



**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS**

In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.

NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION	Board of Education
DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED	December 5, 2008
LOCATION	Rocky Hill Town Hall Council Chambers
DATE OF MEETING	December 11, 2008
TIME MEETING STARTED	7:00 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary
VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING

1. William MacDonald, Chairman	2. Nadine Bell
3. Raffaella Calciano-Coler	4. Charles McMonigle
5. Maria Mennella	6. Frank Morse
7. Rene (Skip) Rivard	8. Catherine Vargas
9. Charles Wisnioski (Left at 7:05 p.m.)	10.

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 5 QUORUM PRESENT Yes No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Charles Wisnioski, seconded by Maria Mennella, to elect William (Bill) MacDonald as Chairman, Rene (Skip) Rivard as Vice Chairman and Nadine Bell as Secretary.

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Rivard, Wisnioski
OPPOSED: Bell, McMonigle, Vargas**

MOTION CARRIED

(This was the only motion that Charles Wisnioski voted on at this meeting because he left the meeting after this.)

2nd MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Frank Morse, to approve the minutes and working notes of the October 6, 2008 Finance Committee meeting, the October 6, 2008 Policy Committee meeting, the October 9, 2008 Curriculum Committee meeting, the October 16, 2008 Board of Education meeting, the November 6, 2008 Curriculum Committee meeting, the November 12, 2008 Facilities Committee meeting, the November 17, 2008 Finance Committee meeting (minutes only) and the November 17, 2008 special Board of Education meeting (minutes only).

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

3rd MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Nadine Bell, seconded by Charles McMonigle, to accept the Consent Calendar of December 11, 2008.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

4th MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adopt the Bullying Policy as written.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

5th MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Nadine Bell, to move Item #22 (Discussion on High School Graduation Requirements) ahead of Item #19 (NEASC Update) on this evening's agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

6th MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adopt the Resolution with regards to the Third Party Administrator of 403 (b) Plans.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

7th MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:50 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: _____.

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2008**

Members Present: William MacDonald (Chairman)
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)
Nadine Bell
Raffaella Calciano-Coler
Charles McMonigle
Maria Mennella
Frank Morse
Catherine Vargas
Charles Wisnioski (Left at 7:05 p.m.)

A meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, December 11, 2008 in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman William MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Moved by Charles Wisnioski, seconded by Maria Mennella, to elect William (Bill) MacDonald as Chairman, Rene (Skip) Rivard as Vice Chairman and Nadine Bell as Secretary.

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Rivard, Wisnioski
OPPOSED: Bell, McMonigle, Vargas**

MOTION CARRIED

Before this motion was voted on, Mrs. Bell asked if the election of the Officers wasn't usually done individually. Mr. Wisnioski said he had no experience in this. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if it makes a difference. Chairman MacDonald said there is a motion and a second and he told Mrs. Bell if she wanted to that they would have to have the person who made the motion withdraw this motion. Mrs. Bell said this motion was fine if it was at the pleasure of the Board of Education. Mr. Wisnioski said the motion would stand. Chairman MacDonald asked if there was any further discussion with regards to this and there wasn't any.

At this point, this motion was voted on.

Mr. Wisnioski told Chairman MacDonald he had to be excused for a period of time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Frank Morse, to approve the minutes and working notes of the October 6, 2008 Finance Committee meeting, the October 6, 2008 Policy Committee meeting, the October 9, 2008 Curriculum Committee meeting, the October 16, 2008 Board of Education meeting, the November 6, 2008 Curriculum Committee meeting, the November 12, 2008 Facilities Committee meeting, the November 17, 2008 Finance Committee meeting (minutes only) and the November 17, 2008 special Board of Education meeting (minutes only).

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Dr. Villar shared a letter from Senator Joseph Lieberman that was received from the faculty and the staff of West Hill School. Superintendent Dr. Villar read this letter aloud and in full. Senator Lieberman congratulated this school for being recognized on the President's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports.

Superintendent Dr. Villar mentioned a letter that had been received by Griswold Middle School from Human Services Director Mr. Mark Williams. Mr. Williams thanked Griswold Middle School on behalf of the Town of Rocky Hill's food pantry for its contribution this year.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said a thank you note had been received from Ms. Peg Lawlor who had celebrated retirement earlier this year. Ms. Lawlor thanked the Board of Education for its generous gift.

Superintendent Dr. Villar reminded the Board of Education that it was in receipt of a letter inviting the Board of Education members to attend the December 15, 2008 meeting of the Town Council so that they could hear a legislative update from Senator Paul Doyle and State Representative Tony Guerrero.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Meeting Open to Public

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak at this time. No one from the public wished to speak.

Report of Students from Stevens School

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked these students to introduce themselves and then to give their report.

Nathan Friday said he was present on behalf of Stevens School. He told everyone that he wanted to tell them about some of the objectives in this school. Stevens School decided to create and to maintain a composter in order to beautify its courtyard. He explained that everyday a student

places certain things in this composter and he mentioned what is not allowed to be placed into it. The fifth graders are going to try to be taught about this first and then in the long run, the entire school will be taught about it. He explained what the new recycling rules are that have been established. He told everyone who helped UNICEF this past October that they did a fantastic job. Together they raised \$1,888.92. He thanked everyone.

Emily Pentland said she is a fifth grade student in Mr. Steven's class. She explained that they do a book project every month. She mentioned the types of books that they read for September, October and November and what project they did for each of these books. They had to read a science fiction or fantasy book in September. They had to read a mystery book in October and in November they could read any book. She said they are presently reading a biography or autobiography and she explained what project they are working on for this book. She loves doing these projects and she thanked the Board of Education members for their time.

Report of Student Representatives

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he didn't see the student representative from Rocky Hill High School so no report was given.

1. Consent Calendar

Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he had any comments about the Consent Calendar before it is moved for adoption. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he didn't have any.

Moved by Nadine Bell, seconded by Charles McMonigle, to accept the Consent Calendar of December 11, 2008.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2. Personnel and Negotiations

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said one contract has been settled with the Rocky Hill Teachers Association so far in collective bargaining. With regards to the wages, for 2009-2010 they settled on 2.65% for a general wage increase with the total that includes steps of 4.60%. For 2010-2011, they settled for a 2.70% general wage increase and 4.47% total that includes the step. For 2011-2012, there was a 2.75% general wage increase with the total being 4.37%. They are still in negotiations with the paraprofessionals and the secretaries. They will be going to negotiations with the Nurses' contract.

3. Policy

No report was given.

4. Finance

No report was given.

5. Curriculum

No report was given.

6. Professional Development

No report was given.

7. Facilities

No report was given.

8. Technology

No report was given.

9. Transportation/Accommodations

No report was given.

10. Liaison

No report was given.

OLD BUSINESS

11. Bullying Policy (Second Reading)

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is required for adoption under state legislation that went into effect in July 2008. This was brought before the Policy Committee and that Committee recommended that this come to the full Board of Education. At the last Board of Education meeting, there had been some discussion about this. Superintendent Dr. Villar asked if there were any additional questions. He recommended that the Board of Education adopt this policy as it is written.

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, to adopt the Bullying Policy as written.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS

12. CAPSS Awards

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had the pleasure this evening of presenting students who have been selected in this district with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendent Award. This is a prestigious award that is only given to students who have been nominated by their administrators and their teachers at their school for outstanding performance in community service, academics and demonstrated leadership in their school. He said he holds this award in the highest esteem. It has been his experience that students who receive the CAPPS Award often go on to high school to receive additional highly prestigious awards and these students do quite well. He told the parents of these children that they should be very proud of them. This award is not easily obtained. He told the children who are receiving this award that they should be proud as well.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was going to ask the principals to come forward to introduce the award recipients and he asked them to give a little explanation as to why the students received this honor. Superintendent Dr. Villar said these students would be called forward and they would be presented with a nice Certificate of Achievement and they would be congratulated.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Principal Audrey Boutaugh to come forward. Principal Boutaugh introduced the awardees from Stevens School who received the CAPPS Award for 2008-2009. These awardees were Alexa Cannistrano and Alex Bondi. Ms. Boutaugh read a brief description of Alexa Cannistrano that her teacher, Mrs. Blitz, wrote about her. Ms. Boutaugh read a brief description of Alex Bondi that his teacher, Mrs. Montgomery, wrote about him.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan to fill in for Principal Cori DiMaggio who had to attend a meeting on behalf of her children this evening. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she was delighted to be able to recognize these CAPPS Award scholars from West Hill School this evening and she said that this is such an important award. The awardees of the CAPPS Award from West Hill School were Abhishek Gupta and Kanika Malani. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan introduced Abhishek Gupta and Kanika Malani and she read something with regards to each of their accomplishments.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Principal Rick Watson to come forward to represent Griswold Middle School. Principal Watson said it was a pleasure to introduce the two Griswold Middle School recipients of the CAPPS Award. He introduced Emily Miehke and Daniel Madigan. Principal Watson read a letter from Emily Miehke's team of teachers who work with her everyday. Principal Watson also read a letter from Daniel Madigan's team of teachers.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Principal Mario Almeida from Rocky Hill High School to come forward. Principal Almeida introduced Gabrielle Franza and Kevin Curtin who were the two recipients of the CAPPS Award from Rocky Hill High School. Principal Almeida read the accomplishments of Gabrielle Franza and Kevin Curtin.

Superintendent Dr. Villar told everyone as they just had listened to the biographies of these students with regards to what has already happened in such a short period of time in their lives that everyone can only be truly impressed. He congratulated all of the families for their hard work and he congratulated the recipients of the CAPPs Award. He thanked them very much.

13. Presentation on Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Superintendent Dr. Villar introduced Dr. Christine McGrath to the Board of Education. Dr. McGrath is a Licensed Psychologist with a PhD in Psychology through the University of Oregon. For the past nine years, she has been working as an Educational and Behavioral Consultant. For five of the nine years, she has been working in New England with the remainder of her experience in Oregon. Dr. McGrath has training in school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports systems through the University of Oregon. The positive behavioral supports and interventions is an issue that is beginning to be explored because of the recent changes in the state legislation. The Bullying Policy that was just adopted this evening by the Board of Education specifically calls for this type of intervention. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Dr. McGrath has done presentations on a national level and PBIS is an implementer in several different forms. Dr. McGrath has presented at the Association for Positive Behavior Supports Conferences, the New England Positive Behavior Supports Conference, the National Association for School Psychologists and the Applied Behavior Analysis Conference. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has had the pleasure of working with Dr. McGrath for almost five years. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has also had the opportunity to co-present at the New England Conference as well.

Superintendent Dr. Villar told Dr. McGrath that he would now turn this meeting over to her so that she could be allowed to inform the Board of Education on what Positive Behavior Supports are and why the State of Connecticut might have thought highly enough of such a program to essentially require its use in the state's schools. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Dr. McGrath that she could also explain what might be expected as they move down this road.

Dr. McGrath told the Board of Education members that she was going to provide for them a brief overview this evening of what the things are that are being spoken about when Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is being talked about. She told them that she would be calling this PBS or PBIS because they are the same things. This used to be called Effective Behavioral Supports when she was in Oregon and then it was changed to Positive Behavioral Supports. She told everyone that she was going to go over a little theory or rationale and a brief review of features. Everything that is done in terms of Positive Behavioral Supports is databased.

At this point, Dr. McGrath gave a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation is attached to these Working Notes.

Dr. McGrath said the next step for all of this would be meeting with the individual schools in this district. For the elementary schools, she has given them a preview of this.

Dr. McGrath asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mrs. Bell asked Dr. McGrath, in her experience, if she usually implements this on a districtwide basis or on a schoolwide basis. Dr. McGrath said there are varying ways of doing this and they have done this

from a statewide initiative down to one school starting this. She doesn't work anymore with schools in which the Administrator is not on board with this. Interventions in schools don't work if the Administrator isn't a supporting member and an active member of it.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they are going to be challenged with implementing RTI (Response to Intervention) protocols for identification or hopefully prevention of the identification of students for Special Education services in the upcoming school year. He explained how the RTI model uses the triangles that Dr. McGrath had shown in her PowerPoint presentation this evening. It follows a similar research base of looking at the progression of students along the triangle. He explained some more about this. PBIS is an important piece also of them successfully implementing the RTI model. The successful education of all of the students within the mainstream classroom in the RTI model is going to be very dependent on their ability to support students who are a little bit more challenging within the classroom model in such a way that the positive behavior is being promoted within the classroom and in such a way that there is not a disruption to the learning of any other students. To be successful in the RTI work, they also have to be successful in the management of the classes and the schools. He said these are integrated in some ways and they have a similar research base. Dr. McGrath said these are a parallel process.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if there is any idea as to what the referral rate is in Rocky Hill either for the district or by school as data is looked at. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is one of the things that they are going to be number crunching and this is one of the reasons that the new student information management system has been put into place. This allows them to do a better job of tracking. The administrative team has developed new office referral forms that are common between the schools. In their definitions of things that may not be appropriate, they are trying to be more standardized so that they can be more standard in their response to this. As a district, they do well overall. This is a very successful school district and he wants to use this to bring it to the next level. All children can really benefit from this environment being spoken about and it turns children on and makes for a very exciting model. He explained that Assistant Superintendent Hourigan was the principal of a very high achieving school but when this was put in place in that environment, that particular school "exploded" with success. It made school that much better of an experience for the children.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if this is used as well in the high schools as it is used in the middle schools. Dr. McGrath said PBIS is used in the high schools. The foundation is similar but the process is different. The work for this started in high schools in some very challenging cities (i.e. Chicago and Maryland). Success is being found but they are still trying to figure out what works with the high schools. They are not as well versed in the high schools as they are in the middle schools and the elementary schools.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said she understands what this is trying to do. She told Dr. McGrath that she gave concrete examples of what is presently being used as intervention (i.e. expulsion). Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked for some concrete examples of some positive behavioral intervention of what would be done instead of this. She asked if it would be that a really warm environment should be created because she thought they should be doing this already now. She asked what positive behavioral intervention should be employed that they are not employing presently. Dr. McGrath said this was a great and complex question. She gave an example of an individual

student for an answer. She explained that the whole philosophy would be to make school so it is more reinforcing. She explained what happened when she taught seventh grade math.

Chairman MacDonald asked Dr. McGrath if an increase in student achievement through increased student scores with the implementation of this program has been able to be correlated. Chairman MacDonald asked what the results have been. Dr. McGrath said she is going to be presenting on this. She said an elementary school in this state has been implementing a score of PBS with good fidelity for a few years and it has now moved off of the school in need of improvement designation and it is now into safe harbor where it has remained. Good curriculum and good behavioral support practices have showed gains now in terms of academic achievement overall. Decreases have been shown in problem behaviors of the challenging students who are disruptive. These students have also been shown to have an increase that was significant over their same peers in terms of bridging the gap and a higher improvement on state CMTs than the same peers who didn't have this type of intervention.

Mrs. Bell said that perhaps some of these strategies can be employed for the summer reading program as well as for the tardy situation at the high school. Superintendent Dr. Villar didn't disagree and he thought when a system-wide approach to these types of issues with a positive spin on it is implemented that students react in a very good way.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said that UCONN was able to attract Professor George Sugai a few years ago. Professor Sugai was one of the backbone researchers nationally who was at the University of Oregon and he began this work. He has a research group that Superintendent Dr. Villar is a member of and this is where the districts participate in several meetings throughout the year interacting with Professors in this program where they look at this type of research, apply it in districts and monitor it. This has nationally been on the radar and some of the data is from 1995 in Oregon. This has had tremendous success and he told the Board of Education members that he would be happy to supply them with more information. He also referred them to www.pbis.org. Dr. McGrath referred to the credits on the first slide of her PowerPoint presentation and she said this website is listed there too.

Mr. McMonigle asked where this district goes from here. He asked if approval is being looked for, for this or he asked if this has already begun. He also asked how this would be implemented and if Dr. McGrath would be contracted with to do the training or if she would just present on the general principles of this program. Once they get going with this as Mr. McMonigle presumed that they would, he asked at what point they would have enough data to monitor the effectiveness of this program in this district. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this district has begun to work with Dr. McGrath. Superintendent Dr. Villar thought that it would be important for Dr. McGrath to come to present to the Board of Education members so they would have a good understanding of this before it is brought to the schools. Preliminary work for this has had to do with having conversations with some of the Administrators. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan have been working in the planning stages with Dr. McGrath. They are lucky to have access to some grant funding that will help to start this. Most of the heavy lifting of this activity will be done by the staff. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he is certainly moving forward with this and he would like to keep the Board of Education abreast. They will start gathering more specific data that they can share over time with the Board of Education. There will probably be more formal presentations that will be done by himself or by Dr. McGrath.

Mr. McMonigle hoped that all of this district's building administrators have signed on. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the administrators all thought this was a great idea after they had a meeting. Chairman MacDonald thanked Dr. McGrath and told her that this was a very good presentation.

14. 2009-2010 School Calendar

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are Board of Education members who have asked questions to him as well as to other members about the school calendar. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he would be interested in working with a Committee of individuals to review this and to get a broader perspective. He mentioned that this is more important than just him bringing a recommendation forth on this because it affects the entire community.

Chairman MacDonald agreed and he said several Board of Education members have expressed an interest in really looking at the school calendar instead of just "rubber stamping" it for approval. He said this school calendar should be looked at with other people such as the PTO, parents who may not be part of the PTO as well as different other members so there can be different input into it. Teachers have asked to participate in the discussion as well. He told the Board of Education members to let him know if any of them are interested in participating in an Ad Hoc Committee. Chairman MacDonald said they will try to reach out to others through Superintendent Dr. Villar for them to provide input. The goal is to get this wrapped up in the next few months. Chairman MacDonald thinks this is well worth spending some time on and looking at specific questions that several people have come up with. Mr. Morse said he agreed.

15. Teacher of the Year

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had the privilege of attending the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Ceremony at Central Connecticut State University on November 13, 2008 along with the Rocky Hill Teacher of the Year who is Ms. Deborah Wolfe. The Teacher of the Year process is a very rigorous process and it requires the candidate who is selected for this honor to submit a comprehensive application that takes hours upon hours to complete. The candidates are selected based upon the quality of their work, the accomplishments with students that they have had over time and their passion for teaching. This year, they were very honored to be able to select the Teacher of the Year.

He said Ms. Wolfe did a wonderful job of representing Rocky Hill at the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Ceremony. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Principal Almeida prepared some comments about Ms. Wolfe. Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Ms. Wolfe to join them.

Principal Almeida said it gave him great pleasure to introduce Ms. Wolfe as Rocky Hill's District Teacher of the Year for the 2008-2009 school year. Ms. Wolfe has been an outstanding family consumer science teacher in this town since 1996. He read some comments about her including some from some of her colleagues and her students.

Principal Almeida introduced Ms. Wolfe to everyone. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Ms. Wolfe had previously received a very nice plaque.

16. CMT/CAPT UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they are participating in the pilot program of the state benchmark assessments in terms of CMT analysis and in trying to prepare the students to do well on the CMTs. The state has developed online tests for students in Grade Three through Grade Eight. This is being piloted in this district in Grade Three, Grade Four and Grade Five at Stevens School and at West Hill School. These students go to the computer lab and take two tests. One of the tests is a reading test which is comprised of three subtests that are each twenty minutes long with the total being sixty minutes long. The other test is a math test that is sixty minutes long. The results come back in terms of grade level expectations in math and strands in language arts. The online assessment has been progressing very nicely and there haven't been problems in the computer labs. Teachers have done a very nice job with their students and the students love taking these assessments online. They are hoping that the results they are getting will help to inform instruction and help to prepare the students because there will be very timely information that will relate exactly to the types of things that the students will see on the CMTs.

At the elementary level, Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they are starting to go out to the teachers to talk about the new grade level expectations that the state has set in math. They have looked at Trailblazers and what is being done with the curriculum to make sure they are aligned as they should be with the state. In areas that they are weaker, they are developing ways to boost that.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the elementary schools and the middle school are working on developing the CMT Academy which usually takes place after school for the students who need a little boost before CMT testing. This provides for both reading and math. Data is being looked at to see which strands each of these students are weak on and where they need help. Tutoring assistance is being put where they need it. Mrs. Darlene Brown, the Coordinator of Language Arts, and Ms. Joyce Waterbury, the Math Implementation Specialist, are developing the curriculum for this and making sure that the correct students are selected who they think will benefit from this.

They have been working on revising and aligning the math curriculum at the middle school in order to make sure that they are going along with the new grade level expectations that have been set by the state. At the elementary level in reading, Mrs. Brown has been working very hard in training teachers on the guided reading model. Mrs. Brown is going into the schools and working with the teachers as they begin to do this. A template has been developed that the teachers are using so that the type of instruction is standardized.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said a reading teacher has recently been hired at Stevens School to replace one there. The reading service model has been changed a little. They are starting to get ready for RTI that the state is expecting the districts to have on board for next year. The first grade at Stevens School is piloting this right now. She explained about Tier I, Tier II and Tier III types of intervention. The whole point of RTI is trying to help the students before they fail.

A kindergarten pilot is being looked at in each of the elementary schools and this will begin in January. This will allow the staff to compare and contrast the merits of each of the programs. With RTI, there needs to be a very solid core program for the students to make sure they are getting equal access to the curriculum and have the opportunity to do very well.

For professional development, they have been building capacity in this district. Teachers have been sent out for effective teaching strategy training and people have been brought into the middle school to work with them. Teachers are learning research based ways to help students as they are working in their data teams. Every one of the schools has identified students at the proficient level or below the proficient level in each of the grade levels. These students are being targeted for extra help in math and reading.

For CAPT, the freshmen who came in from eight grade with scores that were proficient or below proficient have been identified. The teachers in all of the disciplines who are working with these students are aware of what their weak areas are and they are getting them ready for the CAPT that they will be taking next year.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan told the Board of Education members that the Immigrant & Youth Education Program Grant that they approved today as part of the Consent Calendar will be used to provide for after school tutoring programs at each of the schools. This will be providing extra help for students who have the need for this and they will be focusing on combining language skills and literacy.

17. Update on Explore and Soar Program

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mrs. Marguerite Alpert will inform everyone on the progress of this. Mrs. Alpert said she was delighted to be present this evening to talk about enrichment which is her favorite subject. She thanked the Board of Education for funding the Explore and Soar Program. The Enrichment Program is an exciting and a very vital portion of Rocky Hill children's education.

Mrs. Alpert said Superintendent Dr. Villar spoke about collaboration at convocation at the beginning of this school year. Mrs. Alpert said she puts collaboration into active use every day. The effort to reach out has returned many dividends including monetary benefits back to the school community and a sense of good will. She gave a few examples of this.

Mrs. Alpert said since she has been in Rocky Hill, she has created an enrichment consortium that includes Suffield, South Windsor, Wethersfield, Berlin, Glastonbury, Manchester and West Hartford. They will meet three times per year with the goal being to share resources and ideas.

This district has launched an environmental enrichment theme this year. Mrs. Alpert sees this initiative developing over the next two or three years. Virtually every subject area will be able to draw focus on this very important issue. She shared with everyone some of the first environmental programs that are going on. Ms. Kristen Spain, a fifth grade teacher at Stevens School, is doing a composting system. Mrs. Alpert would like to see this grow to all of Rocky Hill's schools. At Stevens School, Jilani Sheir, an art teacher, has created a outstanding project, which is called Penguin Parade, with her fifth graders. The penguins are made of all recyclable materials.

At West Hill's Spirit Night, which was held in October, Ms. Susan Romano, an artist from Young Audiences, guided students to create and paint eco friendly designs on fifty-five gallon recycled oil drums. Two of these drums are being used for magazine recycling in West Hill School's lobby and two more will be placed at the Town Hall.

The Grade Six students at Griswold Middle School who are in the family consumer science classes attended the "One Thing Activities" at the Connecticut Convention Center. Mrs. Alpert mentioned an assembly that all of the students from Grade Seven and Grade Eight participated in. Mrs. Alpert told the Board of Education members that she wanted them all to continue to check for articles in the Rocky Hill Post pertaining to enrichment this year.

The Explore and Soar Enrichment Committee has awarded nearly \$6,000 in grants during the first round of the 2008-2009 school year. Eight requests out of the ten requests that were submitted were approved. All of the funds that were granted aim to strike a balance between schools, curriculum connections, grades and disciplines while working within the confines of this budget. Across the district, every effort was made to share programs and ideas in order to ensure equity among the schools. She gave an example of this at each of Rocky Hill's schools.

Mrs. Alpert said it is the mission in the Explore and Soar Program to spark ideas, imagination, creativity and motivation in all of the children in order to encourage and nurture an interest in lifelong learning. She thanked the Board of Education for supporting the Explore and Soar Program because it is very important. She told the Board of Education members that she appreciated their attention and their time. She asked them if any of them had any questions and no one did.

Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mrs. Alpert for doing an outstanding job in keeping this program moving forward. Superintendent Dr. Villar also thanked Mrs. Alpert for putting a positive face on the Rocky Hill public schools.

18. Update on Fall Sports

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Mr. Tom McCabe to give an update on the fall sports. Mr. McCabe said the fall sports were very successful and there was a total of two hundred and fifty-two students who participated in athletics this fall. Sixty of these students made the All Academic Team on the Northwest Conference. There were twenty-one All Conference players and five All State players. There was one All New England player. All of the teams that participated made postseason play. Five out of the seven teams had winning records. The football team won its first ever Nutmeg League Championship and Rocky Hill almost hosted a tournament team here. Three soccer players participated in a Senior All Star Bowl which was hosted at Rocky Hill.

Mr. McCabe said he has organized everything so that the coaches are going to be CPR and First Aid tested each August at Rocky Hill High School. The coaches won't have to go outside of the system anymore in order to get certified. If a coach decides not to do this then they will have to go out on their own to get this done. He did a review of all of the coaches to make sure that each of them is up-to-date and that they have a coaching permit. Each coach they have in Rocky Hill

High School who is coaching now is a certified coach through the State of Connecticut. Those who weren't, had to get this done and they did.

Last night, a very successful coaches', parents' and athletes' preseason meeting was held. There was a speaker at this meeting. This will take place three times per year before each season. The reason for having a speaker at these meetings is so that a message can be given to the athletes, the parents and the coaches. Last night, the message had been with regards to substance abuse and making good choices. It was a very good program.

Mr. McCabe said he is asking each coach to submit to him a budget for the next following school year. He is asking them to submit this prior to the school year so he will have some idea about what the needs of the coaches are. He is evaluating what the district has and what it needs. Each coach will be responsible for having an inventory and submitting the inventory to him so that there will be a tracking of where the equipment is, how much it is getting used and what will need to be replaced.

Mr. McCabe is meeting with the Boosters Club monthly. The coaches are coming up with a wish list for the Boosters Club so that they will have a priority of things that they can look at to help add to the program. Mr. McCabe doesn't want them buying uniforms and sweats, etc. but he wants them to buy things that will enhance the program. A relationship has begun between the coaches and the Boosters Club.

Mr. McCabe is working closely with the Parks and Recreation Department and the scheduling for rec track so that there won't be building issue problems. He has been in contact with Pat Mirante (Administrative Assistant of the Parks and Recreation Department), Lisa Zerio (Director of Parks and Recreation) and Walt Sykes (Crew Leader- Parks and Recreation). There is a very good relationship between them and in the fall there weren't any building issues. They always keep in contact with each other and they have had to move things around but all that took was a little bit of communication with each other.

Mr. McCabe said he has added freshmen and JV awards to the Awards Assembly which was a big deal to the children. In the past, at the large assembly, Rocky Hill High School never gave out awards to the freshmen and the JV players. This was done this year. This went over well and it will continue to be done to recognize the sub Varsity program and not only the Varsity program.

Mr. McCabe said Rocky Hill has entered a new league which is the CCC League and they are no longer going to be in the Northwest Conference. He, along with Principal Almeida, worked very diligently to make sure that Rocky Hill landed in a good place. Beginning in the fall, Rocky Hill will be part of the Central Connecticut Conference. They met with the coaches and certain other people in this Town beforehand for them to make sure that they knew what was going on. Mr. McCabe said they kept in contact with people to tell them why they were doing what they were doing and why they needed to do it. This all fell in place very nicely for Rocky Hill. He thinks the Board of Education members will be pleased with this in the long run.

Mr. McCabe said his visibility is the one thing he has heard about that has been a positive thing. He is making sure that he is getting to the sporting events as well as to all of the events in the schools. He has been at away games. One of his main goals for his first six months in the

district was to watch and see what was going on and then begin to make whatever changes they want to make. He has been out there and he has been putting in a lot of long hours. It has been great and he has loved every minute of it. He will continue to do this.

Mr. McCabe referred to the new Athletic Trainer and he said this has worked out great. He has had nothing but positive comments from the coaches with regards to this. This Athletic Trainer is leaving it up to parents as far as where they want to bring their child for treatment and he is not referring them to certain places like some Athletic Trainers will do. Mr. McCabe said this Athletic Trainer has put in extra hours because he likes Rocky Hill and the children. This Athletic Trainer is beginning to develop a relationship with the coaches and the children. All of this has worked out very well.

Mr. McCabe said he has reorganized the Awards Assemblies to make sure that the children receive their letters and pins, etc. at them. This makes this more formal for the children.

A brand new Student Athlete Leadership Club has been started. There are approximately twenty students in this club now and there are three Council members who will be going to CIAC with Mr. McCabe. These members will bring back ideas with regards to looking at school climate and what can be done to spirit within the school. Three of the Council members are underclassmen so that they can be around for a few years. These children were sent last month to Manchester High School where they were involved with ten other schools and their leaders. These children sat down and had roundtable discussions. These children said it was fabulous and they got some good ideas from other schools. The first project for this group this winter will be a "Coaches versus Cancer Night" which will be started at one of the basketball games. Money will be raised for one week. This will be a dedication night for anybody who is suffering from cancer that the children know or for anybody the children lost to cancer. This will be part of the student athletes doing some type of community leadership within the community.

The Ski Club is back and it is very strong. Forty-seven children have signed up for a ski trip and he explained a little more about this. There are two teachers who have started an Environmental Club. Two other teachers have started the Future Business Leaders of America Club. This is a national organization. Presently, there are up to twenty-four children in this now. The Drama Club completed its first production of the year which was "Miracle On Thirty-Fourth Street". This went very well and Mr. McCabe said he is hearing nothing but good things with regards to the Drama Club and there haven't been any issues. Ms. Liz Daigle is doing a great job with this.

Mr. McMonigle said when the athletic handbooks were handed out at the beginning of the school year or the sign-offs for the students were handed out, it was noticed that there were some changes in the language from previous editions with regards to conduct or expectations. He asked if this has been changed. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he recalled the conversation about this. He said they had looked at the alignment of the policy and the handbook. There was some terminology used that they were concerned about with regards to whether the same level of expectation would be maintained that related to students being in the presence of alcohol. He understood that the same level of intensity has been maintained or they may have even increased it. Mr. McCabe thought the issue was whether the students were having alcohol, in the possession of it or near it. It was left that the students should not be around it. Mr. McMonigle knew this was a stated policy but he thought it had been omitted in some of the published material that had come out the last time. Mr. McCabe said this is in there. He said just like the

program that they held last night, they are looking at this from a prevention method. More of these programs will be brought in and hopefully they won't have to deal with these issues down the road.

Chairman MacDonald said he is hearing from all of the parents who have approached him about the presence Mr. McCabe has had and the change of the atmosphere in the high school as it relates to athletics that this is outstanding. Chairman MacDonald thanked Mr. McCabe on behalf of them. Chairman MacDonald said that he and Mrs. Bell had attended the Awards Night. Chairman MacDonald said the freshmen and JV awards are a huge thing. This was never done in the past. This may be the largest award that some students ever receive and that they are recognized for. He thinks this is outstanding. He asked Mr. McCabe if he can give the members of the Board of Education a copy of the biography of the speaker going forth if they want to attend the awards ceremonies. Chairman MacDonald said from what he heard that the speaker was outstanding with regards to talking about substance abuse. He had received an e-mail with regards to the payment for the speaker seeing there is the tight budget situation. This speaker was paid for by the Football Boosters Club and the Football Boosters Club is committed to paying for any speaker as this relates not only to football athletes but to any athlete or student. For the amount of \$300 to \$400, if one child is touched regardless of what activity they are in then it is well worth it.

Chairman MacDonald told Mr. McCabe that his presence at the club events or at the games is amazing and the students have appreciated seeing him at these events. Chairman MacDonald referred to the CCC League and he said Rocky Hill was close to a disaster where it would had to have gone to an independent league. This is huge that the principal and Athletic Director were able to pull this off. Rocky Hill will now be in the strongest league that has thirty-two teams in the state. Chairman MacDonald complimented and thanked Mr. McCabe on behalf of the parents and he thanked him on behalf of the students.

19. NEASC Update

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Principal Almeida to come forward to give an update on the progress for NEASC. Principal Almeida said he needed Mr. Gomes to teach a business class at 7:15 a.m. tomorrow morning and he asked if Mr. Gomes' item on this evening's agenda could be moved up at this time.

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Nadine Bell, to move Item #22 (Discussion on High School Graduation Requirements) ahead of Item #19 (NEASC Update) on this evening's agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

22. Discussion on High School Graduation Requirements

Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mr. Gomes for his professionalism in staying so late this evening. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that he and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan had presented to the Curriculum Committee a concept with regards to how they could use Perkins funding to expand the programming at the high school while also offering a different route to students for their meeting the graduation requirement for fulfilling the computer essentials course. This is in the research phases right now and no Board of Education action would be asked for this evening with regards to changing high school graduation requirements or impacting the program of studies at all. He thought it would be really important though to share with the Board of Education members the concept that Mr. Gomes developed for this course and for him to explain some of the positives so that this dialogue can be continued as they discuss potential changes in the high school graduation. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mr. Gomes.

Mr. Gomes told the Board of Education members that they were familiar with this proposal and if they weren't, he said that he had a handout with regards to it. The proposal they are making relates to the computer essentials course that is currently a graduation requirement at the high school. This graduation requirement is for the purpose of the technology competencies which are one of the academic expectations at the high school.

Mr. Gomes said he has taught computer essentials since 1990 and he has taught personal finances since 1998. He started teaching three years ago at Rocky Hill High School at which time he was given the computer essentials course there. There were a lot of diverse opinions that came along with that regarding what this course was really doing.

A lot of people thought this had no place in the high school and then there were parents who asked that their children spend a semester just learning how to use the keyboard. He said it isn't the case that children are so techno savvy that they don't need this. Students are very familiar with a lot of technologies but the technology competencies that want to be provided to them relate very specifically to the Microsoft Office Suite (i.e. Excel, using PowerPoint, etc.). He has four computer essential classes and he has lots of students with anecdotal data. From three years ago to now, there has been an improvement but there is a very limited understanding of using the spreadsheet, etc. in terms of Excel. A lot of technology is learned in the computer essentials classes. He thinks this can be done better though.

Mr. Gomes said from having taught finance and listening to a lot of opinions about the current financial situation everyone is in and the need for the students to have financial literacy that they thought it would be better to have the technology skills presented within the context of a personal finance class. This is essentially what the proposal is. The personal finance curriculum lends itself to the technology because it enables students to create an Excel document which is their personal budget. He explained more about what the students can do with this. All of these things can be done effectively in the finance course rather than it being taught in a vacuum in computer essentials where the students do assignments just for the sake of doing them to gain the competency of that particular technological skill.

Mr. Gomes said this is the rationale for the course and he told the Board of Education members that if any of them had any questions, he would be happy to answer them.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he would ask a lead-in question to help the Board of Education. He mentioned how one of the questions that had come out of the Curriculum Committee meeting was with regards to the request for the materials (i.e. the text). He asked Mr. Gomes if he could explain why a different text would be important. Mr. Gomes believed that a textbook for an economics class was proposed last year and it is in this year's budget. The economics class was proposed and approved last year. The economics textbook is not a personal finance textbook. The economics course is being introduced now with the goal of taking it to the AP level. When it is taught, it will be taught at the honors level. This course will be eligible to juniors and seniors and it is a more advanced course. The personal finance and technology course is something that sophomores, juniors and seniors would be taking and possibly freshmen. This would be taken at the general level so these are two completely different courses.

Mrs. Bell asked Mr. Gomes if the textbook that he uses for the personal finance course that he currently teaches could be used. Mr. Gomes said this textbook could be used. It is six years old and the Perkins Grant would allow for new textbooks to be bought. This is being looked at as a rollout so six sections might not be taught. If this is made into a graduation requirement that all students would need to take then they will probably need additional textbooks. He put in for a set of four textbooks for four classes into his budget.

Mrs. Bell asked Mr. Gomes once he gets the full implementation if he is anticipating that he would eliminate the current personal finance class as well as the full year document formatting. Mr. Gomes said the document formatting was eliminated last year and there is the computer essentials course now. The finance course would be this new course and this would just add the technology skills to the existing finance course which he said would be a "no brainer". Mrs. Bell asked if this would be a full year course and Mr. Gomes said this would still be a semester course.

Mr. McMonigle asked Mr. Gomes if he anticipated that the students who will take this course will just move over from the current courses and he referred to the staffing. Mr. Gomes said this would be a "win-win" for staffing because he currently teaches two computer essentials classes during the first semester and two computer essentials classes during the second semester. If the computer essentials classes were to be folded into the finance classes of which he teaches two of these then more students would be gotten through the technology requirement without having to add staff.

Vice Chairman Rivard referred to the textbooks. He asked if they were concept and application of finance or if they also included software application. Mr. Gomes said the textbooks don't include this and he integrates this on his own. Vice Chairman Rivard said there wouldn't be the obsolescence that they would anticipate and Mr. Gomes said that was right.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the specifics of this will continue to be worked out. The next step will be to go back to the Curriculum Committee when there are some more solid things. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Mr. Gomes that he appreciated his time this evening.

19. NEASC Update

Principal Almeida thanked the Board of Education for giving him the opportunity to explain NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) to them. Rocky Hill High School's NEASC Accreditation is scheduled for October 3, 2010 through October 6, 2010. NEASC serves the public in two ways. The first way is that it establishes and maintains high standards of educational excellence and it utilizes evaluation processes that focus on self improvement to perfect a review. Every secondary school in New England goes through NEASC and this occurs every ten years. Rocky Hill High School must complete an extensive self study in preparation for this visit. This involves the participation of administrators, staff, faculty, community, students and Board of Education members.

The main purpose of the self study that must be completed is to draw and substantiate conclusions that the school has built and see how well it meets each of the standards for accreditation. There are seven of these standards. There is a Steering Committee that oversees all of the Standards Committees. He said the Media Specialist and the School Psychologist are the main two Co-Chairs of this process. The Standards Committees have been formed and they have met on the NEASC half days which so far have been on October 30, 2008, today and the next one will be on March 30, 2009. They have also met on full day PDs which were on October 24, 2008 and November 4, 2008 and the next one will be on May 7, 2009. Principal Almeida explained what the tasks are for these Committees. Each of these Standard Committees is made up of an average of nine or ten certified staff. Every certified staff is on a Committee and there are two students on each Committee as well as one to two parents. The Board of Education members were invited to serve on these Committees and currently there is one Board of Education member who is on a Committee. Each Standard has between seven and sixteen indicators which assist comparing the school against the standard specifically. He went over what the standards are. He commended the staff, students and parents who are on these Committees for their efforts and he said they are working extremely hard and they are taking their task very seriously.

Principal Almeida thanked Superintendent Dr. Villar and the members of the Board of Education for giving the NEASC half days for this year. Principal Almeida gave an idea to everyone of how important these half days are. Today, the Rocky Hill High School Mission Statement was revised and ratified. The Rocky Hill High School Mission Statement now states "Through high expectations and a challenging curriculum, all students at Rocky Hill High School become responsible citizens who embrace learning as a lifelong process in an ever-changing world". The webmaster was contacted and this will be on the website shortly. The Board of Education members will also have this forwarded to them shortly. Principal Almeida said this Mission Statement will be the guiding principle and it will be everything that they do from now on. This Mission Statement guided them to revise their academic expectations. There are seven academic expectations that have been identified and all of the students will be able to do these when they leave Rocky Hill High School. He gave an example of this. Social expectations will be identified down the road.

Principal Almeida said that another thing which came out of the meeting they had today was how these expectations will be reported to the community and to the parents. Department rubrics and assignment rubrics have been in place. They are working on schoolwide rubrics. Each

expectation will have a rubric that is measured by the Mission Statement. Students will either have met proficiency, exceeded proficiency or will still need to work on proficiency with regards to these expectations. These expectations will be reported and one idea is to have a comment added on each teacher's report card. Today, the seven Committees and the different departments chose and agreed that they would be responsible for two to three indicators. Each of the departments was assigned two of the seven indicators and the department will be responsible to make sure that the students meet those expectations. He referred back to the report cards and he said one idea is to have a column on it and he explained some more about this.

Principal Almeida thanked the Board of Education for giving him the opportunity to come to this meeting this evening. He feels this is such an important thing for the community and for the school because there are so many implications. He wanted to be able to explain the process with regards to NEASC. He asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked Principal Almeida if he had any idea what percentages of high schools in Connecticut are accredited by NEASC. Vice Chairman Rivard knew that this is optional and he said Rocky Hill is very special to be accredited. Principal Almeida told Vice Chairman Rivard that he can get him this information.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked Principal Almeida if NEASC accreditation will "open the door" for any federal grants for Rocky Hill. Vice Chairman Rivard knew that it opens it up for student grant money through the feds at a college level. Principal Almeida said he would investigate this and give this information to Superintendent Dr. Villar.

Vice Chairman Rivard referred to the essentials that the on site team for NEASC uses and he asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he knew if this checklist is available on their website. Principal Almeida said that he didn't know about this. He said when this team comes that it will look at what Rocky Hill wrote and it will look at the things that Rocky Hill said it does or it doesn't do. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if this team will rate everything in three categories: compliance, non-compliance and potential compliance. Principal Almeida said there is also the category of nowhere near compliance and they would have to answer why something isn't anywhere near compliance.

Chairman MacDonald asked Principal Almeida how he will embed the new Mission Statement into the everyday activities in the school and how he will get the students to own it. Principal Almeida said the first thing is that the new Mission Statement is now one and a half sentences long and previously it was a paragraph and a half long. The Mission Statement has to be student friendly. The second thing is that the last time the Mission Statement was modified, a parent group (PAC) was surveyed as well as students and staff. This came back, one version versus another. The new Mission Statement that was ratified today has already been e-mailed to the webmaster to be put onto the website. Every letter coming out of the principal's office has the Mission Statement on it at the bottom and hopefully tomorrow it will have the new one on it. As people enter Rocky Hill High School, there is a banner hanging that speaks to this language. Principal Almeida said a media blitz can be done to the school in every hallway and in every classroom but they are waiting for all of the expectations to be ratified. He explained an idea that came out today with regards to the next Student Advisory Committee meeting and how there could be a door decorating contest on the Mission Statement.

Chairman MacDonald referred to the new sign in the front of the high school. The back of this sign is blank and he asked if there is any way to have this Mission Statement printed on the back so that when people are leaving the school, they will be able to see it. Principal Almeida said part of the deal with Sign-a-Rama with regards to the sign is that the Mission Statement will be printed on the back side of the sign.

20. Strategic School Profiles

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan told the Board of Education members that they had a copy of this in their packets. She told the members in the audience that there were extra copies available if anyone was interested in having one.

In May 1990, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Section 10-220c. of the Connecticut General Statutes. This was an Act concerning the reporting of school and district strategic profile reports. This report requires that each local and regional Board of Education submit a strategic school profile report for each school that is under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole. These reports are to be available annually on November 1st and they are to be reported to the Board of Education at its next meeting after that date. Some of the information on this report comes from testing services, the school system or the U.S. Census. The report has four broad areas: student needs; school resources; student performance and school performance. The primary goal of the Strategic School Profiles is to improve schools through informed decision making. The two purposes are to stimulate school improvement through shared information and to serve as an accountability system which informs the public about what is happening in Connecticut schools. There were changes to this document this year and she explained some more about this.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she compared the 2006-2007 Strategic School Profiles to the 2007-2008 Strategic School Profiles and Rocky Hill is still comparing very favorably to the state in most areas. There weren't many significant changes. As was previously reported, there were increases in the CMT scores in Grade Three, Grade Five and Grade Seven and decreases in Grade Four, Grade Six and Grade Eight. The CAPT scores increased in all of the four areas: math, reading, writing and science. The participation in the SATs increased from 83.9% to 91.0% of the graduates tested. The scores remained very similar. Rocky Hill's graduation rate increased from 95.5% to 98.8%. In the cumulative four year dropout rate, there was a decrease from 4.1% to .9%.

There was also a decrease in the annual dropout rate from 1.7% to .8%. There were some discrepancies in the number of instructional hours in language arts at the elementary school and middle school levels. This is being investigated further.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan asked the Board of Education members if any of them had any questions about the Strategic School Profiles. Chairman MacDonald referred to Page 4 of this report with regards to the high school. He said a lot of positives were spoken about of which there are a lot. He referred to the physical fitness percent of students who reached the health standard on all four tests. Rocky Hill is below the state on this. He wasn't looking for an explanation this evening but he told Assistant Superintendent Hourigan that maybe she could provide some input on this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she called the Department Chair with regards to this because this isn't really what they want it to be at the elementary level. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this is being worked on and it is hoping to be

remediated. There is no actual reason as to why this is happening. The state is revising this test and changing some of the activities that the children will be tested on. Chairman MacDonald said this stated Grade Ten and that it wasn't the elementary level. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the children also get tested in Grade Four and there was also a problem there as well as in Grade Ten.

When looking at the advanced placement courses, Chairman MacDonald said while the number of the courses for which the students were tested seems to equate to the state high school that the percentage of Grade Twelve students tested seems to be half at 11.2%. He asked if he should be concerned about this and he asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan what this tells her. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said that she and Principal Almeida were talking about this yesterday so they could decide why they thought this was the case. They thought some of the students weren't interested in taking these tests. These tests are very hard and the schools these students might be applying to may not require them. Chairman MacDonald confirmed that these are students who have taken the course but it appears that they have not taken the test. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is correct. The taking of the test is an option that the student can take and he explained some more about this. Chairman MacDonald wanted to know what the root cause was as to why only half of the students in Rocky Hill compared to the state average are taking this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a very valid question. There are smaller classes in the AP courses as he looks at the high school schedule and he said this is typical. He thinks a districtwide goal of a healthy thriving district is to always increase the number of students who participate in rigorous courses and increase the number of students who are demonstrating success in these courses. This is an area that they would like to continue to focus on because this is an indicator of overall health that they would like to make as part of their districtwide plans for improvement.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if there is a disadvantage to taking the test and not earning the three points. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there is the financial implication because the test is being paid for.

Chairman MacDonald asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan if she can come back with a little more detail with regards to all of this at a later point because he didn't think that Rocky Hill's students were any more fearful than any other students out there. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this would be worth pursuing to find out why.

21. Third Party Administrator of 403(b) Plans

Superintendent Dr. Villar publicly introduced Mr. Frank Connolly. Mr. Connolly recently retired as the Business Manager of the Stonington Public Schools. He has agreed to come on as the Interim Director of Finance and Operations for this district and Superintendent Dr. Villar is very pleased that he has. Interim Finance Director Connolly will be working three to four days per week and he is filling in as the district begins to conduct its search for a new Director of Finance and Operations. Mr. Connolly has a very unique background because he has also served as Town Manager in several locations throughout this state and he has extensive School Business Manager experience. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Interim Finance Director Connolly has been very helpful to him in providing insight as to how a municipality might look at the presentation of a school budget, etc. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Interim Finance Director Connolly's skill set will be very helpful as everyone is coming into perhaps the most difficult budget season.

Superintendent Dr. Villar was very glad that Interim Finance Director Connolly could be present this evening to answer questions on the 403(b) of which there have been some legislative changes. Superintendent Dr. Villar reminded the Board of Education members that this had been brought to the Finance Committee.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Interim Finance Director Connolly to give a quick “snapshot” of what this is. Superintendent Dr. Villar said a motion will be needed from the Board of Education this evening with regards to this so that they can remain in compliance with the law.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he would give a “reader’s digest version” of the 403(b). The IRS adopted new regulations that states that school systems have to start tracking the tax deferred money that is being taken out of employees’ paychecks. He explained what had happened in the past with this money. This is a very complex operation and a result of this CASBO (Connecticut Association of Business Officials) went out and went to a process recommending some vendors. It is being recommended here that ING be selected as a Third Party Administrator to handle the extensive amount of paperwork that goes around in meeting this IRS regulation. There is no financial implication to the Board of Education for this but there is an obligation to follow the IRS regulations on this.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mr. McMonigle asked if the hiring of ING relieves this district of the liability for this or he asked if this district is still ultimately liable for ING’s performance. If this district is liable for ING’s performance, he wanted to know how they would monitor it. Interim Finance Director Connolly explained that they don’t have the fiduciary responsibility on this but ING takes over the administration of this and if questions come up then ING will be on the front line responding to any questions or issues that come up. This district will look to ING as its agent on this in case any questions come up on it. Mr. McMonigle asked if this district would pay or if ING would pay if IRS determines that “somebody dropped the ball”. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he didn’t know what payment there would be and this district would look to ING as its agent. He couldn’t specifically say who would be liable because he wasn’t sure what they would be liable for but he said he would find out. Mr. McMonigle said that would be great because if it is an IRS regulation then somebody somewhere is liable.

Moved by Charles McMonigle, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adopt the Resolution with regards to the Third Party Administrator of 403 (b) Plans.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

23. Monthly Financial Report

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he was looking this over and trying to get a handle with regards to what the Board of Education would like to receive on a monthly basis. He saw the detailed report that went out to the Board of Education and there was so much detail. This time they tried to show one way of looking at the budget and comparing it year-to-date on November 30, 2008 to a year ago on November 30, 2007.

In budgetary operations, history is so important. They picked the object codes which is a common way of looking at the budget. The object code allows people to look at areas to see

where there might be potential problems developing. He told the members of the Board of Education that this can be put in any format they would like to see along with any graphics that they would like to see.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said in looking at the budget, overall it looks like they are fairly close to budget. There are a couple of potential “bumps in the road” on this budget. He will inform the Board of Education every month of potential problems that might develop by the end of the fiscal year. The budget can be adjusted somewhat by doing this month by month and also by doing this, surprises to the Board of Education are avoided. When they get into the month of June, the Board of Education will have a very good handle as to where the budget is, where the numbers are in the budget and where some potential problems might be.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to a few items that are somewhat over budget at this point. These items were legal expenses, health insurance, Special Education and the change in legislation on magnet schools. He gave more detail about each of these items.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he will present a financial report to the Board of Education each month. Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mr. McMonigle referred to the comparative analysis. He said one of his questions with regards to transportation and tuition had been answered. He then referred to the program improvement and he said this is well under-spent compared to last year. Interim Finance Director Connolly said part of this was a change in where the Special Education tuition was changed from. It was previously in the 500 accounts and now it is in the 300 accounts. In the 500 accounts, there is a larger balance. This is more of an internal shift.

Mr. McMonigle referred to Parent Choice and Project Choice. One of the reasons that there was a lot of unbudgeted money last year was that the state didn't get to its total until March or April with the enrollments and bills that Rocky Hill was going to be presented for its students because it was late through the whole process. He has been at meetings where it has been stated that the state is going to attempt to get this data to the district earlier and perhaps as early as mid to late January. Mr. McMonigle asked Interim Finance Director Connolly if he has heard anything on this so that Rocky Hill can have a better handle on what the upcoming tuition bills are going to be for the Choice students. Interim Finance Director Connolly said at this point that he didn't. Superintendent Dr. Villar said in his report for this evening that he will speak a little to some of these changes.

Chairman MacDonald referred to Graph # 5 with regards to transportation and tuition. For 2007-2008, it looks like 1.5% and for 2008-2009, it looks like 12%. Interim Finance Director Connolly explained that this is not expenditures. It is the reciprocal and it is the balance remaining after encumbrances. He said it is one thing if they prefer to see the balances or if they prefer to see the expenditures. He referred to an attachment and in the 500 accounts, there was a balance of \$297,000 in the current fiscal year as opposed to \$37,000 last year. At this point, there is a much larger balance. Chairman MacDonald asked if this is a timing issue due to billing. Interim Finance Director Connolly said a lot of this is timing and when the bills were paid. One of the major changes that has occurred this year compared to a year ago is the change in the Superintendent's Office and the change in the Assistant to the Superintendent. He referred also to what was happening with the processing of the bills when they came in and how there was a change in personnel, etc. The timing in the payment of the bills has been a little slower

and this will get picked up in December. Interim Finance Director Connolly referred again to the changes in the personnel and he said this impacts this.

Chairman MacDonald asked Interim Finance Director Connolly if he has identified any positives with regards to the budget. Interim Finance Director Connolly said no and he said each month he will open up the financial report with how the bottom line looks in the budget. At this point, it is still looking doable.

Chairman MacDonald referred to the employee benefit account and specifically the healthcare cost. He explained some more and he asked if there is a practice in place where this would be looked at on a monthly basis to ensure that if there is termination or changes to this list that these people are immediately removed from this list. He asked if it was known when the last time was that a full reconciliation was done of this and he asked if this would be done during the open enrollment period or if it would be done monthly. His fear is that there could be employees on this for which premiums are being paid for and they are no longer employees of the school district.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he had a lengthy meeting with Rob Lindberg who is the Board of Education's agent on the health insurance. They started to take a look at the expenditures in the health insurance because this is almost the largest line item after salaries. One of the things they spoke about was sending out a survey to the employees during the open enrollment to verify who the school district is insuring and who it is not insuring. He said this is like a positive enrollment and it really needs to be looked at as to who is on the health insurance. The time to do this is during open enrollment which is during the months of April and May. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he and members of his staff and Rob Lindberg sat down to talk about if they can take a look at this to reduce some of the exposure that is on this.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if this meant that at no other time during the year an inquiry could be made as to who is on the policy. He explained about a system that came up recently with regards to additional names of employees who were no longer in the school system but they were listed with the insurance. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this would be easy enough to check on. He asked Vice Chairman Rivard to give the names of these people to him and they will check on this.

Chairman MacDonald personally believed that there should be a periodic process and at a minimum, either quarterly or monthly, the list should be looked at that is being sent to verify and validate if there have been any changes to the employees to ensure that this is consistent. If it is correct then what is happening here is premium costs are being incurred for employees who this district is not obligated to pay insurance on. He thinks it will be well worth it if there is any way that this can be looked at given the tight budget process they are in now and going forward.

24. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Villar reminded people to look at the website. He has a blog and he is going to try to update this by adding something to it after every Board of Education meeting to give the public some information from his perspective.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said most of his report this evening will be focused on recent communications from the Commissioner of Education with regards to some of the legislative proposals for the 2009-2010 school year. There is a great level of trepidation throughout towns and school districts because of discussions around funding given the state's projected deficits. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the Commissioner was asked to take a look at a 10% reduction in the State Board of Education budget being submitted to OPM. They produced some recommendations that they shared with school districts with regards to where they would like to go. The Commissioner in the most recent communication implied that the State Board of Education would like to go in a direction where ECS grant funds are not cut to districts. Three proposals (Option A, Option B and Option C) were put forward by the State Board of Education and he said what these are. Option C which is a reduction in a great deal of grants and preserving ECS is the option that the State Board of Education prefers and is recommending at this point according to a letter by the Commissioner. To balance their budget, they are proposing the closing of a state technical school which will save the state approximately \$8,000,000. They are also looking at eliminating some of the smaller grants that are made to districts throughout the state. Superintendent Dr. Villar guesses that the logic behind this is to try to minimize the impact across the board. He took a look for informational purposes to see what a 6% reduction in ECS would mean for Rocky Hill. This would be over \$400,000 cut in monies that would come to this town. He anticipates that if the town's ECS monies are reduced that this will negatively affect the Board of Education's budget requests. It seems to be more advantageous for Rocky Hill that ECS may not be cut. He said none of this is set in stone.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to things that are of great concern for him that are being put forth from the State Department of Education. There seems to be a shifting of responsibility in some of the funding. He explained more about this. One area of great concern for him given Rocky Hill's geographical location are the changes in the Project Choice Program. Currently, Rocky Hill has approximately twenty-six students who are participating successfully in School Choice and attending Rocky Hill public schools from Hartford public schools. This is managed by CREC. The state is proposing to make a determination on its estimation of district capacity. This will be the number of seats that they feel Rocky Hill has empty based on what their interpretation of class size should be and the sizes of Rocky Hill's schools. The state is asking that the Commissioner be empowered to inform Rocky Hill as to the number of students it would take from Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this would be of great concern because Rocky Hill has historically worked very hard to maintain a certain level of class size and he didn't think it would be very palatable having an outside authority indicate to Rocky Hill what its class size should be.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said it seems like the State Department of Education is seeing the Choice Program as the vehicle that might help desegregate Hartford public schools more successfully than the Magnet School Program. The Magnet School Program has cost millions and millions of dollars and it hasn't had the results that they are looking for as far as desegregation of the schools. The changing in the grant formula for School Choice is being looked at. Currently, Rocky Hill receives approximately \$2,500 per student for twenty-six Choice students who attend school in this town. The state is looking at proposing a base grant for each receiving district. There would be an incentive with regards to districts receiving a higher amount of money in the grant if that district has more students attending it. A tiered system would be created.

Superintendent Dr. Villar spoke about the proposal to eliminate the parent pay option for part time interdistrict magnet schools. A great percentage of students from Rocky Hill who participate in Magnet Schools do this on a part time basis either at the School of Fine Arts or at GHAMAS. Currently, many of the students are enrolling and their parents are paying for a portion of the tuition. As proposed, the state would eliminate that option for parents to pay and the bill would come to the district. This would mean that approximately \$4,000 per student could be shifted to the district. These potential changes in the legislation could impact the budget in the future.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there continues to be on the table, the increase in high school graduation requirements. At the state level, the plan is to implement this at twenty-five districts that volunteer to pilot this program. The timeline for this has been pushed out for two years and the statewide requirement to implement these graduation requirements would begin in the 2015-2016 school year. Superintendent Dr. Villar stressed that the Commissioner seems to be maintaining the line on the ECS funds in their recommendation. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his concern is that there are a lot of small things that are shifting costs to the district. He referred to the BEST Program and said the funding for this is gone this year. Quite possibly there will be requirements in place and these will be “shouldered” by districts. A lot is on the radar and none of it is in stone. Superintendent Dr. Villar told the Board of Education members that as they begin building their budget and as they begin their discussions for next year’s finances that they have to be mindful of all of these changes

Vice Chairman Rivard asked Superintendent Dr. Villar how a student is currently accepted into a Magnet School. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there were changes in the legislation that began on July 1, 2008. He explained how a student is currently accepted. Vice Chairman Rivard confirmed that it is just application and acceptance. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is correct. Vice Chairman Rivard questioned if the shifting to the district is probably just the state’s method to boost its own enrollment. Superintendent Dr. Villar said some of the Magnet Schools are run by CREC and some are run by Hartford. By taking the barrier away with regards to the concept of taking away the requirement of a Board of Education negotiating with the management firm of the Magnet School, it has made it possible for more families to participate. The enrollment has been increased in these schools because the families don’t need a Board of Education now to say that it supports an agreement that the students participate in this program. The parents can now do this independently and they are responsible for transportation. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if this is in the new legislation. Superintendent Dr. Villar said as the law is written currently that the district is not obligated to transport a student who attends a Magnet School. Many students are transported to Rocky Hill to CREC Programs and there is a grant that helps to pay for these because these are larger programs.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if a student is accepted through Choice into the “Rocky Hill Magnet School”, if this district gets a \$2,600 reimbursement and if a student leaves to go to go to a Magnet school that it would cost \$3,400. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it depends on the school and he mentioned once again how this district gets approximately \$2,500 currently per Choice student. There are some tuitions for Magnet Schools that cost \$7,500. A financial burden is created. He explained about the Hartford area Superintendents Organization which he meets with regularly and he said that every district in the Hartford area is running a budget deficit in this line item as a result of this change in this legislation. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if this district’s responsibility for the reimbursement wouldn’t be limited and if it would be

\$3,400 or \$7,500. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this district is legally responsible for the tuition. Vice Chairman Rivard said this sounded fair.

Mrs. Vargas referred to the tuition that this district receives from the Magnet School and she questioned if that is their per pupil cost because the \$2,500 doesn't come anywhere near this district's per pupil cost. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is an issue between Superintendents and the Commissioner in the State Department of Education because there is no district in this state that educates a child for \$2,500 per year. The rationale with the School Choice Program initially was that extra empty seats were being filled. If this program is shifted and forcing large number of students then they are talking about changing the percentage or the amount of money the districts would get for each student. This would be based upon a sliding scale for the numbers of students. They want to make this so that districts would get more money if they take more students. They recognize that if districts take one hundred additional students then they will need additional support staff, faculty, etc. to support this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his position along with many of his peers' position in the Superintendents Organization is that the amount of money that is being proposed still wouldn't cover this and problems would be created for the districts.

25. Board Chair's Report

Chairman MacDonald said he attended the Board of Education Chair roundtable at CABE this week along with fourteen other Chairs of the Boards of Education. He will send out notes from this meeting to the members of this Board of Education for consideration with regards to some things that other Board of Educations are doing. What is common for virtually everyone is that as they are going through their 2009-2010 budget, they are looking at various sensitivity level budgets which he explained about. He said at this meeting there was also significant discussion over the wellness program needs in the high school as well as large grants that are available and he knows that this district will be pursuing them.

Chairman MacDonald said there was also quite a bit of discussion about the formalization in Board meetings over the approval, through formal motions and approvals, of textbooks and all curriculum materials which include electronic. As the Curriculum Committee is being talked through, if there are new textbooks then they are legally obligated to approve the textbooks as well as other teaching materials used in the curriculum.

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____