

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION
MAY 10, 2010**

**THE FOLLOWING ARE THE UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE MONDAY,
MAY 10, 2010 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION.
ANY ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS WILL BE MADE AT A FUTURE MEETING.**

**10-67 CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE TO THE FLAG AND ONE MINUTE OF
PRAYER OR SILENT MEDITATION**

A Special Meeting of the Windsor Board of Education was held on Monday, May 10, 2010 in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. President Milo Peck called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. Present were: President Milo Peck, Vice President Christopher McAuliffe, Paul Panos, Doreen Richardson, Cristina Santos, Christopher Watts and Superintendent Feser. Ms. Lucille Brown, Mr. David Gay and Mr. Howard Jubrey, Jr. were absent.

10-68 AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

President Peck invited audience to visitors to spend 3 minutes commenting on any school related activities or concerns. There were no audience to visitors.

**10-69 DISCUSSION OF REPORT FROM THE WINDSOR ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TASK FORCE**

President Peck recognized Mr. Curtis, Chair of the Task Force Committee, and Mr. Barrett, DRA Consultant to discuss any questions that may be asked pertaining to the Elementary School Task Force Strategic Plan presentation of April 27, 2010. President Peck also acknowledged various other members in attendance that would be able to answer any questions and they were: Mrs. Phelan, Principal of Oliver Ellsworth Elementary School; Ms. Cindy Deschaises; Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Cristina Santos and Dr. Feser, Superintendent.

Mr. Barrett advised that he had received some questions and concerns via e-mail and thought that a good place to begin would be helping to share a base understanding of the core class recount. He stated that within the study document (Section 4.3 – Grade Reorganization) it is shown how they arrived at the best long-term fit and accountability for each school. This also included the space for the cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, art classes, music classes and office space. These rooms are being considered in each building analysis in addition to the core class count.

Mr. Barrett went on to say that each building was looked at as currently structured. This was spelled out in more detail in Chapter 2 of the Strategic Plan. A snapshot of how each building is currently being used was taken. As an example, Wolcott Elementary School currently has 9 classroom spaces and it is believed that 10 core classes could be utilized in the future. The current count in Oliver Ellsworth Elementary School shows a tutor space, which would likely be used as a core classroom space in the future.

Questions from the Board followed.

Mr. Christopher McAuliffe stated that while looking at the plans, he can see other options for core classrooms in the future. He asked Mr. Barrett if there were plans for a full assessment of the needs of each room would be performed in the future. Mr. Barrett advised that there were no plans at this time, but he could identify whether or not the system could handle what is needed,

including room for changes in enrollment. Mr. Barrett advised that from a capacity standpoint, at this time the system works. He also stated that he could look at specific sections in the future, if necessary.

Mr. Paul Panos asked whether or not Mr. Barrett knew the number of classrooms being used at Oliver Ellsworth and John F. Kennedy Elementary Schools without needing reconfiguration. Mr. Barrett advised that there were 22 class rooms and 1 “tutor room” being used at Oliver Ellsworth and at JFK there were 22 classrooms currently being utilized. There will continue to be space available for 6 “special” rooms.

President Peck asked Mr. Barrett if it were safe to say that currently the rooms are not being used to their full capacity. He also believes that Option G is currently the option being looked at to put in place.

Ms. Doreen Richardson asked Mr. Barrett if it were possible to move to all day kindergarten today if we chose to. Mr. Barrett advised that the task put before him was to come up with a plan for the school year of 2014 – 2015 and that is what he looked for and had information for at tonight’s meeting.

Dr. Feser stated that this is the information that was requested to obtain. Four years ago, there were more teachers with more students and each room was being utilized. There is now more room for flexibility. When spaces vacate, they become used for something else.

Mr. Barrett stated that he received a question regarding the Enrollment Projection. He was asked whether or not the NESDEC (New England School Development Council) was the only source utilized relative to the projection. He was also asked whether or not any consideration was given to population trends. Mr. Barrett advised that DRA and the Task Force availed themselves to use NESDEC projections as well as 2000 Census Data; however, they were not hired to perform their own projections. He stated that information from UCONN was also used. This information very broadly looks at school aged populations. Mr. Frank Williams stated that the NESDEC data is updated and used each year. He also advised that in 2008, the Windsor Board of Education hired Merrimac to complete a study looking at the declining enrollment trends. Initially, it was believed that the declining enrollment trends were false, but the Merrimac study proved they were true.

Mr. Christopher McAuliffe stated that the enrollment projection, specifically looking at Pre-K to 5th grade in 2009 and beyond, seems to look pretty flat. He stated that the loss of students seems to generally be at the higher grade levels, and kindergarten seems to be flat. He asked Mr. Barrett if this were true. Mr. Barrett stated that he actually believes that observation; however, he would agree with the general statement being relatively flat.

President Peck asked Mr. Curtis if there was data regarding Magnet School enrollment. Mr. Curtis referred the question to Mr. Barrett, who stated that if we went back 10 years ago, there wouldn’t be very many options other than the public school system. Currently, there are more choices for elementary school students. Dr. Feser stated that she would provide the board with more information on the Magnet School enrollment data.

Mr. Barrett stated that the declining enrollment is affecting the entire state of CT, and across the Country. These days, there are other options such as: Home School; Private Schools; Magnet Schools; Charter Schools; and, families leaving the area.

Mr. Christopher McAuliffe asked if Option G was the option that was put into place, would there be a need for teachers to meet and get together more often. He stated that this might be a difficult task. The teacher's contract states 3 meetings are to be held to be compliant.

President Peck commented on Option F and stated that sending 200 students to two school buildings would put a burden on parents to get the children to school. We wouldn't know where the "home" school would be or where the students would be coming from. This would be a major configuration.

Mr. Curtis stated that grades K – 2 and 3 – 5 seem to be ideal breaks, and a lot of people agree with him on that point. It is believed that if grades 3 – 5 stay in 2 buildings, with staff remaining, there could be additional collaboration. It is also believed that if you have grades clustered together there would be a cost savings when you purchase books, as you would be making the purchase for fewer schools.

Mr. Curtis provided his personal opinion and stated that he had spoken with various members of the community and has received positive feedback in the process. The people are also thrilled that a decision does not have to be made right now.

What's next? The study might dig deeper, such as into transportation costs. This study was a first step for the community and the needs of the Windsor Elementary School System. It will need to be further researched and discussed.

10-70 ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paul Panos made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christopher McAuliffe.

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Doreen Richardson, Secretary
Windsor Board of Education