



Waterbury Public Schools

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Dr. Kathleen M. Ouellette
Superintendent

Superintendent's Report for April 5, 2012 Board of Education Meeting

The legislature's Education Committee passed a revised Education Reform Bill, Senate Bill 24 Substitute, by a margin of 28 to 5 last week. The newly rewritten bill was not immediately available for public review, but the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education did obtain a copy and reviewed it for members last week in a webinar. The substitute bill that passed does not include Governor Malloy's original proposals on teacher tenure changes, and earlier this week, Governor Malloy has stated he would not sign the revised version.

The revised bill would still provide a conditional increase in Education Cost Sharing funding for districts in need of improvement. It reduces the maximum number of network schools needing intensive state intervention from 25 to 10, and states that no district will have more than two such schools. It increases the number of new school readiness slots from 500 to 1,000, and up to 20 family resource centers or school based health clinics will be opened in low performing schools.

I have included a copy of CABE's summary of the revised bill for your review. Although the summary does not specifically mention, the revised bill does include an expansion of School Governance Councils in schools needing improvement in the coming year, beyond what was originally mandated when the law requiring school governance councils was first passed.

On March 28th, the Exchange Club honored Rotella Magnet School Principal Gina Calabrese as Educator of the Year. Gina is an accomplished educator, who was appointed Principal of the Rotella Interdistrict Magnet School in 2005. Under her leadership, the school has become a nationally recognized magnet school. In 2007, Rotella was named the recipient of the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Award from the Magnet Schools of America, the highest award possible for a magnet school. For the past three years, the school has been named a School of Excellence by that same organization and is one of the most highly decorated magnet schools in America. Rotella students have had art work displayed in a number of national venues, and in 2010, a fifth grade teacher at Rotella, Joan Dooling, was named a Magnet Schools of America National Teacher of the Year. In 2011, a Rotella fifth grader, Autumn McDonald, was declared the National Poster Winner from Magnet Schools of America. Last year, Gina Calabrese was declared the Principal of the Year by the Magnet Schools of America. That award is presented each year to a Principal who has succeeded in implementing innovative programs that promote academic excellence in a magnet school.

The Exchange Club also honored a Kennedy High School student as a second place winner of Youth of the Year. Nelson Depillar is a true scholar and well-rounded student. He is in the top

10% of his class at Kennedy High School. He is a member of the National Honor Society, is vice-president of ASPIRA, a health instructor for the Greater Waterbury YMCA, a member of the NAACP and a Boy Scout. He is also a distance runner, a running back in football, and a tennis player. Among his awards, he has been named "Best Debater in the House of Representatives in Youth and Government Award" and he has received the State Educational Center Award of Excellence and the Waterbury Outstanding Samaritan Award.

On March 27th, I attended a Meet and Greet with East Division parents, held at Wallace Middle School. I was welcomed by approximately fifty parents and staff. I spoke briefly about my vision for the school district, including a reorganization of Central Office. We shared dinner together, and I then welcomed questions from the audience and spoke to many parents one-to-one, listening to their individual concerns. There are three additional Meet and Greets planned before the end of this school year. The next Meet and Greet, on April 18th will be for parents whose children attend West Division schools.

Crosby High School won first place in two separate statewide competitions recently. Crosby's LifeSmarts team defended its state championship with another win in a tournament held on March 16th. The five member team, advised by teacher Donna Mancuso, will be heading to Philadelphia for the national competition later this year. Crosby's Mock Trial team captured the state championship with a win over Weston High School. Crosby is scheduled to represent the state in the national competition, to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in May.

On March 16th, twenty-two school administrators from China visited Wilby High School. Wilby's Culinary Arts students made breakfast and lunch, and the visitors had the opportunity to visit sixteen classes, including Manufacturing and Allied Health programs. Wilby students were excited and eager to showcase their school.

We had a very successful groundbreaking ceremony for the new Carrington Pre K-8 School this morning. Many Board members, along with Mayor O'Leary, former Mayor Jarjura and other elected officials were able to attend. It was particularly gratifying to have the participation of Carrington students and staff. The students played music, recited poems and sang for the audience. The students were so proficient with their shovels that it was suggested they join the construction crew. After the event I was able to view the progress of the construction site itself. It was very impressive and progress is clearly underway for the school to be complete for the start of the 2013 school year. It sounded like the students and staff were anxiously awaiting their new school.

I also visited Bucks Hill School today to view their second annual dance performance. All students from Pre-K through 5th grade worked hard over the past few weeks on their dances and enjoyed performing. It was wonderful to see all the children integrating dance into their physical education course.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Kathleen M. Ouellette
Superintendent of Schools

Education Committee Votes on SB 24, An Act Concerning Educational Competiveness

After lengthy caucuses and discussion, the Education Committee voted 28 to 5 to support modifications to the Governors' proposed education reforms contained in SB 24. Among the key changes from the original bill are the following:

- Teacher and administrator evaluations are not linked to obtaining and maintaining tenure. The bill requires the Commissioner to consult with PEAC to develop a plan for such linkage.
- The commissioner's network schools will be limited to 10 schools for 2012-13, with not more than 2 schools in any one district.
- Funding would be provided for 1000 new preschool slots (the Governor had proposed 500).
- Up to 20 family resource centers and school based health clinics will be established in the lowest performing schools.
- No changes are made in the ECS formula, but town by town ECS grant amounts are contained in the bill.
- Most towns would be required to meet a minimum budget requirement of at least the amount they budgeted for education in FY 12 plus any increase in the ECS grant for FY 13. Exceptions are made for districts in which enrollment decreases, a school has been closed, or there are cost savings from regional collaboration or efficiencies.
- Local districts would not be required to pay charter schools \$1,000 per pupil.
- Costs in districts with fewer than 1000 students would be studied, with no reductions in ECS at this time.
- Teachers could be dismissed based on a finding of ineffectiveness.
- A teacher improvement plan must be developed in consultation with the teacher and union representative.
- A teacher can file a grievance claiming a failure to follow the support plan.
- A mentor teacher system is established, with required \$500 stipends
- The State Department of Education will develop a plan to encourage exemplary teachers and administrators to work in the lowest performing schools in districts.