

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011- 7:00 PM

Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: G. Cooper, M. Fazio (7:07), I. Fox, R. Jannelli, S. Leroy (left 8:22 pm),
D. Metrena, R. Taborsak, Drs. Glass, Pascarella, J. Emmett,
K. Thompson and Edward Arum, Interim Director of Finance from
Administration

Absent: E. Alberts, R. Austin, K. Molinaro

CALL TO ORDER

Irving Fox, Chairperson, call the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A parent told the Board that he was disappointed that Irving Fox was not reelected to stay on the Board and thanked him for his dedicated service and unblemished record. He said, “I appreciate the service you have given to the City of Danbury”.

Mr. Resendez said he wants to recognize Irving Fox’s 100 % attendance and his outstanding efforts with the students in the system.

Mr. Fox thanked them for their kind words.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

MINUTES

Special Board Meeting (Exp)	10/25/11
Community Relations Committee Meeting	10/26/11
Board of Education Meeting	10/26/11

PERSONNEL

Accept Leave of Absence: Sherrie Blount

Accept Resignations: Melinda Mandics Ronald Morrissey

GRANTS

The Sodexo Foundation approved a \$4,500 multi-year grant to be paid over 3 years to support

the local Backpack Food Program in partnership with Connecticut Food Bank. Mr. Fox thanked them for the grant which provides services to students who cannot afford it.

The motion carried at 7:06 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE – Cindy Mirochine told the Board that NEA has been working on the calendar since May. The calendar adjustments we just got yesterday and we got in touch with teachers the best we could; some want to make up the days; some have plans for those days. Our concern is on those two days I don't know how many teachers may be out – last February we had 80 teachers out.

Ms. Leroy told the Board that she was disappointed that City of Danbury did not reelect Mike Fazio and she thanked him for all his services over the years to the children in Danbury.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - No students attended

PRESENTATION

Dr. Pascarella said this slide presentation is to address realignment plans for increasing enrollments in some elementary schools.

The recommendation is that the district not implement a pocket-redistricting plan. The approach that is more conducive to the educational needs of children and their families, as well as being more fiscally responsible, is to create formal sister school relationships building on our current model to address enrollment issues.

The reasons for not implementing pocket redistricting:

- Any form of redistricting is extremely disruptive
- This type plan cannot be accomplished in our district since our schools are nearing their maximum projected capacity levels for enrollment
- Impact on targeted receiving school including Great Plain and Hayestown would be extremely negative with regard to the loss of special subject area classrooms and a reduction in the quality of instruction

The reasons for implementing sister school plan redistricting:

- Students move as kindergartners to sister school will have the option to stay in that school until grade 5 or move back to their home school the following year if space permits
- Consider Mill Ridge Education Center (MREC) as a kindergarten annex for schools that are overcrowded (28 classrooms at MREC)
- All 8 current special education preschool classes at MREC annex would remain there as well as two Head Start classes
- Relocate the two Family Resources Center preschool classes at Morris Street to the MREC Annex
- In the event that the April referendum for a third middle school passes, then there are two options.
- If the referendum fails, then we have to start thinking about MR schools and also the Magnet School. The Magnet school will still be by choice and lottery.

Mr. Jannelli said we were pretty much assured that the Head Start facility would be ready by September. The Common Council was not aware of referendum. If we can bank on Head Start would be available and maybe sometime in April it would be more definitive in your options;

Mr. Saadi spoke to it and the Mayor had alluded to it as well. I am hoping everything is done now. I understand that a consultant was hired, but we have no control over that. Mr. Jannelli said according to lead time – if everything passes in April – are we looking for 2-3 years for a facility for us. The Superintendent said 20/20 saw some sites in town that would be ready – they contacted the State and the State is looking to re-tooling current sites, but they would have to meet all the criteria of a school. If something passes in April and a building suitable – it would typically 18 months. The whole process has to be approved by the State. While you are going through the approval, the building is being built-out. Depending when it is approved, it would be 18 months to 2 1/2 years.

Ms. Cooper commended Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Joyce Emmett on their presentation to the parents. She said it was well done and very professional.

Other Board members had comments on realignment. Among other questions and answers, Mr. Fox said he thinks the tactical plan should be on the next agenda.

ACTION ITEM

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the proposal to address lost instructional days due to weather related conditions

Dr. Pascarella said we lost 7 days; 5 days just last week. We did not receive power until last Saturday, but it looks as though we could add days at the end of the school year. There are four days remaining until the end of June and we are prohibited to go into July. If we use 6 or 7 days, we would go into February and April vacations. He apologized to Ms. Mirochine that we got the revised calendar out so late yesterday. We could use the day before Thanksgiving; one of the days that we recommend to make up the day. Dr. Glass stated that an “x” on the calendar are the days that Dr. Pascarella is talking about. The suggestion is to have school on Friday, February 17 and not have school on Monday, February 20.

Mr. Jannelli said Ms. Mirochine is correct about the days; we may have to spend the funds for the day before Thanksgiving since that day is a heavily travel day.

Mr. Fox stated that he supports this and asked for a motion to amend the calendar changing the February vacation.

MOTIONS - G. Cooper moved, seconded by M. Fazio that the Board of Education amend the motion and approve the proposal of having school on Friday, February 17th and not have school on Monday, February 20th to address lost instructional days due to weather related conditions

The motion passed at 8:06 pm.

Dr. Pascarella asked Kim Thompson to introduce Edward Arum, Interim Director of Finance to fill the position left vacant by Elio Longo. She told the Board that the best option was to hire Ed as an interim through the end of the school year. We are looking forward to working with him. He will be working 3 days a week at \$650 a day. The Superintendent said he will attend evening meetings and if we need him for 4 days a week we will do that, but if we need him less time, we will do that.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Alternative Center for Excellence Facility Update

Dr. Pascarella said before the storm we had some questions and had a team looking at the building in the basement area since there were some concerns about the safety factor. We took air samples which proved negative. They recommended that we restrict students in the basement area. We spoke to the principal and told her that we need to remove the classroom out of the basement. During the storm, the position is that we need to look at it again and that we may have been too aggressive. It will cost more than \$400,000 all has to do with the external downspouts. Mr. Iadrola is looking at it. It is quite a challenge. Mr. Grandville will be doing samplings up stairs as well as down stairs. We seem to be okay right now.

Ms. Leroy stated that she has to leave the meeting but before doing so she wanted to thank the Board and the community. She said it has been memorable, sometimes frustrating, but felt the Board has been productive and a benefit to the children of Danbury. She said I will miss you and wish you all the best. Ms. Leroy left the meeting at 8:22 pm.

Mr. Fox thanked her for her 8 years of service, including 3 years as Chairperson.

Bullying Policy Update

Mr. Thompson said there is a new statute governing the overall policy which we have been working on with our administrators to produce plans, individual plans by building to get to the state in January. This process is on-going; we need to train the staff. She stated that the Committee needs to amend its policy and that she is preparing the policy right now. We will be meeting on the 17th at 5:30-6:00 and we will be bringing the amendments to you at the next two board meetings for your review.

Mr. Jannelli told the Board that Danbury Children First is sponsoring an incredible performance by Tony Deblois on Saturday evening at 7:00 PM. The tickets are \$15.00 per person; the performance is at Broadview Middle School. Mr. Deblois is deaf and learned to speak when he was 3-4 years old; an accomplished musician.

DISCUSSIONS

2011-2012 School Calendar Modification – see discussion under Action Items.

Mr. Fox said there will be a new Board orientation on Monday, December 5th at 5:30-7:00 PM at Beaver Brook Administration. Dr. Pascarella said invitations will be mailed out tomorrow.

Board Workshop on enrollment and space utilization – see Presentation

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

CABE Delegate Assembly

Mr. Fox said he will not be attending the CABE Delegate Assembly. Ms. Molinaro will be attending as his replacement and she will report back to the Board.

Mr. Fox asked for reports on the following Committees:

Community Relations – Richard Jannelli, Chairperson

No report

Finance Committee – Mike Fazio, Richard Jannelli, Co-Chairpersons

No report

Superintendent Evaluation – Kathleen Molinaro, Chairperson

Mr. Fox said we will talk about that at the next Board meeting.

DSABC – Richard Jannelli, Member

They had a fund raiser last week which was successful

Education Connection – Richard Jannelli, Member

No report

Magnet School – Gladys Cooper, Trustee

Ms. Cooper said she believes the next meeting is in January, the Superintendent said he will double check.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cooper moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of November 9, 2011 and the meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary