

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
September 28, 2011

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins, Dr. Sewall

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Adamo

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Barker-Jones, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Hossai Jabary, Katelynn Person

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski; Board of Education candidates Michael Desaulniers, John French, Mary Gallucci, Doug Lary, Luz Osuba, Nancy Tinker; general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Rayhall called the September 28, 2011, Board of Education Workshop meeting, to order at 7:05 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center. Mrs. Rayhall welcomed the Board of Education candidates to the meeting.

WORKSHOP SESSION

Dr. Adamowski presented information on *Developing a Plan for School Improvement – Vision, Theory of Action, Performance Targets and Strategies* and led Board members and candidates in a discussion centered around developing a three-year strategic operating plan for the district. As explained by Dr. Adamowski, the Special Master legislation requires that a district plan on how the district will improve and raise student improvement be collaboratively developed by Board members, the Superintendent and the Special Master. Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the nation as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) due to several reasons. In response to this issue, Dr. Adamowski spoke about possible solutions that would close the gap. However, in order to close the gap in Windham, students would have to improve five to six times the average state rate of improvement each year for the next five years.

In John Kotter's book, *Leading Change*, eight areas are identified to bring about change and tonight's meeting will focus on the stage that research suggests is the most important: the development of a vision and strategy which go hand in hand. Dr. Adamowski explained that vision is a description of a better future that inspires hope and provides general direction, and strategy is the theory of action used by a district to achieve the district's vision. Dr. Adamowski reviewed a chart showing the different theories of action that can be chosen by a district to be used either individually or combined. As documented by research to effectively close the achievement gap and to achieve fundamental change and accelerate student achievement, Dr. Adamowski spoke about a mix of using both Managed Instruction and Performance Empowerment (portfolio) to create Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE). Using the MPE, the district defines its relationship with each school based on the school's performance. Schools that are high performing or showing significant improvement are given a great amount of autonomy and rely mostly on school leadership. On the basis of achievement, schools in the district that are low performing are subject to

district intervention, redesign, closure or replacement with higher performing school models. Dr. Adamowski shared an Overall School Index (OSI) school performance matrix to chart accountability based on CMT and CAPT results. Achievement is measured by the level of proficiency in reading, math, science and writing. Attainment is measured by accomplishments; i.e., school status/improvement, percentage of students graduating from high school, and percentage of high school graduates attending college. Dr. Adamowski reviewed the many areas that create a framework for the operating plan once it is developed.

Dr. Adamowski presented the timeline for the development of the three-year Strategic Operating Plan which will be the focus of Board Workshops culminating in December when the Board adopts the plan and the Special Master approves the plan. In January, Dr. Adamowski will bring the plan before the State Board of Education for approval. Beginning next summer, each year the Board will hold a retreat to focus on data review of the previous year and then adjust the operating plan as necessary.

Discussion, along with questions and answers, occurred throughout the meeting.

Dr. Adamowski concluded the workshop by saying that during the three-year period, the theory of action will allow for systemic changes to occur so that everything in the district is in alignment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

(21) Motion by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:07 P.M.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Rayhall, Chair