

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018- 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Absent: Kathleen Molinaro

Also Present: Drs. Pascarella and Casimiro and, K. Walston, K. Truchsess, K. Thompson, J. Martino

Mr. Johnston welcomed Mr. Ralph Pietrafesa to the Board.

**RECOGNITIONS**

Sterling Miller, 2019 CT Tech. & Eng. Education-Association High School Teacher of the Year

The Principal of Danbury High School, Mr. Dan Donovan introduced Mr. Sterling Miller to the Board. He said that Sterling has done a tremendous job in the classroom teaching a variety of courses from the old woodworking courses to today's video production classes. He is also personally responsible for bringing eight AP computer science principles to Danbury High. Aside from classroom work, he wears many hats. He produces videos of school events and meetings and offers students invaluable hands-on experience working in the field. He also spent three years as department head of the CE business department and has written and received over \$100,000 dollars in grants to provide students with current technologies. He has written countless curriculum. Out of school he was presented at teacher technology conferences across the state and in New England also 2018 he was invited as a certified Google innovator at the Googles offices in London he presented to other educators the emerging technology. He published an interactive book for kids called "Treasurer Protectors Incorporated". It's a novel that's using QR codes to drive investigations. Sterling's Hatters TV channel had over 172,000 views last year. He will be recognized in March 2019 at the International Technology and Engineering Education Association Conference in Kansas City, Missouri and will receive a plaque in front of thousands of fellow educational professionals from around the world.

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, gave Mr. Miller award showing Danbury's appreciation.

Mr. Miller thanked the Board for their support. Without the support of the District and the Board, we would not be able to do all the videos and all the other things we do.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Joe Mariano, parent of a first grader special needs student told the Board that he is a research analyst for technology. He said he has e-mailed his report to the Board. He started to look at what other large districts are doing for professional days and said they were disproportionate to the top 9 other

Connecticut schools districts base on student population. He said breaking up so many weeks and half days for professional development is not good for his special education child who needs continuity and everyday structure. Mr. Mariano went on to give the statistics for the other schools that he did the research on Bridgeport, Fairfield, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Waterbury, and West Hartford. He compared those schools to Danbury in regard to Professional Development sessions, full weeks of school and early dismissals sessions. He had six questions for the Board: Why are there 15 PDDs on the 2018-19 schedule; why are 18 PDDs on the 2019-20 schedule, does the Board have impact data on PDDs and can it be provided to the public; what makes Danbury unique to have double the amount of PDDs, will Board reconsider the current 18 PPDs on 2019-20 schedule, and will the Board consider the ideas of forming a Board/Educator/Parent group to find a better method for administering PDDs. Between holidays and PD days, it creates a difficult environment not only for parents but the educator and students as well. As a parent of a special education student, the inconsistency can be very damaging.

Leigh Viviano is a Special Ed teacher at Pembroke School. She wanted to give the Board an update on the progress of the playground. The community's effort has made strides and today with help of Mr. Jannelli we were able to meet with Mayor Boughton and receive a commitment to have the City of Danbury use their labor and machines to prep the site which is necessary for the installation of a new playground; this includes fixing drainage issues, leveling the ground and removing the old playground equipment. This will save us approximately \$30,000. Ms. Viviano spoke about local businesses that have since donated as well as the VFW Post 140 and other schools in our district that offered their assistance with this project. Danbury High School is making thermometers to be posted in and around town. The athletic department has also allowed our volunteers to collect donations at the entrances at home football games and all season long. Dr. Anne Mead is writing a grant for \$15,000 which will be done soon. We also have two representatives in Hartford, David Arconti and Michael Ferguson who have jointly agreed to support a government bond for \$175,000 dollars. They are both alumni of Danbury schools. We have raised \$19,450 and will continue to work hard until the total amount of money is collected. In closing, I want to mention if Board members are interested in using their talents or connections to help the community, we would appreciate it.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION -** D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-129 through 18-131, as recommended:

### MINUTES

10/24/18 Policy Committee Meeting  
10/24/18 Sites & Facilities Committee Meeting  
10/24/18 Board Meeting

Abstain: Ralph Pietrafesa

**Motion carried at 7:20 pm.**

## **EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)**

### **Broadview Middle School**

The Principal of Broadview, Edie Thomas, introduced four students to the Board: Two 8<sup>th</sup> graders, Brianna Creggan, and Jessica DePalma and two 7<sup>th</sup> graders, Zack Cataliano and Colleen McGuire. The students narrated the slide presentation starting with Broadview's Pride Statement: Having respect for people, property, the ideas of others and always doing the best we can. They spoke about the Team Time and student recognition assemblies that are held once a month for each grade level. They celebrate academic success, most improved, a student of the Month, and random acts of kindness. They mentioned that they have great teachers who care and the students are challenged every day to be the best. The teachers ensure that everyone in the school is safe and learning. Our administrators are good listeners. Our curriculum is challenging. We are continuing with the Expeditionary Learning Program ELA. We have a new curriculum for math. We continue to learn new standards in science with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning. One of our fun projects is the Humanities Project-Based Learning Night (PBL). It's a fun way to present what we are learning in Social Studies. In 2018 we are celebrating Mrs. Meyer who is the Teacher of the Year; our math team placed first; parent informational night for our Spanish and Portuguese families; breakfast celebration to honor veterans and our Music Theater Department will be presenting "Lion King". Colleen McGuire gave the Board a sample of her singing, "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" Each student told the Board their favorite memory of being at Broadview. A Counselor at Broadview told the Board about their goals for 2018-19: Data to Drive Instruction, Implement Vertical Teaming, and Utilizing team Enrichment periodically for Advisory, Implement Elements of School Connectedness, and develop parent workshop funded by United Way. They invited the Board to attend the many wonderful things happening at Broadview. Ms. Thomas thanked the Board for Spotighting Broadview and mentioned that tonight in the audience is our Assistant Principal, Mrs. Prendergast and one of our Broadview teachers, Ms. Kennedy.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES** (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Board Meeting each month)

DHS Executive Board of Governors: Alisha Nagarsheth, Gabrielle D'Ostilio, Joanna Wenchell  
ACE: Tamara Souza

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Summer Learning, Dr. Anne Mead**

Dr. Mead gave the Board an update on the Summer Learning Program. She said the purpose of the program is so children don't lose skills they acquired over the school year. In the Fall of 2017 and Spring 2018, thirty-nine summer providers met with the curriculum coordinators and produced a summer directory. 42 programs were offered. All used the Summer Feeding Program with 21,340 breakfasts and 25,979 lunches served. 411 Danbury children were tracked in 3 different programs: SunSational Summer, 21 Century Programs and 1 Community provider that had 74 children. The duration was 6 weeks of programming while 160 attended 5 weeks. Outliers were examined and excluded, i.e., didn't attend all of the weeks, absences during the week or spoke limited English. Wrap around care was provided for the two 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Programs until 5:30 pm Monday thru Friday with a field trip on Fridays. In regard to testing, STARS Literacy and math scores between May 2018 and September were compared. The results were 55% increased their scores, 30% maintained within 5 points and 15% dropped. Math scores increased by 65%, 18% maintained within 5 points and 17% decreased. Our next steps are to evaluate differences in programs and why one had fewer scores that dropped than another and meet again with summer providers in January, update the directory and February Resource Fair.

Mr. Jannelli asked Dr. Mead how the public is notified of these programs. She said most families knew about the programs because they come back every year. Families attended the Resource Fair in March 2018 to see what we had to offer.

Dr. Pascarella said the Summer programs are an issue and a challenge for us. We have been looking and in fact, considering timing into where we actually offer summer school so the work is needed to be reinforced. He thanked Dr. Mead for her report.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Seclusion/Restraint/Exclusionary Time-Out Policy**

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education accept for first reading the Seclusion/Restraint/Exclusionary Time-Out Policy (new) 7-237

Abstain: Ralph Pietrafesa

**Motion carried at 7:35 pm.**

#### **Student Records; Confidentiality Policy**

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by F. Santos moved, that the Board of Education accept for first reading the Student Records; Confidentiality Policy (replaces current policy in its entirety) 7-125

Abstain: Ralph Pietrafesa

**Motion carried at 7:36 pm.**

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Legislative Meeting**

Dr. Pascarella said we could have a Legislative Breakfast meeting here. The Legislators like to have meetings the first thing in the morning. I need some direction as to how you want to meet with them, so we will work on that.

#### **CAUS Editorial**

Dr. Pascarella as Co-Chairman of CAUS, he put in an Editorial. We're trying to get the attention of the new legislators and the governor to read about the Urbans in terms of sustainability. The program most of us rely heavily on is the Alliance money. If the Alliance money walks away from us we are going to have some major issues, so this is an attempt to get somebody's attention. Have not gotten anyone's attention yet, but we keep trying. We are in line for some resources and Joe Martino keeps reminding me the Alliance money has not been approved yet.

#### **Facility Update: DHS Elevators; WSMS Modulars**

Joe Martino told the Board that elevators in C and D building shut down. Building C got fixed promptly and the City is on top of the situation. Additional part is needed for D building's elevator. They are inspected every three years. Mr. Johnston asked if the inspection could be done in the pre-summer. Joe replied that it is all up to the State. They show up at random.

The portables had some challenge with fire codes. Originally there were no exterior doors out of each classroom and we had to add exterior doors or sprinkle the whole building. So we are adding the doors. The egress path originally went around three-quarters of the building, so we got a change order to go around the whole building. Floor waxing is taking place in the next couple of days. We are very close to occupying them, I would say probably December 1st. Furniture is on its way.

Rachel Chaleski asked if the students at DHS are okay in the Media Center. D2 and D3 were the challenges. Mr. Martino replied that thanks to the City, electricians were out there on Monday. We did not have to relocate a class. Ms. Truchsess said she also didn't have to relocate a class. Students who had more significant mobility issues it was very difficult to get upstairs. We had to go a roundabout way.

### 2019-2020 Budget

Mr. Martino said we are going to send out the requests for City administrators in the next couple of days. We are kind of on track with the budget. We must have it on the Mayor's desk by February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Alliance Grant will play a role. He said that Mr. Jannelli and the Finance Committee will have to have a meeting to talk about a three-year budget. A full presentation to the Board might be held off until in January.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Strategic Plan Process

Dr. Pascarella said he just wanted to brief the Board on the Strategic Plan Process. He said a number of years ago the district had an Enhancement Plan which was pretty comprehensive, with an Action Plan that was needed for improvement district-wide, then there was a 5-Year plan subsequently. We also had a Coherence Plan and a Multi-year Goals. I am not a proponent of long-range plans, ten years out, I don't know about five years but that seems more reasonable. I thank the Board for the goals they have set for us. They have driven the work that we have been doing. People are focused on your goals and my goals with teachers' goals moving us forward. It sounds mundane, but it really is important. Long-range plans provide a different perspective. We sat down with this team and we have an updated list we want to share with you. There is a draft of an invitation letter that I would like you to co-sign with me. We're working with a gentleman, Richard Lemons. One of the things we are looking at is what do you expect as a Board when students leave here. Some started in Kindergarten. What is the portrait of the graduate? Connecticut districts are creating a protocol for what a graduate should look like and be reflective in the community. Kevin is going to talk to you about the extended group and will bring to you different perspectives. Ultimately the Board makes the decision. At the end we present to you a Strategic Plan, if you don't accept it, it's your decision. But if you do accept it, it then becomes the marching orders for the district for the next five years.

Mr. Walston distributed a presentation outlining the Strategic Planning. We have multiple stakeholders in the district. We won't post this on our website. In the process, we will have three phases. Phase I will comprise of 40 people in a day-long meeting. We haven't sent out invitations yet, but we thank them in advance. This Phase will be facilitated by Richard Lemons. Phase II we currently have one Board member and would like to extend the invitation to one more. This Phase we will conduct ourselves. Phase III will have considered involvement and we hope to pass it by the end of the School year for review.

Phase I (November-January) we will convene the focus groups with key stakeholders with the Board of Education, Schools and Districts Administrators, Teachers, Parents, Students, Community Members to preview mission, vision and guiding principles; conduct SWOT analysis; share data and reports, administer surveys; analyze results and develop a ‘draft’ mission statement and characteristics of a portrait of a graduate.

Phase II (December-February) will be a guide strategic planning session with TDC and extended members. They will share the revised “draft” mission statement and characteristics of P.O.G for decision making and further directions; develop a summary of research phase results and design outline for the development of the strategic plan.

Phase III (February-May) organize Planning Meetings, central office, and school administrators to develop the implementation plan and develop a process to monitor progress towards goals

Mr. Jannelli said the participant's list seems top heavy in Education. Why not include business people? We have large companies in Danbury who employ a lot of workers. Should we get the opinion of these companies since they would be shaping the future of our students? I recommend including Danbury Hospital who is a large employer. Education doesn't offer the credentials that the community is looking for. We need representatives from the business sector and get their feel. This is only a constructive comment.

Dr. Pascarella said that is why we included the Chamber of Commerce. We feel they can help us out in the business sector.

E. Palmares said engaging P.J. Prunty of the Chamber of Commerce you can expect him to go back to his membership and get some feedback. I think it's actually the most streamlined way of knowing a lot of these larger corporations who have difference volunteer structures. It's going to be very complicated to find out the right person who is likely the key person in that company to come that day. I think it's best to invite the Chamber representative and ask P.J. to get involved. About the Brazilian club aspect, there is no Brazilian club or social club. There is a community center that is under the direction of the Catholic Diocese with Brazilian pastors. When it comes to the Brazilian community, unfortunately, there is no identifiable leader. It is strictly connected to religion, so you may want to just identify folks that are tied in with religious communities to also give you a different perspective.

G. Cooper asked about the Mission Statement that the Board discussed on Saturday that we currently have. Mr. Walston said he believes that Dr. Pascarella has plans for you to meet with CABA again to revisit the Mission Statement as a group. I don't what month that is set for. He said I should have included that in Phase I.

## **INFORMATION**

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Annual Board of Education Meeting, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm at Westside Middle School Media Center.

Mr. Johnston thanked Hatter's TV and Zach Murdock of the New Times for helping us get the word out to the public for us. We do appreciate your being here and thank you for all the help they give us all year. We want them to know that we appreciate their support in filming all the events that takes place in the District.

## **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

Mr. Jannelli told the Board, it was mentioned at the last meeting or the one before, about Board members visiting the PTO at selected schools and come back and give us a brief report on what's happening in a particular school. It was discussed at a meeting at Pembroke, the fundraising efforts for their particular project. They are doing a tremendous job. If we can have more volunteers, anybody on the Board, who wants to participate and who might have any state expertise in fund raising would be helpful. Mr. Jannelli said, he also would like to see the students participate at our meetings. I had some thoughts on this and Dr. Pascarella said the logistics may not work. I would like Dr. Pascarella to give you his idea on how it may work

The Superintendent said rather than extending the number of students, the students that come to the Board meetings are comfortable with the Board since they know the personalities of the members. It might be good if the DHS and ACE students stayed at the meeting if there was something that we could have their thoughts on, like the school calendar for instance. For timing purposes, we could always adjust the agenda to accommodate their staying a little later. The students are on the long-range planning.

Ms. Palmares said she attended Tech Night at Broadview Middle School. There were 150 parents in attendance. I was able to share a little bit of my story since I went to BVMS school. We were able to connect with a lot of the parents to talk about parent involvement, homework and just being involved in their child's education. It was really an interesting experience to see the technology. They felt it was very much needed and very good networking. There was a purpose of the meeting other than just meeting people and meeting the teachers. I also want to thank Dr. Pascarella and Kelly Truchsess regarding an issue from a parent.

Mr. Santos said he attend a PTO meeting at Shelter Rock School. They meet once a quarter. There is a double benefit because my daughter is now in Kindergarten there. The principal, Anna Machial, was actually very honest by stating that this is her first year at the school. She is doing some very great things there and the PTO is appreciative of the new ideas that she has brought to the school. In December they are going to do some kind of a function in December. Last week I was there for a presentation from Mr. Saadi on Veteran's Day and some of the questions the fifth graders asked were just amazing. He was really impressed. In October she had a Halloween event. The teachers volunteered their unpaid time for the event, which was attended by 350 people. The PTO is even more active now than before.

Ms. Spallino said in October she attended a PTO meeting at Danbury High School and it was a pleasant surprise. Last year there were only 5 or 6 parents there, this year 19 people attended. They chose new officers. People stepped up. They have a new president, vice president, and treasurer. Rachel Chaleski was also there that night. One of the concerns was about the rug in the entrance area to the gym, and some bathroom doors don't close. Ms. Chaleski said that she did bring that up in the Sites and Facilities meeting.

Ms. Chaleski said she and Amy Spallino attended a Veteran's Day celebration at AIS for a Flag Ceremony by the girls and boys scouts together with family and friends and students. Veterans were invited, recognized and treated to breakfast with the students. Students sang songs and wrote poems. Dr. Casimiro and Mr. Walston attended, and I want to thank them for coming. I thought it was a perfect example of that hybrid day model that we were discussing at our last meeting and so my question is can we move forward on to change the calendar to home-school.

Ms. Chaleski said she also attended a groundbreaking ceremony right after being at the AIS site at Region 12, Shepaug Valley in Washington. Met with the superintendent, the principal and school Board Members who were excited about a new agraria-science lab and building a coalition with member towns and prospective students which includes our Danbury 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are invited to attend an informational session tomorrow evening at 7:00 pm at Shepaug Valley.

Ms. Chaleski also said there is a middle school data night for parents to learn about how students' performance is assessed. This is at Rogers Park at 6:30 pm. I asked Dr. LaBanca if Board members were invited and he said that was a good idea, if anyone is available tomorrow.

Ms. Chaleski told the Board that she registered for the CAFE lobbying 101 in at the CAFE building in Wethersfield, on December 4<sup>th</sup>, it is free for DABE members. It is in the middle of the day at 1:00-2:20 pm and if anyone would like to come along, I would be more than happy to drive.

Ms. Chaleski told the Board that tickets are now on sale at Danbury High School for the Nutcracker's big production by the Danbury Music Center on December 7, 8, 9<sup>th</sup>. Over 200 kids from the greater Danbury area are in the production and it is a community tradition that has been going on for more than 50 years.

Ms. Chaleski mentioned to the Board that on December 10<sup>th</sup> at Western Connecticut State University Westside Campus, there is a community screening of the documentary on Resilience and then a forum afterward which explains the dangerous biological syndrome prospects of stressful experiences during childhood. This is free and open to the public. She said she asked Debbie to put the flyer information in your Board packet.

Ms. Chaleski wanted to follow up about the Spanish at AIS that was brought up at a Board meeting. Dr. Sal replied that they followed up with the parent. He said the original design ran out of money and we could no longer do it. We are revisiting the curriculum now. You will start hearing more about curriculum.

Mr. Pietrafesa thanked the Board for voting him back to join them as a Board Member. He also wanted the Board to know that they are invited, as is the Danbury Community, to the Alternative Center on Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:30 am for ACE's Annual Thanksgiving dinner.

Ms. Cooper told the Board that they are invited on December 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-3:30 to the New Hope Baptist Church to meet and greet and recognized our Assistant Superintendent of Students, Mr. Kevin Walston.

Mr. Johnston said he heard on the radio that Simsbury did what Rachel had said. They had school and had veterans come into the schools and it was hugely successful. Mr. Johnston also told the Board that he took his children to several colleges. He went to an open house at Western Connecticut State University and there were many DHS students there. The University put on a really good open house. If you have children coming up from their junior year, you should attend one of their open houses.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: F. Santos moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing outstanding litigation.



**Motion carried at 8:20 pm.**

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

Drs. Pascarella and Casimiro and, K. Walston, K. Truchsess, K. Thompson, J. Martino from Administration

Absent: Kathleen Molinaro

The Chairperson called the Executive Session to order at 8:20 pm and turned the meeting over to K. Thompson.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

MOTION: A. Spallino moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education returns to Public Session.

**Motion carried at 8:35 pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

F. Karrat moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education adjourns its November 14, 2018 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

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Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(the meeting was videotaped)