

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010 - 7:00 PM (revised)

Administrative Center - 63 Beaver Brook Road

Attendance: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak, Drs. Dylewski, Glass and Pascarella and Mr. Longo, Ms. Emmett, Ms. Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, K. Gailliard, J. Scozzafava, S. Podhajski LeRoy

The Chairperson, I. Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITIONS

DHS Semifinalists in the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Competition:

Mr. Fox recognized Benjamin Altman, Emily McWilliams and Kashish Singhal and congratulated them on being semifinalists.

DHS Semifinalists in the 2011 National Achievement Scholarship Competition:

The Chairperson, David Fox (not present)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

David Schlissel, told the Board that he has three children in the Danbury Public School System. He is here tonight to talk about the Summit Program. His 5th grader was in the STEM program last year and it was the most rewarding program for his son. They support the program and want the Board to consider Summit as a full time program.

Barb Coleman has two students in the program, her daughter entered the summit in 4th grade and she is disappointed in the restructuring.

Kevin Haddad is a teacher in the district and he wanted the Board to know that both at KSI and MRI everything has been going pretty well, parents are happy, teachers are happy, students are getting along fine and we have the supplies we need.

Mr. & Mrs. Erik Amalfitano addressed the Board. They are concerned about the CMT scores at Stadley Rough School and also with the class sizes. When comparing CMT scores with all the other schools in Danbury, Stadley is at the bottom of the barrel. Their son is in 4th grade; there are 27 students in that class; a variety of students and since the class is so big they try to pull children out for special needs and ESL. There are several ELL teachers plus an aide and they want to know why they cannot have one of the bi-lingual teachers to be used to provide an

extra class to minimize the large class. They continued to tell the Board that they are not very happy of what they see. Mr. Amalfitano said he and his wife both attended the Danbury Schools with wonderful experiences and they want their children to feel the same way as they do. I want my children to get the same opportunity that we had. This is a definite strain on the system, however an equitable balance has to be met. My request to the Board is allocation of resources either short or long term and changes at Stadley Rough, we have the opportunity to fix it. We want an action plan.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended, Exhibits 10-155 through 10-159:

MINUTES

Sites & Facilities Committee Minutes, 9-16-10

Bi-Monthly Board Meeting Minutes, 9-22-10

Special Board Meeting Minutes (Exp), 9-23-10

Special Board Meeting Minutes, 10-6-10

PERSONNEL

Accept Resignations: Anthony Robinson

Kellie Iasiello

Robert Barghaus

Motion carried at 7:15 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danbury High School student representative told the Board that the senior students had pictures taken today. She reminded the Board about the Wheelchair Basketball game and that tickets are \$5; also Homecoming will be on October 30th.

PRESENTATION

Update on CT Coalition for Justice in Education

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that this is a landmark case and we decided in order for it to be operative, students' need to have access to the programs. It is going to court in 2 years and we have been filing briefs. We are continuing to work with the Ct. Coalition; Yale is handing it. The Coalition felt if you would like them to come and do a presentation they would be able to give you more details and they would be happy to do that. R. Jannelli read excerpts from the

Exhibit that was in the agenda. He stated that this is great but without funds it is nothing but an unfunded mandate. When they give us the tools to do business, until then it is just struggling. Mrs. Molinaro agreed with Mr. Jannelli – I think we as a body can discuss how to begin equitable education for all our students without using money – we have to be more creative and decide if there is no money, we are not going to get any money for another 2 years, we need another middle school desperately, we need to come up with better solutions. Mr. Fox said this particular case does not have any practical application – I would defer this discussion until enough progress has been made in the courts and we should have this discussion a year from now.

Ms. Cooper said we do not favor one school rather than another – I have not professed for any particular school. Mr. Taborsak asked if numbers are 27 and more, it should be a priority. Dr. Pascarella said absolutely, there is a problem, this is not news. We have some classes that are 27, 28 and 29. I think we are heading towards a City model with more than 27 kids in a classroom. In our high school, there are some classes with 28. The facts are that it is crowded. Mr. Fox stated that in order to keep some of the classes the way they are now we did it from not funding textbooks, library books and those choices are going to get more difficult next year. Dr. Pascarella said he is looking at alternative ways. Dr. Glass said he is keeping track of the numbers and we are working off the October 1st enrollment report. We are relatively in good condition; we were going to have classes as high as 30. Classes of K-1, 2, of 20 to 22 students and grades 3-5 of 25 students is a thing in the past. This is going to be the norm for us. There were many parents and educators that came to the Board and they said keep teachers.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Stadley Rough PTO Meeting, October 5, 2010

Dr. Pascarella said that the effort has been put forth. Stadley Rough is in a situation where they are not succeeding. We have a plan for us to follow. It has numbers for growth. It would be better off if the class sizes were small. Stadley Rough has been working with Anne Mead. I was not happy what I heard from the parents that night. It is hard to please everyone all the time. Dr. Pascarella asked the principal who was in the audience if she would like to speak. Ms. Johnson stated that we have 460 students at Stadley Rough and we are trying to use ESL staff and special education personnel. The Staff is committed to an improvement plan and we did not make safe harbor. She told the Board that we do have our challenges and that she is up front with all parents. She will continue to work with parent groups and staff to continue on our improvement plan. Ms. Molinaro asked if she has the largest English language students; she responded that she has 100 students; 2.8 teachers to service these 100 students.

Ms. Cooper asked the Superintendent if at the next Board meeting if he could provide the plan for Stadley Rough. The Superintendent referred this to Dr. Glass. Dr. Glass said every school in Danbury has a plan in place. Mr. Fox said we had a plan last year and it seems it

did not help the students; now we are seeing repercussions of that, what is going to be different for the students who are sitting in school today to help them achieve. Dr. Glass said the scores did come up – grow did take place. I can show you the charts that show the improvements.

AIS Magnet School Tuition

Mr. Longo said last year we opened with tuition of \$1,500 with a one time assessment. This year's budget is built on an increase and we will be meeting with the various districts to discuss the charge. We will be recommending tuition which we plan to present to our colleagues at our meeting. In order to close the gap \$108,000 cuts from the state, we absorbed the cost reduction. Mr. Fox said since we do not have a financial analysis in front of us we do not have the information to make a decision. The Superintendent said he just wanted to put it on the table; I wanted to make sure the Board is in agreement.

CCM Annual Convention, October 6, 2010

Dr. Pascarella said the CCM Convention involved sharing resources with the City. Many school districts have joint purchasing, etc. We met about two weeks ago and Dr. Glass is currently working with the City on Technical support; Mr. Longo is working on insurance with the City.

Nellie Mae Visit, October 7, 2010

Dr. Glass said Anne Mead is bringing this into the high school level. We are in a tiny pool now, but we started out in a large pool. They have met with teachers, students and administration – there is a planning grant, implementation grant which will be millions of dollars over 5 years. That is what we are shooting for. We think we are very well positioned and we have sent them a lot of documentation and structural material. They have been very complimentary. Mr. Fox said he had a conversation and he asked about policies. He is still trying to reach the Mayor.

DISCUSSIONS

Summit Program Restructuring Update, Dr. William Glass

Dr. Glass said it is tough to hear parents say remember our kids. I had a special education son and a summit son, both ends of the spectrum. Last year we did not have teachers who would sign up for Summit. This year, we do have several applicants for being teachers and/or Director. We saved \$250,000 by eliminating three teachers. At RPMS and BVMS we have two teachers interested in the STEM Program. Transportation for the extended learning program costs a huge amount of money. We have talked to principals about this and we are going to talk to the kids to see if they are interested in having a program on Saturday. If the programs are interesting they would be willing to come 3-4 Saturdays. We hope to start this by November. We think we have an exciting program and kids will love it. Mr. Jannelli asked if

we could use retired teachers. Dr. Glass stated these are paid positions, it is the after school/summer school rate. We did approach some teachers, but they said they were not interested in two days a week for the entire school year.

Building Utilization Committee, Dr. Robert Dylewski

Dr. Dylewski told the Board that his Committee met and Ms. Cooper and Mr. Taborsak played a role in this meeting. We discussed if we need to update this information and spend the money on our projections which are on target. At the last meeting we talked about three levels; there is no space at the high school. We outlined 5 or 6 scenarios. Our homework was to go home and think about the pros and cons we kicked around and come back next Thursday and share our thoughts; we would then look at a timetable. Some of the needs are short range, elementary would be in a few years time, but maybe that would be a two step process. It was a very active and productive meeting all participants took part and we have a good cross section on the Committee. We have 12-15 people and a lot of diversity of opinions. Our timeframe was to have recommendations to the Superintendent to share with you at the second meeting in November. We may not have specific information since there are 5 or 6 scenarios we are looking at. We agreed to meet every two weeks to get a plan to the Superintendent so he can get it to you. We have invited the City, but no one from the City has attended the meetings. Mr. Fox asked once this gets to a particular level can you please bring Mr. Longo into the meeting for the financial analysis. Mr. Fox said this comes with strategy and it is academic unless you can tell me we will have the staff and the programs. Mr. Fox continued to say as I said at a Board meeting, “would we would have funds in our operating budget if the space would become available tomorrow. When the space gets freed up, how are we going to hire people to fill the space? If we don’t have the funds, then this whole situation is mute”. Ms. Cooper stated that the Superintendent needs to call the Mayor and tell him our concerns about Head Start as well as this meeting. Dr. Pascarella said he would phone the Mayor.

ACTION ITEMS

2009-2010 Building Rental Fund Analysis (unaudited)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education accept the 2009-2010 Building Rental Fund Analysis (unaudited)

Mr. Longo told the Board that the opening balance as of July 1, 2009 was \$142,273.78. Total revenue was \$167,775.35 with disbursements/fees of \$115,269.49 leaving a remaining balance as of June 30, 2010 of \$194,779.64.

Ms. Cooper asked Mr. Longo to explain the Scales. Mr. Longo told the Board that Scale I rate is for Danbury entities that are non-profit; Scale II is not only Danbury but other towns as well also non-profit and Scale III is for profit.

Motion carried at 9:00 pm.

2009-2010 School Lunch Program Analysis (unaudited)

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept the 2009-2010 School Lunch Program Analysis (unaudited)

Mr. Longo told the Board that for the 2009-10 fiscal year the revenue was \$1,073,922; rebates were \$28,189; federal aid \$1,741,831 with state aid of \$615,971. Total revenue \$3,931,768. Ms. Cooper asked how many breakfasts were being served would it be the same as lunch. A representative from Food Service was present and he said that 2,500 breakfasts are served with 7,000 lunches served.

Motion carried at 9:04 pm.

Structural Engineering Roof Analysis at Ellsworth and Park Avenue Schools

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve a \$6,000 expenditure for structural engineering roof analysis at Ellsworth and Park Avenue Schools as it relates to the installation of roof-top solar panels, charged to the Building and Rentals Fund

A discussion ensued. Mr. Longo said he met with Mr. Palanzo and one bid was \$6,000 which has to be paid by the school district. The City has identified this firm as being an experienced qualified vendor.

Motion carried at 9:01 pm.

DHS field trip to San Jose, Costa Rica

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the DHS Spanish class trip to San Jose, Costa Rica, Apr.14-21, 2011

In favor: E. Alberts G. Cooper I. Fox
R. Jannelli K. Molinaro

Opposed: R. Taborsak

Motion carried at 9:12 pm.

DHS field trip to Quebec, Canada

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the DHS French class trip to Quebec, Canada, Feb. 17-20, 2011

Mr. Taborsak said he will vote yes for this trip since the cost is more reasonable and more students could afford this and only ½ day of school missed.

Motion carried at 9:13 pm.

INFORMATION

STA – Unauthorized Bus Stops

Ms. Thompson told the Board that she wanted to alert the Board that some drivers are going on routes which were not previously authorized.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

CABE Update

Mr. Fox said he was on the nominating committee. The committee renominated the same officers as last year. He stated he was not very impressed since the candidate for President did not show up. They will be sending in a slate for the Convention.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Community Relations – Richard Jannelli, Chairperson

Mr. Jannelli said he does not have a report only what he mentioned at the last meeting. Mr. Fox stated that he received a letter from Mr. Maloney requesting a meeting.

Operations/Policy – Robert Taborsak, Chairperson

Mr. Taborsak said four out of five members are here that worked on the proposal for hiring candidates. Dr. Pascarella said that a social network policy has to be on the agenda. Mr. Thompson said it will require a policy which means looking at other policies and the adopting one of them. Mr. Taborsak asked about having a meeting next Wednesday.

Superintendent Evaluation – Kathleen Molinaro, Eileen Alberts, Co-Chairpersons

Ms. Molinaro stated that she just handed out to the Board a packet starting the evaluation process and timeline. She said she included on the left side of the packet 2009-2010 evaluation results; the Superintendent’s goals and objectives in draft form and the Education Commission’s expectations in the paper on August 19th. She stated that Dr. Pascarella and she discussed that. On the right hand side is the evaluation process and sheets that we used last year. She would like to have an Evaluation Committee Meeting and gave the members a couple of dates. It was decided that the meeting would be on October 19th at 7:30 pm and encouraged all Board members to come. It is the most important thing we do.

City-Wide PTO – Kathleen Molinaro, Member

Dr. Pascarella said it was packed. The interest is filtering down on leadership and they did a fine job stimulating the people. We shared the enrollment numbers; there were some questions about Head Start; school programs; most impressed to see the attendance.

DSABC – *Richard Jannelli, Member*

Mr. Jannelli stated that they had a meeting this morning and talked about the fund raiser on October 21st from 5-9. Board members have or will get invitations. He said it would be good to have Mary Gregory on a Board agenda so she could explain the function of DSABC and what it is doing today – basically, an update on the program.

Magnet School – *Gladys Cooper, Trustee*

Ms. Cooper said a meeting will be held tomorrow at 10:00 am

Oral Health Initiative – *Eileen Alberts, Member*

No report

Mr. Jannelli said Childrens First is hosting a children’s concert on November 20th at the Palace Theatre from 1:00-4:00 pm and at 4:00 there will be a jazz session. It is free and he has flyers to distribute.

(5 minute recess)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: E. Alberts moved, seconded by R. Jannelli that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session to discuss the appointment of the Assistant Principal at Rogers Park Middle School.

Motion passed at 9:29 pm.

Attendance: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak
Drs. Dylewski, Glass and Pascarella, Ms. Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, K. Gailliard, J. Scozzafava, S. Podhajski LeRoy

The Chairperson, I. Fox, called the Executive Session to order at 9:35 pm.

Mr. Fox asked for information from Ms. Thompson and discussion took place on personnel issues at King Street and Rogers Park Middle School. Ms. Thompson updated the Board on negotiations. Ms. Thompson updated the Board on grievance procedure.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: E. Alberts moved, seconded by R. Jannelli that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent of Schools to offer employment to the recommended candidate for the position of Assistant Principal at Rogers Park Middle School.

Motion passed at 9:50 pm.

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak, that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent of Schools to offer employment to the recommended candidate for the position of Assistant Principal at Rogers Park Middle School.

Motion passed at 9:51 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education adjourn its October 13, 2010 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(meeting videotaped)