

The question of whether to introduce International Baccalaureate (IB) to Greenwich middle schools and the High School is a critically important decision for our community, and one that must be decided only after careful deliberation.

In 2008, before proceeding with IB at New Lebanon School, a committee was formed to evaluate all possible school curriculum options and themes. This committee, after many meetings, reported its proposal to the Board, where public comment was given. Only then did the Board vote on IB implementation at this elementary school. I voted for it as part of a racial balancing magnet solution.

***To date, none of these legal and common sense requirements to safeguard the public interest have been followed with the significant expansion of IB into our secondary schools.***

It was only two weeks ago, after my requesting them of the Superintendent, that I saw for the first time copies of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) agreements with the Greenwich Public Schools in connection with Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Western Middle School (WMS). At no prior point in time were these documents circulated to the entire Board.

After reviewing these documents, I was shocked that they included representations to the IBO that the WMS principal, "was able to secure the approval from the Superintendent and the Board of Education to implement the IB Programme" at WMS. I never recollected the Board approving the implementation of the IB Programme at WMS, so I reviewed Board minutes to determine if the Board had indeed approved it. My review makes very clear Board protocol for

"implementation of IB" at a given school, as it involves a major change in curriculum and significant costs. It also makes clear that no such protocol had been followed here.

Yet Chairman Anderson signed a letter in March 2010 addressed to an IBO representative, stating that *he* (significantly, not "*we*") "supported the implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme" in the Greenwich Public Schools. Such letter was written on Board of Education stationary, signed by Mr. Anderson as "Chairman of the Board".

Mr. Anderson's signing this Letter was required by the IBO application for WMS, which incorporated by reference the IBO's Rules and Regulations. The Rules require that the "governing body is explicitly supportive of the programme, and has allocated sufficient funding for the effective implementation and ongoing development of the programme."

While the Board did approve the 2010-2011 budget, which included IB professional training funding for the purpose of exploring possible IB expansion, it has ***never voted*** to approve the ***implementation*** of the IB MYP curriculum in the middle schools (6-8th grades) or high school (9-10th grades), or further. At no Board meeting(s) was there a discussion followed by a Board vote of: the alternatives considered, and their relative pros and cons and feasibility, the implications of implementing the "IB programme," or the extent of the financial commitment (current and future).

Our Board Policy specifically provides that the Chairperson can only "sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out the requirements of the state and the will of the Board."

Yet, the "**will of the Board**" was never determined and

recorded to be “explicitly supportive of the IB programme”, at any time in public meetings, prior to March 2010, or subsequently.

Did the Board Chairman and others exceed their authority without first obtaining the explicit approval of the Board of Education in public view? Would any documents that were signed by him and the Superintendent, as a consequence, be rendered invalid? The Chairman's role requires him to protect the Board's prerogatives to approve significant changes to the delivery of education in our school system only after full and considered public debate.

Because the relevant legal requirements were not followed in this situation, the public interest was not properly safeguarded. There was neither proper public notice nor discussion, nor was the public afforded opportunity to understand, and comment upon, substantive and significant and long-term implications of IB to the school district.

I have very serious substantive reservations about the IB program and its implications for the Town's schools. We cannot discuss the substantive issues about IB, without first ensuring that due process has been followed, allowing them to be discussed. We need full and open discussion and complete information. In the absence of that, however, I, and many others, can only draw negative inferences about how IB proponents believe the public is likely to react, and what the public might fear.

***The Board of Education must be transparent and accountable to the public it serves. If the Board does not do so, we are failing in our most basic duty to those who have placed their trust in us to protect their interests.***

