

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020- 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Danbury High School ROTC Cadets.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Absent: n/a

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

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 20-14 through 20-19, as recommended:

**MINUTES**

1/15/20 Board Workshop  
1/22/20 Policy Committee  
1/22/20 Community Relations Committee  
1/22/20 Board Meeting  
1/30/20 Board Workshop  
2/4/20 Board Budget Workshop

**Motion passed at 7:04 pm**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE**

Spotlight your School – Shelter Rock

- Principal Anna Machial presented a video highlighting events held at the school. Events highlighted were:
  - Start With Hello Week
  - Read Across America Day
  - Recognizing a Hero
  - 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat
  - Kindergarten Halloween Parade
  - VH1 Save the Music
  - Holiday Read-Aloud Night
  - A visit from Veteran Tom Saadi

- Student of the Month
- Annual K-5 Science Fair
- First-ever attendance raffle
- A visit from “The Rock” (Hat Tricks)
- Invention Convention
- McTeacher Night fundraiser at McDonalds

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

DHS Representatives: Larissa Costa, Claire Moreira

- On January 10th the Danbury Girls 4X200 track team ran the states best performance with a large school winning time of 1 minute 46.85 seconds.
- Congratulations to Robert Murray, who was a finalist in the National Cross Country Coach of the year, an award given by the NHSACA on January 17th.
- Another congratulations to Tyler Warren for winning the United Soccer Coaches All-New England Award.
- On January 20th, the Danbury Boys Wrestling Team won against Mount Anthony, 49-21.
- 3 weekends ago, the Model UN Club at DHS took part in the Yale Model UN Conference as they do every year. Our BOG treasurer, Rebecca D’ostilio was an honorary delegate.
- Viktoria Wulff Andersen won 1st place in a Yale essay writing contest, and will be published in a Yale Political Relations Journal.
- Sahana Chinthak, Aalia Haque, Kayla Hodge, Arianna Martinez, and Penelope Peralta all won Scholastic Art Awards and were honored on January 26th at the Hartford Art School.
- The Danbury Girls Track and Field 202 FCIAC West Division championed 154 points in fifteen events.
- Semester one report cards were finalized February 3rd, ending the marking period.
- DHS had a successful fundraiser that ended February 3rd. Partnered with the Jericho Project that involved each mentor Monday class. Each class brought in \$15 for a box of Krispy Kreme donuts and a chance for a Hatters Cafe breakfast.
- On February 4th, The Connecticut Commissioner of Education, Dr. Cardona, and staff came to DHS and met students. Learned about the programs going on, such as the Early College Opportunity with Naugatuck and discussed K12 issues with Dr. Pascarella, Mayor Mark Boughton, and CGA members.
- The Lady Hatters won on February 6th with a 52-51 victory in overtime against Norwalk, securing a top 4 seed in the upcoming FCIAC playoffs.
- The Danbury Cheer team won their FCIAC competition for the 4th year in a row on February 8th.
- The Hatters welcomed Kevin Williams, a history teacher at DHS, as their new freshman baseball coach, as well as Angela Mcaleavey, a health teacher, as the boy’s new tennis coach.
- Last Saturday the Key Club at DHS partnered with a local Chipotle in a fundraiser for Camp Sunshine, making \$85.
- A chili cookoff fundraiser put together by the Peer Leadership class, with all proceeds going to the Women's Center of Danbury, was held on February 12th.
- This week, the freshman class of 2023 began selling valentine carnations. Their fundraiser to begin collecting money for their prom.

## **PRESENTATION**

Portrait of a Graduate Steering Committee

- Presented by Kevin Walston and some members of the steering committee.

- Steering committee members are composed of four students from DHS, Dr. Martins from DHS, Carmen Vargas-Guevara from South Street School, John Webber from ACE, Dana Perez from RPMS, Dr. Anne Mead and DHS teachers Elise Tobin and Ray Colletti.
- What is it? Essential skills, knowledge and dispositions that are valued not only by schools but also the community. Skills critical for college, career, community and life.
- We want students to continue advancing once they have graduated.
- Cycle of the Portrait of a Graduate
  - Vision - DPS aspires to advance ALL learners (students) to their highest potential
  - Mission - DPS, in partnership with families and the community, provides transformational learning experiences, designed to nurture thoughtful and prepared graduates.
  - Portrait of a Graduate - What do our graduates need to know and do in order to be successful in career, college and life?
  - Implementation - 2020 and beyond.
  - Equity - Helping ALL learners succeed.
- This is a community wide effort.
- Want input from the community, educators, students, alumni, community leaders, business owners. Asked the Board to participate as well and to be their voice in the community.
- Portrait of a Graduate is not ready to be leveraged during this budget season but when it is ready, they envision it playing a significant role in the budget.
- Will need to resource programs in ways that we have possibly not done before. Students entering our schools are coming in needier.
- Part of annual campaigning will be to point back to the Portrait of a Graduate that the community has designed.
- Any questions can be directed to POG@danbury.k12.ct.us.
- R. Chaleski stated that the district just went through this with the Vision and Mission Statements. Asked if any of the work from the prior committee and community engagement can be used or is this a totally different look for this portrait? K. Walston stated that when they applied for the grant, one of the first things he was told was that the district has to start over to be a recipient of this grant. Part of the rationale was that even in a year, there can be significant shifts in the community where feedback can change.
- One of the conditions of this grant was to elevate the student voice in the Portrait of the Graduate. Adults are mindful that the students need to be at the table to help shape this new portrait. Will include students from all walks of life.
- Key struggles in the classroom are a lack of connection on what students are learning and why that is relevant to life after school. This work is taking what they actually need to learn and then be able to fund programs that will give them that.
- This is a completely different transformational approach.
- R. Jannelli asked for a simple definition of what the Portrait of the Graduate is? Is it a program? A concept? R. Jannelli asked for a definition that rolls of tongue easily so the Board can speak to the public about it.
- K. Casimiro stated they are exit outcomes for the students. What do the students need to have in order to be successful in life after high school? The ideal characteristics and skills that a student needs to graduate with.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. 2020-2021 Budget**

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget as presented, for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter.

- J. Britton stated that he strongly supports this budget. This is just the beginning of a very long road ahead. The budget has to go to the Mayor, then the Mayor has to agree, then the City Council. \$10 million is a lot to ask for. This speaks to the reality of where we are with this district. This budget is more than just numbers on a page. It is our declaration that we need to fight for public education.
- R. Chaleski thanked C. Leborious and R. Jannelli for the work they did with this budget and with their workshops. This budget, along with the recent bond proposal, is a big ask of local taxpayers. It's to make up for the shortcomings of a failed ECS formula that will take a ten year implementation with the phase-in. Should we be asking for an accelerated ECS phase-in since they are using outdated data? While \$10 million seems like a lot, it is not the largest percentage we have asked the city in the past 20 years. Being realistic, we don't have the same tax fees like Norwalk. It is important to realize that we will have to make some very tough choices at the end of this.
- J. DaSilva also thanked R. Jannelli and C. Leborious for all their work. Especially for C. Leborious with very little lead time since she is new to the district. This isn't the budget we want, it's the budget we need. This budget is to restore what we've lost and to meet our obligations to our students. Being dead last in school funding has to change. We wouldn't need a 7.3% increase this year if in the past six years, our requests weren't reduced from
  - 4.89% to 1.81% or
  - 4.59% to 1.78% or
  - 4.72% to 1.79% or
  - 5.45% to 2.08% or
  - 5.85% to 3.84%.
  - In other words, we are here because the Board presented responsible budgets in years past and they were cut.

**Motion passed at 7:55 pm**

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Danbury Schools of Distinction
  - Hayestown Avenue, Mill Ridge Primary, South Street, Great Plain, Ellsworth Avenue, Stadley Rough and AIS.
  - Noted for their performance and growth in student success.
  - Great Plain was named as a high performance and high growth school for all students.
  - Ellsworth, Hayestown, South Street and AIS were also recognized for high growth in all students.
- Danbury Day in Hartford
  - Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020
  - 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- NYU Teacher Residency
  - The launch with the partnership will be held at 6pm on February 13, 2020 at DHS. Board members were encouraged to attend. Representatives from NYU will be speaking about the partnership.
  - DPS will partner with NYU. University will recruit people with Bachelor's Degrees who are interested in a career in education.
  - It is an online Masters Degree program.
  - Intensive one year professional development program.
  - Tuition comes at a cost but NYU is working on scholarships.

- As part of the partnership, they will be in our school community as mentees.
- Recruiting regionally and in the state of CT. Hoping that once they are done, they will stay with DPS.
- Will start with DHS and RPMS and hopefully expand to other middle schools if successful.
- The person leading this NYU effort is the former president of the Teaching Fellows Program in New York City.
- We are the first district in CT partnering with them at no cost for us.
- Legislative Update – Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm
  - We have a great story behind our budget request.
  - Emergency assistance request by Dr. Pascarella that “the district requests assistance with the lease costs, which are required in the short-term to accommodate the immediate K-5 needs, since it is impossible to construct any project to accommodate the current and projected enrollment”.
  - Dr. Pascarella will be speaking about this to legislatures on February 20th.
  - R. Chaleski stated that there is an appropriations public hearing on February 13, 2020.
  - K. Thompson informed the Board that the Associated Press has picked up the story about a Title IX action suit. It has been said that the district is included in the lawsuit, yet she has not been informed of such but expects that it is coming. K. Thompson will keep the Board notified on any happenings. Shipman and Goodwin will represent all three districts, as well as FCIAC, included in the suit.

## **DISCUSSION**

- College Career Pathways – Dr. Kara Casimiro
  - Small representative group from Danbury to travel to the academies of Nashville to do a field study visit.
  - Mayor Mark Boughton, PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Dan Donovan, Melissa Nadeu (STEM Coordinator), Dr. Pascarella, K. Casimiro and A. Spallino.
  - In order to transform what our learning systems look like, we need everyone on board to have an understanding of what that is. Hoping this trip sparks ideas.
  - Going down there to learn from the national model. It will be a highly articulated visit with many of the different pathway high schools that are part of the greater Nashville metro area.
  - The main conference will be held from March 9, 2020 to March 11, 2020. The pre-conference will be on March 8, 2020.
  - K. Casimiro and M. Nadeu will also be attending another conference from the National Center of College and Career Readiness. The State of CT has partnered with this group with the intention of helping CT school systems to bolster their work in this area. The idea is to graduate high school students with their high school degree, prepared for college but also to leave with industry recognized proventials to give them some background on 21st century jobs that are in demand.

## **INFORMATION**

- Middle School Lab Furniture
- Dr. Pascarella stated that there were science lab tables at Broadview Middle School that students voiced a concern that they had asbestos due to the chalky dust coming from them when scraped. The district took that seriously and state officials came in to speak with the students and to do an assessment on the tables. District is partnering with the state to determine what needs to be done. C. Leborious has heard nothing further for now but will keep the Board informed.

## **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- G. Cooper asked A. Spallino to put together another workshop with CABE to look at our roles and responsibilities again. It will be held before the Board.

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

- R. Chaleski
  - Sites and Facilities Committee met on February 11, 2020 to discuss accommodations and predicted enrollment, will meet again in March.
  - Policy Committee meeting was postponed to allow more time to review the Series 3000 and will meet on March 4, 2020 at 6 pm, and subsequently on the first Wednesday of each month.
  - There is a video on Hatters TV showcasing the Science Fair at Westside Middle School Academy.
  - A question about PowerSchool grading came up at the WSMSA PTO meeting. A number of questions regarding the weight of the grade instead of an overall percentage. K. Casimiro stated that in a department, the grading is the same but that she will look into it. K. Walston stated that it was reported to him as well. He spoke to G. Jasmine and it is something that needs to be explored.
  - Next PTO meeting for DHS will be on Wednesday February 26, 2020.
- A. Spallino
  - Attended the ACE Parents Night held on February 6, 2020. She was pleasantly surprised to see the amount of parents and students present. They also do parent conferences on the same night. The Principal and teachers work really hard and they were very appreciative that a Board member came by.
  - ACE Career Day on April 8, 202 in the morning and then a Renaissance Fair will be held that same afternoon.
  - ACE graduation in June.
  - ACE poetry event at Hatters Park on June 4, 2020.
- J. DaSilva
  - Attended the Park Avenue School PTO meeting. The PAS PTO does a great job because they need to coordinate a Spanish and Portuguese interpreter for all of their meetings or a good chunk of their audience could not participate.
- R. Jannelli
  - Asked if 6pm on February 19, 2020 was good for the Community Relations Committee to meet. It was denied because that is the same night as the Superintendent Evaluation Committee meeting.
- G. Cooper
  - Asked members of the Superintendent Evaluation Committee to be present for their meeting on February 19, 2020 at 6pm.
  - Attended a forum on February 6, 2020 at DHS for the CT Students for a Dream along with R. Chaleski, R. Jannelli and K. Conetta.
- J. Britton
  - The last two Sites and Facilities meetings have been more informational, and they haven't had the chance yet to have an open dialog. A meeting for 6pm on February 26, 2020 was agreed on.

**ADJOURNMENT**

R. Chaleski moved, seconded by J. Dasilva, that the Board of Education adjourned its Meeting of February 12, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

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Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)