

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, P. Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

RECOGNITIONS

March is Board Member Appreciation Month

Dr. Pascarella thanked the Board for their hard work and they were presented with a small gift of appreciation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Erin Daly - Representative from NEA Danbury. Ms. Day explained how the teachers are part of a movement, Red for Ed. They wear red to remind the community that underfunding our school budget makes it extremely difficult to prepare our students to be successful contributors to our community. They wear red to ensure that teachers have a say in the decision making for our students because investing in our future leaders for today is a sound investment in our future. Our kids deserve better than being dead last of per pupil spending in the state of Connecticut. They wear red to let the community know that ranking 169 out of 169 is unacceptable. They wear red to show support to the Board of Ed Members. They appreciate the Board's efforts with the proposed budget and all that they do for our students. NEA wishes to unite their efforts with the Board to create a powerful, change making voice for our students. Please know that Danbury teachers will stand with the Board.
- Melinda Scott - Ms. Scott thanked the Board members who turned out for the NEA Danbury Meet and Greet event. She fully recognizes that the job is hours and hours long with extra unpaid hours, as it is with the teachers. It is really refreshing to hear the Board say how they are on the teacher's side and there for them. This is a great start in building bridges to move the district along.
- Kathy Snow - Thanked the Board for all they do for Danbury and our kids. Ms. Snow asked the Board to consider a change for the calendar for next year because the May PD also falls on the day of AP exams at the high school. Dr. Pascarella responded that the date has been changed.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-40 through 19-43, as recommended:

MINUTES

2/19/19 Special Board Meeting
2/22/19 Special Board Meeting
2/27/19 Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting
2/27/19 Board Meeting

Motion passed at 7:10 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Spotlight Your School - Park Avenue School

- Principal David Krafick and Interim Assistant Principal Michelle Tarsi presented. Mr. Krafick stated that he really looks forward to this night because they get the chance to highlight things we don't normally get to see.
- Park Avenue is the largest elementary school in the district and their numbers have grown considerably.
- The staff comes in every day with a smile on their face and make the kids feel so good.

- Mr. Krafick thanked the Board. Staff members of the school presented the Board with popcorn for the movie presentation.
- The presentation was driven by the students. Most of the movie is from the children's eye level as they wore gopros to film the presentation.
- Park Avenue has never been identified as a school of needing improvement under No Child Left Behind.
- Mr. Krafick was named a Hometown Hero Honoree in 2018.
- Park Avenue was recognized as a School of Distinction.
- The movie highlighted the staff, students and events held throughout the year.

PRESENTATION

State Budget Update: Ryan Bingham, Government Affairs Associate/Lobbyist
Mr. Bingham was not able to attend due to testimonies being held.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. High School Repairs/Fire Alarm Issues

- J. Martino stated that there was a fire alarm issue at the high school. The fire alarm went off right as buses were pulling up to drop students off. It was discovered that there was a bad splice in a wire. It has since been repaired.
- The previous flood issue is still moving through with the insurance company. Furniture arrived on March 12, 2019. New computers have also arrived. Painting will be needed to spruce up C3. Abatement will be big job and has moved summer school to Broadview. Bids are going out to pick the tile. Goal is to have everything done by mid-July of 2019.

B. Update on Parent Forum, March 7th

- Dr. Pascarella stated that the event was well attended. This is part of a series of events with more meetings coming up.
- K. Truchsess stated that the next meeting has been put together by Terry Budlong of MCCA and Danbury's Stand Together Make a Difference coalition. It will be held on March 20, 2019 at the Danbury Police Department community room at 6:30 pm. The presentation will focus on alarming drug trends, vaping, vape devices, synthetic drugs and alcohol.
- There will also be two presentations by Scott Driscoll who is very well versed in internet safety. This will be on social media and all parents in the district are invited to attend. The first presentation will be held on March 14, 2019 at Broadview Middle School at 6pm and the second will be held on March 18, 2019 in the Black Box Theater at Danbury High School at 6:30 pm.
- K. Truchsess stated that the administrative team and PPS staff are being trained by the State Department of Education on school climate and restorative practices. The purpose is for staff to reflect on current practice and how we can handle unique situations and learn from missteps. Some of those individuals being trained will also be trained as trainers so this can be used as further professional development.
- E. Palmares asked if we could reach out to the Stand Together coalition because the March 20th presentation conflicts with the Community Budget Forum that is being held on the same night. She would like to know if there could be a second presentation so parents who attend the budget workshop can have another chance to attend.

C. Community Budget Forum, March 20th

D. Early Childhood Early Learning Fair, April 6th

E. Social Media, May 16th

F. NEASC Visit, November 2019

- Danbury High School is going through their accreditation. Completing this year with a reception on November 17th. Dr. Pascarella will keep the Board informed.

DISCUSSION

Facilities Update

- Dr. Pascarella stated that we are in need of space and he shared the enrollment study with Mayor Boughton.
- We have immediate issues that we need to address. Teachers are giving lessons in hallways and classrooms are on wheels. This is not the best environment for our kids.

- J. Martino stated that Board members should schedule a Facilities and Sites meeting regarding the upcoming growth and how we can put the pieces together. A meeting was suggested for March 27, 2019 at 5:30 pm. J. Martino will see if Friar is available that night.
- F. Santos stated that the Board members are very well aware that we need more room for our teachers and have been advocating for them for a long time. Mr. Santos asked the public and teachers to support them as well when they advocate for more room and the budget.

INFORMATION

High School Technology Lease 2019-2020 School Year.

- J. Martino stated that there is a \$750,000 lease which is part of the five-year goal for replacing cycle. The elementary lease was done two years ago and the middle schools last year. This is for teacher equipment, teacher laptops, projects, chromebooks, etc.
- J. Martino will have a full document to present to the board.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- R. Pietrafesa stated that the DSABC will be having their annual wine tasting fundraiser at Stew Leonard's on March 22, 2019. Tickets can be purchased online.
- R. Pietrafesa stated that he was at the Great Plain PTO meeting on March 12th and he asked the parents to attend the budget forum on the March 20th.
- E. Palmares stated that April 2, 2019 will be the Light Up Blue Night to celebrate Autism Awareness at the Danbury Public Library. Police Chief Patrick Ridenhour will read Kerry Magro's "I Will Light It Up Blue" at 4pm and "Deej," a documentary about a non-speaking young man who dreams of autistic civil rights will be shown at 5pm. A panel discussion will follow the film. The event will conclude with a Light Up Blue Ceremony at 6:30 pm. The ceremony will feature speakers and musical performances.
- E. Palmares stated that there is an article in the Tribuna newspaper about the budget workshop and why it's important attend. The articles are in English, Spanish and Portuguese. She asked community and teachers to please share it with their bilingual parents.
- F. Santos stated that as of March 14, 2019, he will no longer be a Board member. Mr. Santos has been appointed to the City Council. His service for the Board has been a pleasure. Mr. Santos thanked the administration and Dr. Pascarella for his leadership. He also thanked his fellow Board members for their hard work. Mr. Santos went on to thank the teachers, principals, and staff, all the way down to the custodians, for all the effort and work they put forth. He knows they do it because they care about the kids.
- R. Chaleski asked if there are plans to paint the auditorium at DHS. J. Martino stated that as of right now there are no plans on the docket. R. Pietrafesa suggested it be brought to Sites and Facilities to discuss.
- R. Chaleski asked that the proposed budget and presentations (that are held at the Board meetings) to be part of the district website in a drop-down section.
- R. Chaleski thanked the cabinet and administration on coming out for another meeting to explain the mid-year data information at their pace.
- R. Chaleski asked about NGSS and how we are accessing them and also grading on standards that are not being taught. Ms. Chaleski would like a follow up on why we are testing the science so early and not in conjunction with other testing that is going on. K. Truchsess stated that the state sets the testing window and then the district maps them out. The district tries to make sure that they don't test back to back with math, science and ELA so the students don't get testing fatigue. K. Truchsess will follow up with more specifics.
- R. Chaleski asked about the proposed calendar for next year and if there could be some possible adjustments, specifically with the Tuesday one-hour early release days. After meeting with parents and administration, the common solution was to hold the one-hour early release day once per month on the first Tuesday of the month. Dr. Pascarella stated that a committee is working on the calendar and it will be going to the unions for approval. November has been challenging with parent conferences, holidays, PD, etc. Dr. Pascarella is hoping that the calendar will come back to next meeting for review.
- R. Chaleski thanked K. Walston and Ms. Debbie Stanton for working on the robo calls for parents wanting to know if their children were accepted to AIS and WSMSA. It was confirmed that the lottery at WSMSA is held without sibling preference and that the bus route has no role in the lottery. The lottery is run by an outside company.

- R. Chaleski stated that she is frustrated that the 6th grade students at Westside Middle School Academy don't get to experience a full rotation before they have to commit to their trimester rotations for the next two years. Ms. Chaleski asked if this is the same protocol for Rogers Park and Broadview Middle Schools. K. Walston stated that it is not the same at RPMS and BVMS because they don't have the same pathways that WSMSA has.
- R. Chaleski asked about the Spanish Curriculum. She was made aware that there is not an alignment for different levels from middle school to high school. Dr. Pascarella stated that A. Gomes (World Language Chair) has been doing updates on the curriculum. Dr. Pascarella will ask K. Casimiro to update the Board at next meeting.
- G. Cooper thanked Dr. Pascarella, K. Conetta, F. Santos and Mr. Adams, the Director of the High School Band, for their support and performance with their visit to New Hope Baptist Church. The students were so pleasant and well mannered. They held an amazing performance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Farley Santos moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa, that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the Danbury BOE Secretaries/IT Employees Union, with possible action in public session; also, to discuss the Superintendent's performance.

The motion carried at 8:15 pm

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

Absent: Richard Jannelli, David Metrena

Also Present: Sal Pascarella, Kevin Walston, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: Fred Karrat moved, seconded by Emanuela Palmares, that the Board of Education ratify the contract with the Danbury BOE Secretaries/IT Employees Union as proposed.

The motion carried at 9:30 pm

ADJOURNMENT

Fred Karrat moved, seconded by Farley Santos, that the Board of Education adjourn the March 13, 2019 Board Meeting. **The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.**

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)