

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
February 7, 2007**

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cavagnero at 7:10 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Broverman, Mrs. Carbone, Mr. Cavagnero, Miss Laus, Mr. Lutka (arrived 7:26 p.m), Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Oliver, Prof. Royals, Mrs. Traub, Mayor Bingham, Dr. O'Brien, Dr. Campbell, Ms. Haynes

Absent: Mr. Lyons, Mr. Jacobs, Miss Kulesza, Miss Shugrue

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SESSION

Public Participation

John Bubela, 240 New Harwinton Road – He spoke regarding donations to Katrina schools. He reported that he sent school drafting program supplies which were not needed to a school in Napoleonville, LA, and this week he received a thank you card for those. He just wanted to thank the Board and let the Board know this.

Joe Ammirato, 79 Brass Mill Dam Road – He spoke regarding the THS Goal Program. He asked the Board to take a vote to hold off on this proposal until at least the NEASC final report is received which is due probably around this time next year.

Wayne Civelli, 826 Mountain Road – He spoke regarding the THS Goal Program. He also asked the Board to table the proposal for one year until they have more information and there is not a rush to get into it.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

On a motion by Ms. Carbone, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve the agenda with the elimination of item 7.3, the addition of item 8.5 for Board action regarding attendance at the Board of Finance meeting, and the addition of a School/Community session as item 10. All were in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Ms. Carbone, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve the minutes of January 10, 2007. All were in favor.

Mr. Broverman cited some corrections. On page 35, the first comment on the top left was made by Mr. O’Connell. On page 40, the third paragraph was a comment by Mr. Lutka. On page 44, it should be Mrs. Traub stated instead of Miss Laus. On page 34, the last paragraph, should read a Board member stated, and the same on page 38, the next to last paragraph, again should be a Board member stated.

On a motion by Mrs. Carbone, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2007. All were in favor except for Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Jacobs who abstained.

On page 3, the motion was also to include a community session.

INFORMATION SHARING SESSION

Student Board Member Reports

No report given.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. O’Brien reported that the budget process is going along quite well. They are meeting with their administrators again this Friday to do a final series of refinements on the building budgets. Friday afternoon, exec will meet again to continue the refinement process. Dr. O’Brien is very pleased with the budget. It is very lean, it is very responsible, and it is tied specifically to the Board goals regarding reducing the dropout rate, supporting NEASC, and answering obligations under AYP and No Child Left Behind. Those are the 3 main areas. She thinks the Board will be pleased when they see the budget. They will be meeting in exec on Monday, to do the final revisions of the budget, and they look forward to having the budget completed and presented on the 21st with copies to the Budget Committee on the afternoon of the 16th.

Dr. O’Brien also reported that they have taken very seriously the lady’s comments about handicap accessibility, and they regret that she had difficulty with her stroller. Ms. Haynes has met with David Bascetta, and there are now instructions at the elevator as to how to access the elevator should someone need to do so. Mrs. Carbone also made the observation that if you park out back, you can just walk into this level of the building. Dr. O’Brien added that if the elevator was not be the best way to accommodate needs, she would like people to give her a call at her office at 489-2396, on the day of the Board meeting, and they will make special arrangements to assist and facilitate attendance at the meeting.

Dr. O’Brien also addressed the comments about adequate supplies, materials, and textbooks. She spoke with the principal at Forbes School, who went and actually investigated in the classrooms the comment about a lack of pencils. The PTO at Forbes had asked teachers for a wish list that went above and beyond all of their regular, general

classroom supplies that are provided. The teacher in question had requested some special colored pencils for a special art project. This Board has actually put forward a large increase for all of the buildings for materials and supplies. In the past, the supply closets have been very lean, and they are trying to rebuild those supply closets so that the students have all of the materials they need for their schooling. This Board also approved over \$100,000 of additional textbooks for THS last year. This Board also approved over \$300,000 for new math textbooks in grades K through 5. So she would certainly like the viewing public to realize that they cannot make up for things that were not purchased in the past all at once, but this Board has made a firm commitment to new textbooks, and to improving art and general supplies.

Dr. O'Brien also related some information related to the cold weather closing. She believes many people don't know that here in Torrington, they have over 400 people who walk as far as 2 miles to the high school. So she had decided to close school on that day as she judged it to dangerous and unsafe for walkers that day. She also addressed that she thinks that some people have the impression that when there is a snow day or a weather day, that administrators get the day off. That is not true. Administrators work on snow days, cold days, and weather-related delay days. In fact, they worked for 7 hours on budget the day of the cold weather closing.

She also wanted to relate a quick story which she heard from one of the elementary principals. He told he came up to a little boy on the playground who was wearing a sweatshirt with a hood on a very cold day. He was concerned because it was so cold out that day. The previous day he had seen this same child wear a nice warm jacket out at recess. The principal asked where his jacket was and the child responded that it wasn't his turn that day to wear the warm jacket.

CONSENT AGENDA

Certified Staff Resignations/Appointments

Rocco Mesiti, World Language-Italian-HS, resigned eff 1/19/07

Alicia Maglione, World Language-Italian-HS, hired eff 1/22/07

In a motion by Mr. O'Connell, with a second by Mrs. Carbone, the Board moved to approve the consent agenda. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Report on Parent Meetings at Torrington and Southwest Schools

Dr. O'Brien reported that they have had several very successful parent meetings. She attended one at Southwest School, and she was very pleased. The cafeteria was filled with interested parents. Two meetings were held, one at Torrington and one at Southwest, and administration has invited both Mrs. Theeb and Mrs. Todor to report on their parent meetings.

Mrs. Theeb reported that Southwest School welcomed 24 families to their open house on January 30th. Many of the children, as well as their parents, recognized Mrs. Theeb from her days at Vogel-Wetmore. 100% of the teaching staff introduced themselves and then took small groups on a tour of the building. The teachers answered questions during the tour, and then following the tours, reassembled in the cafeteria for a question-answer period. Phil Joslin was also on board and helped answer some of the concerns. The parents did raise some very thoughtful issues. They expressed concern over the changed school hours, noting that Southwest School begins at 8:20 a.m. and dismisses at 2:50 p.m., which is very different from the Vogel-Wetmore schedule. Programs were a concern for many parents, such as if Southwest will provide before and after school care. Parents were also concerned about continuing Power Hour, which is an after school reading program for grades 2 and 3. They asked if Southwest will provide a breakfast program, and if Southwest will be able to provide services for ELL and ESL. They were also concerned with where the 4 additional grade levels would be housed. Lastly, they were concerned with how large the classes would be.

Mrs. Todor reported that Tarringford School had their open house on Wednesday, January 31st. Once again, Mr. Joslin and Mrs. Labonski were there to help greet the children when they arrived. They welcomed approximately 100 parents and children. Teacher representatives from each grade level were present, and PTO officers on the hospitality committee served a wonderful table of treats for all of the children. One teacher from each grade level then led the tours with the children who will be in that grade level next year. The majority of the questions asked were through those tours, and there were questions about Power Hour and class size. The teachers said that the parents also wanted to know if their children could be placed with classmates from their current school. Back in the cafeteria, children reported that some things they liked about Tarringford School were the Library Media Center, the books, and the art room. Parents' questions were about the special ed program, and they were assured them that these services would follow the children. They also wanted Power Hour, as that was a program they had at Vogel-Wetmore. They asked questions about the curriculum, and they were assured that the elementary school principals have worked very hard to provide a curriculum that was consistent across all the schools. Finally, they had questions about class size and how the increasing numbers would be accommodated. Overall, she feels it was a very successful evening. They did tell parents that they are planning other events with the PTOs, and they would like the parents and children to come and visit the school when it is actually in session so they can see what a real day at Tarringford looks like before they begin in August.

Mr. O'Connell asked if Power Hour is offered at either Southwest or Tarringford. Dr. Campbell explained that Power Hour is funded through Early Reading Success, and the Early Reading Success grants were widely available many years ago to schools with high free and reduced ratios. Mr. Joslin has received funding every year since then, but there needs to be a certain level of free and reduced students. There are also several other criteria, and reapplication is needed every year based on those criteria. So they need to wait and see what the demographics look like, because there is an application process involved. She thinks the last time the legislature looked at funding, they weren't

accepting as many new grants. So if the grants are there, and the free and reduced is right, it is a possibility. But this is funded entirely out of a grant.

Another Board member asked about the ELL. He knows that this is to a certain degree driven by the number of students. Are they able to determine at this point in time where that leaves Vogel in terms of no longer having enough to warrant it, yet maybe having a lot of students that still need it?

Dr. O'Brien responded that they are monitoring the numbers at the start of each month. Dr. Lambour is taking slices, and the enrollment as of February 1st became their most recent slice. So they are taking those numbers, and using the SASI computer system to analyze those numbers in terms of male/female, special ed students, regular ed, and ESL. So each 1st of the month, they have a very detailed picture of who the young people will be traveling from Vogel and from Forbes to the other schools. In the budget proposal, it can be clearly seen that they are tending to the needs of these young people, and the administration knows from analyzing where they are and where they wish to go that they need to organize the ELL program, and the curriculum and materials, in a better way, and the program needs to be staffed in a fuller way. They will start to make more solid decisions as to possible teacher transfers and the like starting in April.

Dr. Lambour reported that Mrs. Theeb and Mrs. Todor will be receiving packets tomorrow in the mail about this slice Dr. O'Brien referred to, which is a portrait of the kind of students they'll be getting by grade. This is broken down by students in special ed, students in ELL, 504, and other special needs. As they get that, they will be able to start formulating where those students will fall into their current grade structure. Then this Friday, after the administrative meeting, he will be meeting with them, as well as the 2 sending schools, and start talking about the nature of the students that are going to be coming their way. The first step is to start pinpointing the classroom needs, and then how many teachers they need to move from one building to another. As that is put in place, then they will be fine tuning in terms of special needs, a school psychologist, social workers, art, and the special subject areas. At that point, Judith Babcock will start joining the discussions, and will be looking at what type of schedule adjustments in those people that are across buildings need to be made. So with each passing month, they are getting a better handle on who is coming and the consistency of that population. Dr. Campbell was able to provide that information through her staff and the SASI data base that they maintain on their students. So each month, they are able to get a picture of these kids based upon the street structure and the area that is being affected.

A Board member stated that she would like to thank Mrs. Theeb and Mrs. Todor for their efforts and their staff as well. She thinks it is very important what was done for the people, and she appreciates that. Mr. Cavagnero stated he echoes that. It sounds like a very good program was put together, which will be a nice transition program for the kids. He believes they went the extra mile to see that the kids were able to fit in as best they could in this situation, and he applauded them for that.

Director of Human Resources Search – Process and Timeline

Dr. Lambour reported that a timeline has been provided in the Board's packet, and this timeline was put together and approved by Dr. O'Brien. The posting has been put in place, and advertising has been placed through the newspaper in Connecticut, internet sources, on our website, and in Minority News. Copies of the posting brochure were sent to every public school in Connecticut. The CASBA work group of personnel directors that Dr. Lambour belongs to are all aware, as are case people from other towns. They are getting hits on their new electronic application process already from literally around the country. There was a work session today with the interview committee to start generating questions that will be asked in the first round of interviews. This was started early enough so they can capture those people that may be looking for work early on, and also to allow time if a second round of recruitment is needed.

Mr. Broverman asked if one of the requirements of the job application was that the person be a certified teacher or administrator. Dr. Lambour responded that a certified administrator is preferred, and also someone with school-based administrative experience. It is also preferred that they have some experience in human resources. If you look at who makes up most human resource directors in public schools, they are usually either lawyers or people like Dr. Lambour, who have been administrators and then moved into that. Having a law degree or having public school administrative experience lends credibility to the individual as when they are dealing with other administrators, it lends to their understanding the educational laws and contractual procedures that need to be dealt with. He thinks it would not be appropriate to require only a teacher. They want somebody who was a teacher who moved up through preferably, or somebody who has a strong human resource background, with some time in public schools.

Mr. Broverman stated that the reason he asked the question was because sometimes they are not professional educators, but they are personnel people who may have come through private industry and so forth. But is it the intent that this person should have public school experience? Dr. Lambour answered that when they listed the criteria, they listed it as preferred. They don't want to exclude anyone because they don't know who may come along who would be absolutely great. But based upon what they saw as appropriate here in Torrington, they indicated that as a characteristic.

Dr. O'Brien added that in the finalists interview phase, it seemed to work very successfully in the past to have a couple of Board representatives join her and Dr. Campbell. Administration would like to suggest that they have 2 Board members participate at that point to give their impressions of the finalist candidates to help guide the selection. The Board responded that would be fine.

Mr. Lutka stated he was wondering whether or not a salary was posted. Dr. Lambour stated that a salary was posted which was equal to that of an elementary administrator, up to that amount. The salary is approximately \$109,000.

Dr. O'Brien stated she would send an email out regarding a little informal reception for any interested Board members, and to seek volunteers for the finalist interviews. Mr. Cavagnero responded that would be fine as it got closer to the time.

Pre-School Lab at THS – Tuition and Recruitment

Dr. O'Brien stated that the Board has the proposal from Ms. Haynes regarding the current tuition of the preschool, a summary of comparison tuitions from around town, and a suggestion that the Board consider raising the tuition by \$25 for a total of \$130 a month, to put it in line with comparable fees around town. In fact, it still would be among the lowest tuitions in town. In terms of the recruitment piece, Dr. Metallo has worked with the staff of the preschool, and a draft flyer has been sent to Migeon and approved. Subject to the Board's decision on tuition, they will insert that number on the flyer. They plan to print a multi-colored flyer that is attractive and can go out in the community, and they have also with Dr. Metallo's permission set a date for the open house activity. It will be after March testing, as they don't want parents and little ones coming in during the CAP testing time. They plan the open house for the Friday after testing. They are also ordering a new attractive, professional-looking sign to go out by the THS sign, which will advertise the preschool. It will say something to effect of "Register now", and will give the appropriate phone number. So they are trying to put a new look and a new face on the preschool, and these activities will start as soon as the Board decides on the tuition.

Mr. Lutka asked what the capacity of the preschool was, and how many days a week it was run. Dr. O'Brien responded that she thinks the capacity is about 64 or 65, and it runs 4 days a week.

Mr. Lutka stated he didn't particularly like the \$130 amount, since if that is divided by 4 weeks in a month, it is \$32.50 a week. He would prefer to go with something a little bit more rounded off, say like \$140, because that would be \$35 a week. Dr. O'Brien responded that this is not paid weekly though, it is paid monthly. Also, the preschool is run 4 days, but each child either goes Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday.

Mr. Broverman asked if it was 65 each day. Dr. O'Brien responded she thinks it splits into 32 and 32, so 65 would be the total enrollment.

Mrs. Traub stated she thinks the preschool should not be self-supporting, and if it has full enrollment, even at the \$105 monthly, that would be almost \$67,000. She would be willing to raise it to \$110, and that is about it.

Mr. O'Connell said that he intends to agree with Mrs. Traub. He might even go to \$115 as a rate. He also doesn't feel the preschool needs to be self-sufficient, anymore than any other program that they offer in the high school. He would much rather see if this wonderful new effort to promote the program doesn't produce the additional revenue that might help offset some of the cost. He would be much more comfortable with an

increase of \$5 to \$10 this year, and this doesn't mean they can't increase again next year. But he thinks to go up 25% to 40% in 1 year is a very big jump that he is not sure makes sense. He is very pleased with what he is hearing in terms of promoting the program. He asked if there was also a yellow page ad to which Dr. O'Brien responded affirmatively.

Dr. O'Brien stated that they are just looking for input at this point, and if the Board has a number or if they want it brought back next time to actually vote on it.

Mrs. Carbone stated when she broke down the numbers the hour, she falls on the \$115 where Mr. O'Connell came down. She feels that \$115 would be all that she would be comfortable raising it this time around.

Mr. Oliver stated that if he remembers correctly, this was a time sensitive issue to a number of parents. He asked if this could be moved forward with a number agreed upon tonight.

Mr. Broverman stated that he would have supported the \$130, but he really thinks if they want to encourage people to go, \$115 makes good sense. He thinks that would be a good compromise. He thinks it is not high enough to dissuade people from going, but on the other hand, it is a little bit more cost effective.

Prof. Royals stated she might be in the minority, but she supports the higher tuition rate. In looking at these figures, and taking into consideration what other members of the Board have said, she thinks \$125 is a fair price, because it is only \$20 more and still within the ballpark and still less than a lot of other preschool centers. So \$125 is her recommendation.

Miss Laus stated she agrees with Prof. Royals. When they had all the parents come and support this program, they were very open about the fact that they would be willing to pay more in tuition to keep this up and running. So she feels that the need is out there, and people will definitely pay it. So if they could offset some of the costs at \$125 or \$120, that sounds good to her.

On a motion by Mr. Oliver, with a second by Mr. Lutka, the Board moved to set the payment at \$115. All were in favor with the exception of Prof. Royals who was opposed.

Language Arts 2 Class Offering – TMS

Dr. Campbell asked the Board to recall her CMT score presentation. As they will remember, the math and reading scores over the last several years at the middle school level have been disappointing. Those who have been on the Board longer than Dr. Campbell, also know that the middle school was the building being identified as being most in need of improvement because of achievement there. One of the things they have looked at is the double block of Language Arts at the 6th grade level. This seems to help the students, but it then it goes back to a single block of Language Arts in 7th and 8th

grade. They thought it was important to give the students in 7th and 8th grade the opportunity to also have the extended time in Language Arts. They began talking about adding more time for Language Arts probably back around the time she gave her report to the Superintendent about the curriculum infrastructure. Today when she opened her email, she had a question about how many schools have double blocks of Reading/Language Arts at the middle school level. From the responses to that question, she could see that quite a few middle schools have this double block and they feel it is extremely important, especially for those students struggling with reading. It is not a different curriculum than what happens in the first hour, but it gives the teacher and the student extra time to master content. It gives the teacher time to do some differentiation, so that if the students didn't get it the first time, perhaps when it is changed the second time around, a light bulb will go on. So one of the first things she and Dr. O'Brien thought needed to happen at the middle school was to add this extra time for Language Arts instruction. She stated that when she was meeting with a group of teachers, one of the teachers told her that this was not something new. Apparently, several years ago, there was a double block for Language Arts at the 7th and 8th grade levels. So Dr. Campbell thinks this is coming back around because they really want to make certain that they can help all of the students reach proficiency and beyond in Language Arts.

Dr. O'Brien commented that basically this is back to the future. They want people to become better readers and writers, so the way to do that is to spend more time on it.

Miss Laus stated as she is a certified language arts teacher for the 7th and 8th grade, or for the middle school, she thinks it is extremely important to have extra time on these tasks, especially when they are the 2 tests that CMT evaluates, the writing and the reading. So it makes good sense to spend more time on them during the day. But one thing she noticed on the 7th grade student schedule on page 6 of the packet, is that the Language Art blocks are at the end of the school day. It has been her experience that having something like Language Arts, especially a double block of Language Arts, at the end of the school day hasn't always been very effective, especially for the struggling students. It seems to her that having Health/PE, or something more hands on for those students is a better idea. She would like to see a change there.

Dr. Campbell said they had talked about that, and this is just a sample schedule so certainly her comment will be something they can weigh.

Miss Laus also asked about the advisory period. Dr. Campbell responded that they have asked Mr. Harnett to speak to those schedule issues a little later. So if it is all right with the chair, she would like to defer that question until then. Mr. Cavagnero said that would make sense.

Mr. Lutka stated that he understands the need for Language Arts 2 and the purpose of trying to support the CMT effort as Miss Laus has already said, as he is a middle school teacher too. But he would like Dr. Campbell to explain to the laymen who may be watching, what Language Arts 2 would be and what it will do for the students.

Dr. Campbell stated that when she took English in junior high school, they spent a great deal of time reading literature, learning the structure of the language, the grammar, and the appropriate way to write. But they didn't have many reading strategies for comprehension, it was pretty much what she would call traditional English. Over the years, research and experience with children have taught us that writing, reading, and the study of literature shouldn't be taught separately, if the product you are looking for is a literate adult or a literate student. So at the time all that research and practice came together, you began to hear the term Language Arts. So what is going to be in this program is what is already there at the middle school. Students are going to learn to enjoy literature, and experience different kinds of literature. They are going to learn how to be a critical reader of that literature. If they are missing critical reading strategies, those skills will be taught. They will read what they write about and they will write what they read about, so they will become proficient writers. They will also learn the structure, the conventions of English, what used to be called grammar. They will learn what they do now at the middle school in a single block. What will happen in Language Arts 2 is extended time so the teacher can pace the instruction, and perhaps talk about reading strategies to use for reading a story and perhaps use other strategies to understand a story, such as being asked to role play it. The extra time to take the instruction and change it a little bit, will give struggling students the extra time to grasp the content.

Mr. Lutka asked why they thought the Language Arts 2 would work at the middle school level, since the block schedule is not working successfully at the high school. Dr. Campbell responded that they are not doing a block schedule at the middle school. What they are saying is that for a group of students who are struggling in the English Language Arts, they are going to put back to back opportunities for students to master that content. It is the only thing blocked in the schedule.

Dr. O'Brien stated that the Language Arts 2 in 7th and 8th grade, really takes the place of World Language for those young people for whom World Language is so frustrating and unproductive.

Mr. Lutka stated that when he read about the Language Arts 2, all he could think about was back when he was 5 years old and his best friend's mother got on to cod liver oil, and she was sure that if 1 spoonful of cod liver oil was good, 2 was even better. And what he is thinking here is if you have a kid who is struggling with Language Arts 1, is giving him a double dose of it really going to make him like Language Arts and do better? He understands the theory, but in practice having a kid do a subject for a double period, he doesn't know how successful that might be.

Miss Laus stated she currently teaches for a 90 minute block, and she doesn't have any problems. She thinks that there is a way to go about teaching in a block period. You have to chunk things up and do different activities for the middle school student. It is different with a high school student, but that is how she does it and it works fine.

Mrs. Traub asked if Dr. Campbell had any estimates as to what percentage of the 7th and 8th graders she thinks fall into this. Dr. Campbell stated she knows exactly. It is about a

third of the students, so it will be about 100 to 120 students. When students enter 7th and 8th grade, some students will be able to begin World Language, and other students will take Language Arts 2, and they have criteria for which students will go on to World Language and which students will go into Language Arts 2.

Dr. O'Brien added that the number is derived from looking at the CMT scores, and then determining which young people are scoring at basic and below basic. In other words, that chunk of young people who to date were unsuccessful in gaining their language art skills from basically K through 6. The other piece is that they feel compelled to catch these young children before high school. They don't want the young people to pass through middle school, and then for doc to have a program for young people who aren't even close to reading or writing on grade level. It becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible at high school to remediate. So this is one of their last best chances to zero in on those 100 young people, who are approximately 30% or so of the class, and give them that double dose of cod liver oil so that they will love it.

Mrs. Traub asked if they currently offered a second Language Arts now for 7th and 8th grade, or if everyone has to go into World Language. Dr. O'Brien answered that virtually everybody goes into World Language unless your IEP indicates that it is really counterproductive. But they have heard from the children, parents, and World Language teachers that many of these young people are really having problems in their native language. They ask why these students are forced to take a world language. Dr. O'Brien thinks they should use their last best chance to give these students that double block. And the classes will be relatively small, so they can be more specific about the needs of the young people to really remediate like crazy while they still have the opportunity.

Mrs. Traub asked if they are increasing the minutes of the classes. Dr. Campbell would like to also defer that response to Mr. Harnett and his staff later on as they can answer where that calculation came from.

Mrs. Traub asked if this will have a teacher need effect. Dr. O'Brien responded that it will be cost neutral.

Mr. Broverman commented he feels the 90 minutes could be great or it could be totally ineffective based on the quality of the teaching that goes on and how the instruction is dealt with. So, again, he thinks that time on task is wonderful if it is used properly. But his question has to do with the language piece. He is pleased that two thirds of the students will continue to take World Language. But is Spanish the only option? What impact does World Language at the middle school level have on high school enrollment? In other words, do they offer as many languages? Do they see students opting toward a few and does that have any impact when they get to high school?

Dr. Campbell answered they offer Spanish, Italian, and French at the middle school. They are looking to improve that program so that students who meet certain criteria will be taking each of those Language 1 classes at the middle school, and then if they meet the exit criteria be credited. They will receive high school credit for that if they meet the

criteria. Dr. Metallo will then be able to schedule those students should they decide not to change languages. If the Spanish 1 student successfully completes Spanish 1 at the middle school, that student will be enrolled in Spanish 2 at the high school.

Mr. Broverman asked if this will then give an opportunity down the road to offer 5 years of world languages. Is that where they are going with this? Dr. O'Brien answered yes, that will accelerate the learning of the young people who are really proficient. This is the building block for that.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he thinks this sounds like a very good idea, but when he was looking at the Strategic School Profile, he noticed that in grade 6 where they have the double block in reading, they do worst in the State, but in grades 7 and 8 where they have the single block currently, they outperform the State in reading. So he finds it interesting that now they are going to have the double block in the grades where they are actually doing better than the State. Of course, for writing they are doing poorly across the board, but in your description of Language Arts 2, it seemed to be focused more towards reading than writing. He is not quite sure what to make of that..

Dr. O'Brien responded the statistical analysis is interesting because those numbers are averages. So what that tell is they have some really high flyers who are lifting up the bottom, but when you analyze beyond the average and look at how the students are stratified in terms of achievement level, there are 100 students who are so low that although those scores are not sufficient to drag down the average, administration knows that those young people have a great need. She thinks it is a matter of looking at the statistic as a more gross statistic, but looking at the stratifications on the 5 levels as being more diagnostic.

Mr. O'Connell stated he has no doubt that is correct. But he feels to evaluate the success of this, it might be helpful to have that statistical evidence as to the students in that one third, so the Board can see how they do increase their performance with this new model. He would like that as a baseline to evaluate the year after.

Dr. Campbell commented that one of the things they know about improving writing is they need to tie it tightly to what kids are reading about. And writing takes time in the classroom, as you need todraft and redraft. When she met with the Language Arts teachers they were frustrated because without the extra time, they didn't have time for kids to write, and for peer review and conference. So the writing part of this will be very integral and will be there will be more time on task.

Mrs. Carbone stated she was thinking about Dr. O'Brien's observation. She asked if it would be a fair assessment to say that the test scores that are shown in that Strategic School Profile for 6th grade could be reflective of the work that was done in 5th grade, since the test is being administered in the fall. So the test results in 7th grade are probably more reflective of what the double block Language Arts provided.

Dr. Campbell responded that the Strategic School Profile and testing make her crazy, because they are a year behind and they have moved to administering from spring to fall. She thinks the other important thing, when looking at those test scores, is to remember that because of NCLB, each year the standard goes up by a certain percentage point, and as it climbs higher so does the number of students you must have reaching the proficient level. So you leave the other students further and further behind. Her goal is to get out of AYP, because she doesn't want any of the sanctions that they face.

Mrs. Carbone stated she knows that at the high school when they had the double block, that there was a real challenge for teachers to really utilize that period effectively. Will there be any professional development given to the middle school teachers to help them to implement strategies to keep those students engaged?

Dr. Campbell responded that they have already started doing some professional development at the middle school, and when the Board looks at her budget proposal, they will see more professional development targeted in that, because they believe that if they equip the teachers, the students learn.

Mr. O'Connell asked for clarification about the 2005-2006 Strategic School Profile with testing in the spring. Wouldn't that be in this profile.

Dr. Campbell said that last year was the first year they took the spring CMT. So that would not have been in the profile the Board has, because that one her office submits the narrative for in June and the scores weren't back until July. So this was the last fall administration.

ACTION ITEMS

Receive Schedule Modification Language Arts 2 – TMS

In a motion by Mrs. Carbone, and a second by Mr. O'Connell, the Board moved to receive the schedule modification Language Arts 2 – TMS. All were in favor.

Mr. Harnett stated he would like to highlight a couple of different things, starting with the process they began back in September. He started meeting with the teachers and they began talking about what was successful and unsuccessful at the middle school. Actually this really started in August before school even started. But by September, they had formed a scheduling committee, and this teacher has very diligently called a variety of middle schools throughout the State, gathering their schedules, gathering their program studies, and getting as much information as she could. Then they sat down and started ploughing through the information. They looked at what they liked, what they didn't like, and what they thought would work with the populations they were dealing with here, and they started to list off the different things they would like to build into the schedule. The highlighted parts of it address the needs of a variety of different students. As in the discussion you were just having, they do have about a third of the population within the building that is not meeting any kind of goal. They are basic and they are below basic in

a variety of areas. They are not reading or writing on grade level, and they are academically unsuccessful which creates a lot of different problems. There is a ripple effect that goes through the building, and through the climate and the culture inside the building, based on the fact that they are not being successful in the classroom. So they had to figure out a way to address that. They also want to take and find a way to push the kids who were being successful as hard and as far and as fast as they could, to get them prepared for high school. So some of the middle school students will be coming to the high school with high school credits, and some will be coming with a really solid skill base. One of the biggest things this schedule does is increase instructional time, and it gives teachers and students more time together to work and focus in on the skills they need, whether it is remediation and building new skills, or being more rigorous and relevant and pushing them even farther and harder. This is a multi-step process, and this schedule is the first step in taking the school in the right direction. It is making the most of the resources that they have now, and it is pretty much cost neutral. He would love to go forth from this point and fix every single problem there is in that building right now, as he knows it is one of the Board's goals to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Torrington. This schedule takes what they have and puts both the adults and students in positions, to be more successful and to meet the needs of the learner in a more efficient way. At this point in time, they are trying to fit everybody in to the same cookie cutter and it is not working.

These are just sample schedules. They have not run this all the way through, so some of the things about time of day, and back to back, and would things be split around lunch; those are all details that will be worked out as they move through. Hopefully, with the Board's approval, they can start hammering those things out and looking specifically the exact numbers and the exact times that these would meet.

Mrs. Traub asked if the amount of minutes per period changed or if they are still the same.

Mr. Harnett responded that on the schedule, there are A, B, and C days. On the A and B days, the periods are 53 minutes long. On the C day, they are 50 minutes. But there are things that have changed. There is advisory, which right now is called enhancement. That is 40 minutes each day, every day. On the A and B day, it is 30 minutes long, and on the C day, it is still 40 minutes. Also, in the mornings, currently between homeroom and 1st period, they have 20 minutes of SSR. That chunk of time in the morning and also at the shortened advisory period at the end of the day on the A and B days, the time is taken back and given to direct instruction.

Mrs. Traub stated she is concerned that currently Band and Chorus alternate days, Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday, and then they share alternative Fridays, and that is during enhancement period. Now Band is put in the schedule every 3rd day. Where does Chorus fit in?

Mr. Harnett responded that the schedules are examples. So Chorus, Band, or Orchestra could be put in. So those classes instead of meeting at the end of the academic day, they

will meet during the day and gain time. So instead of having a 40 minute block of time at the end of the day to rehearse, if it meets on A day, they are going to have 53 minutes. So they are picking up 13 minutes more of time. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra are built into the schedule, and even so, the C day still has the 40 minute block where they can also call down and have another rehearsal at that time as well. Mrs. Traub asked if IP would still be mandatory in 6th grade. Mr. Harnett stated yes.

Mrs. Traub asked if they can still take Band and Chorus. Mr. Harnett responded they can, they just wouldn't be scheduled on the same day. Band might be on A day, and Chorus might be on B day. That way if a student does choose to participate in both Band or Chorus or Orchestra and Chorus, they can do that. Currently, there are about 7 kids in 6th grade who do Band and Chorus. There are no kids in 7th grade who do it, and there are about 7 kids in 8th grade who do Band and Chorus. There are about 6 or 7 kids who do 6th grade Orchestra and Chorus, and there are no kids in 7th and 8th grade who do Orchestra and Chorus. After their 6th grade year, the kids come in and kind of make their own choices and figure out where they want to focus their own time. She is talking about a small handful of kids, but they still will be able to do that if they choose to. That was one of the concerns that was expressed to them by the Chorus and Music teachers, in general, and they went back and figured out a way to make it happen.

Prof. Royals indicated that she did support an increase in the instructional time for Language Arts. She thinks that is something that is much needed, and she supports that 100%. But why are they still requiring 2 years of a foreign language for the majority of students at TMS, if they are no longer requiring a foreign language requirement at THS?

Mr. Harnett responded that currently every student in the middle school, when they come out of 6th grade, has to take a foreign language. The thought behind the Language Arts 2 was there are kids who just don't belong in that class. They needed extra support in other areas, which is why that group is being pulled out. There are also another group of kids who don't necessarily need that Language Arts 2 class, so the option of being able to take World Language was something that was still there. He knows it has been eliminated at the high school, but they still have that as a choice for the kids to take. There are going to be a group of kids who will be eligible to take World Language for high school credit. There will be a group of kids who are going to be taking World Language to prepare them for Spanish 1, Italian 1, French 1; or whatever it is they choose to take when they enroll as freshman in high school. If you look at what kids need to prepare for in order to go to college, get into college, and be successful, colleges are looking for some type of foreign language. So to completely eliminate it from the program would be handcuffing some of the students coming out. There is a pretty large group of students in the middle school who have the ability to earn some high school credits, and they are going to start them on that path. So it is opening up the doors for them to take other higher level courses at the high school, once they do achieve a certain level of success at the middle school.

Dr. Campbell added that when you look at the brain research for this age of student, and when you look at world language proficiency, what you discover is that if you are going

to hook students on learning a world language and they are going to become proficient, the earlier you start the better it is for students. If they had unlimited resources, she would be advocating for a World Language program at the elementary level. The other things they know about students at this age is they like to try things. This is a very impressionable age. She is not a big proponent of everything that goes behind the middle school philosophy, but one thing is very clear and true. They are at a developmental age where exposure to options is extremely important. She said that for next year, she and Mr. Harnett are talking about bringing Family and Consumer Science back to the middle school, expanding some of the Tech Ed offerings, and putting some things in place for students so that they get hooked into school.

Prof. Royals asked if 2 years of a foreign language in the middle school is comparable to 1 year at the high school. Dr. Campbell stated yes, that one of the consultants who is working with the high school for NEASC, was a departmental supervisor for World Language, and they are working at the middle school now because they have to build the articulation piece for NEASC. This supervisor will tell you that if you are going to offer World Language, offer it in the 7th and 8th grade, and then push the high achieving kids to meet the standards to get credit for it.

Prof. Royals stated that her thought was that students should have the option of taking Language Arts 1 and 2 instead of Language Arts 1 and Spanish. She thinks they should have the option to opt out of Spanish because not all students are college bound.

Mr. Harnett responded he thought that was fine. If there was a student who was really interested and wants to explore more Language Arts, by all means they should go in. But there are kids who he thinks need to go into Language Arts 2, and he has made the best use of the resources they have right now. He has also discovered that he doesn't have enough resources.

Dr. O'Brien commented that she feels that Mr. Harnett is a wonderful advocate for the middle school, and he has great vision as to where he would like to see the middle school be in 2 or 3 years. But she has been telling him they can only go so far this year, but let's think about your 2, let's think about your 3, and they are thinking in the future to a much more fully articulated elective program so that young people can have more choices. The problem they face right now is they are trying like crazy to make this cost neutral.

Mr. Harnett added that it is also important to remember that the middle school is the one school in this district that receives every single child. When the 8th grade leaves about 1/3 of them are going to go someplace else. But every single student from the elementary school pretty much ends up at the middle school, and they need to develop a comprehensive program that meets the needs of all the kids that are coming in there. He would love to be able to offer them every choice in the book.

Mr. Broverman asked if TMS is still the largest middle school in the State of Connecticut in terms of population. Mr. Harnett answered that he doesn't believe so, but certainly for a middle school it is big.

Mr. Broverman commented that he thinks that the job of dealing with that many students is daunting, and he applauds Mr. Harnett's efforts and understands that the job of being a principal at a middle school the size of TMS in this community, is not an easy job. Mr. Harnett responded that he appreciates this compliment, but he thinks that the teacher's efforts really need to be recognized, given the obstacles and parameters they face, and the tasks that they are given. It really is impressive what they are doing.

Dr. O'Brien stated that the Board has heard them speak a number of times about those struggling learners who need extra support. One of the things that she loves about Mr. Harnett's proposal is that both Algebra and World Language are going to be kicked up a notch or two, and provide the kinds of challenge and acceleration for their best and brightest. She is very committed to working with and improving the experience of young people across the entire continuum, and not just focusing on students who are struggling or who need more. Students who perform at the average range and the students who are the high flyers need to be pushed and challenged and have their learning accelerated. She has heard from too many parents that their child is a little bored. With time, there are going to be very few bored people in Torrington, because they want to accelerate that learning for everyone. She didn't want that piece to be lost in the discussion tonight. They are really pushing it up a notch in both Algebra and World Language.

Mr. Lutka stated that he was in 100% agreement with Prof. Royals tonight, having taught at the middle school at Shelton for the past 8 years now. He believes that a world language requirement at the 7th and 8th grade is unnecessary. He thinks world language should be an elective. He understands the importance of a language if you want to get into college. He avoided French and Spanish by taking 3 years of Latin, and he got into college. But that was done at Harding High School. It was not done in 7th and 8th grade. He thinks the language requirement at the high school proved to be daunting, and that they decided that it was necessary to eliminate that language requirement and make it an elective at the high school. So he thinks that this particular schedule should be relooked at with respect to the language requirement because not everybody is going to be going to college.

Mr. Lutka stated he also understands how languages help people learn better, and there are quite a few people at his middle school that are taking Spanish, French, and Italian too. He has sort of argued with the Language Department on a number of occasions that French and Italian aren't really popular languages in the business world today. They are great for people who are of the Italian descent or people who like the idea of going to Paris someday, but the languages that are going to be the most usable in the world today are not the ones that they are teaching. He believes that the people who are learning Spanish are learning a very valuable tool that they might be able to use in business, because there are quite a few Hispanic people who are out in the workforce today that cannot speak English that well. But he thinks the language requirement at the middle school level is the same problem that they experienced at the high school level. By forcing kids to take that rather than making it an elective, he thinks they are preventing themselves from being able to do tech ed. Tech ed is near and dear to his heart, and the

tech ed schedule is one that any tech ed teacher would pull his hair out with because there is no consistency as far as day to day. He sees his students for 9 weeks every single day. When you teach someone to use a band saw, you don't want to have a 3 day lag before they come back and remember what they did 3 days ago. He thinks there is a need to beef up those types of electives. And for struggling learners, he knows for a fact, that kids who take his class who are not academic champions, but seem to excel at the hands on activities. So for struggling learners, he would look to beef up the tech ed area. He knows that may require additional teachers. He also thinks the schedule that they should be moving towards is one that is very elective enhanced similar to what the high school does., because that offers kids the choices to be able to decide what they want to do. So by increasing the amount of choices they have, they are going to have a well-rounded educational experience. He knows for a fact that people learn a lot better when they get to choose what they want to learn. From that standpoint, he was a little bit disappointed in the schedule because of the fact that there wasn't a lot of tech ed in there. But for the most part, he can understand what they are struggling with, and he knows that the resources are not exactly large in that area.

Mr. Lutka would recommend that as a Board they look to revisit the language requirement, and look to see whether or not they can boost some of the electives that are offered. One of the things that he wants to be able to bring to the Board is a program called Project Lead the Way, which is a pre-engineering course that also has a middle school application. He thinks that would enhance what is being done by the science teachers, and would also expose a lot of kids to pre-engineering activities that have been proven to help CMT scores. Technology education can be a nice adjunct to what goes on in the classroom, when it gets the type of resources, and this program shows students that technology involves math, being able to write, and do all the other things that are occurring in their academic subjects. So he thinks those type of resources are things that he would like to help advocate for the middle school level. In the building that he teaches in, they have an elective system and the kids thrive on being able to pick what they want to take.

Dr. Campbell said that she knows that Mr. Harnett is in complete agreement with everything said about providing an elective base to the program, and he was all set to do that. However, this first year stepout had to be cost neutral, and it had to provide some acceleration for those students ready to fly. That is why the world language piece is in there. Dr. Campbell also stated that she is also a tech ed advocate, and when she, Mr. Harnett, Mr. Bascetta, and Jerry Crowley did the capital walk through and looked at the tech ed facility she almost had a coronary arrest. The physical space is there, but there is serious infrastructure that needs to be taken care of before a full-blown technology education program can be offered in the way she would like to see it offered.

Mr. Lutka responded that he thinks that any type of decision that they make this year with respect to budget should be predicated on the maximum amount of effect it would have on the maximum amount of students. He thinks that when they look at spending money, they should be able to say as a Board that they are making the maximum amount of impact for every single student in the school district.

Mrs. Traub stated that she remembers a comment that was made last year during budget season which said, “this year high school, next year middle school,” and now she is hearing that every thing should be cost neutral. She would like to remind the Board that they need to be advocates of the best interests of the students, and they need to make sure they are meeting their educational needs. She would like everyone to keep that in mind when revising this schedule, and to take into consideration some of the comments that were made tonight, regarding other options instead of making World Language requirements.

Dr. O’Brien stated that there are plenty of other things that will be seen in the budget which are not cost neutral. The only cost neutral piece she was referring to was the Language Arts 2, but there will be plenty of other things for which Mr. Harnett has advocated very powerfully that the Board will see in the budget.

Approve the Summer School Proposals 2007

In a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Prof Royals, the Board moved to approve Summer School Proposals 2007. All were in favor except for Mr. Lutka who was opposed.

Approve Proposed Plan for THS GOAL Program – Education Program

In a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve proposed plan for THS GOAL Program – Education Program. Mr. Broverman, Miss Laus, and Prof. Royals were in favor. Mr. Oliver, Mr. Lutka, Mr. O’Connell, Mrs. Carbone, and Mrs. Traub were opposed. So the motion does not carry and this plan is not approved as presented.

Mr. Lutka asked the chair if they approve the educational program does that in effect require them to approve the funding. Mr. Cavagnero responded that he would expect it would.

Dr. O’Brien responded that as they do the budget proposals, the Board certainly has the opportunity to withdraw anything at that time. If the Board would recall, they asked administration to present conceptual items for the Board’s consideration and discussion prior to the budget process. What the administration is asking tonight is for the Board to consider approving the educational model. They can break out costs if the Board has specific questions. The part that is still out there for discussion and further investigation is the potential site. They are in the midst of negotiation on a site. None of that is binding until the Board says it is okay. Given your acceptance of the educational piece tonight, if no site presents itself, then it is a mute point. So what they are asking the Board to do is to ask any questions or give comments, or bring back something to the drawing board, so the administration can entertain those things. This is not about site. She believes she emailed the Board and said she would bring those specifics forward on

February 21st. And clearly if the Board doesn't like what they see during the budget process, they can simply not approve it.

Mr. Broverman stated that in looking at the staffing piece, he noticed that there is going to be a number of teachers that will be assigned to THS GOAL, program administrator, math teacher, English teacher, and so forth. What will the impact be of losing those teachers to the high school?

Dr. O'Brien said negligible. She said that when the Board approved the change in the THS schedule, the very best projection for the enrollment of THS was 1,451 students. The actual number of students at THS this year is hovering around 1,340. So they had a significant differential there, in terms of what they staffed for and the numbers of young people who actually walked through the door. Basically, there is a 100 student differential. So with the 10 additional teachers staffing for 1,451, and then actually having 1,340 students, that allowed them to have some attractive class sizes and to offer large numbers of sections. So when you take the 100 differential, and you take the fact that 40 young people would be pulled, in effect you have an economy of 140 young people. So the impact on the staffing and the class size at THS is not going to be significant. The other piece of this is when the Southeast School program was eliminated, those people were picked up, brought over to THS, and set down in the School Within a School program. So they have some staff already embedded in THS, who were formerly part of the Southeast School program, and they plan to recapture some of those people back.

Mr. O'Connell stated that from a budget standpoint, if they approve this, he has no idea where that leaves the budget committee, in terms of trying to get through the budget process. They will have a program that the Board has approved, that the budget committee, from his perspective, will feel obligated to fund in the budget. But without a site, it doesn't seem to make sense to him. He doesn't know how they will decide as a budget committee to allocate any resources to this, when there is no site and it could become completely moved. From his standpoint, he thinks they should just drop this until they have a site because he thinks they are wasting time. This is with all due respect to the administrator's strong efforts to try and find a site, which he applauds. But until they have a site, he doesn't feel a need to discuss this.

Another Board member stated her only thought is that it is hard to approve a program that unfortunately for administration is still conceptual. Although she approves of the classes that will be offered, the staff that go with it, and the students, she still has reservations as to which student should be in a GOAL program. She thinks sometimes they need to be reaching 7th and 8th graders before they get to that point, and she is having a difficult time with this part of it. She likes the concept, but it is hard to approve a program when they don't have the site.

Dr. O'Brien stated that what if they find the site, negotiate it, and she brings it back to the Board, and then they don't have a program for the site. She needs to present a budget on

February 21st. She thinks it is counterintuitive for her to continue negotiating for sites if the Board doesn't think the program is worthwhile.

Mr. Cavagnero responded that he doesn't believe that is what is being said. He stated he believes what Mr. Lutka was saying is if the Board approves the program, they are instructing themselves to fund the program, and yet the Board doesn't know what this is going to cost in terms of the actual venue which is a huge unknown.

Dr. O'Brien believes the Board can approve the concept of the program contingent upon an acceptable site.

Another Board member stated they still don't know the costs inherent, and to the extent that the Board doesn't know where this is going to be housed, he thinks that would be a necessary item for them to be able to consider the program and its implementation regardless of site. Then they would look at approving the whole nut, as opposed to a portion conceptually, since they don't know where it is going to live.

Dr. Campbell stated if they are looking for a site, but the program is not approved yet, she feels the owner of the site will not want to devote time and resources on a maybe program. She thinks when you look at it from the viewpoint of potential site owners, it is kind of counterintuitive.

Mr. Oliver stated that he thinks the 2 go hand in hand. For example, if he is looking to expand his business, he would start looking at sites. He would then put the best case together for the site which he thinks is going to be the best fit for the extension of his business, and then he would bring it for approval. He would do background first, bring all the costs inherent, and then develop a performa. But he thinks that they should find the site, put the program in it, and then the Board will vote on the whole thing together. He thinks that would make sense.

Dr. O'Brien stated that administration tried to do that when they brought 4 sites forward, but none of them were acceptable to the Board. So now they are trying to bifurcate this thing into the educational concept and the site concept. The educational concept is still pretty much the same, and it is pretty close to being cost neutral too as the materials and supplies are already in the high school budget for these young people. The teachers are already in the budget. They have estimated transportation, and all of the support services. The one piece they don't have is that rental.

Mr. Oliver responded that piece is the addition to budget that the Board can't understand yet, so they don't want to say everything is cost neutral but we have to spend \$1,200,000 on a site. He commented that maybe then the best forum for the Board to to approve this would be the next meeting.

Dr. Campbell asked how they are going to find a site if they don't know what the program is going to look like. She said if the Board doesn't approve the program as it is presented that could change what they are looking for in a particular site.

Mr. Lutka said his vote on this particular issue is going to be predicated on how much it is going to cost to have this program divided by the 40 students who are going to benefit from it. As he said before, he thinks that any types of increases that they see in the budget for this coming school year, should be based on how many students will benefit the most from the money that the Board spends. He doesn't want anybody to think that he is down on these 40 kids who need help. He thinks they are making their best effort now under the current circumstances in the high school to try to accommodate those students. But when the initial proposal was first brought forth, what he did was he took the lowest number, because he likes the low numbers. He is one of those guys who worked on military contracts, and the low bidder always got everything. So he took that \$400,000 figure and he used what Dr. Lambour gave him one time for cost of new teachers, and he found out that if they took the \$400,000 and purchased ourselves 8 kindergarten teachers, they would be able to provide 347 families in Torrington with all-day kindergarten, and he is sure the cheer would go up when they voted on that. So he is looking for proposals that are going for proposals that are going to give them the most for their money, and he is not convinced that this particular proposal, although it is worthy of consideration, represents the type of expenditure that he would like to make as a Board member to give the maximum amount of effect for the most number of students.

Prof. Royals asked Dr. O'Brien if it was possible to run this program at THS next year. Dr. O'Brien stated it could, but it would be unsuccessful, because these 40 young people cannot succeed in a large comprehensive high school. That is why it is an alternative high school. Dr. O'Brien stated that she must mention that they never use the criterion of doing the greatest good for the greatest number when they fund sports teams that only have 10 or 15 people. They don't talk about funding the greatest number of people when they have small AP Physics classes. They don't talk about doing the greatest good for the greatest number when they look at a preschool program that costs \$72,000 for 38 kids. So she finds that criterion to be a bit selective. These 40 young people are not, cannot, will not succeed here at THS. They are on the verge of dropping out of school. They will not have high school diplomas. They will be unemployable. They will be minimally employable at best. They will become parents in this community. Their children will have uneducated parents. They will be living below the poverty level, and they will be continuing to dump 20% of the students from THS out on the street with no diplomas. She asks these 2 questions. What is the cost of 40 young people dropping out of school to society, and to the quality of life of those young people? What is the cost of ruined lives? When she looks at this, and she has done this before in 2 other school districts, she looks at saving 40 young people with really minimal money. This is a fraction of the money of the athletic program. They will be able to do this for well under \$100,000, because so much of it is cost neutral. She thinks the Board members need to ask themselves if they are truly committed to lowering the dropout rate of the Torrington Public Schools. If they are, then she is sharing as their hired expert, that they need to have a program like this apart from THS, where these young people can succeed. If they are not serious about aggressively dealing with the dropout rate that they have, which is 3 times the State average of 7%, then the dropout rate will still be unacceptable for years and years, and the human toll to this city will go well beyond any dollars that will be

expended in human misery and ruined lives and people who are unemployable. She asks that they not look only at dollars and cents, but look at the long haul for the community and for these young people.

Prof. Royals stated that she asked that question because if they are not able to get the funding or the site, she wanted to know if this program could still move forward because she is in complete support of the program. She believes they should keep Torrington students in Torrington and in school where we have some control of their education. And she believes that 40 dropouts is a big amount and that will carry on through generations. So if these students can at least get a high school diploma in their hand, then she thinks they are doing the City of Torrington a big service. She thinks the Board can vote on this pending funding and acceptance of a site.

Mrs. Carbone asked how else Dr. O'Brien would address the need if the program was not approved. Dr. O'Brien stated that she doesn't know how within the context of THS, a large comprehensive urban/suburban high school, to meet the needs of these young people. These young people will quietly drop out, and no one will know they're gone. Also, the way the school is organized, they can't segregate 4 or 5 classrooms from THS now to do this kind of thing. That is part of the reason why the offsite is so important. Plus alternative high school is not School Within a School. They had School Within a School and it was a horrible failure. There were 40 kids from Southeast School who dropped out of school. She remembers that from March of 2005, when she came on board.

Mrs. Carbone responded that this program is not going to help address that population though. So she guesses this problem is bigger. It is bigger than approving this program. They are still needing to address the needs of the self-contained School Within a School, and still needing to address the Core Plus program because there is waiting list for kids to get into that program, and they don't have enough teachers or classrooms to do that.

Mrs. Carbone asked Dr. O'Brien if she has a Plan B. Dr. O'Brien responded that she has no Plan B.

Mr. Broverman stated that first of all he wants to state that this program was a goal of the Board that they directed the Superintendent to bring to them. Secondly, he stated that he certainly concurs that 40 students dropping out of this school will cost more on the other end, a huge amount more on the other end. Forty kids are worth a lot to him and he thinks that is worth a lot to this Board. They always can take their approval back if the place doesn't work. They can always change their mind. That is certainly an option at budget time. If there is a site that doesn't work, they certainly can vote no at any given time, and they can kill the program. But it would be a shame to kill the program now.

Mr. O'Connell stated he doesn't think anybody on the Board is being pennywise or pound foolish or is not willing to commit resources to affect the dropout rate. He thinks that the Board has people who are very strong advocates for the students and very strong advocates for the Superintendent to succeed in reducing the dropout rate, but he also

hears people saying unless they know what the cost is, they can't approve it. But without knowing what the dollars are, he thinks there are some people saying they are not prepared to support a proposal for a program that they don't know the costs of. He doesn't think that is being anti-kid or unsupportive.

Mr. Cavagnero asked how many Board members approve of the educational program conceptually as laid out here without the venue. He believes that this discussion is getting hung up in 2 different ways. One is the fact that there is no venue, and therefore, to approve of a program that there is no place to put seems to be counterintuitive or backwards. So he thinks there are some people who do not want to approve this, simply because they don't have both pieces together here, since the outside venue is important to this program. On the other hand, what he thinks he is hearing from the administration is does the Board think this is a viable program. So where does the Board want to go from here? He thinks there is more discussion to be had.

Another Board member stated that the night that they received this and they discussed it, she believes that they said that they would approve the plan in concept, and then they would approve the site.

Dr. O'Brien stated that those were the marching orders from which the administration went forward with and which they understood, and that is why they have proceeded to examine 6 other sites in town, and basically to reject them because they thought for the most part that this educational concept was generally accepted by the Board as a positive step toward helping the dropout rate and toward helping these young people. So they have gone all over, looking at sites, making phone calls, findings sites. They are negotiating with 1 person right now, and there are 2 other possibilities, and that is why she sent an email that administration believes they can have this nailed down by February 21st. They have these components already built in the budget with the exception of rental. But the bottom line is that is what they thought their marching orders were. She personally doesn't see a problem with approving a concept contingent upon an acceptable site.

Another Board member stated it sounds to him as if the administration has had no difficulty negotiating or discussing the sites without a formal Board approval, and to that extent, he sees no need to have a formal Board approval. He will also say apart from the site issue, he is not yet comfortable with the program. When it was first presented, he did say he would like to have a budget for it. It just says that it is cost neutral, but he would like to know the cost of the program, what it will cost the City of Torrington, site aside. He also said that he was looking for some formal assessment mechanism, and there has been no modification of this plan that shows any formal assessment component to it. So his initial objections to the program, site aside, have never been satisfied.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if the Board approves the proposed plan for THS GOAL, the education component. What happens at that point?

Dr. O'Brien stated they would continue negotiations, and try to get the site figure. They would come back on the 21st, and this is already in the budget and is under \$100,000.

There is \$20,000 for a partnership. All the materials and supplies are cost neutral. All the staff are cost neutral, they currently exist in our program. There is a bus and there is rental. If they unable to secure a venue, then all bets are off because it is not going to work at THS for these kids.

Mr. Cavagnero then addressed the Board stating if they vote to approve this motion right now, that is what is going to happen. If they do not approve this motion, what does administration intend to do? If they do not approve this motion as stated here? Will they still continue to do much the same thing? Would administration still continue to look for a venue?

Dr. O'Brien asked why she would look for a venue if she doesn't have an educational program. Mr. Cavagnero answered because there are number of Board members here who would like to see the final numbers on this, meaning numbers for the venue and then bringing that forward at a subsequent meeting.

Ms. Haynes stated that she remembers doing the budget process last year, when they would bring concepts to the Board of Education. They were specifically told that would not be the appropriate time and place to do it, and that the Board wanted administration to bring programs to them for approval so that they can then work on the budget. So they are doing what they asked, and now it seems they are reverting back and saying they want them to bring it forth in budget all as one component.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that if they brought forth a curriculum piece, a new program that you wanted to institute, but you said you don't have the money for any of the books for that program and you asked the Board to approve the program, they would be in much the same waters.

In a motion by Mr. Oliver, with a second by Mr. Lutka , the Board moved to call the question. Mr. Oliver, Mr. Lutka, Mr. O'Connell, Mrs. Carbone, Mrs. Traub, and Miss Laus were in favor. Mr. Broverman and Prof. Royals were opposed.

Receipt of Five-Year Capital Plan

In a motion by Mr. O'Connell, with a second by Mr. Lutka, the Board moved to receive the five-year capital plan. All were in favor except for Miss Laus who had stepped away and did not vote.

Mrs. Carbone reported the budget committee went through the proposal and recommended the budget capital improvement plan as presented. The big picture questions were essentially justification or an explanation for the items that appear in the entire plan, with a concentration on the expenditures for the fiscal year 2007-2008. She thinks Dr. O'Brien, Dr. Campbell, Mr. Bascetta , and Ms. Haynes provided excellent answers to all questions. Some of the overarching questions that applied to all of the sites pertained to State reimbursement, and how our current approved capital plan showed some of those expenditures qualifying for State assistance. It was explained that those requirements change from year to year, so it would be very difficult for administration to

predict over a five-year period which of those projects would qualify, so they wisely decided to concentrate on those areas that would apply in 2007-2008. She thinks also in reviewing the capital plan, one of the big questions that was posed to Dr. Campbell was about the computer hardware. She thought it was significant that Dr. Campbell reminded the committee that once she presented her technology plan that she promised this Board that she would not make any proposal for an investment of computers that could not be adequately serviced by the staff that they have. So when the Board is looking through this and thinking about why there is not more of commitment in technology, these are the limitations that they have to think about, and that administration has given careful consideration to. Other than that, she thinks that the questions that came forward during the committee meeting were good questions. She did provide copies of the minutes from that to the Board members. Those may answer some of the questions that the Board may have.

Mayor Bingham asked if he could have a packet as last year he and his staff had made comments that they would look over the capital budget to see if there were any cost-saving measures that they could help with.

Mr. Lutka stated that he went to the budget committee meeting and he thinks that Mrs. Carbone did an excellent job of chairing the meeting, and that Dr. O'Brien, Ms. Haynes, and Dr. Campbell did an excellent job of supporting the meeting. He thought the amount of detail that was there gave him the opportunity to be able to ask questions of Mr. Bascetta, who is probably the hardest working and most underpaid member of the Migeon staff. Every single question that was asked was answered in detail, and he wants everyone to know that in order to do that you have to be a department head who is extremely knowledgeable in what is going on and who has his finger on the pulse of the Torrington School system. And he thinks Mr. Bascetta did an excellent job of being able to answer all questions and he knows the capital plan inside out, right side to left. Because of that, it makes it easy for Mr. Lutka as a Board member to go back over it and be able to understand it and to vote to receive it, and at a later date to accept it. He supports the plan 100%. He thinks it reasonable investment on the Board's part to deal with the capital infrastructure and to be able to maintain the school district in the way the Board is entrusted to do so. He thinks because he has the capital document in front of him, and the information he got at the budget meeting, he would hope this would be the same type of information he gets at the operating budget hearings, so that will make his job easier to go forth as an advocate for what they are trying to do with the school district.

Project Budget Deficit Action

In a motion by Mrs. Carbone, with a second by Mr. O'Connell , the Board moved to direct the budget committee chairperson to go to the next earliest Board of Finance meeting and present the projection for deficiency that the district is facing and appeal to the Board of the Finance to look at the excess cost grant funds that would be generated as a result of the additional tuition costs and agree

to apply those excess cost grant funds to the current operating budget. All were in favor.

Mrs. Carbone added that they don't have a set dollar amount at this point, but she thinks it is just prudent to move forward with this to let the Board of Finance know that this is what they are facing. It is still very fluid, but it is worthy of note.

Another Board member explained why this request needed to be made. The deficit is something like \$750,000, and that is largely because of out-of-district placements that the administration could not have anticipated, and as a result of that the city will receive additional revenue that nobody anticipated. It appeared logical to the budget committee to approach the city to have the additional revenue reallocated back to the Board of Education which then hopefully reduce the deficit to something that is much less at approximately \$250,000.

Mr. Cavagnero added that when the State provides funds for the ECS grant, that money technically goes to the city, not necessarily to the Board of Education. The expense is to the Board of the Education, but the refund money goes to the city, and therefore, it makes sense to ask the city to get that money back to recoup as much expense as they can.

Another Board member commented that although the motion was to send the budget committee chair to do this, he is hopeful that the budget committee and the administration will be there in support of this and to answer questions.

Mr. Cavagnero responded that although the motion is to send the budget committee chair, the Board will direct the administration to send someone to assist in the presentation to the city.

The next Board of Finance meeting will be on Tuesday, February 20th at 4 p.m.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Cavagnero discussed the upcoming workshop. A draft agenda for that workshop should have been received, and Mr. Cavagnero would like to meet afterwards with the Board leadership and with Dr. O'Brien to discuss that, so that can be finalized. There are some elements that he would like to include to make the workshop as effective as possible going into the budget season. He thinks they need to bear down on this and get some very specific things accomplished at the workshop that will enable a very productive, efficient, and well-run budget season.

Mayor Bingham stated that he wanted to suggest a huge thank you from himself and from the Board of Education for the academic letter night. It was a successful night, and it was really good for the parents and students to know that they have successful students in Torrington. He is glad this event is on its sixth year, and he hopes next year they put it in the gym because it was pretty packed.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

No one was present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None given.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

Dr. O'Brien stated she has a list including approve 5-year capital plan, receive Superintendent's budget proposal 2007-2008, approve of schedule modification for TMS which includes Language Arts 2, receive monthly financial statement from January of 2007, and approve of budget transfers.

ADJOURNMENT

In a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Mr. O'Connell, the Board moved to adjourn at 10:05 p.m. All were in favor.