

# ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## MINUTES

**PLACE:** ANSONIA CITY HALL

**DATE:** 5 MAY 2010

**TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: PRESIDENT John Lawlor

### I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE (time)
MR. GEORGE BOATH	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO	X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President	X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS	X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY	X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	0	0

### II. PRESENTATION: CABA Student Leadership Awards

**DISCUSSION:** Superintendent Carol Merlone said she is very proud to present the CABA Student Leadership Awards to Chelsea Rhodes and Arthur Kwaskiewicz from Ansonia Middle School and Jasmine Schuchmann and Wilson Fong from Ansonia High School. Mr. McNeill, teacher on special assignment, and Mr. Chester, guidance counselor from the middle school along with Mrs. Merlone presented the awards to the middle school students. Mrs. Merlone presented the awards to the high school students. There was applause from the audience. Mr. Lawlor, on behalf of the Board of Education, congratulated each student and their parents for a job well done. He added that you represent Ansonia well and we are proud to have you as students and proud to have you as parents who instill the importance of education in their child's life. Again, there was applause from the audience.

### III. PRESENTATION: International Institute of Connecticut, Inc.

**DISCUSSION:** Superintendent Merlone introduced Jeremy Marshall, case manager from the International Institute of CT, Inc. who gave a presentation on the background of children from Nepal and how they transitioned into the Ansonia school system. The Superintendent asked Mr. Marshall to explain why Ansonia was chosen over neighboring towns. Mr. Marshall said there is an oversight committee and they have very strict criteria on how they decide who is placed where. We have resettled families in Waterbury and Bridgeport and there is an overflow of refugees in those areas. He explained housing rents have to be low, there has to be public transportation, there has to be proximity to one another, the availability of laundry facilities, the availability of at least one school system, everything you would think a family would need. They must also be within a particular geographic area. Mrs. Merlone said she would think the rental property in Derby would be comparable to Ansonia. Mr. Marshall said yes it is. We are trying to locate some of our refugees in Derby as well. Mrs. Merlone asked, to date no one has been placed in Derby? Mr. Marshall said that is correct. We have to work very fast to relocate these families and to try to reinvent the wheel in another community is logistically difficult. The executive director is aware that we should try not to put all of our families here. The Superintendent said our class sizes are huge and she did explain that to the executive director. When they first met, along with Diane Conway, assistant superintendent, we were assured that Shelton, Derby, as well as Ansonia, were going to split these 15 families. It seems like Ansonia is receiving all the families. Superintendent Merlone said it is not that we don't want to educate everyone; it is just that we don't have space. Mr. Marshall said he realizes that resources are taxed and we don't want to over burden the system putting all of our

families in Ansonia. Mrs. Merlone went on to say that the number of ESL students to one teacher that we have at each building exceeds the amount they should have. Mr. Marshall explained before the first three families arrived rents were negotiated and everything had been set in place in Ansonia. This last family we have coming over will also be placed in Ansonia. That happened as a result of some of our longstanding commitments with one of our landlords. So, we are almost bound by one of our other agreements to have them placed here. For the next families that come in, at least three, we will begin to transition and look elsewhere. They would have to be close enough in proximity to the families living in Ansonia. Michael Smerznak, a member of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation (BOAT), asked if Ansonia receives funding from the International Institute of Connecticut, Inc. Mr. Marshall explained that their resources come from the federal government. The only thing that comes to Ansonia would be what we provide in terms of logistical systems. Our organization is nonprofit and we rely heavily on the funding that comes from other streams. Mr. Lawlor said there is no subsidy to the City of Ansonia. Mr. Marshall said it is unlikely, after this next family, that we will continue to pursue Ansonia. The work we have done so far with Ansonia has been productive. The Superintendent said we did prepare nicely for the children coming in. We have nothing against the children coming in; the concerns we have is space and only have one ESL teacher in each building servicing so many children that it cuts the services for each child. She said she is worried about the children getting short-changed. Mr. Marshall said he is as well. One of the services we provide is Volunteers for Literacy. We also have the Valley Regional Adult Education providing ESL classes and other tutors. Mrs. Merlone asked if the volunteer staff would be able to come into the schools and help with ESL. Mr. Marshall said he will ask. Mrs. Conway said the students will need help with language support specifically aligned with their courses. Mr. Marshall said we are finding that the children are getting homework and do not understand it, but they have come a long way. One of the ESL teachers called and said that one of the students performed very high on a math and science exam but there are some English problems that are preventing the student from achieving as far as she could. Mr. Marshall said the next family coming to Ansonia speaks some English. Mr. Nimons asked Mr. Marshall what is the size of his budget. Mr. Marshall said the funding is done by head, per capita, how many people within the family and which part of the grant will help them out. When they first come in they are under an R&P grant. The families in Ansonia are now under a Matching Grant. This grant provides more than the R&P grant. Mr. Nimons then asked what the corporation budget is. Mr. Marshall said he didn't know and would have to get that information. Mr. Nimons asked, how many employees are there? Mr. Marshall said Hartford has 35, Bridgeport has 40 and Derby has 4. Mr. Norman, also a member of BOAT, asked how you measure your success rate? Mr. Marshall said some of what we do depends on us and part on the clients. As long as the clients continue to go to their ESL classes, workshops, and understand what they are supposed to do, they will continue to receive our funding. Mr. Marshall added that our success is measured for us from the federal government. After the 120 days there is a grace period where we are given an extra chance. It depends on all of our case documentations. If everything looks picture perfect but the market isn't that good at the time, they will extend the period. The time does come when the government says, is this family putting a burden on the community? Mr. Norman asked does the community absorb them. Mr. Marshall said what generally happens is that most of the refugees know people that are their relatives or come from the same camp. All of our families are in that category. They also believe, given their time here under their contractual period, they will then go east to join a large community such as the one found in Colorado. Mr. Marshall gave the website of his organization, [www.iiconn.org](http://www.iiconn.org). Mr. Lawlor thanked Mr. Marshall for the presentation.

#### **IV. PUBLIC SESSION**

1. Ed Norman, 51 Grove Street, said BOAT is in the midst of their budget process and it is very tight. Some things were done at the last workshop that he is sure didn't sit well with the Board of Education (BOE) or a few of our members. He added, hopefully we can make some changes. Mr. Norman said perception is nine-tenths of the law. There seems to be a real breakdown of communication between the BOE, the administrative offices, BOAT, and the city government. A lot of side conversations and information exchanged at the workshops aren't presented to the BOE upfront, as far as looking for answers. Some issues that came up during the workshops were the increase that the BOE was looking for and did you really need it and things that you do to control your budget. One item that came up was the lack of bidding for the transportation contract. He said he received an explanation afterwards, but again looking at millions of dollars in transportation costs, in this economy, how could we not go out to bid? Mr. Lawlor said, to that one point, all it took was a simple question to get an answer. We have had representation at every meeting and workshop and he said he doesn't think that question was ever asked of Mr. Gaskins, Business Manager. Mr. Norman said he is not there to berate your Board; he is there to try to open up the lines of communication. He added that he and his chairman have been attending BOE meetings. You give BOAT your budget by object. When you closed out your budget last year, it seems like you don't balance your budget the way a budget should be balanced. At the close of last year there was a surplus in certified salaries, non-certified salaries, energy, and public utilities. Mr. Norman said he is sure there is a reasonable explanation as to where those were. The repairs and maintenance lines were spent to 107%, so you overspent that line item, and you took money from somewhere else. We don't know, by the information given, where you are actually taking that money from. Granted, at the bottom line, there was a \$134,000 surplus that was given back, but do you have any kind of financial control over your budget or do you just let the numbers run? This gives a perception that no one here is watching the budget. Mr. Lawlor said we have financial control of our budget or else we wouldn't have a \$134,000 surplus. At the end of the year we balance out those accounts. In the end, what does it mean? Mr. Norman said, it means when you come in and ask for a 2% increase in utilities, why would you be asking for a 2% increase in utilities when you didn't spend 16%. We can't make rhyme or reason to that line item. You know the BOE is the biggest piece of our budget and also the biggest piece of state funding of our budget, and also the biggest tax payer share of our budget. It is hard for us to say; yes they do need 4.99% increase because we know utility costs went up. Well, utility costs did go up last year

but you had a major surplus. Mr. Norman said you are looking for more teachers where you had a \$179,000 surplus in certified salaries. This is what we have in front of us to make these decisions and it is not easy to push forward an increase when we look at this. It was brought up last year that there were no concessions from the teachers as far as the budget. We had the city employees give up concessions and the administrators had given some concessions. This year it wasn't so much concession, but through arbitration. We found out that it didn't go to arbitration, it was borderline arbitration. Mr. Norman said again, these are things that come to our board that are brought up as hearsay or misinformation. We need to work together so we can come up with a true figure of what your budget needs. We are in a major dilemma between information from this board and where we are set in the city's budget for 2010-2011. Superintendent Merlone said she believes they provided some of the answers to those questions today when Mr. Norman met with the superintendent and business manager. Arbitration was scheduled but we negotiated the contract beforehand. With respect to the teachers with 0%, Michele Fraher, union president, explained about concessions in previous years that were not returned to them. Also, the certified salary line item, Mrs. Merlone went on to say, a few teachers who were highly paid were released because of ineffectiveness and we had to hire a substitute for that position at a lower rate of pay. Mr. Norman, again, said these are questions that come up in our workshops, posed to our board members and we don't have the answers. Mrs. Merlone said where the problem lies is it is how one person perceives it then it is spread like rumors all over, like the desk at the high school that didn't match the décor. There is nothing in that room but a desk. Mr. Norman said the way it was explained was that someone needed a desk, they got a desk, it didn't match the décor of the office, and they gave the desk to someone else and bought all new furniture that matched. The Superintendent said these are ridiculous conversations. Mr. Lawlor said the thing that is perplexing is that those things come up and take on a life of their own. No one says wait a minute; let's get the story before we allow this to have a profound effect on how we are deciding what we are deciding. Mr. Norman said that is why he is there. Mr. Lawlor said he knows how much time Mr. Norman spends at the Board of Education office on Grove Street asking questions. That is great and we invite that. We have asked every board, BOA, BOAT, anytime you want to come into the school system to see what we are doing, by all means come and do it. Superintendent Merlone said she would like to take people through the schools but no one ever asks. No one ever wants to. Mr. Lawlor said he has not had any takers in the five years he has been on the Board. Mr. Norman said one time there was a walkthrough for the kindergartens and he along with four or five other members attended. Mrs. Merlone said Mr. Norman also attended the forum at the middle school and she thanked him for that and for coming to the meeting because we do need that kind of exchange. Mr. Norman then said at his forums he is the one who always asks the questions. They are things that are growing and festering in the room and everyone is hesitant to ask so he asks. Mr. Lawlor said the BOA has representatives from other departments; we are the biggest portion of the city's budget, why can't we have an educational liaison from the tax board to the Board of Education. Mr. Norman suggested also having a liaison from BOAT because so much goes on, there is so much interaction. Mr. Lawlor said they have tried very hard to open the lines of communication. He received an email the other day where Mr. Norman was also copied and the lines of communication between the city and the BOE has never been better. Another point made in that email is that this Board has always put everything on the table and he is a little confused. Mr. Norman said he is there to try to open the lines of communication. Mr. Gaskins and Superintendent Merlone attended just about every meeting. We do have questions; we do have a responsibility back to the citizens when these things come up. He said he doesn't know if the BOAT meeting is the place to ask these questions because this is the management of your system. Mr. Lawlor said the liaison way is the way to go. BOAT should pick a person they trust and will bring back the right information. We will assign a person from this side that will do the same thing. Mr. Norman said BOAT's public hearing is Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at city hall and he hopes we get a good turnout to voice your opinion. Mr. Norman added that he does not want to see the school system in Ansonia fail; it can't fail. The worse thing that could happen is that the school system fails; the State comes in and takes over. The State then says the city will pay a certain amount of dollars and start dictating the way they did in Waterbury. Superintendent Merlone said what sickens her is that in this short timeframe, the last two years, they have focused on student achievement, implementing things for children so that they could go to college. We put in all those AP courses so the students could be competitive. We have moved so far and now we are going to move 20 steps back. She added that she is a taxpayer in Ansonia and has no children in the school system. Superintendent Merlone said she applauds Mr. Norman for coming there that evening and caring about the children of Ansonia. Mr. Norman said he too has no children in school and thanked the Board for their time.

2. Laura Lane, Westfield Avenue, said she too is a taxpayer and doesn't have any children in the system. Both her children did attend Ansonia schools. She said she continues to have a strong interest in the education of Ansonia's children. Mrs. Lane said she thinks the idea of a liaison from the BOAT to the BOE is a very good one. She added that she thinks the BOA has an educational liaison. She could be wrong but there used to be. These people give up their time from their families to serve on these boards. If they would just read the meeting minutes of the BOE they will learn a great deal and it might be helpful to them to understand. Mrs. Lane said she attends almost all of the BOE meetings. She was at the meeting when the bus contract was discussed and agonized over the waiving of the bids. The decision made sense to her as a taxpayer and someone who is interested in education. She said she is sure that if these boards have questions the BOE would answer them. Why are they coming up with these questions at the last minute? Mrs. Lane said she supports Mr. Lawlor's suggestion of a liaison to help with communication.

3. Pat Henri, 16 Harris Road, said since the BOE is the biggest part of the budget and the biggest part of the problem is that we have too many kids in town, the city needs to see that. They need to say what can we do to stop families with kids from coming into town? What can we do to make it not so attractive? He said he doesn't have the answer to that right now but it might be in rezoning, incentives to rebuild 2-family houses into 1-family houses. The BOE needs to start pushing BOA, city council, to see what can be done, staying within the limits of the law, and see what we can do. We need some proactive planning. We have a problem. What can we do to stop it? Not what we do to keep populating. Mr. Henri said it will take a lot of coordination and a lot of people. Superintendent Merlone said that we go through the lists of names of parents

and students with regard to lunch money and such. If we see a difference in address we contact them. They have to come to Central Office and verify their address. This is ongoing. Mr. Henri said we have 5,700 rental houses in town, maybe we should knock that down by 1,000. Mr. Lawlor said if Mr. Henri's goal is to stop families from coming into Ansonia, first thing Ansonia needs to do is to stop promoting models of affordable housing. Part of that model is keeping our taxes to 0%. That is a player in that model. Mr. Henri said we have people coming here from other countries. Mr. Lawlor said we have an affordable mill rate. Mr. Boath said we need to point out that this is kind of a double edged sword. What this administration has done, the quality of education that we are now providing for children is drawing people to come here. There is the economic factor, yes we offer affordable living but we are also a good place to get an education with the addition of our curriculum changes.

4. Terri Goldson, lives in Ansonia also and is a taxpayer, wished to address some things that were said. We must be aware of the idea is to have excellent education in Ansonia. That is the number one thing. When you do that you are going to draw people. If we have an attractive educational system we are going to draw people that are going to commit to our community and help our community grow and improve. We have Target and Big Y and there are other businesses that want to come in. If we don't have a population that is productive then we are going to lose the resources that we have. When we talk about people coming into our community we should talk about open arms, promoting our education and educating them, not isolating them, not saying we should not have people in our community. Mr. Goldson said he grew up in this community and knows everyone here is committed. It is very important that we have an open mind, have an open heart, welcome people that want to come into our community and want to help our community grow. We continue to talk about isolation or say we don't have enough room for people, then we are short minded. We need to look ahead. It is about progress, about growing, about doing the right thing. If we need to build our schools then we need to build our schools. If we need to provide more classrooms then we need to do that. If we have people in our city then we have a larger tax base. That is important. We need to think about promoting education, having the best schools, bring good families into our community. That is what it is all about. Mrs. Merlone said we can't make that happen on 0%. Mr. Goldson said he knows that the Superintendent's goal and objective is to have excellent schools. When you have excellent schools and are moving forward then you are going to draw people, regardless of economic status, because they are going to know that there are good schools here. We can't do more with less. Our objective is to tell our tax board that we want excellent schools for all of our children, who ever they are, wherever they come from so that all of our children could be productive. The Superintendent said the reason why they were able to do it last year with 0% was because of the early retirement incentive. Don't forget, the severance pay that we had to give back to those teachers was split between two years, so we owe those teachers another \$5,000 each and we have to pay their insurance for another four years. These are thing the tax board doesn't know. Mrs. Merlone said Mr. Gaskins told her last year, you're making it this year but you're not going to make it next year on a 0%, and he is right.

5. Ken Plavnicky, 15 Mountain View, said he believes that we can't afford the people from Nepal. He said they should go to a more wealthy community such as Greenwich, Darien, and New Caanan. Mr. Lawlor said they can't afford it. Mr. Plavnicky said so we have to accept them in our school system. Mr. Lawlor said if they live here then we need to educate them, it is the law. Mrs. Merlone said they are looking as an organization to find affordable housing. They were supposed to settle in Ansonia, Derby, and Shelton. However, Ansonia seems to be getting everyone.

*After asking three times if anyone wished to speak, Mr. Lawlor closed the public session.*

### III. ACTION ITEMS, CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING . . .

- A. **Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated December 30, 2009 (finance), January 14, 2010 (curriculum), March 22, 2010 (special), April 8, 2010 (special), April 14, 2010 (regular), April 21, 2010 (athletic), and April 21, 2010 (policy)**

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated December 30, 2009, (finance) be accepted as presented.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI				X
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY	2	X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY				X
<b>TOTAL</b>		3	0	4

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated January 14, 2010,  
(curriculum) be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH				X
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	1	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY	2	X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY				X
<b>TOTAL</b>		3	0	4

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated March 22, 2010,  
(special) be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH				X
MR. ROBERT CARUSO		X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	2	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY				X
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	1	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		4	0	3

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated April 8, 2010, (special)  
be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH		X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	1	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY				X
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	2	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		4	0	3

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated April 14, 2010,  
(regular) be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY				X
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	2	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		4	0	3

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated April 21, 2010, (athletic) be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH				X
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	1	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY				X
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	2	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		3	0	4

**MOTION:** That the minutes dated April 21, 2010, (policy) be accepted as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO				X
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	2	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS				X
MR. CARMEN PITNEY				X
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		4	0	3

**B. Resignation/Lauren Sroka/Reading/Ansonia Middle School**

**DISCUSSION:** Mrs. Merlone explained that Mrs. Sroka's husband took a job in a different state and she is staying on to finish the school year. She is an excellent reading teacher.

**MOTION:** To accept the resignation of Lauren Sroka, reading teacher at Ansonia Middle School, and send a special letter of thanks.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO	2	X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS		X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY		X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

**C. Assistant Superintendent Job Description**

**DISCUSSION:** Superintendent Merlone explained that the former job descriptions of the assistant superintendent and assistant principal were outdated and needed revision. These two positions are no longer managers of the buildings. Mr. Boath asked if the descriptions are based on models. Mrs. Merlone said we did use other job descriptions as models. Mr. Nimons suggested that in the future to highlight the changes. Mr. Lawlor said if it is not a word document then the old descriptions will be attached so they can be compared.

**MOTION:** To accept the assistant superintendent job description as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO		X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS		X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY	2	X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

**D. Assistant Principal Job Description**

**MOTION:** To accept the assistant principal job description as presented.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Sharkey asked about item #4 under qualifications. Mrs. Merlone said that item was supposed to be extracted.

**MOTION:** To withdraw the motion and to accept the revised assistant principal job description as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO		X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI	2	X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS		X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY		X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

**E. Recommendation from the Athletic Committee re: Athletic Director Job Description and Contract**

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Sharkey said the athletic committee would like to recommend to the full Board the revised athletic director job description and the new contract. Mr. Nimons asked what the major changes are. Mr. Lawlor explained that he did make redlined copies of the job description. Other than now having the athletic director report directly to the Superintendent the changes within the job description are more of a consolidation nature compared to the one revised in 2001. Predominately it is the same responsibilities that have been in place since the last revision. Mrs. Merlone said she shared this, before it came to the Board, with the athletic director. Mr. Sharkey asked about the revision date at the bottom of the document. Mr. Lawlor said once approved, the date will be changed to reflect May 5, 2010. Mr. Boath asked when this will take effect. Mr. Lawlor said immediately.

**MOTION:** To accept the recommendation from the Athletic Committee re: athletic director job description and contract as presented.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO	2	X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS		X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY		X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

**F. Recommendation from the Policy Committee re: Proposed New Lunch Credit Policy**

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiGiorgi explained that the policy committee met and added a page to policy #3542, food services, which is the lunch credit policy. It is to help Mr. Golia, food service director, with procedures on how to get people to pay for their lunches and not end up with a balance sheet of red ink. Ms. DiGiorgi said policy #3542 (a & b) will remain the same, the lunch credit policy is an addendum and will be #3542 (c).

**MOTION:** To adopt the recommendation from the Policy Committee re: proposed new lunch credit policy.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO		X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS	2	X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY		X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY		X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

**DISCUSSION:** Mrs. Merlone noted that the student report cards and transcripts at the high school will not be issued until the account is made current. We did call CABA regarding this and this can be done. Mr. Lawlor said no that this is approved he assumes Mr. Golia will send home the necessary communication to the families.

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Information from A.H.S. and A.M.S. Principals on Report Card Changes**

**DISCUSSION:** Mrs. McKernan, principal of the high school, explained that effective with the 2010-2011 school year at the high school and middle school, they will be reporting grades in a numeric fashion rather than letter grades. This will provide more specificity for parents, particularly for our struggling students and encourage students who are on the cusp to achieve higher. There will also be no need to take secretarial time to change the letter grades to number grades. Teachers report the grades numerically. Parents will still be able to see the relationship to letter grades because a key will be listed on the report card.

**B. Assistant Superintendent's Report/District Improvement Plan (DIP)**

**DISCUSSION:** Diane Conway, Assistant Superintendent, reported on the progress of the DIP to date. She informed the Board that the District Data Team (DDT) agendas and minutes are posted on our website for their perusal. Mrs. Conway said that we are going to administer the state benchmarks in May, which is quite a hardship but since we started it we need to finish it. She added that she has been working with Heather Levit, our consultant regarding the state benchmarks and how we can modify the student achievement outcomes to make them more reasonable in terms of tracking our progress. She said they will begin developing LA benchmarks over the summer, aligned with our curriculum. This will be a truer test of the effectiveness of our curriculum and the ongoing achievement of our students. The State will be attending the DDT meeting on

June 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Lawlor asked, overall is the DIP on target? Mrs. Merlone said yes. Mrs. Conway said Fran Adjei, LA consultant, has written in the plan that they will finish the performance tasks by the end of this year. With the technology curriculum development plan, Mrs. Conway said, they will develop a scope and sequence plan using national standards embedded in performance tasks. Student may have to do a report in PowerPoint, or Publisher, etc. Mrs. Conway said the State is going to adopt the national standards for technology for students and teachers, so the pressure is on the teachers. Ms. DiGiorgi said she finds it difficult to believe that some teachers do not have the experience in PowerPoint. In the last 10 years, if you went to school, your presentations are all in PowerPoint. Superintendent Merlone said all the new teachers coming into the district are excellent with technology. It is not a large population that does not have the experience. Mrs. Conway said for the last two years, in the spring, we have offered technology training for teachers. However, we didn't have a large showing last year. We had experienced staff offering the training and will offer it again in June. The high school will be moving to Windows 2007 next year. We are moving in the right direction and will continue to support teachers and offer help so they will gain the confidence to use technology.

**C. Special Education Director's Report**

**ATTACHMENT #1**

**DISCUSSION:** Mrs. Merlone said Ms. Gabrielson was not able to attend the meeting because she is at a special education conference. Mr. Lawlor instructed the Board members to contact Ms. Gabrielson directly if they have any questions.

**D. Technology Report**

**ATTACHMENT #2**

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Lawlor said that Ann Turner was not able to make the meeting and to contact her with any questions. Superintendent Merlone said we are moving along with TEMS, our new student data system. Training has been set for designated staff across the district. TEMS has been up and running by September. Everything has to be in by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. DiGiorgi asked to see an online demo of TEMS. Mrs. Merlone said she will schedule something.

**E. Financial Reports**

**ATTACHMENT #3**

1. 2009-2010 Year to Date

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Gaskins welcomed the members of BOAT that attended the meeting. He wants to stress that they have established some strong and positive relations with BOAT. Although communication might not be perfect at this time, it has been getting better and he would like to assume it will be getting better in the days to come. Mr. Gaskins said it is true for our object summary budget we don't chase transfers with explanations; we focus on the bottom line. He said he tries to provide explanations at every Board meeting. Balances in certified staff is quite common. The amount of turnover in this district, as in many districts, relative to the municipal side, is quite high. We don't charge a position to certified salaries, there are such narrow parameters to be charged to a certified salary account. If you don't meet those parameters it has to be charged somewhere else. He then gave examples and said this is very common. Mr. Gaskins explained that benefits go over because of volatility and changes. Because we had an early retirement incentive last year, there seems to be a trend that we have younger staff throughout the district. These staff members will be going from single, to married, to family. This results in increases in costs. Mr. Gaskins said unemployment and dental have gone up. We proceed and manage this budget in a very controlled manner on a daily basis. Any accounts that have projected to go over have reserves held in some other accounts. We keep an eye on the bottom line and our responsibility to the municipality. In addition to the projections that have negative balances now, is primarily because in our controlled management style it is very conservative. We have things encumbered that may not come to fruition. He then gave an example of this using special education and transportation. Mr. Gaskins said, in his opinion, in June you are going to see a lot of those numbers reversed. As always, the accounts that are over are telephone, transportation, benefits, and non-certified salaries line item. Undetermined (tuition and transportation) are projected to be over but those are the two primary areas where he is hoping to free up some encumbrances and projected expenditures. Mr. Gaskins added that the substitute line item is not projected to be over at this time, but we use a service that often bills months behind. We try to monitor this internally. Spring time is a heavy time of year for substitutes, with workshops, professional development and such. The offset is that there are times where grant funding will pay for substitutes.

Mr. Gaskins said the projected balances have remained stable over the last four months and he is confident that we will make it through the year without any problems. There hasn't been any official change to the Boards' proposed budget at this time. On Monday, BOAT did reduce the BOE budget to 0% increase. This will be the second year in a row. There will be a public hearing on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at city hall but it may be moved to the high school.

Mr. Nimons said it was brought up during public session that public utilities last year was \$100,000 over. He asked, when you build a new budget do you go back to the adjusted baseline or do you start from the baseline you had and just add adjustments to it and go forward? Mr. Gaskins said no we don't just add a blank percentage, which is why these accounts have different degrees of increases or decreases. We have looked at kilowatt hours, generation charges, distribution, and delivery charges. We have broken this down looking at a history. It is the same for fuel oil. We have trended, over the past 6-10 years, our fuel usage and it has been decreasing. We accommodate that when we built the 09-10 and 10-11 budget. Mr. Nimons asked Mr. Gaskins how he arrived at budgeting \$57,000 for public utilities, item 410. Mr. Gaskins answered, using

anticipated usage at an anticipated price. We did not just take what was there last year and add on top of it. Mr. Nimons asked Mr. Norman about the report that he had and what the baseline was for public utilities. Mr. Norman said it started off at \$926,000. Mr. Nimons said so the prior year you spent \$757,000 and for the 2009-2010 you budgeted \$857,000 which is a \$100,000 increase. Mr. Gaskins said yes. Mr. Nimons said yet you are projecting an \$81,000 surplus. Mr. Gaskins said yes. Mr. Nimons said he thinks that is what Mr. Norman is alluding to from BOAT's standpoint. Mr. Lawlor said we built that budget a year ago based on information we had at that time. Mr. Gaskins said fuel and gas prices were higher, and electricity was going up. Mr. Nimons said BOAT is pointing out that the year before you had a \$100,000 surplus in public utilities and it appears that this year you are going to have an \$81,000 surplus and what they are saying is *where did you come up with that number*. Mr. Lawlor said it is anticipated usage. Mr. Gaskins said we estimate usage and we estimate price. That is all we can do. The price wasn't as stable 1½ years ago as it is now. We had to use the best information we had at the time.

2. Athletics

**DISCUSSION:** No questions were asked.

3. Food Services

**DISCUSSION:** No questions were asked.

4. Grants

**DISCUSSION:** No questions were asked.

5. Other Income

**DISCUSSION:** No questions were asked.

**F. Enrollment**

**DISCUSSION:** No questions were asked.

**G. Attendance Officer's Report**

**DISCUSSION:** No activity this month.

**H. Teacher Absences**

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Sharkey asked if there was training for running records. Mrs. Merlone said yes and we used substitutes which are grant funded.

**I. Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent**

**ATTACHMENT #4**

**DISCUSSION:** The Superintendent presented her notes to the Board members. Mrs. Merlone added that at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Connecticut Data Conference the Commissioner of Education approached her and said that he never thought Ansonia would be able to achieve everything that they intended to with the District Improvement Plan. The Superintendent said it was a very proud moment for Ansonia. Breakout sessions were done by Fran Adjei, Amy O'Brien, Michelle Fraher, Lynn Bennett-Wallick, Bill LaRovera and Bridget Calabrese. All did a phenomenal job.

In regards to the Race to the Top project, the Superintendent said that we will need that funding because it is going to be mandated things that are going to happen to the high school that we don't have such as the Capstone Project, need more course work, and need to form alliances with technical schools. Mrs. Conway said high school reform is going to be a big part of this. Mrs. Merlone said that graduation requirements will go from 22 to 25 credits in the near future. All of this costs money. If you don't join the Race to the Top project, it will be done to you. If we join we will get 4 years reprieve, if we don't, it will be done to us as a mandate.

**J. Additional; Administration or Board of Education**

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Nimons said he heard that the teachers contract was settled, not by arbitration. Is that going to come before the Board? Superintendent Merlone said it was emailed to us today. The union presidents have to go over it. Mr. Lawlor asked if Mr. Nimons meant vote on the contract. Mr. Boath explained that once mediation session ends and it goes to arbitration then the decision comes down as an arbitration decision even though we were able to work out an agreement. Mr. Lawlor said then it goes to the BOA and if they don't act on it in a 30 or 60 day period it comes back. Mr. Nimons asked, but will we see it? Mrs. Merlone said yes, the union presidents were looking at it and the front cover says agreement and the teachers want it to say contract.

## V. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

	<b>MOTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
MR. GEORGE BOATH	1	X		
MR. ROBERT CARUSO		X		
MS. FRANCES DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN LAWLOR, President		X		
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS		X		
MR. CARMEN PITNEY		X		
MR. EDWARD SHARKEY	2	X		
<b>TOTAL</b>		7	0	0

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*NOTE: The Board of Education members were given handouts, the Ansonia High School, Ansonia Middle School, and Prendergast School May 2010 calendars, and the Prendergast School newsletter.*

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Perrotti  
Recording Secretary  
May 10, 2010