

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020- 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, 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: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Kathryn Hodgdon, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino

Absent: Kim Thompson, Kara Casimiro, Loren Daly, Kathleen Molinaro

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

**RECOGNITIONS**

- School Heroes William Montafia and Beth Roos, King Street Intermediate
- Tina Hislop introduced staff member Beth Roos. B. Roos and Safety Advocate W. Montafia are credited with saving a student who choked on food during lunch in November of 2019. B. Roos observed that the student was choking and began the Heimlich Maneuver. She and W. Montafia continued the Heimlich until they were able to dislodge the food from the choking child. Both staff members were recognized by T. Hislop and the Board for saving the life of a student.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Ron Quinn - Parent of a DHS student. Hoping that messages conveyed to parents and students could be consolidated and more concise rather than answers or comments sent from the school and then changing.
- Jeffrey Salka - Parent of 7th grader at RPMS and a Senior at DHS. Advocating for concise and proper messages when they are released. Would like to know when they might expect to see some messaging about the vast number of trips that are happening throughout the schools.
- Tara Martin Volpe - Parent of students at AIS. Thanked the Board and Cabinet on navigating everything that's happening in real time. Would like to know if there is a plan in the event that schools do close for children who receive free and reduced.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 20-32 through 20-38, as recommended:

**MINUTES**

2/11/20 Sites and Facilities Committee  
2/11/20 Board Budget Workshop (Revised)  
2/25/20 Community Relations Committee  
2/26/20 Sites and Facilities Committee  
2/26/20 Board Meeting  
3/4/20 Policy Committee

**Motion passed at 7:16 pm**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

- DHS Representatives: Larissa Costa, Jake Goodwin, Rebecca D'Ostilio
  - The Hatter Athletics will host three track invitationals this spring. Two of the three are annual meets; the O'Grady Relays on 4/24/2020 and 4/25/2020, and the Dream Invitational on 5/23/2020. The third meet on 5/16/2020 is new and will be called the Connecticut Classic.
  - On 2/15/2020, the FCIACS Class Double L's for wrestling crowned DJ Donovan, Tyler Johnson, and Ryan Jack among others, the FCIAC titles for their respective weight classes. In addition, the team as a whole won the CIAC Wrestling State Open title for the fourth time in a row.
  - Girls Basketball coach, Jackie DiNardo, is to be honored by the Franciscan Life Center with the 2020 St. Clare Award in June.
  - The DHS 4x800 Team placed third at the New England Championship on 2/29/2020.
  - The DHS production's yearly musical "Newsies" was tentatively postponed to 6/4/2020, 6/5/2020 and 6/6/2020.
  - The National Honor Society had its yearly induction on 2/12/2020.
  - On 3/3/2020, students in the National English Honor Society visited Mill Ridge Primary for Read Across America and Dr. Seuss Day.
  - Little Hatters had their orientation day on 2/19/2020.
  - The Danbury High School HOSA program paid a visit to King Street for a special assembly to talk on all things health as a reward to their Top 5 Hallway walkers on 2/19/2020.
  - The Junior class had an assembly on safe driving on 2/21/2020. The group that spoke brought distracted/impaired driving simulators. The line stretched all the way down the hall with students wanting to participate.
  - The Hatters Cafe opened for business on 2/25/2020. Students are beyond ecstatic for their teachers to schedule an open slot.
  - Congratulations to DHS Junior Kaitlyn Klampert for receiving the President's Volunteer Service Award on 2/26/2020.
  - Earlier in March, the Peer Leadership program hosted a fun variety of sports tournaments, such as dodgeball and basketball, to raise money for organizations like the Wounded Warrior Project.
  - DHS is getting ready for another Spirit Week. The new spring spirit week will be from 4/6/2020 - 4/9/2020 so that all can enjoy the warm weather & spread even more spirit!
  - On 3/7/2020, The DHS HOSA program attended the Connecticut HOSA State

- Competition and took home multiple awards.
- On 3/10/2020, retired K-9 Tex and retired trooper Ed, along with the Danbury police Department, visited the Little Hatters preschool classroom.
- ACE Representative: Tamara Souza
  - ACE Manufacturing students will participate in Saturday work experience totalling 18 hours on 3/14/2020, 3/21/2020 and 2/28/2020 in Waterbury at the Manufacturing Service Alliance Corp. (THIS TRIP IS NOW POSTPONED)
  - ACE continues to offer students intervention and enrichment during Career and Life Skills course on Thursdays.
  - Juniors are currently focusing on SAT prep work to better perform on the exam scheduled for 3/25/2020.
  - On 4/8/2020 ACE is scheduled to hold their Career Day. The 16 workshops provided allow for students to choose four areas of interest to explore careers that serve the community and promote well being.
  - After lunch on 4/8/2020, the Humanities students will put on their 2nd annual Renaissance Fair. They will utilize classrooms and the hallway for students to participate in learning stations and activities.
  - In light of the recent emergency preparedness plan, the following trips have been impacted:
    - STARS trip on 3/13/2020 (4 students)
    - Norwalk Maritime Center trip on 3/18/2020 (20 students)
    - White Memorial Park trip on 3/25/2020 (52 students)
    - Norwalk Community College trip for Seniors on 3/25/2020 (25 students)
    - Poetry Hike at Steep Rock in Washington, CT on 4/23/2020 (10 students)
    - Long Wharf Theatre trip on 5/15/2020 (20 students)
    - White Water Rafting trip on the Hudson River on 5/27/2020 - 5/29/2020 (20 students)
    - CAASP Conference at Tunxis Community College on 5/29/2020 (12 students)

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Danbury Day – April 28, 2020, 11:00 – 1:00 pm at State Capital
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that they are trying to limit exposure to students with outside influences and activities to potential people who may have the coronavirus.
  - Students were supposed to go to this event but the district is hesitant now. More information to follow.
  - Election Day is also scheduled for 4/28/2020 in Danbury.
  - There are six voting sites bringing a lot of individuals in. In order to minimize exposure, an emergency early dismissal day may need to be scheduled. Perhaps use the 5/22/2020 PD day to make it up. Dr. Pascarella advised the Board to bank as many days as possible in case we need to use them for school closures with the Covid-19 issue.
- Preparedness Management Influenza Plan
  - The Board approved this plan a few years ago.
  - Not a checklist but gives us a lot of guides.
  - Lisa Morrisey, Director of Health for the City of Danbury and Kathy O'Dowd, Health Services Coordinator spoke.
  - Information is changing very fast. Guidance changes four or five times a day and it is difficult to get through that information.

- The first case of Covid-19 was on 3/6/2020, then a second confirmed case the following day. Both are New York residents and healthcare workers. An additional case in Wilton and a case in New Canaan, both Connecticut residents.
- Lots of conversations with our school district, WCSU and surrounding school districts.
- Stressed early on to make sure everyone is on the same page and importance of sharing information.
- Time for planning is finished, now in the mitigation phase which means reducing the number of potential cases in the community.
- Anticipate and prepare for 20-30% of the community to have the virus.
  - Example: In a room of 100 people, 80-85 people will have mild cold symptoms. 12-15 people will be sick enough to see a primary care provider. The final group of people, the last 2 or 3, are the people that will require hospitalization.
- Working with C. Leborious on how to provide meals for students.
- Working with K. Truchsess regarding students who have 504s and IEPs.
- Explained the difference of a primary contact and secondary contact.
  - Primary contact - exposed to sickness while someone is symptomatic. Will be asked to stay home for 14 days to monitor symptoms.
  - Secondary contact - has been in contact with the primary contact. Does not have to quarantine.
- School nurses have been extremely vigilant in monitoring students who have been ill.
- Sick guidelines have been posted on the district website.
- Disinfecting throughout buildings have been stepped up and reinforcing messages to students for frequent handwashing.
- Hand sanitizer is available in classrooms, throughout buildings and in cafeterias.
- K. O'Dowd's role is to reinforce guidelines from the Health Department and CDC. We have to fight this with education and knowledge.
- It's not a straight science on deciding if schools need to close. Figuring out what the relative risk is to students, faculty and people in that building is the first piece. The second piece is what is the community's perception of what we should be doing? L. Morrisey might advise to give the school a deep cleaning but the public perception may want to close the school for multiple days. There will be a time that we need to close schools because the risks suggest so, but we are not there yet.
- It is a balance between managing the risk with the public's perception of what we should be doing, but we do not want to create panic and fear. We want to be very deliberate and put a lot of thought into how we want to close and why we want to close. These are conversations needing to be held with districts around Danbury as well. If we have one school district that has such an extreme response, the public will question if the other districts are being too lax.
- J. DaSilva asked how to explain to parents what the difference is between DPS and the colleges that are already closing, including WCSU.
- When we take a look at Harvard and some of the other schools it is because they do have cases in their communities. A critical piece of closing the school is you have to time it just right. You don't want to close it too early while there are still cases because the students may bring the virus back to the schools. If schools close too late, then we have widespread transmission. L. Morrisey and K. O'Dowd are

- monitoring absenteeism rates and looking at what's happening in surrounding communities and Westchester County. If the district closes schools, it will be based primarily on the risk. We will do what makes sense for our community, just like the other communities are doing what's best for theirs.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the district is using the data to understand and that has been the district's approach.
  - R. Jannelli asked why we would close just one school and not the district?
    - L. Morrissey stated that if she recommended to close multiple schools it would be because there are multiple cases.
    - If there is one case, then they would have to look at that specific school and area. If there are multiple cases, then that suggests that there is widespread transmission in the community and that would be why all schools need to be closed.
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that he has taken aggressive steps to prevent spread with restrictions of people coming into the schools.
  - Buses are being regularly cleaned three times a day. After the AM run, PM run and kindergarten run.
  - R. Jalbert is checking in to make sure buses are properly being cleaned.
  - People coming into schools on a rotating schedule with enhanced cleaning.
  - Custodial overtime on weekends.
  - Five electrostatic sprayers that are efficient in spraying large areas.
  - Purchased 14 additional sprayers.
  - Pump sprayers in the meantime that have been purchased for use in every school.
  - Hand sanitizer dispensers have been ordered and will be distributed.
  - Soaps in bathrooms at DHS. R. Jalbert and team have been regularly checking to make sure soap is available in bathrooms.
  - Disinfectant wipes ordered to make sure keyboards are being cleaned as well.
  - Individual hand sanitizers have been ordered for classrooms and teachers have been instructed to use spray in classrooms.
  - R. Jalbert is creating a video that will show proper cleaning protocols.
  - Plan is in place for free and reduced lunch students. Also working on a state level and with United Way. The state will be releasing guidelines on 3/13/2020. Our regular school food contractor will be available to man sites around the district. They are looking at which sites will be needed. Looks like six sites so far. If the state allows, will do breakfast and lunch. A United Way site will also be available. Will be treated as a drive through. People can walk to the sites if needed but will be encouraged to not congregate. Will do this food initiative as long as necessary.
  - K. Truchsess stated that the food bank also has a lot of distribution sites in the area and she will further distribute that information.
  - The Board requires insurance for school trips costing more than \$500. The travel agencies that parents used all have different contracts. C. Leborious is reviewing contracts and families that requested insurance.
  - K. Walston met with principals last week regarding international travel and out of state travel. Shared this guidance with principals. Received a list of all planned trips for the remainder of the school year. Unfortunately given the state criteria, the majority of the trips had to be cancelled; DC, Philadelphia, Florida. In-state trips also had to be cancelled. Parent engagement sessions have also been cancelled.

- There is a window to cancel contracts. It might be smart to cancel and get money back while there is an opportunity to cancel.
- Dr. Pascarella had a phone conference with the governor on 3/10/2020, the state's department was going to provide something to try and get some muscle in terms of recouping money. The Governor posted a State of Emergency on 3/10/2020, we will try to use that letter as leverage to get the money back for parents. Plan is to postpone trips if possible.
- Copyright laws with the school theater production is why we postponed it to the first week in June. Trying to push everything out as much as possible before officially cancelling. Keep kids at the forefront of decisions and allow them to participate in the dreams they want while keeping them safe.
- C. Leborious stated that the trips to DC and Philadelphia in the middle schools are in process of being cancelled. They are past the time frame for reimbursement for a few of those trips and that will be communicated to the parents. As far as Disney, they spoke to the travel agency and it looks like they will be able to reschedule the trip, more information will follow. If in fact it winds up being cancelled, Dr. Pascarella is trying to see how much money can get back to the families.
- Parents have asked why we are keeping schools open when we have large groups but the Governor says to cancel gatherings of 100 or more. K. O'Dowd stated that the goal is to minimize risk and we do that when and where we can. We stopped visitors from coming into the buildings and cancelled activities. The reality is that we do have 3200 kids. They pass in hallways but that is not extended contact. In terms of lunch waves, we try and do our best and encourage social distancing and hand washing.
- K. Connetta asked what measures are being taken for buses that are traveling between communities. C. Leborious stated that they have put in place a cleaning schedule and R. Jalbert is making sure it's being done. There is a disinfectant being used three times a day. They feel that is sufficient because the disinfectant has a five hour life. STA has issued this protocol for sister districts.
- Sites that we rent out, such as Crosby Street and the congregation across from City Hall, do not have custodial support. R. Jalbert has worked with those landlords to make sure that our cleaning rules are being followed.
- K. Truchsess stated that documents were created and shared with the district in regards to why visitors are not allowed in the schools during this time.
- Has also created a FAQ document available to all staff members in the district on what our expectations are in the district. Clarifies how outside groups could not enter schools, arrival and dismissal procedures, electronic conferences, conference calls for PPTs and 504s. The district will continue to update this document to make sure a clear and consistent message is available to all employees.
- 3/17/2020 will serve as an early dismissal to allow faculty to prepare curriculum for students to be able to take home in case of school closure. DPS K-12 Learning Initiative is available on the district website. Resources for ESL students and SPED students are also available online. The district understands that there is an equity and access issue in our district and not all families have access to technology at home. The district is encouraging staff to have an online guide as well as paper in case students don't have access. That will be the focus of the early dismissal on 3/17/2020.

- What do we do for SBAC and SATs? Dr. Pascarella is talking to the State to see what we can do. SAT requirement is three feet proximity and per L. Morrisey, that is acceptable. SBAC testing will be more difficult.
- A. Spallino asked if the documents that K. Truchsess referred to are available for everyone? K. Truchsess stated that they are on a Google document for internal employees as there is information not relevant to parents but will be shared with the Board.
- J. DaSilva asked if field trips can be rescheduled to the summer? Dr. Pascarella stated that as of right now, commencement is for 6/17/2020. Advised to do the trips post graduation.
- J. DaSilva asked if there is disruption on payroll, have we gotten guidance from the Department of Labor? C. Leborious stated that the Department of Labor has not said anything yet. We are a 180 day operation and have union bargaining units. Will work with the evolving situation within the 180 days. Possibly adjust payrolls so they don't miss out on pay during closure days. The main takeaway is to not interrupt anyone's pay as much as possible. Will be making adjustments at the advice of the state as it comes through but we aren't waiting for that.
- Dr. Pascarella said that this can all change tomorrow. It is very fluid but we are here to protect the students.
- R. Chaleski stated that paper packets assume there is a parent or adult at home to help the student. K. Truchsess stated that the packets are there to reinforce the learning that has already been done in school so they are packets that students can work independently on at home.
- R. Chaleski asked if the state were to exercise power over local districts to close schools, what are the rules around make up days? Dr. Pascarella's understanding is that we will have to use our days and if you can't make the 180, we will request a waiver.
- There is a link on the main page of the district website with the most up to date information on Covid-19.

## **INFORMATION**

- Portrait of a Graduate
  - a. Met on 2/27/2020 with over 50 community members in attendance.
  - b. Overall, really good meeting.
  - c. Focus of the meeting was educating the community on what POG is.
  - d. Beginning to charge coalition groups with reaching out to their stakeholder groups and eliciting feedback on what their idea of a successful POG is.
  - e. A steering committee will be meeting to discuss ways to engage the coalition in a different way.
  - f. In 2019, the Mission Statement was approved for the district. In order to realize that mission, it is important for teachers and administrators to understand what that looks like and how to get there. Once those characteristics are defined, the curriculum team can then order materials and devise a program to support that statement.
  - g. Dr. Pascarella stated that letters went out over the weekend to all parents to update their Parent Portals so that the district has emails to reach out to the families. Once we have those emails, the district will feel more comfortable sending out emails to communicate with parents.

- Inter-District Grant
  - a. K. Walston stated that the district is applying for a grant. It's a proposal to engage students from New Fairfield, Bethel and Danbury. WCSU is also collaborating on the grant.
  - b. Purpose of the grant is to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation while increasing high activity achievement in students in reading, writing, math and science
  - c. If the grant is approved there will be weekend programming and the focus will be STEAM.

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

- Asked Board members to attend committee meetings so they can be informed.
- If Board members can not attend a PTO meeting as a liaison, call another Board member to fill in for you.

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

- R. Jannelli
  - Continuing community relations program to get information out in regards to the budget.
  - Asked for anyone else on Board who can lend a hand to participate in the project.
  - Looking for a time to meet again because time is of the essence.
  - Met with D. Donovan to see what DHS students can do to help with getting the message out.
  - Will meet with ACE to have the same discussion.
  - Will notify the committee on the next meeting.
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that the public hearing will not be held during Spring Break, will be held after.
- R. Chaleski
  - Asked if PTOs are still allowed to meet during the day or after school.
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that the ongoing executive board can still meet but no additional parents or presentations until further notice.
  - Suggested Board members use PTO liaison to pass along Community Relations info on the budget.
  - Policy Committee met last week on Policy Series 3000. Taking in chunks at a time as it is a large series. Have made some recommendations to be brought to the Board after CABE reviews and makes modifications. Will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of every month.
  - Attended No One Eats Alone event at Great Plain School. Literally no one ate alone. Very well done.
  - Invited to read for Read Across America week at Morris Street School, another fabulously done job by staff.
  - Citywide PTO meeting held earlier this month included a presentation by B. Mollengarden from Sodexo and C. Leborious on the budget. Next meeting will include presentation by R. Torres on school security.
- A. Spallino
  - The next City Council meeting will be on 4/7/2020 at 7:30.

- Encourages residents of Danbury to attend the City Council meeting. They don't have to wait for the public hearing, they can go on 4/7/2020.
- Attended POG meeting. Shift Happens video was presented that was mind blowing. Presentation was very future focused about technology and how fast it's moving. How we are preparing kids and we don't even know what technology is going to be like in the future. K. Walston stated that the team put together a really moving video where students spoke about what inspires them on what they want to be when they grow up. If technology has changed this much in the past five years, imagine what it will be like in future years. The video got everyone's attention in the room on how we have to prepare kids in a very different way.
- J. DaSilva
  - Attended Belt Promotion Ceremony at Park Avenue School. It was an anti bullying and respect program for first graders. Gym was packed with first graders and their parents. Teachers were raving about the program and how they could see the transformation in the kids.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by J. Britton, that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of March 11, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)