

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2018- 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: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos, Amy Spallino

Absent: Richard Hawley and David Metrena

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

RECOGNITIONS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Robert Pote thanked the Board on behalf of Western Connecticut State University's, Pre-Collegiate and Access Program. He said he wants to recognize Mr. Walston who visited WCSU this summer to see the Minority and Bilingual Teaching Pipeline Program. He said we have three students here tonight who participated in the Program, and they are going to tell you about where they are today and where they are going. They will give you an invitation to what is going on later.

Good Evening, my name is Rohiny Perez, I was born in Bolivia. I'm a senior and I'm enrolled in the ESL program at Danbury High School. Also, I'm part of the minority bilingual teaching pipeline program. It would be an honor for us to have you at our poster session, observing the work that we have been doing during this program. Our poster session will take place on Thursday, December 6, from 6 to 7:30 pm. At Westcon University in the Midtown Campus. It's important for us have your presence there, due to your support and commitment to our program. Thank you for your time and support. We hope to see you on December 6. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

Good evening, my name is Gloria Dickson, I was born in Nigeria, I am a junior at Danbury High School and I am also a part of the Minority and Bilingual Teaching Pipeline. At the end of our program we have an annual poster session, in this session we present the work we have completed in both our summer and fall semesters. During the summer we taught students at Ellsworth Avenue Elementary school and completed lesson plans. Currently we now observe teachers at Danbury High School, where we learn the importance of classroom management, teaching strategies, differentiation and assessments.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jasmely Rodriguez and I am currently a senior at Danbury High School. I was born here in Danbury, but my family, with whom I learned Spanish as my first language, is originally from the Dominican Republic. Like my fellow peers, I

am a part of the Minority and Bilingual Teaching Pipeline. This program is a partnership between Western Connecticut State University and Danbury Public Schools. It provides students with the opportunity to get first-hand experience teaching. This program has two parts: a summer semester and a fall semester. When completing the course, students receive 3 free college credits as well as elective credits.

Melinda Scott, teacher at Stadley Rough, told the Board that she just wanted to follow up with her comments from the last meeting. She said I was very excited to hear after I spoke in public participation that Mr. Walston reported that the district is moving forward with plans for LGBTQ training. I was very saddened to read the extremely horrible and negative online comments to the article that Zach Murdock wrote in the paper. These comments were so hurtful and awful, but they were also a clear sign of just why we need this training for our students, our teachers, and our parents. I also mentioned that at Stadley Rough, Shannon Henggeler does the morning announcements with students and has started doing shout outs. My students were very excited to hear their names over the loudspeaker, everyone likes to hear themselves mentioned so I wanted to give a shout out to Mr. Jannelli and Mr. Metrena for responding to emails I sent during the last meeting when I wanted to respond to comments they made, but since I was unable, I sent them email. Both responded the next day. I know that they too are super busy, so I appreciated the time they took to do so. I also thanked Ms. Spallino for attending our PTO meeting. It is great to see the Board members come to our school.

Tricia Robinson's daughter Kiran Suri, told the Board that she goes to AIS. In the Bridges of Peace and Hope Program, they help people in Africa and around the world. They sent seeds to Puerto Rico after the hurricane. They are working to spread the club to other parts of the world. Ms. Robinson, a parent whose children attend the AIS, told the Board that she is here today to talk about Spanish. She learned Spanish when she was in Indiana from Kindergarten through Junior High School, where we had level 11 and 12. She said she talked with several parents whose kids have finished AIS and have some strong concerns about what will happen once my child graduates AIS. She has been told middle school has eliminated all of the advanced Spanish teachings, and she is not sure if what she heard was right about what most colleges require. She has heard from a parent that their child who was accepted in a major college needed to complete three levels become accepted. It has been spreading around not to bother taking Spanish until you are in high school and you can take 1, 2, and 3, there because advanced work doesn't help you. Once you get to high school, there are not enough Spanish classes. It would be really helpful to know what is right because I think there is a lot of misinformation out there. I am really impressed with the teachers that are here tonight. My daughter is in second grade and my older daughter in fifth grade. Languages are very important in our community that has 50 percent Hispanic. Everyone should at least speak two languages. I would appreciate any information on that.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-120 through 18-122, as recommended:

MINUTES

9/26/18 Revised Board Minutes

10/10/18 Board Minutes

10/13/18 Board Workshop

Motion carried at 7:22 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Academy for International Studies Elementary Magnet School

Mr. Roche thanked the Board for hosting AIS tonight. He also extended his thanks to Kim Thompson for the substitute teachers. He then introduced three special students at AIS: Sydney Borst, Emma Pires, and Joah Gertenfeld, who are representatives of the Student Leadership Team.

Sydney Borst said to the Board, I want to tell you a story about a little girl crying on the bus. The first day I saw her crying on the bus I thought I should help and the second day I decided I should sit with her. I came home with a note that said I was very kind to this little girl and maybe I should get on the bus at her stop. So my Mom drove me to her stop and I got on with her and she had never gotten the bus yet so it was a big accomplishment for her to get on the bus. I was very proud of her at that moment and then she came and she got on that stop. Within a week, she was racing with my sister and me to the bus, which was a huge accomplishment. I think this helps because we want to help everybody feel like they're welcome and that they should never feel like they're down or that they're feeling bad.

Emma Pires told the Board why we have a Leadership Club. It helps kids and makes them feel like they have a voice in our community and that our voices matter. It is not about being the boss or a leader, it's about doing the right thing.

Joah Gerstenfeld told the Board that this is his second year in Student Leadership. He said he is the co-editor of the school newspaper, AIS TIMES. The school newspaper is a good addition to our school. It gives all students a voice. It showcases the many talented and creative writing we have at AIS. It promotes a sense of community and finally, it is fun. We feature trivia questions and review interesting facts. I'm proud to be a part of it. Students handed out copies of the first edition of the newspaper to the Board. Mr. Roche mentioned that the students wrote and edited it themselves.

Mr. Farley said he wanted Sydney to know the importance of what she did for that kindergartener and how that helped her. But just to give you a little perspective on what was happening in her mind, I was that little kid that cried on my first day of school, on the second day and the third day. Yes, I had someone like you who also did the same thing and that changed my world. It was a major thing for me at that age. So, congratulations.

Marc Poliquin, who is the AIS Math Specialist and was referred to by Mr. Roche as the 'Math Coach', talked about school climate. He said he has been a teacher for 10 years and this is his first year as coach. He went on to tell the Board that it was with trepidation that he went into a new transition and a new school. He was impressed with what happens in that building. Every single thing they do in their classroom is in the best interest of kids. It was a blessed invitation when Mr. Roche gave me the opportunity to work here. It feels like its home already. Teachers in the audience stood up and applauded.

Matthew Calvanese - AIS 4th Grade Math Team Teacher, talked about departmentalization. After eight years in first grade, I joined the 4th grade. I know that you don't always get to hear good things. Being focused on one subject gives me the opportunity to get to know all 67 math students instead of only 22. I am able to work closely with them. One thing the students say is

they can now do science for 70 minutes a week. They like to have the experience with different teachers instead of one teacher in one room.

Mr. Roche then started the video presentation. The opening showed an “International Day of Peace” Assembly. Students introduced “May Peace Prevail on Earth” speaking 13 different languages in their native tongue. The presentation showed students working in math and other classes. It also showed student chorus with Mr. John Farrell; also students working in the garden program. Mr. Roche thanked the Board for allowing them to speak this evening.

Mr. Roche thanked Ms. Chaleski for being our kindergarten interventionist last year helping students get on grade level. It helped because we were down a number of staff last year. We had the highest math performance you’ve ever had at the school and that’s because of the people back here (as he pointed to the audience) and the wonderful staff we have. We work very hard as you know and will persevere until we are 100%. We have some amazing achievements in math and you may have heard that Math Olympiads is coming to AIS. 25 students will be performing in our Math Olympiads Club. We thank you for your continued support. Mr. Roche thanked Mr. Jannelli for coming during Start With Hello week and thanked Mary Levasseur for coordinating it. He thanked parents, students and staff for coming tonight.

Dr. Pascarella asked that Mr. Roche to tell the Board about the trip to Washington, DC. Mr. Roche said we were invited to Washington because we were awarded the Green Ribbon. There were several presentations on sustainability at the American University. We met a lot of people from all over the country, a lot of initiatives. There is a lot of science to be taught so it’s good we are bringing science back in terms of the garden that you saw in the video. It was an exciting trip. We had parents and teachers with us and it was an honor to be there. We are the only school in Connecticut to receive this Green National Award for Environmental Science.

Mr. Jannelli said AIS had “Start with Hello” luncheon, which he and Ms. Chaleski attended. Community members were invited for lunch. They had tables set up for the Fire Department, Police Department the Board of Education. Students wrote letters and put them on each table. I will give these letters to Debbie Warner to circulate to the Board. For example, one letter said, “I would like to have more recess; fifty recesses; my own iPad; have parents have lunch with us 4 days a week; a week off. The conversations with the grades were most interesting. I was asked if I could make a wish come true – I didn’t have an answer to that question. It was an enlightening experience.

Ms. Lori Woodruff, a teacher at AIS told the Board to mark their calendars for April 4-5, 2019. Our Theater Magnets are about to embark on our 6th show since the school first opened and it will be a musical. We will let you know more information when it closer to the time date.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES (4th Wednesday Board Meeting each month)

DHS Student, Joanna Wenchell, told the Board that on Thursday, October 18th Girls XC won their first FCIAC championship in school history. Boys came in second. Club fair at the school Thursday where the students and especially freshmen have the chance to check out the different clubs the school has to offer and get involved. Boys’ soccer qualified for #1 FCIAC spot last night by defeating Trumbull. First quarter closes November 9th Flex is continuing, and it seems to be successful hopes of it working - Mr. Donovan meets with group of teachers he meets with to discuss flaws and how to improve them Herf Jones of Danbury held our first event in the Black Box with group of students from surrounding districts who were all part of their yearbook

staffs. That was the first main event. Dr. Pascarella also used it yesterday to meet with superintendents and legislatures!

PRESENTATION - None

ACTION ITEMS

Small Improvement Grant

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Small Improvement Grant to the State Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

Motion carried at 7:45 pm.

2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education remove from the table the 2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

Motion carried at 7:46 pm.

2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Board of Education Goals

Motion carried at 7:47 pm.

September 2018 –Operating Results Analysis (General Fund/Grants/Projects)

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education accept the September 2018 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund/Grant/Projects)

Motion carried at 7:48 pm.

Mr. Martino told the Board that during the month of September 2018, the District expended \$10,442,276 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$22,651,219, which represents an expenditure of 17.1% of the General Fund budget.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

WCSA Regional Efficiency Meeting with Legislators, October 23

Dr. Pascarella said that he and other Superintendents from the area met with several Legislators on October 23 in the Black Box at AIS. The discussions were about ways of working together and the challenges that we face in our districts; one being the state’s student data privacy laws. It was suggested to have another meeting after the election sometime in the first week in December to go over priorities for the legislative session with the incoming group of elected lawmakers because we don’t know what’s going to happen with a new governor and that could pose new challenges.

Dr. Pascarella said the meeting went very well. Mr. Martino agreed. A major topic was the student data privacy. He said we have over 100 applications that contain information. Every district has to comply at the state level. It would be easier to have one large blanket document sent to every district over these agreements. It’s a complicated process and we all use the same power school and busing software.

Revised Spotlight Your School Schedule

R. Chaleski said with the consensus of our Workshop to have schools present at every other meeting, there is a revised schedule in the packet just to take a look. So we wouldn't see AIS again until two years from now. G. Cooper asked if this list could be turned around if we wanted some information about a school could we bring them in. Dr. Pascarella answered, yes.

Say Something App

Dr. Pascarella said we do have an APP for this, but we are continuing to study this internally. We are looking at a more formal system. Our kids are very well versed on it. We do have a system of reporting incidences. We had the Police Chief here last week and talked about the options. We are trying to find some districts of our size to look at the operational challenges.

Veterans' Day Update

Mr. Walston said for a formal recognition at the schools we are extending invitations to the community. We spoke to leaders in our community and they are looking to continue to investigate on our behalf to see what Veteran's day would look like in 2019-20 and beyond.

Dr. Casimiro said we are still in the process of soliciting various stakeholder groups with the idea of having a hybrid day of school work and celebrational commemoration. She mentioned some ideas of the events and assembly activities. She also mentioned that we have parents and grandparents in our district that are veterans who we could call on to come into the schools. Local veterans, such as Medal of Honor Recipients, local heroes, or other distinguished guests, would be invited to the speak to the student body; Patriotic themed musical performances given by school chorus and band groups; Patriotic themed readings and recitations of Presidential addresses or military heroes led by students; School-wide National Anthem and flag raising ceremony; Moment of Silence & Taps; Participation of local veteran groups, such as Fife and Drum Corps to attend and perform in period uniformed dress. Excited about the possibilities and opportunities, academics would also be infused with a variety of essays, contests, photo gallery walks and opportunities to share stories. Ideas are continue to be solicited and then work will begin to formulate a plan. Mr. Walston said that the draft hybrid-day model was also shared with Mr. Saadi, who will continue to share and gather feedback from leaders and Veterans in the community.

DISCUSSION

District Strategic Planning

Dr. Pascarella said one of the things as I listen to the Board talking about goals, was a good idea of a Strategic Plan and how we operationalize the things that we do. Years ago we had an enhancement plan. We need to get a representative group and start crafting a vision. This August we decided to look at all the plans. We have had Coherent, Vision and Mission plans in the past. There are documents that need to be updated, which would then give you an opportunity to set your goals for the year. The Superintendent then asked Mr. Walston to speak on Strategic Planning.

Mr. Walston told the Board in order for our Strategic Plan to be successful, we need to identify ways to effectively engage and communicate the plan. Throughout this process, in a very fundamental level, we need to apply the five W's approach to determining some of our objectives. One of the first things we want to do is identify community stakeholders who would

be appropriate to be at the table to develop the new Mission of our district so that the team of stakeholders will determine if it is representative of Danbury and the Danbury Public Schools. Before the Plan is disseminated, we will meet with the Connecticut Center for School Change in December to help facilitate this effort. Tentatively we're looking at December 11th for an all-day meeting starting at 8:00 am with community stakeholders. In the next couple of days, we will be firming up that date. We anticipate inviting 25-30 people to participate. We have 30 different names of community members who are stakeholders who should be invited to the meeting. Our hope is that they would help in the development of a revised Mission Statement and will lead to subsequent work identifying the goals and strategies to help operationalize our Mission. Mr. Walston said the timing could not be more perfect.

The Superintendent asked for three Board members to participate. He said they will be talking about several different categories; our facilities, making them knowledgeable of our issues; resources in the building, etc. We will invite the Town Council and municipal workers. It will be a good opportunity to communicate in an organized way. By springtime, we will have something for the Board. We are not going to accomplish this in one day. He said when we have the list of people being invited, we will share it with you.

R. Jannelli asked if they are going to be looking at the Mission statement. Mr. Walston replied they would. He then suggested it may be a good idea to forward that information ahead of time for them to look it over, so they are aware of what we have so far and then they can adjust it. Mr. Walston said his colleagues already have talked about that.

Ms. Chaleski asked if this meeting was going to be open to the public. Mr. Walston said he didn't know. Dr. Pascarella said we can talk about that. We can think about that. He said the more people who know what our issues are, it can't hurt. We have to find a venue. It was recommended that they use the Black Box, Dr. Pascarella said the parking is terrible there.

The Chairperson asked who would like to be on this Strategic Planning Committee: it was confirmed that G. Cooper and E. Palmares would be on the committee with R. Jannelli being the alternate. All Board members are invited.

Ms. Palmares said in regard to revising the Spotlight schedule, there are times when we have a dense data-driven presentation and we would like to have more time to study our due diligence and to do more Board work.

INFORMATION

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The Superintendent said we have to set up a date to interview the two applicants that we presently have for the Board vacancy. Tomorrow is the last day to apply. It was agreed that the interview would be held on November 14th from 5:00-6:00 pm. The question was is more time needed, no one replied.

Ms. Molinaro said they need to have a Policy Committee meeting. A Policy meeting following the applicant interviews was scheduled for November 14th from 6:00-7:00.

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

Mr. Johnston asked if anyone has signed up for this convention. No one said that they had. Mr. Karrat said that he did attend last year but is unable to attend this year. He said it would be nice to have a representative there.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Molinaro said that they had a Policy and Sites and Facilities meeting, and most members were there. Policy changes will be on the next agenda for the first reading. CABE is going to review our entire policy manual for us. On Sites and Facilities, we dredged up our space utilization analysis, I believe it was done in 2007. We've looked at that the update on summer projects, the school lunch, and rental activities. Rich Jalbert gave us the updates on the summer projects. We asked that the Superintendent look at the Magnet School and give us a report.

Mr. Jannelli said when we met on Saturday, I thought when we left there we were saying that we would have a follow-up Workshop meeting.

Ms. Cooper said she doesn't think we should have 3 meetings back to back on the same day on November 14th. The Chairperson asked if they wanted to postpone one of those meetings. A discuss ensued about changing the Board vacancy interview date. It was then decided to keep the three meetings on November 14th.

Ms. Chaleski said we need another Workshop to continue our conversation and set Board goals. It was decided that another Board Workshop would be for two hours 5:00-7:00 pm before the Board Meeting on November 28th. The question was if Bob Rader is not available, can we have the workshop without him. Ms. Cooper said we need to have a facilitator. Dr. Pascarella said he will see if Mr. Rader is available. If he is not, it will be someone else.

Ms. Palmares told the Board that WCSU Office of Diversity and Equity will host a workshop, "Working with Diverse Student Populations: Understanding Social and Cultural Differences" on November 16th at 10:00 am. Room 212/214 at the University's Westside campus on 43 Lake Avenue. The workshop is free, and the public is invited.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education adjourn its October 24, 2018 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(the meeting was videotaped)