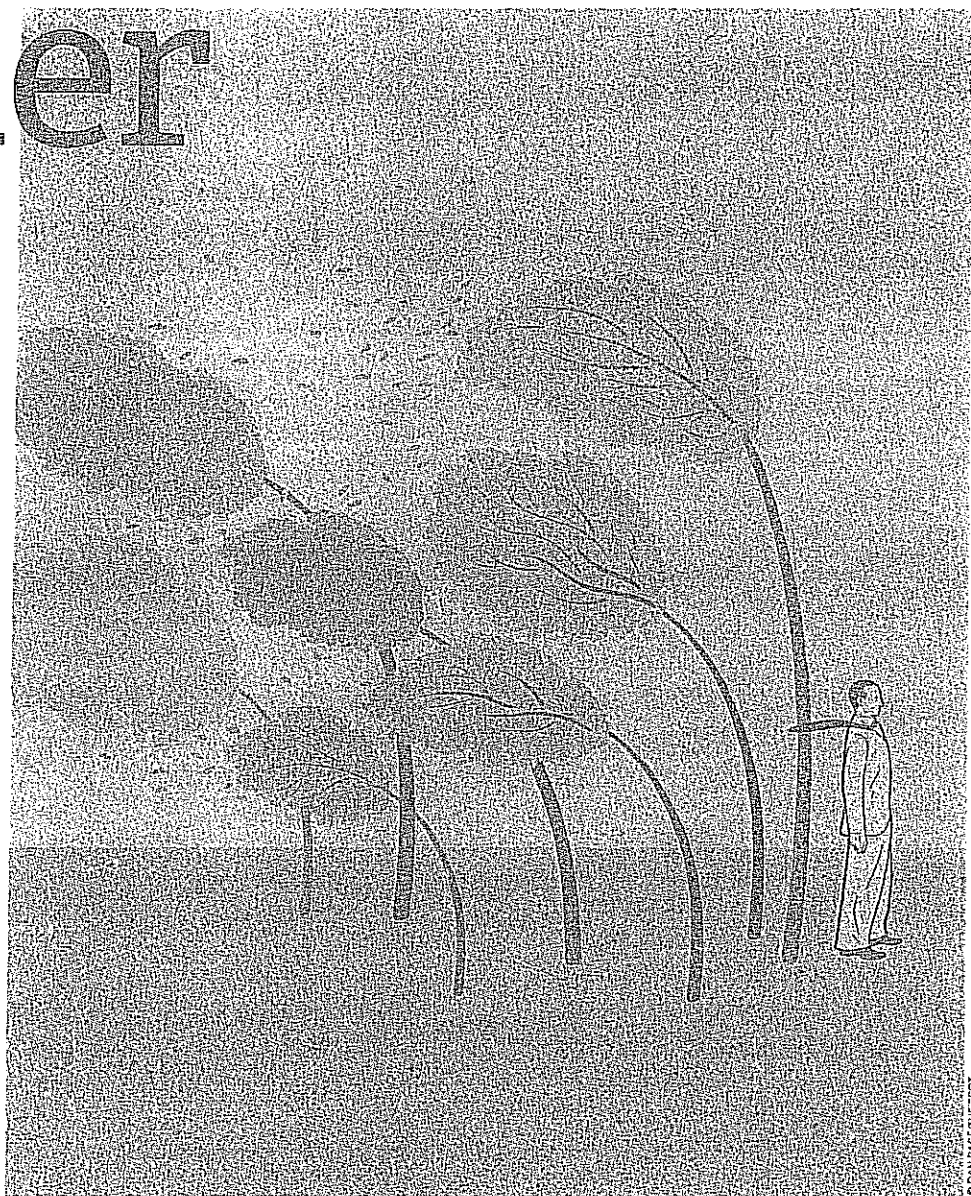
Happiness and resilience are related. On an ongoing web-based inventory, my colleague Doug Reeves and I ask

leaders to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 on both personal happiness and the extent to which they find their work meaningful. We then ask them to rate themselves on various qualities related to leadership. Leaders who rate themselves as a 9 or 10 in happiness and meaning also score in the "incredibly resilient" range on the inventory

twice as often as do leaders who rate themselves as a 1 or 2 on happiness and meaning.¹

What Is Resilience?

Resilience is often described as a personal quality that predisposes individuals to bounce back in the face of loss. Resilient leaders, however, do



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more than bounce back—they bounce forward. With speed and elegance, resilient leaders take action that responds to new and ever-changing realities, even as they maintain the essential operations of the organizations they lead (Reeves & Allison, 2009, 2010). Not only do resilient leaders quickly get their mojo back, but because they understand that the status quo is unsustainable, they also use it to move mountains.

* Good leaders lead with open eyes. Some leaders are so risk averse that they put on blinders to avoid seeing the truth of precarious situations. Others are so pessimistic about any turn of fortune that they ignore opportunities for growth. But a leader who pays attention to relevant data recognizes both opportunities and harbingers of disaster. Such a leader monitors signals of flagging resilience in his or her organization and shores resilience up. Here are five signals that indicate that a school's resilience is at risk (Allison & Reeves, 2011).

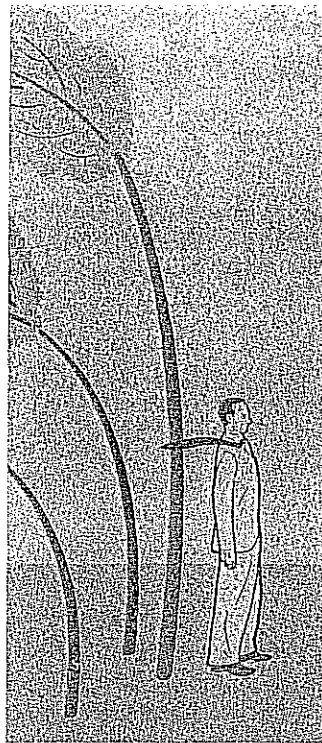
* **Resilience Risk 1:** Top leaders stop learning. When things are going well, change is the last thing some school leaders want to do, so they skimp on learning. When things aren't going well, some leaders make the dangerous mistake of believing they can't afford to invest in professional development. Whenever top leaders quit learning, it usually means one thing: They believe they know everything they need to know. Organizations, however, are in a constant state of change. Responding to change always requires learning.

* **Resilience Risk 2:** People blame everything on the budget. Some organizations make poor decisions when cash flow is strong, which sets the stage for blame and despair when budgets shrink. They use soft

money—that is, one-time funding—to fund important positions and programs (which are then cut when funds run out) and give money to certain people's pet projects (citing "politics" as the rationale). They fail to monitor the added value of the initiatives they commit to and therefore don't make important revisions that would keep those initiatives relevant and nonnegotiable in hard times. Mike McLaughlin, superintendent of John Swett Unified School District in California, reminds leaders that they convey values and priorities with every decision: "Bear in mind that whatever you cut during a budget crunch, you'll have to prove is worth adding back when your budget is flush."

During times of economic fluctuation, nonresilient leaders make cuts across the board without regard for the organization's mission or values. Presenting themselves as victims of the economy, they cut corners on important initiatives. This creates vulnerabilities in the system, which often undermine success.

* **Resilience Risk 3:** Leaders ignore critical indicators. Leaders need to know how every initiative is performing. Key metrics provide essential feedback about how to refine and revise the work of the organization. In addition, leading indicators in schools—such as the percentage of graduates, the percentage of students who are proficient in expository writing, and the percentage of students who go on to postsecondary learning—forecast



future trends and reveal weak areas. Strong leaders use these data to invite discussion and planning—hallmarks of resilience.

* **Resilience Risk 4:** Too many initiatives drain people.

"Busyness" is the number one excuse people give for not getting to the most important work of the organization. Ironically, time spent putting out too many fires today undermines high-leverage action and therefore creates crisis situations tomorrow.

In an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Bruch and Menges (April 2010) refer to the "acceleration trap." Organizations caught in this trap load their system with too many different activities, often adopting new initiatives without discarding old ones; thus, they overload people and give them no break. The bottom line: a sense of powerlessness. Leaders who complain about being overwhelmed need to claim their priorities and let go of initiatives that don't fit those priorities. Leaders who bounce back possess a sense of self-efficacy rather than powerlessness.

* **Resilience Risk 5:** Success goes uncelebrated. During times of strife, it's easy to succumb to fear. When leaders fail to celebrate success, they lose the opportunity to learn lessons that could provide key breakthroughs that might alter current challenges. Resilient leaders celebrate even small wins—anything that shows more of what the leaders

desire—to understand how the system creates such victories.

Sandy Thorstenson, superintendent of Whittier Union High School District near Los Angeles, found that by celebrating successes, district leaders discovered that some of the most effective strategies related to student success—for example, creating portals to student achievement data and giving teachers easy access to this information during professional learning community meetings—were quite inexpensive. Whittier then committed to celebrating student success more publicly and more often.

Practices of Resilient Leaders

Resilience, it turns out, is an inside job that begins with *choosing* to be resilient. ✓ So what are the personal practices of highly resilient leaders? In large part, resilience requires leaders to take care of business—and themselves—while taking action in new realities (Allison & Reeves, 2011).

Practice 1:

Engage in personal renewal.

✓ Resilient leaders who are happy and doing meaningful work make time for activities that revitalize them physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Personal renewal generates the energy leaders need to show up for demanding work.

On the job, resilient leaders take advantage of good coaching, which gives them interludes for reflection during the throes of a demanding day. Less resilient leaders counterintuitively forfeit coaching sessions because they're "too busy." They suffer through the day with what amounts to grim determination—an unsustainable state of mind (Reeves & Allison, 2009, 2010).

Practice 2: Watch your mouth.

✓ Environmental activist Van Jones is credited with saying, "Martin Luther

Resilient leaders learn from the past but resist nostalgic conversations that reinforce negative views about change.

King didn't become famous by saying, "I have a complaint." Principal Janine Hoke of Miller Intermediate School in Alief, Texas, puts it this way: "You have to be polite." Jones and Hoke have the same idea.

Resilient leaders use words carefully to create a positive emotional climate in which hope prevails and individuals feel inspired to create a better future (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). For example, instead of jumping in with

quick answers, they ask, "What do you think?" Instead of explaining why things can't be done, they say, "Let's imagine the possibilities." These leaders learn from the past but resist nostalgic conversations that reinforce negative views about change.

Practice 3: Stay optimistic.

✓ In the face of harsh realities and brutal truths, resilient leaders are optimistic but not naive. Optimistic leaders are

Questions to Bring out Resilience

To Help Someone Learn from Loss

- What is the best opportunity this situation could lead to?
- What has this loss or challenge cleared up for you?
- How can you have a sense of humor about this?
- What are the best lessons here and how will you use them in the coming weeks?

To Encourage Action in the Face of Loss

- What is the new reality?
- What next milestone are you working toward?
- What can you do immediately to support the people who are affected the most?
- How can you show others this challenge will not get you down?
- What skills, habits, and knowledge do you have that will work here?
- What can you eliminate now? What are you willing to give up?

To Bring Out Someone's Vision

- What is your new vision? How does it resist the "pull of the past"?
- What will you celebrate?
- What do you wish to let go of that is holding this project back?
- What about this challenge puts a bounce in your step?

When Progress has Plateaued

- Where have you seen the strongest momentum up to this point?
- What is still missing?
- How are your talents a plus in this situation?
- What requests could you make to move this forward?

quite aware, thank you very much, of undesirable trends—when they exist. However, these leaders find negative data compelling. Whereas pessimistic leaders react to harsh data about important initiatives by slowing down, quitting, or losing focus and energy, the same appalling information inspires optimistic leaders to action.

Practice 4:

Quickly blunt the impact of setbacks. During a school walk-through, Principal Hoke received feedback from her supervisor that student engagement was low. She immediately reprioritized her schedule to spend more time in classrooms to learn what teachers needed. Compare this response to those of less resilient leaders who become defensive or resort to finger pointing.

Practice 5: Cultivate networks before challenges hit.

Resilient leaders continually work to sustain buy-in from individuals who are inspired by what the leader's organization achieves and who will gladly provide support and resources. The time to nurture networks of support from fellow educators, community leaders, and pivotal families is before the organization begins facing threats like severe budget cutbacks or teacher shortages.

Practice 6: See patterns—and use insights for change:

Strong leaders are not in love with their own data or their own interpretation of any data. They invite multiple perspectives and absorb relevant information from all parts of the system. Resilient leaders draw on diverse perspectives to make well-informed decisions that ultimately create new realities in organizations.

These decisions are almost always in response to challenges, such as “How

Less resilient leaders suffer through the day with what amounts to grim determination—an unsustainable state of mind.

will we reorganize the advanced placement program so more students have the opportunity to take challenging classes?” or “How will we partner with community and business organizations?” These decisions are defining moments for leaders, whose reputations hinge on their impact.

Coaching Leaders for Resilience

Resilience may be a highly personal characteristic, but as such, it's a quality that individuals can choose to develop. Leadership coaching, a highly personalized strategy for developing leaders, is an ideal vehicle for doing so. As I coach leaders to become effective actors and culture transformers in schools that are stuck or beset by challenges, I've learned that resilience can be coaxed out.

One way to foster resilience in times of strife and loss is to ask powerful questions during coaching sessions. Good questions elicit ideas about resilience and inspire leaders toward resilient action (see “Questions to Bring out Resilience” on p. 81).

Perhaps we are each born with a starting point for resilience. Perhaps

events in each of our lives strengthen or compromise our resilience over time. Whether we can ever know the antecedents to resilience in human beings, one thing is certain: Each of us can choose to take action—like the ones suggested in this article—every day, to become resilient leaders of resilient organizations.

George Washington perfectly connected happiness and meaning when he said, “Happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected.” Leaders who choose resilience over defeat not only gain energy to sustain change, but also gain happiness from doing meaningful work that makes a difference for students. ■

¹To participate in the study, go to www.renewalcoaching.com/assessments.html.

References

- Allison, E., & Reeves, D. (2011). *Renewal coaching field guide: How effective leaders sustain meaningful change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2005). *Resonant leadership: Renewing yourself and connecting with others through mindfulness, hope, and compassion*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Bruch, H., & Menges, J. I. (2010, April). The acceleration trap. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Reeves, D. B., & Allison, E. (2009). *Renewal coaching: Sustainable change for individuals and organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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EL Online

For more on resilient leadership in difficult times, read the online-only article “Lincoln’s Mission” by Harvey Alvy and Pam Robbins at www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec11/vol69/num04/Lincoln's-Mission.aspx.



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