

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Richard Jannelli,
Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Emanuela Palmares, Amy Spallino

Absent: Gladys Cooper, David Metrena and Ralph Pietrafesa

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

AMEND THE CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Rachel Chaleski moved, seconded by Kate Conetta, to amend the Consent calendar of the October 23, 2019 Board meeting to include a recognition of Pembroke Elementary 4th Grade students, J.D. Andrews and Alex Ascone for organizing a fundraiser that collected \$1,500 for the victims of hurricane Dorian.

MOTION: Further, to amend the agenda to add to the consent calendar the acceptance of donations from the Western Ct Academy of International Studies Parent Teacher Organization (\$15,828) to update the sound system and also to Steve and Jenn Borst (\$490) for the handing microphones in the WCAIS ampi-theater.

MOTION: Rachel Chaleski moved, seconded by Joseph Britton that the Board of Education add an Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

Motion passed at 7:10 pm.

RECOGNITIONS

Broadview Middle School – Update Chromebooks
from Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and New Hope Baptist Church

Darryl Dasent, School Counselor at Broadview told the Board that it is his pleasure to tell them on October 8th Broadview had their first, and hopefully, their annual public ceremony. This was an opportunity for us to give our 13 Chromebooks to students that needed one and did not have computer access, so this is pretty awesome. We didn't just hand out the Chromebooks. The students had to go through a rigorous interview process. They had questions about how they can use Chromebooks to help them benefit academically. They also gave us information on how they were able to accomplish their schoolwork before and how they had to walk blocks to go to the library and also how they had to do their homework and

projects on their cell phones, as challenging as that may sound. On one hand, I see the perseverance and resiliency of the student that we have in our schools and I also see a need. I am happy that we met this need. Dr. Thomas said we are going to hear from the students and what the program meant to them. A Board member asked about following up with the students and Dr. Thomas said we'll do a follow-up on the students. We just didn't want to hand them to the students, so we actually gave them to the parents for their child. In a sense we were helping them to guide their children. Daryl said he would like to acknowledge people that helped make this event happen; Dr. Thomas, Principal of Broadview Middle School, Leroy Parker, Pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Thank you for having me.

Pembroke Elementary 4th Grade Students

Kelly Truchsess introduced J. D. Andrews and Alex Ascone. She told the Board that these two fourth grade students raised \$1,500 in just four school days for hurricane Dorian victims. Together they came up with an idea to do a 'Penny Wars' activity. They set up buckets in the classrooms and urged their classmates to donate pennies to the cause. In just four school days they organized the fundraiser that collected \$1,500 to donate to the Red Cross for the hurricane victims. These two students did good community work and I think we are going to see great things from them in the years to come. Unfortunately, your principal Dr. Sharon Epple could not be here tonight. Following is a letter she asked me to read to you on her behalf:

"I am so pleased that Alex and JD are being recognized for the selfless initiative they took. The boys were struck and moved by the destruction of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas and Alex proposed Penny Wars at Pembroke. JD, his good friend, immediately jumped on board. They created a flyer that was sent home with all Pembroke students, made announcements to encourage competition between classrooms and collected and counted all the spare change and donations that poured in. In only FOUR days, the boys collected OVER \$1,500 to donate to the Red Cross to assist with recovery in the Bahamas. I couldn't be more proud of their initiative and leadership!"

Dr. Pascarella told the boys that he appreciated what they have done. He also extended his thanks to their parents. Mr. Johnston gave J.D. and Alex certificates of appreciation.

Director of Finance

Courtney LeBorious gave the Board a background of her experiences and said she is very happy to become part of the Danbury Public School system.

The Chairperson said we are happy to have you here. Congratulations on your new position.

Kim Thompson told the Board that we had a lot of applicants. We started at 9 and got down to 3. And, as a group, we could not be happier than to have her join us. She brings not only a wealth of experience but enthusiasm and will serve us well.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - Rachel Chaleski moved, seconded by Frederick Karrat that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-131 through 19-134, as recommended:

MINUTES

10/2/19 Policy Committee Meeting
10/10/19 Policy Committee Meeting
10/10/19 Board Meeting
10/16/19 Special Board Meeting

DONATIONS

Accept a donation from the Western Ct Academy of International Studies Parent Teacher Organization (\$15,828) to update the sound system.

Accept donation from Steve and Jenn Borst (\$490) for the hanging microphones in the WCAIS amphi-theater.

Rachel Chaleski listed several corrections to the October 10, 2019 Minutes. Patrick Johnston said this is one reason why it is important to speak into the microphones so that the meeting can be recorded. The minutes will be amended.

Motion passed at 7:15 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Spotlight Your School – Adult Education Program

Terence Cunningham, Regional Director of the Adult Education Program said he appreciates this opportunity to tell the Board how this program enhances the lives of hundreds of families in the community. WERACE is a mandated free program offered to adult learners age 17 and up who live in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, Easton, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding, and Ridgefield. Our staff is dedicated to helping them find ways to succeed and to meet their educational goals and achieve their dreams. We offer a variety of educational programs including High School Completion, Adult Basic Education, General Education Development (GED), ESL and Citizenship. We also offer college and career counseling services for students in all our programs.

Mr. Cunningham explained what each program is comprised of. He went on to say they have dedicated teachers and staff giving our students the best possible opportunities to be successful in life. We help them transition themselves, not just with a high school diploma or a GED, but to be prepared for the next stage of their lives with the tools to be successful citizens. In 2019 we had a total of 780 students ages 17-60+. Of 780 students ages 27% are ages 17-24, from 25-44 is 53%, age 45+ is 20%. There were 180 in CDP, 63 are adult basic education and GED, 523 are ESL and 14 are citizenship.

Mr. Cunningham then introduced the staff that is here this evening: Cecilia Veiga, ESL Coordinator, Ashley Fiorita, Counselor, and Jody Huzina, Program Manager. He also said there are a couple of students here tonight as well, Kim Light, Edgar, and Dalilia Bustamante.

Ms. Huzina explained to the Board the federal and community grants that allow them to expand their programming outside of what they are able to do with their mandated programs and funding: Program Enhancement projects, or PEPS, are federally funded programs through the CSDE and Out of School Youth Grant is also federal funded, but through NRWIB.

Ms. Fiorita explained the DCAP (Danbury Career Achievement Program). It is an out of school youth program that is entirely funded by the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board. It offers hands-on vocational training to eligible out of school youth between the ages of 17-24. Through this program, we are able to pay for student's tuition, supplies, books and even gas cards or bus passes.

IELCE, (Integrated English Language and Community Engagement) is an advanced level of ESL course that includes; Civic engagement, how to find and maintain employment, how to make greater use of community resources. It also provides access to the training program at TBICO where students earn a National Recognized Credential in Customer Service or Microsoft Office. We have 34 graduates from this program and some of them have already found jobs in the customer service area. The Workforce Readiness grant provides students with career exploration coursework and opportunities for experiential learning in the form of job shadows and unpaid internships. Transitions grant is career and college exploration to assist students in developing individual success plans and completing admission requirements for post-secondary education and programs. DCAP (Danbury Career Achievement Program) is a federally funded program that offers hands-on vocational training and educational opportunities to eligible out of school youth between the ages of 17-24. There is no cost to be accepted as a DCAP candidate. All tuitions supplied are paid for through WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act), federal funding. Family Literacy provides ESL and parent education classes to support parents in becoming partners in their child's education. Teaching effective parenting strategies and promotion communication and literacy skills in a 2 generational approach

Mr. Cunningham said we are proud of what we are doing. We need your continued support to make our programs more successful and he invited the Board to visit their program. He thanked the Board members for attending their graduation exercises. We have several students here and he asked them to stand. The Board and audience applauded.

Dr. Pascarella and Mr. Johnston thanked them for the presentation this evening.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

ACE Representative: Tamara Souza

I would like to thank you for allowing me to represent the Alternative Center for Excellence and share what is going on with our family.

- On October 10th a group of ACE students met with Judy Coco and Kevin Walston to be a part of the discussion regarding the District's equity work.
- On October 15th Rob Melillo took 6 students to participate in a STARS workshop with 2 other Alternative Programs that were focused on building community.
- On October 17th Katja Piergostini took the Environmental Science students to plant shrubs in a buffer zone along the Still River as a part of the Still River Project.
- On October 17th in the afternoon Paul Thrasher took his financial literacy class to experience the inner workings of a local music studio owned by one of our staff members, Kenny Vascuez.

- On October 22nd Kyle Trocolla set a Full Sail University workshop day at ACE including Sports Media, Gaming Production, Music Production, and Film Making.
- On Thursday, October 24th Angelea Fingado and I will be participating in a community day regarding Equity at the DHS Black Box Theatre.

Thanks so much for your continued support of our effort to educate, engage, and empower at the Alternative Center. May America always be above everything and God above everyone. Thank you.

DHS Representatives - Not present

PRESENTATION

ACTION ITEMS

September 2019 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund & Grants)

MOTION: Rachael Chaleski moved, seconded by Frederick Karrat that the Board of Education accept the September 2019 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund & Grants)

During the month of September, the district expended \$10,724,323 resulting in fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$19,214,420 which represents 14.2% of the General Fund budget.

During the month of September, the district expended \$524,026 resulting in fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$1,096,217 which represents 11.6% of the Grants budget.

Motion passed at 7:45 pm.

The Superintendent said that Ann Adriani, Assistant Finance Director has created a report. Ms. Adriani directed the Board to the financial report. She said the top sheet where we normally show the budget and the month to date expenditures was modified to add additional columns to show the anticipated request that we've asked for from the City. \$134,986,000 represents our awarded general fund budget which includes \$500,000 from the Matrix Development, but we have not received that. The \$1.273 million increase we asked for is for the enrollment growth and the additional increases to special education costs. Our encumbrances are for the first quarter which only includes the first month of the school year. A lot of the encumbrances are projections based on the prior year, especially in the area of Special Education as new contracts come in and become available. We will have a better understanding of those costs over the next month or two. Additionally, we projected claims of the health insurance based on last year and we will continue to monitor this along with the projections. The second page is a summary of where we are seeing the shortfalls. We are running a deficit of about \$780,332 in salaries. Basically, it's staffing for the additional enrollment and the increased graduation requirements for newly arriving high school students. We are monitoring the tutoring staffing levels which currently is showing a deficit of \$270,066. We also need additional PT/OT support for the additional enrollment. Our employee benefits are in line with our overall projections. The transportation account shows increased stress this year due to four additional buses for the enrollment growth. In Special Education for outplacements, right now, we are projecting a deficit of \$560,164. Athletic insurance's deficit is \$30,022. We have had a freeze on our supplies account for some time. Overall, we are showing a deficit of \$1,523,788 in the 500 series accounts. Ms. Adriani said she does have a spreadsheet showing all the shortfalls.

Mr. Jannelli thanked Ms. Adriani for presenting the monthly financial report in this way. He said the question he had is the appropriation. I'm anticipating us getting the \$1+2 million. I understand, but I may be wrong, that this particular council meeting coming up they are going to ask us to give the appropriation. Am I wrong or are they going to extend us to the end of the year to the extent of our negative position? He asked Dr. Pascarella if he was wrong and how it was going to work. His reply was the Mayor has to go to the council for approval.

A discussion ensued on how the funds are issued, whether be a drawdown, lump-sum funding or funding as we go along. Dr. Pascarella said he is not certain how the money rolls to us. Mr. Jannelli said he doesn't care if it is one check or not. Are they going to give us an emergency \$1.3 million dollars? He mentioned it is illegal for us to have a deficit.

2019-2020 Superintendent's Goals

MOTION: Rachel Chaleski moved, seconded by Kate Conetta that the Board of Education accept the 2019-2020 Superintendent's Goals

Motion passed at 8:00 pm.

Rachel Chaleski said she appreciates the detail update on the goals. But what she would like to see at the end of the year, is the specific outcome that matches each goal; just either next to each goal or right under each goal. That is my only feedback. But I appreciate the detail and the updated goals.

Patrick Johnston said reiterated Ms. Chaleski and said the specific outcome for each goal would be appreciated.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Facility/Enrollment Update

The Superintendent said the Official report is as of October 1st, but we had until October 15th to lock in the enrollment. So, the dollar number that was just mentioned earlier tonight is relative in regard to transportation.

Community Workshop on Equity, October 24, 8:00-12:00, DHS Black Box

Tomorrow we have a workshop starting at 8:00 am. The workshop will be with the feedback from the group that we had last December. We will go over our plan to see if, in fact, it is still in the direction that they were talking about. We will be making any adjustments we need to after tomorrow and bring it back to you sometime in November as a draft for your consideration.

DISCUSSION

INFORMATION

Revisions to 7-109 Wellness Regulations

Dr. Pascarella said regulations just fall under the policy. This is on the agenda just for information. There was a question about regulations. Ms. Thompson said the regulations are just how the policy is carried out.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Johnston said he reached out to Tom Mooney regarding the grievance and he has not heard back yet. Ms. Thompson said the timeframe was 10 school days. Mr. Johnston thought it was 10 calendar days and now realizes it was school days. Ms. Thompson told him what the timeframe was. Mr. Johnston was relieved that they had a time buffer.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Emanuel Palmares spoke about the WERACE program. She said if you were not able to go the graduation she urges the Board to visit the program to see the students and faculty. It is one of those classic stories in Danbury. It started with one purpose and has evolved into many programs servicing the community.

Amy Spallino said she went to Spooky Story Night at Stadley Rough School last week. The students came dressed in their costumes with their parents. They had five stations in the hallway with three teachers reading stories and acting it out, really animated. There were projects in the library and parents were involved. It was for one hour. Attendance grows every year. Hats off to Stadley Rough.

Amy Spallino told the Board that the Ad hoc Committee had a meeting last night. I just want to share with you what we are working on. Board professional development is one thing and we've come up with some other initiatives we want to put into place for the new Board members that will be coming on after the election. There are a couple of things and dates we would like to keep in mind. January 15th, Wednesday night, at 5:30-7:00 pm CABA representatives will be here; also we are just getting ready to prepare a packet of directions for the new Board members. We want to have a new Board member orientation by the Ad hoc subcommittee along with the administration's orientation and do that on Thursday evening, December 5th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Kate Conetta moved, seconded by Joseph Britton that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.

Motion passed at 8:12 pm.

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Emanuela Palmares, Amy Spallino

Absent: Gladys Cooper, David Metrena, Ralph Pietrafesa

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Kara Casimiro

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnson, called the meeting to order and turned it over to Kim Thompson.

A discussion ensued.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: Frederick Karrat, moved seconded by Richard Jannelli that the Board returns to Public Session.

Motion carried at 8:23 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Frederick Karrat moved, seconded by Richard Jannelli, that the Board of Education adjourn its October 23, 2019 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting Videotaped)