

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020- 6:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM

<https://youtu.be/jnhDu9tm3SA>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro

Absent: Loren Daly

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kim Thompson, Kevin Walston, Kara Casimiro

RECOGNITIONS

WCSA Student Leadership Awards

Exhibit

20-54(pg.4)

- Alternative Center For Excellence - Principal Webber gave a brief overview of why Mari-Lynn Joyner and Alissa Cubas have been awarded the WCSA Award.
- Danbury High School - Principal Donovan gave a brief overview of why Claire Ricardo Moreira and Tyler Robert Warren have been awarded the WCSA Award.
- Westside Middle School - Principal LaBanca gave a brief overview of why Dylan Hennessy and Christian Fournier have been awarded the WCSA Award.
- Rogers Park Middle School - Principal Zaleta gave a brief overview of why Camila Dominguez and Reden Carlo Tuano have been awarded the WCSA Award Award.
- Broadview Middle School - Principal Thomas gave a brief overview of why Matthew Guertin and Alexandra Ilardi have been awarded the WCSA Award.
- Dr. LaBanca stated that three students from WSMSA were recently published in a state literary magazine.
- Dr. LaBanca stated that there was a group of students who qualified for the nationals for National History Day and two students who qualified for the nationals for Invention Convention.
- Dr. Casimiro thanked all of the principals for how hard they work. She thanked Dr. LaBanca for his help with the Distance Learning shift, his efforts and support with helping to organize super users and adding to the philosophical understanding of some of the things that were incorporated into the program.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Dana O'Rourke - The Danbury High PTO would like to promote our "Light up the City Blue & Orange" program. We would like to see the city of Danbury in blue and orange from 6/5/2020 to 6/12/2020 to celebrate our Class of 2020. We are asking all Danbury residents and businesses to show us their blue and orange. It can be lights, signs, balloons, streamers, or anything else!

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 20-55 through Exhibit 20-58, as recommended:

MINUTES

5/11/20 Superintendent Evaluation Committee	20-55(pg.8)
5/13/20 Regular Board Meeting	20-56(pg.9)
5/20/20 Superintendent Evaluation Committee	20-57(pg.22)
5/21/20 Policy Committee	20-58(pg.23)

Motion passed at 6:28 pm

PRESENTATION

Re-Entry and Recovery Plan Update (Summer School, Fall)

- K. Walston stated that we are currently waiting for feedback and formal guidance from the state.
- CSDE receives information from our area RESC Directors from around the state. K. Walston represents Danbury along with EdAdvance.
- In those meetings, they are making recommendations and reviewing multiple considerations for how a reopening can look.
- Hoping for official guidance as early as 5/29/2020.
- The Commissioner's Office has informed the Governor's Office that it is necessary for the districts to have this information for planning efforts as many staff will soon be entering summer vacation.
- It is critical that we are clear on what the guidelines are for the fall.
- There have been two formal re-entry and recovery meetings. They have focused on the mitigation strategies and protocols that will be necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.
- Questions from the day-to-day operations in what a classroom will look like: are we cleaning in between periods? Will common spaces be wiped down regularly? What will this mean when children get off the bus? Will students and staff be required to wear PPE equipment?
- All of this information is being reviewed.
- anticipating that the state will be giving guidance this week. Once we have updates, we will share it with the community and Board when it's available.
- Reviewed five or six different scenarios on what school will look like when we reopen and what cost associated might look like. In that work, that information will be brought to

directors who will give it to the Deputy Commissioner who will then share that with the Commissioner of Education.

- K. Connetta expressed concern. The district is already running a deficit in transportation. If the guidelines that they are talking about for how many kids are to be on transportation, she is concerned that will cripple our operations. Dr. Pascarella stated that he has communicated that loudly and often to the mayor's office. We are all wondering how we can possibly move into the new culture with the budgets that we have. Dr. Pascarella has asked the mayor that, if we do this, what kind of reimbursement money can we expect?
- Dr. Pascrealla stated that elementary will look different from secondary. Transportation will be part of it. We will also have social distancing as part of it, where classrooms will have to be divided. That is an additional expense.
- K. Conetta asked if the guidelines come down by the state, and that is not financially feasible for us to do, what does that mean for us in the fall? Dr. Pascarella stated that he spoke to the mayor a few weeks ago and informed him that if the district cannot handle it, there is no way the Board will be responsible, the City will have to help. If the state board gives us the option versus mandating, that is a different story. That is why Dr. Pascarella has asked if we will have guidelines or mandates. If we had that information, then we can intellectually make the decisions. We already have parents that have indicated that they question whether or not they feel comfortable sending their children back to school in the fall. Staff has already expressed their feelings on going back in the fall as well.
- J. DaSilva asked if there anything the Board members need to do at this time? Dr. Pascarella asked if anyone has the opportunity to speak to the delegation and inform them that we need to know if we have guidelines or mandates to follow, that will help us get a plan ready.
- R. Chaleski stated that we are planning for the unknown. Are their contingency plans in place after we reopen and if we have to reclose? Dr. Pascarella stated that if we close, we will go back to Distance Learning and we would do that better. That would be our only option. K. Walston stated that if there is another outbreak in the community, the contact tracing protocols that are now in place will help us to be able to nail it down. We may not have a choice but to close all schools, but we feel like the contact tracing will give us the ability to just close some schools, if we feel like it is contained.
- K. Truschsess stated that we are also starting to engage in feedback from the school level administration like what went well in distance learning and what we can improve upon. Already looking to put those plans in place so we can do Distance Learning better than where we left off at the end of the year.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that they have at least a couple dozen “do over” items on how we could make Distance Learning better. Such as training students on how to use some of the Distance Learning programs with adult help and show them how to navigate the programs. We will be concentrating on a few of those right when we come back to school. This way, if something should happen and we have to go back to Distance Learning, the students will be better equipped on the online programs. Also spoke briefly about summer school and finding a way to send students home with materials for learning such as blocks for modeling and composition notebooks, items that students do not have at home. Maybe create individualized learning packs for students that they go home with. Some modest things but definitely tools. This way they have learning materials at home that can support the curriculum.

- R. Jannelli stated that assuming there is a distance requirement such as six feet. The classroom would encompass perhaps two classrooms. Who would teach those two classrooms? Add the element of parents that want to keep the students home. Who would teach them? How do you breakout teaching those three parts? Dr. Pascarella stated that R. Jalbert is currently setting up model classrooms using the six feet apart protocol. It would probably be two classrooms. If that is the case, it would be a team-teaching situation that the district would need to work with the unions. Perhaps a certified teacher and a paraprofessional co-teaching. The youngsters that would be home, would not be part of that classroom, they would be doing Distance Learning. It would be an all hands-on deck approach, but they would not all be certified. R. Jannelli stated that we are jumping through hoops and all these enormous costs being taken away from the education process. It would be smarter to continue the online learning until Covid-19 gets under control.
- A. Russo stated that no matter what, we need to err on the side of safety. J. DaSilva stated that he will support the safest decision. No matter what we do, someone will not be happy. So, we err on the side of safety for the children and staff.
- J. DaSilva asked if it is better to have elementary students in school and allow the secondary schools to continue with Distance Learning or do alternating days. Dr. Casimiro said the youngest kids struggle the most. Mainly because our K-5 was not flooded with technology prior to this. There is better saturation at the secondary level. Many teachers were using Google Classroom already. Grades 4 and 5 not as bad. But when you get down to the little ones (K-3), it becomes very challenging. If we had some time with this before it happened and we had these devices in their hands and they were used to using them and logging on, it would have been a bit easier. This is part of the “do over”. We do a lot of small group instruction at elementary level because the needs vary. Doing that with youngest learners is important, as well as with our ELL and SPED students. Having them in person would be ideal. K. Truchsess stated that there are some special populations that we will need to think about differently, like ELL and SPED, as we unroll this plan. Dr. Pascarella stated that as we find out the expectations, we can get moving in the right direction.

ACTION ITEMS

A. April 2020 - Operating Results Analysis (General Funds and Grants)

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. Britton that the Board of Education accept the April 2020 Operating Results Analysis (General Funds and Grants, in accordance with 20-59(pg.24)

K. Conetta asked about the transportation budget. When we got the emergency appropriation from the City, were the transportation costs factored into that? C. Leborious stated that they were but there was still a gap in transportation that exceeded the credit that we got for the closure. Typically, what we had been doing in the past when we had an experience in insurance that was better than expected, we used that to cover some gaps. \$300,000 was used to offset the transportation costs. Also getting a credit from STA for what we negotiated towards next year's budget.

Motion passed at 6:59 pm

B. Policy 6114.8 -Emergencies and Preparedness

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education accept for second reading and adoption Policy 6114.8 - Emergencies and Preparedness, as accepted by the Policy Committee. 20- 60(pg.35)

Dr. Pascarella has not received any feedback on this.

Abstained by J. DaSilva

Motion passed at 7:00 pm

C..Policy 2131.1 - Appointment of Designee for Superintendent

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by R. Chaleski that the Board of Education accept for second reading and adoption Policy 2131.1 - Appointment of Designee for Superintendent, as amended and accepted by the Policy Committee. 20- 61(pg.39)

Dr. Pascarella has not received any feedback on this.

Motion passed at 7:01 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- NEASC Draft Preliminary Update
 - D. Donovan stated that DHS did receive its full accreditation. Has not yet received a full report but the summary does state we have been accredited once again for the next ten years. That has a lot to do with the leadership, administration, teachers and students.
 - The NEASC committee was impressed with DHS because of its size, how well it is run and the positive school climate.
 - DHS was commended for rubrics and personalization of instruction, small group instruction, formative assessments, communication, safe and positive school climate, open enrollment, FLEX, health services, dedication of custodial staff and the Blackbox Theater.
 - Commision did express concerns with two different categories, one of which DHS was put on a warning. A special report has to be written by February of 2021. If these issues are not fixed, accreditation can be in jeopardy.
 - Staffing levels, materials, technology, equipment, supplies and facilities do not support the 21st century curriculum.
 - Overcrowded hallways, inadequate and uneven heating and ventilation, plumbing and bathroom issues.
 - ADA compliance including elevators, furniture and fixtures.
 - Insufficient Science labs.
 - Inadequate space for service delivery and student privacy in health services.
 - Outdated, corrosive, and toxic chemicals in the facility.

- Insufficient technology and support for that technology.
 - Excessive class sizes and teacher student loads.
 - Inadequate number of certified/licensed school counselors.
 - Insufficient funding for instructional supplies to deliver the curriculum.
 - What has to be fixed by 2/2021 is:
 - Class sizes and student loads must be reduced.
 - Ensure adequate number of certified/licensed school counselors to support students' needs.
 - Funding of critical instructional supplies.
 - Provide sufficient technology.
 - Address overcrowded hallways, HVAC issues, upgrades of science rooms.
 - Repair pipes in C building and make sure bathrooms are fully functional.
 - D. Donovan stated that while they are doing great things at DHS, there are certain levels of frustration because these are things he cannot control (piping, bathrooms, etc). He will look at Dr. Pascarella, the Board and the City to get these things resolved in a very quick time.
 - A complete list was provided to the Board by K. Pompano.
- Moving Up Ceremonies/Graduation Update
 - K. Walston stated that there are several elementary schools that are requesting to bring some closure to the year in a safe way. He is reviewing the K-5 principal's request with the Department of Health. Principals will be able to communicate something to their respective communities soon.
 - DHS graduation and ACE have shared their plans. Graduation plan for Reach is being reviewed along with the K-5 ceremonies.
 - T. Cunningham stated that Adult Ed would normally be held at WCSU but they are not able to do so this year. They will do something similar to what DHS is doing on (tentatively) 6/18/2020 at DHS. Working out details and will report back to the Board. They want to honor and celebrate the close to 40 graduates.
 - D. Donovan met with the chief of police and other delegates to solidify the plans.
 - Somewhat of a drive through event. Hoping to get instructions out with Google Map drawings to graduates and their families.
 - The front entrance will be closed. Cars will need to go through East Gate through the do not enter.
 - Graduate will get out at the first stop sign. Everything will be roped and marked off to promote social distancing.
 - When it's their child's turn to go, the car pulls up and one person will be allowed to get out of the car to take photos.
 - This will also be streamed live, and someone will be on hand to take pictures.
 - D. Donovan will be on stage handing out the graduation certificates.
 - Students will get an actual diploma after they see D. Donovan.
 - Then another picture station by the garden outside for.
 - They then get in the car with their family and they are done.
 - Need to get through 45 students per hour. Hoping that it will be a steady flow.
 - Letters with directions will go out on 5/28/2020.

- Graduation will be on 6/10, 6/11 and 6/12/2020 from 9am to 3pm.
 - Tents will be used to cover graduates in case it rains.
 - Steady plan with police, safety advocates and volunteers.
 - R. Chaleski asked if there will be limits with certain amounts of people in each car or one car per family? D. Donovan stated that there will be one car per family, no oversize bus or trailers or they will not be able to pull out of exit. Only one person is allowed to leave the car. Everyone will be masked and gloved. Students can remove masks to take pictures. Will track which graduates show up and which days and times, so if there is an outbreak, we can trace who was present. Also taking custodials precautions with wiping down tables.
 - K. Hodgson asked which area this will be? D. Donovan stated that it will be in front of the school by the flag poles.
 - G. Cooper asked which students graduate on which days? D. Donovan stated that students with last names A - F will be on 6/10/2020, G - O will be 6/11/2020 and P - Z will be on 6/12/2020. 45 students per time slot.
 - A. Spallino asked how Board members could help for the graduation? D. Donovan stated that members are more than welcome to come. Can't invite everyone because they don't want more than 5 people around the stage at any given time. D. Donovan and the graduate should be the only ones on stage. Lots of research has gone into this. We do not know how this will go and we may have to make changes as days go on. We have a good, solid plan. There are not many schools that graduate over 700 students so we don't know how this will go. If it rains, it will not be cancelled (unless thundering and lightning). There is no time to reschedule.
 - Cap and gown distribution will be on 6/5/2020. This will be done in a car parade fashion. Police department has limited it to 100 cars starting at 11am starting at Rogers Park Middle School. There will be groups of five people working at different letters of the alphabet. Each person will be assigned to two boxes. That will be more of a party atmosphere where staff can wave to kids because staff will not be allowed at graduation. Has invited 2020 parents to decorate signs and plant them on the hill at DHS. Goal is to fill up the hill with congratulation signs. This could be the day where Board members attend. This will also be an entry through the East Gate do not enter. Whole event will be from 9am to 2pm. Similar to a graduation plan. Use of overflow student parking lot, new parking lot and blackbox lot if needed. Parents do not need to attend but D. Donovan has requested that parents drive the car parade if they can. This way graduates do not have to focus on the road and enjoy their time that day.
- COVID Protocol for Staff
 - K. Thompson stated that there was a protocol put in place because in the last couple of weeks, some of employees have started to return to work on site. It is inevitable that some of them will report symptoms or contact with someone who has tested positive. a protocol was rolled out a week ago for administrators so they would have a cheat sheet on what to do if someone approaches them with that information. It rests heavily on notifying someone from the HR department and K. O'Dowd. Together the process of accessing who else may need to go home will be made in as much real time as we can make it. Important to get something

in writing so they know how to react and what to do on the spot. The more people come in, the more the policy may change. These are basic policies so ultimately; we have documents ready to go if we have to pivot at some point.

- Dr. Pascarella stated that requests were made for the Board meetings to be available in multiple languages. We are looking into that. That will be possible as we move along during Distance Learning.
- K. Truchsess stated that the Granville location is on schedule. They are working on the rooms and permits were approved from the City. Positions have been posted for staff needed for next year. Anticipated entry date is in the third week of August.
- Cottage Street location has been renewed.
- Looking to renew Crosby Street two years.
- Various facilities are being looked at for overcrowding. State had promised to come down and look at some of our facilities. Have not heard from them yet. As soon as we get clarity, the Facilities Committee can have a meeting.
- Building across the Central Office has become available for storage areas.
- J. Britton stated that he attended a community meeting where some legislators were in attendance from the delegation. J. Britton communicated to them about the Osborne Street project they said there was not going to be reimbursement for the part of the project that was office space. A. Iadorola said there would be no issue with reimbursement at the Facilities Committee meeting, so there is conflicting information. Dr. Pascarella stated he would ask about that. J. Britton stated the legislators were also going to get clarification to see if anything changed.

DISCUSSION

- 2020-2021 Budget
 - C. Leborious spoke about the braided funding strategy.
 - The 2019-2020 budget was \$134,986,000. There was an addition of \$1,273,000 due to enrollment.
 - The district asked for an additional \$9,995,129 which brings the district to the requested amount of \$146,254,129 for the 2020-2021 school year.
 - The mayor's budget is proposing \$136,786,000, which is a big difference from our ask.
 - The district is taking a braided approach.
 - The Alliance funding will be \$2,723,000.
 - CARES funding will be \$2,286,030. This is federal money, a relief fund (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief- ESSR). Must be spent by 9/2021. Utilizing these onetime funds as a source of doing some things in the operational budget as well as partnering Covid related activities to ensure the safety of our students which includes sanitizing, potential bussing and potential PPE. A lot of different scenarios to plan for.
 - The grant carryover fund is a result of underspending this year. It is a onetime \$2,268,433 rollover. We have not heard the final word that this is available yet. It is in the budget because districts in Connecticut were told it would be available.

- The City funding will be \$2,541,452. City fund balance is unspent funds that we can utilize with the city's cooperation next year. The district will propose to set up reserves for unpredictability.
- All of those pieces come to \$146,604,914 which is equal to our BOE request.
- City budget is short of \$136.8. The proposed budget is a braided funded strategy that will put the \$146.6 to address our need in 2021. It requires a reprioritization of the alliance expansion funds which was presented to the Board when originally presenting the budget. It includes the one-time funds of the CARES money; grant carry over and the City fund balance. It is due to only these funding streams associated with the Covid closure that enables us to reflect the most crucial needs in next year's plan. It also enables us to set up a reserve for future uncertainty. The budget also includes no proposed cuts to staff or contractual increases, the addition of Covid related safety activities to be planned for and some portion of our DPS priorities that were able to be put forth strictly due to these new revenues associated with the pandemic. It's not our ideal budget, it is the best budget we can put forward now. Although it does not require a reduction in staff, there are some changes in positions. The Finance Committee will go through the budget in detail on 5/28/2020.
- J. DaSilva stated that the way he is reading the presented spreadsheet, it looks like braiding money from everywhere, it gets us to be where we originally intended. C. Leborious stated that is not the same because we now have to spend money in other areas due to the pandemic. It is challenging because we had to use Alliance funding to support some of our other operations versus some expanded projects that we wanted to do. The CARES money has to be dedicated to address social and emotional needs. It is the same number, but not the same spending purposes.

INFORMATION

- Program and Curriculum Update
 - Dr. Casimiro stated that the district is still moving ahead with putting in a new phonics program at the K-5 level. The program is called Being a Reader for K-2 and bolstering the intervention for K-3. Part of the purchases in our budget. Doubled down on intervention programming to help mitigate some of the loss students will have during this time period. Staggering intervention by levels to make sure that we have the appropriate materials at each level to service the students. Still a little up in the air about the rollout depending on how the re-entry into school is. Wonderful partnerships with the SPED Department. Met specifically regarding collaborative training, alignment and the systems expected to see flowing between regular ed and special ed. Welcomes the increased collaboration with SPED. Will be making that purchase very shortly and hoping to train teachers should we get back in the fall or late fall.
 - Expanding and improving ESL programming. Moving forward with a program called EL Chi which is a systemic English Language Development program. Training is expensive so they were going to start with six schools. Now that there is virtual training, trainers can accommodate more trainees and we don't have to pay for transportation, flight or hotel costs. Due to this, the training will be

expanded to all 12 schools. A few added expenses for the materials for the schools but Mr. Gomes was able to absorb some of that in our Title Grants.

- A letter was sent out to parents that we will be shifting acceleration practices in mathematics starting in 8th grade instead of 7th grade. Through a lot of work, research and tracking students over time, we realize that a lot of their proficiencies are what we call fragile proficiencies. They may do well enough to pass some tests, but they don't have deep solid foundational working knowledge. It is a much better route. Starting in the fall of this year. Considered waiting another year but when this disruption hit, realized no one was ready for acceleration next year. District will advance students accordingly. Students will still be on track to take advanced mathematics in high schools should they choose to do so.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- G. Cooper thanked J. DaSilva for serving on the interview panel. J. DaSilva said it was very interesting and the panel was great. Dr. Zaleta did a great job running it. Most impressive part was the applicants who were fantastic and already in our district. We should be very proud of our district that we had four internal candidates that were that good.
- G. Cooper discussed moving the June Board Meeting to 6/9/2020 instead of 6/10/2020 due to the graduation. Dr. Pascrealla stated that will be fine but it will be called a Special Board Meeting which means we can only discuss what is on the agenda.
- G. Cooper stated that the Board would like to thank staff, teachers, students, and parents for the teamwork during these uncharted times that we are facing. Thanked school counselors and non-teachers doing online learning. On behalf of the Board, thank you for working together as a team.

ADJOURNMENT

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by A. Russo that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of May 27, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)