



**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	March 13, 2009
LOCATION	Rocky Hill Town Hall Council Chambers
DATE OF MEETING	March 19, 2009
TIME MEETING STARTED	7:00 p.m. (Executive Session started at 6:47 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. Rene (Skip) Rivard
3. Nadine Bell	4. Raffaella Calciano-Coler
5. Maria Mennella	6. Frank Morse
7. Catherine Vargas	8. Charles Wisnioski
9. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar	10. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM   5   QUORUM PRESENT  Yes  No

**TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES**

1st MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to go into Executive Session at 6:47 p.m. for the purposes of discussing the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers (Long Term Substitutes). (For the Executive Session, Raffaella Calciano-Coler, Charles McMonigle and Maria Mennella were absent. For the regular meeting, Raffaella Calciano-Coler and Maria Mennella were present.)**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

2nd MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to come out of Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

3rd MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Nadine Bell, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the January 22, 2009 Board of Education Budget Workshop (Working Notes only), the February 9, 2009 Board of Education Budget Workshop, the February 12, 2009 Board of Education meeting, the February 12, 2009 Board of Education Executive Session meeting (Minutes only), the February 23, 2009 Policy Committee meeting, the February 26, 2009 Curriculum Committee meeting and the March 4, 2009 Board of Education special meeting (Minutes only).**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

4th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to accept the Consent Calendar of March 19, 2009.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

5th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Charles Wisnioski, seconded by Maria Mennella, to accept the proposed Rocky Hill Lacrosse Booster Club sponsored Lacrosse Team under the terms that Mr. Casasanta has presented to the Board of Education and that he will work closely with all of the Board of Education personnel to achieve its success and that the Parks and Recreation Department will be part of the field use decision and that there will be a report back at the end of the season so that the Board of Education knows how they did.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

6th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Charles Wisnioski, that the contract of employment of the following non-tenured employees who are in long term substitute positions not be renewed for the coming school year upon its expiration before or at the end of the current school year and that the superintendent of schools notify these individuals in writing of this action: Sandra Buonannata, Jennifer Clark, Francesco Garzone, Tanya Granger, Christina Hatzikostas, Ana Homick, Molly McGuire, Megan McKinnon, Kelly Moore, Michael Stevens and Kelly Walsh. (Frank Morse was not present for this motion or for the rest of this meeting's motions.)**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Rivard, Vargas and Wisnioski  
ABSTAINED: MacDonald**

**MOTION CARRIED**

7th MOTION       Passed       Failed       Tabled

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Nadine Bell, to approve the Rocky Hill Paraprofessional Contract.**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, MacDonald, Mennella, Rivard and Vargas**  
**ABSTAINED: Wisnioski**

**MOTION CARRIED**

8th MOTION       Passed       Failed       Tabled

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Catherine Vargas, to approve the Rocky Hill Nurses Contract.**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, MacDonald, Mennella, Rivard and Vargas**  
**ABSTAINED: Wisnioski**

**MOTION CARRIED**

9th MOTION       Passed       Failed       Tabled

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 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: 8:52 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: \_\_\_\_\_.

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
EXECUTIVE SESSION OF MARCH 19, 2009**

**Members Present:** William MacDonald (Chairman)  
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)  
Nadine Bell  
Frank Morse  
Catherine Vargas  
Charles Wisnioski

**Also Present:** Dr. Jeffrey Villar (Superintendent)

**Members Absent:** Raffaella Calciano-Coler  
Charles McMonigle  
Maria Mennella

An Executive Session of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 19, 2009 in the Executive Conference Room off of Council Chambers in the Rocky Hill Town Hall.

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to go into Executive Session at 6:47 p.m. for the purposes of discussing the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers (Long Term Substitutes).**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to come out of Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MEETING OF MARCH 19, 2009**

**Members Present:** William MacDonald (Chairman)  
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)  
Nadine Bell  
Raffaella Calciano-Coler  
Maria Mennella  
Frank Morse (Left at 8:17 p.m.)  
Catherine Vargas  
Charles Wisnioski

**Also Present:** Dr. Jeffrey Villar (Superintendent)  
Marian Hourigan (Assistant Superintendent)

**Members Absent:** Charles McMonigle  
Frank Connolly (Finance Director)

A meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 19, 2009 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.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Moved by Nadine Bell, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the January 22, 2009 Board of Education Budget Workshop (Working Notes only), the February 9, 2009 Board of Education Budget Workshop, the February 12, 2009 Board of Education meeting, the February 12, 2009 Board of Education Executive Session meeting (Minutes only), the February 23, 2009 Policy Committee meeting, the February 26, 2009 Curriculum Committee meeting and the March 4, 2009 Board of Education special meeting (Minutes only).**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated the staff of West Hill School. Two letters on their behalf had been received. One letter was from Senator Christopher Dodd who extended warm congratulations to the school for being one of the President's Challenge State Champion Schools for 2007-2008. Superintendent Dr. Villar read part of this letter aloud. The other letter was from the Connecticut Humane Society which asked for their sincere appreciation to be accepted for the donations of dog and cat toys, etc. Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar thanked West Hill School and said they did a good job.

## **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

### **Meeting Open to Public**

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak about any items that were not listed on this evening's agenda. Mr. Scott Coleman, 200 Cold Spring Road, R.H. spoke about his \$100,000 technology challenge. He is convinced that the schools could be saving thousands of taxpayer dollars with more prudent technology strategy and with a different vendor selection without any noticeable sacrifice in student benefit. He presented Superintendent Dr. Villar with a check in the amount of \$10,000 which was made out to the Rocky Hill Schools Technology Department. Mr. Coleman told everyone what his conditions are with regards to this check. He told them the money is theirs if the schools aren't able to be saved between \$10,000 to \$100,000 over the upcoming budget cycle after following his technology strategy and vendor selection.

Chairman MacDonald asked if anyone else from the public wished to speak at this time. No one did.

### **Report of Student Representatives**

Principal Almeida said they had something a little different for this evening and the members of the High School Council weren't going to be giving a report. He introduced two of the seventeen students who had taken part in Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans during February break. These students were Teresa Gallo and Rachel Novello. He also introduced Bonnie LaPorte, who is a first year Spanish teacher at Rocky Hill High School, and he said she was a chaperone. Mr. Fortier, who had organized this trip and who also was a chaperone, was not able to be present at this evening's meeting because he was presently in New York with the newspaper students. Teresa Gallo said she was one of the lead organizers of this trip. They started working on this in September and they had fundraised all of their money to go on this trip. The students only had to pay for their hotel rooms and for their airline tickets. She explained what they did for fundraising. In New Orleans, the hotel they stayed at had taken ten percent of their rate off of the rooms every night and local businesses donated lunches. They worked with Habitat for Humanity in the upper ninth ward which is in the Musician's Village. They started with a house that only had floorboards and they built window frames and door frames, etc. There was one Habitat advisor and everything they did was hand labor because they weren't old enough to use power tools. They met so many nice people who gave them connections for next year if they want to go back. Local businesses there were amazing. A thank you card, along with a picture of everyone who had gone on this trip, was sent to all of the businesses throughout Rocky Hill that had donated money to them. Teresa Gallo passed pictures around to the Board of Education members. She said it was a good trip and it was worth spending months planning for this. They are hoping to get more support for next year and they are going to try to talk to more local businesses. She hopes they go back again next year and she thanked the members of the Board of Education for allowing them to go there. Principal Almeida introduced two more students who had gone on this trip. These students were Harsida Desai and Britainee Davis. Ms. LaPorte said this was a great trip which was primarily made up of female students. They really showed what they could do. She thinks the students got a lot out of this and they put a lot of work into it. She would like to have this continued in the future.

Principal Almeida related one story that had happened on this trip. He said it was an amazing trip and he thanked the Board of Education for having allowed the students to experience this.

Chairman MacDonald asked for the Board of Education's compliments to be passed on to the rest of the students who had gone to New Orleans. He asked Superintendent Dr. Villar to have one or two of the pictures that they just saw put onto the website because they are outstanding photographs of a great project.

### **Report of Students from Griswold Middle School**

Principal Watson introduced Gregson Curtin. Gregson Curtin said he was a sixth grader and he was Secretary of the Student Council at Griswold Middle School. The eighth grade students are gearing up for the annual field trip to Washington, D.C. from May 26, 2009 to May 29, 2009. The students participating in this have to be in good academic standing and they have to abide by accepting behavior standards throughout the school year. He mentioned what this field trip will include. March is Youth Arts month. Art students from Griswold Middle School and Rocky Hill High School have their work exhibited at the Cora J. Belden Library from March 12, 2009 to mid-April. He mentioned what types of artwork this includes. Ms. Barbara Wysocki from the Cora J. Belden Library had just spoken to the sixth graders in Family Consumer Science about the importance of books and young children. Students are going to bake and prepare banana breads that will be donated to St. Vincent DePaul Place in Middletown. This is a great community service project.

In the Music Department, several eighth grade students joined the Rocky Hill Royal Blues Marching Band this past fall. They have practiced with this group. They have performed in the band competitions and field shows as well as in parades. Seven students participated in the Northern Region Middle School Festival which was held on March 6, 2009 and March 7, 2009 in Burlington, CT. Students had been chosen from every grade for this. Louisa Acca and Rushi Shah were chosen for the orchestra. Chris Castanho, Jacob Stacy, Kristin Cancelliere, Prachi Shah and Peter Kohanski were chosen for the chorus. The Griswold Middle School Jazz Band will be performing with the Rocky Hill High School Jazz Band on March 28, 2009 at the annual pasta supper at St. James Church. The Griswold Middle School Concert Band will be practicing marching in preparation of the Memorial Day Parade. This band will also be performing the Star Spangled Banner with the Rocky Hill High School Royal Blues Marching Band at the Memorial Day Parade.

The annual spelling bee had taken place on February 24, 2009. The Griswold Middle School community congratulated all of the talented spellers. These included James Wang, Prachi Shah, Aasim Shaikh, Brian Kozak, Alex Kocaqi and Jacob Tvaronaitis. Prachi Shah was the Griswold Middle School Champion. The three runners up were James Wang, Alex Kocaqi and Jacob Tvaronaitis. All of these winners have received a free one year online subscription to the Students Education of the Britannica. Prachi Shah went on to compete at Southern Connecticut State University in the Regional Spelling Bee on March 17, 2009 and she placed fourth in this.

In the Foreign Language Department, forty-one students took a national test. One hundred and twenty-four seventh and eighth grade Spanish students are participating in the National Spanish Exam the first week of April. Results from both of these tests will be announced in the future.

Griswold Middle School had participated in a Unified Sports basketball tournament on March 13, 2009 at Farmington High School. Out of the ten teams at this, Griswold Middle School took the silver medal.

With regards to technology education news, eighth graders at Griswold Middle School were exploring manufacturing processing in tech ed class by building cell phone charger stations. This tied into the eighth grade Social Studies unit on the Industrial Revolution. One of these cell phone charger stations was given to each of the Board of Education members. The tools that the students had used to make the cell phone charger stations were mentioned.

Mr. Tom McCabe spoke about some good news events that have happened at Rocky Hill High School. He referred to the High School Arts Recognition Award. Two students were recommended by the Music, Art and Drama Department. These two students are Jacob Skrzypiec and William Pazdziora. They will be honored in April at the Aqua Turf. Mr. McCabe congratulated these two students. He referred to the CABA Award. Polls were sent out to teachers at the high school. Jacob Skrzypiec was the male winner and Gabrielle Franza was the female winner. This award is based on leadership and the students' roles within the school. These students will be brought to the Board of Education at a later date so that they can be honored. Mr. McCabe said the Unified Team played at Berlin High School last night and took the gold. This team is coached by Mr. Dave Coyne, Ms. Stephanie Kelly and Ms. Sandy Bonfiglio. Mr. McCabe congratulated that team and the coaches.

## **1. Consent Calendar**

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Nadine Bell, to accept the Consent Calendar of March 19, 2009.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **2. Personnel and Negotiations**

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said the Personnel and Negotiations Committee negotiated three contracts. They worked with some very competent, caring and dedicated professionals and she thinks the public should know this. They are very proud of the work that is being done and they are very supportive. Sometimes the general wage increase doesn't reflect this. It is because of the economy today and not because of the appreciation that there is for the staff members. The nurses signed a four year agreement. The general wage increase for year one is 2.9%, for year two it is 2.9% and for year three as well as for year four it is 3%. In all of the three contracts, they were able to get language that will allow them to look for insurance carriers and this is a plus for them for negotiations in the future. Paraprofessionals have a three year contract that will be effective June 30, 2008 which is backdated. Their general wage increase is 3% for the first year, 3% for the second year and 2.9% for the third year. The contract for the secretaries is a three year contract. Their general wage increase is 3% for the first year, 3% for the second year and 2.9% for the third year.

### **3. Policy**

Mrs. Mennella said this Committee had met on February 23, 2009 in order to learn more about CAFE's policy review services. It appears that CAFE's customized policy review program would be a good option for this Board of Education as a means of reviewing and revising Board policies. This program would cost this district approximately \$3,000 per year for approximately four years. The end result will be a revised policy manual that is up-to-date in an electronic searchable text format. This will be maintained by CAFE. She said Superintendent Dr. Villar will give more detail about this later on.

### **4. Finance**

No report was given.

### **5. Curriculum**

Mr. Wisnioski said a Curriculum Committee had been held. He advised anyone who is interested with regards to what happened at this to read the Minutes from this online. The most broadly discussed issue was the Summer Reading Program as it is being studied and evolved. He believed that Superintendent Dr. Villar or Assistant Superintendent Hourigan would address this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said there is a wonderful Committee that has been working for quite awhile on the Summer Reading Program. This Committee is comprised of teachers, students, parents and administrators. The current Summer Reading Program was looked at and they looked at ways that they could possibly improve student participation. Their first ideas were brought to the Curriculum Committee which added some suggestions and these have been brought back to the Summer Reading Committee. They are looking forward to discussing this again at this month's Curriculum Committee meeting. A number of the representatives from the Summer Reading Committee are planning on attending the Curriculum Committee meeting. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they have had some nice discussions and they are looking forward to doing some nice things.

### **6. Professional Development**

No report was given.

### **7. Facilities**

Mr. Wisnioski said a Joint Facilities Committee meeting had been held. Due to the absence of one of the Councilors, there will be another Joint Facilities Committee meeting on March 23, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. The continuing engagement of an Architect (Friar Associates) and a Construction Manager (O & G Industries, Inc.) is being addressed. A frank discussion had been held at the meeting with regards to whether they can afford to do anything. They feel obligated that they must continue to plan and anticipate the issues that need to be addressed given the conditions of the schools. The referendum had been turned down by the taxpayers but there still is a need and there are things that need to be resolved. This is in combination with the Board of Education reassessing the concept of all day kindergarten and other issues such as air conditioning, etc. There are various different proposals that include two

elementary schools and three elementary schools, etc. There are extensive Minutes with regards to this where all sides are presented. The economic condition is recognized and it is not likely that there will be a referendum in the immediate future but the need still exists. Mr. Wisnioski said they welcome anyone who wants to see what they are talking about to contact the Superintendent of Schools so that they can get into the schools when the children are not there. This district has buildings that go back to 1929. There are no immediate answers but they are looking for the continuing discussion of this.

Mr. Morse referred to a memo that had been sent from Superintendent Dr. Villar to the members of the Board of Education with regards to the facility needs of the Rocky Hill Public Schools. Mr. Morse said the Board of Education had submitted a budget to the town and this was part of the budget. He said this had been amended without the Board of Education all agreeing on it. Chairman MacDonald said he amended this. He added two items onto this because in his judgment it was a Scrivener's Error. One of these items has to do with football locker rooms and the other item is the refinishing of the basketball court in the high school. In the past, there used to be a more detailed listing of facility needs that went along with the transmittal. He said the memo that Mr. Morse is referring to is an addendum to his transmittal that he had sent for the budget. Chairman MacDonald said these two items he just referred to have always been historically discussed with the town. The Town Manager has expressed a concern to him and to Superintendent Dr. Villar given the tough economic times everyone is in. The Town Manager said the Facilities Committee needs to prioritize and to make sure they are in agreement with facilities. Chairman MacDonald said he will then ask for this to come in front of the Board of Education so that they can stand in front of the Town Council and say what the items are that they need done. He told Mr. Morse that if anyone is at fault it is him because he is trying to make the list more inclusive. In Chairman MacDonald's opinion, it was an error of not having these two items in the budget from the past.

## **8. Technology**

No report was given.

## **9. Transportation/Accommodations**

No report was given.

At this point, Chairman MacDonald asked Principal Almeida if he wanted to mention the Mission Statement. Chairman MacDonald said this had been part of the Consent Calendar for this evening's meeting that had been adopted without a lot of discussion. Principal Almeida introduced the NEASC Steering Committee Chairpersons to the Board of Education. He introduced Ms. Stephanie Kelly as well as Ms. Raisa Bublick, who has been on several NEASC ten year cycles.

Ms. Bublick said she wanted to go over an overview of the Mission Statement. The Mission Statement represents their core values of learning. This is a living document. They began revising the ten year old Mission Statement and expectations approximately three years ago. They knew that they had to reflect on very specific items (i.e. students' needs). They also had to base their revisions and changes on the most current research data and the trends in education. They have to adhere to the current national and state standards. Faculty, staff, students, parents

and community members were with them as they went through this process. The changes were finished this year. She told the members of the Board of Education that they have these changes in their packets. There are three main components in the Mission Statement as she sees it. The educational goals are very clearly articulated and students understand these. The list of the educational expectations is very specific and yet they are broad in scope. This meets the needs of every student who is graduating from Rocky Hill High School.

Ms. Kelly referred to the academic expectations as well as the social and civic expectations. She told the members of the Board of Education that they have a pack of revised schoolwide rubrics as part of their packets. This was the second part of this process that was put into place. For each academic expectation, there have to be schoolwide rubrics as required by NEASC. These aren't needed for the social and civic expectations. There had been some rubrics that had been in place and that the school had been utilizing. There were differences in opinions as to how those were working so a fellow educator came in to review the rubrics that were being utilized. This fellow educator gave really great pointers as to how to revise the existing rubrics so that they were more teacher and student friendly. A Committee was created that was comprised of cross department representation as well as people who were already versed in writing the rubrics. Many hours were spent revising every single rubric so that they became more user friendly for students and teachers. At different faculty meetings, these rubrics were "tweaked" a little by staff. She told the members of the Board of Education that the rubrics they had in front of them were voted on and accepted by all of the faculty at the high school. She went over what the point of the rubrics is as well as what the reason is behind them. They are hoping over time that the students will become more familiar with the rubrics as they are used throughout the school, throughout the curriculum and throughout all different kinds of classes. This is an assessment tool and they are hoping that students will be able to meet the seven academic expectations through the use of the schoolwide rubrics by the time they have graduated and have gone through the Rocky Hill Public Schools for twelve years. They are currently in the process of using these new rubrics and the teachers are testing them out to see how user friendly they really are. At their next Professional Development Day, they have allocated some time to get some feedback from the staff as to how this is working. If any changes need to be made to this working document then those will be done at that time and they will continue to do so as they need to. She said they were present this evening to share with the Board of Education what they have been working on for the last year plus. They also wanted to thank the Board of Education for the professional development time it allocated to them. Ms. Kelly promised that they have utilized every single second of this time passionately and then some. They are very grateful for the time that has been given to them. The faculty was eager for this to be presented this evening because they are very proud of how far they have come as well as everything that has been accomplished within the last year. A lot of work has gone into the documents that the Board of Education members had before them. This has been a long process and they have a ways to go but they are doing well.

Ms. Kelly said they are right on track with regards to timelines and deadlines. They have frequent correspondence with the NEASC people and they are right on track if not a little ahead of the game in some areas. With the Board of Education's recognition this evening of the hard work and progress, they hope to continue to move forward and prepare for the site visit which will be in October 2010.

Vice Chairman Rivard said there is student self-assessment in the rubric. He asked how frequently students prepare those. He asked how they document this and how it is reviewed. Ms. Kelly said this will be up to the teachers. This has just been put into place now and rubrics are an important component of NEASC. She said the importance of this is to see how the students are rating themselves in terms of how the teachers are rating them. This gets the students more involved in the learning process. The teachers are supposed to be utilizing this as much as possible hopefully. Vice Chairman Rivard said he is very curious and would like a follow-up on this.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **10. CAS Award Presentation to Griswold Middle School**

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had the pleasure of recognizing the faculty and Principal Watson of Griswold Middle School for a job that was well done. Griswold Middle School functions at a very high level as seen through analysis of the student achievement data historically. In his estimation, Superintendent Dr. Villar said one of the reasons that the school is so successful is because of the power of the collaboration of the teachers at the school. He asked Principal Watson to come forward. Superintendent Dr. Villar read the CAS (Connecticut Association of Schools) Award aloud. He congratulated Principal Watson for outstanding leadership and the staff at Griswold Middle School for a job that was very well done.

Principal Watson thanked Superintendent Dr. Villar and CAS for this award. Principal Watson also thanked the Board of Education because over the few years that he has been principal at the middle school, they added through the budget process a lot of things to help them out with the teaming process. Some Special Education help was added most recently. Every team has a Special Education teacher on it. Also, the Board of Education gave the Strategic Literacy Program a few years back that has allowed them to meet the needs of a lot of children in the Language Arts area. He recognized some teachers who were present this evening to support this award. He introduced Louise Adamow, who is the team leader in Grade Seven. Melissa Whitaker is the strategic literacy person. Rosemary Lentini is one of the Guidance Counselors. Andy Benson and Steve Patarini are the two tech ed guys. There are two teams per grade at the middle school. There is also the Unified Arts team which meets daily and they interact with the other academic teams. Griswold Middle School has been used as a model recently by NELMS (New England League of Middle Schools). People from throughout New England have visited the school to look at the schedule and to see how things are done at the middle school. Last spring, Griswold Middle School was chosen as a NELMS spotlight school. Principal Watson gives most of the credit to the people who work at Griswold Middle School because without them doing their job the way they do it, this wouldn't happen. This is how the children benefit from great people.

**11. Presentation of CPR Kits**

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Mr. Sweeney to join him at the podium. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked the Rocky Hill/Wethersfield Elks Lodge and the Larry Pontbriant Athletic Safety Fund for their generous donation of CPR kits to the public schools. Diane Rowe, who is the Exalted Ruler from the Rocky Hill/Wethersfield Elks Lodge, was introduced. She was extremely generous with the fundraising that allowed the purchase of an AED for another high school and forty CPR kits that were being presented this evening. From the American Heart Association, Michelle Nicholson and Kay Moore were introduced.

Mr. Sweeney said a lot of the fundraising was to educate people on something that is very important and dear to his heart. Mr. Pontbriant was a friend of his and he lost his only child in August of 2007 when he collapsed at a cross country event that was associated with the high school. This child passed away from cardiac arrest. Over two hundred high school students across the United States die of cardiac arrest. Seventy percent could be saved within the first five minutes if an AED was available. Mr. Sweeney said they decided to do something about this one school at a time. They had a fundraiser. The Elks Club was very generous as were the Rocky Hill and Wethersfield business communities. He said Superintendent Dr. Villar was very appreciative and great to work with. Mr. Sweeney said they were present this evening to present the CPR kits. Chairman MacDonald thanked them very much.

**12. Lacrosse/Rocky Hill Lacrosse Boosters Club Proposal**

Mr. Chris Casasanta said lacrosse is in many towns around Rocky Hill. They want to try to get it to Rocky Hill and perpetuate the whole thing. He hasn't even gotten this together at the high school level and he is already being approached by a lot of parents who want to start a youth program. The hardest thing has been the economic downturn that everyone has gone through. As a Boosters Club, they understand what the Board of Education is going through. He told the Board of Education that there are pretty tough decisions that they have to make. He said the Boosters Club has had some grants that he told them about in the fall and they have raised some money since then. They have in excess of \$10,000 right now. He proposed a budget earlier that he gave to Superintendent Dr. Villar. Mr. Casasanta thinks they are well within what they originally thought they were going to be able to do and he has some extra money in case other things come up which he knows they are going to. He just needed the "go ahead" to say this can be done. He has worked closely with the Athletic Director and the principal of the high school. They have had some great meetings. Mr. Casasanta thinks they are very supportive and they have given him their blessing. He is looking to the Board of Education for its blessing. They have also gotten the support of the Town Manager and Parks and Recreation. He has been assured that there are fields they can use. The cost of lining the fields has been discussed and this has been covered also. He doesn't think they need to ask anybody for any money anywhere and he hopes this is going to be the big sell. They are going to be self-sufficient for the next two years. He said everybody is in this for the long haul. Between donations and fundraisers, they are planning for the upcoming year and he doesn't think they are going to have a problem keeping this going.

Mr. Casasanta said there were approximately seventy children who had expressed interest in this program the last time that he was before the Board of Education. This is one of the reasons he is pursuing this. He has talked to most of the children who are interested and he feels committed to them with regards to being the one who has to get this together for them. He said even if they can just get a few scrimmages in before the end of the school year is really all they are looking to do. They want to establish the program. Sign-up sheets are already prepared. He thinks this will spark enthusiasm that will carry this into next year and he is expecting a big turnout for next year.

Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in high schools and this has the largest scholarship ability of high school athletes in the country. Mr. Casasanta said they are going for a coed program. Right now they are getting a lot of feedback from boys. If they get enough interest from girls, he would like to “hit the ground running” with both of these this season. If the girls don’t show up as far as participation is concerned then they will just make sure they have this in place for next year.

Chairman MacDonald asked Mr. McCabe to come to the podium and to give his “flavor” towards this conversation. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. McCabe that if the Board of Education was to approve this, this evening, then he would be responsible for helping coordinate this and he wanted to get his insight.

Mr. McCabe said from his perspective at the high school, there are two sides to this. This would be a great thing for the students because it adds another activity but from the position of the high school, there is no money to do something like this. The Boosters Club went out and did this fundraising and they said they can self-support this. The Board of Education is going to have to decide where they want to take this. Mr. McCabe said he can oversee this and that is not a problem. This is something as an Athletic Director and Student Activities Director that he will make sure he will oversee. He said he made it clear to the group that they can’t support budget wise a program like this in this tough economic time. He told them to make sure that they self-fund this over the next couple of years and if the money doesn’t show up then the program might drop. The sport itself is fast growing and it is very popular. They are going into a league where lacrosse is played. It would be up to the members of the Board of Education if they feel this group can self-fund this over a couple of years to have them go for it. Mr. McCabe said from his perspective that it will probably be him just overseeing support as far as making sure that everything is okay for the children. This probably will encompass a lot of children in the next couple of years. Mr. McCabe said his position is that he wouldn’t be here unless he was for expanding activities for children.

Chairman MacDonald opened this up to the Board of Education for comments and for questions. Mrs. Bell said she had two questions for Mr. McCabe. Mrs. Bell asked what Title IX implications this would have if this was to be opened up at the high school and some girls signed up but there weren’t enough to field a team. Mr. McCabe said they would have to check into this. This wouldn’t officially be a sport and it would be coming in as a club. They would have to sit down and talk about whether this can be a smaller program for the girls and a larger program for the boys to start off. If this becomes full fledged down the road then they will be hitting a Title IX issue. Mrs. Bell referred to the time requirements for the Athletic Trainer. She said the amount had to be doubled in the upcoming budget. Twenty thousand dollars had to be

added to accommodate the current students. She asked where they are with this if there is an addition of thirty students all of a sudden who potentially need to see the Athletic Trainer. Mr. McCabe said the Athletic Trainer works on an hourly basis from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The practice times for lacrosse would have to be within these parameters and he is pretty sure they can make this work. As long as they are done practicing by 6:00 p.m. then they are covered. Mrs. Bell said she had some procedural questions for Superintendent Dr. Villar but she would let some other members of the Board of Education speak first.

Mr. Morse said he is all for adding activities but this is a tough economic time. He mentioned to Mr. Casasanta how two years down the road when they want to take this to a sport instead of a club that he would have to realize if the Board of Education can't support him financially at that time. Mr. Casasanta said they would really have to increase their fundraising then. Mr. Morse said he didn't want the burden on the Town of Rocky Hill in this economic time. Mr. Casasanta said he can't foresee two years from now but what he is hoping for is that the excitement that he feels is brewing actually does transpire by getting this program started then in the next two years there will be a lot of businesses and a lot of parents who will want to support this just like football. Some people who were pivotal in forming the football program in this town have been helping out tremendously with this. Mr. Casasanta said maybe he will want to start off with lacrosse the way that football started off. People volunteer and donate as much as possible because they know there is a lot of excitement in town for football and he feels that lacrosse will have the same effect.

Mrs. Vargas said she had two procedural questions. She was concerned from the Board of Education perspective on the liability with regards to the transportation when it is being said that parents are being relied on. She would hate for there to be a problem for any of the students who are traveling to some place because even if it is a club, it is on school time and they are traveling for the school. Mr. McCabe said if this does happen and it is linked into a high school club then the bus transportation will have to be worked on. Chairman MacDonald told Mrs. Vargas that for the Golf Team currently, the students self-transport for their practices. Chairman MacDonald said they just approved on the Consent Agenda this evening for the Girls' Softball Team to go to an away camp self-transported. Chairman MacDonald referred to what Mrs. Vargas had asked and he said he would prefer for a bus to take the children and he thinks that everyone would.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a very prudent question and the Board of Education Policy does address this. Certain procedures need to be followed to be sure the district is insulated to any liability and this is what they are doing. Mr. McCabe added an extra layer with the golf students and there is a sign-off permission slip for them. No one wants to see a tragedy. Superintendent Dr. Villar prefers if at all possible that the Board of Education control the transportation whenever they can. When he was reviewing the budget for the final time today, he placed a call to Mr. McCabe to ensure sure that the numbers would work. They had a conversation and felt that they would be able to fall within reason to have bus transportation for the group.

Mrs. Bell asked if it is the Board of Education or the group that has the \$700 in reserve. Mr. Casasanta said the group does. Mr. Casasanta said he worked closely with Mr. McCabe and Principal Almeida and they explained the importance of the liability. Mr. Casasanta said he got a few donations from a few people and he is hoping to come up with even more money to cover

any busing needs. From discussions with the Town Manager and the Parks and Recreation Department, they were told that they could possibly use McVicar Field.

Mrs. Vargas asked Mr. Casasanta if he is looking for the Board of Education to approve this as a club and she asked him if they are ready to go and get other clubs. Mrs. Vargas asked Mr. Casasanta what their next steps are in the timeline for this. Mr. Casasanta said he is a phone call away from getting all of the jerseys, helmets and all of the equipment. The children will be asked to provide the “under equipment” for themselves (i.e. shoulder pads, etc.). The children will also get their own sticks. Mr. Casasanta said he can get this going pretty quickly on his end. He needs permission to be able to go into the school to have sign-ups. He feels that they can start scrimmaging sometime between late April and through May. Mrs. Vargas asked if there are a lot of schools that have the clubs. Mr. Casasanta said they are going to “piggyback” on Berlin’s schedule. He said one of the lacrosse Board members, who lives in Rocky Hill, has a son who plays in Berlin. Contact has been made with the Berlin coach. Rocky Hill will jump onto Berlin’s schedule and it will play other club teams. The lacrosse community is extremely tight and the people will do anything to help other schools and other towns to develop a program but if this is not under a high school program then no other high school team will touch Rocky Hill. Mr. Casasanta said he, Mr. McCabe and Mrs. Lisa Zerio (Parks and Recreation Director) had talked about maybe doing a town team but the problem would be that no other high school would want to play this team because they would have no idea if there are high school athletes on this team. Mr. Casasanta said this is why they really need to come under the scholastic program.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler thanked Mr. Casasanta on behalf of everyone for all of the work that he has done. Mrs. Calciano-Coler told Mr. Casasanta that he had come before the Board of Education in the fall and they had asked him to do some follow-up. Mrs. Calciano-Coler told Mr. Casasanta that it looks like he has been very thorough in doing that follow-up and she was sure that his actions were very well appreciated by the students who want to play lacrosse. Mrs. Calciano-Coler thanked Mr. Casasanta but she said that she echoes Mr. Morse’s comments with regards to it being understood that they are in a tough economic position and if the Board of Education was not able to fund this then she didn’t want anyone to be disappointed that they had said yes but then might have to “pull the plug”. Mrs. Calciano-Coler thinks Mr. Casasanta’s actions are awesome. Mr. Casasanta told Mrs. Calciano-Coler that he understands where she is coming from.

Mr. Wisnioski said Mr. McCabe and Principal Almeida run the high school and high school students would be used for this. Mr. Wisnioski said there are existing programs. His understanding is this under the procedure where this is a club and it eventually will become a team. He told Mr. Casasanta that he assumed Mr. McCabe would be his supervisor of this and everything must be cleared through him as a representative of the school. Mr. Casasanta said most definitely and they are looking for Mr. McCabe’s guidance. Mr. Wisnioski referred to the field use. He said they aren’t lacking initiative such as Mr. Casasanta’s or students who are interested in participating but they are lacking space. Mr. Wisnioski then referred to the issue of transportation. He mentioned how the hockey team has some special dispensation where the transportation issue was overlooked. He thinks this happens with other activities sometimes. He told Mr. Casasanta that he didn’t want him to be penalized. He explained some more. He told Mr. Casasanta that this wouldn’t be his problem and he thinks that Superintendent Dr. Villar, Principal Almeida and Mr. McCabe need to make sure there is a consistent application of the

busing issue. Mr. Wisnioski mentioned an activity that his son had been involved in many years ago. He said Superintendent Dr. Villar, Principal Almeida and Mr. McCabe have to make sure if there are activities and people interested in activities that transportation is not the reason for them failing. Mr. Wisnioski told Mr. Casasanta that he thinks what he is trying to do falls under football and he also mentioned youth cheerleading. There is no limit to what students can do if the Board of Education can only figure out how to give this. With regards to money, no one knows what is going to happen with this. Mr. Wisnioski told Mr. Casasanta that he assumes he has enough money to take care of everything here. The Athletic Trainer issue is a real issue. Mr. Wisnioski hopes there is a procedure that will determine if each individual will have all of the equipment for lacrosse and that they will wear it. If the expectation is that individuals will have equipment then someone should have a set of written procedures that have to be handed out and signed so that these individuals don't go out on the field without all of the appropriate protection and there has to be certain behavior from these individuals or they won't ever be able to set foot on that field again. Mr. Casasanta said

he agrees 100%. His younger son plays in the Newington Lacrosse Youth Program which has this exact contract. He said he would make an exact copy of this contract and he will hand it out. Mr. Wisnioski assumed that Mr. McCabe has some uniformed standard that applies to all of the students with regards to behaviors. Mr. Wisnioski told Mr. Casasanta good luck.

Mrs. Bell asked Mr. Casasanta if they have funding to accommodate this if this is as widely successful as it is anticipated it will be and if there are far more than the thirty players who want to participate. Mr. Casasanta referred to the donations he just received in the past couple of weeks and he said that he would be able to purchase at least thirty more uniforms. Mrs. Bell asked if this wouldn't be like a cut club. Mr. Casasanta said it wouldn't be.

Chairman MacDonald commended Mr. Casasanta, the town and administration for working together. Chairman MacDonald knew that the Board of Education threw a lot back to Mr. Casasanta when he came in front of them several months ago and he knew that he could never pull this off individually. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Casasanta that he knew there are a lot of people behind him who have helped him with this. Chairman MacDonald asked Mr. Casasanta to express the Board of Education's gratitude to these people as well as to the business community in Rocky Hill. Chairman MacDonald thinks it is really critical that they work closely with the town and he mentioned their relationship with Mrs. Zerio from Parks and Recreation, the Town Manager and Superintendent Dr. Villar. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Casasanta that this is an example where he and others took the initiative. Chairman MacDonald commended Mr. Casasanta for the hard work he has done on this so far. Chairman MacDonald said he has personally been trying to lobby some of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to start thinking of this as a youth program. He looks forward to attending that meeting at some point.

Chairman MacDonald said he would like to get this on the record because like they have talked about in the past, if there is a significant activity then it should be approved by the Board of Education. Chairman MacDonald said he would like to have a motion to approve the establishment of the Rocky Hill Lacrosse Club at Rocky Hill High School.

**Moved by Charles Wisnioski, seconded by Maria Mennella, to accept the proposed Rocky Hill Lacrosse Booster Club sponsored Lacrosse Team under the terms that Mr. Casasanta has presented to the Board of Education and that he will work closely with all of the Board of Education personnel to achieve its success and that the Parks and Recreation Department will be part of the field use decision and that there will be a report back at the end of the season so that the Board of Education knows how they did.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

### **13. Discussion of Magnet School and Open Choice Programs**

Chairman MacDonald said at this point that one or two Board of Education members had asked if they could be excused around this time because there were some activities that they previously had been engaged to. This was really a time critical nature for certain Board of Education members if they had to leave. Mr. Morse left at this point.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the Commissioner of Education in the past six months has made it very clear that he sees the Project Choice Program as the means to meet the demands of the Sheff v. O'Neill settlement for the State of Connecticut. This is translating into recommendations coming from the Commissioner's Office through the State Department to the Governor and to the legislature to request permission for the Commissioner to have authority to identify seats in suburban districts. This is essentially legislative authority which would mandate participation in the Open Choice Program.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he recently received the Open Choice Program memorandum from the state with a window of return within five days which asked for what level the Rocky Hill Board of Education would participate in Open Choice. He said because of the inability to have a meeting with the Board of Education, he had a discussion with Chairman MacDonald.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he elected to continue the level of involvement as they have done historically which is twenty-five students. This translates into \$2,500 per student for the Town of Rocky Hill. Historically this has been used to offset the costs of the magnet school tuitions for the School of Fine Arts and GHAMAS. Based on the changes in legislation, this district has a \$198,000 bill for magnet school tuitions that has had to be paid this year. Certain accounts have gone quite over when the Financial Report is looked at. Rocky Hill is not alone in this and this is a situation that every school district in the Hartford area has faced. All Superintendents have deficits in these line items and they are also suffering from the inability to accurately budget for these items because families can self-select to attend these schools as the legislation is written. The district has no prior notice of this and it receives the bill afterwards which is well after the budget has been created.

Superintendent Dr. Villar explained how he received a memorandum from Hartford Public Schools last week which further complicates things. This memorandum indicates that in Hartford's estimation, Rocky Hill Public Schools will have twenty-five students participating in the Hartford interdistrict magnet schools. He explained more about this. Hartford Public Schools estimate that this bill will result in \$115,000 of unbudgeted monies that Rocky Hill Public Schools would be responsible for. This is an area of great debate and there are Superintendents in the Hartford region who will refuse to make payments on this.

Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks this is an issue that needs to be brought up in the Finance Committee so that Rocky Hill can make a determination of what will be done with these bills when they come next year. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained the reason for why certain of the Boards of Education and Superintendents are electing this course of action.

Superintendent Dr. Villar told the members of Board of Education that it is important for them to be monitoring the School Choice situation and magnet school situation. These have become clear avenues for the state to shift the burden of funding onto the suburban districts for the magnet school program and the desegregation of Hartford Public Schools. They are looking at a percentage point of cost for magnet school tuitions out of their budget which is substantial. He thinks this Board of Education also has to consider its position on the support of magnet schools. He said this could start in Subcommittee perhaps. Rocky Hill does have students who live in this town and they have the opportunity to attend some fabulous schools. The issues of funding need to be addressed and he thinks the administration would look forward to some policy guidelines as far as to how they are to either promote or not promote this participation. To him promoting participation means promoting reduction in the amount of funds that he has left to continue a high quality educational program for the students who are staying in Rocky Hill. He thinks if the Board of Education was to debate and come up with some guidelines then the position would be clearer ultimately and then he hopes they can do a much better job of communicating to students what opportunities there are out there. At the end of the day, their job is to make sure they do right by the students. Superintendent Dr. Villar recommended that several issues need to go to Subcommittee and they need quite a bit of discussion.

Mr. Wisnioski said he didn't entirely agree with this. Mr. Wisnioski asked Principal Almeida if the programs at GHAMAS and the Greater Hartford Arts Academy are half day. Principal Almeida said that was correct. Mr. Wisnioski said if this permits them to have fewer teachers in Rocky Hill then this district is better off in paying the students to go to magnet schools. The amount being paid is something that needs to be discussed. Mr. Wisnioski hoped that Principal Almeida and Principal Watson would encourage this district's students to seek out the opportunities that exist which this district never will be able to offer. Mr. Wisnioski mentioned what some of these opportunities are. If all of the students stayed home then some would be bored and opportunity may be lost for other ones. A bigger school would be needed as well as more teachers, etc. It is the failure of the legislature to fund these fully and the politics of Hartford looking to "dump" people here. Mr. Wisnioski told Superintendent Dr. Villar that he knows he meets with these people periodically and many things are beyond their control. Mr. Wisnioski said if they could figure out what the real arithmetic is first locally and see if there is a threshold then it is not cost effective if they have to start paying more than \$5,000. He didn't think this was just simply that this costs this district money if the students go somewhere else. He said if these students aren't here then this district doesn't incur certain expenses.

Chairman MacDonald said there needs to be much more discussion in Subcommittee on that topic as well as on the Open Choice Program which he looks forward to adding in on. He sees this as a perverse project that is being pushed down on the suburbs. The issue is that the money is not following the children. The \$2,500 per student that this district gets is nowhere near what it costs this district which is approximately \$10,000 or more per student. He thinks they need to go through the Subcommittee to see if they have "an appetite or even a financial appetite" for any additional students to the present twenty-four or twenty-five students.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked when the students leave Hartford to go to the suburbs if their budget is reduced per child. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there is quite a bit of debate over how this system should work. There is an elaborate formula where there are ECS matches and certain amounts of monies flow into Hartford for each student. He said in fairness to the Commissioner that he did propose an increase in the amount of monies per students but he feels it is insufficient. The highest amount was going to be \$6,000 and the average cost of educating students is closer to \$12,000. Many of the students would need additional services and this district would need additional staff to do a quality job. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if it is counted against Hartford's enrollment when the students leave Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the students wouldn't be counted as students of the school but there are issues around the ECS formula. If the state could come up with a regional formula for the cost and then have the cost follow the student then this would become cost neutral and the students would go where they go. He supports this and he said many Superintendents have recommended this. As Mr. Wisnioski had pointed out, the students would be able to participate in a quality program. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they wouldn't have to worry about the funding. He supports this and he said many Superintendents have recommended this.

#### **14. NEASC Update**

Chairman MacDonald asked Principal Almeida if he had covered this already this evening or if he asked him if he wanted to say anything in addition. Principal Almeida said the ladies had done a phenomenal job earlier with regards to giving an update on this. He had just a few minor things to mention. He thanked the Board of Education for recognizing the work that has been done with regards to the approving of the expectations and the Mission Statement because they can move on. He showed the Board of Education members what has been ordered with regards to a professional sign of the Mission Statement. There are one hundred of these and these will be in every classroom within one week. He explained the idea behind this being publicized. Many times during a NEASC visit, the NEASC Committee will ask a student what their Mission Statement is. The idea is to have a professional sign of the Mission Statement geographically located in every room.

This week, there are two staff members who are on NEASC visits. A couple of other staff members have gone and others will be going. They have made an initiative to send as many people as NEASC asks for. Staff members are bringing back some experiences from the visits that they will share with the staff. All of this is on track with regards to NEASC which had been said earlier this evening. There are two groups that have to report before the end of the year and the reports have to be voted by the staff. This is the Mission Expectations Group and the School Community Profile. He explained what the School Community Profile is and the reason that these two groups have to go this year. He said the parents received directions this week with the progress reports as to how to get onto a NEASC parent survey. He asked the parents to please take a few minutes to complete this survey and he explained what this survey will tell. The parents' feedback is the tool for the Mission and the School Community Profile with regards to the reports being completed. The entire staff will be doing their version of a survey on their next Professional Development Day which will be held on March 30, 2009. The members of the Board of Education should be getting theirs very shortly. The last piece of the puzzle will be the students doing this during the week of March 30, 2009 through the English Department. By the end of this month, every one of the survey groups will have been completed. The two groups will then be able to go on with their reports.

**15. CMT/CAPT Update**

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan told the Board of Education members that she was very pleased to tell them that the testing has been completed. The CAPT has already been packed up and sent back. The CMT makeups are almost complete and these materials are in the process of being packed up as well. Mrs. Darlene Brown, this district's testing coordinator, did a very fine job monitoring the materials and the test administration as well as representatives from each of the schools. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan also commended the staff who was flexible with the scheduling. They expect the preliminary results of these tests back sometime in July. They are presently working on elementary Language Arts curriculum and middle school math curriculum. The three different Language Arts Core Programs are still being piloted in kindergarten, one at each of school. They are continuing to administer the piloted state benchmarks and they have just done the second one for Grades Three through Five. These are online tests and they are to adhere to the grade level expectations that are set forth by the state. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Joyce Waterbury, who is the Math Implementation Specialist, prepared the results in an Excel spreadsheet for the teachers so that they can very easily see each student's strengths and weaknesses in order to adjust instruction accordingly. Mrs. Waterbury also sent information to the teachers as to which of the items will be tested on the upcoming CMT.

The second after school Effective Teaching Strategies Workshop was held yesterday. This was presented by Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Waterbury along with the math and reading personnel. Next Tuesday evening, there will be the third voluntary Dine and Discuss Workshop. This will focus on the use of the Math Trailblazers website for teachers.

There is another Professional Development Day on March 30, 2009. This will feature presentations on SRBI (Scientifically Research Based Interventions). She explained more about this model. For a portion of the Professional Development Day, principals have planned data team meetings. Teachers in Grades Five and Six will meet at the Board of Education on that day to discuss the Trailblazers fifth grade math transition into sixth grade.

Mr. Wisnioski said he would like to hear a report on the SATs from the fall at an upcoming Board of Education meeting. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this item was going to be on this evening's agenda but the agenda was so full that this item will be on April's agenda instead for that Board of Education meeting. Mr. Wisnioski said he would like someone to get back to the Board of Education with regards to the CAPT tests. It had been represented to the Board of Education that those students were going to be kept busy and he wasn't sure that was the case as he understood it. He asked if information could be gotten back to the Board of Education with regards to how every student had been kept busy.

Mr. Wisnioski asked if the elementary students weren't given some sort of DRP (Degree of Reading Power) test three times per year. One of these times would be in September, one would be in January and one would be subsequent to that. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said yes. Mr. Wisnioski wanted to know how soon they got this data and what it told them. He asked if this district is testing in a way that is useful for preparation and identification of problems. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this is what they are hoping to do. The DRP is part of what is on the CMT. The other part of what is tested on the CMT for reading is very similar to what is in the benchmark assessment. She explained that the point of having the DRP given

three times a year is to inform instruction and to help the teachers know if their students are making progress. She told Mr. Wisnioski that she can get back to him with regards to the exact number of days it takes for this information to get back to the teachers but it is a fairly quick turnaround. Mr. Wisnioski said it wasn't so much the number of days but he wanted to know if this is a useful effort and if it helps them as well as the district in any way. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said it should because it should show growth. She explained more.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said as a parent that she gets the report for the DRP with regards to where her child was in the fall and where her child is in the spring. She said this is communicated back to the parents.

**16. Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers (Long Term Substitutes)**

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Charles Wisnioski, that the contract of employment of the following non-tenured employees who are in long term substitute positions not be renewed for the coming school year upon its expiration before or at the end of the current school year and that the superintendent of schools notify these individuals in writing of this action: Sandra Buonannata, Jennifer Clark, Francesco Garzone, Tanya Granger, Christina Hatzikostas, Ana Homick, Molly McGuire, Megan McKinnon, Kelly Moore, Michael Stevens and Kelly Walsh. (Frank Morse was not present for this motion or for the rest of this meeting's motions.)**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Rivard, Vargas and Wisnioski  
ABSTAINED: MacDonald**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**17. Approval of Rocky Hill Paraprofessional Contract**

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said this contract is a three year agreement that is effective from July 2008 to 2010. She went over the general wage increase again that had been discussed earlier this evening. Some insurance proposals had been changed to coincide with everyone's contract and they have the opportunity to look at other carriers.

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Nadine Bell, to approve the Rocky Hill Paraprofessional Contract.**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, MacDonald, Mennella, Rivard and Vargas  
ABSTAINED: Wisnioski**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**18. Approval of Rocky Hill Nurses Contract**

Mrs. Calciano said this contract is a four year agreement. She went over the general wage increase again that had been discussed earlier this evening. Language had been added for LPNs. Insurance language also had been changed to allow them to look for different carriers.

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Catherine Vargas, to approve the Rocky Hill Nurses Contract.**

**FAVOR: Bell, Calciano-Coler, MacDonald, Mennella, Rivard and Vargas**

**ABSTAINED: Wisnioski**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**19. Policy Regarding Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems**

Superintendent Dr. Villar this is a recommended change from the existing policy. Shipman & Goodwin were worked with and this was brought to the Policy Committee which recommended that this be brought to the Board of Education for the first reading of it this evening. Action on this will need to be taken at the April Board of Education meeting for approval of this policy.

**20. Policy Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety**

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this involves revision of the prior policy. In the previous Board of Education policy, these two issues were combined into one and they have been separated out now. Legal advice is being followed with regards to having these separated into two. This has been recommended by the Policy Committee and it will have to be voted on for approval at the April Board of Education meeting.

Mr. Wisnioski asked if this policy anticipates some issues that may come up with software and other aspects of this in anticipation of moving forward with a Virtual High School. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes. He said this is written in such a way that it is about the proper use of computers and what can happen when the use of the computers is abused. This is not written for a specific software or application. Mr. Wisnioski said there is a potential that students may do distance learning and this might not necessarily be within the geography of the school district but they will certainly be using software that may be owned by this district or licensed to it. He explained more and said they ought to at least anticipate this.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said a conference had been held at West Hill School on March 17, 2009 with Officer Frank Dannahey from the Rocky Hill Police Department. He did a presentation on internet safety. He brought out really interesting data and information. In the future, she would like to see this district offer the children some safety tips on the internet. She didn't know what Subcommittee this would fall under.

Mrs. Bell thinks this would be very appropriate. She thinks there is some new litigation recently with the use of camera phones among the teenagers. She thinks many teenagers don't understand what some of the implications are. She told the Board of Education members that she thinks it would be in their best interests to raise these issues.

Mr. Wisnioski said there has been a lot of discussion that if people go onto some of the community websites, these own what they have there. There are a multiplicity of issues such as what the implications are if a picture of a student is taken, who owns this and where it goes, etc.

**21. Monthly Financial Report**

Chairman MacDonald told the members of the Board of Education that this is in their packets. Finance Director Connolly was not present this evening because he was on vacation. Chairman MacDonald told the Board of Education members if they had any questions on this that they could get them through Superintendent Dr. Villar to Finance Director Connolly.

**22. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated Dr. Cathrynn Riggs and the entire Rocky Hill School District, particularly those in the Special Education Department. Under the leadership of Dr. Riggs over the last year, this district has moved from "a district in need of intervention" in year one for its compliance for the PJ Settlement. He explained more about the PJ Settlement. He said the district is no longer "a district in need of intervention" because of a lot of work on Dr. Riggs' part as well as a lot of Board of Education support through the budget process and the addition of positions last year. Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated Dr. Riggs in particular.

Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mr. Fred Ames. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it came to his attention that he had been remiss in not thanking Mr. Ames publicly for his actions.

Superintendent Dr. Villar spoke about a newspaper article that had been forwarded to him recently with regards to a Board of Education that was seeking to purchasing software which would cost \$24,000 and which would ultimately save that district an estimated \$40,000 in future electrical costs, etc. This had to do with the use of software that would automatically shut down machines and computers overnight after a certain period of time.

Mr. Ames had written a very similar script for this district's network back in July. He had worked with Mr. Rich Cooke (Director of Facilities) in an effort to save Rocky Hill money. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this works and he thanked Mr. Ames for his effort and his forethought. Mr. Ames is saving the Town of Rocky Hill money.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Mr. Ames to come to the podium. Superintendent Dr. Villar told the members of the Board of Education that they found spreadsheets at their desks this evening that Mr. Ames had prepared for them with regards to computer purchases. These give an idea of how they use the state bid list to make mindful purchases of technology.

Mr. Ames described what this district already has deployed. He went over the list of what desktops there are that are deployed and these are the ones the district is considering replacing. When this district buys the hardware or the software, its goal is not to take solely into account the initial cost of it but instead the cost of it over its life cycle. This district actually keeps computers in the district for eight years even though the past life cycle was six years and the current life cycle is five years. The processor, RAM and ability of it to communicate on the network, etc. are all taken into consideration. He also explained that the more remotely something can be managed, the fewer humans are needed to do the managing. The two things that are important are the Preboot Execution Environment (PXE) and the Remote Wake-Up. He explained more about these. He said power usage is always important. There are eight hundred and twenty-five computers in this district that run eight hours per day for at least one hundred and eighty days and sometimes they are used over the summer for summer programs. Consistency is important and this includes hardware as well as software. Computers are rotated.

The most expensive computers are not purchased and this district purchases a “middle computer”. He explained why this is done. He went over the chart on the second page of the paperwork that the Board of Education members received this evening. This was with regards to a handout that he had given to them at the last Board of Education meeting. He had been asked to look it over to see how it compared to the state bid list and that is what this chart referred to. He said this district is getting a \$1,000 computer for \$600 if the monitor is included. This would be the discount. Mrs. Calciano-Coler referred to an asterisk that Mr. Ames had on the chart. He explained what that was supposed to be. Mrs. Calciano-Coler confirmed that the addition that was done in the second column on this chart (for the HP dc7900) was used for the computer that had a monitor. Mr. Ames said that was right and this is the total price that this district would pay with the monitor if all of the upgrades were done. He said that he wasn’t advocating the upgrades though. He told everyone they have to remember this is the state bid list so there is the discounted price.

**23. Board Chair’s Report**

Chairman MacDonald said the Board of Education’s budget has been submitted to the town side. The town will have the budget released within the next couple of weeks. On April 27, 2009, the Board of Education will make its budget presentation. He will draft a letter for Superintendent Dr. Villar to go through each child back to their home. People will also have a reference to the website so that they can check out the actual budget document themselves.

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth  
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_