



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

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 24 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	September 12, 2008
LOCATION	Rocky Hill Town Hall Council Chambers
DATE OF MEETING	September 18, 2008
TIME MEETING STARTED	7:05 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary (Absent from this meeting)
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. Raffaella Calciano-Coler
3. Charles McMonigle	4. Maria Mennella
5. Frank Morse	6. Rene (Skip) Rivard
7. Catherine Vargas	8. Charles Wisnioski

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 Rene Rivard, to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2008 Executive Session of the Board of Education and the minutes of the August 21, 2008 Board of Education meeting.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

2nd MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to accept the Consent Calendar of September 18, 2008.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

3rd MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:38 p.m. .

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: .

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2008**

Members Present: William MacDonald (Chairman)
Raffaella Calciano-Coler
Charles McMonigle
Maria Mennella
Frank Morse
Rene (Skip) Rivard
Catherine Vargas
Charles Wisnioski

Members Absent: Nadine Bell

A meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 18, 2008 in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman William MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard,
to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2008 Executive Session
of the Board of Education and the minutes of the August 21, 2008 Board of
Education meeting.**

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman MacDonald said there was no correspondence at this time.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone from the audience who wished to speak at this time.

Mr. John Farnham, 902 Gray Fox Lane, R.H. said he came to this evening's meeting to try to get some questions answered because he has been receiving some confusing information. He wanted to make sure the Board of Education is governed by CT General State Statute 10-221. He assumed that this was correct. He had asked this question at

another Town meeting and he was told that the Town Charter supersedes the CT General State Statute which he didn't find to be true. This led him to the point where he questioned how this town ever got to a public hearing with regards to the building of schools. He referred to the Schoenhardt Study and how it was clearly stated in the proposal that that the Board of Education's responsibilities are in CT General State Statute 10-221. He read aloud what is stated in this section with regards to the Board of Education's responsibilities for the schools in the district. He mentioned how he went to another town meeting and after he was told that this is not so, he looked at the Town Charter. He read aloud what is stated in the Town Charter with regards to the Board of Education and its duties. From previous experiences, it became apparent to him that he was never aware of a public hearing being run for the purposes of deciding what needs and renovations are going to be made to the schools. He has brought this issue up at other town meetings to which he has not received any response. He didn't think the Town Council was in order when they ran a public hearing and when the Councilors proposed a Resolution for # 2 which he said is completely isolated to the elementary schools. The Town Council's argument was that it has the right under the Statutes to procure bonds. He didn't dispute this but he thought in this particular case that the necessity of procuring the bond would be on the recommendation from the Board of Education. At this point, his conclusion is that the Town Council is out of order. As far as he knew, the Board of Education would first hold their Facilities Committee meetings and then it would make a request for the particular needs of the schools. It would then be the Town Council's job to get the bond money.

Chairman MacDonald interjected at this point. He told Mr. Farnham that the Board of Education has a two minute limit for speakers to make their public comments. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Farnham that they let him speak well beyond this two minute limit. Chairman MacDonald said they would be happy to answer a question for Mr. Farnham if he could get to one. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Farnham that he would ask him to speak to the Town Council if he thinks anything relates to items that the Town Council was improper in doing. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Farnham if there was a question he had or if there was a comment that he wanted to make regarding a question then they would address it if they could or if they couldn't then they would get back to him.

Mr. Farnham asked if the Board of Education only requested modifications with regards to having a new elementary school built and having the other two elementary schools renovated. Mr. Farnham said this was his question. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Farnham to go through his all of his questions and he said maybe they could lump them into one answer for him. Mr. Farnham asked if it wasn't the obligation of the Board of Education to accommodate or to see that all the needs for all levels of all of the schools are accomplished. He asked if the Board of Education has educational specifications for all of the schools that were presented at the public hearings and he asked if all of the members of the Board of Education who spoke at the public hearings didn't request that Resolution # 1 should be implemented. He said these were all of his questions. Chairman MacDonald thanked Mr. Farnham.

Chairman MacDonald said the Board of Education unanimously approved a K-12 Plan which was presented to the Town Council. There is a record of this and he told Mr. Farnham that he was welcome to have the documents of this but he told him he probably already has these. Chairman MacDonald explained that the K-12 Plan addressed all of the schools, all of the needs and all of the issues. With regards to what the different members of Board of Education spoke to at the meeting, it was a unanimous decision of them to send this to the Town Council. He asked Mr. Farnham to go in front of the Town Council if he had any detailed questions about their process or their order but as far as he was concerned, the due process was followed under the Board of Education, the concerns of the students were addressed and the Board of Education submitted in a unanimous fashion a K-12, all school plan.

Mr. Wisnioski referred to the state law that Mr. Farnham had cited and it was his understanding of the state law that governs all Boards of Education including Rocky Hill's that they have two responsibilities to the state that they actually work for and to the taxpayers of this town. One of the responsibilities is curriculum and the other is finances, which would be as an operating budget for the Board of Education during its school year. He explained that the Board of Education is a department of the Town of Rocky Hill. Through the town side under the Town Charter, the Town Council decides which Capital Improvements will be made and how these will be financed. The Board of Education did provide educational specifications for the schools for K-12 in two separate documents. The Board of Education acted as a whole to endorse all of these proposed improvements and there are many issues related to how all of this can be financed. He explained how the town engaged two outside consultants: Friar Associates (Architect) and O & G Industries, Inc. (Construction Manager). These consultants met at length with the administration of the Board of Education and with the Facilities Committee and he also thought with the whole Board of Education. The action of the Town Council was to bring to the voters for referendum a question which was to expend a certain amount of funds. If this is approved, the town will then have to engage an Architect for the specific construction of the school. He went over the process as he understood it. Rocky Hill High School is twenty-seven years and the economic cost to the taxpayers of this town will change significantly when this building is thirty years old. The high school is going through several types of review, one of these being NEASC in which the high school is evaluating itself. There has been a substantial change in personnel and everyone is waiting on the state's process towards changing graduation requirements which will likely change what is being taught at the high school. The Town Council was aware of all of this and he thought it considered this in its decision. He explained a little more. If the referendum is approved in November, then the Board of Education and its consultants have until June 30, 2009 to complete the educational specifications. It is the Board of Education's intent to complete the secondary school specifications within this timeframe because every member of it wants to have a K-12 Program. The question becomes the timing and the likelihood of it being approved. This is all very complex and in some ways the action of the Town Council is mutually exclusive from the Board of Education and in some ways the Town Council listens to the Board of Education. The Town Council has acted and now this is being moved forward with.

Mr. Farnham said the question was not answered with regards to if the Board of Education is working under CT General State Statute 10-221. Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Farnham that they will get back to him with a detailed answer to this at a later point.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone else from the audience who wished to speak. Mr. Bill Pentland, 325 Old Main Street, R.H. said he was present to invite everyone for the last time to the Annual Royal Blues Invitational which will be held on September 27, 2008. This will be held on McVicar Field and the gates will open at 3:30 p.m. The UCONN Marching Band will start performing at 4:30 p.m. and it will perform the National Anthem at 5:00 p.m. to open the show. This will be the 10th Year Anniversary. There has been major support from everyone in town and they are looking forward to a great show.

Mr. Pentland said he attended the PAC meeting at the high school the other night. This is a parent organization. At this meeting, he expressed to the principal, vice principal and the Athletic Director what he has heard through talking with other parents and staff which is the excitement that is involved in this year. The staff is excited about the administration that has been put in place at the high school and he said this is such a refreshing and exciting thing to have. They are looking forward to a great year at the high school which Mr. Pentland thanked everyone for. He has heard the same thing through the parent organizations in the elementary schools with regards to new Superintendent Dr. Villar. The staff is very excited. Mr. Pentland said he hasn't seen this enthusiasm in a lot years and they really look forward to some great years ahead with Superintendent Dr. Villar.

Mr. Pentland said it is up to the parents to ask the Board of Education to look at the summer reading program. This had been brought up at a meeting that was held last night by several parents. He believes that this was done by the Board of Education years ago and he also believes that this has to go through the Curriculum Committee. He asked the Board of Education to ask the Curriculum Committee to look at the summer reading program and to ask the staff at the high school to readjust this program. He believes that this program had been put in with good intentions but it has become obsolete and needs to be fixed as well as looked at. This program is not working for students. He has heard from many parents that this is not working right so he asked that this be looked at and that it is tried to be repaired. At this point, he passed out passes to the members of the Board of Education for the Annual Royal Blues Invitational. Chairman MacDonald thanked him.

Chairman MacDonald said on a special note that today was Superintendent Dr. Villar's birthday.

Mr. Wisnioski asked Mr. Pentland to give more details about the Annual Royal Blues Invitational. Mr. Wisnioski said one of the principal attractions of it is the food. Mr. Pentland said fried dough will be featured this year and there will be a concessions tent that will have a full variety of food and he explained the types of food, drinks and snacks

that will be available. This band show should run until approximately 10:00 p.m. and there are seventeen bands from all over Western Massachusetts and Connecticut which include Rocky Hill's band. These bands compete through music and marching in their classes which are based on the numbers of members of the band. Awards are given out at the end of the night for different forms of what they are judged on. Mr. Wisnioski asked what the purpose of this band show is and Mr. Pentland said this is their major fundraiser which supports the band. The Band Backers don't just support the marching band in Rocky Hill but they also support the symphonic band and the jazz band at the high school. This year they are also very involved with the middle school band and Mrs. Harding through some great work by Mr. Burgess. There are ten eighth graders this year who are in the high school marching band. Mr. Wisnioski asked where people will park for this event and Mr. Pentland explained where this will be.

Mr. Wisnioski spoke about the issue of reading that Mr. Pentland had mentioned. Mr. Wisnioski explained how when he had previously been on the Board of Education that it had imposed summer reading. The Board of Education hired a Reading Coordinator who he understood will be beginning on Monday. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mrs. Darlene Brown has an extensive background in Language Arts and he certainly will be working with her to approach districtwide Language Arts issues. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had met with parents of high school students last spring and he began to talk about this program. Mrs. Brown has quite a bit of experience that will be very helpful when literacy issues are begun to be delved into. Mr. Pentland said he asked at last night's meeting where the policy came from and he was told that it came from the Board of Education. He told the people at the meeting that if they want change then they need to come to the Board of Education meetings. If the people don't want to come to the meetings then the Board of Education is available through its website or through the Town Hall at the Board of Education's offices. He told the people to let the elected representatives know what they want because this is the only way things are going to get changed. Mr. Wisnioski told people to "kill their T.V." and to read to their children and give them books. Mr. Pentland said he is a firm believer of this.

1. Consent Calendar

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler,
to accept the Consent Calendar of September 18, 2008.**

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2. Personnel and Negotiations

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said this Committee has been meeting three to four times a week. It has four contracts that are being negotiated with the bargaining units for paraprofessionals, nurses, secretaries and teachers.

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

Mr. Wisnioski said this Committee had a meeting approximately one week ago. Mr. Bill Leahy of Eastern Connecticut State University spoke about high performance schools. He is reviewing new construction plans for approximately thirty schools in this state presently. He gave a presentation with regards to what he does and this was a review of the status of schools in this state in terms of their age and their energy efficiency, etc. There was a discussion about how they review plans and attempt to identify ways to make schools more efficient in terms of operating costs, etc. There was also a discussion during the meeting about the issue of fixed windows versus operable windows and air handling systems. This is part of what must be in the educational specifications. Mr. Leahy also had spoken about intangibles (i.e. having air quality in the schools means fewer absentee issues as well as better health, etc.). Mr. Rich Cooke (Director of Facilities for the Town of Rocky Hill) was present at that meeting. The school buildings are under his control. He has been taking courses with Mr. Leahy at Eastern Connecticut State University. Mr. Cooke has been going through the school buildings at night to find out where the heat loss is. The town pays for the schools' utility expense. Once there is an approval to go forward with everything then these types of issues will be further addressed at the Board of Education meetings as well as at the Joint Facilities Committee meetings and at the Town Council meetings.

Ms. Valerie Montalbano, 11 Rocamora Road, R.H. asked if there are minutes available from the Facilities Committee meeting that just took place with regards to high performance schools or if there is a DVD available. Mr. Wisnioski believed that both are available and he told Ms. Montalbano that he would give her his copy of the presentation

but he suggested that she watch this meeting. Mr. Wisnioski asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he can get a DVD copy of this meeting from the Facilities Department. Mr. Wisnioski told Ms. Montalbano to call Superintendent Dr. Villar's office to find out when it will be ready.

8. Technology

No report was given.

9. Transportation/Accommodations

No report was given.

10. Liaison

No report was given.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Introduction of New Certified Staff

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the new certified staff would be introduced and he asked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan to help him with this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the administrators from the high school and middle school were not present this evening because they all had previous engagements with their children because of open houses. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan and Dr. Riggs offered to fill in for them. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had the opportunity to interview approximately 85% of the new staff. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan filled in for him on occasion which is their policy to do this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was very impressed with the quality of new teachers this year. They were able to pick the best and the brightest and he is very excited for them to come on board. He asked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan to begin with the introductions.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan introduced some of the new high school staff and welcomed them. Ms. Sharon Parker is teaching biology and chemistry. Ms. Margaret Hale is teaching English. Ms. Bonnie LaPorte is teaching Spanish. Ms. Kelly Walsh is teaching Social Studies.

Dr. Riggs said there is a number of new Pupil Services staff. Ms. Meghan Gallant is the new Special Education teacher at Griswold Middle School. Ms. Lindsey Howard is the new Social Worker for Moser School and Stevens School. Ms. Jenny Leightsinger is the

new Speech and Language Pathologist at Stevens School. Ms. Karen Risinger is the new part time School Psychologist for Moser School and for Stevens School. Dr. Riggs said she has two returning staff members who were not present this evening. One of these is Ms. Rachel Portal who has returned in a part time position as a Speech and Language Pathologist for Moser School and Rocky Hill High School. The other person is Ms. Zoe Dolan who has returned in the newly created part time Special Education teacher position at Stevens School.

Principal Audrey Boutaugh introduced the new staff for Moser School and Stevens School. Ms. Laura Montgomery is returning as a fifth grade teacher. Ms. Jilani Scherer is the new art teacher for both of these schools. Principal Audrey Boutaugh said there were two new candidates who weren't able to be present this evening. One of these is Mr. Mike Stevens who is returning as a fifth grade teacher. The other one is Ms. Christa Vermeil who is currently a long term substitute in Grade Two at Moser School and she will be working as the consortium substitute for the remainder of the school year.

As each of the new certified staff was introduced, a brief description of their educational experience and/or previous teaching experience was given. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this concluded the introduction of the new certified staff.

12. Monthly Financial Report

Finance Director Turansky said there was not a lot to report because the school year is very new. He referred the members of the Board of Education to the one page document they had that was labeled "Object Totals". He spoke about the encumbrances and he referred to the salary items. There were two figures: \$87,000 and \$2,000,000. He explained that these are phantom encumbrances. There has been a glitch in the software system that has been identified and the software company is currently being worked with to identify where these numbers came from. (At this point, Chairman MacDonald told the new staff members who had just been introduced that they could home if they wished to and he welcomed them to come back for another meeting at any time. He congratulated them and wished them the best of luck at Rocky Hill schools.) Finance Director Turansky gave a copy of the report that had been issued last month to the members so that they could see a comparison. For these same two line items there were no encumbrances and the amount was zero. He said they believe this problem is with the report generator.

Finance Director Turansky referred to activities for this school year so far. He said there is a new state law that allows for parents to enroll their children in magnet schools. The state provides the town with a bill for these children's participation. The Board of Education has no control over this and it is obligated to pay these tuition bills. A statement was received from CREC (Capitol Region Education Council) with regards to the children who have been participating so far this year. The bill totals \$210,602. In comparison, funds have been budgeted that total \$155,864 to cover this. There is a shortfall of \$54,738. In addition to this, two slots have been budgeted for vocational

agricultural students in the Middletown program. So far this year, these positions are open. There is \$15,700 available that can be applied to the tuition shortfall. This nets out to an approximate \$39,000 shortfall on the tuition area. This will have to be addressed as time goes on. There is another issue that he wanted to bring to the members' attention and this was with regards to the Athletic Trainer. The Athletic Trainer that the Board of Education had in place for last year moved out of state. Services for this year had to be gone out to bid for. The budget was \$20,000 for that service but only one bid was received unfortunately and that was for \$40,500. There will be a shortfall of \$20,500 in this account. This will have to be monitored through the course of the year and funds will have to be identified to make this whole before the end of the year. He said these were the major items that he wanted to make everyone aware of.

Chairman MacDonald asked the members if they had any questions. Mr. Wisnioski said he didn't understand the salaries for Griswold Middle School. He said \$92,000,000 was budgeted for and \$169,000 of this was encumbered. He asked what was going on. Finance Director Turansky said this was another phantom encumbrance that he had referred to before. He said that salaries are not encumbered. This encumbrance doesn't exist. Mr. Wisnioski confirmed that this is an error. Finance Director Turansky said yes. Mr. Wisnioski asked if the same thing was true for West Hill School. Finance Director Turansky said for any of the salary accounts that are either 111 or 112 that there is an error where an encumbered amount is seen. Mr. Wisnioski asked if the members will get a corrected copy of this once things are working right. Finance Director Turansky said absolutely.

Chairman MacDonald referred to the textbooks and he asked Finance Director Turansky if he could help him to understand if more of them are being anticipated on being bought after the school year has started because there is a budgeted amount of \$66,000 and \$30,000 has been encumbered. Chairman MacDonald asked why there is still a budget balance for textbooks. Finance Director Turansky said just under \$22,000 was included in the budget for new math books at the middle school this year. He believed that this plan was changed at the last minute and workbooks along with support materials have ended up being purchased instead. There is a balance of \$6,600 that is left in this. The remainder of the money is split among a variety of different accounts. There are relatively small amounts. He believes that \$3,000 was budgeted for advanced placement science courses at the high school and he didn't believe that these purchases have been made yet. The remainder is for replacement books. Purchases will be made during the course of the year when it is identified as to the areas where replacement books are needed. In the area of English at the high school, there are many paperbacks that are used and purchased when the time comes for teaching these particular courses or for reviewing these particular books. Purchases will be seen in the English Department throughout the course of the year. Chairman MacDonald asked Finance Director Turansky if he could keep the members up-to-date with regards to this. Finance Director Turansky said sure.

Chairman MacDonald referred to how Mr. Wisnioski had noted quite a few accounts that showed a negative budget variance. Chairman MacDonald said these were primarily salaries but there were several others that related to non-salary items. At the next Finance Committee meeting, a different type of variance analysis report is going to be spoken about where things can be quantified and there can be an explanation as to why things have been overspent from what was budgeted. Finance Director Turansky said the philosophy behind all of this is that principals are given some flexibility in terms of their purchases. This budget was put together some time ago and priorities change over time. He said the principals have the flexibility to over-expend in one account in a program area as long as funds are going to be reserved in a different account. This has been the past practice for a number of years now. Chairman MacDonald said he knows this policy and he has read it but it is supposed to be providing an explanation of why accounts have been overspent and the reasons for the over-expenditures. He is trying to get a better understanding of what the actual expense is that is needed for budget items if they are overspending especially as the next budget session is gone into.

Mr. Wisnioski said his understanding was that a math textbook series, Trailblazers, was adopted for third, fourth and fifth grade and that this was going to be extended into the middle school. It asked if it was being said that a Trailblazers type of textbook or an equivalent for this wasn't purchased. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had discussed with the Math Supervisor and the principal of the middle school which materials should be purchased. A part of these materials was purchased and this was for the workbook. The actual Trailblazers textbooks have not been purchased. They are presently discussing the concept of reviewing the curriculum which will be presented later and rather than moving forward with a very costly adoption and expenditure of text, they want to make sure this is the right direction to move in. The workbook is a very natural continuation of the work that had been done. The next step hasn't been executed yet because they weren't ready to execute it very well. Mr. Wisnioski hopes that there will be a Curriculum Committee meeting sometime "in the horizon". Superintendent Dr. Villar said absolutely.

At this point, Superintendent Dr. Villar extended sincere apologies to Ms. Jennifer Quinones who is one of the new teachers and who is a Guidance Counselor for the high school. He unfortunately didn't have the opportunity to interview her. He apologized that she wasn't included with the first group of new staff that he introduced this evening. He told Ms. Quinones that her addition has been immense in the Guidance Department and he thanked her for being on board.

At this point, Ms. Tanya Matalia said she was supposed to report from the high school. She said there are many exciting things going on at the high school. There are a lot of new faces at this school. Mr. Almeida is the new principal and there are also new teachers. There is also Mr. McCabe who is the new Athletic Director. Freshmen orientation was held on August 21, 2008 and this included a cookout which was very different this year. There will be an open house held on September 25, 2008 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The Royal Blues Home Band Competition will be held on September

27, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. On September 29, 2008, the band and choir holiday pie sale starts. Lend-a-Paw will be held on October 3, 2008. Over two hundred and thirty students participated in that last year. This year it is hoped that there will be more than three hundred students who will participate in it. New clubs, fall sports and activities have been started. The Rocky Hill High School's football team won their opening game this year.

13. Report on Current Enrollment and Class Size at Rocky Hill High School

Superintendent Dr. Villar distributed to the Board of Education members an amended copy of the spreadsheet that had been included in their packets. He highlighted on the spreadsheet the errors that had been on the one that had originally been given to them. The numbers that are reflected on the spreadsheet are "a snapshot in time" of the district from September 10, 2008. The official numbers for enrollment in the State of Connecticut in the schools is held after October 1, 2008. On the spreadsheet that has been prepared, a comparison from "an apple to an orange" is being seen in the sense that this gives a rough idea where Rocky Hill is. These are not steadfast numbers because the 2007-2008 numbers are October 1, 2008 numbers. The 2008-2009 numbers are the current September 10, 2008 numbers. He wanted to provide an introduction to where this is headed as far as enrollment goes. He plans on preparing for the Board of Education meeting in October, an enrollment report which will give class size in much more greater detail comparing year to year. He pointed out at West Hill School that there are currently twenty-two more students on the books. Moser School has fifteen fewer students. Stevens School has nine fewer schools. Griswold Middle School has twenty-four fewer students and Rocky Hill High School has twenty-two more students. This report was able to be pulled off of the new Student Information Management System.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred the Board of Education members to the bottom of this report and he said an area that is being monitored is a comparison of the current enrollment with the NESDEC projection. Currently, the school system is over projection by seventy-six students. An eye will be kept on this. He said with Rocky Hill being a member of the NESDEC organization because it had to join in order to get their enrollment reports that on an annual basis, a new updated report can be asked for. He recommended that this be considered to be done.

Superintendent Dr. Villar pointed out to the Board of Education that students who have been attending other high schools rather than Rocky Hill High School have been tracked. There are twenty students who they are aware of that are going to Vinal Tech, East Catholic, Loomis Catholic, Northwest Catholic, Xavier, E.O. Smith and the classical magnet. There is one student at Maloney, Meriden and one in Hyannis, MA.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there were questions and concerns about the high school schedule this spring with regards to being sure that a full course load was able to be offered to all of the students. He had a follow-up conversation at the high school and he checked the data today to be sure and currently there are all but twelve students who are enrolled in the complete program. Of these students, many are seniors who are

graduating midyear and therefore don't need a full course load. Some of these students are Special Education students whose IEP calls for a course load different from that which is offered otherwise. Some of these students are ELL students who are enrolled in a full course load but they receive different credit based on that program. He thinks some progress has been made in this area as well. Chairman MacDonald asked what this progress would have been compared to for last year. Superintendent Dr. Villar understood that there were sixty-two students who didn't have a full schedule last year. He reminded the Board of Education that positions were able to be added to the high school this year which he thought helped facilitate this need being met.

Mr. McMonigle said there has been a lot of discussion in the past with regards to what the magic number would be to run a course. This had to be looked at individually and he asked if there have been any changes to the decision to either run a course or to not run a course this year from last year. He asked how it was decided as to whether a course was "a go or no go" this year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they want to be mindful of the expectation of not running courses for very low numbers however there are twelve courses that are being run that have low numbers of students enrolled in them. There is a value judgment. For some of these courses, he feels that they need to work with them to grow and to make sure enrollment is grown into them. He gave some examples of these courses. His concern is that he would like to try to work to grow the AP programs and he would not advocate eliminating an AP section. This would sadden him and he didn't think that this would be a good move for the district. They are trying to be mindful in balancing this need. He attached a master schedule of the high school for the members' knowledge. The new information system is making it a little easier so that reports can be generated to see where the resources are going. He thinks there are curriculum discussions around how the enrollment is improved in AP. He thinks this would be a really good discussion for the Board of Education to participate in during a subcommittee meeting. He thinks these courses are really critical for the overall health of the students in applying into advanced universities and it is a course load that is somewhat expected.

Mr. McMonigle asked if the Board of Education members will be getting a list of courses that didn't run increased enrollment numbers or he asked if this is something that the Curriculum Committee will be looking at. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he could produce this. He didn't actually ask the question as to whether any courses were cancelled so he will look into this at the high school. If there was a list that was generated, he will be happy to share that with the Board of Education.

Mr. Wisnioski confirmed with Superintendent Dr. Villar that he had expressed to him that the course selection process is not final yet. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there is a process going on now that is called balancing. Most students should have their schedule set at this point. There might be a section of a course that has ten students and another section that has seventeen students if the master schedule is gone through. The Guidance Department will work to balance this so that the two sections have more of an equal number of students. This is still occurring. He would like to advance the scheduling

system this spring so that not as much changing is being done in September like it has historically been done.

Mr. Wisnioski hoped by the next Board of Education meeting that Superintendent Dr. Villar could provide to the members the course enrollment data in the format that is in the budget. Mr. Wisnioski said this evening's Consent Calendar had a budget charged to the staff and Superintendent Dr. Villar. Historically, the budget process was being done at the same time that the high school handbook had already been created that offered courses that had not been approved. This became a problem as the budget was cut. Mr. Wisnioski suggested that there be better coordination between what is offered at the high school and the budget process so that they are not mutually exclusive. He didn't know what subcommittee would look at this.

Chairman MacDonald gave an example of a French IV course that has eight students and an AP French course with six students. He asked if there is any school district that has been able to combine these and offer one class but have the teacher differentiate the teaching of these two. To him, he is in favor of having AP and has always been but as an example, when he sees French IV having eight students and AP French having six students then there is one teacher teaching only fourteen students over two periods. He asked if there is a way to combine these into one. Superintendent Dr. Villar agreed that there is an obvious inequity in the sense of this number of students. It might be looked at to combine French III and French IV. The AP courses are audited and they have to be careful as to how this curriculum is worked with. It is worth looking into this. He said the other thing being looked into is virtual online learning. He along with Assistant Superintendent Hourighan and Principal Almeida are registered to attend some more conferences at CREC with regards to this.

Mr. Wisnioski understood that in the last six months, the State of Connecticut approved language courses offered at other venues. He hoped that the Guidance Department and Language Department make students aware of this opportunity. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this was going to be part of his presentation this evening later on with regards to the legislative update.

14. CMT/AYP Results

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there would be a presentation with regards to this by Assistant Superintendent Hourighan. Superintendent Dr. Villar shared with the Board of Education and the Rocky Hill community that this town's approach in examining the assessment data is going to be framed by their belief that they need to be open and honest. They will share with the community either honest bad news or honest good news about the assessments. He firmly believed that it is important for the organization to embrace data as a source for opening conversation about what the practice is and how this can be improved or changed in order to get better results. In his estimation, the results this year are a "mixed bag". There are some areas where there is a definite need for improvement and there are also some areas where this community should be very

proud of its results. This showed him that there is a solid core to the school system that can be built on. A District Data School Improvement Team has been formed which has school administrators and content area experts. This team has met three times already to look at academic data results from the CMTs and the CAPT tests in order to begin to analyze these results and generate a plan of action on how to move forward. Part of the plan will be to look at the curriculum and the assessment system in order to begin to make some fundamental changes that will give the opportunity and the tools that are necessary to move forward.

At this point, a motion was made to take a five minute break.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan gave a PowerPoint presentation. She told everyone that she was going to share with everyone an overview of the 2007-2008 results of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). There are some mixed results. There are some positive results and there are some areas that need to be improved.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan reviewed briefly the targets that State of Connecticut sets for schools and districts. This year in order to be proficient on the CAPT and the CMT, schools needed to have a 95% participation rate. Criteria were also set for academic performance on the test. At Griswold Middle School, Stevens School and West Hill School there was 100% participation and at Rocky Hill High School there was 96.9% participation.

For the CMT, the targets were: 79% proficient in reading; 82% proficient in math; and 70% at above basic in writing. For CAPT, the targets were: 80% proficient in math; and 81% proficient in reading. An additional academic indicator was 70% graduation rate or improvement from the previous school year. The last data that she could find showed a 98.8% graduation rate. These goals will remain the same until 2010 when nine out of ten students will need to make the proficiency standards in math and reading. The state looks at the scores of all of the grade levels taking the test in order to make adequate yearly progress and it also looks at the subgroups in each grade level. She went over the subgroups that are monitored. When the number of students in a subgroup reaches forty for a school then these results are counted towards the calculation for adequate yearly progress. She gave an example of this.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan went over what the consequences are for not making adequate yearly progress. This is calculated for the whole school, the district and subgroups.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said Safe Harbor status can be reached. This is achieved if a school doesn't make AYP but it has a 10% reduction in the percent of students who are not proficient from the previous year. There has to be a 95% participation rate and a 70% proficiency rate has to be achieved in writing.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan shared Rocky Hill's scores. The CAPT scores are above the state average. Rocky Hill was at 94.1% in reading and at 89.4% in math.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said that Rocky Hill was above the state average with regards to CMT reading. She showed a slide that compared Rocky Hill in 2007 to Rocky Hill in 2008 and what the difference was, the state score and the DRG score. Gains were made in Grades Three, Five and Seven and the scores dropped in Grades Four, Six and Eight. For last year, the opposite of this was true. Large drops are concerning and this indicates that a closer look has to be done even though different groups of children are being looked at and some variance should be expected in scores from year to year. The State of Connecticut published vertical scale scores this year and this allows for test scores to be compared for the same children from one year to the next by allowing for the differences in tests.

With regards to math, Rocky Hill was above the DRG and the state at most grade levels. There was also a big increase in Grade Five math. Gains were made in Grades Three, Five and Seven and the scores dropped in Grades Four, Six and Eight.

With regards to writing, Rocky Hill was at or above the state average for goal in four out of six grade levels. Rocky Hill was at the top half of the DRG. There were gains in Grades Three, Five and Seven and declines in Grades Four, Six and Eight.

This was the first year that Rocky Hill tested science on the CMT for Grades Five and Eight. Rocky Hill scored above the state average. In Grade Eight, Rocky Hill was the fourth highest in the DRG.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan went over the vertical scale scores. The growth for two years was above the state level for Grades Three, Four and Five and Grades Five, Six and Seven cohorts. Less growth in the state was made for Grades Four, Five and Six and Grades Six, Seven, and Eight cohorts. The scores indicate that there are significant gaps for some of the subgroups but the gaps narrow over time for Grades Three through Eight. She showed a slide of cohort comparisons for the vertical scale scores and she explained some more about this. There are very different starting points and ending points for some of the subgroups which she gave more detail on.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan referred to another cohort: Grades Four, Five and Six and she said these are the students who are now in Grade Seven. Rocky Hill students begin at a higher level than the state in Grade Four but less growth was made in reading and math than the state average. The subgroups begin lower. In the case of free and reduced lunch and English Language learners they made less growth. In Grades Five, Six and Seven, these are the students who are in Grade Eight now. Greater growth than the state was made for all of the groups but the gap is still present for the subgroups although it is not as large a gap as was seen for the other cohort. For Grades Six, Seven and Eight, these are now the students in Grade Nine and the two year growth was slightly higher for

the state. The average scores were higher also. The beginning scores and ending scores for the subgroups show a significant gap.

For the first time this year, a Rocky Hill public school joined 42% of Connecticut schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress. One hundred more schools this year in the state did not make AYP last year. Griswold Middle School failed to make AYP in math and reading for students with disabilities. Stevens School made Safe Harbor in reading for economically disadvantaged students of which Assistant Superintendent Hourighan explained some more about.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said the question becomes how Rocky Hill addresses these test results. She went over the plan of action. A program review of the elementary reading program is going to be conducted. It has to be established what is in place and what needs to be done in the future. K-5 teachers will be involved in identifying strategies, materials and assistance that they need. Existing curriculum will be looked at in relationship to the new grade level equivalence standards put out by the state last spring. It needs to be made sure that the benchmarks are rigorous enough to challenge the students and that they reflect the state's expectations for each grade level.

There is a significant body of school research that suggests that schools that collaborate around high quality of curriculum instruction continually outperform those that don't. This is regardless of their demographics. What is intended to be done this year is that a climate will be established that focuses on data, student learning, collaboration and common formative assessments.

As a district, a system wide improvement plan is being developed to address areas of concern. Each school will also be developing a plan to meet the needs of their students. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said that she and Superintendent Dr. Villar started this school year during the professional development days explaining to the faculty at all schools that they will be focusing on using data to improve instruction. They explained how teams can collaborate to affect student achievement. Principals have formulated data teams in their schools. The Informed Data Collection System will also be implemented and she explained some more about this. System wide assessments will continue to be developed that are aligned with state standards and provide teachers with information regarding student performance. At Stevens School, they will be piloting the response to the intervention model in Grade One. Reading teachers, regular education teachers, Special Education teachers and support staff will collaborate together to help the struggling students regardless of their identification. The plan is they are going to start looking when the children arrive in kindergarten. This year, there will also be a focus on differentiating instruction. She went into more detail about this plan.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Chairman MacDonald said he understood the vertical scale scoring and he understood the data itself but he asked if this is also looked at by school as well to see if there are any items in a specific school or he asked if data can be obtained by the teacher.

He asked how isolated cases can be addressed. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said there are many ways in which the data can be obtained. There are the capabilities of bringing this back to individual teachers. Grade to grade can be compared as well as school to school. Rocky Hill has already been looking at school to school to see what the variances are and to make plans accordingly. The teachers have gotten the scores of their current students so they are able to see where the weaknesses are.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said one of the areas that he and Assistant Superintendent Hourighan have seen and that the district level of data team has begun to explore is an issue that they have with the current assessment system. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the methodology they are using to establish a collaborative practice among teachers requires constant feedback from the teachers. Benchmark assessments need to be in place. He explained some more about this. They are reaching out to different organizations currently to begin to see how they can acquire assessments that can better guide them towards the goal. This is one of those issues that will take some time. They are working with CREC and they will be building this system for Rocky Hill. They should be able to tell the Board of Education in December or maybe even in September what they anticipate the results will be in March before the tests are taken. Part of their plan is to build a system that is this predictive in nature so it is known what needs to be done with the students when they walk in the door on the first day.

Chairman MacDonald said academic excellence should be the number one priority. He knew that DRG is one data point that they look against. He also looks at data points at schools or school districts that are considered top tier (i.e. Glastonbury and Berlin). Virtually, every item Rocky Hill has for Grades Three to Eight and for every component, it is below this. He encouraged them to not only look at CREC or other organizations but for them to see if there is a way to gain best practices or some input from schools that are truly far ahead of Rocky Hill in every component when the data is looked at to see if anything can be gleaned from it. He has heard the story before about Rocky Hill having data teams, etc. and then results are gotten that are very concerning. He thinks Rocky Hill has some really good components and it has some other components that need significant work. He asked that more frequent updates be given to the Board of Education. He thinks that this is such an important item that he would like to have it as a standing agenda item going forward. He told Assistant Superintendent Hourighan that he appreciated all of her effort and he is very encouraged with her detailed background in elementary as well as with some new individuals. Chairman MacDonald thinks that Rocky Hill will finally have the correct background in skill sets that can complement what Rocky Hill currently has. From his perspective, this is one if not the most important issue that needs to be resolved. He understood that this takes time but directionally he didn't like where this is going.

Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said absolutely and she thought this needs to be begun at the beginning which is why kindergarten is being looked at to look at reducing the gaps from the very beginning. She thinks if a high quality curriculum instruction program can be provided right from the start then the gaps in time will start to be

diminished. Chairman MacDonald asked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan to quickly look at the differences between the different elementary schools to address any of those issues as soon as she can if she hasn't already looked at these. He thinks this is a starting point that definitely needs to happen. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said absolutely. Superintendent Dr. Villar voiced his appreciation for this direction. He thought it was critically important that the Board of Education be behind curriculum instruction at all times. This needs to be the focus and he said he shares with Superintendents that he meets with regularly that it is easy for them to lose focus on this because there is so much of the other business of education that can get in the way. He said a team has been put together that has experience in actually doing exactly what is being asked to be done. They will work hard and they will bring things to the Board of Education to show evidence of progress. One of the things that the school improvement plan requires is a discussion of how they are going to know they are actually doing what they say. Until the adult behaviors are measured, they can't even begin to determine whether or not it had a causal relationship on the academic scores. Research shows that when this is done, that is when results are gotten. This is where their efforts are going to be focused this year. Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he is envisioning doing a morale survey or getting some type of input from all of the teachers. Superintendent Dr. Villar said these things are great data points depending on where the exploration brings people. Often in education, an initiative is rolled out and it loses its impact because the implementation isn't monitored. Implementation needs to be measured before it is determined that it worked or it didn't work. Collaboration of teachers is critically important because the answer lies within them.

Mr. Wisnioski asked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan, working with staff, to put these slides from her presentation on the Board of Education's website. He asked if someone could tell the public what DRG is. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this is the District Reference Group and there are twenty-four including Rocky Hill which are based on economic status demographics. Mr. Wisnioski confirmed that all of these are considered to be of similar socioeconomic makeup and Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said yes. Mr. Wisnioski told Assistant Superintendent Hourighan that he was assuming she was going to come back to the Board of Education with regards to what Chairman MacDonald is looking for regarding the vertical scale scoring. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan asked the Board of Education members if they would like to learn more about vertical scale scores the next time and she was told said yes. Mr. Wisnioski told Assistant Superintendent Hourighan how she kept referring to the variance between the grades and how they seem to alternate and he asked her if there is a theory with regards to what this is all about. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said there is a conjecture and she is thinking that they might not be differentiating instruction enough to meet the needs of the various groups as they are moving through the school system so the scores are dependent on the students who are going through. She gave an example and said if the elementary school is being spoken about then guided reading is one way of differentiating instruction. Mr. Wisnioski knew what differentiation is but he said that in a particular year it seemed liked third grade did well but fourth grade didn't or in one calendar year the third grade did okay but it didn't the next year. He asked what is

going on. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said there are different groups of children. The group of third graders, fifth graders and seventh graders moved up to fourth graders, sixth graders and eighth graders. Last year, there were difficulties on the mastery test for Grade Three, Grade Five and Grade Seven and this year there are difficulties on the mastery test for Grade Four, Grade Six and Grade Eight. If something is not done then difficulties on the mastery test will be seen in Grade Five, Grade Seven and Grade Nine next year because there is a group of students that is moving along.

Mr. Wisnioski asked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan to explain what the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) test is and how often this is given in an academic year. He gave an example of this being given to a third grade class and he asked if this would be given in September, in January and just before the mastery test. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this would not be given just before the mastery test. She said that DRP is a closed procedure test which she explained more about. The students take this three times a year. Mr. Wisnioski asked if this is similar to the mastery test. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said for the mastery test that reading comprehension is determined by DRP and also by a different type of comprehension test.

Mr. Wisnioski asked how good of a predictor these are for the CMT results. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said some research would have to be done for this with regards to the DRPs. The DRP is a good valid predictor of someone's reading ability but a different set of skills is being used to answer the open ended response questions when the CMT is being taken. This is an area where they feel they have fallen down and may have drawn their scores down in the past. A number of the schools were focusing on this in data teams to bring up this area of reading comprehension. Mr. Wisnioski asked if these tests have been given this year and Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said the students are taking these tests right now. Mr. Wisnioski asked if the results from these are something that can be used to prepare the students to take the test in March or April. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this will give information to tell everyone how the students are doing now and instruction should be adjusted accordingly.

When the elementary school students are given the mastery tests, Mr. Wisnioski said these teachers and students continue on doing their daily curriculum. At the high school, when the students are given the CAPT tests, they come into school to take it and then they go home after. He asked why this is. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan thought the CMT is broken up over many days and usually the portion of the test they take each day is just one portion which takes approximately one hour to take. This might not be as strenuous as what is being done on the CAPT. Normally, the teachers make the rest of their day a little less stressful for the students.

Mr. Wisnioski referred to Griswold Middle School not making adequate yearly progress which is not dissimilar to many districts and he asked if there isn't the likelihood that all schools "X" years out will be at this point. He asked what is going to happen in five years. Superintendent Dr. Villar thought that just about every educator that he knew would tell everyone that 100% proficiency as NCLB is currently written is not going to happen by 2014. He said hundreds of schools joined the list this year and when this goes

up in 2010, hundreds more are probably going to join this. He said this somewhat absurd standard unfortunately dilutes the power of part of the legislation which is forcing the school system to look at every individual student. Once the benchmarks start going up, the only chance is to make Safe Harbor. Once everything gets to the high nineties for proficiency and 100% proficiency, the subgroups are going to have to start making a smaller incremental gain. This is very doable when individual student performance is analyzed. He explained what one of Rocky Hill's strategies is for this. He said there is a clear flaw in the law that is expecting students who are intellectually deficient with an IQ of 45 to be proficient. The reality is that this school system is not going to be able to get to 100%. He asked if there will be changes and he said it is not known what the law will look like when it is reauthorized but they do know that the politicians in Washington, D.C. are going to wait before they touch this.

Mrs. Vargas referred to Griswold Middle School not making the adequate yearly progress and she confirmed that this was not for the whole school but that it was just for a subgroup. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this was just one subgroup. Mrs. Vargas said this was because the number of forty was reached. She said these students have probably been there but there never were forty so they weren't monitored. She wanted to make sure that it was clear that this wasn't the whole middle school. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this was right. Superintendent Dr. Villar said when the data is analyzed for Griswold Middle School that there is a phenomenal effect that is occurring. There is an imbalance in the elementary school performance right now. One elementary school is underperforming and one elementary school is over-performing. When the students go through Griswold Middle School, they merge and the performance rises. This tells him clearly that some curriculum instructional changes can be made to get the same outcomes at the elementary schools that are being gotten at the middle school. Although Griswold Middle School has been identified, this is for a subgroup and the staff is doing some really powerful teaching practices there so this wants to be built upon. There is a precursor for what is to come because larger subgroups of economically disadvantaged and English language learning children in the elementary schools are being seen who he predicts will hit the middle school in a few years. He said it is good that some practice is being gotten with this more focused instructional approach because he thought this is the "tip of an iceberg" that needs to be addressed now. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan thought it is significant that the gap starts to decrease at the middle school so the children are making growth there. The school system needs to get these children in better shape before they reach the middle school. If the schools that were added to the list across the state are looked at, these are mostly middle schools and high schools.

When the performance of a student is analyzed between the schools and between alternating grade levels, Mr. McMonigle asked if class sizes that these students experienced in Kindergarten, first grade and second grade will be looked at. He knows that there have been varying levels of enrollment through the years and he would be curious to see if this is one of the factors as well besides all of the curriculum issues. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said this is a very good point and she thinks this is

something that should be looked at as well. Already they are starting to look at what remedial services the children have in order to determine if what they have been given is actually working because their learning really needs to be accelerated. In the past, she thought if students, particularly those with disabilities, were pulled out of class and missed the basic instruction then they could never get up to where they were supposed to be. What needs to be done is what Griswold Middle School is doing now and this is having the extra classes.

Mr. Morse thanked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan for the presentation. He said he also likes the vertical scale scoring because it really judges what the students are doing. For the “horizontal”, it takes grades that don’t have the same students. He agreed with Chairman MacDonald that not only should Rocky Hill be aiming for the top of Rocky Hill’s DRG but he wants Rocky Hill to be one of the best districts in the state. He said this should be the goal. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan told Mr. Morse that she agreed with him and she thinks Rocky Hill has the potential to do this. Mr. Morse said not only does Rocky Hill want to make the basic students proficient but it wants to make proficient the goal and Rocky Hill wants to get the advanced up higher. He wants to see more students who are at proficient and it wants to be made sure that the students who are already at goal and already at advanced are not being lost sight of. These students need to be excelled. Assistant Superintendent Hourighan said they are running with the high as well when they are talking about differentiating instruction. In Rocky Hill, there are a lot of students that can be run with and she thinks there is the capacity to help the students who need a little bit of extra help.

Chairman MacDonald thanked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan. Chairman MacDonald said this was a very good first presentation and he was sure that there will be many more.

15. Legislative Updates

Superintendent Dr. Villar told the members that there was a legislative update included in their packets that was prepared for them by Shipman and Goodwin (Board Legal Council). All of the changes are important and everyone needs to be mindful of them but he wanted to highlight four key areas.

There was a change in the In-School Suspension Law which has been postponed until July 1, 2009 for actual implementation. The State Department of Education is being waited for to issue some guidelines for districts as to how to determine when an in-school suspension is appropriate. Superintendent Dr. Villar understands that this is a very large document. The length of permissible in-school suspension has been extended from five to ten days. Rocky Hill has the capacity currently at its high school to meet this law.

There is also a significant change in the Bully Regulations that are on the books now. Shipman and Goodwin has supplied Superintendent Dr. Villar with a very large brief on a sample policy. The Board of Education, in its Policy Subcommittee, will need to review

this. This has to be on the books by February 2009. He explained what will need to be done for this still. A piece of this will be a requirement for a proactive policy to be in place to address school climate. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he will be bringing a recommendation to the Board of Education with regards to a program that he is very familiar with that is specifically listed in legislation and that has proven to be highly effective.

The next legal change has to do with high school credit for outside foreign language instruction. Rocky Hill may find a need to change its practice in awarding credit and this might ultimately result in some changes in Rocky Hill's policies as well. This will also have to be brought to the Policy Committee of the Board of Education.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the last thing he wanted to highlight with regards to legislative updates is that the BEST Program is being phased out. The teachers are no longer required to submit a video portfolio section. Rocky Hill is waiting for the newly created BEST Program from the State Department of Education. At this time, it is unclear as to what shape this program will take.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred next to what is not a new law but he said Rocky Hill is waiting for the Commissioner of Education to release an updated version of the high school graduation plan that he has proposed. The Commissioner of Education in his opening comments to the Superintendents' Association has made it clear that this document has changed significantly. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks that the economic condition of the state and Sheff V. O'Neill have made some impacts in the initial and quite lofty proposal. Some more direction will be waited for from the Commissioner of Education.

Chairman MacDonald thanked Superintendent Dr. Villar. Chairman MacDonald referred to the Bullying Policy that has a date specific of February 1, 2009 and he said that Mrs. Mennella has asked to call a Policy Committee meeting in the near future. Chairman MacDonald said they want to make sure that they are well ahead of the February 1, 2009 date.

Mrs. Calciano-Coler referred to the changes with suspension with regards to there now being in-school suspension. She asked how this will impact the budget for the 2009-2010 school year if there has to be in-school suspension. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there currently is a room that was created and they like to call this something other than in-school suspension. Principal Almeida is creating a Behavior Intervention Program in order to make this more of an educational experience for children to change their behavior. This room has been created and it is part of the main office area at Rocky Hill High School. One of the things that will have to be looked at in order to predict the capacity for meeting this law is that the numbers of suspensions have to be analyzed because it needs to be made sure that there is the capacity to keep students in-house on any given day. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his understanding from the potential legislation is that it is going to be quite difficult to issue an out-of-school suspension

unless some significant criteria are met. It appears on the surface that Rocky Hill High School does have the capacity to keep students in-house but he wants to look a little deeper to make sure this analysis is accurate. Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked if extra space in addition to extra staff will be needed. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this would depend on how the program is structured. He said currently there is faculty who go through the program in a monitoring sense but he has experience with a program where a person is purposefully hired who has a skill set who would interact best with children who may be impacted or emotionally upset at the time. This person would be able to make this a productive time period for them instead of an escalation period. If Rocky Hill wants to be more proactive then it will have to put on the books a proactive behavioral system for the district anyway so this might be decided to be brought as a recommendation for the Board of Education.

Mr. Wisnioski referred to Page 5 of the review of the education legislative summary and the arts defined for curriculum purposes. He wanted to know under NCLB what it states that Rocky Hill as a district should be doing about the arts. He believed that there is a component. He wanted to know if there is support for having this under NCLB and exactly what NCLB says about the arts. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he wasn't aware of specific references so he said he would research this. He did know that districts often lose focus on the arts because they worry about the initial pieces of NCLB. Mr. Wisnioski said a music teacher told him that this is part of the requirement.

16. Special Education Update

Dr. Riggs told the Board of Education members that she had included two handouts in their packets with regards to this. One of these is with regards to the facts and figures of Special Education. The other is a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that she was originally going to be showing this evening but she said that she wasn't going to be showing it anymore.

Dr. Riggs got the update from the State Department of Education on the Annual Performance Report for Special Education yesterday afternoon. This was based on the 2006-2007 data. She had given the Board of Education a lengthy presentation about the APR Process and the twenty performance indicators last winter. She just found out that Rocky Hill met requirements in all categories based on the 2006-2007 data. It is expected that the requirements will be met for 2007-2008 as well. Dr. Riggs referred to the PJ monitoring and the time with non-disabled peers that Rocky Hill was being scrutinized for last year. The state reviewed the 2006-2007 data. It was known that Rocky Hill wasn't going to meet the standard for 2006-2007 but because such a huge gain was made in 2007-2008, the state is giving a reprieve and considers Rocky Hill to remain as a Needs Assistance I District rather than moving to Level II. This is very good news. She was pleased to report that they are on top of this year's district data as well and hoping the requirements will be met in both areas for the current school year.

Dr. Riggs told the Board of Education members that in their packets they have some information that brings everyone back to last summer and the extended school year program. She thanked the Board of Education for its financial support for the extended school year program during the budget process. She was able to recruit and hire some excellent summer staff. There were thirty-eight children from pre-school to those entering Grade Six who qualified for this program and who attended this at Stevens School. This program was held five days a week. Most of the children in this program either attended 2 ½ hours or 4 hour sessions which focused on social and academic skills. Twelve additional students participated in extended school year activities that were designed to meet their individual needs. Fifteen students continued during the summer in their out-of-district placements. A new addition this summer was a two week extension of the extended school year. This is referred to as the extended, extended school year program and this is where selected students attended Summerscape. The school provided the teacher and paraprofessional support for a limited number of students on the autism spectrum through a wonderful collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department. A great deal of thanks is owed to Lisa Zerio (Director of Parks and Recreation), Chris Rusack (Parks and Recreation) and their staff. The Parks and Recreation Department forgave the tuition payments for these students and Dr. Riggs said the school provided the staff. A satisfaction survey was distributed to parents and staff at the conclusion of the summer programs. The parents were overwhelmingly positive about the program. They are looking forward to seeing what will be offered for next summer. The total cost was approximately \$33,000 for staff. The Coordinator was paid also and the cost for materials was \$500. This was a little bit under what had been budgeted.

Dr. Riggs said the 2008-2009 school year is beginning with approximately two hundred and eighty-six Special Education students. The numbers at this point are a little preliminary because there were two or three PPTs today. The official child count is due to the state on October 1st. The two hundred and eighty-six students represent an approximate 10.5% prevalence rate. As the year goes by, more Special Education students will be added. In the spring when she addresses the Board of Education, she is imagining that there will be approximately three hundred Special Education students which will be similar to last year. She explained why there are changes in numbers and in student population in Special Education. This year there are fifty-four professional staff in the Special Education and Pupil Services Department. She referred to the two newly created positions in Special Education and how this has allowed case loads to be reduced and how this has allowed for more intense services to be provided to students especially at the middle school area. No new programs have been added but significant changes have been made in the way that Special Education services are delivered to students. Ongoing monitoring and consulting support will be needed as the co-teaching efforts are begun and expanded. A positive outcome for all of the children is being hoped for.

Dr. Riggs referred to the out-of-district placements. One year ago, there were twenty-four students in full time out-of-district placements and there were three students who attended magnet schools who received Special Education services. This fall there are

nineteen students who are placed out-of-district full time and there are three students who are attending magnet schools. Over the past year, there were seven out-of-district students who had moved out of Rocky Hill but six more moved into town. Four students returned to the Rocky Hill public schools from out-of-district placements. Three students who were in out-of-district placements graduated. There were two new placements last school year. She explained about when additional costs would be incurred with the out-of-district costs.

Dr. Riggs referred the members to the copy of the PowerPoint presentation that they had. She explained that this PowerPoint presentation was shown to the Pupil Services and Special Education staff at the beginning of the school year. She had thanked this staff for all of the work that they had put forth last year and she also wanted to set the stage for this year's priorities. She went over the priorities at this point which included: IEP development and student achievement; least restrictive environment time with non-disabled peers; transition planning; SRBI; parent outreach and training; and a number of professional development and program development needs.

Dr. Riggs said Rocky Hill has been selected by the New England Assistive Technology Center (NEAT) to be their only public school partner in a Stepping Stones Technology Grant. If Rocky Hill gets this grant, then it will be focusing on Grades Three through Five at Stevens School on early intervention and strengthening the intervention for students with disabilities.

Chairman MacDonald thanked Dr. Riggs and he asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mr. Wisnioski asked Dr. Riggs if she manages the Brook Street facility. Dr. Riggs said that she doesn't manage the facility but that she manages one of the two programs there (the daytime clinical day program). Mr. Wisnioski asked how many students there are for this. Dr. Riggs said there are eight students. Mr. Wisnioski asked about the staff for this. Dr. Riggs said there is a full time teacher, a full time paraprofessional, a half time School Psychologist, a six hour per week certified English teacher and a six hour per week certified math and science teacher. A four hour per week reading tutor has just been hired and an art teacher is still being looked for. Mr. Wisnioski thought it was in the newspaper about some threat by legal terms of that building's ownership. He asked if there is a sense to where this is going and he asked what efforts are being undertaken to plan for the worse case scenario. Dr. Riggs said she has no sense of where this is going. As soon as she saw this article that Mr. Wisnioski was referring to, she went to Superintendent Dr. Villar and told him that she thought they need to have a contingency plan. Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the other program at this school and he said they are in better shape with that one than they are with the Special Education program. They are in the process of working on a plan that will be presented to the Board of Education at some point this year about using a different facility perhaps for the alternative high school program. Mr. Wisnioski said they have a good investment of a big server and ten workstations, etc. The whole idea of the program that Dr. Riggs runs is that this be remote from Rocky Hill High School. He thinks that this is something that needs to be anticipated and maybe they will continue with their

right to be there. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he distributed this information to the Board of Education some time ago because this is something they are concerned about. This is a very good opportunity for them at this location and it may be very difficult to mimic this somewhere else but this program is very important. Mr. Wisnioski asked if a two year renewal had been signed. Superintendent Dr. Villar believed that it was. Mr. Wisnioski asked if this begins with the academic year and he asked when this ends. Mr. McMonigle was pretty sure that this is tied to the academic year.

Superintendent Dr. Villar thought Dr. Riggs deserved some public commendation for the fact that she worked very, very hard to do a job that is a very difficult job. Dr. Riggs is working very hard to save the town monies while providing students with quality education.

17. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the year began with a very successful professional development. He and Assistant Superintendent Hourighan were very pleased to work hand in hand with the teaching staff at the facilities at each school to help them see what the division for instruction there is for the district and what direction everyone is headed in. The first day of school was a very good success. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was able to be at each of the schools to greet students and he met a lot of parents who were dropping their children off.

The Student Information Management System has been implemented and they have gone live. He thanked Assistant Superintendent Hourighan, Mr. Fred Ames and Ms. Virginia Clark for doing a great deal of work this summer to make sure that this happened. The system is up and running. Data is live and there is still a lot of work to be done. This is a mission critical piece of software and a lot of people need to know how to use this.

The Technology Department was able to upgrade the computers in the high school labs. There are new machines and rebuilt machines have been redeployed throughout the classrooms at the high school. LCD monitors have begun to be purchased in place of the CRT models that were in place that are energy costly. Over time, a more uniformed appearance of the computers will be established. He is able to track the time the computers are down with the new online information help desk system. He said they are significantly ahead thanks to the Board of Education and their restructuring of this department and the creation of new positions. The department seems to be functioning quite well but the data is being monitored to make sure that the machines are up and running for the teachers and the students to use.

There is an area of concern with the bussing and they are aware that busses are late. Finance Director Turansky has been working with the bussing company to try to change and rearrange bus stop routes in an effort to get busses to be quicker and to move on time. One thing they have noticed that they can't control is the number of high school students

who have elected to ride on the busses. This seems to have significantly increased over time from the past. He speculates that this could be from some of the recent changes in the laws around teenage driving as well as the cost of fuel. This sets Rocky Hill behind. A future solution for the upcoming budget cycle would be the inclusion of additional busses. This program will continue to be monitored because they don't want children getting home so late from school.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the first planning meeting was held to implement and inform the assessment system that will be able to track K-12 student data.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the district has recently been notified that it qualifies for Title I funds again and it is receiving \$51,949 in these funds which was not anticipated. These funds can be used to focus on lower achieving students, economically disadvantaged students and minority students, etc. within the schools. He is recommending that a plan will be developed on how to use these funds. There is an area where these need to be applied immediately. At West Hill School there are kindergarten classes that have nineteen and twenty students in them. There are other kindergarten classes in the district that have nine or ten students. The West Hill School classes don't currently have paraprofessional support. He is looking to create a position for this. Title I will help to do this.

Superintendent Dr. Villar told the members that Rocky Hill High School has set three half day sessions for October 30, 2008, December 11, 2008 and May 7, 2009. The Board of Education had authorized for four half day sessions to be held for NEASC. They believe these can be done in three so they will notify the parents. He has asked his secretary, Mrs. Flynn, to make sure that she gets a copy of the 2000 NEASC Report to all Board of Education members so they can review what was said back then.

Chairman MacDonald referred to the new help desk system that Superintendent Dr. Villar had spoken about and he asked if there was any way to leverage that for the copiers within the school system which he understood to be a continual issue within all of the schools. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he hadn't thought of using this in this way but this is something that he can certainly explore with Mr. Ames to see if this will work. Superintendent Dr. Villar knew that Finance Director Turansky has been aggressive in following up with the copier company before there have been significant copier failures particularly at the beginning of the school year. They have let the company know that this is not acceptable. This is the last year of the contract with this company. This company rebuilt a machine at Stevens School and it seems to be working better. A directive was given to principals with regards to Superintendent Dr. Villar wanting to know right away if a machine is not functioning for a reasonable period of time. He has not been notified since this has occurred. Mr. Wisnioski explained how he had recently went through the experience of terminating a lease relationship with a copier company. He explained more about this. He knew that there are a lot of difficulties if the same company is not renewed with. This is something to think about in the budget process.

Chairman MacDonald told Mr. Wisnioski that he has asked for a copy of the contract so he will make sure that all of the Board of Education members receive a copy of this.

18. Board Chair's Report

Chairman MacDonald said he wanted to echo the statement that had been made earlier from Mr. Pentland with regards to the atmosphere at the high school. Chairman MacDonald said people are very happy and he has talked to many teachers. He had been at the Erica Garrett Golf Tournament over the weekend and the overall atmosphere from teachers and students is positive. He really appreciated the entire Board of Education in the interview process in selecting an outstanding team for the high school. The entire leadership team is seen at the games and at activities, etc. These are the positive things that the parents are seeing and he is getting good phone calls about this. He referred to the Athletic Trainer that was approved and how there have been several injuries on the field. Chairman MacDonald said thank goodness that this person was there. This is an excellent thing that has happened.

Chairman MacDonald said he had been asked to announce that the Football Boosters will be having a pasta dinner next Wednesday at St. James Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This benefits the football team.

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary
(Absent from this meeting)

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____