

## Hartford Board of Education Member Spotlight:

### **Sharon Patterson-Stallings**



Recently appointed *back* to the Board of Education by Mayor Segarra – filling the spot left open by former Mayor Eddie Perez – Sharon is the newest member to the Board. However, having served a 4-year elected term on the board from 2006-2009, Sharon brings a wealth of experience to her role on the Board.

At her core, Sharon is an activist. She has worked for the Community Renewal Team’s Neighborhood Youth Corporation, The Low Income Planning Agency (LIPA), the South Arsenal Neighborhood Development, Inc. (SANDS), and the Hartford Housing Authority, where she retired from in 1999. Having been the Tenant Relations Advisor in Stowe Village, Charter Oak Terrance and the Section 8 Housing Program, Sharon understands at a fundamental level the connection between poverty and education, and the power of education in Hartford.

In 2000, Sharon became the chair of Hartford’s Northeast Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), and was elected to the national board of ACORN in 2002. In 2007, Shiloh Baptist Church chose her as their Community Woman of the Year for the years of work toward improvement of the community she lives in. Among many positions within the community, she currently serves as a Parent Ambassador within the Mayor’s Office for Young Children.

Having advocated on behalf of many different Hartford neighborhoods, and having been a life-long resident of Hartford, Sharon wields the respect of many Hartford residents. She attended Hartford Public Schools and has four adult children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, many of whom attended or currently attend Hartford Public Schools.

Sharon believes that, moving forward, the Hartford Board of Education must do everything in its power to see that the progress made over the last 3-4 years continues. In particular, she believes that each school must create its own system for accountability to ensure positive change keeps happening at that school. She wants school governance councils to fully engage parents in managing the budget, ensuring the integrity of the school model, and institutionalizing ties to the community. “We can’t afford to turn back the clock, and we have to ensure that all our children get the support they need.”

One of Sharon’s areas of concern relates to the level of service that students with special needs receive throughout Hartford schools. Because of the budget crisis facing the District, Sharon wants to work with the Board and schools to ensure that, amidst cuts to many paraprofessional positions, Hartford’s special needs children do not get shortchanged. She wants to make sure that funds coming into a school that are “assigned” the full weight for a special needs student are not being diverted to cover other school expenses, and that principals maintain compliance with the stipulations within students’ IEPs.

Sharon remains very hopeful and optimistic about the future of the Hartford Public School District, and looks forward to finishing out the remainder of her appointed term on the Board of Education.