

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, call the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos, Amy Spallino

Absent: Richard Hawley

Also Present: Drs. Sal Pascarella and Kara Casimiro, Kevin Walston, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess and Joe Martino

RECOGNITIONS

Nicole Martone

The Chairperson introduced Nicole Martone, DHS English Department Head, and Teacher, who received the Master Teacher of Honor Award from Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education. The audience gave Ms. Martone a standing ovation.

DHS Principal, Daniel Donovan, thanked the Board for inviting them to the meeting. He told the Board that Ms. Martone has been the head of the English Department at DHS for two years and has been a teacher for 18 years. He gave a history of her teaching career. He said she received this award for her professional development, leadership, community service and exceptional contributions to education. She is currently a doctoral student at Lesley University and already has earned a six-year diploma and master's degree from Quinnipiac University after a bachelor's degree in science from Southern Connecticut State University.

Ms. Martone told the Board that it is truly an honor to be here and to bring her experience to this District. Her aim is to support students' cognitive, social-emotional and physical needs by maintaining a welcoming and safe environment for all using data to support teaching, learning and leading and promoting student engagement. She has served on several school safety and safe school climate/positive behavioral interventions and support committees. She said she is looking forward to working with Dr. Walston who she has worked with previously in Waterbury. Ms. Martone thanked her family and all the educational support she has received to make this possible. She also wanted to thank Greg Euchner who recommended her for this award and the Board for inviting her this evening.

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, presented Mr. Martone with a certificate. Each Board member congratulated her on her exceptional achievement.

Spotlight Your School -- Hayestown Avenue School

The principal, Stephanie Furman, thanked the Board for spotlighting Hayestown Avenue School this evening. She said they do a lot of special things at the school, which you will see in the video presentation. The children at the school were the singers. The video showed their book lending box and

highlighted the summertime reading program, family picnic to kick off the year. The start with “hello” program; buddy bench, art show, and ice cream special, their first talent show; PI days celebrating with pie eating contest and poems. They have a good character program and students are selected on trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring and citizenship. They had a children’s book author at their school, which the students enjoyed. They also had children reading to a dog. Parents and students painted rocks with special messages. The rocks are displayed at the front of the school in the flower bed and adds to the landscape.

Ms. Furman invited the Board to visit her school. She then thanked her staff for coming to the Board meeting. The Board thanked Ms. Furman for the informative video.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tom Young, NEA, at Morris Street School told the Board that they had an open house on September 12 and 13, and a back-to-school picnic that was attended by 260 people. They have a Harvest Fair coming up on October 26th. This evening he wanted to tell the Board about one of their 4th grade students, who was in a serious car accident in New York State. Mr. Young said Morris Street staff has collected \$600+ for the family. The school has had fundraisers. But, we are looking for more funds for the family. If you can help, please do.

Melissa Gabriel thanked the Board for their new interim principal, Kristen Bradley. It has been a smooth transition. She told the Board she is here to speak about the paras. We definitely need paras at Morris Street for Kindergarten and 1st grade. There is a big difference in the abilities of my students. I’m alone and cannot give each one the attention they need. Just one more person in the classroom makes a big difference. We do have some wonderful volunteers. I hope the budget is better to give us at least a part-time para that would be better than none at all. Mr. Young said he wanted to thank Ms. Chaleski, Mr. Jannelli and Mr. Johnston for watching our 4th graders attending Morris Street’s end of the year show.

Kevin Haddad said he is a fourth grade teacher at KSI but is on a leave this year. He thanked Mr. Love for speaking to the Board at the last meeting on the LGBTQ issue. I am here to follow up. There is staff who have to handle this in the classroom and don’t know what to do or what to say. They have not received any kind of training. We need to support all our students and there are small things that can be done even at the elementary level to make a student feel more comfortable. If you have a boy’s line and a girl’s line that it could inadvertently alienate a student without the teacher realizing it. When one child calls another child gay, the teachers don’t know how to hand it. The staff wants this knowledge to better support their students. You are probably thinking of cost. Many districts, once you form a committee could meet two hours on a release day. It would be a win for everyone. He asked for a show of hands if the people in the audience agreed with him. More than 20 hands were raised. Mr. Haddad closed by saying that he does not want a Charter School coming to Danbury.

Melinda Scott, a fourth teacher at Stadley Rough, said she agrees with Kevin and she fully supports the training. She told of an incident with a friend recently who has a first grade student. She said the friend’s child told her that he has a classmate that has two Mothers. We need professional training and I think our parents need it to. Whether we feel one way or a different way, our demographics have changed in Danbury in so many different ways. This is one of those many issues that we really need to be proactive on and get ahead of. What are we doing to educate our staff members, our parents, and our children?

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-111 through 18-113, as recommended:

MINUTES

9/12/18 Board Meeting (Revised)

9/26/18 Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting

9/26/18 Board Meeting

Motion carried at 7:26 pm.

Ms. Chaleski asked that the Minutes of the September 26th Board meeting be revised to recognize what Alisha Nagarsheth told the Board; and add the statistics that Mr. Martino told the Board concerning school lunch; that she made the motion to second the vote on the 2019-2020 school calendar and that Mr. Santos opposed the motion; that the duplicate mention of the Council of Municipal Leaders conference be deleted.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES (2nd Board Meeting each month)

DHS: Jazzlyn Torres, President; Alisha Nagarsheth, Vice President; Gabrielle D'Ostilio, Secretary; Joanna Wenchell, Treasurer.

ACE: Chelsea Wilhelmsson

PRESENTATION

Fall Testing Report – Mr. Kevin Walston, Dr. Kara Casimiro, and Ms. Kara Wanzer

Mr. Walston said that he is happy to be here and to work with this team. He introduced Dr. Kara Casimiro and Ms. Kara Wanzer and said Dr. Casimiro will open the presentation and Ms. Wanzer will give you the updates and walk you through the data. He said he will close out with conclusions and next steps. Also, you will have a Q and A after the presentation.

Dr. Casimiro gave the Board a data slide presentation for the 2017-2018 school year. It addressed evidence-based decision making and response to 2016-2017 school year data. She explained the Programmatic Approach which included K-5 Literacy Committee approach, Departmentalization SSS 4th, and 5th grades, college courses at DHS, ELA program grades 6-8. She went on to discuss the Instructional Approach which included Interventions, Math Curriculum, and EL instructional approach.

Dr. Casimiro and Ms. Wanzer spoke interchangeably about the data report and addressed each slide individually. The slides covered Goal 1: Growth in Student Learning and Achievement and College and Career Readiness for all Students. Ms. Wanzer spoke about K-12 and gave the district's total percentage for October 2017: ELL 26%, FRL 58% and Special Ed 13%. The presentation showed the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) overview explaining what the English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) tests measure and what do the mathematics tests measure. There was a bar chart showing CT SBA ELA 3-5 and 6-8 for Statewide 2016, 2017 and 2018 and for math. A similar chart was for the District for 3-5 and 6-8 for both ELA and Math. For the years 2015 through 2018 the SBA Growth average percentage target achieved slide showed the State of Connecticut vs. Danbury which showed we were slightly behind the State in Math for those years and about the same in English Language Arts. District

Reference Groups (DRGs) were charted compared to Danbury for SBA Achievement percentage of students scored at 3 or above.

An overview of the SAT results was shown with a state and district comparison for 2017-2018. Advanced Placement was mentioned. Dr. Casimiro said that we had 627 AP students taking AP courses in the 2017-2018 school year. 51% were minority students. She also spoke college credit courses: addressing opportunity gaps and opening doors for students – Danbury Early College Opportunity (DECO).

Mr. Walston said the conclusions and considerations summarize the presentation. It shows our students demonstrated an increase in SBA Average Percent Target Achieved in growth from 2016-17 to 2017-18 in ELA, but we lacked a similar pattern of growth overall in our math scores. At the elementary level, we exceeded the 10% growth target in the Smarter Balanced ELA subject's area. In grades 6 through 8, we achieved an 8% gain in ELA growth. In math achievement for SBA, we were 36.8% overall, but the Average Percent of Target growth was 56.16%. We slightly declined in proficiency overall but had a significant growth in grade levels where the new math shifts curriculum was implemented. By the end of 2018-19, all new math shifts programs will be fully implemented from K-8. We celebrated achievement in high needs population which increased from 24.7% in 2015-16 to 28.6% in 2017-18 in math. In ELA, the achievement of high need population increased from 35.7% in 2015-2016 to 37.11% in 2017-18. Both achievement levels are above the State average. Last, but not least, according to the trend data, we exceeded the Alliance SBA Achievement and growth average in both subject areas over the past 3 years.

Mr. Walston went on to tell the Board about the next steps. The stakeholder feedback collected as part of the Nellie Mae Equity Grant will be examined and analyzed for relevant data as part of our instructional programmatic planning, as well as addressing opportunity gaps and in addition to PD including not limited to anti-biased education, cultural competency and LGBTQ training for all. The central office reorganization that included critical district leaders will increase support, monitoring and greater fidelity to implementation of curricula. The PSAT will be administered in grades 8, 9, and 10 in order to support students in accessing Khan Academy and decisions regarding course selection needs. Imagine Learning is now implemented at the kindergarten level in the selected schools in order to close the achievement gap at the earliest intervention point. The Lexia Program was extended to grade 2 to increase proficiency in students significantly below grade level. Elementary math and literacy coaches were reinstated to support teachers and students at the elementary level.

Mr. Walston then addressed LGBTQ training. He said the training was mandatory in Bridgeport, Waterbury, and New Jersey schools. He said his goal is to make sure in a couple of months to outline to the Board and community what a draft professional development plan would look like, then make sure we're kicking off the year in those areas. Our idea is as we are talking about issues around equity and for all kids that we have to talk about all communities. This year's professional development schedule is already set, so the new program would start in the Fall.

Several Board members had questions ranging from individual plans for ESL and students with challenges, which is a growing population; adjustments need to be made in the way we teach; is there something we can look at for seminars parents and/or grandparents to understand the concept; lack of creativity in the district; math scoring is a little concerning; Pilot program; what percentage taking SAT; can we send home a video to help the parents understand the new math shifts.

Dr. Kara Casimiro and Ms. Kara Wanzer answered the Board's questions as follows:

Mr. Jannelli asked for a breakdown of SBA math by groups. They said they could supply that.

Ms. Cooper thanked them for the presentation and also thanked whoever worked with minority AP students to make that number grow to 51%. She said you have to encourage students to do the hard thing.

Mr. Metrena said he is frustrated with the new math shifts. He can't help his 5th grader do long division. She should not be struggling with it. His daughters love reading and writing but hate math. He feels we are missing the absolute basics in math. He said the Board and administration have spent several years redeveloping and tweaking the Common Core math curriculum to no avail. We are doing all these different things and models on how to solve problems but the core foundation ability to add, subtract, divide and multiply – I see a correlation there. How do you expect some of the parents that are challenged in the district to help their children?

About 40% of Danbury students are still learning English and a full two-thirds qualify for free or reduced-price lunch this school year. District leaders said the district's population's continuing shift toward poor and English-language learner students poses another challenge to pulling scores up.

E. Palmares said it is hard to want to know more about math or science when you can't even ask when you need to go to the bathroom. No longer are those children a subset of the student body, but really the 'meat and potatoes' of who the district serves.

Dr. Casimiro said she and her colleagues are trying to address this along the way. When Common Core was introduced, math had the farthest to go. Training teachers and this new shift; our district tried to make this shift ourselves, and I think we pretty quickly found out that it was a bigger test that we realized. We had to go with a program for teachers, students and we are entering the final stages of that curriculum. It will give teachers time to adjust to the new math shifts and the students to adjust to the new math shifts. Math is a challenge for our district and many districts, it has been difficult to implement. We believe we are on the right path. It's not where it needs to be and we can do a lot better, but we have a plan of action in place to address it.

Ms. Molinaro asked if there is a pilot program. The reply was on page 2, we have a Departmentalization program. This is what we did last year. AIS will be this year.

Mr. Karrat asked what percentage is taking the SAT and mentioned there was a significant gap between the District's performances vs. the State. He was referred to the page that addressed the SAT statistics. Mr. Santos asked if we are providing enough training for pilot programs. Dr. Casimiro replied that we do have different types of training for teachers and we are working through how to prioritize and focus the academic demands that our teachers need within limited windows of PD time and especially in light of some of the shifts that occurred in the last couple of years.

Ms. Chaleski stated, I also have an elementary student. The math scoring is a little concerning I don't want to diminish that, but my daughter is learning math in a way with these ginormous numbers, I wish I was taught that way. I'm all for the new math and I'm curious about growth in the departmentalization. Ms. Kara Wanzer stated we can follow up. We did see growth in places at the higher levels. Ms. Chaleski asked where are intervention blocks, across what schools? Dr. Kara Casimiro stated WIN Blocks are across every K-5 school. Principals create time and space in the day have an opportunity to

see intervention or acceleration, what any student would need. Teachers spent October 6 PD day looking at student data to determine how to best serve students in those intervention blocks.

The Superintendent said we talked about time, which is a big issue. We spend a lot of time on Literacy because the math is literacy-based. One of the things I am disappointed in is the amount of time of the school day. Currently, we spend 2½ hours of reading and 70 minutes on math. We are finding within the WIN period that we are teaching things that we should teach in core time. We need more time and we need to figure out how to create more time in the day. The research on extended days is very powerful and very expensive to do. We are looking into that. I am going to talk more about that next year.

The Board thanked them for their presentation.

ACTION ITEMS

2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

Motion carried at 8:25 pm.

A discussion followed requesting that the 2018-2019 Board of Education Goals motion is held until the next Board meeting. Mr. Santos said he was okay voting for it, the caveat being changes can be made this week if we see fit. Mr. Jannelli let hold this until the next Board meeting. He wanted it held to see what comes out at the Workshop on Saturday. Dr. Pascarella said these goals align with the principals and all our work. He is concerned with Goal 1. He said he has no problem putting it on hold, but the timing has to be supporting the work we are doing somehow. Ms. Molinaro said there are no questions that these goals are just fine. What would like to be able to do is add on a few or clarify some of them. Ms. Cooper said we are not looking for a change, only clarification. We want to be sure we are all on the same page.

The Chairperson said right now we have a motion to second the motion. We have to take care of the first motion. Chairperson asked Ms. Cooper if she wanted to withdraw her 'second' of the motion and she responded yes.

MOTION: P. Johnston moved, seconded by F. Santos, that the Board of Education table the 2018-2019 Board of Education Goals.

Motion carried at 8:28 pm.

Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent, Director of Finance and Secretary of the Board to sign the Agreement for Child Nutrition Program

Motion carried at 8:30 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent said we need to set up a Policy Committee Meeting for some policy work. We need to set a date to meet. Mr. Johnston suggested October 24th.

A date was set for October 24th:

5:30-6:00 pm	Policy Committee Meeting
6:00-7:00 pm	Sites and Facilities Meeting
7:00 pm	Board Meeting

Modular Classrooms

The Superintendent asked Mr. Martino how the progress was going with the Modulares. He told the Board that a change order for the project was the fire doors for each classroom which was issued today. We are anticipating that the construction crew will be out of there later in October. Occupancy date will be probably the first week in November. They are building the connector as we speak. It is quite a building hitching all 8 together it is quite a hallway going down.

Charter School Update

The Charter School has been approved by the State Board of Education. The next step in the process is funding which is a state legislative issue. Stay tuned on what is going about that.

Free and Reduced Lunch

In your packet is the latest October 1st lunch numbers showing a three-year snapshot. There is a significant growth in numbers. We are looking at CEP provision, State aid for school lunch. Our digit percentage is high, but there are calculations that we have to get into. Morris Street is high. We will get actual certification on April 1 depending on what schools qualify for free breakfast and free lunch. We are getting a lot more data from the state direct feedback on Food Stamp and Husky Programs.

Ms. Chaleski asked, to clarify it's not a threshold for the whole district to receive free breakfast & lunch. Mr. Martino responded there is a district threshold as well, which we certify in April, right now we're in the low 40s, must be 40 and above.

October 1st Enrollment

Mr. Martino said the enrollment changes daily. Some kids have not registered and some have registered and didn't arrive yet. He said the middle schools are in parity. The growth in most of the elementary schools has dropped. Mill Ridge Primary has a big increase this year. There were small pockets of growth throughout and pockets of flattening in the district. There was a decrease in DHS and an increase in ACE.

The Chairperson asked about enrollment growth on the Westside and do they all go to the same school. Mr. Martino said they do. They go to Mill Ridge. We are still growing. There is more development on that side of town.

Mr. Karrat asked about AIS. Mr. Martino said we have a drop in our Danbury numbers. Newtown has dropped their seat count as is Redding. We are bound by a 60/40 split as we lose out of town kids we have to drop our numbers. I have passed on seats. We are reviewing that. As we get seats, we will slide folks in. It is a challenge to keep the \$1.9 million funding in balance. Mr. Karrat asked if there was an option for a waiver. Mr. Martino said there is language in the State for a waiver and if I had to go there I would. The waiver gives us a year or two to correct the action, but I want to stay in compliance. Danbury students are \$3,000 out of town students are \$7,600. The goal is to keep that balance.

Mr. Karrat asked if the funds can be used for space. Mr. Martino said it is a lottery system. Dr. Pascarella said Danbury was given the school paid entirely by the State. It is really a 70/30 split. If we have a balance problem that we can remedy in two years, we will have to reconstitute. If we come up with 100% Danbury students, we will have to see if we owe the State any money. Mr. Karrat asked if we can start getting some information on the pros and cons. Dr. Pascarella said we can start getting some information. We can get some of the details on 'what if.'

Mr. Santos said looking at some of the numbers and seeing that some of the schools have high numbers are in my opinion overpopulation, can the Sites and Facilities Committee do a study analysis of how many buildings we have now, many classrooms we have, and how many teachers.

Dr. Pascarella said we have space issues. Mr. Martino said we have engaged people to look at space. Some schools are virtually out of land. Some schools have no usable grass left, but there are a few that we can look at with an architect to get options or renovations. There are a few schools that we can look at for \$1,500 to study a building. Mr. Santos said we need a study to prove that out in the public. We have to do something.

Ms. Cooper said we cannot keep putting up portables. What are we going to do when we cannot put up any more portables? We need to talk about building another school. I asked the Board for two schools several years ago. If we did it then, we would not have to keep putting up portables.

Ms. Cooper said she does not support a Charter school. The presentation did not give us concrete answers to the questions. As a Board, we need to see how we stand on Charter Schools because I don't know how everybody else stands. We haven't had an open conversation. They would have to prove to us that Danbury would get zero funding. The only thing bad they said about Danbury was we had no room.

The Chairperson said he was approached by the newspaper and told them we basically don't have enough information and that he could not talk about it since we don't know what the State is going to give us. We need more knowledge in order to make a decision.

Dr. Pascarella said that he did send the letter that the Board asked him to send.

DISCUSSION

INFORMATION

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Board Workshop

Mr. Johnston reminded the Board about the Board Workshop, October 13th, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Ms. Cooper said all members should come. All members raised their hands showing they would be attending.

College Fair at Danbury Mall, October 15th, 5:00-8:30 pm

Mr. Johnston also reminded the Board of the College Fair at the Danbury Mall.

CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 16-17, 2018, Groton, CT

Mr. Martino reminded the Board of the Convention and asked they contact Debbie Warner if they plan to attend.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Palmares told the Board about Mission Health Day. It is free healthcare on Saturday, October 13th at Western CT State University, Midtown campus, 181 White Street. This is a great opportunity for parents. Guests will have access to medical services, referrals for primary care vaccines, cancer screening, and other medical services. The doctors are from Danbury Hospital. Last year 450 people were seen. For more information, people could contact her.

Mr. Jannelli said they are looking for volunteers to represent the Danbury Board for a non-profit Stand Together Makes a Difference Committee. If anyone has any interest to let him know. He said it is important that a member is on this Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by E. Palmares that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the Danbury Schools Administrators Association (DSAA) and update on pending litigation, with possible action in Public Session.

Motion carried 8:56 pm.

- Present: Rachel Chaleski Gladys Cooper Richard Jannelli
- Patrick Johnston Frederick Karrat David Metrena
- Kathleen Molinaro Emanuela Palmares Farley Santos
- Amy Spallino
- Absent: Richard Hawley
- Also Present: Dr. Sal Pascarella, Kevin Walston, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess, Joe Martino

The Chairperson called the Executive Session to order at 9:03 pm and turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education returns to Public Session.

Motion carried at 9:30 pm.

MOTION: F. Santos moved, seconded by E. Palmares that the Board of Education ratify the contract with the Danbury School Administrators Association (DSAA) as proposed.

Motion carried at 9:31 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education adjourn its October 10, 2018 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(the meeting was videotaped)