



Education Committee - Board of Representatives

Michael Molgano, Co-Chair Andy Sklover, Co-Chair Mary Savage, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2010
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Democratic Caucus Room, 4th Floor, Government Center,
888 Washington Boulevard

The Education Committee met as indicated above. Present were Co-Chairs Sklover and Molgano, Vice Chair Savage and Committee Member Reps. Cerasoli and Young. Absent/excused were Committee Member Reps. Layton and Wallace. Also present were Dr. Starr, Superintendent of Schools; Jackie Heftman, President of the Board of Education; and Kimberly Schultz, Melissa Bang and Denise Gagne Kurpiewski of Stamford Public Schools.

Co-Chair Sklover called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. E28.002	REVIEW; vetting process for substitute teachers.	REPORT MADE

Dr. Starr reviewed the current system for employing substitute teachers. An individual applies, they submit letters of recommendation, they get fingerprinted, and they enter the pool. Ms. Gagne stated that they are now protecting the school system by not employing the substitute until after the background checks have been received.

Dr. Starr and his staff took questions from committee members:

- The teacher is responsible for leaving a lesson plan for the substitute to follow. This Plan must be checked by the principal.
- Many substitutes and schools develop long-term relationships; this provides continuity when the teacher is not in the classroom.
- Dr. Starr stated that due to lack of funds and labor contract restrictions, innovations in the training and employment of substitute teachers that he would otherwise employ are not possible.

- Ms. Gagne stated they use an on-line application system similar to what is used by 80% of the rest of Connecticut. This has worked out very well for the school system.
- Substitute teachers who are certified teachers provide a higher level of quality. The minimum requirement to be a substitute is a bachelor's degree, three letters of recommendation and a background check.
- The current pool is large, consisting of about 100 individuals. A small number of these are certified, 50% of the pool is well known to the system, and the remainder are used for occasional days, based on need.
- Substitute teaching standards are the same for elementary, middle and high school. Ms. Gagne stated that she is trying to develop a rubric they can use to differentiate pay scales. Ideally, they would like to be able to compensate certified teachers at higher pay levels than non-certified.
- There are no evaluations done of substitute teachers. It is an informal system where principals are expected to notify the administration of any inappropriate or ineffective substitute teachers. After reviewing the circumstances, the substitute can be removed permanently from the list.
- Feedback from substitute teachers varies from school to school.
- The average absence per teacher per building is 5-6 days per year, which is very good.
- There is no dress code required of teachers or of substitute teachers.

Rep. Savage mentioned that the schools take advantage of interns and of student teachers.

Dr. Starr summarized by stating that Stamford manages its substitute teachers on an "average" basis. Without additional finances and without negotiated contract changes, their system is comparable to many other systems and works adequately.

Rep. Sklover requested that a copy of the "State Guest Teacher Policy/Procedures" that were recently implemented be forwarded to the Committee.

The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on March 18 at 6:00 p.m. They will take up the item of a review of the Cambridge Report at this meeting. In April, they will hold their meeting on the 19th at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Sklover, Co-Chair