

The regular meeting of the New London Board of Education was held in the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School Library on February 21, 2008.

PRESENT:

DRAFT

Ms. Elaine Maynard-Adams, Vice President
Dr. Christopher P. Clouet, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Susan Connolly
Mrs. Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez, Secretary
Mr. Alvin Kinsall, President
Mr. William Morse
Mr. Anthony Nolan
Mr. James Pearce

ABSENT:

None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kinsall called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Nolan led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. STUDENT AND STAFF PRESENTATION/RECOGNITION

- The Board recognized Casey Hanlon, a 5th grade student from Jennings School, as Student of the Month.
- The Board recognized Ana Santiago, an Educational Assistant at Jennings School, as Employee of the Month.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sara Chaney, Ann Street, New London, a 1953 graduate of NLHS, stated that her experience at NLHS was a wonderful educational experience. Mrs. Chaney is the grandmother of a senior at NLHS who is a First Honors student. Mrs. Chaney expressed the following concerns:

1. There are no African American teachers who are physically teaching at NLHS. Mrs. Chaney stated that she has recommended an African American math teacher who has applied for a teaching position in the NLPS, but has not been hired. Mr. Allen will hopefully be meeting with the teacher in the near future.
2. She is appalled that NLHS was very late in doing something about the Martin Luther King Holiday. Mrs. Chaney feels that every holiday, including all ethnic holidays,

should be addressed in the schools so that the students understand why they are in existence.

3. Her grandson, along with approximately 20 other students, participated in a High Honors English class for which the students received college credit. It was not until the end of the class that she was told that this class would cost \$100. Mrs. Chaney feels that the school district should cover the cost of this class for these students. This would encourage other students to take these types of courses. She has not yet paid the fee because she feels she should have been informed about the cost at the beginning of the class.

Mrs. Chaney stated that she is not beating up on the system; she just wants to see all children succeed. Every child needs an education in order to survive. Students can no longer depend on just a high school education; they need to further their education in order to succeed. We, as a community, should work for the betterment and improvement of our young people and their education. As a grandmother she stated that she works very hard to ensure that her young people are educated and will be prepared for their future.

Michael Cristofaro, Denison Avenue, New London, stated that he is a native born New Londoner who has lived here all his life and went through the whole system in New London, graduating from NLHS in 1981. Mr. Cristofaro has an electrical engineering degree and feels that he got a very good education. Today, however, the NLPS rank 150 out of 153 – and stated that this is disgraceful. He feels that the NLPS are failing many of our students and something must be done. Mr. Cristofaro addressed the Board on the article in the New London Times that was written by President Kinsall. The article states that citizens should come to the Board of Education meetings and not the City Council meetings – but people feel when they speak at Board meetings their concerns fall on deaf ears. He commented that it is really the same at City Council meetings – it is as though your minds have already been made up. Mr. Cristofaro stated that he has no problem with the proposed plan which will provide for a 95% reimbursement rate from the State and cost the taxpayers \$3 million, but he feels there is too much ambiguity. For instance, the \$1.7 million for the architectural plan – is this part of or in addition to the \$3 million? The public needs to know the cost of the whole project. Mr. Cristofaro stated that he has no problem paying more taxes provided the school system improves, and he asked that the Board just be truthful with the citizens.

Eric Parnes, Admiral Drive, New London, stated that he is here tonight representing his own personal interests. He stated that his wife grew up in New London and he is proud that his children both went through the NLPS and received a very good education. If the magnet schools go forward Mr. Parnes would like something in writing from the parents indicating their commitment to participate in their child's education. Mr. Parnes also stated that he has no problem paying higher taxes if he knows he is getting more for his dollars. He commented that New London homeowners are being taxed out of town, especially the elderly. He referenced the article written by Mr. Kinsall and stated that it is the responsibility of the citizens to question the BOE and the City Council. He asked the Board to live within a budget. Mr. Parnes questioned if the Board's mind was made up before voting on the magnet school plan; and, if so, the taxpayers just wasted their time coming to the meeting. He also stated that he is not totally against the magnet school concept.

Lindsey Blank, Nathan Hale Street, New London, addressed the Board on the NLPS's website and the need to update it regularly.

Evelyn Louziotis, Lower Boulevard, New London, stated that she was pleased to see an article in the New London Times asking citizens to come before the Board of Education. Ms. Louziotis asked how many certified technology teachers are at the Science & Technology Magnet High School (STMHS).

She also commented that she feels there is a conflict of interest with Officer Nolan serving as a member of the New London Board of Education when he is also the School Resource Office at New London High School.

Mayor Kevin Cavanagh, Greenway Road, New London, advised the Board that we had 134 NLHS students make the honor roll this past marking period. To recognize these students Mayor Cavanagh proposed to the Board that he would like to host an ice cream and pizza social for the students and their parents which he will personally pay for. Mayor Cavanagh also advised the Board that he recently met with a cross section of randomly selected NLHS students, and he was impressed with the fact that these students are proud of themselves, the school, and that they know how to positively deal with conflict. All these students are college bound and have selected career paths. These students feel NLHS is well disciplined and well run, that they have good teachers, are knowledgeable about teen pregnancy and STDs and understand about discrimination. They feel safe in New London at night, but would like to see brighter street lights. They would like to have full-time jobs in the summer and would especially like to see New London businesses employ New London students and support student activities at NLHS. Mayor Cavanagh would like to talk to the Board and the administration about establishing a Mayor's Youth Council at NLHS. He concluded by commenting that while the public has its own perception of NLHS, its students have the best perspective.

Dan McSparran, Elm Street, New London, addressed the Board on the letter that appeared in the New London Times and the statement made that the public who spoke at the February 4th City Council meeting should have brought their concerns to the Board of Education. Mr. McSparran reminded the Board that the issue of tuition for the magnet schools was referred to the Board of Education and the Board took no action. Therefore, the public most likely feels that the Board would not act or consider their concerns. He disagrees that most residents think the Board works for the City Council. Mr. McSparran stated that since the Board is an agent of the State Board of Education parents or taxpayers who have unresolved issues with the New London Public Schools should file a complaint with the Commissioner of the State Department of Education and send copies to our legislators.

Jermaine Floyd, P.O. Box 15, Waterford, asked if he submitted something in writing to the Board could he expect a response? Mr. Floyd disseminated a letter to the Board.

Responses to Public Comments:

Ms. Adams asked Dr. Clouet for information about Mrs. Chaney's concern that parents were not notified until mid-semester that there was a fee for this course and if there are provisions for students who cannot pay this fee.

Mr. Pearce:

- Also inquired about Mrs. Chaney's concern.
- Clarified that on January 31st this Board passed 7 – 0 a statement affirming that we will charge tuition to the sending districts and left it to the Finance Committee to determine the timing and the amount.

Mrs. Connolly asked who is in charge of the website. Dr. Clouet stated that populating the website was part of a student project over the summer. It was his understanding that the issues brought up tonight were taken care of, but he will address them with the staff member.

Mr. Morse:

- Referenced Mrs. Chaney's comment that teachers should reflect our student population. He stated that we also hear this with both the Police and Fire Departments that there is a need to have people in the ranks reflect the people they serve.
- Asked if we looked into having a Teachers' Club at the high school to promote teaching as a career choice with the hope of sowing the seeds for future teachers who would come back to the district and serve our students? Dr. Clouet advised Mr. Morse that NLHS currently has a such a club, The Young Educators' Society, which meets regularly and whose members volunteer at such places as The Friendship School. We also attend minority job fairs for teachers and have hosted such fairs ourselves. Dr. Clouet added that we are very committed and believe we have leads on highly qualified candidates who are excellent educators that we would be proud to hire who happen to be people of color.
- Inquired if all the courses including those that provide students with college credit are listed in the catalog, and if the fee is noted in the catalog. If not, Mr. Morse suggested that the fee be stipulated in the catalog so that it is clear to the parents from the beginning. Dr. Clouet stated that he will look into how the information was disseminated.
- Regarding the question of whether or not the \$1.7 million for architectural fees is included in the \$3 million, Mr. Morse stated yes.
- Announced that on Monday, February 25th, at 5:30 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room there will be a Finance Committee meeting to discuss the 08-09 Budget. The public is invited and there will be a portion of the meeting dedicated to public comment.
- Parental involvement is very much a part of the formula for the magnet school proposal involving Winthrop and Nathan Hale.
- Thanked Mr. Blank for bringing up the website, as it is one of his pet peeves. Mr. Morse stated that we either need to update the website or take it off.
- When Mr. Allen gave his presentation on the STMHS he addressed the fact that we have approximately 95% certification among our instructors. Dr. Clouet stated that there is a certified technology teacher at the STMHS. More importantly, technology is infused throughout the curriculum and instruction. In addition there are courses that are technology specific and there is a certified technology teacher teaching that course
- Applauds Mayor Cavanagh for taking the initiative for establishing a Mayor's Youth Council at NLHS. He stated that it is a great idea that the Mayor meets with our students.

Mr. Nolan responded to the comment made about him serving on the Board and being a police officer. He clarified that he is employed by the New London Police Department, not the New London Public Schools. Mr. Nolan added that, he ran for the Board of Education as a member of this community.

Mr. Kinsall:

- Stated that he is glad that his article has drawn some attention and commented that it seems to be working because there are people here tonight who have not been here for a long time. He emphasized that the Board encourages such participation.
- There were some constructive items highlighted this evening by all the speakers, and he assured them that their comments and concerns do not fall on deaf ears.
- This Board and the previous Board is very unique in that everyone has their own opinion and votes their own conscience. We do not come here with preconceived notions or ideas that we are boiler plating votes.
- Added that he certainly hopes that the Board can gain the trust of the public when it comes to budgetary items, and he stated that the Board does not waste the taxpayers' dollars.

- Feels that the comment that was made that the Board keeps coming back for more money is unjustified, but he will take it with the tone that it was given. The fact of the matter is the cost of oil, salaries and electricity goes up. If you look closely at the budgets that have been presented over the last five years you will see that we are still behind the 8 ball.
- Also thanked Mayor Cavanagh for meeting with our students and his idea for recognizing students on the honor roll. He will take this up with the Board to see if the Board can also accommodate this partnership.

Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez clarified that some of the parents and citizens who are here tonight have been attending Board meetings and City Council meetings since she first served on the Board. They are very concerned about education and the City and they speak well about their concerns. Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez stated that there are dedicated parents in this school system and citizens who do not have children in the system who are also concerned about education.

5. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

There was no Student Representative Report.

6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- 6.a. Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 2008, as amended.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

- 6.b. Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mr. Nolan,
that the Board of Education approve the January 31, 2008, special meeting, as submitted.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the regular Board of Education meeting of February 21, 2008, be approved or received for the record, unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools.

ALL CONSENT ITEMS NOT REMOVED HAVING THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ARE HEREBY ADOPTED WITH A SINGLE ROLL CALL VOTE.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

7.1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7.2. BRIEF INFORMATION AND REPORTS

The Board of Education received the following written reports for the record:

- 7.2.a. President's Report
- 7.2.c. Finance Committee Report
- 7.2.d. Status of the Budget Report
- 7.2.e. Policy Committee Report
- 7.2.f. Public Relations Committee Report
- 7.2.g. Continuing Committee Report

7.3. ACTION ITEMS

- 7.3.a. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

The Board of Education approved the application for the Family Learning Curriculum Connections Project Grant and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.a.

- 7.3.b. Grants from Private Sources

The Board of Education approved the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund Grant application to support after-school environmental service clubs in the NLPS and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.b.

- 7.3.c. Grants from Private Sources

The Board of Education approved the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund Grant application to support a Parents' Educational and Development Program and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.c.

- 7.3.d. Grants from Private Sources

The Board of Education approved the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund Grant application to provide supplies for the continuation of the culinary arts program and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.d.

7.3.e. Grants from Private Sources

The Board of Education approved the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund Grant application to support the Literacy Program Motherhead/Fatheread and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.e.

7.3.f. Grants from Private Sources

The Board of Education approved the Pfizer SMART – Habitat Reconstruction in Bates Woods Grant application and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.f.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA**7.2. BRIEF INFORMATION AND REPORTS**7.2.b. Superintendent's Report

Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the Superintendent's Report be received for the record.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

7.2.h. Human Resources Report

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Human Resources Report be received for the record.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

7.2.i. Operations Report

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Operations Report be received for the record.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

7.2.j. Truancy Review Board Update

Motion by Mrs. Connolly, seconded by Ms. Adams,
that the Truancy Review Board Update be received for the record.

Ms. Adams commended all those involved with the Truancy Review Board.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

7.3. ACTION ITEMS

7.3.g. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education approve the application for the Two Percent Education Cost Share Grant and authorize the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.g.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

7.3.h. Calendar

Motion by Mr. Kinsall, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education table the proposed 2008-2009 School Calendar until such time as the NLEA and the Administrative Council respond with their comments or concerns.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

9. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS AND SETTING OF FUTURE BUSINESS

Mrs. Connolly asked that Dr. Clouet update the Board on the ongoing action steps with Tourtellotte. She clarified that this can be part of the Superintendent's Report at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Pearce congratulated the NLHS Basketball Team, and he commended the Dance Team who performed at the last basketball game.

Mr. Kinsall stated that there will be a special Board meeting on Thursday, February 28th to discuss the budget. The Board will need to stay until the budget is passed as the City needs a bottom line figure by March 1st.

The reports on the out-of-district programs for students, as requested by Ms. Adams, and the initiatives at BDJMS, as requested by Mr. Nolan, will be placed on the next Board agenda.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mr. Nolan,
that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting.**

Motion carried, 7 – 0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez
Secretary