

The special meeting of the New London Board of Education was held in the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School Library on January 31, 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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ronald Crusan, Director of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, addressed the Board on his support of establishing Art as one of the themes for an elementary magnet school, and he stated that the Lyman Allyn Art Museum would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the New London Public Schools.

Louis E. Allen, Jr. Director of the Science & Technology Magnet School, expressed his support of the magnet school concept at the elementary level, and he stated that approving this initiative will be the best investment New London will make in many years. Mr. Allen added that the Science & Technology Magnet School is one of the best decisions that was made for New London students. He encouraged support of "Art" and "Science" as the themes for the elementary magnet schools. Mr. Allen commented that the decision to establish magnet schools is the easy part, the biggest obstacle will be making it work afterwards.

Margaret Curtin, Ocean Avenue, New London, a member of the City Council, Chair of the New London Film Commission and CT East Regional Film Commission, stated that she supports the magnet school concept. Councilor Curtin asked that the Board consider Arts Communication and Film Study as one of the themes for the elementary magnet schools.

Councilor Curtin read a letter from Nick Checker, Executive Producer of SECT FILM, which cites the burgeoning film movement currently taking place in New London County as evidence to support a magnet school with a Film Study theme. *(This letter will be attached to the minutes.)*

Louise Fabrukiewicz, State Street, New London, a member of Save Ocean Beach and Director of the Living Museum at Ocean Beach stated that she has had the enjoyable experience and privilege to work with a number of teachers in the NLPS, and she is extremely impressed by their enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism. Ms. Fabrukiewicz supports the proposed magnet school concept as she believes it will give us the best bang for our bucks. In choosing themes for the magnet schools, Ms. Fabrukiewicz reminded the Board about New London's rich natural resources and its maritime heritage.

Stephanie Morton, Liaison to Learn & Serve, Bates Woods Environmental Education Program (BEEP) and the New London Environmental Educators Coalition, stated that she fully supports the concept of Art and Environmental Science that is project based as magnet school themes. Ms. Morton cited the outstanding program at the STMHS.

Reid Burdick, Jerome Road, New London, referenced the impact Sheff vs. O'Neill has had on all public schools in CT. He stated that racism is alive in CT and that is why magnet schools are not being built in Avon, Woodbridge, Darien or Rocky Hill. Mr. Burdick added that the issue in New London is not just about educational opportunities for our kids, it is also about providing New London the opportunity to fix our schools - which are seriously in need of repairs - at a significant savings to our taxpayers. He emphasized the need to stay focused on the 3 R's, and suggested that we not sweat the details. In closing, Mr. Burdick stated that we will have to see what happens at the City Council.

Laurelle Texidor, Principal of Winthrop School, stated that she is a staunch supporter of the magnet school plan for New London students. She referenced the significant savings that would be realized by New London taxpayers if the magnet school plan is approved. Mrs. Texidor also spoke about the success of the STMHS and her support of having science as a theme for one of the elementary magnet schools. Mrs. Texidor called for an open and honest discussion of the pros and cons of the magnet school concept in an effort to collectively solve the issues associated with this initiative thereby addressing the concerns of New London's citizens.

Susan Hanby, Berkeley Avenue, New London, stated that she has been a substitute teacher in every school in the district except the high school, and she is proud to work in the NLPS. Ms. Hanby stated that our students will meet the expectations we set for them. She feels that the discussions that have taken place about the magnet plan is a positive thing, but she hopes we can get out of this initial step and come together to make this plan work.

Jeffrey Wolfson, an Art Teacher at Nathan Hale and Harbor Schools, stated that he supports the idea of an "Arts" magnet school. Mr. Wolfson stated that the NLPS are already doing a good job and art is a strength for many of our students, Tessa Rock, a second grade student at Nathan Hale, shared with the Board her butterfly artwork and talked about how this project taught her other things, such as patterning and symmetry.

Daniel McSparran, Elm Street, New London, a parent of a STMHS student, stated that he supports the magnet school concept. He questioned, however, if we should make one of these schools K-8 so that we have continuity. Mr. McSparran also emphasized the need for parental involvement from top to bottom so that when we open our schools to more students from other towns we are sure that we are doing everything correctly across the board. Our policies need to be reviewed and this review should provide for parental input.

Peter De La Rosa, West Street, New London, a member of the Environmental Educators Coalition, stated that he is hopeful about the magnet concept. He supports Winthrop being designated as an Environmental Science school because of its proximity to Riverside Park and the Arboretum. Mr. De La Rosa advised the Board that there are a number of USCGA cadets who would relish the opportunity to work with our students.

3.1. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the following items as set forth on the consent agenda for the special Board of Education meeting of January 31, 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

4.1.d. ADMINISTRATORS' EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE

The Board of Education approved the Early Retirement Incentive for Administrators, as submitted in Exhibit 4.1.d. (Confidential Exhibit)

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

4.1. ACTION ITEM

4.1.a. NATHAN HALE AND WINTHROP SCHOOL RENOVATIONS

Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Pearce,
that the Board of Education, after years of study and deliberation, enthusiastically reaffirms its commitment to the renovation and

expansion of Winthrop and Nathan Hale Elementary Schools; and, further, that the Board of Education reaffirms and fully embraces its commitment of July 13, 2007, for the development and execution of these two schools as magnet schools in the New London Public School District.

Mr. Kinsall read a letter from Dr. Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of Education, and asked that this letter be entered into the record.

Motion carried, 6 – 0

Pass: Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez

4.1.b. NATHAN HALE AND WINTHROP SCHOOL THEMES

Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education discuss and adopt the themes for Winthrop and Nathan Hale Elementary Schools.

Motion by Ms. Adams, seconded by Mr. Nolan, that the main motion be amended to adopt the following four themes for Winthrop and Nathan Hale Schools and that parent meetings be held at Winthrop and Nathan Hale Schools as soon as possible:

- Math/Science/Environmental Studies
- Humanities/Language Arts
- Visual and Performing Arts/Communication
- Health/Nutrition

Motion carried, 7 – 0

Vote on main motion, as amended:

Motion carried, 7 - 0

4.1.c. TUITION – ELEMENTARY MAGNET SCHOOLS

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education refer consideration of elementary magnet school tuition to the Finance Sub- committee.

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the main motion be amended to affirm that it will ask Magnet School sending districts to provide tuition for each student sent and refers the question of the timing and amount to the Finance Committee.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

Vote on main motion, as amended:

Motion carried, 7 - 0

4.1.e. NLEA GRIEVANCES

Motion by Mrs. Connolly, seconded by Ms. Adams,
that the Board of Education recess to Executive Session to discuss
two NLEA grievances and invite Dr. Clouet, Ms. Tamano and Mrs.
Whalen to join them.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

The Board recessed to Executive Session at 8:10 p.m.

The Board reconvened to open session at 8:29 p.m.

Mr. Kinsall stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Motion by Mrs. Connolly, seconded by Ms. Adams,
that the grievances filed by two former members of the
NLEA be denied.

Motion carried, 7 - 0

5. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS AND SETTING OF FUTURE BUSINESS

Mr. Kinsall announced that the following have been scheduled:

- Policy Committee meeting on February 14th at 5 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room
- February Board meeting will be held on February 21st
- Public Relations Committee meeting on February 6th at 5 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room.

Ms. Adams, Chair of the Finance Committee, advised the Board that the dates for the Budget Committee meetings are forthcoming.

Dr Clouet advised the Board that:

- There will be an Arts and Science Community Forum on February 7th from 5:30 – 8 p.m. at NLHS and the STMHS.
- College Goal Sunday will take place on February 10th at 1:30 p.m. at the STMHS.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Kinsall, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting.

Motion carried, 7 – 0

The Board adjourned its meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Garcia Gonzalez".

Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez
Secretary