

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018 – 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos and Amy Spallino

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Joe Martino, Kelly Truchsess and Kim Thompson

RECOGNITIONS - 2018 Schools of Distinction

Dr. Glass said there are three Schools of Distinction being recognize this evening.

Great Plain School - Ms. Keshia Smith, principal of Great Plain School, introduced the staff members that were at the meeting. Ms. Smith thanked the Board for giving Great Plain this opportunity. She thanked parents for their support and students. The audience applauded.

Mill Ridge Primary - Dr. Mary Cronin, principal of Mill Ridge Primary, said this is the second year in a row that her school was recognized and she is hoping for again next year. Dr. Cronin introduced her teachers that were present and said it takes all the staff to make this happen and she accepts this honor. The audience applauded.

South Street School - Dr. Pascarella said that he visited the school recently and saw remarkable growth. Ms. Carmen Vargas-Guevara, principal of South Street School, introduced her teachers that were present and thanked them for their hard work. The audience applauded.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston told the Board that before Public Participation, he would like to change the order of the agenda. He said I will begin with some excerpts from our outside counsel. As I promised the people at the last meeting, I would look into the legality of what we can and cannot discuss. He said that each person that would like to speak will be given 3 minutes for a total of 30 minutes of Public Participation. We do not want to prohibit people from giving their views, but we do need to be respectful to staff and students. I've made every attempt to be as transparent as possible, also as promised. Although much of the investigation is being conducted by an independent investigation team, some information has been requested by and published by the local media. The information garnered was under Freedom of Information requests and its release required as a matter of law. Mr. Johnston went on to say, as provided by *Robert's Rules of Order*, the chair may require that speakers be courteous, avoid personal attacks, refrain from the use of vulgarity and the like. All such requirements must be imposed with an even hand, without regard to the viewpoint (as opposed to the manner) of the individual's speech. No speaker at a meeting of the Board of Education, however, has a First Amendment right to be disruptive or rude.

Mr. Johnston then called on the first speaker:

Bob Evans, Broadview parent, said he e-mailed the Board members and he hoped that they reviewed his comments. Mr. Evans asked that the Board give us basic information that we deserve.

Darryl Smith, Broadview parent, said he spoke to several Board members after the last meeting. He stated that Dr. Pascarella also called him the next day and Mr. Smith wanted to thank him for that. Mr. Smith said he would like a response to his e-mail and he has reprinted it to distribute tonight to Board members.

Theresa Lopez, Broadview parent, said her son's teacher has helped her son mature this year and has taught him life lessons. She distributed to the Board a hard copy of her comments this evening.

Jonathan Chinga, Broadview student, told the Board that his teacher taught him the value of all people.

Peter Chinga, Broadview student, told the Board that his teacher taught him to be a responsible person and that everyone should be treated with kindness.

Lori Hickey, Broadview parent, said she is appreciative of the teachers. It takes a team to be as effective as possible. She asked that the Board take the time to look into their Special Education policies. Ms. Hickey believes there is a conflict of interest in the Human Resource Director's position. She had some questions relating to the policy governing Special Education. Ms. Hickey distributed to the Board a petition with 270 signatures that was taken 72 hours ago.

Katheryn Souse, a student, said when they are testing for performance the students should not be stuck in school all day. We need recess.

Kim Battachio, told the Board that she feels there is still a lack of security at DHS even though there is a police officer there. We had a lockdown and at that moment they didn't know what it was about. We were all on the floor scared. She asked the Board if there is a plan in-place for more security. She said presently there are two officers who are armed and a police car outside. We still have an open access at the East Gate parking lot.

Mary Jane Carboni – said she is a parent of two daughters who are not special education students. She told the Board that without question the special education teacher is the most professional person that we've worked with. He single handily changed family dynamics.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-74 through 18-75, as recommended.

MINUTES

5/23/18 Board Meeting

6/6/18 Superintendent Evaluation Meeting

Motion passed at 7:35 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

King Street School

Dr. Tina Hislop, Principal of King Street Primary, thanked the Board for inviting her school to do a presentation. She also thanked Rachel Chaleski and Amy Spallino for touring the school. Dr. Hislop told the Board there are 451 students at KSP and 386 at KSI. She introduced Gwen Gallagher, Assistant Principal. Ms. Gallagher narrated a slide presentation. She spoke about:

Curriculum – Grade level teams

Community – Melding the three KPS, MRP and KSO

Character – Tiger Citizen Awards and other student activities to build character

Creating Opportunities – Field trips, PTO events

Communication – Weekly messages, language link, 2 PTO meetings a month, new reports cards

Ms. Gallagher and Dr. Hislop ended the presentation with photos of the students doing projects, participating in field trips and the part they have played in community, curriculum and character building. They invited the Board to tour the school. The Chairperson thanked the King Street Primary team for coming to the meeting and their informative presentation.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES – (Next Board Meeting on June 27th)

PRESENTATION - None

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Johnston told the Board that he would like to add to the Action Items approval of the revised school calendar for the 2018-2019 school year. He then asked for a vote and it was unanimous added to the Action Items.

Revised 2018-2019 School Calendar

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education approve the revised 2018-2019 school calendar dated June 11, 2018 to address the missed 2017-18 school days.

Mr. Hawley asked several questions about the school days and financial impact it would have on the budget. Mr. Martino said that it was complicated and that he and Ms. Thompson are working it out. Ms. Thompson spoke about the contracts and that they are going to hold each other harmless. We may have an issue with a couple of our holidays. Ms. Chaleski also had some questions about Veterans Day and the 2019-2020 calendar. She also questioned coming back before Labor Day. The Superintendent said many districts have school on Veteran’s Day and Columbus Day.

Motion passed at 8:15 pm.

WERACE Grant

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by E. Palmares that the Board of Education approve the submission of the WERACE Program Enhancement Projects Grant

Motion passed at 8:20 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Administrative Hiring Update

Ms. Thompson gave the Board a review of the interview schedules for hiring. She said there continues to be shortages in the area of math and science. Summer school is fully staffed with 300 people. This year summer school will be clustered in three locations. Human Resources will be filling certified staff and support staff in July and August. They are presently in negotiations with several groups. Secretaries’ negotiations will begin tomorrow. Mr. Tom Mooney is handing the administrators negotiations.

Mr. Hawley asked Ms. Thompson about the position of the new Assistant Superintendent and were there any thoughts that the next step for this position would be for Dr. Pascarella’s position in the future. Do the people being interviewed and being hired know that they would possibly succeed the Superintendent? Ms. Thompson answered yes. Career advancement was addressed in the interviews.

Technology & Copier Lease Update

Mr. Martino said that the City Council this month is getting a contract extension. There is some life left in some of the copiers and therefore they warrant extensions. We have many bidders and will narrow a timeline to September 1. He said at the next meeting he will have more information on this subject.

TDEC Update

Dr. Glass told the Board that unfortunately there were some budgetary constraints which resulted in cuts to the literacy and math support staff. There were also identified challenges with our Professional Development program. The district also had to reduce the number of paraprofessionals at the elementary level. Presently the paras are being repurposed at a staffing level of one per building to do SRBI work. We are piloting a departmentalized approach at South Street School at the fourth and fifth grade levels. We will be reviewing 3 years of data to determine if this is a model that improves learning. Ten years ago a study was conducted of our ELL Program by UCLA. There were very specific suggestions that were made but due to dollar limitations the

district could not put the suggestions in-place. Dr. Pascarella asked me to reduce my time in the field and lead the development of a new vision for professional development. We had a terrific team come together including leadership from NEA Danbury. The State has just notified us that the new model has been identified as a state model and it is currently being offered to the 30 Alliance Districts and eventually it will be made available to all 169 districts throughout Connecticut. We have also received preliminary information that the CEA will also consider it a model for management and union collaboration with very productive outcomes. Mr. Johnston thanked Dr. Glass for the update. Dr. Glass replied that there is a full blown report.

DISCUSSION

Waiver Request/Revision to 2018-2019 School Calendar

Dr. Pascarella said that we have already added a half day on June 29th to this school calendar and will also start classes with a half-day on August 31st. The adjustment will satisfy the requirement for the district to be in session for 180 days. He stated that students at Hayestown Elementary, Pembroke Elementary and Broadview Middle School will have an additional half-day of school on Columbus Day, October 8. Those schools have an additional day of school to make up: Pembroke power outage in October; Hayetown and Broadview severe water main break in late April.

INFORMATION

Award in Paraeducators Arbitration

Kim Thompson said a decision came in and we prevailed in most categories in the contract for paraeducators. The original contracted expired last year.

Amendment to Sodexo Agreement

State mandated school lunch price increases

Mr. Martino told the Board that in order to maintain federal and state funding for the program, the current school lunch pricing increases by .05; secondary lunch price to \$3.00, elementary \$2.80 and breakfast to \$1.10 are mandatory.

2018-2019 Board Meeting Dates

2018-2019 Spotlight Your School Schedule

Mr. Hawley asked if we can we have the Spotlight held at the school that is spotlighted for that particular meeting. Dr. Pascarella said that would mean moving all the equipment from this room to that school location. Mr. Martino said it gets a little complicated moving from school-to-school. Ms. Molinaro said we would have to consider the public that would like to speak. Ms. Palmares said we as a Board should go to them instead of them coming to us. Mr. Hawley said he would like to have a tour of every school on a two year basis; a tour every other month. He said, I have gone to Shelter Rock and haven't gone to any other school. I know that everyone has a school they are responsible for. Ms. Cooper mentioned going to the PTO meetings at the various schools. Ms. Thompson said the logistics including the general public and staff members would have to be considered. Mr. Johnston said we will look into it and see what the schedule is. Ms. Cooper mentioned we have time to think about it.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Johnston reminded the Board that the next Board Meeting will begin at 6:30 pm with a retirement reception for staff members. The regular Board meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Palmares said she did some research of what other Board members do to bring together special families and about what the benefits are of doing that. She said when a parent organization already exists in a school; parents of children with special needs may want to see if they can form a committee within that organization for families with special needs children. The purpose of the special education parent teacher association (SEPTA) would be

to bring together special families and schools to foster partnerships in the school setting and our community. We are committed to ensure that all children receiving special education services will be empowered to reach their full potential within the school district. The goals would be to connect with other parents of children with learning differences, sharing information and resources; improve communication between schools, families and the community and to increase acceptance and inclusion of students with special needs and learning differences in the school community.

Ms. Spallino said she went to a Stadley Rough meeting and the day of elections was a concern. All the entrances to the school were open and some felt it was a safety issue. Dr. Pascarella said this will not be the case this year as school will be closed on Election Day, November 6th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing status of the Superintendent's evaluation and salary negotiations for exempt employees.

The motion carried at 8:57 pm.

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos and Amy Spallino

Also Present: Dr. Sal Pascarella

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the Executive Session to order at 9:02 pm and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent. A brief discussion followed.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by F. Karrat that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

Motion carried at 9:50 pm

ADJOURNMENT

P. Johnston moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of June 13, 2018 and the meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(meeting was videotaped)