

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Reed Intermediate School.

Present:	E. McClure, Chair	J. Robinson
	L. Bittman, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
	K. Fetchick, Secretary	4 Public
	A. Wiedemann	2 Press
	R. Gaines	
	W. Hart	

Mrs. McClure called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Item 1 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mrs. Wiedemann moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes of August 11, 2009, the donation of a Simmons Omega DIV enlarger with lens to Newtown High School, and the additional coaches and volunteer coaches for fall sports at Newtown High School. The grant for Hawley School was removed because it had been approved in July. Mr. Gaines seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 2 – Public Participation - None

Item 3 – Reports

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Robinson told the Board that we have 40 Newtown students attending the Magnet School.

Two weeks ago Howard Feddema met with the district Leadership Team including some department chairs and assistant principals regarding the implementation of the strategic plan. By the middle of September she and Dr. Gejda will meet with each principal regarding their mutual goals for their schools to align with the strategic plan.

We are meeting with town departments and Maria DeMarco regarding our move to Fairfield Hills. The town offices at Kendro will close at noon on October 8 and the staff in Edmond town Hall will do the same on October 23 to make their moves. The Board of Education offices are scheduled to move on October 30. IT will move mid-September to get all communications and technology ready for the other departments.

Dr. Robinson, Diane Raymo and Gino Faiella conducted a walk-through of the buildings to acknowledge the hard work of the custodians over the summer. The schools are in good shape for the start of school.

We are considering the feasibility of using the lower room at Hawley School as a possible cafeteria. If it is possible, the earliest it could be done would be by mid-year.

Mrs. Wiedemann said she had asked for accounts payable information. Dr. Robinson said she would have that at the September 15 meeting.

Mrs. Wiedemann asked about the status of the CAFE audit of our policies. She thought it would be better to receive them as they are being edited. Dr. Robinson said she would contact them.

Connecticut Mastery Test Report:

Dr. Gejda reported on the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test and Average Yearly Progress report. This is the 4th year of the 4th Generation. This year was also the pilot year for the Modified Assessment System (MAS) for students with disabilities. These results are expected in early November.

Mrs. Fetchick asked how many students took the MAS and if they were excluded in the CMT results.

Dr. Gejda said that approximately 100 students took this assessment.

Dr. Robinson said as a pilot year schools were expecting that these students would not be in our results but they were. Those who did not take it were shown as failing.

Dr. Gejda said that mathematics for grades 3-8 showed an increase in the number of students scoring at the advanced level. Reading for grades 3-8 had overall improvements in reader/text connections and the DRP average unit scores have shown a slight improvement for each grade level. In writing for grades 3-8 there are increasing numbers of students who are reaching mastery in editing. The grade 4 prompt scores continue to be the highest. All scores on the direct assessment of writing were higher than in 2008. Science for grades 5 and 8 showed grade 5 strengths in life science, physical science and earth science. Grade 8 performance was consistent across all three content areas.

Vertical scale analysis measures change or growth across grades on tests which have different characteristics and items from one grade level to the next but similar content. It also allows valid interpretations of growth across time and provides a means to assess achievement growth across grades using different tests.

Adequate yearly progress is set by the federal government. All subgroups must meet AYP targets. Newtown elementary schools achieved AYP in all categories. Reed Intermediate School achieved "safe harbor" for reading and math targets for students with disabilities, meaning significant improvement shown. Newtown Middle School did not meet reading and math targets for students with disabilities. Newtown High School achieved AYP on the 2009 CAPT administration and the school district also achieved AYP for the 2008-2009 school year.

Newtown participation rate for each test was 98-100%. Less than 8% of our student population is identified as special education. MAS students were not included in the CMT results but were included in AYP consideration and scored as below basic. CMT and CAPT assessments are one measure of student learning and progress and continuous improvement has been shown for all groups we have data for. We are still waiting for the MAS data.

Item 4 – Old Business

Newtown High School Expansion Project Update:

Dr. Robinson said there is a 6-day delay but we may be able to make up that time. We are waiting to pour the concrete. We still have concerns regarding the occupancy rate for the team room because one door has been blocked. The capacity is 40 but there are 70 lockers in the room. She asked the Board to contact Mr. Dumais if they wanted to see some of the work.

Mr. Hart asked if the team room issue was missed by the architects.

Dr. Robinson said she spoke to Joe Costa. He said it would not diminish the capacity but Fire Marshal did not agree. We need the capacity to be in the seventies.

CIP Discussion:

Dr. Robinson said that she, Mrs. Fetchick, Mrs. Raymo and Mr. Faiella would be at the September 14 Board of Finance regarding our CIP. She would like to speak to the Legislative Council and Board of Finance about changing our CIP format to be like the one that Bob Tait has for the town. She would like some of the Board members to meet on this and look at the projects in phases. Mr. Gaines, Mr. Hart and Mrs. Fetchick volunteered. We need to have a fresh new look at what has to be done at the middle school.

Mr. Hart said he would look at the properties besides Kent House at Fairfield Hills that could possibly be used for education. Mr. Gaines said he would also like to be involved in that. Mr. Hart said we have to know what our long term growth needs would be and if the land is valuable for the school system. If Kent Hall is in bad shape we have to decide if we really want it.

Mr. Gaines said it had too much work to be done to be refurbished.

Item 5 – New Business - None

Item 6 – Public Participation – None

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to adjourn. Mrs. Wiedemann seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathryn Fetchick
Secretary