

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, P. Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Patrick Johnston,
Frederick Karrat, Emanuela Palmares, Ralph Pietrafesa, Amy
Spallino, Richard Jannelli, Joseph Britton

Absent: David Metrena

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Joe Martino, Kelly Truchsess, Kim Thompson, Kevin Walston, Kara
Casimiro

RECOGNITIONS

- Jody Huzina, WERACE Program Facilitator, chosen as “Leader of the Year” by CAACE
Ms. Huzina is the program facilitator at WERACE. She invited the Board to come see what Adult Education is all about. They serve students between the ages of 17 and 65. WERACE is so much more than a GED program. They currently have over 900 students with around 600 ESL students. WERACE runs a citizenship program, an adult basic education program and two high school completion programs. There are currently over 160 students in the credit diploma program, most are from Danbury. Hoping to have over 60 students graduate this year with their high school diploma. Also invited Board members to the graduation ceremony. Terence Cunningham was introduced as the program director.
- The NAMM Foundation announces that Danbury Public Schools is now a 2019 Best Communities for Music Education School District.
 - Certificate presented to Jill Russell-Benner.
 - NAMM Foundation is an organization that supports a few of the music programs in Danbury. One of 10 school districts in Connecticut and 600 nationwide that were recognized.
 - Ms. Russell-Benner introduced some of the music staff: Mary Peters, Skip Jennings, Liz Dandeneau, Brian Ho, Nicole Cardamone, Amanda Wood and Debra Morris.
 - Music students in attendance spoke briefly about the program:
 - Mateus Dos Reis plays the cello and piano at DHS. Mateo started playing in third grade. Playing an instrument helped him a lot, not only with school but because he didn't have friends. The music program helped him create new bonds with people. He now he has friendships with a lot of people that he wouldn't have been able to meet without the program.
 - Gryffin Syme also plays in the DHS orchestra. He has played the violin since third grade. The Chamber group he is in plays while people are showing up to meetings and also play at small events. Gryffin thanked his teachers for making music and orchestra a rewarding experience.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that every year we have cut backs and each year the Board supports keeping music as a priority. It makes it a special place. This is why we put the effort in what we do. It's a tremendous award and we were not there a few years ago. Dr. Pascarella thanked Ms. Russell-Benner for bringing this program in and really showcasing it through the district.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Lori Woodruff - Director of the AIS Theater Magnet Program. Thanked the Board members who attended the production of Twinderella last week. The students were so proud of themselves, as were the parents. The production was a huge success.
- R. Jannelli- Update on Pembroke playground. Things are moving ahead nicely. They will have a charity golf outing at Oxford Green on April 30, 2019 at 9am. \$150 per person, \$600 for foursome. Price will include lunch. Has flyers if anyone is interested. Thanked Mr. Krafick and his school, Park Ave, for raising over \$1000 for the playground. Also thanked Chuck's Steakhouse for their donation of \$10,000 and a Senior Executive (who wished to withhold their company name) for their donation of \$5000. They are currently close to \$90,000. Texas Roadhouse has also been in contact to hold a fundraiser April 11, 2019 through May 10, 2019. Anyone who buys an appetizer gift card will have 100% of that money go directly to the Pembroke playground fund.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-55 through 19-56, as recommended:

MINUTES

3/27/19 Sites & Facilities Committee

3/27/19 Board Meeting

Motion passed at 7:23 pm

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

ACE: Tamara Souza

- On March 15th, six ACE students went on the STARS Trip with teacher Rob Melillo to participate in the STARS workshops. The workshops allowed students and teachers from alternative programs around the state to interact and prepare for the upcoming STARS conference.
- On March 18th, 12 Green Chemistry students took a trip with Chemistry Teacher Katja Pieragostini to the Norwalk Maritime Center.
- On March 20th, ACE held their Career Day, which was organized by Dianna Dinardo. Career Day allowed students to choose four workshops to attend that serve the purpose of promoting wellness and care for others in the form of career opportunities. Workshops included speakers from Danbury Fire Department, Danbury Police Department, music production, yoga, culinary, making a first impression, comfort dogs, music performance, meditation, energy work and healing hands, and a design your own technological space workshop.
- On March 20th, the top floor of ACE was setup to host their first Shakespeare Fair. The Shakespeare Fair was for the entire student body to enjoy, engage, and have fun learning with one another. The Fair was a Social Studies and English collaboration with Kyle Trocolla's Modern World students, Daniela Esposito's English 1 students, and Joanne Tolles' English 4 students. The Fair included 16 stations designed and hosted by these students. (John won the paper airplane contest with a paper airplane that flew 53 feet).
- NVCC Danbury Summer Program is in the planning stages and ACE is working to offer students summer courses at NVCC for Hospitality and Food Service, Microsoft Certification, and CNA.

- On March 27th, the 11th graders put their best efforts into the SAT which is overseen by Kyle Trocolla and his SAT team.
- On April 3rd, a US History and English 3 Collaborative Project on oppression culminated in group project presentations during the morning at the Westconn Student Center.
- On April 4th, there was a follow-up focus group on the District's Equity Statement with these same students as facilitated by Judy Coco and Kevin Walston. ACE students were happy that their voices, experiences, and thoughts regarding equity were valued.
- The new ACE website is complete and all are invited to check out what is happening this year at "our house".

PRESENTATION

- Rob Pote, Director, Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs
- Danbury Public Schools Collaborative/Upward Bound/Excel/EA²P/
- Minority/Bilingual Teaching Pipeline
- Western Connecticut State University
 - Teaching pipeline is in its 6th year right now.
 - Expanding on the minority bilingual teaching pipeline through a grant from the federal government as a supplemental grant.
 - Supplemental grant for STEM students interested in STEM fields.
 - 30 students this upcoming summer will have the opportunity to attend a teaching pipeline and a computer science pipeline.
 - Students are getting high school and college credit through the teaching pipeline.
 - Ms. Megan Martins and Ms. Vicki Carlson have been emailed to distribute this information to DHS students, not just Upward Bound students.
 - E. Palmares congratulated Mr. Pote on expanding the program. When she has visited, she feels that she has seen more females in the educational pipeline program and is hopeful that this new pipeline will provide more opportunities for males.
 - Mr. Pote stated that computer science is nationally primarily males, so this is a program to get females involved.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that Mr. Pote has been aggressive in going to DC and finding grants. These are outstanding programs with solid youngsters coming out of the program.
 - Mr. Pote thanked the Board for being good partners.

ACTION ITEMS

A. 2019-2020 Revised School Calendar

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education approve the revisions to the 2019-2020 school calendar.

Dr. Pascarella stated that they needed three days for teachers to do PD work before the start of school and the fourth day is a volunteer day. Teachers have option to go to their classrooms or stay in PD.

Motion passed at 7:35 pm

B. High School Graduation Date

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education set the high school graduation date at June 19, 2019.

Motion passed at 7:35 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Budget Update

- Budget subcommittee result recommended the adoption and approval of Mayor's budget.
- Mayor's operation budget approved \$2.2 million.
- Other \$500,000 that Mayor has spoken about is expected from the development on west side of the city.
- Governor's proposed budget (hoping for approval in May) will bring it up to \$2.4 million.
- Expectation is ECS money of \$500,000 will be moved if we are not considered a distressed district.
- That will bring us to \$4.7 million while we have asked for \$7.7 million.
- Hiring positions that are crucial in Special Ed and Bilingual Ed. Will have to wait until after the May date to hire other staff.
- Anticipating 25 retirees. \$70,000 in the budget for retirees.
- J. Martino is concerned with current budget. Uptic in outplacements with Special Ed. Projecting \$450,000 to 1/2 million deficit in that account. \$175,000 in the budget for next year so we may have to raise that in the future.
- Dr. Pascarella spoke about excess cost reimbursement. Once passed 4 ½ times per pupil cost they will supplement the city. District does not get that money.
- K. Truchsess stated that we can also go to PPT and change placement mid-year. Particularly this year we had three students in the past month that we had to absorb.
- F. Karrat asked if there was anything the Board could do to get the excess cost reimbursement back to the district versus the city? J. Martino responded that it's a city policy that the money does not come back to the district. Dr. Pascarella stated that the discussion may need to happen with the city this year.

B. Legislative Update

- Ryan Bingham has been calling each day and updating Dr. Pascarella.
- As of April 10th, the disposable lunch tray bill will not be passed. The impact to state is too costly.
- African American Studies and Latino Studies bill might be passed which will add two courses to the schools instead of units of study. There are no resources for these courses.
- School Safety bill is still moving through. Dr. Pascarella is extremely concerned. We have no money in the budget to handle counseling, support work and diagnostic work. This will put the district in the position of over identifying and disciplining minority students.
- Teacher pension bill did not pass. Astronomical cost. May come in through appropriations or finance.
- Danbury is the only priority district that would be paying the 25% because we are not a distressed city. If it comes back around, the district is looking to add something attached to the bill where all priority districts receiving funds can be put into that distressed category.

- J. Martino stated that the Appropriations and Finance Committee will put forth or modify the Governor's budget in early May. More updates to see what comes out of those committees and ECS.
- Mayor's budget clearly states that pension comes back to the Board responsibility, not the city.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that he will continue to send updates. Board members were instructed to let Dr. Pascarella know of any questions and he will get in touch with R. Bingham.

C. CORE Visit, March 27-28

- K. Casimiro stated that CORE visited the district on March 27th and 28th. They visited to give feedback on the ESL programming and how we are servicing our students.
- Stadley Rough, Morris St, Park Ave, Pembroke and Ellsworth schools participated in administrator and teacher focus groups.
- This was an opportunity to hear from the consultant on ways we can improve and identified strengths we currently have going.
- Consultant did notice some nice improvements in K-5.
- Consultant will be sending improvement suggestions in a formal report and those suggestions will be put into action.

D. CABE Policy Update

- K. Walston stated that CABE has concluded their review of the policy manual with recommendations.
- Add a table of contents in policy manual.
- Recommended regulations to be part of manual and available online for everyone.
- Reorder our policies to be consistent with the CABE policy manual.
- Two to three-year implementation plan. A number of policies that were mandated, two of which have been recently updated us. Fifteen more to update immediately.
- CABE Series by Series. Series 0 through 9000. CABE will send us updated policies on a monthly or every other month basis.
- R. Chaleski asked to schedule a Policy Committee meeting. Meeting date of April 24, 2019 from 6:45 - 7pm was agreed on. This meeting will be to schedule future meetings.
- K. Thompson reminded the Board that we are going into negotiations for teachers so if you sit on both committees, be careful not to bunch them together or you'll get overwhelmed.

E. Meeting with mental health providers, April 2

- K. Truchsess stated that she had a meeting with two representatives from Danbury Hospital/WCHN, several members of PPS team, our head of Nursing and Health Services and Dr. Pascarella.
- Exciting and collaborative meeting.
- Follow-up meeting has been scheduled for the week after April vacation.
- Piloting a committee with representatives from the medical community and school community to case review and work together collaboratively to prevent need for hospitalizations related to mental health.
- Looking at discharge summaries if students do go to ER for mental health issues and how we can collaborate getting the information from the hospital to the school district so we can better support the students.

- Danbury Hospital was very open to listening to feedback regarding them not having a youth ward for crisis and inpatient units. Looking at partnerships with expanding network and having place available for our students if they need it. Also open to considering and looking into sectioning off a youth part of the Crisis Intervention Unit.
- 211 is a mobile crisis unit that can be called by the school district or families at home if needed. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, open on holidays. Danbury Hospital will look at partnering families with 211 before the youth has been discharged. This way they have an immediate contact person through 211.
- K. Truchsess stated that she is excited about the partnership and they are very open in listening and providing feedback.

DISCUSSION

A. Facilities Update

- J. Martino stated that they did rerun the data for the King Street campus and will send the information to the Board. Merged two campuses together. Moved out Mill Ridge as well. Will share at next Sites and Facilities meeting. Start to move ahead with idea of bond referendum. Westside is still a good option.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that they are having challenges trying to locate property for the Early Childhood Program. Have looked at a few sites but haven't been successful. Hoping to have some sites available to discuss at next Sites and Facilities meeting.
- J. Martino stated that the bid for the track at DHS is done and that he will know more when the project is ready to start. J. Martino will inform DHS of the progress. It most likely won't be complete for the next track season unless we get a very favorable summer and fall.
- R. Jannelli stated that the Sperry Rail building on Shelter Rock is moving to Shelton. 10,000 square feet. Ridley-Lowell is in that building, which they have vacated. J. Martino stated that they did walk that building some months ago and it's a corporate office park and not possible for early childhood.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the city owns a lot of property/buildings and we need to start looking at those.
- G. Cooper asked if the Black Box issue has been taken care of. Contractor is looking at it, evaluating the front side. Warranty does not cover natural condition. More updates to come.
- G. Cooper stated that at the budget education meeting there was discrepancy within the budget and enrollment that needs to be cleared up. Asked to footnote that. J. Martino stated that those FTEs are paid by city tax payer dollars. 730 some odd teachers and we divide that out with what's in the grant and what's not. Head Start piece sits inside the city budget and goes straight to Head Start.
- R. Chaleski stated that it used to be a line item in our budget, but it goes straight to city now.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that we are talking to our vendors and moving in that direction as well.

INFORMATION

A. Overview of Healthy Food Certification

- J. Martino stated that this will be on the Board for adoption at the next meeting.
- Filing application for free meals across the schools.
- Anticipates 70% of schools will go to that provision.
- Won't know until approved by state.
- Most of our elementary and middle schools will fall for that provision because of the poverty.
- Free lunch and breakfast program.

- DHS will not qualify based on number and size as well as AIS and possibly Westside Middle School Academy.
- Probably 12 elementary, ACE and two middle schools.
- New Britain and Meriden has this program.
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B. BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- P. Johnston attended the Twinderlla production at AIS and said it was awesome.
- His wife and daughter went to Godspell twice because it was so magnificent.
- P. Johnston thanked R. Jannelli for speaking earlier in the meeting about the Pembroke golf fundraiser.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- A. Spallino also went to Godspell at DHS. It was a great play. She spoke to someone at the play and they asked why aren't there stairs coming up from Blackbox parking area? Walking up that hill was difficult. J. Martino stated that there was a plan to have stairs but nothing has been built yet.
- R. Jannelli asked for a Community Relations meeting on April 22nd at 6pm. Asked for as many Board members as possible to attend.
- E. Palmares also went to the Godspell production. She had the experience to see a couple of rehearsals and congratulated the DHS production and music departments. Great example of how you can not only change the student's lives but the sense of community as well.
- E. Palmares thanked R. Chaleski, R. Jannelli, Dr. Pascarella, K. Truchsess and J. Martino for attending the Light Up Blue Ceremony celebrating Autism Awareness Day. It was a beautiful celebration! They were able to raise a couple thousand dollars to the first sensory room at the library. A representative was also there to raise money for the Pembroke playground.
- E. Palmares stated that she saw an article about left over foods being sent home with students who are in need in the midwest and if it is possible for our schools to do this program? J. Martino stated that we do that on Friday's for some of our students.
- Sites and Facilities meeting set for May 15th at 7pm.
- Finance Committee meeting set for May 15th at 6pm.
- Superintendent's Evaluation Committee meeting set for May 7th at 6pm.
- Ad Hoc Committee meeting still scheduled for May 1st at 5:30 pm.
- R. Chaleski attended the No One Eats Alone event at Stadley Rough. Their principal and social worker did a great job. In attendance were policemen, firemen, middle school principals and high school students.
- R. Chaleski asked what the Board's take is on speaking at public forums as an individual from the Board? Members responded that it depends on the context of the meeting. Show care if you are representing the Board. P. Johnston stated that he is not sure if there is an actual written document on how to approach that. R. Jannelli stated that generally it's the Board Chair that makes statements. He suggested saying "this is my personal opinion, not based on my elected official position". One can also refer them back to the Chairman. P. Johnston stated that if we need to clarify it more, we can do that. G. Cooper stated that when she wants to make a statement, she will call the Chair and ask if it's ok and in agreement with what she has to say.
- R. Jannelli stated that he would like the Board to consider appointing mentors to the new Board members. P. Johnston replied that that is currently in the works.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by A. Spallino, that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation and administrative appointments. The motion carried at 8:30 p.m.

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

Absent: David Metrena

Also Present: Sal Pascarella, Kevin Walston, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess, Kara Casimiro

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by F. Karrat, to return to public session. The motion carried at 9:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by F. Karrat, to adjourn the April 10, 2019 Board Meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)