

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
January 10, 2007**

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cavagnero at 7:05 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Broverman, Mrs. Carbone, Mr. Cavagnero, Miss Laus, Mr. Lyons (arrived at 7:42 p.m.), Mr. Lutka, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Oliver, Prof. Royals, Mrs. Traub (arrived at 7:25 p.m.), Steve Nocera, Miss Kulesza, Miss Shugrue, Dr. O'Brien, Dr. Campbell, Ms. Haynes

Absent: Mr. Jacobs, Mayor Bingham

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SESSION

Public Participation

Jody Gauthier, 395 Riverside Avenue – She spoke in regard to the alternative high school. She is the mother of a 1st grade child and is very upset that they are getting rid of the portables due to lack of funds and that about a hundred or so kids are going to be redistricted. Now in the newspaper it says that they are keeping the portables, and high school students are going to be at this elementary school. She thinks this is wrong. High school students belong with high school students, middle school students belong with middle school students. Elementary students cannot voice their opinions because they are young. A lot of parents are upset because the high school students will be interacting with their children. They need a place to eat, a place to go to the bathroom. They need a nurse, they need a principal, and she does not feel all the kids will fit in this one little area. She states they should make room at the high school for the high school students. They are not troubled children, they might just need extra help, but that is what these teachers get paid for. Forbes teachers are there to take care of our elementary school students. She is concerned that some of the high school students drive and their cars will be on the property. Another concern is there are security guards and police at the high school. Are there now going to be security guards and police at the elementary school? Those questions need to be answered because right now.

Mr. Cavagnero responded that at this point, this is only a proposal, one of four proposals that will be discussed tonight. The Board has not voted, but is simply receiving this as information, as proposals from the administration.

Ms. Gauthier responded that she has lived here for 36 years. She asked whether the school down on South End is still under consideration. Mr. Cavagnero responded not at that location. There are again, four locations. What they will hear tonight is a model for

the program itself, and then four locations to house that model. This is the first of at least two discussions they will be having. This will be revisited again in 2 weeks. They are not voting on this tonight. Ms. Gauthier asked when will the parents hear about the vote, as she would like the Board of Education to buy her house so she can move her daughter in a school where there are just elementary students and not high school students. Mr. Cavagnero again stated this is the first of at least two discussions to be had about this issue, and he urged Ms. Gauthier to just listen to the conversation and the discussion, and keep an open mind, and just see where the Board is going with this.

Gai Brady, 160 Maplewood Avenue - She spoke in regard to the alternative high school. She stated she has a daughter in this program. Her concern is when they signed up for this program she was told there were no behavior problem issues at all in this program. Her daughter went from Fs to crying when she opened her report card having all As and Bs. The program works for her, but she is not a bad kid. So the proposal to take her out of the high school where she can have her activities and be part of the high school, just because she needs a little extra help is concerning. She is not a bad kid. The kids that are causing the problems should not be in this program, they should be at the alternative schools. So why is the program out of the school? The teachers are wonderful who do this, they have communication. They are absolutely great, she is doing great, and she absolutely loves it. She wants to go to school every day. There is not one day she tells me she does not want to go. She loves it here.

Dr. O'Brien clarified the program she was referring to is Core Plus, and stated that this program will continue to exist. Again, Mr. Cavagnero asked Mrs. Brady to listen to the Board discussion before making a judgment about if what the Board is doing is right or wrong,. That would be much appreciated. All these topics will be covered by the discussion tonight. It is one of two primary discussions the Board will be having tonight. He asked that she keep an open mind, and stated they will not be making a decision this evening, and she would have another opportunity in two weeks to report other comments.

Steven Thurston, 86 Meenahga Lane – He spoke in regard to the alternative high school. He stated his comments were going to kind of mirror the first lady who spoke. He has come to voice his concern about the proposal to locate high school age students on the campus of Forbes Elementary School. While he supports the concept of alternative education and believes that all students should be given the chance to thrive, he feels mixing high school students with elementary students is inappropriate. When parents send their young children to school, they expect a safe, distraction-free environment. The unfortunate fact is that in today's world, parents need to take more extreme measures to keep their children safe. Today student resource officers or police officers are posted at the high school as a precaution. Is this going to happen at the Forbes campus? Some high school students will be of legal driving age, and as we know and experience, drivers are prone to more accidents. Will the high school students be driving at Forbes? Please allow our students at Forbes the same distraction-free learning experience as all other elementary schools in Torrington. Parents work very hard to keep their children from being exposed to unwanted behaviors. Elementary students are very impressionable, and the fact is that teenagers dress, speak, and act very differently. What

is appropriate for one age is not necessarily appropriate for another age group. The school system itself is set up to keep age groups separate, that is why there are elementary, middle, and high schools. It has been suggested students will not interact. He finds it hard to understand how students located in a portable classroom will not interact at any time. The portables are adjacent to the playground where elementary school students will play. Furthermore, there are no facilities in the portables. Where will the high school students eat, use the bathroom, and have physical education? Children grow up fast enough, let's not expedite that process. From discussions with town officials, it is his understanding that the Board of Education has budgeted removing the portables from the Forbes campus. Removal of the portables would provide additional room for children to play and much needed parking. In Dr. O'Brien's letter on the Torrington Public Schools website, she described the Torrington School portables as "ugly." She adds how much better the Torrington campus looks without them. Don't the Forbes students deserve the same? The renovations will not change the fact that the portables are an eyesore. Furthermore, renovating portables that have been deemed unsuitable is a shortsighted plan. It simply means that sometime in the near future we will be spending additional money when the site is once again deemed unsuitable. The portables have long since outlived their usefulness. Please keep your promise and stop using them. In closing, he would like to stress that it would be a mistake to place high school students at Forbes simply because it is cheaper and quicker. New programs that help students thrive should always be embraced, but never at the expense of another student's learning experience. It is his hope as a parent and a taxpayer, that the Board of Education will consider the impact to the Forbes students and vote against the continued use of the portable classrooms.

Wendy Fox, 136 Ford Lane – She spoke regarding the alternative high school. She stated she was here as a Forbes parent. She stated that excellent comments by her fellow parents have been made. She has many of the same concerns, but is not going to reiterate what was just said, but she did want to urge the Board today to not accept the proposal, to send it back, and let it be brought back without Forbes. She thinks it is not in the best interests for their children to accept the proposal as is.

Frank Gentile, 35 Goodwin Street - He spoke regarding the alternative high school. He has pretty much the same concerns as the other parents tonight, as far as the safety of the children and where the high school students will eat, and about the nurse and other things. He really doesn't think it is a good idea for the kids to be interacting together, as far as the Board can't guarantee that these kid's behavioral problems are not going to cause problems for the elementary kids. It is not fair for our young children to be exposed to this. He really thinks it would be in the best interests of all to reject the proposal for this to take place.

Mr. Cavagnero responded that they will consider the proposal very seriously tonight. It is one of four locations.

Wayne Civelli, 826 Mountain Road – He spoke regarding the alternative high school. He stated a few weeks ago he attended a meeting down at Forbes School. He was told it

was to discuss the relocation of the students, the overcrowding, the redistricting, the balancing out of the schools, and the plan to take down and remove the portables, and then they were hit with a bomb about how they were going to turn around and use this school addition that has to come down and renovate it, and again to put high school students in with the grade school students. This just can't happen. This is just not a good mix. He urged the Board to look for another way.

Bill Battle, 69 Red Mountain Avenue – He spoke regarding the alternative high school. He stated his son is at Forbes School. He feels that they have not been dealt with in good faith. Over the years, when arguments were had about the overdue removal of the portables, with many meetings and a lot of inconvenience, the understanding was that those portables would be removed. He doesn't believe that everybody has to speak in if and only if terms, but the idea that because the portables are gone a certain amount of the Forbes family would be displaced was based on the fact that the portables would be gone. And he says Forbes family because he has come to believe that Forbes is a family; a combination of students, teachers, parents and PTOs that work very well together. Therefore, the student population could not contain itself in remaining structures. Fine. So now they find that the remaining structures are going to be maintained and refurbished for alternative high school students. He understands from what Dr. O'Brien said that Torrington must have a certain number of students. Otherwise, there are some problems financially with the State. Fair enough, but he has seen expedient operations before in other school systems, and they all have unintended consequences. The one unintended consequence they have here is that the Board is asking the parents to accept risk for their children at the word of the administration. This is something that he is not willing to do with his little boy. The risk factors are out of proportion. One thing they are not thinking about is if something should happen between our older students and a young elementary student. The idea that this risk could have been avoided simply by not doing is one of the things that lawyers and torts love. They are salivating. He would imagine his lawyer right now is out pricing a boat, because if anything does happen and the risk could be avoided by the simple expedient of not going forward, the tort is there and lawsuits are inevitable. He thinks they should think about that because it would be unfortunate if anything should happen to any student. If anything should happen to his son it would not be unfortunate, it would be catastrophic, as he would not be able to control his wife and what she would do. He knows that is serious, but it is something to consider because this does not have to happen.

One of the parents addressed Dr. O'Brien stating she believes her to be a strong-willed person and the parents want her to help them in her decision by rejecting this proposal. She thanked the Board and staff for listening to the concerned parents, and stated they have been really understanding. .

Mr. Cavagnero responded that they asked the Superintendent and the administration to bring forth a number of proposals and they have done so as requested. There are four of them on the table tonight and they will be discussing all four of them so stay tuned.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Cavagnero asked for an approval of the agenda.

On a motion by Mrs. Carbone, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve the agenda as amended. All were in favor.

The agenda was amended by adding a time for community public comments at 9 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Mrs. Carbone, the Board moved to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2006 meeting. All were in favor.

INFORMATION SHARING

Student Board Member Reports

Ms. Kulesza reported there were no reports this week from the other schools. No emails were received.

At THS, next week they have mid-terms, tomorrow night they have the 8th grade orientation at 7 p.m. in the little theatre, and on February 1st they have academic letter night, also in the little theatre at 7 pm., and those are based on last year's grades for the students who had an A average. The school, in general, is in preparation for a February 10th Winter Ball that they are having as a new addition, kind of like the semi-formal that they usually do every year in November, but this is run by our juniors and the winter ball is run by our sophomores; the blood drive which they are having in March, T-fest which is scheduled for May 19th, and the prom and senior outing which are a little far out, but they are still in preparation for that. Also, they have these magazines, J. W. Pepper magazines for choral groups, and the THS choral group is on the cover, which is a very big honor, and they have received a letter from the Vice President. She read the letter to the Board. She also reported the women's basketball team is now 9 and 1. Mr. Cavagnero congratulated the choral group and choral director.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. O'Brien invited any Board members who might like to attend the 8th grade orientation to do so.

She also gave a brief update regarding the budget process at Migeon. Soon the Board will be receiving the Superintendent's Budget Proposal for 2007-2008. On January 5, all all building and departments turned in their preliminary budgets. We have already reviewed four of those budgets, line by line, in depth, and by the end of the day tomorrow, six budgets will have been reviewed. She would like the Board to know that they have reviewed as of tomorrow, all of the buildings except for the high school. The principals have done a wonderful job on these preliminary budgets. They embraced a new budget process last year, they are even more skilled at the process this year, their budget requests are very lean and very responsible, and she thinks the Board, when it receives her proposal on February 21, will be pleased with the amount of work and the amount of fiscal responsibility demonstrated by the principals and directors. She wants

the Board to know they are in action and looking forward to a very positive budget season. By January 26, they will have reviewed all preliminary budgets, all preliminary staffing requests, and they will begin crunching those numbers and giving everything the litmus test before it comes to the Board.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dropout Rate Report

Mr. Cavagnero reported discussion of the dropout rate was scheduled prior to receiving the plans from the administration regarding the alternative high school, as the Board thought the dropout report might in some way inform the discussion about the alternative high school. Dr. O'Brien stated that she believed the report was requested by Mr. Lutka, for the Board to look at the dropout rate and look at the calculations by the State, to try to really dig in and understand what the dropout rate is. When Dr. O'Brien and Dr. Campbell began talking about it, they thought it might be well suited to a formal presentation to the entire Board, instead of perhaps an email, because it is a complex item and there are several areas where the Board might have questions or comments.

Dr. Campbell then gave a brief summary of the dropout rate. She stated all of the definitions for dropouts, what a dropout is and how to calculate it, are determined by the Feds and then the State develops its guidelines. In their packet, they have the definition of a dropout that appears in the Connecticut general statutes. These can be confusing, but the simple definition of a dropout is any student who leaves the high school, or even the middle school, but for this calculation the high school student, without a plan to continue his or her education yielding a standard diploma. There are obviously exceptions, and those exceptions are in the report. The data is collected for a year from July 1 through June 30. Her office electronically receives the request for the data. The data is gathered out of their student database. The data are then sent to the State. They do not calculate the dropout rate, the State does that. They are required by both State and Federal law to have a process for determining when a student has left them. It varies by grade levels, elementary, middle, and high school, but basically all of the processes have these components. When a student stops attending, the attendance person calls the home to find out why the child is not in school. After a period of time a call is made, and then in most of our attendance procedures in the buildings, a call is also made the day they determine the child is not in attendance. If that is not yielding data about where the student is, a certified letter is sent to the home. If the letter is returned unopened, address unknown, the school designates someone, usually the social worker, to go to the home or the last known address. If there is no one there, sometimes we talk to neighbors. When it is determined that the student is gone, then we withdraw them from the system. Now sometimes parents will come in and say we are moving to South Carolina and request the transcripts, that is a different code. But every student who is no longer attending THS must be accounted for within a very specific time frame. Those data are stored, and when the State asks them to report it the following October, they draw it electronically from all the data bases and submit it to the State. Once the State has the data, it does a calculation. For the Board, she has provided the difference if they use our data to calculate it and the way the State does it. There are two forms of dropout rates. One is the annual dropout rate, and that is the number of students who dropped out the previous

year divided by the total population of THS on October 1 of that following school year. The one that people watch very carefully is the cumulative rate, and that is calculated by taking the size of the incoming freshman class and the total number of dropouts dividing it by that classes' 9th grade enrollment number.

She then put feet on these actual numbers, so the Board could see how the cumulative dropout rate is calculated. She used the class of 2005, because that was the dropout rate that appeared in the strategic school profile that the Board received a few months ago. When the class who graduated in 2005 were freshman, there were 491 of them. The school knows that they graduated 390 of the 491. The difference is 101, so that means 101 students left THS and were coded as no longer attending. If you divide 101 by 491, you get a 20.5% cumulative dropout rate; that is if the school uses their numbers. When the State did that calculation, they came up with a cumulative dropout rate of 19.7. The difference is that the State has a way to track and calculate for transient students that the school doesn't, that is why they do the calculation. Just as a predictor, we know that last year we marched 303 students across the stage at the Warner Theatre. We know that the class of 2006, as freshman, had 369 students in it, so we know we have 66 unaccounted for, so if she does the same calculation they can guess that the cumulative dropout rate that will be recorded for next year's SSP for the class of 2006 will be somewhere around 17.9. It could be higher or lower but that is the ballpark figure.

Mrs. Traub asked if the freshman count would be on the first day of school for the freshman class. Dr. Campbell responded the freshman count is taken on October 1st. Mrs. Traub then asked about the difference of the 66 students. She asked if this included those who may have moved, and Dr. Campbell responded it could include them as she did a raw number calculation. Dr. O'Brien stated that the figure is probably a ballpark, but the State may have more information on those 66 young people, and that may affect the 17.9 in a positive direction for the school system because it will lower that number. They do not know the true number until they get the SSP.

Mrs. Carbone asked if of the 66, may there be a student who does not graduate in four years, but is still enrolled in the school. Is he or she considered a dropout? Dr. Campbell responded that she did not know, but her guess would be they would not be in the count.

Mrs. Carbone stated that in the summary of the Connecticut statute it refers to an equivalent secondary education with regular high school credit, and she asked if the school system has any programs that give an alternative route to graduation. Like, for example, the students that came to the Board at the end of last year who graduated through Education Connection and received their diplomas. The Board responded that is adult education, and a GED is still counted as a dropout.

Mr. Broverman had questions about the codes. Who determines the code of that particular student, is that done by a guidance counselor or the administrator? Dr. Campbell responded that it is usually done by the guidance counselor, because at the end of the process in the majority of cases the parents would have come in and withdrawn the

child saying I am going to send my child to this private school or I am going to send my child to a charter program, but if the high school has finished the process of investigation and does not know then they give them a W33. The high school counselors work very closely with the high school administration to make certain that these codes are accurate. In fact, Dr. O'Brien knows that when she came on board in March, the following October when she looked at the first dropout report some things did not make sense to her, and they went back and looked at the coding and made certain that they had a double-check process in place for the coding so that it was always accurate.

Mr. Broverman said that some of the coding was difficult to understand. For example, W21 discontinued schooling; how was that different from 304. What is discontinued schooling versus simply dropped out? Dr. Campbell was not sure. Those definitions were in the dropout data. Counselors are usually the ones who are the experts. When they have a question, they either call the person at the State Department, or they call Dr. Campbell's office and they call someone. She asked the person at the State Department whether they had anyone who would come and do this report for the Board. They said it is so complex they wanted a whole evening for the report, but she did not want to do a whole evening, but it is very, very complicated.

Mr. Oliver asked if the school has these codes somewhere tracking the reasons or rationale about why people are leaving in the district. Dr. Campbell responded that they are in the database. He stated that if the dropout rate in the district is in the neighborhood of 20%, that being a large number, and then understanding that if in that number we are talking about things like transferring schools or people just moving out, that would be important. He is surprised we do not have more drilled down data as to what these codes are, how many children fall into what buckets. He is thinking if of that 66, 40 of them moved out of town, the dropout rate is completely different because they are not really dropping out. So what is our true dropout rate? He is surprised they don't have data about the students that really fall in. He thinks if they are going to have a discussion about the dropout rate, they need that data here too as part of the discussion. If they are trying to figure out what the dropout rate is, they should have data as to what students are falling into what buckets. Then they could look at what our true numbers are. The ones they are concerned with are the true dropouts. If you take out all the people who are moving out of district or transferring to another school or a magnet school, the real dropout rate may be 5%. The goal is 0, but if the rate is 5%, that is a much more manageable number than 17.9%.

Dr. Campbell responded that when Mr. Lutka asked for the report, he wanted a definition of it and how it was calculated, so she did not do a drill down. They would have had to do the drill down for the class of 2005, because the final data on the class of 2006 will not be done until the end of this year. They give all the students who were withdrawn by these codes to the State, then the State based on its definition and its data, don't include the students who transferred to another public school. They only count the students who are not continuing their education anywhere.

At the last board meeting, Mrs. Traub said there was an enrollment differential at the high school of 28 students. Dr. Campbell didn't have it with her at that time, but she was curious what had happened to the 28 students. She found out 3 of those students had dropped out and notified the school, 2 had gone to employment, 1 student the parents had withdrawn to homeschool, 7 had left the school without notifying the school where they went, 1 had transferred to a high school credit diploma program, 3 had transferred to a GED program, 6 had transferred to another public school in Connecticut, and 5 had transferred to a school out of state. These codes all have a corresponding W code, so she could break it down fairly easily, but it would be inaccurate data because the 7 who left without notifying the school, if they enroll in another public school, the State will pick that up and administration will never be told that. If the 3 who dropped out and notified the school decided to re-enroll at the end of the year, they are still an enrolled student and not a dropout. Some Board members responded that those students are counted twice in the dropout rate even if they come back.

Dr. Campbell stated but this was not an end of the year count. They take a snapshot. When they send the form in October they have to use the June 30 number. Whatever the status of those students is on that day is it. It doesn't matter if something happens the day after. It is done at that point when they submit it to the State.

Mr. Oliver stated that he would like to see that information broken down to see where the trend is, like are we losing families to other districts in a major way which is a reflection on the school system potentially or economics or whatever it is. An inference can then be made to the extent that they could look at the reasons behind why the students are leaving. He thinks that would bear some merit.

Dr. Campbell recommended they draw the data from the October 1st report because that would give the truest look at it. They draw the data for the State on or about Oct 1st. She thinks they could give you numbers. She has looked at the aggregate data and they have students whose parents elect to send them to parochial school. They could do that, but she would recommend so that you get a true picture of what is going on, that you wait and take your snapshot at the same time the State and Feds take theirs. The period for the State and Feds is July 1 to June 30, but the State gives us until on or about Oct 1st when they actually finalize the list and submit it electronically to the State. They filed the 525 in October for last year, so if the Board wanted to look at last year's data they could do that.

Mr. Oliver stated that he knows the number is a big number whether the State calculates it or we calculate it. He wants a comfort level about what we are calculating internally. What Torrington says their numbers are, these are numbers he wants to stand behind.

Mr. Lutka thanked Dr. Campbell for an excellent report that really defines how this particular scenario works. He admitted to being a little bit already informed about this because his best friend is a high school principal who explained to him how the dropout rate works, but he felt it was important for the rest of the Board to be involved in this particular process. He thinks that in order to be able to understand how to attack the

dropout problem, you have to understand how this works. He thinks Mr. Oliver found out by listening and reading what was read tonight that the process is very convoluted and it is very difficult to understand. He thinks the main thing he was trying to get across by asking for an explanation of this was to get the number, because percentages are not something that can be embraced to really solve a problem. Percentages don't solve problems, numbers and names solve problems. When you can actually focus in on a group of people who decided to discontinue their education and find out what the root cause was that solves problems. When you get a listing like this, and he saw this same listing from his friend, and you send in that many codes and determine this particular person is considered to be a dropout because of that particular code, and then it goes to the State and a bureaucrat in Hartford takes a look at the things and tells you exactly what the dropout number is based on his interpretation of the codes, there is a lot of interpretation going on here. In the meantime, we have an obligation to try to deal with a specific problem, and that problem is not going to be solved unless you understand what the root cause is, and it is not solved by saying our dropout rate is 20%, and we need to throw a lot of money at the problem to solve why 20% of the kids in Torrington are not graduating. He thinks the best way to solve the problem is to understand and develop a method for being able to identify why those particular kids are choosing not to continue their education, and see whether or not we can develop programs to help those kids and encourage and motivate them to continue with their education. He has serious problems with the fact that if some kid decides he doesn't want to stay in a regular high school situation, but he wants to go out and get a job, and is still motivated enough to enter into the GED program, he doesn't think that student should be considered a dropout. The biggest problem facing most dropouts is a real strong draw to the economics of I want a car, I want clothes, I want this, and you can't do that while you are going to high school full-time during the daytime. A lot of them want a full-time job that is going to pay them the money that they want in order to be able to live the way they want to, but some of them are smart enough to realize I still got to have a diploma. He doesn't think those kids should be classified as dropouts because they decide to use an alternative vehicle for obtaining a diploma. He brought this whole discussion up so they can begin to focus in on how to go about attacking this. He knows Dr. O'Brien is thoroughly well versed in this, and Dr. Campbell by virtue of this report is well versed in it too, and as administrators they know what they have to do to be able to deal with that, but he thinks as a Board they need to understand how this process is arrived at so that they can make the types of decisions that are going to give the most for our money when they go out to do things and not just be overwhelmed by that 20% number. He can't tell the number of people that came up to him on the street and said how can we be allowing 20% of the kids in the school to drop out, and he said he didn't know and he would like to know what that 20% represents, and that is what precipitated this whole request for this dialogue, and he appreciates the fact that Dr. Campbell did an excellent job, and everyone now has the opportunity to understand how those numbers are arrived at so they can make some good decisions.

Mr. Lyons asked a clarification question of Dr. Campbell. He asked if he heard her say that if a student leaves Torrington and goes to another district, they are not notified of the student enrolling in that district. Is that correct?

Dr. Campbell responded it can happen in two ways. A student can leave saying mom and dad are moving to Naugatuck, and I will be going to Naugatuck schools, and then when the student enrolls in Naugatuck, the guidance people request a transcript from THS. Then there are other students who disappear and even with all of the best efforts of staff to find out where they have gone, they never find them. But when the State gets the data, they may find the same students enrolled in Putnam, and then they have a reason and that student doesn't count as a dropout, and that is why our calculation is never accurate, because the State can find students that we cannot. But by and large, the students whose parents are moving them usually come to the school and say we are moving, or we decided to go the charter school or the parochial school, and the school knows. Then they are coded appropriately and they are not dropouts.

Mr. Lyons responded that it would be logical to him that there would be an inquiry for the transcripts as the students would need the transcripts or something.

Mr. Broverman stated he was still concerned because the State uses the same formula for deciding the dropout rate, and according to our SSP our numbers are significantly higher than many other schools. So if they are using the same criteria that we're using, if it is the same in Putnam as it is in Torrington, or Naugatuck, or West Hartford, and our numbers are significantly higher than theirs, that is a cause for concern. He agrees with Mr. Oliver. He thinks that the Board ought to have a breakdown so they get more raw information about it, but nonetheless, when their numbers are significantly larger than many other schools, that is an alarm bell that has gotten his attention.

Mr. Oliver asked if the data that is gotten from the SSP on the dropout rate is something that can be broken up by category, or is it just a number. Dr. Campbell responded they never see the number they put in the SSP until they get the SSP. She also responded negatively to the question about if the State shares their backup data that supports that number. Mr. Oliver concluded that the school system's own backup data is the best they have to support the dropout rate.

Dr. Campbell reported that this is a hot topic nationally and could even change next week, because there is an enormous argument going on. Some people are making the same case as Mr. Lutka, that the GED should count as a student who has finished. There are all sorts of really serious discussions and debates going on, all of which are trying to get a truer picture of who is staying in school and who is not.

Dr. O'Brien stated she agreed with Mr. Lutka's assessment that any young person who decides to pursue a GED and successfully completes that course of study has graduated from high school and is not a dropout. Unfortunately, the State and the Feds don't care what she thinks about this, but she agrees with Mr. Lutka, that facet of the number is not really descriptive of that young person's situation.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he thinks that they can decide to rely on their own data rather than the State's data. The State's data is not something they can support or understand,

but their own data is data they can support and understand and break up. They can determine what the Torrington Board of Education decides is an appropriate dropout rate, and then publish that as to how well they are doing or not doing. At least that is how he looks at it, and he thinks that is where Mr. Oliver, Mr. Lutka, and Dr. O'Brien are going with it.

Mr. Oliver stated he just does not see how someone who transfers to a private school would be considered a dropout. Dr. Campbell responded they are not. It is only codes that are W33, W34, and when they can't find them, and incarceration if they do not return before October 1st. Those are the only numbers that they use to calculate. The ones above, the W1's, W2's, the W12's, W13's, W15's; those are not entered into that. It is only some of the codes that are used for the calculation. Mr. Oliver stated he didn't hear that point being made.

Dr. O'Brien stated she thought that was a little ambiguous too. All of those are the codes they have to report, but only selected pieces of those are used in the calculation. On the first page of Understanding Dropouts, it gives the four categories that are focused upon to calculate the dropout rate. Those four categories are the heart of the calculation: 16 years or older officially dropping out of the school; people who leave and have no transfer information available; students who enroll in the GED. Those are the numbers they use, not every variable. Dr. O'Brien also said they are not counted against the school if they transfer to another school and they are enrolled. If they leave our school and the school does not know where they have gone, and the State doesn't know where they have gone, if they have not re-enrolled somewhere in Connecticut, they have dropped out of school.

Mr. Oliver stated he still would like to see that data broken up if possible.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that they needed to bring a finale to this discussion. Where did the Board want to go? What do want to direct the administration to do as far as the next step and as far as providing us the dropout rate information?

Mrs. Traub said she supports Mr. Oliver. She said she thinks it is a great idea to get some facts behind the numbers.

Mr. Broverman said the other thing is they are holding Dr. O'Brien accountable for addressing the dropout rate, and to the extent that the State has one figure and we have another that is not really fair. After they have a chance to drill down and better understand Torrington, he thinks they can hold Dr. O'Brien accountable to the numbers of Torrington. He doesn't think she should be accountable for a number that nobody can understand. Mr. Cavagnero asked so when are they looking to get this information realistically? Dr. Campbell responded they are doing the budget right now, among other things. Dr. O'Brien asked if they could get back to the Board via email once they check with their statistician as to when. Mr. Cavagnero responded that's fine, they know it will come after the budget, and they are not rushing it. Their next meeting would be fine.

Mr. Broverman asked one more question. How does the high school staff specifically deal with the dropouts? Is there a procedure or an approach, as far as counseling or something? Do they just go out the door and that is it? Does Torrington ask why are you leaving or is there something we can do to help you?

Dr. Campbell stated she would like Dr. Metallo to respond to that if that is okay with the Board. Dr. Metallo stated that the dropout conversation has mystified him for years. Number one, they are dealing with averages when they see these numbers. Number two, they are not losing 1 in 5 kids in this school. Number three, he and Babe Ruth hit 714 home runs together. He hit 714 home runs, I hit none; it averages out to 357 each. So the way to look at it is the concept of what did we start with, what did we end up with. The freshman class is always bigger than the other classes. Those are the kids that tend to struggle the most; some are in the 9th grade the second time. He likes the idea of looking at the actual people rather than numbers. How do you lose a kid? Sometimes they leave the country and nobody tells us. They are no longer in the United States, but they come back. Some kids have dropped out 2 or 3 times in 4 or 5 years. One of the things that would probably be helpful is to track a class person by person. Another phenomenon that happens, they might start a year with 350 sophomores, and at the end of the year have 350 sophomores, but 50 of them are different people. The way they like to do this is a bunch of 9th graders started on August 31st of a year, four years later how many of them graduated. That is the most a dangerous way to do a dropout rate because there are a lot of stories during those 4 years.

One thing the school has begun doing this year is to run a query through the report card system for the 1st quarter. Anybody with an F, they meet with. All the administrators, guidance counselors, and transition leaders have a list of all those names. They meet and talk about interventions that they are doing right now. They did the 9th grade and seniors last week. This week they will be doing sophomores and juniors. They go through what is the situation today in that class, what are we getting from the teachers. Some students have pulled the grade up because we figured it out on the first quarter, they have a place to start. The guidance counselors have a sheet on every student, on interventions, on meetings with parents, on meetings with teachers, and so on, and those are kept as an ongoing kind of thing.

The number can get scary. He thinks the thing the superintendent and the principal need to be held accountable for is whatever you are doing when a child is at risk. If they are not doing anything, they should be indited. If they are doing things, he does not think they should be indited for dropouts. In a lot of cases, the young person, the family, and so on still bear responsibility. He thinks what the Board should ask from them is how many times and what did you do to try and keep this kid. Did you have alternatives? Did you counsel the child towards another program? Did you open the door back up if the kid wanted to come back? He thinks those are the important things, and he thinks the Board would be very happy to see what they are doing now, that they are going to individual attention. They were able to clean up some of the other things that were getting in their way, and now they can give their attention to individual students. In a roughly 1500 student high school, for the principal to sit down and talk about Joey Smith

in 9th grade is almost unheard of. He makes that a priority along with the guidance counselors, the transition leaders, and the assistant principals. They have a whole team of people, and they also have other service providers like the school social worker and school psychologist, and other people who can help them as well. He thinks they are starting to get to the part he would like to see them talk about, which is what they are doing to help students who are in a crisis.

Mr. Broverman stated he thinks that would be a logical next step, now that they are talking about the data. He would still like to see that, but he would also like to understand because he doesn't know. He thinks they all need to be educated in what happens when someone is identified and how do they we reach out to grab them back. He thinks the public would like to know that too.

Dr. Metallo responded that those are things that they could report to the Board. He could bring in some folks if the Superintendent would like. They can explain some of those things and also maybe follow a class individually and say what actually happened. Some are very easy, several hundred graduated. They can then start going through the others that they are tracking and say what happened. Did they go to another school? Did they leave the country? Did they leave the State? It would take some time, but they can do that.

ACTION ITEMS

Receive Proposed Plan for Alternative High School

On a motion by Mrs. Carbone, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to receive the proposed plan for the alternative high school.

Dr. O'Brien reported that Dr. Campbell had put together a very nice presentation regarding the educational program piece of the alternative high school proposal, and they are calling this the THS GOAL Program. The word GOAL means graduation opportunity through achievement and learning. She requested the Board follow along with them throughout the rest of their presentation. They are going to be talking about the THS program currently offered here on site as compared to the THS GOAL program. Also, in the Board packet is a very detailed analysis of each of four sites for their study and consideration. They are hoping tonight that after they review some of the items, and after they address some of the questions raised by our citizens, the Board might direct them to go back and do some additional work. They are very happy to listen to discussion, to address comments and questions, and then go back and do any additional work that the Board might like them to do. Ms. Haynes has done a very detailed assessment of four sites. Mr. Bascetta has done an outstanding job going around with a punch list looking at every site as well. Dr. O'Brien stated she will now turn over presentation of the programmatic piece to Dr. Campbell. From there, Dr. Campbell will turn it over the presentation to Ms. Haynes. They will be happy to address any comments and questions, and attempt to address any questions raised by the parents and citizens.

Mr. Cavagnero reiterated that the first part they are going to discuss is just the program itself, not specific to any site. The program will live someplace or some version of it will live some place. The second part of the discussion tonight will be for the sites for consideration.

Dr. Campbell introduced the THS GOAL program as a program and not another school. She stated they are not creating another school. The students in THS GOAL will be THS students. They will graduate from THS and meet the graduation requirements to do so. They will live during their school day by the THS discipline code. The school system buses students to THS. The students in the alternative high school will be bused. They will not walk or drive. They will be bused to the program regardless of the site. As in her opening Dr. O'Brien talked about comparison, Dr. Campbell is going to tell the Board what is now happening in THS, the building they are sitting in, about the program for the majority of the students, and then she will tell how the THS GOAL program will run. Currently, approximately 1350 students in grades 9 through 12 are served at THS, regular education and special education students. In the program proposal for THS GOAL for next year, they plan to serve incoming 9th graders, those are the students who are currently 8th graders; incoming 10th graders, currently 9th graders; and incoming 11th graders, currently 10th graders. They are serving only 3 grades in the first year; approximately 10 of the 9th grade, 15 of the 10th grade, and 15 of the 11th grade. To gain admission into THS, because they are a public high school, you simply have to prove that your parent or guardian is a resident here, and then if you are of high school age, they are a public school and required to enroll you. That same residency requirement will apply for the students in the THS GOAL program. However, students wishing to participate in the program must apply. It is not open to anyone, they must apply. Regular ed students and special ed students may apply. After they apply, their applications will be judged on these criteria. They are students who have difficulty earning credits or passing courses. They have difficulty maintaining regular attendance. They have no history of the following behaviors: Drug involvement, violent behavior, use of dangerous weapons or instruments, or serious or chronic disruptive behavior. They can have no history of that because their application will not be accepted. The last criteria piece is that both the student and his or her parent or guardian must enter into and abide by a contract that addresses appropriate behavior, attitude, and academic expectations. This is the program of choice for students, and if they and their parents can meet these criteria, they will be considered for enrollment.

What does the program look like once the student is admitted to it? At THS, a comprehensive program is offered with a vast array of core subjects and electives, and THS supplies the instructional materials and supplies so that instruction in that program can flourish. At the THS GOAL program, we are going to offer in math, a continuum of courses, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, and Geometry. Those are the traditional 9th and 10th grade math courses. In English, we are offering English 1 and 2, traditional 9th and 10th grade English. We know that the students who are likely to apply probably are not ready for English 3, but if we find some that are, we will offer it. In Science, the 9th and 10th grade Science programs are Integrated Science and Biology. By law, we must provide

them with Health and Physical Education, and we want them to enjoy the Visual and Performing Arts. The instructional materials and supplies will be provided by those respective departments at THS, because this is a program of the high school, it is not a separate school.

Who will be teaching? At the high school, as you probably already know, we have administrators, instructional leaders, and transitional leaders. We have a guidance team. We have certified contact area teachers. Our proposal for the operation of the first year of the THS GOAL program is to draw from the existing staff at the high school and depending on the specialty from across the district. We believe we can open and operate the program with one full-time program administrator, a full-time math teacher, a full-time English teacher, a full-time Social Studies teacher, a full-time Science teacher, a 0.4 Guidance counselor, a 0.4 Special Education Resource teacher, a 0.4 Health/Physical Education teacher, and a 0.4 Performing Arts teacher. In the Board packet, they have little asterisks after the Health/P.E. teacher and after the Performing Arts instructor. We would like to build partnerships with the Warner, with the Nutmeg, with some of the agencies in the community so that we can offer alternative programming that we think this population will enjoy in the area of Health and Physical Education and the Performing Arts.

So now we know who the students are, we know what courses they'll be taking, we know who is teaching them. So what does a typical student day look like? What does a typical teacher's day will look like? At THS, the student day begins at 7:15 a.m. and ends at 2:06 p.m. That is 6 hours and 51 minutes of instruction including a 30-minute lunch. Students take a minimum of 5 core subjects and 2 electives. In the THS GOAL program, we have included in the Board's proposal, a typical student day. Dr. Campbell reminded the Board that there is a note. This is an ideal time. When a site is chosen, this time may change depending on busing, but it will be 6 hours and 15 minutes of instruction and the 30-minute lunch. A typical student day would be 8:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Dr. O'Brien asked the Board to notice that the students are basically at risk students who are in danger of not gaining their credits and not graduating. They will have a 6 hour and 15 minute instructional day which includes their 30-minute lunch. They are not getting off easily, however. They are taking their 4 solids, Health, Phys Ed, and the Arts. Granted their day is not quite as long as the traditional high school day, but if they are currently 9th and 10th graders, they are having attendance problems, and they have gained no credits. The typical day does not work for these young people, so they needed to design something that is a bit shorter, a bit more compressed.

The other piece Dr. O'Brien pointed out is that the research is absolutely filled with studies on students with this profile. These students for any number of reasons have difficulty getting up early in the morning, waking up, attending school. That is in part why sometimes they have attendance problems. They also could be watching a younger sibling, if mother or dad have to go to work. Usually these young people may have some family difficulties that have in some way hampered their school success. They would like to start around 8:15 a.m., and if this were to be at the Forbes School site, the Forbes

children do not come in until around 9 a.m., so the alternative school would begin prior to the elementary children arriving at Forbes. Also Dr. O'Brien reiterated and made very clear that these students will not drive. If they are 16 or not, no one will drive. Everyone will be on the school bus.

Dr. O'Brien then asked why someone was shaking their head at her, and the person responded because she can't see these kids getting on the bus because they don't do it now. Dr. O'Brien said they will do it. She asked that all remember that these students and their parents have signed a contract to go to this school. This school is a privilege, and she has done this before. There will be waiting lists of students who want to get in. But they only have space for 40, and the parents will have to say they will support this.

Dr. O'Brien also stated the other piece is that these young people will be getting out around 2:30 p.m. Forbes students don't get out until after 3 p.m. Just in terms of physical proximity and the time frames, the elementary children aren't even on the campus when they would start. These young THS Goal students would be leaving prior to the dismissal of the Forbes School.

Dr. Campbell reported that since they are using THS certified staff, they must honor the contract. Presently, teachers at the high school teach a contractual day that is 7 hours and 20 minutes long. They have 5 teaching periods, a supervision, a prep period, and a duty-free lunch. The teachers in the THS GOAL program will teach a 7-hour-and-20-minute day. They will have 4 teaching periods, and then a period of what we are calling the instructional resource period. This is the extra time that these students frequently need to go over how to do that math problem again. This is not study hall. This is the extra time that students who struggle with learning often need. It is the time when the teacher can differentiate the lesson for Susan because she learns visually and for Barbara because she's an auditory learner. This is the gift time. This is kind of the private school model where you can always meet with your teacher in small groups. Then these teachers also have a supervision, a prep time, and a duty-free lunch.

Lunch is different depending on the site. In the site like the Forbes site, the lunch will be a satellite of an existing cafeteria program. The lunch will be brought into the site. They will not be going to the cafeteria. On the 2 off-sites not connected to any of our other schools, they will have to look at a way to get lunch to the students.

Dr. Campbell then reiterated the fact that all the THS GOAL students will have to graduate with the same requirements that all the THS students graduate with. They must subscribe to the discipline code. She also reiterated that a student could be asked to leave the program if mom and dad are not fulfilling their expectations. This is a commitment by the student, and the parents are guardians. We are saying to them, we care as much that your student graduates, does not drop out of school, becomes successful, and can build an adult life. We are going to hold ourselves accountable, we want you to be held accountable.

Mr. Cavagnero stated the Board should prepare to discuss the programmatic piece.

Mr. Lutka asked Dr. Campbell if under the Core Plus program operating at the high school right now, do the teachers have a 4-period day with a resource period. Dr. O'Brien stated they do not. Mrs. Babcock stated they have the same day as a regular teacher, a 5-period day.

Mr. Lutka stated he was looking at the courses, Algebra, Ancient History, and Modern History, and having some experience with some of that, he would think that students who are struggling might have all kinds of difficulty with that kind of curriculum, unless instruction is delivered in a very, very different way.

Dr. Campbell responded that when the Board reviews the Assistant Superintendent budget, they will see a line item under curriculum development. One of the line items will be the development of differentiated curriculum for these students. They will meet the same learning outcomes for all of these courses, but the way in which the instruction is delivered, the materials used, and the selection of topics will be brought into alignment with what they know will capture these students. For example, she remembers having to memorize some group of Roman emperors, and if she was asked to recite them right now she would probably be very embarrassed because she probably could only name two and probably not in the right order. These students will not be terribly interested in knowing those, so one of the approaches that she is thinking about, some of our consultants have thought about, and some of the teachers have thought about is let's take something that is current like the war in Iraq, and let's see what lies underneath that war, like when did the Shiites learn to hate the Sunnis, and why are they struggling to understand democracy. Dr. Campbell thinks she can deliver that content in a way that captures their interest, engages them, and also prepares them for the Civics course that comes later. It is that kind of differentiation. In the math area, they are not going to stand up there and just do algorithm after algorithm. They are going to make it real world. What do you use Algebra for? What would I ever need this for? That is what the curriculum writing will be. It will be how do we teach this so that it grabs the attention of the students and sustains their attention, and then what are the alternative materials and strategies and PD the teachers might need.

Mr. Lutka responded that they were talking about the selection of a number of teachers here. Obviously, the teachers must be a special kind of teacher. What will be criteria for selecting teachers for this?

Dr. Campbell responded that there has been an argument in the teaching profession since the dawn of time if teaching is a science or an art. She wants teachers who know their content but are artists. These are teachers who need to lead the hearts of students, and from what is in that heart, paint a picture for that student and help that student to paint the picture. She wants teachers who care about students and will go the extra mile. It will not be based on a seniority issue or anything like that.

Dr. O'Brien stated her experience with this is that if this proposal flies, there are already some teachers at the high school who will step forward and say they really want to work

with these kids. It will be done according to who will be the best for it as they will have tremendous input in this whole model. This will fail or succeed beautifully based on the person who is building relationships with these 40 students. The content can vary, but it is that relationship. The people have to have huge hearts and be very dedicated to the success of these young people.

Mr. O'Connell stated that unless the problem is that we don't have an alternative high school, the first question to ask would be what problem have you identified that we are trying to solve. The second question would be what benchmarks have you established for determining that the strategy you have here is succeeding, and then how will you assess the success of the program. And then finally, what are the costs associated with the program. Those are the questions that he has for the proposal.

Dr. Campbell thinks that programmatically, aside from the curriculum development, the cost is fairly cost neutral as far as the program piece of this, and she thinks Ms. Haynes in her portion of this presentation outlines the facility costs. They built the program based on what they know is best practice, what works on these kinds of students. Dr. Campbell believes they have not delineated those benchmarks, and those other things, but she could probably rattle off some right now. They were trying to give an overview of the program, and if the Board decides that it wants to move forward with the program, they will want to have these benchmarks in place. The first benchmark that comes to mind is if they admit 40 students, they are hoping to keep 40 students, the same 40 students. Dr. Campbell will be personally and professionally disappointed if they have a student dropout from this program, unless the dropout portion of this is because they could not live up to the contract. She thinks Dr. Metallo outlined another benchmark. They want to see them successfully pass these courses, because if you look at some of these students who are in Core Plus right now, they could be in their second year of the high school and not have passed Pre-Algebra yet, and they should be taking Algebra and Geometry. She thinks attendance would be a benchmark. Are these students attending school regularly? Are there any kinds of discipline issues? They would use many of the same benchmarks that Dr. Metallo uses if he sees his program working, fundamentally, because this is really his satellite program somewhere else.

Dr. O'Brien stated that she agrees. When she looks at the cost feature, one of the really attractive things about this program is that it is virtually cost neutral. They are using the same materials. If they are offering Algebra to 13 students, they take 13 Algebra books from THS, because whether these students are physically at THS or at THS GOAL, they are going to be using the same Algebra book, so there is not a huge cost factor there. Although as Dr. Campbell indicated, with the curriculum development work over the summer, there may be some alternative sorts of support resource documents or supplies that might be acquired, but it would be very small. The only real cost factor that she thinks plays into this has to do with the Physical Education component and the Performing Arts component. She has spoken with James Patrick a couple of times from the Warner regarding some connections with the Warner in the visual and performing arts. He is very interested in supporting alternative programming. Also, she has spoken with Sharon Dante of the Nutmeg in terms of dance, yoga, and physical activity that also

could be part of this program through partnerships. She would suggest probably a total of about \$20,000 be dedicated to the formation of these partnerships and buying some of these services from both Nutmeg and Warner to enhance this program. That feeling and that commitment to the arts, visual arts, performing arts, and a different sort of physical education are all based on some research that was made clear to her at Columbia University a couple of summers ago. Several national experts were talking about alternative programming for young people who are at risk and in danger of dropping out of school. One of the gentlemen said repeatedly that many people make the mistake in alternative programming of just offering these somewhat disengaged and discouraged students, more of the same Algebra, more of the same Science, more of the same English and Social Studies that they didn't learn the first time and didn't succeed in mastering, and they often leave out the arts. Oftentimes for these young people, the arts are an expressive vehicle for them that really helps them to succeed. So you are going to see the Arts components and the Phys Ed component through things like not team sports, not the physical education stuff that the kids hate. They need to be learning yoga or karate or Tai-Chi or things that are body-mind-spirit that will help them to become physically active, but will also help them to grow in confidence. Those kinds of things can be offered without a gymnasium. When you take yoga, for example, all you need is a mat, a rolled-up towel, and some loose clothing. Those are the kind of things they are thinking of to make this program distinctive, and at the same time meeting some unique needs of these young people.

Mr. O'Connell responded by stating that if they are looking at removing 40 students from the traditional program to this new alternative high school and looking at removing 6.5 staff people, are they going to come to the Board in the budget season saying they need 6 staff positions because they have this hole. Are they saying there will be no staff increases to the high school if they remove these? Dr. O'Brien said there would not be. Mr. O'Connell stated he would still like to see a budget for this, and he said he would not be prepared to approve this until he better understands the problems they are identifying to solve, and see the benchmarks and how they are going to assess that. He has heard they are still looking to do that, but until he sees that he would not be prepared to accept this.

Dr. O'Brien stated this is a very appropriate program to address the dropout rate because they know dropouts start occurring in middle school when children can't read, can't succeed in their classes. She stated that having served as an 8th grade teacher herself for a number of years, she knew in 8th grade the young people who would have a very low probability for success in 9th grade. That is why they have included 10 of those young 8th graders in this program. Those children don't need to go to THS, fall flat on their faces for a year, and then have us say, "Oh my goodness, they had a problem." They have no credits, they are discouraged, it is hard to get them to school. They know through experience what is going to happen for a significant number of those struggling 8th graders. They want to catch them before they fall flat on their faces, and because of the nature of this curriculum, they can offer them the same quality curriculum in smaller groups. These classes will be 10 to 1. She doesn't think that was mentioned quite strongly enough. These are very small classes with caring teachers who will

individualize the needs of the children. This is the third alternative program she has worked on in her career. She knows how to do this and she knows what works to save these young people, and this model reflects best practice from the literature, it reflects best practice from her experience.

Dr. O'Brien also stated that with regard to benchmarks, Dr. Campbell enumerated exactly the same ones she was thinking about. In fact, Mr. Cavagnero probably watched her write as Dr. Campbell was speaking. How did you know if you are succeeding? Are the young people gaining their credits? Are they passing the courses and moving from one grade to the next? At the end of the year, are those 9th graders going to gain all their 9th grade credits and be able to move into the program as 10th graders. Do you see intellectual growth? Do you see the students attending school more regularly? Do you see them exhibiting positive learning behaviors in the classroom so that they are initiating more? Do you see them growing in confidence? These kids are beaten down, they are discouraged. Do you see a growth in their self-confidence? How is their attendance? They were having terrific problems with attendance. So how does their attendance compare? Many of these things are very objective criteria that simply can be measured with a number. Others can be assessed using a variety of survey techniques to see if the young person has indeed grown in confidence, grown in self-esteem, and has a more positive attitude toward school. All of these would be the benchmarks that they would impose and use as guideposts for future program modification.

Mrs. Carbone asked about the student application process. Do you anticipate these students would have to reapply every year for this program?

Dr. O'Brien responded that as long as they are successful they keep on keeping on. Some may wish to go back to THS, but it has been her experience that once these young people are in a program like this and they feel the success and they have that linkage with their teachers, they don't want to go back. They feel that their new school is their home base.

Mrs. Carbone asked if it would be more difficult for that 10th grader who completes 10th grade to come back to the high school in 11th grade or 12th grade. She thought she heard Dr. O'Brien say that the graduation requirements for this GOAL program would be the same as the graduation requirements for the high school. How will they ensure those students get those electives and the world language requirement?

Dr. O'Brien responded that there is no longer a world language requirement. Dr. Campbell stated this is their proposal for the first year out. They can't begin with 40 students offering a whole array of electives, so she thinks that over time they will look for creative ways in which to offer the electives. It has even occurred to her that depending on the students, you might see a proposal for them to come to the high school to take Tech Ed, and Family and Consumer Science electives, and then go back to the program. She hasn't given much thought to the specifics of that, but obviously if you look at the graduation requirements, you know they have to build them. When Dr. O'Brien and Dr. Campbell were talking about the programming, they knew the visual and the performing arts were a real hook. They could also expand the offerings in those so that a student

who got hooked on dance maybe at the Nutmeg, might take another course in that, and they would count it as another art elective.

Dr. O'Brien stated that actually this is the first step in a multiple year roll-out of a full program, and they know from the literature that sometimes young people drop out mentally in middle school, sometimes they drop out mentally as freshman, sometimes they drop out mentally as sophomores, and as soon as they are 16, they want out the door. They want to catch them in that 14 to 16 age range as they are mentally dropping out and experiencing little or no success in 9th and 10th grade, to catch them before they drop out of school, and to give them that foundation so that they can move on successfully.

Mrs. Carbone asked if the criteria of this program is designed to include special ed students. Is there any possibility to a PPT process, that it could be determined that this would be the best placement for a special ed student who may have a history of drug involvement, violent behavior, etc.?

Dr. O'Brien stated it is not the best placement because they don't have the support services that would follow that student. When you look at THS or any comprehensive high school, you don't have to just have one program offering for special education young people. It is like beads on a chain, you have programming that meets the diagnosed need of a variety of student needs. If the young person, for example, has some kind of emotional, social, or psychological disturbance, this is not the program for that young person. There is another program that is specifically designed and focused upon the needs of young people with emotional or psychological problems. If the problem for the young person is severe enough, they may outpace that young person to a specified program perhaps outside the attendance area. So there is a whole array of services to meet the needs of students, but she would argue that this is designed for a certain exceptionality area of special education youngsters. Most commonly, those with learning disabilities, who have difficulty reading, or who have difficulty learning through a more traditional approach as offered at THS. These are not young people who necessarily have social, emotional, or behavioral problems. She thinks that is quite clear in the literature. This is one of those offerings for a discrete group of young people, just like they have other offerings. They have some young people who are doing beautifully in Core Plus. If you are doing fine at THS, keep on keeping on. This is for the young people who are not doing fine at THS. There will be Core Plus offerings still here at the high school. Core will not go away. This is something that will augment our offerings to catch those young people who are still not successful.

Ms. Carbone responded that she wanted to be make sure that the Core program and the Links program are going to continue here at the high school, and that this program is not going to supplant either one of them. Dr. Campbell responded that this is a new offering for a distinct group of young people who are still not successful here and will not supplant either one of the other programs.

Ms. Carbone stated that when they talk about an alternative education program, she thinks that is the buzzword for a lot of people who think okay these are your students

who are so disaffected. She wants to make it clear that the students that were formerly our self-contained students or Southeast students would not qualify for this program. Dr. Campbell said no they wouldn't. This is a totally different service model for a different group of young people.

Professor Royals asked Dr. Campbell if she could clarify the difference between the Core, the Links, and this program, because she thinks there is a bit of confusion there.

Dr. Campbell stated she would like it if Mrs. Babcock and Mr. Orefice would join in, as they are the ones who day to day, along with Dr. Metallo, deal with Core Plus and the Links Program, so they could give an accurate picture.

Mr. Orefice stated he was the Assistant Principal at Forbes School, and Mrs. Babcock stated she was the Director of the Student Services for Torrington.

Mr. Orefice stated he used to oversee the Southeast Special Education Alternative program prior to its moving to THS. The Links program that is currently at THS is the former Southeast program. It is strictly a special education program run by 2 special education teachers to service at risk students who have been identified through the PPT process. The Core Plus program is a combination of the former Gateway Alternative program which was an off-campus alternative program for regular education and it combined with an inhouse alternative program School Within A School. The idea with the Core Plus was that it would be staffed by 2 dual certified teachers. Right now when the applications were requested, they only ended up getting 1 dual certified teacher. There weren't any other applicants that had the dual certification unfortunately, so they had to bring in another teacher for the program. There are primarily 3 teachers involved in the program. They are regular students. Also, there are a couple of special education kids who are involved in that program.

Mr Cavagnero asked Mr. Orefice to clarify for the Board the profile of a Core Plus student as opposed to what would be the alternative high school student. Are we saying there is enough of a differentiation between this group of students and that group of students?

Mr. Orefice responded the criteria for the GOAL program, specifically the section that says no history of drug involvement, violent behavior, weapons or dangerous instruments, serious crime, disruptive behavior; those are not criteria which eliminate students from the Core Plus program. There may be students in the Core Plus program who do have this history. That is the differentiation primarily.

Dr. O'Brien added that, as the lady indicated earlier, there are many students who are doing very nicely in the Core Plus program. They would not be the ones to apply to GOAL, but some of the students who might apply to GOAL are those who are in Core Plus who are unsuccessful and who do meet this set of criteria. Although Dr. O'Brien would like to state Core Plus is 100% successful with every student it is not. That is why it is important to design GOAL because they have some young people who are falling

through the cracks in Core Plus. They also have some young people who are falling through the cracks who are not in Core Plus, who are regular education students, who are struggling sufficiently to gain from their high school experience, and they are trying very hard but they are unsuccessful, they are down on themselves, it is hard for them to get to school, and they too would be likely candidates for GOAL if they have no history of drug involvement, and so on and so forth, and if their parents are very supportive and sign the contract of expectations for behavior, attendance, and academic achievement.

Ms. Babcock added when they first discussed Core Plus, it was an effort to give that certain group of students a smaller group to respond to in a much larger high school. It still had the atmosphere of the big high school. Now they are saying for some of those that was not small enough. They need to be away from the atmosphere of a big high school in order to be successful.

Prof. Royals clarified that the Links program is just for special ed students. Would some of these special ed students qualify for GOAL? Ms. Babcock responded that they could, but they would not be the students that are qualifying for Links. Usually the ones that would be considered for GOAL would be the LD students, not those with emotional needs.

Mr. Lyons stated that he is an advocate of a program like this because he knows that every student can't learn in larger classes and he has seen programs like this work around the State. What about the 1 mile rule for buses, if the student lives within a mile of the school? Dr. O'Brien stated she believes that is a 2 mile rule for the high school. She then stated she thinks the Board has the power to say for this specific program, because of the needs of the student and the agreement of the parents, the students are required to ride the bus. That way the school exercises more support and control. Provisions would have to be made in the policy to allow for this exception.

Mr. Lyons stated he liked the piece in terms of the contract with the parents because in some of the schools he has seen and visited it is a choice program and a privilege. He feels this also addresses one of the Board's goals which is parental involvement. What happens when a contract is broken? What is the process? Dr. Campbell stated that in the past when young people did not fulfill the obligations of the contract and they were counseled about it, given another chance, and they broke that expectation, they lost their privilege to attend that school. They would go back to THS. Then if a student is on the waiting list, and the parents wish for him or her to join the GOAL program, that young person is admitted.

Mr. Lyons asked about any thoughts in terms of the student who is coming back to the high school. What type of counseling would that student be provided?
Dr. Campbell stated they would be taking the classes which they had not passed to gain credit, so they would just be placed back into THS in the appropriate Algebra, English 9, whatever. They would be given a regular schedule and placed right back in those classes.

Dr. Lyons stated his question was really more about the transitional aspect from the GOAL program back into the high school. Dr. Campbell responded the 0.4 guidance counselor for the GOAL program is coming from the high school. The other 0.6 part of that guidance counselor's time is at the high school. She personally would make that guidance counselor responsible so that if a student is sent back because she broke her contract, that counselor would put together a transition program with the necessary supports of the social worker or whoever it needs to be to make certain that the student has a chance at making a successful transition back to the high school.

Mr. Lyons asked what provisions would be made for a student who wanted to join a team sport at the high school. Dr. O'Brien responded that in her experience the young people for whom this program is designed really are engaged in nothing. These are the kids who are really disaffected and disengaged from the high school, and they really don't feel comfortable enough at the high school itself. They are not members of clubs. They don't go after the athletic teams. They have dropped out already in their minds and they are just not interested. Basically, they want to get their credits, maybe learn a few things, and go home or go to their jobs. They are kind of outside the traditional school approach with clubs and sports. However, she does recall in a previous alternative program, they had a couple of young men who played football, and with the busing transportation piece and the times of departure from the alternative, they were able to be dropped off at the high school to participate in sports activities. Those are only the 2 exceptions she can remember in her years of working in alternative schools.

Mr. Lyons stated he just wanted to assure that door is not shut for the 1 or 2 students because one of the things they are trying to do is engage the student in the activities of the schools. Is Dr. Metallo still the principal of this Goal school? Dr. O'Brien stated yes there is one and only one principal of THS and that is John Metallo. However, they will not expect Dr. Metallo to evaluate staff, observe classes, or do those on-site kinds of duties of a principal, but GOAL is a program of THS, and that is why they want and need that 092 certified administrator who will observe classes, evaluate staff, and engage in discipline and parent communication. When it is time for graduation, these young people will walk across the stage and shake Dr. Metallo's hand because he is the principal of THS. They will also shake the hand of their coordinator who helped them get there.

Mrs. Traub asked for clarification about what criteria is needed for promotion from 9th grade to 10th grade. Dr. Campbell responded that it is a credit situation. You earn so many credits and at the point at which you earn those you are a sophomore. There are students at THS who finish their first year here, but are not called sophomores because they don't have enough credit, but in this first semester they will have earned enough credits to be called a sophomore. When you reach the next credit level you are called a junior, and the next credit level you are called a senior, and by then they are very close to those graduation credits.

Mrs. Traub asked what is going to be offered to those students who are going into 11th grade, as the classes are mostly freshman and sophomore classes and they are not talking about offering electives yet. Dr. O'Brien stated that these young people have failed their

9th grade courses. When they were technically the age of a 10th grader, they were still taking some 9th grade courses, maybe some 10th grade courses, and basically they were failing them. When Dr. O'Brien worked closely in selecting these students in another alternative high school setting, she reviewed transcripts of young people who had been at the high school for 2 years. They had 1 credit, ½ credit, 2 credits. These young people have not been successful, and they have had 2 years to try to become successful in a high school setting, and they virtually have been falling through the cracks totally. She remembers in other settings probably the most credits that any of these young people would have earned by the end of their second year in high school is 2 credits. She is talking about students who have been at the high school for a couple of years, but have not been promoted because they have not gained enough credit. That is why the curriculum is so narrow, because these young people don't have the foundation necessary for success in the upper level courses.

Mrs. Traub stated that when she reads a student is in the 10th grade, she just assumes they are a sophomore, but now she understands that is not necessarily the case. By age, they would be considered a sophomore, but they don't necessarily have the credits. Her other comment is that she believes the students will like the course offerings of yoga and Tai-Chi, and she would guess there are a lot of students in the high school who would rather take those courses than soccer or field hockey.

Miss Laus thanked the staff for clarifying Links, Core Plus, and what THS GOAL is. She had some confusion there. She wasn't sure they had the Links program. Why was the Southeast program eliminated? The Board responded that it was a segregated learning facility that was not allowed under law. Miss Laus also asked if they know at this time how many students are in Core Plus. The administration responded that as of September 2006, there were 44 students. The current enrollment as of January 10th was 38.

Mr. Oliver asked what was budgeted for additional busing costs. Dr. Campbell responded the site must be picked first.

Mr. Oliver suggested that along with the alternative ways to reach these students such as yoga and Tai-Chi, he would like to suggest culinary as a way to do that as well. Mr. Oliver also asked Dr. O'Brien that if she has done this 2 other times what makes this model the crowning model. Dr. O'Brien responded that some of the things that are different in this model include the solid guidance component, the special ed resource teacher, and the notion of not having that typical Phys Ed/Health component because alternative education students really do hate team sports, it really does not speak to them. So the notion of the creative partnerships with Warner, with Nutmeg, and doing physical activities that are strengthening, that are fitness sort of activities, but different things like yoga, karate, and Tai-Chi is also different. They have had people in the community step forward who are very interested in working in these areas with them, and she knows that will be better than a standard Phys Ed.

Dr. O'Brien also stated that when she attended the seminar at Columbia last summer and studied with a number of experts in this area, they emphasized the nature of the arts and how they can't shortchange these young people in the arts in their enthusiasm to help them get their 4 solids. She thinks that is the important piece that makes this the best model. Also, the entire executive team worked on this model together, so they had 5 minds looking at this thing every which way, and Mr. Orefice was kind enough to join them at their mini-retreat and give them the wealth of his experience from other programming, so she feels very confident this model represents the best of their thought, best practice, and the most recent research that they have available. Also, the contract part she thinks is wonderful.

Mr. Cavagnero invited a student to speak who had a question. The student asked why these alternative Phys Ed things, like the dancing and yoga and other things, shouldn't be offered to the general student population, because she feels she works really hard so she should be getting the same opportunities as the people who might work hard but are having problems. Mr. Cavagnero responded by stating that was a wonderful question, one of the best they have had tonight.

An Administrator stated that she wishes they would have those options and they will work on it, but right now they are really focused on those young people who have 1 foot out the door and are about to drop out of high school. She knows this student is a very good student who has her eyes focused on college, so it is not that they are not worried about her and it is not that she doesn't want her to have the very best they can give her, but she was really worried about the young people who are halfway out the door right now.

Mr. Lutka asked that if they have to bus all these students to the potential site, regardless of what site would be chosen, would they all ride the bus together in a dedicated bus. Ms. Haynes responded that it would be dependent on the site and the times, because the current busing program and pricing is based on having 3 tiers of buses, so they need to utilize the buses efficiently. First tier is now a high school tier, second tier is a middle school tier and one of the elementary schools, and the third tier is the other 4 elementary schools. She has been working with the bus company to see if they can combine, to see if they can get some efficiencies in the current busing. They are trying to do it within the existing tiering of buses so there won't be additional buses.

Mr. Lutka stated the reason for his specific question is he wants to know if they are contemplating putting high school kids on the bus with elementary kids. Mrs. Haynes responded absolutely not. The reason she gave that answer is because they have a certain number of buses that they utilize for each tier. This is not the tier which normally would be the high school tier, so they would need a bus that would be dedicated just to these students.

Mr. Lutka stated then that would be an additional cost factor. Ms. Haynes said unless they can combine other runs and streamline their elementary or middle school runs. This depends on the time. She is saying if they have 20 buses now on this tier that run at this

time, say they serve the middle school children, if they can get 19 buses to serve the middle school children, and then have the 1 bus available for this alternative program, then there is no additional cost. If they can't do that within the existing policy, in terms of having the number of students on the bus, and the length of time they are on the bus, then they would have to have a bus, but they need to land on a program and a time and a site before they could do any of that. Dr. Campbell stated it is also dependent on who the 40 selected students are and where they live. Torrington is a big city geographically.

Mr. O'Connell asked a question for those parents who were not happy when the Board said they wouldn't bus their students to Explorations. Can they distinguish this proposal versus Explorations? One of the reasons he voted against busing those students was because Dr. O'Brien had said that they would have a new schedule here at the high school and new opportunities, and Dr. O'Brien had encouraged those parents to stay here and not go to Explorations. Can they distinguish that advice versus the advice now? Are they different students? Is this a different opportunity? He wants clarification on that.

Dr. O'Brien stated since Explorations is a charter school, she has no authority over a charter school. She does not have the time to investigate the curriculum, the student body, the assessment piece, the staffing of a charter school. She has plenty to do with their 7 buildings. So in terms of comparing and contrasting THS GOAL with Explorations, she does not have a clue. However, she thinks from what parents have shared with her, some of the students who have found success at Explorations may indeed want to apply for THS GOAL. She also thinks that with the improvements that have been made in the past year at THS, with the environment that Dr. Metallo has provided, that is highly positive, highly inclusive of our young people, the Exploration students might also consider returning to THS, because she thinks it is a very positive learning environment. Either one of these pieces might be attractive to some of these young people, and since she does not know them and their specific needs, she cannot say more that would be intelligent about that.

Mr. Lutka stated that when they staffed at the high school in the spring and added 10 teachers, the recommendations for those additions were that they needed those teachers there to keep the class sizes down to a certain level and basically address the problems of student achievement overall in the high school. By pulling out these teachers, can they say that is not going to have an affect on classroom size or on performance in the regular high school?

Dr. O'Brien responded it won't have, from their initial assessments, a significant difference because what they tried to do for some of these students who were struggling was to have very low class sizes. So now they are going to be pulling out 40 young people. Many of those young people for who the small class sizes were devised may now go to THS GOAL. So the teachers won't have filled classes, because those classes will be offered somewhere else. So in some respects it is just taking the teacher and having that teacher's teaching load at a different site. Also, when they initially did the projections on enrollment at THS and the numbers of teachers that they anticipated, they were looking at a projected enrollment of 1,451 students. They ended up at THS with

1,344 students; so they had a negative 110 students there. They had staffed for a larger building and the projections were close to 1500, but they are at about 1350 students now, and they had staffed for a larger projection. So between the 40 students they are pulling out, and the fact that they are at 1350 students, that gives wiggle room to pull these teachers without significantly affecting class size. When Dr. Metallo actually starts grinding out the schedule next month, they will see it more clearly, but when looking at the differential there of 110 in projected enrollment and the 40 they are pulling, that is 150 slots.

Mr. Lutka asked Dr. O'Brien when she came up with the 10 to 1 student ratio. Was that based on optimizing performance or where did that number come from? Dr. O'Brien stated that it came from her past practice. In the THS Summer School program, there were large numbers of young people who gained their credits over the summer. Many of the young people who were not successful, but in class sizes of 10 to 1 were able to be successful in summer school. She is a former high school teacher herself. If she had a class of 10 young people, even if they were struggling, she could build relationships with those 10 young people and, figure out what they need and where they were individually, and then she could teach them the piece in the curriculum that was their stumbling block. So she based this ratio on past experience with summer schools and alternative schools where she used a 10 to 1 ratio, and her own teaching experience. The size is very important for building relationships.

Mr. Lutka stated he is thinking about all the other students and the parents who will be looking at this and saying this is a very rich program. He thinks it is cost neutral on one hand, but on the other hand it is taking a very small portion of the student population and giving them, in a rough calculation, almost a 2 to 1 funding advantage. A lot of people might object to that. Parents will fight tooth and nail for the best interests for their son or daughter. If the students themselves don't show up, or if they under perform, how much leeway would be given?

Dr. O'Brien responded very little. She stated one of the component pieces that she thinks is important is the student-parent interview where the contract is signed, so both the parent and the student realize exactly what the expectations are. The student signs it as well as the parents, and they also know that you can't goof up. They know it is a privilege not a right. Their right is to a public school education that is free and appropriate. She believes this is the most appropriate thing for these young people, but it is a privilege. If they don't embrace that privilege, she would not advocate for the taxpayers or for this Board to let students go on endlessly sassing teachers back, or having poor attendance, or not doing their work. If they fail to do these things, they will be transitioned back to THS, and some other deserving student who wants to do the work will be allowed to be in the program.

Mrs. Carbone asked if there was any reason why Dr. O'Brien wouldn't consider this program more appropriate for a middle school configuration as opposed to a high school.

Dr. O'Brien responded she believes they have some 10th graders who have that foot out the door and she thinks they can save them, and she thinks if it is not in place for 9th and 10th grade, they are going to continue to see an inflated dropout rate. She would like to try to catch those 9th and 10th graders. In the second rendition of this, which will be in their next budget year, a year from now, she would recommend a 7th grade component and the 11th and 12th component, so they would have some kind of programming in place that would catch those 7th graders who are one foot out the door and mentally checking out. She knows the question might be if they want 7th graders in the same environment with older students, but when you think about the size of this program and the old days when you had K through 12 community schools, middle school students were with high school students, and some of the secondary schools now in the State of Connecticut are grades 7 through 12. The thing she hears about 7th grade difficulty is that there are 14-year-old 7th graders. So even though they are in 7th grade, they have been retained a few times and they are too old for the grade, but their skills are not up to snuff. So there would be a focus on some of those young people to catch them, but that would have to be in succeeding years because they are trying to keep this as cost neutral as possible, and they are trying to do this in a developmental fashion over 2 to 3 years.

Professor Royals asked if in addition to the professional staff they have listed, if they would they also require nonprofessional staff such as a custodian or a secretary. Dr. O'Brien said there is a secretary who will come with who is already on staff, who was part of the Southeast program. She will provide secretarial services. So that position will be cost neutral. The custodian and the nurse will depend on the site.

Professor Royals stated that she knows Mrs. Babcock has said this program would be good because it helps students get out of the large high school environment. That is one of the reasons for going offsite. She asked why can't this program be done here at THS? Do we not have the room or is it just that they don't do well in this environment? Mr. Orefice responded that here they are small fish in a big pond. In a separate facility, they become the big fish, and they have a completely different outlook on their education. They are not competing with the athletes, the musicians, the artists, or all the other students, those who are from very functional families as many of these students are. If they are removed from the competition, you see a different animal.

Ms. Babcock said at a smaller site, they would have Mr. Orefice and the secretary, who are with the program and a dedicated staff to these students. The students know them and have daily contact with them. It is not like trying to make daily contact in a school of 1300 students. It is a school of 40. They become people who are seen and spoken to everyday. They are acknowledged when they come in every day. Those are things that are lacking in a school the size of THS. Maybe not because people didn't want to talk to them, but because they are busy with other things with all the other students. She heard some of the parents talk about the family of Forbes School. They are trying to create a family of ownership for these students, so they have someone who checks in on them everyday. This is difficult to do in a school with 1300 students.

Professor Royals asked if there was any reason this couldn't be done with different hours at the high school location. Say move the day for those students to 12 to 6, so they would still have this campus and all of the amenities of the media center and the gymnasium available to them, but also have a small segment of the day where they can access those elective courses. Dr. Campbell stated that is no longer cost neutral as the teachers teach 7 hours and 20 minutes.

Professor Royals said she also suggests moving the teacher's schedules down, and moving the student's schedule down. Dr. O'Brien responded that these students do not particularly want to be with the other 1300 people, even for those couple of hours, and if they are given enough time they will walk out the door. They really need something that is their own. Dr. Campbell interviewed the Core Plus students shortly after she and Dr. O'Brien arrived at Torrington, and she has had conversations with both Ms. Babcock and to a lesser extent Mr. Orefice, and these young people feel like fish out of water in the high school. They are not engaged in clubs or sports. They are failing their classes. They have things going on at home. Being at THS is not a pleasant thing for them. They have got a knot in their stomach when they walk in the door because it is going to be one more failure and negative comparison with the young people who are successful. Also, some of the kids who are successful look down on these kids and don't treat them particularly nicely. These kids to a certain extent are outcasts in this large high school society. They don't want to be here.

Dr. Campbell said some of the students expressed to her that they liked their own room and would like their own door into the room. She said from knowing the research on this, she knows that means they feel comfortable with their own space. When the staff walks in these doors it does not give a moment's pause, but when these students walk in these doors, their hearts are in their throats and their stomachs are on the ground, and they would rather be anywhere else on the face of this earth. The research supports that. When you look at the research on successful alternative programming, it is segregated, it has a small ratio of students to teacher, and it respects the social, emotional, and psychological needs of these students who are fragile.

Mr. Lyons stated he was looking into the future at the 15 11th graders who would be part of this program, and then a year later moving to the 12th grade. He would like to see some conceptual thought in terms of how they are going to address the 12th grade when these students come back. He is not concerned right now about pulling in the 7th graders or 8th graders. Mr. Lyons would like to know how they are going to bring in the 12th grade in year 2 of this particular program.

Dr. O'Brien stated the next step is basically for 2008-2009, and that would be the 11th and 12th grade component. Those 11th graders are starting their 3rd year at THS, and they have only earned 2 credits. So they are going to be taking English 10, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, maybe Geometry. One of the beauties of this approach is that due to the 10 to 1 ratio, you can look at the gaps that the student has. Let's say Susan is an Algebra teacher. She has 10 young people taking Algebra. They don't all have the same needs. They have been through Algebra once or twice and failed it, so they know something about

Algebra. What the teacher does is ascertain the gaps in their knowledge and teach individually to those gaps, and then they might test out of Algebra so she can begin teaching them Geometry. So learning can be accelerated so they can possibly gain more credits down the road. But these students will not be taking 11th grade courses because they have not passed 9th and 10th grade for the most part. The second year they would want to offer those 11th and 12th grade pieces, because hopefully they would have accelerated their learning and gotten the 9th and 10th grade pieces down.

Mr. Lyons stated that he is looking at the 15 students who are listed as being 11th grade, who are starting their third year at THS. Is it not necessarily true that in year 2 of this program, a 12th grade class will be needed? Dr. O'Brien responded maybe or maybe not. It depends on how quickly they can accelerate their learning and fill in the gaps.

Mr. Lyons stated that as the program will eventually include 11th and 12th grade offerings, he would look like to see what that will look like, so that in the end they would have a 9th through 12th THS Goal Program. Dr. O'Brien responded that they will work on a chart for next time to show some electives, as well as typical 11th and 12th grade offerings.

Mr. Lutka stated he thought that was very important because he thinks if they are voting on something, they would hope there is some permanence to it. They would hope that they don't get it off and running and then, whoops, what does year 2 and 3 look like. He would be much more comfortable if he could see what year 2 and year 3 are going to look like.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that the Board will now receive Part II of the proposed plan which is discussing the 4 sites. As they are trying to create an alternative high school here, this is not something that is going to be done in 20 minutes or in an hour. That is why it has been scheduled to take place over at least 2 different meetings. They will do just a highlight of the sites for tonight as there are still a number of other things on the agenda and it is already getting late. But they at least want to start seeing the contours of what the discussion is going to be, and give the administration some time to possibly adjust to Board input on this. There are 4 proposals here. Do they need to have a summary of those from someone?

Dr. O'Brien stated that she would like to ask Mr. Bascetta and Ms. Haynes to come to the table and give a very brief overview of what the Board already has printed in their packet. She knows this has been looked over carefully, but for the benefit of the citizens and viewing audience, she asked Ms. Haynes to just gloss over the 4 sites.

Ms. Haynes stated they have presented for the Board's consideration 4 different site options for the GOAL program. She said when she did these, they were trying to accommodate the goal of having an alternative high school program offsite from where its current programming is and have it ready by the fall of 2007. Those were things they were looking at when they were constructing the different sites. She also said that the costs shown are the costs only for either the purchase or the facility modifications. They

do not include some of the other operating costs, and she will highlight those particular areas for the Board as she goes through them.

The first proposed site is the one to renovate and utilize the existing portables at Forbes School. She reminded the Board that last year, they did offer to renovate those particular portables for continued use for Forbes elementary students and that was not an option that this Board wanted to undertake. They did not want elementary students in those Forbes portables. The community did not want elementary students in those Forbes portables. In next year's capital plan, they had estimated it would cost about \$154,000 to remove those portables. They weren't anticipating doing anything more with the site. Since those portables would no longer be occupied by elementary students, it really presented the lowest cost to them both in terms of any renovations and the cost of any additional custodial fees as they have custodians on site currently. They would have the lunches prepared in the existing cafeteria at Forbes, and brought in. There were bathrooms currently in these portables. The bathrooms would be renovated. If needed, there would be a nurse available on the site. For those of you who are not familiar with how Forbes portables are currently attached to the building, they are by the gymnasium. Where the entrance would be for the high school students is a little vestibule area. There are doors on the gym side and there are doors that go into the portables. It would be their intention to secure those doors so that the alternative high school program students would not be able to enter the Forbes building through those doors near the gym and visa versa. The students from Forbes would not be able to enter the portables. Those would be locked to them through that door. Both groups would be able to exit through that vestibule in the event of an emergency, and they would need to do that for fire code.

The next site that they considered was moving the existing Forbes portables to the high school. She also wanted to address the fact that these portables are much newer than the portables which were up at Torrington, which were quite old and quite ugly. The portables are not pretty, they are utility looking, but the Forbes portables are in a lot better condition and with some renovation, they have got years left on them. However, because of the cost of moving them up to this location, this would present some issues in terms of cost. Some of the other disadvantages would be where would they put them on the grounds, and then they have the problem of not having some physical separation from the traditional comprehensive high school that you heard both Mrs. Babcock and Mr. Orefice talk about.

The third option is the Marine Building downtown. That one presents a nice option for future growth, if they were able to purchase the building. However, there are substantial renovations that would be needed to have it brought up to educational specifications. There are a whole different set of rules that fall into place when talking about a public school educational facility. There are some potentially hidden costs that they may not even know about, so in all likelihood, even though it would be eligible for grant reimbursement from the State Department of Education, it would not be ready for fall of 2007.

The fourth option was Southeast School which is currently being leased by the city to an afterschool program. That site is the former Southeast School which everyone is familiar with. That building also presents problems for them operationally. They have met with the current leasee, and she does not think either side is convinced that they would be able to share the space, because they would both be in it at the same time, and there simply is not going to be enough room for us to work in that building. The school would have to work around their schedule and not vice versa, and the biggest problem would be that the school would have to close the building to renovate it, and that would severely impact the other program's ability to grow their program because they would have no place to go during the summer months. She is not sure that this is a good option after they met and talked these things out with the existing leasee, and under the current scenario that site would not be available for State reimbursement, because in essence the City would be leasing this building back to themselves, and the State Department of Education has issues with that. Under the existing scenario, any renovations would not be eligible for that building. There would also be custodial and operational costs that are not built into this price for both the Marine building and Southeast.

So in a nutshell she thinks that is probably the highlight of the 4 particular sites.

Mr. Cavagnero asked what the reimbursement rate would be. Ms. Haynes responded that it depends on what is eligible and what is not eligible. Mr. Bascetta responded that it could be up to almost 68% at a certain time, but there are certain restrictions that you have to make. For instance, if it is a lease, you have to have a 20-year unconditional lease for that. It would have to be for 20 years before they would even recognize it, but even with the renovation of the portables there is reimbursement for code upgrades. For instance, roofing or increasing the fire alarms or security codes, and what not. There is reimbursement there, but that is at a lesser rate, not at a high 68%. It could be 30% to 40%. It depends on which direction they go after getting a proper cost analysis done. These are really just estimates right now.

Mr. Cavagnero stated he would like to see at least ballpark figures for the next meeting, as the cost will factor into this decision. It would be nice to know what the reimbursements conceivable are. Mrs. Haynes stated that the State is the one who decides that depending on their educational specifications for any renovation. So until you adopt the educational specifications, the State is not going to give a ballpark figure as to what the reimbursement rate will be.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that for the purposes of this meeting, they will go around and start asking primarily clarification questions, anything specific to the numbers that anyone has questions about.

A Board member asked about the State reimbursement for the third option. He thinks that is really the only reasonable option that has a sizable reimbursement. Most of the reimbursements are 60% to 70%. If they are talking 60% or 70%, that knocks off \$1,000,000 off the cost of that option. That means that it is probably the most cost effective of the 4 options. He understands that it will not be done for the fall of 2007. He

was glad he was told about the 20-year lease, but he thinks they would have to investigate this. Someone stated that this site would not be a 20-year lease but an outright purchase. He responded that he still would like to get more information on that, as he knows trying to nail down the State is very difficult, but they need some kind of idea about the reimbursement. He thinks that would be very helpful.

Mr. O'Connell understands and appreciates the effort put into the 4 options. He thinks the only option that appears potentially available for next year is having the high school students at Forbes, and that is not anything he would ever support. For that reason, he really has no other questions for this proposal tonight because he is not prepared to support this going forward, and they have nothing for next year that would meet his needs.

Mrs. Traub stated that she is following along the same lines as that theory as she is afraid of doing everything last minute. She apologized and said she was unaware that the intent was to have this ready by 2007. She actually thought it was to be ready the year after that. She stated that her question regarding the cost of this obviously plays into that. She observed that the short-term cost of keeping it at Forbes is approximately \$400,000. However, that is only servicing X number of students. They are talking about increasing that volume of the students. If they spend \$400,000 this coming year on renovating Forbes portables, and within 2 years they have a program that is 3 times the size, they are going to need another facility. If they have already spent \$400,000 renovating the portables, how much is it going to cost and what are the options at that point? They will be spending X number of dollars to either lease or purchase something 2 years from now. So she is actually thinking along the same line, she does not want to rush the alternative high school. It is a major endeavor. It is important to the students. Her fear is that they are doing this again: "We don't know what the program costs are actually going to be yet, because we don't know what site it is going to be at." They don't know what all the costs are going to be, and to say that the Board is going to make a decision on this 2 weeks from now or even 4 weeks from now, this could have huge budget complications. She said that is her thought theory at this point. She thinks that these are good starting points. She thinks it is great information. She thinks there has been a lot of research on where they can do this, but this is something that is huge, and for the Board and staff to say "Well, by next meeting all this information will be available to us and we will be able to make a decision." She said she is just not convinced of that.

Mr. Cavagnero stated there was one option which he thinks has fallen through, and he recommended the administration to follow up on it.. There was some discussion to him and at least one other Board member, about the possibility of sharing Southeast School, and this was considered to be possibly a 1-year temporary solution so that they could get the program piece up and running at a temporary site. This would give the administration and the Board a year to figure out a permanent home for the program. This initial discussion was more anecdotal, but there seemed to be some real hope that they might actually be able to pull that off and co-share that facility, Southeast School, with the existing program that is there now. It looks like after the discussion the superintendents had with the Mayor's office and several other people that this is really not viable or

feasible. So they are back to the reality of getting this up and running for the fall, and given these large numbers and this many variables really this is indeed not likely, but he would like to come out of this conversation with some direction for the administration of how the Board wants them to proceed.

Mr. Oliver asked if out of all the square footage in Torrington, if there was nothing else that fits their needs or could be retrofitted to their needs. There are a lot of vacant buildings and other space. He is sitting and thinking they are looking at these, and some of them are good options and could be debated forever, but he asked what else is on the chopping block for consideration.

Dr. O'Brien reported that they have not done a survey of the waterfront in Torrington. They have been looking at these sites since late last year and over the summer, and she really does not want people to think this proposal is some kind of last minute, 11th hour process. They have been working on this since the moment their feet hit Torrington in March of 2005, when they took one look at that dropout rate. Actually, the Board adopted the goal of creating an alternative high school program for fall 2007 on September 20 in their goals. She is sorry that was missed somewhere along the way, but this is one of the goals the Board gave the administration to work on, and they are bringing it forward to them. In talking about this, there were several people who have stepped forward with ideas. There were some closed schools that were put forward. The administration would be happy to look at other sites, but there would be cost and time factors involved, of course. In order to do this program for the 40 kids, she asked them to refer back to the Forbes portable piece. She stated they wouldn't need all the classrooms in the Forbes portables. They would want 4 classrooms, a cafeteria area, an office area, and some restrooms. It is not a huge amount of space. Mr. Bascetta reported the total Forbes space is about 9,800 to 10,000 sq. ft.. Originally, they had thought they might be able to do it at between 7,000 and 8,000 sq. ft. to start in.

Mr. Oliver asked if it was theoretically possible to either meet with the Mayor's office and/or look at other sites that have about that same square footage that might be able to be retrofitted at a cost advantaged position.

Dr. O'Brien said yes, in fact, she and Mr. Nocera had discussed a few sites today in their initial meeting, and they have an appointment tomorrow to look at another site that was brought up this morning. They are not wedded to these options, but these were the ones that were either brought forward at Board request or that have been investigated over the past 4 or 5 months as possible sites.

Dr. Campbell added that if the Board approves the investment into the Forbes portables and then the program expands, she can think of at least 2 other programs that could use the space at Forbes. The one they will hear her talk about when she does her Technology budget with them is that their IT staff needs space to work on computers. Currently, when computers break they take them over to the middle school and put them in a trailer outside. When they are ready to work on them, they have to bring them in from the trailer. They have to hope that no one is using this little cubbyhole room, they have to

work on them, and if they get called away they have to take them back out to the trailer. She doesn't get efficient use nor does the Board out of their time, and she has talked many times to Mr. Bascetta about a work area space for the technicians for when they are getting ready to set up new computers, repair old ones, and for an area to have their own offices. So if the Board's choice is as an intro they want to use the Forbes portables and then another building, she would have 3 very happy technicians to take that space. The other piece that they often run into is that they would like to have a place for professional development groups without having to close the media center here at the high school. So she doesn't want the Board to think if they invest that money and then they go to a more permanent site, they don't have any other needs for the Forbes portables. It would not be lost money.

Miss Laus stated that she really is not in favor of using the portables at least for this program. These types of students that they have talked about, she doesn't think they are going to want to be stuck out in a portable. She has never been in the Forbes portables herself, but they were going to throw them away and now here they are going to use them again. Even if it is the interim plan, she does not really think it has a good stigma to it. She thinks that option might be out. She is in favor of option 3, but that brings them to 2008, so again why are they going to make this decision now if they are talking about 2008. She said that is where she stands on it.

Mrs. Carbone stated she agrees. She thinks using the Forbes portables is not a good site for the same reasons that have been stated and for the reasons she is hearing out in public, that this is putting a student population at risk. She does not think they need to go down that path. However, in looking at the other options, none of them appear to be able to possibly be done by the fall of 2007. She doesn't know about the options that have been discussed with the Mayor's office today, whether any of those can be done by fall of 2007, but she does want to go on record saying that she does not want to throw the baby out with the bath water. She thinks the program is a valuable program. She thinks the concept is desperately needed, and if Dr. O'Brien has other options and she would encourage Dr. O'Brien to consider, even if it is just temporary, to establish something here at the high school or find something else and bring it back to be considered.

Mr. Cavagnero stated the only 2 proposals of the 4 here that have any legs and had any possibility of being instituted in 2007, were basically Forbes and Southeast School. Southeast School is off the table. Can the Board agree that they should not go forward with Forbes as a consideration for this program? He asked for a show of hands of people who think they should not go forward with Forbes. He then stated that Forbes was then off the table. Southeast School is also off the table, they can't make the deal there. Are we in agreement that the Marine Building is still certainly worth pursuing? Coming up with some real numbers? He stated that they need to give the administration some specific direction with this.

Dr. Campbell asked if they are still talking fall of 2007, and Dr. Cavagnero responded no. The Board understands that they are not going to have this ready for the fall of 2007.

Mr. Lyons stated that for him this was going a bit too fast. He liked what Dr. Campbell mentioned in terms of if they were to renovate the portables that they would be able to use them for something else later on down the road. Mr. Lyons is not in favor of having the portables as a permanent place for this program at all, because of all of the reasons that were mentioned, but he thinks the Boards needs to say now whether or not they are going to have this program in 2007. And if not in 2007, what are they going to do with students who are at risk in 2007? They need to figure that out in terms of, if they are not going to have this program. They could do this right now as far as renovating the portables, if they know it is only a temporary thing, if they want to start in 2007, since there are no other facilities in which they can do this in 2007. Then what are they going to do? Are they not going to have the program in 2007 and start it in 2008 or are they going to have it in 2007? He thinks if it is in 2008, that opens up a whole new ballgame. He thinks that is what they need to say at this point.

Mrs. Carbone said she realizes that the amount of time and energy that Dr. O'Brien and her staff have spent in investigating these 4 locations is immense, and she can imagine them with their tape measure measuring square footage and calculating costs. If the decision is to go in 2007 or 2008, regardless, Dr. O'Brien is still going to have to look at sites. If the Board can narrow that scope of her investigation down to 2 options or say go for another option somewhere, then she has direction. Mr. Cavagnero agreed that was what he was trying to do.

Dr. Campbell responded that if they are not looking to start in the fall of 2007, then they can just wipe some sites off the board right now. She does not want to waste Dr. Bascetta's time or spend the money having their architect go, and she does not want to waste Dr. O'Brien's time. If they are looking towards the fall of 2008, that is a different story. So they really do need some direction, in terms of whether or not they want this program offsite for the fall of 2007.

Dr. Cavagnero suggested they do because at some point this program has to live somewhere. The Board will discuss it and make the decision next week, but the administration is going to have show them where they can do it, but because they can't do it at Southeast, and they will not be able to do it in 2007 at the Marine, and the Board does not want it to go into the portables, they are going to have to hear some other suggestions for this.

A Board member stated the Board gave the administration the direction for 2007, and were clear when they spoke in September, so the administration have only been following the Board's order and direction. They have come back with their best thinking at this point. The Board has to decide if they want to change their minds. Out of fairness, the Board needs to say the program will go in 2007, and here are at least a couple of options, or the Board is going to wait until 2008. He thinks that they really need to have that discussion first, and decide, so at least the administration can plan their time and what they are going to do.

Mr. Broverman thinks they have received it and listened to the options, and he thinks the next meeting is when they are supposed to vote on it. When they vote on it, they are going to discuss the issue about whether or not to adopt a 2007 program or a 2008 program or whether to consider the sites that were presented. He thinks they can move on.

On a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Mr. O'Connell , the Board moved to move the question. All were in favor except Mr. Lyons and Mrs. Carbone who abstained.

On a motion by Mrs. Carbone, with a second by Royals, the Board moved to receive the proposed plan Mr. Oliver, Mr. Lutka, Mr. Broverman, Mrs. Carbone, Prof. Royals, Mr. Lyons, Mrs. Traub, Miss Laus were in favor; Mr. O'Connell was opposed; and there were no abstentions.

Mr. Cavagnero then acknowledged that the plan has been received and the plan will be revisited next week.

Acceptance of Capital Project as Complete: East School Oil Tank Replacement

On a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Ms. Carbone , the Board moved to accept the capital project as complete. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Capital Project as Complete: East School Fire Alarm

On a motion by Mr. Lyons, with a second by Mr. O'Connell, the Board moved to accept the capital project as complete. All were in favor.

Receive MOU from THS Newspaper

On a motion by Mr. Broverman, with a second by Mrs. Traub, the Board moved to receive MOU from THS Newspaper. All were in favor with the exception of Mrs Carbone who abstained, to approve as amended.

Dr. Lambour stated that the high school would like to establish a student newspaper. The purpose of this is to get something going. It is one of the activities Dr. Metallo is very much a believer in. This is just to get things up and rolling during the 2nd semester. It will be something like the way the yearbook is produced where students volunteer. It is not really a club. It is more of an organized activity. He is thinking of getting maybe 15 or 20 students involved. Two teachers would help organize it. All of the publications Dr. Metallo would personally approve to ensure they go out with appropriate pictures and content. It is basically fairly cost neutral other than the cost of a stipend for the 2 teachers. They are looking to charge 25 cents. In addition, he described it as a small tabloid, 6 to 8 pages. He sees it really as an opportunity for students who have an interest in this area as a possible career tract, to get a chance to apply some of the skills that they are acquiring in the classroom. He sees it as opportunity for the community to hear about

some of the activities that go on in the school because the kids are going to be taking these home. In fact, he is looking at students perhaps interviewing different members of the community and helping bring them into the school as well. The stipend amount is basically a stipend that is similar to what is paid to classbook advisors. The Union was quite agreeable to this. Down the road, this may turn up to be part of a journalism class, something more definite, but this is to get it up and rolling, and they are asking the Board to approve this.

Mr. Broverman asked if this was \$247 each for 2 teachers. Dr. Lambour responded yes. Mr. Broverman then asked if there would be any advertising or would the students be soliciting advertising for this newspaper. Dr. Lambour responded that they had talked about that in executive session. At this point although that is something Dr. Metallo envisioned, they may be staying away from it because it is kind of tricky. If you allow one group to advertise and someone else wants to and you don't want them to, then it gets tricky.

Mr. Lutka commented that as he was the founding father of 2 school newspapers, he finds it really unbelievable that this high school does not have a newspaper, but he endorses it 100%. He thinks it is a wonderful opportunity which does branch out into journalism classes and other things.

Prof. Royals stated that the MOU says the Torrington Board of Education and the Torrington Board of Education agreed to the following. She asked if that shouldn't read the Torrington Board of Education and the Torrington Education Association. The Board responded yes. She asked if that was true for the title as well. The Board again responded yes. She just wanted to clarify that.

Mr. Oliver asked if they can approve this even though they have those clean up errors. The Board answered yes as they were just receiving this.

Approve MOU from THS Newspaper

On a motion by Mrs. Broverman, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to approve MOU from THS Newspaper as amended. All were in favor except for Mrs. Carbone who abstained.

Receive MOU for 10-month Secretary

On a motion by Mrs. Traub, with a second by Miss Laus, the Board moved to receive MOU for 10-month Secretary. All were in favor.

Dr. Lambour stated that last year there was one secretary reduced at THS. They thought they would be able to work things out with the existing secretarial staff. This year as Dr. Metallo, particularly in the Guidance Department, was moving forth and implementing all the various activities, and brought in the Director of Guidance, they found they were really shorthanded. Things were not getting done on time, they were not

getting done as efficiently. Dr. Metallo and his staff tried reshuffling the deck a number of times, reassigning secretaries to different positions, looking at what they could do to speed things up, save time, and make things more efficient. They were still running behind. He then approached administration and requested an additional secretary. The work that the secretary needs to do, however, seemed to be predominantly work to be done during the school year and not during the summer, because it is a guidance based position. Dr. Lambour and Ms. Haynes met with the Secretarial Association, and there is a provision within the current contract where it talks about the 10-month Secretary under the section dealing with sick leave. They built upon that. The Secretarial Union was not opposed to them coming up with this type of position. The administration saw it as something down the road that might be helpful in other situations, where they needed more help during the year but not necessarily during the summer. There were a number of items in the contract that they needed to look at relative to a person only working 10 months. In the MOU, there is a delineation of what they agreed to in terms of the work year being 190 days versus 226. The work day is the same amount of time, 7.5 hours a day. Since they are off during the summer, there is no vacation allowed for. Sick days are as already called for in the contract. Longevity needed to be prorated as they shouldn't get the same money as someone working the full year. Holidays were something they were not comfortable giving a 10-month secretary. Premium cost-sharing they worked through. Since they are only working 10 months, they have to pay the same amount of insurance as someone working 12, so they worked that out. Seniority was more of a concern to the Union than to them, but they came up with some language that the Union was comfortable with in how seniority would be handled; same with job elimination, some language on that. Most of the other articles of the contract applied for both groups of people, so it went fairly quickly and easily in terms of working that out. This particular position, depending on who ends up getting it, would run anywhere from \$24,000 to \$29,000 a year as opposed to \$33,000 to \$40,000 for a 12-month individual. Dr. Metallo has been waiting for this. He is hoping it gets approved. He calls me at least once a week asking where they are on this, so they are asking for the Board's support.

Mrs. Carbone stated she was in favor of establishing a 10-month secretarial position. She thinks there is value to the Board moving forward on that concept. She can see where some secretarial positions within each of the schools would be beneficial and cost effective. Agreeing to the MOU to accomplish this right now, she was sort of rolling that around for awhile thinking we are going into negotiations very soon on a contract which does terminate on June 30, 2007, but from her prior experience with negotiating this contract, she knows that it could be 18 months before they get to the end result of that. So that certainly wouldn't address any of the current needs or the potential for moving some of the other secretarial positions into a 10-month cycle.

Mrs. Carbone said her only question was regarding the premium cost share. Currently, she believes it is a 7% premium cost share, and the 12-month positions are covered for the full year, and they are paying 7% of the total annual cost, for example, for a family plan of \$12,000. If you have a 10-month secretary who is receiving 12 months of insurance and staying with the family plan of potentially \$12,000, they are actually getting a larger benefit, the 2 months. They are getting the same dollar amount, but one

group is getting a better benefit than the other. If you broke that \$12,000 a year out over this period of time, a 12-month secretarial position is receiving \$1000 a month of the benefit, and the 10-month secretary is actually receiving a slightly higher amount because they are only working 10 months so they are receiving 1/10 of the \$12,000. She is worried the 12-month secretary is going to protest that the 10-month secretaries are receiving a larger benefit. She can see where this might skew their negotiations when going into the new contract negotiations.

Dr. Cavagnero asked if language could be added to take care of that. Ms. Haynes stated she had thought that too, but the Secretarial Union did not buy that argument. .

Mrs. Carbone responded that actually, as she was thinking it out loud she also thought that their paraprofessionals are in the same situation. They are in 10 month positions, but they are receiving 12 months worth of coverage. Mrs. Haynes said that is true. Mrs. Carbone stated, otherwise, she thinks a 10 month position is a great idea and she is pleased to see it come forward.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if they could get it in writing in the MOUs that no one objects to it. He believes this is akin to what was done on the cafeteria workers, the teacher's cafeteria MOU. Wasn't their language to that affect on your earlier MOU?

Mr. Broverman stated that the whole contract is coming up for negotiations. No matter what is proposed on either side, it is a matter of what the Board agrees to. So even if all the sudden they say we missed something here, and they decide to bring it up to our negotiations, it does not mean anything has to be agreed to. Mr. Cavagnero responded that it doesn't, but the precedent always factors into it.

Mr. Lutka said he would be interested to find out where the \$41,000 if it is a \$29,000 position, and if it is a \$26,000 position, the addition of the health benefits would make it a \$38,000 position, so where is the \$38,000 to \$41,000 coming from Ms. Haynes answered this has not yet been identified. The Board responded that presently this is to approve the MOU, not to approve the hiring. Mr. Lutka stated but it is Dr. Metallo's goal to do it this year. Dr. Cavagnero responded but that is not the question before the Board. Mr. Lutka said he thinks the question should be asked before they even go through that negotiation. Mrs. Carbone responded that she thought staffing was the responsibility of the administration, not for the Board to approve.

Mr. Lutka stated he is not questioning their ability to do that, he is just questioning where the money is going to come from. They are only budgeted for a certain amount of head count this year. How are they going to change the head count this year with the existing budget? Mr. O'Connell responded that to answer Mr. Lutka's question from his perspective, whether they approve it for this year or not, this allows them to build a budget for next year, to build in 10-month positions.

Mr. Lutka stated that was going to be his next suggestion, why not build this into the 2007-2008 budget. Mr. O'Connell responded the contract would not allow it. They have

to allow it in the contract first in order to do it. They can't budget for a 10-month position unless the contract allows for a 10-month position.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that Dr. Metallo feels they need this now, they needed this four to six months ago. That is the issue.

Mr. Lutka asked if all he was doing was voting to amend the contract to allow a 10-month position, but not voting to authorize the money to hire somebody for this position. Mr. Cavagnero responded that was correct.

Mr. Lutka also asked Ms. Haynes how much they are still in the hole. Ms. Haynes responded over a million dollars. Mr. Lutka stated he thinks if they are in the hole for a million dollars that this is a good idea for 2007-2008, not for 2007.

Mrs. Carbone asked about the 10-month secretaries not being entitled for any paid holidays. Does that mean they don't work on the holidays, they just don't get paid, or they are just not entitled to any holidays. Dr. Lambour responded that when there is a holiday, they will not be paid, where a 12-month secretary is paid for that holiday. Ms. Haynes stated that mirrors the language of their paraprofessionals who are also 10 month.

Approve MOU for 10-Month Secretary

On a motion by Ms. Carbone , with a second by Prof. Royals , the Board moved to approve the MOU position. All were in favor except for Mr. Lutka who abstained.

Approve School Calendar for 2008-2009

On a motion by Prof. Royals, with a second by Mrs. Traub, the Board moved to approve school calendar B for 2008-2009. All were in favor except for Miss Laus and Mr. Broverman.

Dr. Lambour reported the last time they met, there was concern raised about the length of time for the winter recess. So in response to that concern, they developed 2 versions of the calendar, 1 with a day and a half before Christmas, and 1 with 2 full days before Christmas. It does not really affect the end of the year. Two full days gives a few more hours of school, the day and a half is more in keeping with tradition, so it is a tradeoff both ways. Mr. Broverman stated he supports calendar A because it is the traditional calendar, and it has been pass practice not only in this district, but in many other districts for many, many years, and that if they change it there may be some people who they might unnecessarily upset by it. They also might get more people taking those days off, which might cost some money. He stated he did vote against the last calendar, because he did think they should go to school that week. He thinks they were right to turn that first calendar down, but he does think that the 23rd has always been a half day, and he just does not see any reason why they would like to be changing that now.

Mr. Lyons said he can understand, but they are here to educate kids and not to deal with family vacations and stuff like that. He is in favor of calendar B.

Mrs. Traub stated that these teachers will have to be in school that Tuesday anyway, regardless of whether they will go 5 hours or 6.5 hours, so unfortunately, if they get a lot of teachers out that day that would be a tragedy. Mr. Broverman stated he thinks they are just sending the wrong message. They are not doing it on negotiations, they are just doing it on the calendar thing.

Miss Laus said she is going to be the teacher here and say the 23rd, the last day before Christmas is not a pleasant day for anybody. Nothing gets done; it is an unproductive day. So you can have a ½ day of unproductiveness or a full day, so she would vote for having ½ a day.

Mr. Oliver stated that he agreed with Mr. Lyons.

CONSENT AGENDA

Certified Staff Resignations/Appointments

Barbara A. Oles, Spanish-TMS, Long Term Substitute, eff 1/2/07

Contract Addenda

Erin Sullivan, Newspaper Advisor-HS, eff second semester 2006-2007

Lisa Roche, Newspaper Advisor-HS, eff second semester 2006-2007

Chalise Ross, Coordinating Teacher for Technology-FB, eff 2006-2007

Marjorie Pettersen, Coordinating Teacher for Technology-EA, eff 2006-2007

Rene LaMere, Coordinating Teacher for Technology-VO, eff 2006-2007

Sheila Hogan, Coordinating Teacher for Technology-SW, eff 2006-2007

Michael J. Fritch, Coordinating Teacher for Technology-TF, eff 2006-2007

On a motion by Mr. O'Connell , with a second by Miss Laus , the Board moved to approve the consent agenda. All were in favor.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Victoria Measels, 36 Forest Court - She reported that the student council did not mention that they are doing the Penguin Plunge which supports the Special Olympics in Connecticut. Donations are welcome from everybody, the public and anyone at the meeting. It takes \$50 for one person to be in it, so if there are any donations for this, please come and see her. The Special Olympics is on February 3rd at Highland Lake in Winsted.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Lyons reported that tomorrow is their CAFE Breakfast, and he thanked the Board members who signed up. They have 5 representatives and senators coming, and about 12 superintendents, and 53 total people have signed up, and he thinks that they have the most of any of the areas, so it should be a good session tomorrow morning. The other thing that he would like to do is a heads up on that at the CAFE Board Meeting tonight, there was a report that the governor had put together an ECS task force, in which they are

looking at how the ECS is being funded and whatever, and there is going to be a report. They are going to email it to him tomorrow, and he will be sending it out to everybody. It is a complicated issue and they are still talking about it, but it is something he thinks at some point, when they get this task force summary they are coming up with, it may be something the Board wants to put on their future agenda to talk about.

Mrs. Traub followed up on the TMS. The 6th grade, Mrs. Miller's, Mr. Purcell's, History, English, and Math classes were all used for Egyptian night. There was a slide show, a skit, display boards, Power Point presentations. She wants to point out these are some of the amazing teachers that they have hired and kept in their school system. These student's projects were wonderful. She did not get to see as many as she would like to, but these are amazing kids, so kudos to the middle school.

Mr. O'Connell stated that a couple of meetings ago the budget committee mentioned that they thought it would make sense to sit down with the Board of Finance in January sometime, to see if the Mayor really did have any firm number in mind, and he thinks that is in the court of the Board, as well as the court of the Budget Committee. He just wants to make sure that is not on his plate and it is on somebody else's. Ms. Haynes reported that their budgets are always based on student need and not backed into an artificial number, but it may be helpful to see the number.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy has a committee meeting coming up on January 17 at 4 p.m. to discuss graduation requirements and grading policies.

Miss Laus reported she is on Dr. Lambour's Wellness Committee, and they have met a couple of times so far in November and December. They are now meeting again next week in January. They are looking at a couple of services as far as wellness goes, and that is for the lunch program and the nurse health services. They are at the stage where they are looking at what the State standards are for these programs. They are meeting the State standards for all of the schools. They have already looked at the lunch program and now they are going to look at the nursing program next week. So far it looks like they are on target for meeting the State standards.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

Mr. Oliver stated he was wondering what they were doing to address the shortfall in the budget account. He hears it is a very large number, and he is curious. Ms. Haynes responded there is a budget committee meeting next week. She has the year-end projection and she will be presenting to the budget committee. She does not know if they want to leave it in the hands of the budget committee at this point. The Board responded yes. Ms. Babcock has been directed to freeze all unnecessary or discretionary funding for various materials, professional development, so the only expenditures from here on out are only essential expenditures. Mr. Oliver responded that since it is over a million dollars, he would imagine trimming back on ordering pens, paper, supplies, and

professional development is not going to be enough to overcome that shortfall. What is going to have to be implemented district wide to more appropriately address that? He doesn't know if that is a discussion that happens at the budget committee level or if that is something that needs to go to the Board. Mr. Cavagnero responded he would like to see it first go to budget and then come forward to the Board.

Mr. Broverman recommended that they bring this up as an example to their wonderful legislative body of how they are in the hole big time because of SPED. It is a great learning experience, but all 10 of us are in it for about \$100,000 a piece.

Dr. Cavagnero reported that he will not be there for the next meeting. His work will be taking him out to Colorado that week, so Ms. Carbone will be running the meeting. The first thing is to do is the alternative school, what the Board wants to do, and what they want to see from the administration. People want to know if they are going to plan to go forward with this year, is 2007 a possibility, and where the program should live. Ms. Carbone and Prof. Royals brought up the possibility of a one-year, short-term approach as an option.

Dr. O'Brien asked if the Board would like them to look at a couple more sites. In their conversation this morning with the Mayor and his staff, 2 possible sites were brought forward. They already have an appointment tomorrow to visit one of them and take a look, and they would pursue the 2nd site if that is what the Board wants them to do. If they can find a site that is agreeable to all and that meets the financial parameters, and is also something that is doable in the time frame, she thinks they still should try to go for it. The administration would be happy to do that, if that is the direction in which the Board would like them to move. Mr. Cavagnero responded that he thinks that is what they are looking for. Mr. Lyons agreed. Even if it is a temporary site at this point to get the program up and running this year. But if it is going to be a permanent site and it is not going to get up and running this year, he also thinks they need to know that, so that they can make the decision of this year or next year. **Dr. O'Brien clarified that their marching orders were to look at least 2 more additional sites and price them out for fall of 2007, and to bring back a graphic on grades 11th and 12th of a possible second year rollout, whenever that second year is, including some electives.** Mr. O'Connell stated that everyone has to be clear because there are 3 small words that the State Board of Education does not like to hear and those are "change of use". If they take over a building, whether it is temporary or not, they are changing the use of that building. They have to bring it up to State Board of Education specifications to occupy it with kids. So in a temporary building, though he is not against it, there are going to have to be renovations to it and a large expense. He just wants the Board to be aware of that. He has spoken to Mr. Wedge at the State Board, and he is very clear on what they want. He stated that a temporary fix is not going to be an inexpensive fix. That is why Southeast was so expensive.

The Board had requested reviewing the multiple-year planned curriculum development and implementation. Dr. Campbell has been working on that. That will be ready for the 24th for the Board to take a look at. They have a Summer School report from the

summer of 2006, that particular programming. They have the proposal of Summer School of 2007, for them. That will also include costs that they will later see in the budget proposal on February 21. Ms. Haynes will have some financials for the Board for the second meeting, and then, of course their THS GOAL program with the items that she just mentioned, the graphic, and any additional site information.

Mr. O’Connell asked if the report on the Summer School will give them an indication of success in reference to student achievement. Dr. O’Brien responded yes. Dr. Lambour has been working on that diligently. They will roll out the Summer School report for 2006, and then roll out the proposal for 2007.

ADJOURNMENT

In a motion by Dr. Cavagnero , with a second by Prof. Royals , the Board moved to adjourn at 11 p.m.