

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018 – 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Danbury High School ROTC Cadets.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass, Joe Martino, Kelly Truchsess

**RECOGNITIONS**

**Senator McLachlan, on behalf of Mayor Boughton, presented the Danbury Education Foundation Classroom Excellence Grant Awards:**

- **Jessica Archambault** - \$1,487.22 for *Interactive Whiteboards* at Morris Street School
- **Ana Wight** - \$1,500 for *Avoiding The Summer Slide* at Hayestown Avenue School
- **Alexandra Hoyt, Michele Masi & Diana Gomez** - \$1,500 for *Learning About Our Community* at Ellsworth Avenue School
- **Amy Kotach & Jackie Ziegelmeier** - \$1,500 for *A Listening Center* at Park Avenue School
- **Wilson E. Cardenas** - \$4,695.99 for *Interactive Foreign Language* at Rogers Park Middle School.

Senator McLachlan was glad to represent Mayor Boughton. He stated that the choices for the grants were very difficult to make. There were many more the foundation would like to reward. The ideas were spectacular and the Danbury Education Foundation was happy to chip in a little bit of money.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Kim Battocchio - SPED tutor for 16 years, DHS for past 7. Concerned for safety of students. The entire side of DHS has an unsecured opening by the East Gate parking lot. Anyone can gain access to the infant and toddler playground, courtyard and C/D buildings.
- Rachelle Wade - Three years ago we came together as a city, district and as a nation after the Sandy Hook tragedy by participating with the Start With Hello Program. She asks that BOE direct that the program occur when it is supposed to happen, which is during first week in February.
- Tricia Robinson - Strong advocate for education in general. Also a strong advocate for the Danbury Prospect Charter School. We are significantly underfunded and we need to try to figure out a way to bring more public funding to Danbury. She has gone to training sessions and has met with leadership of Danbury Prospect and is very impressed with them. We are bursting at the seams in Danbury and this is a way to bring more education funding to Danbury.
- Jane Croxford - Representative as a parent of special needs parent at DHS. Principal Donovan has addressed her concern of additional security at DHS but she would like to know when the issue itself will be addressed.
- Angela Chastain - Community manager for Danbury Prospect. Danbury Prospect will open in Fall of 2019 with 100 6th grade seats. College prep community. Would like to address misconceptions. Charter will not take funds from DPS. Brings in more state dollars and frees up resources at the local level. Charter schools are funded through different funding stream than traditional public schools. Danbury Prospect has intentionally designed a program that will serve

the socio economically and ethnically diverse families that make up the city of Danbury. Over 6000 signatures on the petition included with the application to the state.

- Wendy Roberts - Concerned with security at DHS. Main concern is the side entrance of East Gate parking lot. Would like to know what can be done to secure this area. There is a need for trained security officers at front end. Also, discipline at DHS. Students are not held accountable for their actions on many occasions.
- Cathy Snow - Thanked BOE for videotaping meetings. Has not been able to attend so she watches from home. Appreciates the BOE for getting the budget over to City Council. Stated that the parents are here. They are also at Boy Scouts, Swim Club, PTO, teaching Religion, at work, just not always physically present. Discussed block scheduling at DHS. Trying to remain neutral. Daughter at DHS does not like it. Why is it being discussed? When she listened to video, Council brought up distance learning. She would like someone to look into it being offered so juniors or seniors don't have to go in every day and can learn from home, with the devices they own. Believes it should be an option to be looked in to.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-24 through 18-27, as recommended:

### A. MINUTES

2/14/18 Policy Committee Meeting

2/14/18 Board Meeting

- G. Cooper requested amendment: Page two, typo Cooper, not copper.
- F. Santos requested amendment: Mr. Bingham's name was spelled incorrectly several times.
- Spallino requested amendment: Second to last bullet point, use the word "spelled" versus "spelt".

2/20/18 Community Relations Committee Meeting

2/21/18 Finance Committee Meeting

2/21/18 Board Budget Workshop

### B. DONATION

Accept \$500 grant to Stadley Rough School from the local Exxon Mobile location

**Motion passed at 7:26 pm**

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

### Ellsworth Avenue School

- Principal Dr. Anna Rocco started off by introducing one of her parents, Mr. Alfred Hannon. Mr. Hannon has two children who attend Ellsworth. He stated that in the time that they have attended Ellsworth they have taken advantage of the programs that Ellsworth has offered such as Program 44 which has made his daughter a more confident reader. Group and individual speech which has made them more confident in class and with their friends and now an instrumental program. Ellsworth has made his children better students and has made him and his wife, who is also a teacher, better parents.

- Dr. Rocco asked her staff, many in attendance, to stand up. She stated this really is a family. We enjoy each other's company. Support each other when we are up and support each other when we are down.
- A. Avila, a 5th grade student spoke. She has attended Ellsworth since Kindergarten. Her Kindergarten teacher prepared her for the future. She is now writing five paragraph essays. Her first through fifth grade teachers, as well as others have also helped. Her teachers have prepared her for the times they won't be there to help. She will always have Ellsworth in her heart.
- J. Ortega, a 5th grade student spoke. When he is learning it is fun and he doesn't need the extra fun. Save the extra fun for home. The 5th graders get to be Kindergarten helpers. Teachers teach them to be kind. Stated that teachers go the extra mile and he is very lucky to be at Ellsworth.
- H. Candino, a 5th grade student spoke. What he likes about Ellsworth is the different types of characteristics each student and teacher has. A teacher who likes to make your last year fun. A teacher who teaches you everything you need to know for your next year at school. A teacher who pushes you to your limits and inspires you to try harder. A best friend who has your back and helps you to understand, and a friend who challenges you to do better. It's the school you're thankful for in your future.
- H. Leles, a Kindergartner spoke. He said he liked his teacher, Mrs. Hoyt, because she teaches him how to read and he likes to draw on his whiteboard. Dr. Rocco stated that when he arrived in school this year, he did not speak any English so they are very proud of him.
- The school then presented a brief PowerPoint presentation that can be found on their school website.
- Dr. Sal concluded that the passion at Ellsworth is tremendous.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **DHS: Monique Delima and Samantha Mortara**

- A busy spring season for DHS is just around the corner.
- 74% of seniors have submitted their college applications.
- On March 5th, DHS will have their spring conferences and school fair. Prospective freshmen are welcome to attend to learn more about all that DHS has to offer. March 5th also kicks off course registration for grades 9 through 11.
- On March 13th, a private and parochial informational session for incoming 8th graders will take place.
- In-school SAT day is scheduled for March 21st.
- Following the SAT testing, NGSS Next Generation Science Standards, mandatory for all juniors, poses a challenge because it must be taken online and thus a special schedule must be created to pull juniors out of classes in order to be completed. It will take three weeks to do so.
- This year's DHS play is High School Musical. It will be performed on March 22nd and 23rd for a student matinee and evening show, as well as the 24th for both a public matinee and evening show.
- On April 13th the second annual Unified Prom will be held at the Ethan Allen Inn.
- Junior Prom will take place on May 11th.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 25th. The theme is Arabian Nights. A contest was held by the senior class that allowed students to create the design for the Senior Prom shirts. The winner will receive two free prom tickets.
- Madison Albano, Gillian Brown and Morgan Albano from DHS also addressed the Board. They presented a proposal for a Schoolwide Student Advocacy Activity, which will be held on March 14, 2018. They would like to do this to stand in solidarity with the students of Parkland, Florida. To honor the lives of the victims, keep them in our memory as well as show support to the students, staff and families of the victims. During the event they will present a banner that will be sent to Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS and posters, which was requested by the Principal of MSD in lieu of gifts. The BOE was invited to attend.

- E. Palmares commended the students for putting this together as a responsible, safe and healthy way for students to express how they feel.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **DECA Students – Realtor Day Project**

- Their campaign is to promote Danbury Public Schools.
- Create strong objectives.
- Rebrand community perspective.
- Improved test scores.
- Courses offered.
- Academic programs.
- Diversity.
- School spirit.
- Rebranding new logo. The new logo represents the above mentioned.
- Using media such as Hatters Herald, News Times, Lamar Advertising, Comcast.
- Dr. Pascarella TV Show, Pocket of Excellence.
- Promotional video for the school showing staff members, students and parents showing off the new logo.
- Will present at state competition next week.
- Press packet that marketing students have been working on was handed out to Board members.
- Launch date for Monday where teachers will be wearing t-shirts with new logo.
- Personalized clothing that community can order.
- Planning to purchase FB ads to try and get alumni to that particular website so we can get some of those funds back to the school.
- Program that have been working on all year long.
- Have been working with Realtors Association.
- Local realtors as well as Fairfield County Realtors Association are invited to DHS. They will take tours of building. Chamber of Commerce also comes on the same day. It will be during first week in April. Was done five years ago and very successful.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### A. January 2018 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the January 2018 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

- R. Hawley asked J. Martino to walk us through lines 201 and 203.
- J. Martino stated there was a large surplus in the insurance line because there was not a final encumbrance on insurance. We cannot make a projection yet. We can make an entry in the coming months. It's a projection at its best; we've done it in years past.
- Salary accounts have a lot of flux. We are monitoring very closely this year.

**Motion passed at 8:08 pm**

### B. January 2018 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education accept the January 2018 Operating Results Analysis (Grant/Projects)

**Motion passed at 8:09 pm**

C. Policy 7-305, Honor Roll

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education accept for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and adoption revisions to Policy 7-305, Honor Roll

**Motion passed at 8:10 pm (R. Hawley abstained).**

D. 2019-2020 School Calendar

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by R. Chaleski that the Board of Education adopt the 2019-2020 School Calendar

- R. Hawley asked if there was any concern by the Union?
- Dr. Glass stated that the calendar was shared with both Unions and there was no feedback.
- F. Santos asked if there were additional concerns from staff and parents with regarding one early release days and early dismissal days.
- Dr. Glass stated that parent feedback was not crazy about any time off, but understood that it needs to be done. They liked as much notice as possible. Parents also liked the guaranteed graduation date and felt that was important.
- F. Santos expressed his concern with the one hour early release days.
- Dr. Sal stated the calendar drives the instructional work that needs to be done.
- E. Palmares asked when it comes to PD, is it centralized or is it up to each school?
- Dr. Glass stated there are two kinds. One is foundational and one is differentiated.
- K. Truchsess stated that two one hour early release days are done a month. One is department bases and the other is building based. It goes hand in hand.

**Motion passed at 8:17 pm (Mr. Santos opposed)**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

A. Liaison for Administrative Interviews

- Two positions - Principal shift. Rogers Park Middle School, Principal P. Joaquim is retiring. DHS, Assistant Principal M. Clark is retiring.
- Board has a process to follow. P. Johnston will ask for volunteers and inform K. Thompson.
- Dr. Sal would like to start sometime in April

B. Substitute teacher challenges & planning

- Flu season has been terrible. Subs are calling out sick.
- Kelly Services and Source for Teachers.
- 150 to 175 subs on our list. Fill rate for pre-planned subbing is 92%, last minute subbing causing problems for us.
- Coverage is costing district money because teachers are losing prep time and having to get paid for it.
- Two proposals to see if they can work within our budget restraints. Expectation is that they would have more subs, recruit more subs. Pay as you go. Time and material as it's known.
- We will get a proposal and see if that could help us.
- Looking at incentives for paying people a little more.
- Recruiting people, having them sign up and having them stay with us is the goal.
- J. Martino said we should get a pricing from Kelly Services within the next two days.
- Sources for Teachers is still running a data analysis

**DISCUSSION**

A. School Safety

- Dr. Sal is very proud of youngsters working with High School administration to do the Schoolwide Student Advocacy Activity.

- Operationally, working with Mayor and Danbury Police Chief.
- Q&A with Principals and how Newtown and Parkland incidents impacted us.
- We have done a lot since the incident in Newtown. We have a lot more to do.
- Dr. Sal would like to go on record that they have asked the town to put fences at East Gate entrance. With fire safety rules, that has been prevented. There is a police guard in that area. It's a posted job so they are not there at all times. They are there more so than not. Mayor, Police Chief and Antonio Iadarola from the city are working on what else can be done to make that better secured.
- Three other buildings concerned about that they are working on.
- Best practice is slowing down whatever the incident is. Time for emergency personnel to respond.
- Panic buttons, bullet proof glass, cameras that are web based, radios that are synced with police, police cars that are stopping at schools as an officer friendly initiative.
- See Something, Say Something. In Parkland, a multitude of people said something, and people did nothing. We need to keep the program going. It's incumbent on the adults to do something
- We have learned that we have to coordinate better. We have new principals who are learning.
- J. Martino is working with video systems and developing a series with the safety advocates.
- Checking that doors are locked. Checking badges.
- Piloting a background check with IDs at schools.
- J. Martino stated mental health component is the greatest weapon we have.
- Some of the school layouts are challenging and that is being looked at.
- K. Truchsess stated the social workers and psychologists are meeting with parents, faculty and students. Great resource to go to. User friendly guide on how to talk to children of all ages. They are an invaluable resource.
- E. Palmares wanted to bring attention to incident in Norwalk. A teen with autism was falsely accused with bringing a weapon into school. This was because he didn't speak and was a loner. Another student in Parkland with autism was barricaded in a classroom. She wants the BOE to think about the kids with special needs and how we can include them in our safety planning. Autism Speaks has a lot of resources on their website.
- F. Santos said he is concerned very much about the access way at DHS. His daughter was in the nursery program last year. He noticed last week at DECO program how easy it was to just walk around. We need to take a look at that immediately.
- F. Santos asked if there was an analysis done a few years ago suggesting we needed a security director for the district. J. Martino stated it was put in the budget a few years ago but funding was a challenge so it was removed. F. Santos said we live in a different world now. As a parent and elected official, if in the future we get some more money, it would be nice to get the security director.
- Dr. Sal stated that when it comes to money it always comes down to "do we add a teacher in a room or a safety advocate?" While that is wonderful, the state really has to step up and help us and maybe this incident will cause that.

#### B. Charter School Program Request

- Brooklyn Prospect has been approved to establish charter school in Danbury.
- According to approval process, they had to inform Board.
- Dr. Sal opened up to the Board if they had any comments.
- K. Molinaro stated that during the public participation, it was mentioned that the charter school would not impact us financially. However if we have to supply the charter school with transportation how is that not impacting us? Dr. Sal stated that transportation and SPED will have to be funded from DPS. This is just like we do with parochial schools in Danbury. K. Truchsess stated this is a minimal amount like we do with parochial schools. K. Molinaro

believes that if the charter is not transparent about the finances, how can she believe that they are not transparent about everything else. She just wants them to be fully open and honest.

- R. Jannelli asked if it would make sense to invite charter to BOE meeting to make a presentation about their program. Dr. Sal said he can invite them.
- R. Jannelli asked will they maintain diversity like we have in DPS?
- Dr. Sal said this is a public charter. Their lottery is accepting of all students. There is no exclusivity.
- G. Cooper said there is a lot of unknown until things start falling into place. What role will we play as a Board? What happens to a student if they can't make it at the charter school? If they are saying we are reducing our numbers, if the child cannot make it at the school, they will return to Danbury schools.
- R. Jannelli said what is their secret for space if we can't figure out space?
- P. Johnston said this is a public charter so they should be able answer our questions from previous charter schools they have run.
- E. Palmares said we should keep an open mind and get more information since because unfortunately, budget and growth wise, we don't have the luxury to close out any ideas. We owe it to the kids to keep open mind for better options for the students.
- F. Karrat said diversity is an important prospect of the district. He is concerned that charter schools do not foster an accurate presentation of diversity. He would prefer if we welcomed a charter with an opt out versus an opt in lottery to sample the districts diversity.
- P. Johnston proposed a special workshop on March 14th before the BOE meeting at 5:00 pm.
- Dr. Sal will ask the state if we can extend the deadline so we have time to meet with the charter on March 14th. If not, it will need to be done on March 6th.
- Dr. Sal said he will ask someone from the State Department to come down and give the Board their answer.
- D. Metrena said this is a publicly funded charter school being funded by the same people who cannot fulfill the mandates to fund us today. His concern is that as administrations change, all of the sudden that separate line item gets melded into the regular line items and then we have the extra burdens to find funds for. He is very cautious as a taxpayer where now we have to ask for \$20 million and only get \$3 million and have to be put back in that position. We need to ask the charter and state, how do we know this will be funded beyond three, five, seven years from now?
- Dr. Sal was contacted by Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty that G. Cooper was nominated for the Standing on the Shoulder of Greatness Award.
- WCSU gave 100 complimentary tickets to DPS honoring Marian Anderson for the February 27th Celebration of Life Concert.
- Dr. Sal and F. Santos were present at the 25th Anniversary of the Hord Foundation on February 24, 2018 which was very impressive with 630 guests in attendance. \$150,000 raised that night alone. There were students there saying how they wouldn't have had the chance to go to schools if it wasn't for the Hord Foundation.
- R. Hawley asked if the News Times could follow up with a "where are they now" piece on DPS graduates.

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

- P. Johnston asked for everyone to please keep harping the state to be more controlled with their budget after he heard that Florida, who has no state income tax, has a budget surplus.

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

- R. Chaleski, Dr. Sal and J. Martino went to Hartford last week showing a good unified stand for Danbury.

**ADJOURNMENT**

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena, that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of February 14, 2018 and the meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

(Meeting was videotaped)

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Rachel Chaleski, Secretary