

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, P. Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for the recent student tragedy and the passing of K. Molinaro's husband.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Emanuela Palmares, Ralph Pietrafesa, Farley Santos, Kate Conetta, Patrick Johnston, Amy Spallino
Absent: Richard Jannelli
Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Joe Martino, Kelly Truchsess, Kim Thompson, Kevin Walston, Kara Casimiro

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-24 through 19-25, as recommended:

MINUTES

1/23/19 Special Board Meeting
1/23/19 Board Meeting

Motion passed at 7:03 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

The presentation began with a brief introduction by the Principal, Dr. Kristy Zaleta. She introduced Assistant Principal's Ms. Perez and Ms. Battaglia. Dr. Zaleta then turned the presentation over to student members of the National Junior Honor Society. Highlights discussed were:

- Collaboration with Danbury Police Department and Danbury Fire Department for Start with Hello Week.
- Break the Silence presentation where stories were shared to bring awareness to bullying.
- For Halloween, students and staff had to pay \$1 each to dress up. That money was used to buy playground equipment.
- Students are recognized during assemblies for Student of the Month, MobyMax Top 10, PRO Awards, Social Studies Stars and IXL Certificates to which students have logged 3,347 hours as a school!
- Extra-Curricular activities at the school include Concert Choir, Jazz Band, Math Club, Student Council, Musical Theatre, Girls STEM Program, SAVE Club, Tobacco Free Club, Gifted and Talented and Door Decorating.
- School activities that make school a little more fun include Break Out Box, Snow Fall Contest, Friday Coffee Cart, Recycling Club Video, Safe Walk, NJHS, Unified Sports, Leadership Summit, Soccer Tournament and Garden Club where students made apple cider.
- Collaborative Learning activities include Egypt PBL, Chemistry Breakout Box, Interland Online Safety, Gallery Walks, Fishbowl discussions.
- 7th graders will be hatching eggs and having a chicken run in the halls.
- Educational trips to Ellis Island, Blue Science on the Long Island Sound, Bronx Zoo and To Kill a Mockingbird on Broadway.

- Performing Arts: Steel Drums, Band, Orchestra, Pop Choir and Guitar, Chorus.
- Media Center activities: STEM Jenga Tournament, Nutmeg Award book talks, tetrahedral display installed by students, genre specific book designation project, new eBook offerings, recording simulated radio broadcast lead-ins.
- Fine Arts: sketching, graffiti art, 3D paper mache sculptures.
- College and Career Readiness: JA in Two Days, CCSU field trip, Career Fair to be held on March 21, 2019.
- Donors Choose Program has raised \$241,000 by 801 supporters. Items bought include new books, chromebooks and headphones.
- Community partnerships include The Greater Danbury Garden Club, Collins Aerospace Girls' STEM Program and Praxair - Paint the Park Project which will be held on May 4, 2019 with a rain date of May 18, 2019. Praxair has donated \$5,000 for paint and 50 volunteers. RPMS still needs 50 more volunteers. A generous parent will be providing breakfast and Chic-Fil-A will be providing lunch.

ACTION ITEMS

A. 2018-2019 Budget

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget in the amount of \$139,967,101 (a 5.85% increase) for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter

R. Chaleski wanted to take the time to acknowledge the effort that is going in to communicating the budget to the public and also thanked J. Martino for his presentation at the City-Wide PTO meeting. In regard to the Budget Workshop held the previous week, she reminds the community to remember that Danbury does not have the grandness or property values like Norwalk or Stamford. R. Chaleski personally struggled over the 5.85% increase. Resources are scarce but they're scarce everywhere. She has heard horror stories from other towns and cities. It's a shame the way the state has inequitably funded education for so long that has pitted towns against towns but also governing bodies within the same town. Danbury's reputation precedes us. We are known for how well we work amongst ourselves as a Board and with the City. R. Chaleski also struggles with the tax issue that was brought up at Budget Workshop and it seems likely that more will come down from state level. It is our number one job to be advocates of high quality free public education for our kids and our kids need and deserve more. Therefore, she approves the budget.

E. Palmares also mentioned that she wants to empower parents to go to City Hall and to encourage property owners who don't have children in the district to support our budget. This budget isn't because we want it, it's because we need it with the supersize growth of Danbury.

Motion carried at 7:23 pm

B. Educational Specifications for oil tanks

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education approve the educational specifications for oil tanks

Motion carried at 7:24 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. TDEC Update

K. Walston reported out to TDEC committee last week. They wanted to make sure that the TDEC Committee also had the opportunity to provide feedback on the statements. It was also shared with staff and the community. Some staff members felt that they didn't see themselves in the statement of the initial draft of the vision statement. There were also questions and concerns about some of the language. So, part of their job as outlined in the strategic planning timeline is that they will get out there to the community and continue to get feedback before they bring it back to TDEC again for consideration. TDEC will also receive their own survey. As of right now, the timeline calls for the last Board meeting in March.

B. Nellie Mae Workshop

K. Walston stated that he, K. Casimiro, J. Coco, A. Mead, M. Nadeau and two community representatives (parents) went to the workshop in Massachusetts. In many ways the convening was about district shared and best practices around equity work. On the first evening they participated in a fishbowl like activity where other districts give you feedback on how the practice is going in your district. They were challenged with the questions of "has your district defined what equity means to you?" and "how are you going to operationalize this idea of equity?" They were there for three and a half days engaged in serious discussions on how equity is going to live in their day to day work. They came to the realization that it needs to live in the strategic planning process. The vision and mission statements now have a draft including equity. Those were outcomes from that workshop. Also challenged to see that this lives in the schools and that every school should have an equity team. These equity teams need to hold the school responsible for the values of equity.

C. Superintendent Goals/Student Achievement Workshop, March 6th

A lot of data has been collected and would like to present at a workshop on March 6, 2019.

D. Public Forum on Budget, March 20th, 6:00 p.m. at RPMS

The forum will be to discuss the budget that was approved tonight. The obligation is to try to put together a budget that makes sense of what the needs of our students are. At the presentation we will break down in to small groups and talk about the budget rather than only a Q&A. J. Martino stated that a flyer has been completed to send out. Dr. Pascarella will make sure it is put on social media. The City-Wide PTO is helping to promote the night. Dr. Pascarella asked the Newstimes, Z. Murdock was in attendance, and other language papers to spread the word.

E. Veterans' Day Update

K. Walston stated that he met with the City-wide PTO and with a subcommittee to address the idea of having Veterans Day on as opposed to off. Veterans from the community, as well as staff members in the district who are veterans, gave their feedback. For the next calendar year, they would like to get veterans in front of the City-wide PTO to have a meaningful dialogue around this idea. K. Casimiro stated that they met with T. Saadi and council representatives. There were mixed feelings of having school on Veterans Day. Three were for the idea but five were against it. Most of the wonderings from the group was if this was just a way to get a day on the school calendar. City Wide PTO was all for it. K. Walston will invite the VA to the City-Wide PTO and in hopes of getting cross dialogue. One of the things that came from the meeting was the importance of the day and finding ways to recognize it in school regardless of the outcome of this particular process. One way or another, we will be able to put together some programming in honoring veterans regardless of day. K. Walston stated that there were strong feelings on both sides. Some felt very strongly for it and felt it was an opportunity to teach.

- F. Dr. Pascarella stated that February is Black History Month. There are a number of activities going on in the district such as essay writing and other things.
- G. Dr. Pascarella spoke of the recent weekend tragedy. He stated that they are reviewing district programs and seeing what we can do to keep supporting staff and students and making sure we have a safe environment. Our job has been to support and comfort our students and faculty and to communicate with the family to do what we can to assist. There may be a lot of questions out there, but our work has been and will continue to be with helping the youngsters and staff who have been impacted. Dr. Pascarella also stated that there are some other things going on with authorities and that the district is cooperating. Dr. Pascarella thanked K. Truchsess and her team for their work with staff and students.

DISCUSSION

Dr Pascarella spoke of the enrollment update and the presentation held before the Board meeting. The district is working with Friar. They are looking at everything and options we may have. At some point, they will meet with Facilities Committee to talk about some opportunities we have on how to accommodate growth. Looking at bricks and mortar and other modules as well.

In regard to the water leak at DHS, J. Martino stated that the ceiling tiles have been replaced. Furniture and computers are starting to come in. The insurance has approved the asbestos abatement. Summer school will be moved to Broadview Middle School due to abatement. The air is still being monitored as well as testing of the tiles and we are in the clear. Since carpet has been temporarily put in, they have noticed a reduction in noise. Carpet would get damaged quickly with the foot traffic, but they are looking into alternatives other than hard vinyl tile.

F. Santos asked if they figure out what the heat issue was that caused the water leak. J. Martino stated that work orders weren't put in other than the school store being hot. F. Santos will look into it.

R. Chaleski asked when the space study will be ready. J. Martino stated he hopes to bring it to the Facilities Committee by the end of March.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A. Updated Committee & PTO Lists

A. Spallino stated that the Stadley Rough PTO meeting is held on the second Tuesday of the month. An edit to the schedule needs to be made.

B. Superintendent Evaluation Process

R. Chaleski stated that she received the updated superintendent's evaluation process guidelines from CAFE. She would like for the Superintendent's Evaluation Committee to consider it. She especially appreciated the introduction as well as timeline and flow chart. A Superintendent's Evaluation Committee meeting was scheduled for February 20, 2019 at 5:30 pm.

G. Cooper stated that R. Jannelli will be taking a leave of absence for at least 3 months.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

F. Karrat stated that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee was cancelled. A reschedule date of February 27, 2019 at 6:00 pm was approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by F. Santos, that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of the Superintendent’s performance.

Motion carried at 7:50 pm

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

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: D.Metrena moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa, that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

Motion carried at 8:45 pm

ADJOURNMENT

F. Karrat moved, seconded by F. Santos, that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of February 13, 2019 and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)