

# DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

***WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011- 7:00 PM***  
**Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, M. Fazio, I. Fox, K. Gailliard, R. Austin-James, R. Jannelli, S. LeRoy, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak; S. Pascarella, J. Emmett, E. Longo, and K. Thompson from Administration

Absent: W. Glass from Administration

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Irving Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m., and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **RECOGNITIONS**

Ryan Kerr, DHS Sophomore, won multiple prizes at the CT Science Fair at Quinnipiac University in Hamden in March and will receive an all expense paid trip to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, the world's largest international pre-college science competition, in California in May. The Board wishes Ryan a lot of luck and congratulates him for his outstanding work.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

**A. MINUTES**

Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 4-13-11

**B. PERSONNEL**

Accept Leaves of Absence: Andrea LaRosa, Kimberly Moran

Accept Resignations: Jayanthi Joshi

Accept Retirements: Kenneth Buescher, Paula Caldara, Ann Marie Curran, JoAnn Giesen, Barbara Taylor

Chairperson Fox announces that the retirees represent over ninety years of service to the Danbury Public Schools and thanked them for their service to the students of Danbury.

**The motion carried at 7:20 p.m.**

## EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danbury High School: Nadine Edwards reported that there will be a national competition for DHS DECA students in Orlando, FL from April 29 to May 4, *Urinetown* will be performed on May 5, 6, and 7 in the DHS Auditorium, Movement to Music will be held on May 12 at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium, the Special Olympics will be held on May 14, ROTC Award Ceremony will be held on May 17 at 6 p.m. in the Auditorium, and National Honor Society Induction will be held on May 23 in the Auditorium at 7 p.m.

### PRESENTATION

#### High School Redesign Update

Dr. Rossi and Dr. Martins made a presentation to the Board. Dr. Rossi said many changes have been made. There are no longer any lower level courses at DHS. All of the courses have a required guaranteed curriculum. He said that DHS is a much different school and a much better school. They focused on three major redesign areas: Detracking effort (writing of the curricula), Freshman Academy, and Open Enrollment to AP classes. He discusses the advantages of students taking AP classes. Dr. Martins spoke about the curricula that was written and acknowledges Kara Casimiro, who has been working on English and Social Studies, and Harry Rosvally, who has been working with our Science and Math teams for their hard work. She spoke about the Freshman Academy and the plan to provide a better transition for the freshman to high school.

R. Jannelli congratulated Dr. Rossi and his staff for an excellent job. He asks if staff is on board with the redesign. Dr. Rossi responded by saying that the shift is taking place, and he feels they are moving in the right direction. R. Taborsak asks if there are still some areas of the curricula that are being revised. Dr. Martins responded that it is still being revised. S. Molinaro inquired about the time it takes to get the assessments, and Dr. Martins explained the different assessments and the time it takes for each. R. Austin-James asked about the intervention piece where students are struggling, and Dr. Martins explained the process that is followed. S. Molinaro inquired at what point do the students get reassigned to a lower class, and Dr. Martins responded by saying that the students are assessed after each marking period. I. Fox asked if there is any data about the students' capability to handle a class that lasts for 90 minutes. Dr. Martins explains that the blocks are not for the entire day, but if a student is planning on going to college, it is a good way for them to experience sitting in a class for that length of time. I. Fox asked Dr. Martins what improvement has been evident based on what has been implemented. Dr. Rossi responded saying that one of the things he wanted to do is to reduce the number of study halls and lunch periods. He would like to offer all science classes in a block format as is being done with the freshman. R. Austin-James asked if there will be flexibility for students who enter or drop AP courses, and Dr. Martins said the procedure for drop/add has not changed at all. K. Gailliard asked how the teachers feel about the blocks. Dr. Martins responded saying that in the beginning, some of the teachers struggled, but she said that the current feedback, on the whole, is positive. I. Fox thanked Dr. Martins and Dr. Rossi for their presentation.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### School Governance Council Updates

Anne Mead reported that an informational meeting was held for parents and it was fairly well attended. Information went out to all parents in all schools. A nomination form went out to all of the families. Once the nomination forms come back, the information on the nomination will be verified, and then there will be ballots going out to each of the schools with the information about the potential candidates. Those will be sent home with all of the students, and follow-up phone calls will be made with reverse messenger to all the families to alert them that the ballots have gone out. She said that a reverse phone call was done to remind them that the nomination forms have gone out. Ms. Mead is pleased with the results using the instant messenger adding that it has cut down on the costs. On approximately May 24, it will be announced who have been elected to the councils, and during the week of May 30, there will be an orientation meeting with a representative from the State, and everyone on the councils will hear the same information, more on their responsibilities, code of ethics, and some of the other associated paperwork that goes along with running the councils. In September and October, there will be the first set of trainings that all of the members of the councils will be required to take, and that will prepare them for the November deadline. R. Taborsak asked how the teachers are chosen. Ms. Mead said each school has an election committee, and they are doing the internal nominations and ballots for the teachers. R. Jannelli asked if there is anything that the Board can do to insure that the people on the councils are representative of the community. She said they are very fortunate to have Board members who are liaisons to the schools, and they can help with the nomination process. The use of the reverse messenger is letting all families know about that and it has been discussed at PTO meetings. R. Austin-James asks who is providing the training. Ms. Mead said that the Parent SEE Model will be implemented, which is Parents Supporting Educational Excellence.

### Facilities Report

S. Pascarella reported that we had a setback with the roof problem at Pembroke School, and the work will begin the second week of May. There has been an ongoing issue at Broadview with an odor coming from a carpet. Engineers have been called in to detect where it is coming from. It has been determined that there is nothing in the carpet that poses a danger. At ACE, some excavating needs to be done to make sure water is diverted to prevent it from entering the building. Air samples were taken. There is ongoing work at Pembroke School and they are scheduled for major roof repairs. I. Fox inquired if there is leaking with buckets in the hallways, and E. Longo said that at this time, it is there, but should be alleviated when they finish all of the repairs to the downspouts. I. Fox inquired if there are any unusable areas in the building and E. Longo reported none. Mill Ridge Primary work is being done. ACE has mold in the basement and there is a question as to whether it is safe to use the basement floor classrooms. E. Longo said the City Council approved the Mayor's proposal to increase the Honeywell project to include additional boilers and window and door replacements at DHS. R. Taborsak asked if this requires a bond issue and E. Longo said it does not.

### Middle School Dress Code Policy Update

S. Pascarella reiterates that we do not have a middle school dress code. Currently, the Policy Committee is reviewing some suggestions for middle school attire and will present it to the Board. He discusses that the DHS Summer School Program has not been successful for the past two years, and the recommendation is to discontinue it. I. Fox asked if funding for summer school was included

in the budget that was currently approved by the Board, and E. Longo replied that funding was not included. The middle schools will run a program, and elementary schools will have their programs. DHS Graduation is set for June 24 at 3 p.m., and the rain date is June 25 at the same time.

### Reach Program

J. Emmett talked about the Reach Program and reported that for the past two years we have been able to increase services at the program because of the ERRA money, which is not available to us this year. She said several people have gone in to assess the Reach program, and what they are looking at for next year would be moving back to a half day program in the building and then supplementing with using our high school vocational education staff to do placements in the community so that older youngsters will have job development opportunities, and some youngsters that are not ready for work experience will have vocational skill development. M. Fazio asked if going back to half day equates to the fact that what has been done over the last two years was not working. J. Emmett explained that part of it worked for some students but not for others, and that part of the problem with having all students all day is that students are combined who might not be good fits for one another. There is a need to serve more youngsters who have mental health issues and conduct issues. E. Alberts asked if Reach and Endeavor are two separate programs. J. Emmett explains the two programs. R. Taborsak inquires if this will require more personnel to set up these vocational programs. She responded that it would come out of the vocational support services that we have at the high school for students with disabilities. M. Fazio asks what data we have that shows we have been successful. J. Emmett said attendance, number of suspensions, how successful are they in making transitions, etc. are some of the areas identified. I. Fox feels we need to spend more time reviewing this before we make a change of this magnitude. S. Pascarella said this is on the Agenda simply for awareness and it is evolving because of the lack of resources. A discussion ensued. S. Pascarella said he wanted to alert the Board and will revisit the issue with the Board at a more appropriate time. G. Cooper inquired as to how many students are in the Reach Program. As of April 28, there will be 22. She inquired if the students at Endeavor are administratively placed, and if the Board is aware of all in attendance. J. Emmett responded that it is reported in the Monthly Attendance Report.

S. Pascarella read an announcement that Bailey Brown, a 2009 DHS graduate, was honored this week at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Brown tutors students in the public school system of Philadelphia, and she was named a Ronald McNair Scholar. This program identifies and prepares high achieving undergraduate students for graduate studies leading to a Ph.D.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### A. March 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept the March 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

E. Longo told the Board that for the month of March, 2011, the District expended \$7,363,645, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$71,899,338. The fiscal year-to-date expenditure represents 63.1% of the General Fund total budget as compared to the theoretical

expenditure rate of 75%. As of March 31, the district carried encumbrances valued at \$4.5 million dollars for a year-to-date expenditure value with encumbrances at 67.1%.

**The motion carried at 9:01 p.m.**

B. March 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education accept the March 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

E. Longo told the Board that for the month of March, 2011, the District expended \$1,636,571, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$13,478,926. The fiscal year-to-date expenditure represents 50.7% of currently reported Grants and Projects awards.

**The motion carried at 9:02 p.m.**

C. Board Member, Joseph Scozzafava, Resignation

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education accept the Resignation of Mr. Joseph Scozzafava, Board Member, effective April 20, 2011

Chairperson Fox thanked J. Scozzafava for serving the Board so well for the past four years and wished him luck in his future endeavor.

**The motion carried at 9:03 p.m.**

**DISCUSSIONS**

2011-2012 Budget Update

R. Jannelli reported that a meeting was held to discuss some of the previous cuts that were suggested to them and a recommendation was made to the Cabinet to go back and look for a minimum of \$100,000 more in cuts, referring to the outer circle that W. Glass has indicated and in accordance with a conversation at the last Board meeting, as specified in the minutes. He looks for E. Longo to make a recommendation. I. Fox confirms that the City Council will meet on May 3 to finalize our allocation, and the Board should then receive at its next meeting what the recommended list is to reach the final allocation, and it is anticipated that it will be voted on at our second meeting in May. A Finance Committee meeting will be held in the interim.

Space Utilization Update

S. Pascarella is prepared to make a recommendation to the Utilization Committee in terms of how to prioritize and what the next step should be and also what kind of building should be going on. He feels we need to be moving in that direction quickly. As soon as we get a new Committee, a date will be set, and hopefully, at the next meeting a presentation can be made to them and the Board. He has been contacted by the City again.

S. Pascarella said that one of the things that was questioned is the enrollment at Shelter Rock School. Typically, there are about 58 kindergarten students, and on the last day of registration 72 had already registered. That was a point that was brought up by the demographer. We will be looking at how to handle this situation, but we need to have a conversation about this. Enrollment is increasing and we have to have something in place and are anxiously waiting to work with the Committee to do that.

### **INFORMATION**

- A. Invention Convention
- B. Draft 2012-2013 School Calendar
- C. High School Summer School

These items above were previously discussed during this meeting.

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

#### **Committee Assignments (fill Committee/PTO liaisons vacated by Mr. Scozzafava)**

Chairperson Fox said as we just referred to, we cannot leave these positions open until the new Board member is selected, which will likely not occur until the end of May. In order to fill the committees, he assigned E. Alberts to the Finance Committee, K. Molinaro to chair the Facilities Committee, and R. Jannelli to the Facilities Committee. I. Fox reserves the right to make further adjustments when the new Board member is selected. For PTO assignments, J. Scozzafava had Broadview Middle School and Hayestown Avenue School, and those two will be covered by K. Gailliard, pending the arrival of the new Board member.

### **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

**Community Relations:** R. Jannelli reports they have met as a committee, but it is part of an ongoing cooperation with the district involving A. Mead and a program that received a grant from the Nellie Mae Foundation. About one month ago, a forum was held with the parents at the high school, the contents of which was emailed to the Board today, and it basically covered questions and an overview of the summary that came from that meeting and certain action plans that were looked at as a result of that meeting. Sixty-six parents were in attendance in addition to some corporate members of the community. Judge Yamin attended who was very supportive of our program and would be willing to help in any way that she can.

**Operations/Policy:** R. Taborsak reports that a meeting was held today and information will be brought to the full Board concerning the dress code and the recommendations of the two principals. K. Molinaro reported that R. Taborsak asked that a new policy be written and presented at the next meeting. The new policy will be delayed in implementation, as we are going back to the current 21 graduation credits. There will be one more meeting in May on Title IX and the graduation requirements. R. Taborsak feels very strongly about the fact that graduation requirements were raised, and hearing the presentation today by Drs. Rossi and Martins, confirms his feeling that we are moving in the right direction for students.

Superintendent Evaluation: K. Molinaro reports that the Superintendent is planning to give the Board an update at the next Board meeting, and she would ask that a Special Board Meeting be held to evaluate the update in May.

City-Wide PTO: K. Molinaro reports there will be a meeting on Monday, May 2.

DSABC: R. Jannelli reports that everyone should have received their invitations to the annual breakfast honoring the mentors and mentees. It will be held at the Amber Room.

G. Cooper asked when the students at the Pathways Academy transfer back into their original schools. S. Pascarella will look into the amount of students in attendance and get back to her with that information.

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing updates on negotiations.

Convened in Executive session at 9:14 p.m. There was no discussion.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** R. Alberts moved, seconded by R. Austin-James that the Board of Education adjourn its April 27, 2011 meeting.

**The motion carried unanimously at 9:15 p.m.**

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Kathleen M. Molinaro, Secretary