

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019- 7:00 PM

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, P. 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, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Amy Spallino, Joseph Britton, David Metrena, Ralph Pietrafesa

Absent: Kate Conetta, Emanuela Palmares, Richard Jannelli

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

RECOGNITIONS

CABE Student Leadership Awards

Broadview Middle School:	Maria Strattner & Sahil Patel
Rogers Park Middle School:	Caitlin Lee & Ishan Patel
Westside Middle School Academy:	Choe Guttman & Jeffney Peterson
Danbury High School:	Alisha Nagarsheth & Lucas Amaral
Alternative Center:	Isabella Bernal & Justin Escobedo

The CABE Student Leadership Awards Program recognizes two students from each school who exhibit leadership skills based on the criteria under “Encourage Them!”. Each Principal spoke about their students and why they were chosen for the award.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Dr. Kristy Zaleta - Painting the Park. Dr. Zaleta thanked the Board members who helped out. There were 175 volunteers made up of teachers, former teachers, administrators, parents, Civil Air Patrol, Board members, and 1/3 of the RPMS staff came out to paint the park. Thanked Praxair that gave the initial monetary amount to buy supplies. Sherwin Williams who provided the top-notch paint. Over 120 gallons of paint was used. 100 gallons on the walls, 20 gallons for the trim. Not completely done yet. 700 hours of work completed in six hours. Started at 7 am. By 10 am there was a coat of paint on all the walls. Number of parents that came out in full force to help was touching. Generosity of businesses in the town was incredible. Lorenzo’s, Nicos, Soho Pizza, Bagelman, Texas Roadhouse, Mothership Bakery, JK’s and Chick-Fil-A donated food. ShopRite and PriceRite donated gift cards, water and breakfast. Custodians and cafeteria staff donated water. Even staff who couldn’t attend donated money to help. Dr. Zaleta invited Board to come see how great the school looks now.
- Melinda Scott - Ms. Scott spoke of the things that have made her sad this year. She began with stating that the country has been left broken hearted yet again with the two latest shootings. One with a very close connection to one of our Danbury families. Students have asked her “what do we do WHEN it happens”. Not if, when. It breaks her heart and she doesn’t have an answer for them. Also didn’t have the right answers for their SBAC and Star testing questions. Kids are asking “my video stopped playing, what do I do?” and “my screen went blank, what do I do?” She spends three weeks on the test prep unit in strategies for the test but then when the test doesn’t work, it worries the students and they get upset. It worries her too because they are looking at her test scores. Her former students (college aged) want to go back to Stadley Rough to visit and it saddens her that there are protocols in place that don’t allow that to happen anymore. She understands why but it makes her sad. Lastly, the Board and Dr. Pascarella put together a team to work very hard on the budget and yet again, it didn’t get passed by the City Council. Things in the classroom are really hard right now and she is worried that they are only going to get worse.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Chaleski moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 19-64 through 19-70, as recommended:

MINUTES

4/22/19 Community Relations Committee

4/24/19 Board Workshop

4/24/19 Policy Committee

4/24/19 Board Meeting

4/30/19 Superintendent Evaluation Committee

5/1/19 AdHoc Subcommittee Meeting

5/1/19 Policy Committee Meeting

Motion passed at 7:39 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE – Spotlight Your School

Ellsworth Avenue School

- Principal Marnie Durkin introduced her staff in attendance.
- Exciting time with Teacher Appreciation Week.
- National Walk to School event with 173 students in attendance and 25 adults.
- Students wore sunglasses at school because their future's so bright.
- Students wore hats to school for “hats off to teachers”.
- Students got to dress up as what they want to be when they grow up.
- Students also sent notes to their teachers/staff with really touching words.
- Artwork was displayed by the Ellsworth students.
- Ms. Durkin had the Board members participate in a game called Kahoot. This game highlighted fun facts about the school.
- The school mascot is a soaring eagle. This is also the symbol use to refer when speaking about students who go above and beyond. Each month they celebrate their soaring eagles.
- Students practice reading fluency with their book buddies which are academic role models. Older students help younger students navigate social and academic situations.
- Ellsworth was built in 2009. It replaced Roberts Avenue School.
- Ms. Durkin invited the Board to stop by and see one of their concerts. The school received VH1 Save the Music grant which provides over 40 students with a musical instrument for free.
- There are 502 students enrolled. Four classes of each grade level from K-5.
- 501 laptops for students purchased with Title 1 money. Received this funding based on free and reduced lunch recipients, 90% of students. Ellsworth has the largest percent of ELL students in the district.
- School of Distinction two times.
- 47 staff members. The greatest asset is the staff in the building who make it a priority to impact students in a positive way.
- Many classroom volunteers from WCSU and ARC (Association of Religious Communities).
- Ms. Durkin’s daughter is currently a student at Delaware State University which has a large African American enrollment. Dr. Pascarella gave Ms. Durkin the opportunity to go to the university and do recruiting for the school district. She has had meetings and interviews with students at the university and is building a relationship to recruit future teachers to Danbury Public Schools. There has been a great amount of interest.

ACTION ITEMS

A. **Strategic Direction (Vision, Mission, Portrait of a Graduate) 2019-2024**

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by J. Britton that the Board of Education approve the Strategic Direction (Vision, Mission, Portrait of a Graduate) 2019-2024

R. Chaleski stated that she is so proud and excited of this work. She has been engaged with the process and knows the time and effort that went into it. K. Walston going out in the community with the whole team was very impressive. She wanted to point out that there are five Guiding Principles and six Themes and to consider that. R. Chaleski asked for clarification for labeling the Board of Education piece in the Coherence chart. K. Walston stated that the District Goals are not to be confused with the Board of Education Goals. The goals of the

Board of Education would be what's wrapped around the other goals. All-encompassing for everything and how we focus our energies.

Motion passed at 7:59 pm

B. New Policies

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education accept for 1st reading the following policies:

P0521:	Mission, Goals, Objectives: Nondiscrimination
P4118.11/4218.11	Personnel, Certified/Non-Certified: Nondiscrimination
P4212.42:	Personnel, Non-Certified: Drug & Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers
P4112.52/4212.52:	Personnel, Certified/Non-Certified: Security Check/ Fingerprinting
P3542.22:	Business/Non-Instructional Operations: Food Service Personnel-Code of Conduct

Motion passed at 8:00 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

City Council Budget Meeting, May 7th

- Dr. Pascarella stated that the budget was reduced to the Mayor's recommended budget. \$2.2 million was the allocation and \$500,000 for the development which equals \$2.7 million. Several members on the City Council requested an amendment to the budget to acquire \$1 million more. It was spoken about for a while but it was against fund balances, which is a reserve to meet the unfulfilled needs of Danbury. In the end, it was voted down. The district is also working with Mayor Boughton as they are concerned about excess cost in special area. \$100,000 came out of our budget for the sprinkler break at DHS. Discussion of reductions are to be held at next week's Finance Committee meeting.
- F. Karrat asked why the deductible for the sprinkler issue at DHS fall on the City's responsibility? J. Martino stated that it's the way the relationship has been set up over time. The district holds the insurance liability and policies. If it was an uncovered issue that would go to the City. Most cities are set up like this. It's not legislated, it's just the way it has been set up. J. Martino stated that the deductible will go up to \$250,000 per claim next year.
- J. Martino stated that we have not made a claim on this policy in seven years. We typically don't access the policy. Our rates are low because we are in a municipal pool.
- J. Martino is looking into purchasing a secondary insurance.
- P. Johnston spoke about rolling over accumulated funds. J. Martino stated that we aren't allowed to carry funds over year to year.
- J. Martino has made a request to the City to see if they can help with the deductible. It wouldn't be a huge issue if this was the only problem, but we are having many more budget issues this year.

Legislation & Funding Update

Dr. Pascarella and team will be going to Hartford and try to get money for the district. \$5.4 if you take the Matrix money and appropriations money. June 7th is the approval date in Hartford unless they go into an extended session. Dr. Pascarella encouraged the Board to work with him on where funds need to be cut.

Enrollment Update

- 207 new students have enrolled since October 2018. Some of those students are receiving services that were not anticipated, thus not included in the previous budget.
- J. Martino reviewed enrollment handout and highlighted concerns.
- Ellsworth was built for 370 students, but they have 502 students.
- Ellsworth, Great Plain, Hayestown, Mill Ridge Primary, Park Avenue elementary schools had largest enrollment growth.

- Rogers Park is at 1002 students.
- High school numbers decreased since October 2018.
- 899 kindergarteners enrolled as of October 2018, now at 939 kindergartners.
- 698 12th graders compared to 729 from last school year.
- 10/1/17 enrollment numbers compared to 10/1/18:
 - 140 elementary
 - 30 middle school
 - -11 high school
 - 159 total
- Concerned with the amount of families moving into Danbury. We don't have enough room.

Danbury Day in Hartford, May 9th, 11:00-1:00

Postcards were given to Board members on three key items to discuss with Legislatures in Hartford:

- 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. on the three notes mentioned at last Board meeting. asked for 7.7 million, got 2.2 million. cards also went to PTO members and sent to schools.

Mental Health Meeting, May 30th

- K. Truchsess stated that she has been working with representatives from the City as well as Danbury Hospital. They are excited to partner with the district.
- Danbury Hospital has agreed to contact the district beyond school hours (if crisis happens at night or weekend).
- Hospital will also provide more detail upon discharge so district can better assist student.
- May 30th meeting will be at Danbury Hospital to go over Community Care Model.
- Goal of the team is to have representatives from the community, Danbury Hospital and local agencies that work with youth at risk to come up with a Care Model Team on how we can prevent youth from needing crisis intervention.
- Will be a monthly or bimonthly meeting to brainstorm.
- Currently use this model in working with homeless population in Danbury with great success.
- This has not been replicated with youth and will train DPS staff on how to get this off the ground.
- The doctor in charge is a nationally known researcher and mental health expert.

Teacher of the Year Reception, May 2nd, Ellen Meyer, State Semi-Finalist

Ellen Meyer recognized in the fall but had a special recognition night on May 2, 2019 in Uncasville.

INFORMATION

Celebration of Danbury Arts (CoDA) Festival, May 11th, 11:00-4:00, at DHS

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Memorial Day Parade, May 27th

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- A. Spallino stated that she went to the Laramie Project at the Black Box Theater on Friday night. Could see the student's faces and expressions because they were so close. Really well done and it was a wonderful experience.
- F. Karrat stated that two policy meetings were held. He thanked the committee members for their hard work in reviewing the policies and giving feedback. As a result of the hard work, adopted policies presented tonight for first reading. More policies will be on the next agenda. F. Karrat asked to set up another date to meet. A Policy Committee meeting was decided for May 15th at 5:30 pm.
- F. Karrat thanked all who attended the City Budget meeting in support of the Board. Also thanked teachers, students and parents who spoke on behalf of the district and the budget.
- R. Chaleski asked how current the enrollment numbers are. J. Martino stated numbers were pulled on May 1, 2019.

- R. Chaleski asked why Westside Middle School numbers are at 631 and not at 650 where they should be. J. Martino stated that when students leave in the middle of the year, they do not fill those seats. Next school year there will be 700 students.
- R. Chaleski asked why there are 11 less students at DHS since October. J. Martino stated that includes ACE as well. Possible early graduates or students who go into Adult Ed.
- R. Chaleski asked if there was an update for the Abbey Woods bus stop? J. Martino stated that the bus company has looked into it as well at BBAC. Driving in there will impact five bus stops at least. BBAC has exhausted what they can do. J. Martino has personally made four trips up there to see what can be done. The walk is not far but it is a steep hill. R. Chaleski stated the concern from parents is that cars bottleneck at the entrance as well as some grandparents walking children down the hill creates an issue when it's not nice weather. J. Martino stated it was .3 of a mile going the whole loop and that is within walking guidelines.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the Board will have to keep in mind with larger class sizes when we can't add buses. People may have to walk further when trying to figure out what lines can be reduced.
- A. Spallino thanked those who attended the AdHoc meeting on May 1st. Professional development for the Board was discussed at the meeting. July/September timeline on Board self-assessment. Will have the self-evaluation sent out some time in June. Board retreat will be on September 7th. A. Spallino reminded the Board that there will be a few new Board members next year. Next AdHoc meeting is set for June 5th at 5:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.
- G. Cooper thanked members who participated in the Superintendent Evaluation Committee meeting. Next meeting will be on May 28th at 6pm.

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by F. Karrat that the Board of Education adjourns its Meeting of May 8, 2019 and the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Gladys Cooper, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)