

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021 - 7:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Joseph Britton, Loren Daly
Absent: Richard Jannelli
Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

RECOGNITIONS

Exhibit

- Rebecca D'Ostillo, DHS Student Body President, Jake Goodwin, DHS Student Body Vice President, and Faculty Support Advisors Carmela Calafiore and Stephanie Spiridon for securing a \$10,000 grant from DoSomething.org for demonstrating the best effort to involve the community (both school and external alike) to take part in voter registration and civic engagement. 21-01(pg.4)
 - D. Donovan stated that he couldn't be more proud as this was a tumultuous election year. The students decided to step up in collaboration with their teachers, C. Calafiore and S. Spiridon, to run a campaign to get as many registered voters with DoSomething.org. They won \$10,000 for DHS.
 - C. Calafiore stated that it was a collaboration of three programs; BOG, Peer Leaders and the DECA Program. It started out as a way to adapt to online learning because they couldn't go out and do community service. When the students were put into groups and networked, they were able to apply so many skills they learned across the curriculum. They were able to get over 100 new registrations all while never leaving the living room. It was a testament to their abilities to be able to communicate, work with others in a team and work across the curriculum through the FLEX program. Not only just to ask people to vote but really to pitch what voting means in a Democratic society and how important it is to vote. The DHS media center also participated in a mock election. There were over 150 students who participated in the project.
 - R. D'Ostillo shared the presentation that was submitted to DoSomething.org.
 - Mobilize eligible voters in our community.
 - Inform students on the importance of the voting process.
 - Encourage students to become informed on current issues.
 - Messages from local influencers (Mayor Boughton and Karol Granda).
 - Instagram engagement. Story views were over 3,000.
 - Twitter engagements. Over 2,000 impressions on Tweets.

- TikToks made by students. Over 65 TikToks were made.
 - School-wide announcements.
 - Anyone who was 18 by election day was able to register.
 - Mock elections on Presidential, US House of Representatives, State House and State Senate.
 - Issues chart; what students thought were the most important issues going on.
- C. Calafiore stated that sweatshirts will be purchased for the key people involved. This was her 39th year of teaching and she is always amazed at the spirit Danbury students have and how much they have grown over the years. They always step up and she is so proud of their participation and interest in their own community.
- S. Spiridon stated that there were so many great TikToks and retweets on Twitter. The closest school was 30 registrations behind DHS.
- D. Donovan stated that the check has been received. R. D'Ostillo is working with the involved groups to see where the money should go. As a committee, they will make an informed decision on what they want to spend it on.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that they have spent a lot of time on the Portrait of a Graduate. These attitudes and attributes are what we are looking for in a Danbury graduate. The involvement in the community has been at the highest with making connections. The students just rose to the occasions and it's a critical part of the legacies that are left. The actions, commitment, connection, care and civil consciousness is wonderful!

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Carol Corcoran - Parent of a high school Junior.
 - I am very upset that my child hasn't been going to school since March of last year when 95% of all other communities have been going. Every single community around us has been in school and made an effort to have their kids in school. I pay taxes for my child to have the right to be educated in an actual school. I don't think the Board is listening to the community. I don't feel like my needs are being met. Please don't listen to the few parents that want their kids to stay home. Allow them to stay home and allow all the rest of the families to send their kids to school. I have seen my daughter's mental health decline, her love for education disappear and her sleepless nights from too much screen time instead of learning from a live person. The detachment creates detachment to the love of learning and to the emotional aspects of all the things in school learning bring. I feel my child has gone backwards and yet kids in our neighboring towns are going to school and moving forward. We can't sit on the sidelines and watch others go to school. Our religious and private schools in Danbury are in school. Abbott Tech, Immaculate, Ridgefield, Bethel, Brookfield are all in school. Many are in school five days a week. Why can't Danbury? It will never be perfect. Please push forward and manage this problem, manage the issues and manage the virus. Our kids deserve first priority not the virus. Let the parents decide and give us all the options. Please don't change your mind and give in to the fear when our kids need to be in school. The message is clear, we want our kids in school. Do it now and

work the issues out while doing it! Our kids' education and futures cannot be put on hold any longer.

- Melinda Scott
 - Tonight I wanted to express my hope that someone will be addressing the big question on so many minds, "why now?" Because it seems to me that returning to school in person now goes against everything that the medical experts and the health department have shared here in previous meetings. The disruption of classes, the inevitable disruption due to closures, the end of consistent instruction, the abbreviated time to deliver instruction and the potential risks all seem like good reasons to continue the way we are.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approve the item on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 21-02, through 21-06, as recommended:

MINUTES

11/10/20 Regular Meeting	21-02(pg.5)
11/24/20 Finance Committee	21-03(pg.15)
11/24/20 Regular Meeting	21-04(pg.18)
12/2/20 Annual Board Meeting	21-05(pg.29)
12/21/20 Finance Committee	21-06(pg.31)

10 Votes Yes: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly, Joseph Britton

One was not present to vote: Richard Jannelli

Motion carried at 7:23 pm

DONATION:

K. Conetta moved, seconded by A. Russo that the Board of Education accept a \$1,000 Donation from the Uncle Bobby Foundation to Western CT Academy for International Studies (AIS), in accordance with 21-07(pg.32)

10 Votes Yes: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly, Joseph Britton

One was not present to vote: Richard Jannelli

Dr. Pascarella stated that the donation was made by a former AIS student, Angela, who now attends WCSU as a Freshman. She recently chose to donate the money from her Uncle's foundation who died in 2019 from cancer. The school was chosen because it's mission aligns with that of the foundation which is to support organizations that promote

education, environmental awareness and humanity. She hopes that the school can use the money to support the arts, education or science for students.

Motion carried at 7:25 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

- Erin Daly
 - Wished everyone a happy New Year. Everyone is working hard to greet their students next week. Wants community to know that NEA of Danbury's number one focus will continue to be the health and safety of our students and school community at large. Thanked the Board for all the work they have been doing to ensure as safe a return as possible.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- DHS Representatives: Jake Goodwin, Rebecca D'Ostilio
 - The DHS Baseball and Football communities held a holiday toy and coat drive to provide for the less fortunate. The contactless donations went well and hopefully someone is a little warmer this winter.
 - DHS won the \$10,000 scholarship for best community involvement.
 - On 12/5/2020, the Key Club had a successful non-perishable food drive for Hillside Food Outreach, collecting 255 items in total.
 - DHS had their first snow day on the 12/17/2020! A much-deserved day to relax and catch up.
 - Before break, after teacher recommendations were sorted through, administration handed out Hatter's Heros awards to the stand-out students who are valiantly deserving.
- ACE Representatives: Chris Johnston
 - ACE staff is participating in virtual student entrance interviews over the next two weeks to welcome the new students to ACE. These meetings are the first step in building relationships with the students and their families in an effort to create a supportive learning plan specific to each incoming student.
 - On 2/1/2021, ACE will run a structured Orientation Day to deliver expectations for attendance and course schedules, behavioral norms, and social emotional learning activities. Students will follow the orientation day schedule with their guidance groups to continue the process of building community as we re-enter the building in Semester 2 following the Hybrid Model.
 - On 1/15/2021, ACE will hold a schoolwide Google Meet where students and staff will read works and celebrate the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in an effort to continue the efforts to promote social justice and equity.
 - A special thanks to the ACE English Department for organizing the 2021 ACE Inaugural Poetry Contest. The contest was organized by Joanne Tolles, Daniela Esposito, and Mellisa Lasky. Students created and submitted their original pieces of work, which were also shared with each other in their English classes. After their works were scored anonymously by ACE staff, we had five finalists.
 - First Place went to Serena Som, Second Place went to Chris Johnston, Third Place went to Makayla Oyola, Honorable mentions were Olivia

Selino and Nazariah Battle. Congratulations to all the students who shared their creativity with us.

- ACE would also like to publicly recognize two students of the week for their hard work and demonstration of the five behavioral expectations of ACE. Nine students were nominated and the two students who were recognized are Serena Som and Derek Jaramillo. Congratulations to both of you!
- Lastly, ACE would also like to congratulate our December Student of the Month award winners Jaylyn Batista and Andy Vasquez.

ACTION ITEMS

A, 2021-2022 School Calendar

MOTION: J. DaSilva moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar, in accordance with 21-08(pg.33)

10 Votes Yes: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly, Joseph Britton

One was not present to vote: Richard Jannelli

Motion carried at 7:32 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Special Education Update - In Person Learning
 - K. Truchsess gave a follow up on bringing SpEd students back.
 - High needs SpEd students came back to schools on 11/30/2020. They were in cohorts on Mon/Tue or Thur/Fri. There was great success. Commended SpEd staff, administrators, and nursing staff. Has been a nice trial of getting students back into school. Some of the students with significant disabilities needed a little bit more coaching and training on mask wearing and compliance. Happy to report that they have done very well with it. They have fallen back into place of where we were in March of 2020.
 - Parents have understood expectations, so they were able to maintain the health and safety of all.
 - Had an incident where had to close down a classroom out of abundance of caution to take precautionary measures and all came out well.
- CIAC Update
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that CIAC will make a decision on 1/14/2021 for Winter sports. Looks as though they will categorize sports into different segments. Will know more after announcements and report back to the Board. Students will probably participate with some kind of phase-in, much like the Summer. Coaches still need to be hired. Competition would not begin until sometime in February if it comes into fruition. Whatever is decided will have to be reviewed by our health personnel.
- PSAT 1/26

- DHS is scheduled to return to in-person learning on 2/1/2021 because that is when the new semester begins.
- The Tuesday prior, students that are signed up for PSATs will be invited into DHS for the test. Students will be socially distanced and able to take the test.
- D. Donovan stated that there are 323 students registered to take the PSATs as of 1/13/2021.
- Budget Update
 - C. Leborious thanked the Finance and HR teams for going above and beyond on initiating 21st century programs so there are more transparent budget reporting as well as an efficient payroll.
 - Excited to kick off budget season. Will schedule a series of meetings with a goal to present the budget to the Board on 1/27/2021 and will need to have a vote on 2/10/2021 to make a deadline with the City. Will work with Board members to have an understanding of the budget.
 - Did have a preliminary meeting and it's a bit challenging because it is about 5.3% because we didn't get much of an increase this year due to the pandemic and the City's restraints as well.
 - There were some things able to be done due to the Cares Act Funding.
 - Have spent about \$7.7 million on COVID-19 and pandemic related items last year and this year combined. A little more than \$5 million this year. Some of that is for SEL support on purchased software that would like to continue going forward. Also, some maintenance costs of online learning to see if we want to maintain some of those components. With Cares money we were able to hire some counselors as well as some student support staff.
 - Deficit of \$1.3 million for this year. Related to braided funding used this year. Just aligning all the grants with the Board operating budget to show it brings us in to balance this year.
 - A. Russo asked when the Board will get something in writing to look over the proposed budget for the upcoming year? C. LeBorious stated that she could get something to all Board members by Friday 1/15/2021.
- Protocols for BOE Meetings 2021
 - K. Thompson stated that as we turn to the new year and the way meetings are running trying to sketch out the way the year will go. Some changes have been made with public comments and representative comments because we have been meeting virtually.
 - K. Thompson stated that the Board is hearing from the teacher's union but not hearing from the administrator's union and that's something that has come forward to consider.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that there was a proposal made by the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents and also by Katie Roy.
 - Dr. Pascarella will get the information to the Board that was just published. CAPS is looking at revamping ECS for the entire state over a 15 year period and have a system that is dependable and recognizable with a 2.5% increase.
 - Also looking for the State to step up to their 50% commitment with the local taxpayers.
 - Looking at the two year excess cost funding mechanism.

- Finance projects are looking at it much more aggressively in order to achieve equity. That's about \$649 million to put into the formula for ELL, SpEd and reduced/free lunch to bring equity to the programming.
- Dr. Pascarella will bring more information to the Board once available.
- Ryan Bingham has requested time to speak with the constituents at the legislative level. Will bring it up at the next Board meeting for discussion.
- The Board has been very mindful of the needs of parents and students. Some of the things Dr. Pascarella has been reading are not only inaccurate but disparaging of our neighbors, teachers and parents in the district. Asked all to be calm as we come back. The lens has always been about safety and the new lens is about safety and practice.

DISCUSSION

- Reopening Update
 - Dr. Casimiro stated that nothing much has changed with the 6-12 Hybrid Model. Still incorporating DL students into the classroom.
 - Providing more structure to at home students' learning day. Three touch points during the day, which will be picking up after the second week.
 - AM session SEL. Students will be invited to join their classmates to be part of that SEL activity and to get overview of the day.
 - Will have opportunity at the end of day for questions and check in.
 - The part added in is a lesson touchpoint mid-day. Will change each week depending on what is going on in the classroom.
 - Coaches are creating lessons that would best serve at home and in person learners. Still attending to philosophy that when students come into school, teacher is giving most attention to the in-person learners so we are not keeping students on the computer when in school all day.
 - Individual schools will be providing updates for parents to talk through that and teachers will be sending the schedules out.
 - First week back will be just the end of the day check in. Want to make sure that the first week of school is really about orientating students to buildings, classrooms and safety protocols. Just getting used to the idea of what six feet means in the classroom.
 - Morning touchpoints could happen at different times until we establish a busing schedule.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that in October the turnaround was difficult to do but it was done because we felt it was important. Since then, we have received information from the State in regard to practice that is much different now. Currently, every town is in the red. There are towns that exceed Danbury's infection numbers. One or two that are in the moderate.
 - The schools themselves in terms of transfer rate is very low among students. The numbers are coming from community spread. Staff should be aware and knowledgeable to keep themselves healthy and be in the position to come to work.
 - There are some spreads in schools and some schools are closed due to the staffing issues and inability to operate. More concern of that than in school spread. The

vaccine now is moving aggressively so we may have hit a sweet spot with reintroducing our students to in-person learning.

- Dr. Pascarella stated that a robo call will be sent to parents on 1/17/2021 and on 1/20/2021 just reminding staff and students of healthy protocols, stay home if you are not feeling well, where you could be tested if needed and who you could contact if ill.
- DPS has 4,000 students on DL and 8,000 in Hybrid. 4,000 at a time in Hybrid spread through campuses.
- K. Thompson stated that the way the vaccine runs is there is a system run by the CDC with support from the local Health Department. Once staff are deemed eligible within phase 1B, they ask the district for basic information of the staff member. Once all of that information is uploaded into the vaccine registry, the system takes over and notifies people who have been input. Those eligible can set up a file and select a vaccination time and location. K. O'Dowd and K. Thompson are working closely together getting all of those lists together. Have already gone through this practice with nurses, occupational and physical therapists. District has about 200 employees so this will take a little bit of time.
- K. Walston presented the reopening plan:
 - Principals, teachers, school custodians, safety advocates, secretaries, nurses and staff have done an amazing job getting buildings ready for the reopening.
 - Felt ready to open in October and feel even more ready now given the development of resources available in each classroom.
 - Each desk is equipped with a desk shield.
 - Students are still expected to wear their masks.
 - Elementary schools will open on 1/29/2021. Middle Schools will open on 1/25/2021. DHS will open on 2/1/2021 (due to the new semester).
 - Updates from CDC and Department of Health. 14 day quarantine has been relaxed down to a 10-day quarantine. If you are COVID-19 positive or have been identified as a primary contact, the expectation is that you will quarantine for 10 days.
 - Majority of K5 lunches will be served in the cafeteria. In some cases, lunch will be served in the classroom. All about how the principal was able to provide supervision during lunch in the cafeteria. Students having lunch in the cafeteria have limited movement to limit congregating. Shields will also be on cafeteria tables. Cafeteria tables will also be wiped down by custodians. In some schools, gymnasiums have been opened up for lunch time.
 - J. DaSilva stated that it seems risky with a large number of students eating lunch unmasked. That would not be allowed in a restaurant.
 - K. Walston stated that the capacity in most of the elementary schools is 100 to 250 students. Other than RPMS, no one has more than 40 students in the cafeteria. Traditional long cafeteria tables have no more than three students per table and they are six feet apart. Even at the round tables there are three students. Also with barriers in the middle of each table. In spaces where there were too many students in one room, principals were asked to

open an additional space for the students to eat lunch. As examples, Morris Street will use their stage and South Street will use their gym. Numbers are also reduced significantly and students are spread out. Desk shields provide an additional barrier along with social distancing.

- Dr. Pascarella said that he told the elementary principals that they will have to review everything in two weeks and make changes where needed. Need to be nimble.
- K. O'Dowd stated that she believes there is a very safe plan in place for the return. Travel advisory will also be discussed during the robo calls due to go out. There is a requirement in the state of Connecticut for international and domestic travel that people must do their quarantine for 10 days or have a negative COVID-19 test provided to the schools before returning. In addition, will be reinforcing all mitigation strategies including mask wearing, social distancing and frequent hand washing/sanitizing. All classrooms have been supplied with wipes and disinfectant cleaner. We have more than enough PPE. Have established the isolation rooms. In regard to the cafeterias, everyone has been distanced as best as can be.
- K. O'Dowd stated that she will be conducting contact tracing in collaboration with school nurses, principals and teachers. If a positive case has been identified in school, will look to see who has been in close contact (anyone who has been within less than six feet of distance for 15 minutes or more total). Those people will be notified directly. For families that will include a robo call with a letter. Will include instructions for quarantine, where to go for testing, the school nurse's phone number as well as K. O'Dowd's phone number. Every principal will be provided with a general notification letter that will go to their school community informing them that there has been a case. Will not identify if it is a student or staff member. That letter is just notification for their information. Positive cases will be followed by the health department for them to continue their contact tracing. School nurses will keep track of the students/staff who are in quarantine in terms of their negative or positive results. The general public will have access to a dashboard updated on a daily basis to see the individual school, if there is a case, any direct contacts and how many people are in quarantine.
- K. O'Dowd stated that in terms of the new quarantine, the CDC still recommends that 14 days is the best but they feel that there is a lot of non-compliance in most communities throughout the country, so they determined two options. One option was to reduce the quarantine to 10 days with a COVID-19 test. After the 10 days and no symptoms they can return to school, however people must continue to monitor for the full 14 days. The other option is a seven day test out which means that after five days of exposure, someone could get a COVID-19 test and if it is negative, they can come out of quarantine and continue to monitor for symptoms. However, when looking at that there is a 5% risk so the district went with the 10 day quarantine option.
- C. Leborious stated that they had set aside money in the budget to hire substitute custodians for every building. There was not a huge response but there were a few hired with great feedback. Hoping to continue to bring more in. Will provide an update at the next Board meeting. Custodial staff is also being restrained on

cleaning protocols. Dr. Pascarella said the plan is to bring overtime in until we can hire more custodians.

- K. Thompson stated that they have had to make some modifications in the way that sick time is assigned to employees because of changes to the federal law. The Family First Coronavirus Act was changed fairly significantly in its second iteration. It did not pick up 14 days of sick time if you are in quarantine and did not renew intermittent child care. Had to plot a series of policies and procedures together. There is a letter that went to all staff available for review on the HR tab in the district website under COVID-19 procedures. Trying to make it as seamless as possible, particularly for those involved in quarantining situations where they aren't sick and can work from home. Trying to work through all of the scenarios on what options will be for staff if they have to call out sick or if they have to stay home for quarantining reasons.
- K. Thompson stated that they have created significant changes to the Frontline system, which is currently ongoing. HR is still getting requests for accommodations to work from home. In a perfect year, there are days where we can have 125 absences in a day. This will be a challenge this year. District is in need of substitutes. The sub pool normally has 250 people. They currently have about 50 people in the sub pool. In addition to the regular building subs they have bolstered that group with a second building sub. Will not allow those substitutes to work across multiple buildings to reduce the number of spread or breaking the cohort. They are being assigned building by building. When all options are exhausted for coverage, such as using available staff to cover classrooms, the only option left may be to close a building. Now working on what that emergency plan will look like. M. Bang, from HR, will check absences every night in order to put up an alert to the building principal if those numbers seem to be rising in a way that they may not be able to sustain opening on the following day. If that decision is made, a robocall tree will be sent out to the bus company, staff, parents, etc. If that does happen, the school will flip to remote learning for that day.
- K. Truchsess stated for the SpEd reopening, they will return all students to the two days a week cohort. They will look to expand to bring the identified four day a week cohort students in. At the preschool level, students will come in on four cohorts. AM/PM, Mon/Tue and Thur/Fri cohorts. That is to keep the class sizes very small to ensure safety.
- A. Spallino asked when the Board will be able to come into Beaver Brook to meet? Dr. Pascarella asked that the staff return first to see how that goes. February might be a good target to think about. They have been following how the City Council is meeting.
- K. Thompson stated that Beaver Brook is going to operate on a modified schedule because there's a lot of space that is shared and cannot meet the six feet distancing requirement. A lot of work was made in the fall on separating teams to make sure everyone is spread out. In some places, they will need to move to an alternating work schedule, like the schools are doing in cohorts. There is also only one men's and women's bathroom in that building. In regard to Board meetings, there are 11 Board members, five Cabinet members anyone invited to the meeting and then the public. That is a primary concern. Ventilation is also not great in that room. There

are some districts moving to full Board meetings and we are watching to see how that goes.

- C. Leborious stated that R. Jalbert went to each building with a CO2 reader. There is a recommendation for the amount of CO2 in a room that represents the amount of fresh air that is in a room. He made sure that every of those spaces met the threshold and worked with the city where upgrades to ventilation were needed. Staff have also been trained on opening windows where applicable.
- G. Cooper stated that it was suggested that some Board members could opt out and meet from home virtually. She is bothered with that because she has been pushing that the Board work together and support one another. Her suggestion is to discuss this in February.
- K. Conetta asked about the 1B distribution of the vaccines with teachers and support staff. K. O'Dowd stated that the State determines the different phases of vaccine distribution and who qualifies under each phase. Phase 1B will include all school staff. Bus drivers will be included but registered separately. Everything is dependent on the vaccine supply.
- K. Conetta asked what the district's plan is with making sure everyone is vaccinated and with people who are not comfortable with it. K. O'Dowd stated that you cannot mandate the vaccine. Encourages everyone who is eligible receives it. If people have concerns, they should be discussing that with their health care provider. Everyone will be uploaded into the system and will have the option. It will be their personal decision whether they get the vaccine or not. The vaccine will be offered at several locations (not limited to Danbury). There is a clinic currently being run out of Rogers Park Middle School.
- J. DaSilva stated that Danbury has had well over 1,000 cases in the past three weeks and the State positivity level was almost at 11% on 1/12/2021. The red zone for 100,000 cases went away and now we are three times the limit, but it doesn't seem to matter. So what is the thing that matters? What causes us to pull the plug if 1,000 cases in three weeks isn't that? K. O'Dowd stated back in August and October, there was no playbook for this. This is a pandemic that we have not seen the likes of for over 100 years. We did not have anything to go back on and could only deal with real time information. Now that we have had the information for schools who have been in session since September, we are hearing from the State that the risk for transmission in school is very low, even with high community numbers. The State Department of Health is saying that if you can reduce the density in your buildings and employ those mitigation strategies, it is feasible to try and return to in-person learning.
- J. DaSilva stated that City Hall is closed to the public. The State Capitol building is closed to the public. The Connecticut House of Representatives voted from their offices and were sworn in outside. We are a little premature in thinking it is safe to go back to in person Board meetings.
- G. Cooper asked once the students go back to school, what happens if a student refuses to wear a mask? K. O'Dowd stated that there is a mask policy the Board adapted. There are rare cases they would consider a mask exemption. If it is a matter of a student being non-compliant, that may become something the administrator has to address. There are some special needs students where mask

compliance is difficult, but the teachers have been doing a wonderful job working with them and creating lessons on how to wear a mask. Flat out refusal by a student who is capable is not something that we will tolerate in the schools.

- R. Chaleski stated that if the teachers can work together on a hybrid model, it would be ideal for the Board members to mirror that model and try to meet somewhat to show support for what's happening in our schools. Other Board's of Education have been meeting in a hybrid fashion for a while now.
 - R. Chaleski stated that families are concerned that there will be another last minute change like there was in October so many are holding off on the decision to go DL or hybrid until the last minute. How can we assure them that we will reopen as planned?
 - R. Chaleski stated that on behalf of her fellow Republicans and herself, they fully support and urge the follow through to open schools as planned. We also feel that these decisions should be made in consultation with the Board and they feel they have not been. How can we be more involved and informed in the decision making process and how can we support the district and staff?
 - R. Chaleski asked what the communication has been between the governor's office and Dr. Pascarella? Are they aware that we have had this prolonged closure since March and are they concerned?
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that the decision made in October was a last minute decision so he doesn't know how the Board could have been involved and he takes full responsibility for that. He thinks the Board has been advised and he is keeping all up to date. There is no reason for us not to open. We will open unless the governor says we can't open. He had informed the Commissioner of Education just this past week that we are opening. During all of the times he spoke with the Commissioner, the practice in October and November was different and each town was different and had to do what they had to do. His intention is to return and the State is aware of that. He does see us as getting disruptions but that will be a way of life.
 - R. Chaleski stated that at some point she would like to know how our students have fared academically through the closure. Typically in a non-pandemic year the Board would receive data presentations.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that as we start collecting that information, we can do that.
- (Summit) College & Career Pathways Project Update
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that he will work with J. Britton and put together a meeting for the Facilities Committee in regard to looking at Ed Specs that will need to move to the Board for approval and then will need to go to the City regarding the application. Even though the project has been approved, still has Ed Specs to review.
 - J. Cavo stated that there is a committee that operates in the town. C. Leborious and Dr. Pascarella are part of that committee. It is separate from the BOE and is a building committee that nurtures the project as it moves through.
 - C. Leborious stated that the Osborne project is on track. Architects are in the design phase. Still on track for a scheduled start for this upcoming summer. May

even start a little earlier. Secured lease for Facilities Department and looking to secure lease for Registration and A. Meade's department. Short term, just while the building is being worked on.

- The Granville project has temporary occupancy. It's scheduled to open on 1/19/2021. K. Truchsess stated that six of preschool classes will move over. Only occupying the top floor of the building as that is the floor that is finished and approved for occupancy. That will be enough to house all of the classes for the beginning of the return to school. Will then move into the lower floor of a couple more classes starting two to three weeks later. Thanked Cabinet, R. Jalbert and his team. Building looks beautiful and thrilled to have preschool kids there. Feels like a school for preschool when you walk in. Once the entire building is finished, can do a Board walk through.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Board of Education Committees, District Committees and PTO Liaisons
 - Gladys stated that everyone has received their committee assignments. This is not the final draft and if anyone wants to change, look at other PTOs or committees to please inform K. Pompano and it will be finalized at the next Board meeting.
- On 1/12/2021, A. Russo, G. Cooper and K. Conetta attended the workshop for CABE.
- G. Cooper stated there is another workshop to attend on 1/14/2021.
- G. Cooper stated that we will review in February to see if we can return to in-person meetings at Beaver Brook and hopes everyone has been vaccinated.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- A. Russo stated that he thinks we are above the curb. The topic of the CABE workshop was "Civility". He feels that as a group, the Board works very well together. There are differences of opinion, but vitality is being able to communicate those differences in a positive manner. Feels very fortunate to be able to work with this group.
- A. Russo asked how he can sign up for the vaccine. K. Prunty stated that there is a survey on the City website where those who are 75 and over can fill out the survey. She believes the age will change and he should go on and fill out the survey so he can get the invite to create the file.
- R. Chaleski stated that the Citywide PTO met on 1/11/2021. Thanked Dr. Pascarella, K. Walston and A. Mead for being there to provide updates to families. The minutes of the meeting are on the Citywide PTO website.
- R. Chaleski stated that Westside Middle School Academy is still looking for judges for the Science and Engineering Expo to be held on 1/20/2021. It will all be virtual.
- R. Chaleski requested a Republican on each committee. G. Cooper asked for a discussion on that to be held on 1/14/2021.

ADJOURNMENT

R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of January 13, 2021 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)