

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, P. Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

RECOGNITIONS

- Luanelly Iglesias, RPMS teacher, received the George I. Sanchez Memorial Award, given annually to an educator who promotes education for Hispanic children, to be presented at the National Education Association's convention this summer.
 - Ms. Iglesias has been at RPMS for four years. She thanked the district and the community. Ms. Iglesias came to this country 30 years ago as a bilingual student who received a lot of support from her teachers and the community and that is what she does today. Thanked the NEA and CEA for walking her through this path.
- Finalists in the State Spelling Bee: Aahil Nishad, WSMSA, 8th place; and Sandya Sudarsanam, AIS, 6th overall
 - Sandya stated that the Spelling Bee has been pretty fun to do. She was introduced to the Spelling Bee thanks to her teacher, Marc Poliquin. Sandya thanked Mr. Poliquin for his dedication and hard work.
 - Aahil stated that he started his Spelling Bee journey in third grade. Aahil also had Mr. Poliquin as his Spelling Bee mentor. Aahil stated that the Spelling Bee has been an incredible experience.
 - Marc Poliquin (currently at AIS) took on the program at Stadley Rough seven years ago with a small group of students and it just blossomed. Mr. Poliquin works with students on the etymology of words, parts of speech and getting kids excited with the competition. Two students from Danbury were present this year and no other school in CT had as many as Danbury. M. Poliquin stated that A. Nishad also represented Danbury in Washington, DC when he was in fourth grade.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Mariana Martins - Ms. Martins is a Social Work student at WCSU who is currently interning at the Family Resource Center at Morris Street School. Ms. Martins has had the incredible opportunity to see the impact the center has on families of Danbury students. One of the most influential programs she has seen is the Theater Club. She has witnessed students completely transform in their confidence. Students have learned to be organized, time management and what it means to be part of a team. Ms. Martins invited the community and Board to the theatrical presentation on May 9th at 6:30 pm in the Morris Street cafeteria. Ms. Martins provided forms for those interested in buying tickets.
- Melinda Scott - Ms. Scott added that the Spelling Bee is a big deal at Stadley Rough because of M. Poliquin. Originally started by Mr. Boucher. She strongly encourages all to watch a Spelling Bee competition as it is an amazing experience. Ms. Scott stated that Mr. Poliquin does this his own time, it's a volunteer position. She reminded everyone how much volunteer work teachers do. Ms. Scott also stated that Luanelly Iglesias is going to be recognized for the award she received tonight in front of 10,000 teachers for the national NEA meeting and we get to say that she is from Danbury. Stadley Rough will hold their "Don't Dis My Disability Dance" on April 26th. This is their 10th anniversary and is put on by the Kindness and Compassion Club. The club is made up of about 25 kids. Ms. Scott invited the Board to attend from 3 to 5 pm. Funds raised will go to the Down Syndrome Organization.
- Donna Bosworth- Ms. Bosworth is an Art teacher at AIS and Morris Street. She is the co-coordinator for the district wide Celebration of Danbury Arts (CoDA). The event happens once a year and it brings together art, music, robotics, culinary, ROTC, along with all schools represented in visual arts and music performances. It will be held on May 11th from 11 - 4pm at DHS.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-60 through 19-61, as recommended:

MINUTES

4/10/19 Special Board Meeting

4/10/19 Board Meeting

Motion passed at 7:22 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Spotlight Your School – Reach & Endeavor

- Presented by Administrator Jackie Dinardo and Assistant Administrator Michael Sheiken.
- Endeavor/Reach is a behavior modification program. They try to get students back on track and get back to their home schools.
- Successful PBIS (reward program). Students who don't receive rewards at home or get praise will get that at the school. Build students up by positive reinforcement.
- They have returned student to DHS and several have gone to HATS while others have graduated from the school.
- Teachers are special but these teachers are a little more special to work in a program like this. This staff is strong! J. Dinardo is very proud of her staff.
- J. Dinardo presented a slideshow about the school. It began with two former students. One was Miss Connecticut Latino who graduated from the Reach Program and is now in L.A to pursue modeling and acting. The other student also graduated from the program and is now a Dental Assistant and married with two children.
- Relationships are the roots of Reach and Endeavor. Rebuilds self-esteem. Forges positive connections with the school. Builds trust among stakeholders. Students strive to thrive, not just survive.
- Students achieve academic success. 90% of students reach STAR, DBQ and SBAC growth expectations. Reach students hit CAPT and SAT score expectations. Endeavor students accepted into HATS every year. Reach students maintain/regain academic standing and strive for graduation.
- Authentic learning experiences give success meaning. Activities that apply to future job force. Exposure to business, nature, politics, entertainment, art, law, social change and technology. Honest and open dialogue provide insight into their day-to-day struggles.
- Taking responsibility promotes change. Students realize how to control their lives. Elaborate PBIS data connects their choices to their outcomes. Provide solutions to overcome negative choices. Trust in staff eases student resistance to change.
- Their staff is like no other. Resilient, patient, tireless, fearless, skilled, relentless, innovative, flexible, dedicated, supportive, generous, insightful, creative. All held together by their leader, Jacki Dinardo.
- A current student, Juliana, spoke. Juliana had a couple of options to go to different schools but she chose Reach. She is grateful for her teachers. In time of crisis, they are always there to help. Juliana prefers Reach because the teachers are always on top of students, making sure they understand and get work done. That is what helps her.
- J. Dinardo invited the Board to stop by any day.
- Dr. Pascarella thanked Ms. Dinardo and the staff in attendance for all that they do and how they care. There is no last chance there. Every day is a new day! It's hard work and we see it and are very appreciative of all they do.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS Executive Board of Governors: Alisha Nagarsheth

- National Honor Society's "Mr. DHS" will be next Friday, May 3rd at 6pm in the auditorium to raise money for Smile Train.
- This year's DHS's production Godspell was a success! There was an amazing turnout at all three shows.
- The Laramie Project will be shown next week in the new Black Box Theatre on May 2nd, 3rd, and 4th.
- Nine student artists from Danbury High were selected as winners in this year's "Hooray for the Arts" contest.
- Peer Leadership interviews are done, and selection process has started for next year's new peer leaders.
- Class elections as well as BOG elections will be taking place within the next month.
- Junior Prom is this Friday, April 26th at 7pm at the Portuguese Cultural Center.
- Danbury's baseball team is up for team of the week and doing exceptionally well.

ACTION ITEMS

A. March 2019 –Operating Results Analysis (General Fund/Grants/Projects)

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education accept the March 2019 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund/Grant/Projects)

- J. Martino stated that he has concerns going in to the year with some of the costs in Special Ed and the Substitute lines.
- Substitute rates were boosted which has helped with coverage.
- Transportation and SPED will be a stressor. He will put City on notice of the costs, just as a precaution.

Motion passed at 7:37 pm

B. Healthy Food Certification

MOTION: Healthy food option: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Motion passed at 7:38 pm

MOTION: Food exemptions: R. Chaleski moved, seconded E. Palmares, that the board of education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

Motion passed at 7:39 pm

MOTION: Exemptions for beverages: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Conetta, that the board of education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

Motion passed at 7:38 pm

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

● City Public Hearing on Budget, April 15

Community approved Mayor's budget. Final vote will be on May 7th at 7:30 pm.

● Legislative Update

- Getting resources from Hartford.
- Followed up with discussion at Public Relations Committee meeting.
- Dr. Pascarella will keep sending Board materials.
- Within next week and a half there should be a final recommendation to go through with approvals (from Hartford).

- We are scheduled for \$2.7 million from the City, including the Matrix funding. \$2.2 million is the base City allocation. We are still looking for \$2.4 million from Hartford.
- Public Relations meeting came up with an idea to send flyers to community. The flyer informs community on where to call (Legislative Office) and to request three key items needed:
- Support the Governor's H.B.07150 which will provide Danbury with \$2.4 million in the Alliance/ECS Grant.
- Support reclassifying the Danbury Public Schools as a Distressed District in order to reduce the teacher pension cost to the municipality. The fact that we are an Alliance District and receiving funds should qualify us.
- Support the Excess Cost Rate for Special Education at 2.5x rather than 4.5x the District average.
- This will make a major difference in our budget if passed in Hartford.
- Won't know until June 6th and into July if they go into extended session.
- Pembroke Utility Upgrade
 - On April 22nd, the power was down at Pembroke Elementary. It was a result of underground work done during Spring Break. There was a three-hour delay for the school until power was restored.
- R. Jannelli stated that he attended the public hearing on April 15th. This was perhaps the most attended public hearing he has witnessed. Incredible outpouring from public. Teachers asked City Council to support the Superintendent's budget. Teachers in attendance didn't say they needed more money, just indicated the impact from the lack of funding to our students. There was a different aspect from each person that spoke, so it wasn't redundant.

DISCUSSION

- Danbury Mission/Portrait of a Graduate
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that as this gets identified, all of our resources will be aiming at that.
 - Looking at our rising 5th and 8th graders as they transition to middle and high schools respectively.
 - K. Walston reviewed the six themes of Portrait of a Graduate:
 - Critical thinkers
 - Global stewards
 - Purposeful communicators
 - Persistent innovators
 - Forever learners
 - Empathetic citizens
 - On December 11th they had a Community Day with over 55 stakeholders from the community.
 - Charge that day was to lead the meeting with Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Portrait of a Graduate.
 - Recurring themes and patterns landed on the above-mentioned characteristics.
 - Vision Statement is that Danbury Public Schools aspires to advance ALL learners to their highest potential.
 - Mission Statement is that Danbury Public Schools, in partnership with families and the community, provides transformational learning experiences, designed to nurture thoughtful and prepared graduates.
 - R. Jannelli asked if there would be an opportunity to discuss, give input or ask questions before approving the statements.
 - K. Walston stated that he was hoping to have a Q&A during the previous session. We don't need a formal meeting. R. Jannelli asked if there could be another brief meeting to discuss the statements so we are all on board with the terminology.
 - It was agreed to be discussed at next meeting.
 - R. Jannelli asked if it was possible to have a sheet highlighting the different sections and accountability that would be able to be followed and measured. Also asked if this would be a living document that would change over the years. How would that be evaluated?
 - K. Casimiro stated that is an important piece on how we hold ourselves accountable for the statements. Knowing there will need to be revisions and mitigating factors. They will meet regularly and monitor the action steps that are carved out. Periodic meetings will be held to hold ourselves accountable for getting tasks done and doing it well. If tasks are not on track, discuss what needs to be done to get on track.
 - R. Jannelli stated that these same standards should be held to the Board as well.
 - K. Casimiro stated that all of our goals should be in alignment, all the way down to the classroom level.
 - Teachers set goals for the students. Schools set goals for their buildings. Departments set goals for their staff members. Hierarchical system.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

P. Johnston stated that he was at WSMSA on April 24th for their Welcome Walkthrough. The school had asked him to go there as a parent of a former student as well as a Board member. It was quite a turnout. Four different groups that looked at different aspects of the school. He surveyed the physical environment of the school. It was very interesting, and he spent several hours there. Found some good things and some things that needed attention, such as the new modular buildings having loose trim and several electrical outlets not working. P. Johnston was not sure if this event was done at all schools but if it isn't, it should be. This was done through the SERC program from New Haven. They will take information from the session and report it back to Principal, Dr. LaBanca.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- F. Karrat requested a Policy Committee meeting. The district has 16 to 17 policies that we need to be reviewed and adopted. Asked Cabinet to please distribute the policies as quickly as possible so they can be reviewed. A Policy Committee meeting was decided for May 1st at 6:30 and May 8th at 5:30 pm.
- K. Conetta thanked R. Jannelli for the Community Relations meeting held on April 22nd. She feels that the note card for the community to contact state legislatures is very important. The meeting also made Mayor Boughton aware that that money for SPED is issued back to city, not district and he agreed that that money will now go back to the school district.
- R. Jannelli stated that the meeting was well attended. The purpose was to put together a coalition that would engage community stakeholders in Danbury to allow us, as a city, to advocate for more funding in Hartford. R. Jannelli asked Mayor Boughton to select someone from the City Council to sit on the Community Relations Board as well as someone from NEA. A. Spallino and K. Conetta will be part of the committee on behalf of the Board. Mayor Boughton is 100% on board and also indicated the need to get this information out to the public. This project is expected to take over a year.
- J. Britton stated that he went to the Shelter Rock Science Fair on April 23rd. They did a terrific job. Everyone was engaged and the school was packed with parents and students. The raffle baskets that they created were beautiful.
- Facilities Committee meeting still set to be held on May 15th at 7pm.
- J. Martino stated that the current enrollment in the schools is 11,712. 130+ preschool. RPMS is at 1000. Park Ave is at 664. 107 new elementary and 29 new middle school students since October 1st. 30 additional kindergarten students registered since October 1st. Mill Ridge had 15% growth this year.
- J. Martino stated he will get actual enrollment numbers for next meeting.
- Dr. Pascarella has been searching for new facilities, nothing really available for us to rent. Preschool is really a challenge because of the standards. Will look into several options.
- Danbury Day in Hartford will be on May 9, 2019 from 11 to 1 pm.
- G. Cooper stated that her granddaughter attends the preschool program at Great Plain. She has been attending since December and has not had a day where she doesn't want to go. Says her teachers love her the way her parents do. Vocabulary is improving. G. Cooper thanked staff at Great Plain. K. Truchsess agreed and will pass along G. Cooper's compliments.
- K. Thompson stated there will be an executive session soon because of negotiations.

ADJOURNMENT

P. Johnston moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of April 24, 2019 and the meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)