

The Bridgeport Board of Education signed the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition's Children's Bill of Rights for Education at its meeting on Monday, January 24.

Hernan Illingworth, who represents parents on the Board of Education, introduced the Bill of Rights and asked the board to sign the three-foot by four-foot Bill of Rights document.

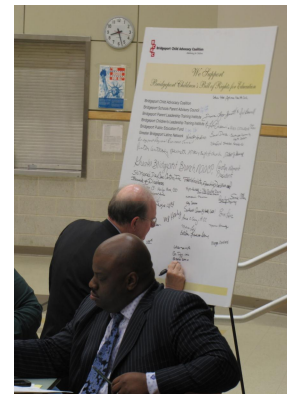


"We all have a common goal: to help Bridgeport children receive the best possible education they can from our school system," Illingworth said. "To help move us all forward, the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) developed the Bridgeport Children's Bill of Rights for Education and presented it to us about two months ago. The Bill of Rights is a set of core principles that are critical to the success of our school system."

Illingworth added, "As you can see, many parent organizations and community groups, including the local chapter of the NAACP and the Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, have already signed this document. I propose that all of us on the Board of Education join the community by endorsing and signing this Bill of Rights."

Most recently, the Children's Bill of Rights for Education was whole heartedly endorsed by the *Connecticut Post* and Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch.

Robert Trefry, chairman of the Board of Education, signed the Bill of Rights in front of an audience of about 60 parents, educators and concerned citizens.



The Bill of Rights calls for:

- A commitment to excellence, student achievement and mutual respect;
- Strong leadership at all levels;
- Safe schools;
- Financial resources tied to fiscal responsibility;
- Stability and support for school staff and students;
- Representation on the Board of Education by parents of children in the school system who reflect the diversity of the city;
- Open lines of communication among the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, Central Administration, the Mayor's office and parents;
- Transparency in decision-making;
- Accountability; and
- Community engagement and empowerment.

"We're pleased that the Bridgeport Board of Education has chosen to join us in signing the Children's Bill of Rights for Education," said Mary Pat Healy, executive director of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition. "We've met with Interim Superintendent Paul Vallas and his team and look forward to working with them and the Board of Education so that Bridgeport young people receive the education they need and deserve to compete for the well-paying jobs that undoubtedly will be created once our economy improves."