

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

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

RECOGNITIONS

March is Board of Education Appreciation Month. Board members were thanked and given a small token of appreciation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Christina Sweeney - Concerned about proposed charter school. Doesn't feel the group behind Danbury Charter Prospect is being entirely truthful with their claims about the proposed charter school. Their website claims to be the first school in CT to offer the International Baccalaureate curriculum. According to the IB's own website, there are 17 other schools in CT that offer the IB program. Any school wanting to offer the IB curriculum can do so after they undergo a lengthy authorization process typically taking 2-3 years. According to the NYC Department of Education School Quality Guide, during the 2016 - 2017 school year Brooklyn Prospect Charter School served a population that included only 1% ELL students. The ELL population in Danbury is 25% and students speak 43 different languages. If a charter school is the only answer, why not promote or look for a charter school that will actually meet the needs of the district as a whole? Based on the report presented by the BOE in January, it seems that one of the greater challenges facing DPS are SIFEs, Students with Interrupted Formal Education. She would welcome a charter school that seeks to address that type of a need with the Danbury student population and encourages the BOE to actively seek a charter school that would be willing to help the district tackle some of these challenges.
- Anne Khan - What is BOE doing locally to help teachers out? Teachers not getting enough funding. Teachers having to pay out of pocket for their own classroom supplies. Why are we only providing \$12,000 for each student? As a city we should provide more money and more funding to the city and our students.
- Tricia Robinson - More education dollar funding to Danbury is her main goal. We need more than \$7 million going into our budget. She knows BOE is doing everything possible, and it's just not enough. She plans to stop by Mayor Boughton's office Saturday from 9 to 12 pm and asks other to do so as well. She is in favor of charter school.
- Keith Manning - English teacher at BVMS. Spoke about new curriculum in English Language Arts Department and the toll it is taking on staff and students. Grateful to be teaching three classes instead of five this year. Has gathered data from 2017-2018 school year. Difference is preparing three lessons a week last year to 10 lessons a week this year. It is overwhelming. Three to five hours a week last year for prep. This year is 18 - 25 hours of prep a week. One thing that hasn't changed is prep time during a school day of 3.5 hours a week. We obviously want to do well, students want to do well. When your time isn't being used efficiently and you're being pulled in so many different directions, that is difficult. Students are having trouble staying focused for a total of 460 minutes of instruction. Invited board members to come shadow him for a day and see what it is like.
- Kathy Snow - Respectfully asked that agendas for board meetings get posted earlier. Expressed concern with all of the changes that are happening with block schedules and graduation requirements at HS and previous changes in the schools.
- Lisa Ruffles - Bridge a gap of what you know (BOE) and what we don't know (parents). Believes that the function of the PTO needs to go beyond box tops. Your power is with the parents. The challenges we face are many. The city, BOE and teachers all play a vital role. We all need to be held accountable. Guide us as to

where our efforts are most useful. Keep us informed on the issues and what meetings are most important to attend.

- Ann Longest - Loves her job as a teacher but at same time, overwhelmed and disappointed that we underserve our children. Chooses to spend many hours outside of the classroom reviewing and searching for materials. Many additional hours invested in supporting her students by trying to simply figure out what tools to use and how to use the tools she is provided. Each year boxes upon boxes have been dropped off at her classroom with no explanation on how to implement them. No guidance on how to implement them or how to use the wonderful resources that she is given. Not to complain, but insight on what the teachers face.
- Joe DaSilva - The last thing Danbury needs is a charter school. We have a wonderful school system with wonderful teachers. If there is additional funding, it should be coming to Danbury, not to a charter school. We need school space, no question on that. The solution is not to get space by farming it out to a charter school. If there is money let's get it and bring it to Danbury. It should not be used by a private entity.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-36 through 18-37, as recommended:

A. **MINUTES**

2/28/18 Board Workshop

2/28/18 Board Meeting

Motion passed at 7:32 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Park Avenue School

- Principal David Krafick and Assistant Principal Marnie Schork represented their school.
- Title One School.
- Large free and reduced lunch population.
- Large ELL population.
- Has never been a school identified as in need of improvement. That speaks volumes.
- Recognized as a School of Distinction.
- Start day off with Pledge of Allegiance, birthday celebration, school song and “Think About”. This is where students are to think about themselves as people and who they are and what they’re doing. Always be kind, caring, responsible and respected.
- Teachers don’t just teach curriculum, they teach social lessons and how to be kind to each other. Come in every day with a wonderful smile, great attitude and ready to take on the day.
- Largest elementary school in the district.
- Staff in attendance sang their school song for the Board.
- A lot of demands on teachers but they remember that it’s very important to have fun.
- Teachers create memories for the kids.
- Monthly family meetings of students and staff.
- Power manner meetings for respect and kindness where teachers select students who exhibit that.
- 618 students enrolled, 71 staff members.
- 15,000 meals served a month.
- Over 200 hours of SPED support served a month.
- 326 ELL students.
- 70 coats, 100 Toys to Tots donated.
- PTO meetings held in English, Spanish and Portuguese.
- VH1 Save the Music Program.
- Students read over 16,000 minutes each night.
- Strong Start Neighborhood Initiative Community Garden with the United Way. Mr. Krafick thanked Alexandra Suscal, Maria Vargas and her husband Juan for their help and hours with the garden. Mr. Krafick invited BOE to come look at the garden.
- Read Across America.

R. Jannelli asked Mr. Krafick about the PTO meeting that was held a couple weeks ago and the participation at that meeting. Mr. Krafick stated there was a letter and robocall sent stating it was an important parent meeting. There were over 150 parents in attendance. 90% were of a second language. A simple PowerPoint was shown. The room was divided into halves. There was a Spanish and Portuguese translator while Mr. Krafick spoke. The meeting was an hour long. A table was in the back for signups. Multiple parents came up and said they didn't know what PTO was and many signed up for future events and parent organizations. Incredible night and parents were very pumped up.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Monique Delima

- This year's play, High School Musical, will be March 22nd and March 24th. There is a night show for each date and a matinee on the 24th.
- The student advocacy action to show support for the Stoneman Douglas HS was held on March 14th. Roughly 100 students gathered at the main entrance to hear bios of the students who passed and other speeches regarding the event. Organizers who were at the last BOE meeting did a great job and everything went smoothly and the students returned to class. The only hiccup was the fire alarm went off right after students returned to classes and it was actually a smoke detector from the Hatters Cafe. The culprit was a Shepard's pie.
- Next Tuesday, March 21st, the SATs will be held for juniors.
- Winter sports season has recently concluded with multiple teams winning championships including boys track, wrestling and boys' basketball.
- Graduation is locked in for June 22, 2018. Board members are invited to attend.
- State Career and Development Conferences for DECA happened last week. From Danbury we had a winner in Realtors Project which was presented at the last BOE meeting. A winner in Sports Entertainment Marketing. A winner in Market Research Paper for Retailing and a winner in the Business Services Research Paper. A total of 11 students will be competing at the National DECA Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

PRESENTATION

- A. **Graduation Requirements:** Principal Dan Donovan and Associate Principal Dr. Meghan Martins presented.
- This will be effective with current 7th grade class. Class of 2023 and beyond.
 - Some changes made from last time met with sub policy change committee.
 - Humanities, which now encompasses Language Arts and Social Studies. STEM is also included.
 - Most significant change is increase from current 21 credits to 25 credits.
 - Increase in health from .5 to 1 credit.
 - Two year World Language requirement has been walked back to one year.
 - 1 credit to mastery based diploma. Still can't get clarity from state on this.
 - 4 years of Math. That is a local recommendation.
 - Our students need to be taking Algebra II.
 - .5 credits in Personal Finance.
 - Requiring all of our students right now to graduate with 25 credits would create a big personnel issue for us. We would need about 7 FTEs to make that request.
 - 50% of our students graduate with 25 or more credits already but about 350 students who require more.
 - E. Palmares asked if there are any restrictions on creating some kind of internship type of program where they can earn credit towards graduation to alleviate staff numbers. Suggested contacting internship director at WCSU.
 - Run into problems with insurances, transportation but we are looking at possibility of doing that with DECO. There still has to be a certified staff member to oversee the program.
 - Concern is that a lot of students will be at graduation jeopardy because of students who have failed one class. While failure rates have improved, it is still a big concern. Basically, if a student has one bad class, they run the risk of not being on graduation track.
 - K. Molinaro asked to walk us through if we were picking our schedule as a sophomore?
 - Mr. Donovan gave an example of a typical sophomore enrollment.
 - Chemistry, eats up two periods would give us 1.2. (Lab does not meet every day.)
 - English II, 1 credit.

- Math, 1 credit.
- Modern World (SS), 1 credit.
- PE, .5.
- World Language, 1 credit.
- Health, .5.
- Total of 6.3 credits
- There are ways to make up lost credits. Credit recovery, twilight programs, summer school.
- F. Karrat asked has it been explored for online courses. Maybe in terms of elective type courses.
 - It has been looked at. A whole lot of components to that.
 - A blended model where students can come in for a few days and some coursework online still eats up an FTE. APEX learning can create a union issue and we don't know what we're getting. We don't want students taking English III online.
 - Part of the problem is that we have to pay per course. It would most likely be cost prohibited.
 - Not all students have technology available at home.
 - This year we offered a credit recovery type summer school and there was not great success with it.
- E. Palmares suggested speaking to lobbyist that represents board and asking him to push for change in language so we have more wiggle room.
- D. Metrena asked if Carnegie unit can be added to existing course if it has an increased rigor for workload? Mr. Donovan said no.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Primary Mental Health Project

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro the Board of Education approve the continuation of the Primary Mental Health Project

K. Truchsess stated that they applied and received the grant. \$20,000 used at Park Ave, AIS and Morris Street Schools. It is used for social and emotional learning, hiring child care associates and materials used to work with them. Awarded grant pending BOE approval. This would be a renewal. Same three schools have been using this grant. The application was to renew what we already had. She gave credit to Social Workers and School Psychologists who wrote the grants.

Motion passed at 8:37 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. School Security Update

- Increase another police employee on special duty at DHS. Located in back lot at East Gate.
- Also working with city regarding putting fence that would resolve egress issue.
- Looking at new visitor ID system that runs quick background check. Also checks custody/parental issue that can alert person at front door. This will be tested at DHS, WSMSA, PAS, Shelter Rock.
- Chief of Police has been great and has offered to run workshops with Safety Advocates.
- E. Palmares asked if we could look into special needs training for Safety Advocates and Resource Officers.
 - K. Truchsess stated one of the things we have done with Safety Advocates is having them participate in PMT Training (Physical Management Training). 90% of training is on de-escalation strategies with particular focus on students with special needs. This is to avoid restraining.
 - Looking at further training into better understanding students with special needs.
 - We can ask the Chief for Resource Officers to have training as well.

B. Transportation schedule update

J. Martino stated that the consultants are still working on it. They will come back to the board in April or May. Unfortunately he keeps coming back with model of HS and chopping the MS and elementary schools.

C. New State financial report system

State is going to new system. Is supposed to be simpler but it forces us to code all of our accounts for the new database. It a lot of work for us and has to be done by 8/31/2018.

D. AG/STEM Update

- Region 12 starting new school, in Washington.
- Region 14 is our current school, in Woodbury. 22 DPS students that attend the program.
- Cost standpoint to stay the same.
- Right now, 15 seats capped for Region 12, going to 22.
- In our budget and allocated.
- Still more discussion to be had.
- Each student is roughly \$7,000 cost to the Board

E. Danbury Day, April 12, 2018, 11:00-2:30 at State Capitol
Feature DECO Program. Dr. Sal invited the Board to attend.

Dr. Sal mentioned substitute service. Kim stated with our fill rates, it did not make economic sense to go with substitute staffing companies because we would be paying a premium. Increasing slightly daily rate and putting in an incentive plan. Looking at alternative programs. Our numbers are competitive with our neighboring towns. Looking at working with UConn to assist with recruiting. Tap into more recent graduates. Sal said we should have 300 people in the sub pool but we have 150.

INFORMATION

A. Danbury Community Resource Fair, March 24, 10:00-2:00, Sports Dome

R. Jannelli asked for volunteers. The Board will have a table handing out information regarding what the BOE does. Members were asked to email him if interested.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A. Date for Board Workshop with Jonathan Costa on Roles & Responsibilities

- Superintendent Evaluation on March 27th at 5:30 pm.
- Workshop with Jonathan Costa will be at 6:45 pm.
- Dr. Sal's Reorganization of Administration workshop will be held at 6pm on March 28th.
- Light Up City Hall will be on April 2, 2018. This is an awareness celebration in support of children and adults on the spectrum, with musical performances, inspiring speakers and a light up ceremony.
- P. Johnston attended the Perry Awards at DHS. It was a tremendous showing and the students were so well behaved and applauded everyone that was there.
- P. Johnston discussed the Walk Up, Not Out initiative that has been circling on social media where you can walk up to someone and be nice instead of just walking out of school.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- E. Palmares stated she was incredibly impressed with the gathering to show support for Stoneman Douglas HS at DHS on 3/14/18. Students were well organized and it was a very well planned event. By the time she walked back to her car, the students were already back in the building.
- F. Santos asked for an update on the folks that came to the Board a few meetings back with issues in a form of sub committees that discussed a reading program and if Dr. Sal has heard of more concerns from teachers. Such as the teacher that spoke tonight during public participation about the boxes being left in classrooms?
 - Morris Street is very mindful of using what they have so Dr. Sal will check into that. Dr. Glass says he thinks that part of what we are hearing is the feeling of the cutting of coaches.
- R. Jannelli stated that he attended the elementary school Invention Convention on March 12, 2018 at WSMSA. It was incredible to see kids give their marketing spiels and it was very well attended.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: F. Santos moved, seconded by D. Metrena the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing teacher scheduling negotiations.

Motion Passed at 9:15 pm

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Farley Santos, Amy Spallino, Emanuela Palmares
Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess as well as DHS Principal, Dan Donovan.

The Chair called the Executive Session to order at 9:21 pm and turned the meeting over to K. Thompson.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: F. Karrat moved, seconded F. Santos, that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

Motion passed at 10:08 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

F. Karrat moved, seconded F. Santos, that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of March 14, 2018 and the meeting adjourned at 10:08 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)