

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018 – 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence due to the school shooting in Florida.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston,
Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley
Santos, Amy Spallino
Absent: Richard Hawley
Also Present: Dr. Glass, Joe Martino, Dr. Pascarella, Kim Thompson

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lisa Ruffles - Lisa stated that she believes a major setback from the BOE has been an inability to connect with the parents better. She stated that she will be back for the March 14th meeting with support from other parents. She encourages the Board to continue educating parents from now until the passing of the budget, stating parents are paying attention. The PTO at King Street has invited Erika Haynes from the Connecticut School of Finance Project to give a presentation to their parent base on February 20th at 7pm. She welcomed the Board members to attend.

Tricia Robinson - Tricia came to the Board meeting in support of the BOE to make sure that Danbury is no longer last in student funding. Tricia stated that we cannot continue to leverage a parent like her and Board member Rachel as a kindergarten interventionist. She stated that while she is an educated person, she is not a long term solution to make sure that our kindergarten students learn to read. What Tricia needs to be able to be a strong voice is as many voices, tears and stories as possible to provide when she goes to Hartford.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-13 through 18-18, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

1/23/18 Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting

1/24/18 Community Relations Committee Meeting

- E. Palmares stated that she had made a comment if the City Wide PTO meetings could be made in Spanish and Portuguese languages and that is not in the minutes. E. Palmares asked if that could be amended to be included in the minutes.

1/24/18 Finance Committee Meeting

1/24/18 Board Meeting

- F. Karrat requested that the 1/24/18 minutes be amended to mention that he requested an amendment to the agenda to go into executive session.

2/6/18 Finance Committee Meeting

- F. Santos noted that A. Spallino's name is not spelled correctly.
- R. Jannelli stated that it should be noted that the committee members had voted to recommend to the full board that we adopt the budget as presented.

Motion passed at 7:11 pm

ACTION ITEMS

A. 2018-2019 Budget

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget in the amount of \$135,225,463 (a 5.45% increase) for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter

Motion passed at 7:12 pm

B. Educational Specifications for Temporary Classrooms at Westside Middle School

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education accept the Educational Specifications for 8 temporary classrooms at Westside Middle School Academy

- F. Karrat asked if the school would have just eight 8 portables? J. Martino stated that the initial bid is for eight portables, might go down to six, but the bid is for eight. Dr. Sal stated this was in the bond that was set for the improvement for buildings. There was funding left in the bond to use. There are lockers involved so there will be a little more cost involved than the last set at Shelter Rock. Dr. Sal stated this will expand our lottery. Students will be pulled from the waiting list to fill the extra spots once the additions are added. Right now J. Martino is hoping to get to the state in March and have the bid by April with the units in by July 2018.

Motion passed at 7:15 pm

C. Policy 7-305, Honor Roll

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education accept for 1st reading revisions to Policy 7-305, Honor Roll

- Dr. Sal stated that these will be published and if there are any comments, he will bring it back to the next meeting.

Motion passed at 7:18 pm

D. 2017-2018 Consolidated Alliance & Priority School District Application

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approve the 2017-2018 Consolidated Alliance & Priority School District Application for submission to the State Department of Education

Motion passed at 7:18 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Transportation Survey Update

Dr. Sal stated we are trying to go into a three tiered system versus a multi system. It should provide us with more time to pick up students and more time between the runs making it run much more

efficiently. There will be a meeting on the 26th of February where the company will be on site. J. Martino stated that the three tier system is more complicated and it needs more on site analysis done.

B. Ryan Bingham, Lobbyist

- Sullivan and LeShane Incorporated. Lobbying Firm.
- Communicate priorities of the City to Legislators.
- They try to work with Administration to educate legislation. Such as what killing certain bills might do to Danbury.
- Play a lot of defense. Give information both ways. Agnostic to political party. Not Democrats or Republicans. Legislature could make a proposal that can be harmful or beneficial. What the lobbyist does is work with them.
- They track all the bills that are important to us. They send it to us every Friday. They are the eyes and ears for the District.
- Dr. Sal stated this is a joint effort with the City Officials as well. Cost of \$15,000 to the BOE and \$15,000 to the City.
- Mr. Bingham handed out the Grassroots Manual.
- P. Johnston asked highlights on what's coming up and what's going to affect us? State Representative David Arconti stated that the with Governor's proposed budget, Danbury typically does very well. When it gets into the Legislature's hand is when it gets frustrating. That is when we typically get half of what we are supposed to get in ECS funding.
- Mr. Arconti stated that we are partnering with Waterbury, Stamford and Bridgeport to make the argument that student population is increasing and that we need the extra funds.
- State Representative William Duff said Redding is seeing a rapid decompression in enrollment. The shrinking schools are not getting less money. The rest of state has to realize that we send a lot of money up to Hartford economically. They need to realize that and we are looking for our fair share.
- E. Palmares stated that Danbury had a view in Hartford as this little city in Fairfield County and they weren't realizing that we were dealing with issues like those that were happening in Bridgeport and Waterbury where they have inequality and achievement gaps. These other places get a lot more play when it comes to budget cuts and ECS funding. It's time to focus on educating Hartford regarding the fact that we are not a little city anymore and we are producing a lot of talent and we are one of the most diverse districts in the state. E. Palmares stated that on the report that we got that the unfunded mandate keeps popping up. E. Palmares would like to get an updated list on that budget cycle to try and get those unfunded mandates out and repurpose where that money goes.
- Mr. Bingham said at the beginning of several special sessions it benefited us to have the conversation with Secretary Barnes about the uniqueness of Danbury and the fact that it's a growing district. There was a discussion of flat funding and how we used that to our advantage. The Supreme Court reversed that, essentially taking the legs out of our argument.
- Dr. Sal stated asked Mr. Bingham to address parents who keep asking how they can get involved. Mr. Bingham said he will provide an electronic copy of the Grassroots Manual. The manual walks through the legislative process, both short and long session. It identifies how to communicate with Legislators. How our teachers and staff who do not live in Danbury can communicate with Legislators. It's a way the Board, Administration and parent organizations can be effective.
- Danbury Day, is to be held on April 18, 2018. This is during Spring Break so Mr. Bingham will review the date and get back to the Board. Danbury Day is an opportunity for other legislatures to learn about Danbury.
- In regard to the modules at WSMSA, Mr. Arconti stated 62% reimbursement rate from the state isn't sufficient anymore. We are a growing community, 80% is better.

- April 2, 2018 at 6:30 pm is the City Wide PTO meeting. Dr. Sal invited Legislators and Representatives to come.
- F. Karrat said he's been approached by some people asking what has been done for us by lobbyists. Asked if Mr. Bingham could get together some information on what they have done so it could be presented to the parents. Mr. Bingham will pull those reports together and send it to Dr. Sal.
- F. Santos asked for Friday reports when Mr. Bingham sends them.
- G. Cooper thanked Mr. Bingham and Representatives Arconti and Duff for coming.

C. District multi-year budget

- J. Martino stated he would like to have a Finance Committee Meeting.

D. Teacher Focus Group Update

- Dr. Sal stated that the responses from the survey were taken seriously. A lot are K-5 based. Take away is that, at times we are moving a little faster and input isn't as great as it should be. Teachers needing more interventions. Dr. Glass will reactivate TDEC. We piloted three Math programs, we are not using any of them. Teachers need help in the classroom. A lot is falling on their shoulders. Professional cuts in intervention kept coming up across all the schools. Dr. Sal took this information and gave it to the Literacy Committee and they are making a set of recommendations. They have already had four meetings and are making a final set of recommendations.
- P. Johnston added that in the Committee Meeting it was brought up with how much the cuts have damaged the schools and the grades. Overall, this is the reason that we need Hartford and the City on board with us as much as possible. There is a tangible reflection that can be seen with the cuts and how it has hurt our schools.

DISCUSSION

- Dr. Glass stated that he, Dr. Sal and Kara Wanzer have been going around to the schools for mid year evaluations.
- There are three schools of distinction this year. South Street School, Mill Ridge Primary and Great Plain. There would have been four schools but the achievement gap gets very technical.
- All of school's improvement plans incorporate coherence angels.
- Attendance rates have gone up in concerted efforts to get kids to come to school.
- Enrichment for higher achieving kids.
- Five year grad rate has gone up.
- Performance of ELL still remains a challenge. Not just kids coming in having to learn english but a lot of the kids also have deficit areas already in their native language.
- Readers Writers Workshop is now across the district.
- Investigations Math Program is now going into its second year.
- Overall performance index score out of 169 districts, we are 2 points below state average which is a wonderful accomplishment with the funding issues that we have.

INFORMATION

DECO Informational Session, February 22, 8:00 am at DHS

- Dr. Sal said everyone is invited.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A. Board Self-Evaluation

- F. Karrat said it is policy that we have to conduct self evaluation every year and just a matter of setting a date. Not a pressing matter but we should set date soon. G. Cooper stated this is usually

done around September/October. P. Johnston stated we can pick a date at the workshop on February 28th.

B. Board Workshop, February 28, 5:45 pm

- Board Committee protocol will be addressed further.

C. Board Committee Protocol

- P. Johnston stated that by inviting everybody, we may be exceeding number of people getting involved. Mr. Mooney wrote protocols and responsibilities that all members will get copies of. Basically, Board members can attend a committee meeting as an audience but they can not participate unless they are invited to participate.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENT

- F. Santos stated that there will be a Budget Workshop for members of the City Council on February 21, 2018 at 6 pm. Meeting is open to the general public
- G. Cooper stated there will be a Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting on March 6, 2018 at 6 pm.
- R. Jannelli stated there will be a Finance Committee Meeting on February 21, 2018 at 5:30 pm.
- P. Johnston stated that it will be checked if it requires policy to revisit another Policy Committee meeting before the next Board Meeting. That can be discussed at the 28th meeting if it needs to be added.
- R. Chaleski stated that February 15, 2018 would be the last of the series that the Connecticut Finance Project is hosting. This is all about preparing testimony and writing letters to the legislators.
- P. Johnston stated that he, R. Chaleski and A. Spallino went to the PTO meeting at DHS where they had a very informative session about the dangers of vaping.
- R. Jannelli stated that on February 15, 2018 there would be a session at RPMS about the opioid crisis at 6:30 pm. K. Truchsess stated there would be two parts. The first is “Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond” and the second is “Courageous Parenting 101”.
- F. Karrat is the representative to Ed Advance which is a Regional Education Service Center. Mr. Karrat handed out information on some of the services that Ed Advance provides.
- G. Cooper thanked Zach from the News Times on his article that he did from the previous meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by D. Metrena, that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of February 14, 2018 and the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)