

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017 – 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Ralph Pietrafesa, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro and Ralph Pietrafesa

Absent: Eileen Alberts, David Metrena and Richard Hawley

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess and Joseph Martino

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**SWEARING IN NEW BOARD MEMBER**

New Board Member: Ms. Kim Thompson swore in the new Board Member, Farley Santos. Mr. Santos then joined the Board as an official Board member replacing Holly Robinson who recently resigned.

**RECOGNITIONS**

**Danbury Public Schools – 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year**

Dr. Pascarella introduced Beth Manning 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year. Board of Education member and State Representative Michael Ferguson with Senator Michael McLachlan presented Ms. Manning with a proclamation from the State of Connecticut for being selected Teacher of the Year. They congratulated her for her dedication to the children of Danbury.

Ms. Manning said it is an honor to be awarded this proclamation for Teacher of the Year. She said she started her career in teaching at Rogers Park Middle School and have always worked with phenomenal people who have mentored her. She then introduced her husband Brian who encouraged her to leave a profitable sales job to continue her education to be a teacher.

**Kathleen Molinaro, Certificated Board of Education Member in the CAFE Board Member Academy**

Mr. Pietrafesa told the Board that CAFE, an educational organization, gives credit for every three hours of training that a Board member receives from CAFE. Mr. Pietrafesa said that he has worked with Kathleen over the years and he and the Board members look to her for advice. He stated that he has always found her to be a pleasure to work with. He congratulated her on her certification.

**NEW ADMINISTRATORS**

Dr. Pascarella introduced the new administrators and asked that they say a few words to the Board:

Christopher Roche – Principal at Western CT Academy of International Studies

Mr. Roche told the Board that he was selected for the position because of his enthusiasm and experience. He is looking forward to a great year. He mentioned that everyone is very supportive.

Carmen Vargas-Guevara – Principal of South Street School

Ms. Vargas-Guevara said it was an honor to be here and the Superintendent and his team has been very supportive. She told the Board that she has worked with bi-lingual and special education students and she hopes she can expand that experience to South Street students.

Dr. Jamal Gibson – Principal of Shelter Rock School

Dr. Gibson told the Board that he thinks he was offered the position because he can bring people together for the kids. He said he has a unique way to rally the community and the teachers for one goal which is to move students forward.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION -** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 17-97 through 17-99, as recommended:

MINUTES

6/28/17 Board Meeting

7/25/17 Finance Committee Meeting

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

Leaves of Absence: See Exhibit 17-99

Resignations: See Exhibit 17-99

Retirements:	Carole Donaty	LA Para MRP, 36 years
	Georgeann Shields	Grants Coordinator, 27 years
	Patricia Voytek	LA Para MRP, 37 years
	Jose Zambrano	Custodian KSI, 27 years+

New Teacher Hires: See Exhibit 17-99

Other Hires: See Exhibit 17-99

**Motion passed at 7:10 pm**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)**

Jackie DiNardo, Administrator Endeavor and Reach Programs:

Dr. Pascarella introduced Ms. Jackie DiNardo, the administrator of the Endeavor and Reach Programs. Ms. DiNardo told the Board that it was an honor to be here this evening speaking on behalf of the Endeavor and Reach Programs. She stated that the Endeavor Program was for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8 grade students

and the Reach Program is for students 9<sup>th</sup> through 12. She spoke about the statistics concerning the academics of the programs.

STAR Math 90% met SGP growth goal, others were within 2 points of their goal; 19 out of 21 met goal and 2 students missed by 2 points. In the STAR Reading 62% met SGP goal. In Science Benchmark 90% moved up at least one level and 65% at goal on Spring benchmark. In Writing Benchmark 83% improved with 66% at goal with 2 students scoring advanced. In History 65% moved up at least one level, 50% at goal on Spring benchmark.

There were 3 students out of 15, eight graders, who were accepted at Henry Abbott; 3 were accepted to the ACE Program and 8 are now attending Danbury High School. Unfortunately 1 student returned to Endeavor due to attendance. The Reach Program had 52 students last year in which 6 graduated and 2 participated in the Danbury High School ceremony.

Reach: (includes only students who was tested in both testing windows while at Reach) 52 students were placed at Reach in which 17 students started and finished the program STAR Math 70% met SGP goal in STAR Reading 60% met SGP goal.

Ms. DiNardo then called on several of her staff, who were present, to tell the Board about how the programs have helped our students. The comments were to develop a relationship with the students; the motto is there is always a reason to keep trying; happy with the new curriculum; we have really challenging kids; students keep coming back to visit and tell about what they are currently doing; first school where the teachers actually cared about them. We show the kids that they can do better and our goal is to get these students back into their home schools.

Ms. DiNardo mentioned to the Board that a former student in the Reach Program was here tonight and wanted to address the Board. The student said she didn't want to go to Reach. Her mother dropped her brother off at the program one day and she was invited in. Once she walked through the doors and met Ms. DiNardo she felt wanted and decided that she also wanted to be part of the program. Everyone cared about me. I am actually graduating this year. Because of them I am going on to become a productive person.

Ms. DiNardo also introduced the Board to a parent and daughter that were in the audience. The parent said they moved to Danbury from Bridgeport and her daughter was struggling at Rogers Park for two years. She said she didn't want her daughter to go to the Endeavor Program, but then decided to take the chance. At Endeavor they kept pushing her and it changed her attitude. It was a good option for her to attend. She is now at Danbury High School and is in a positive position for the future. The daughter told the Board that she didn't want to be in Endeavor because her friends weren't there and they made it sound bad. It was a smaller version of a regular school. I knew that I changed because before I went into that program I could be very rude.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. DiNardo and her staff for all they do for their students. For past students to come back and give their thanks for the program is gratifying. Ms. DiNardo told the Board that her boss, Kelly Truchsess, is very supportive of her, her staff and the program and she would like to thank her. Mr. Jannelli said the statistics are very impressive. He mentioned that when they have student hearings and the result is to have the student attend either one of these programs as the next step, the look on the students face and the parent's faces is disappointing. I feel better and will be able to ease the parent's pain after hearing Ms. DiNardo's presentation. This message should be carried to the students.

The Superintendent said these are regular school programs. I don't think it was always that way. Jackie deserves a lot of credit for all she has done to make the program a success. Ms. Molinaro said she agreed with Mr. Jannelli, we don't always know if we are sending the student to the right program. We will feel more comfortable now in sending a child to either program now.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES** (once a month – 1<sup>st</sup> meeting)

DHS representative Monique Delima - Good Evening. We would like to start off by saying that the first week of school went smoothly and successfully. The ongoing construction has not led to disruption of the learning environment but navigating through the main entrance construction has been difficult. Overall, though, students seem to be dealing with it well. This year, parking passes were sold to seniors for a reduced price and a guaranteed numbered spot prior to the school year. This helped to ease seniors' worries about limited parking spaces. Spots were then opened to driving juniors for purchase. There are only 35 remaining spots.

DHS Samantha Mortara - Next week is going to be a very busy one at DHS! Spirit week begins on Monday and the days are as follows: Monday, America Day; Tuesday, Character Day; Wednesday, Twin Day; Friday, Orange and Blue Day. The BOG twitter account run by us, will be entering students who share their Spirit Week looks with the hashtag #DHS Pride into raffles for Bagelman gift cards as a way to promote school spirit.

DHS Luana Barcelos - Open house will be held on Monday evening. Friday is the homecoming football game at 7:00 pm. On Saturday from 7:00-11:00 pm we will be holding the Homecoming Dance. This year's theme is "To the Moon and Back" so get ready for a night under the stars! Tickets will be sold to students for \$16, free popcorn, cotton candy, ice cream, and a Cinnamon Churro truck will be provided! Students will be up for a delicious churro or simply the best Homecoming yet.

DHS Cameron Slingerland - As members of the BOG we hope to update you throughout the school year on our goals such as- increasing student involvement and school spirit, and ensuring that Danbury High School is a community that cares. One of our first steps is to work alongside Mr. Donovan in facilitating a school-wide initiative to help Danbury High School located in Danbury, Texas who as you know, is undergoing the tragic effects of a terrible hurricane. We are reaching out to Club advisors and members to organize fundraisers to benefit the cause. The final proceeds will be collected and sent to Danbury, Texas by Mr. Donovan. We intend to update you on this initiative at the next meeting. Thank you for your time tonight.

Alternative Center representative Caitlyn Delaney - ACE is very happy to share that we are celebrating our 40th year anniversary this year. Plans are being made to organize events to celebrate the many years that we have been helping students in our community. We look forward to the celebrations and hope that administrators and Board of Ed members will join us in the festivities.

On Saturday, October 28th, ACE will be hosting a fundraiser, "Breakfast with the Great Pumpkin". Students enrolled in the Service Learning class will be organizing this event which will include making pumpkin pancakes, organizing games for young children and creating Halloween crafts. Pictures with the Great Pumpkin will also be available.

ACE is happy to share that over the summer, through a grant that ACE received, new desks, tables and chairs were able to be purchased for our school. In addition, there are new laptops. All students now have access to laptops in all classes during the day. The increased technology is helping in numerous ways and students are becoming very skilled in using them.

Through our grant 7 students this summer were enrolled in a CNA course at Naugatuck Valley Community college. All 7 students successfully completed the course and received their CNA certification and license. They will be seeking full time employment in our community as certified nurse's assistants.

ACE is happy to have 20 DHS students visiting this week as they explore ACE as an option. We look forward to hosting their visits and accepting all who would like to become a student at ACE.

On Sept. 28th, ACE will be participating in a school-wide field trip to Camp Herrlich in Carmel, NY. The day will be filled with team building activities to help strengthen relationships among peers and staff. ACE has also invited students from the Endeavor Program to join us again this year which allows ACE students to demonstrate leadership and mentoring skills to the younger middle school students.

We look forward to a great school year and appreciate your support of our school. We, the students at ACE, are ACE strong. We welcome you to join us this year in our 40th year celebrations.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Facilities Update**

Mr. Martino showed a slide presentation of all the summer work that has been done in the schools as well as Beaver Brook Administration. Mr. Richard Jalbert, Coordinator of Sites and Facilities, narrated the slides. Some of the slides showed the before and after the work that had been completed, while some showed what work is still in process. Dr. Pascarella said teachers are sending in notes thanking administration for all the work that has been done in their respective schools. Many schools have new carpeting, classrooms and hallways repainted, some new storage cabinets and water bubblers (students can fill us their own water bottles), one-way see through roll-up shades and new lighting to mention only a few of the renovations.

The Board was very impressed with all that was accomplished over the past few months and thanked Mr. Martino for his hard work and Mr. Jalbert for all his efforts and his staff for a job well done.

### **Timeline for Construction**

Mr. Pietrafesa suggests that the Board tour Danbury High School to see the progress. The Superintendent recommended that the Facilities Committee have a meeting before the next Board meeting on Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. They could meet at Danbury High School at 6:00 pm and after the Committee meeting commence with the Board Meeting at 7:00 pm at the high school. The Board agreed.

## **ACTION ITEMS - None**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **Start of School Update – Enrollment**

The Superintendent asked Dr. Glass to give the Board an update on the start of school. Dr. Glass spoke about adding additional staff and that we currently have five teachers teaching five classes. He stated that Ellsworth has continued growth and we added a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. In regard to King Street Primary, parents were concerned about overcrowding Kindergarten and King Street Intermediate overcrowding in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. He spoke about Pembroke and Broadview's special ed classes and that Kindergarten is on hold at Hayestown. The fifth grade at that school has 25 and 26 students. South Street Kindergarten has 25 children. Park Avenue school has a total of 641 students. Dr. Glass said we will keep monitoring the

above schools as well as the other schools not mentioned. October 1<sup>st</sup> is the date that the State of Connecticut looks at which is the Official School Enrollment.

#### Staff Utilization - Hiring Profile

Kim Thompson said we had a deliberate slowdown in the summer due to the uncertain budget. We slowed down on our tutor hiring. We had to implement a plan. We had 10 specialist positions, 3 in math and 7 literacy specialists; took those positions and we bumped 8 teachers. Specialists have been spread among the schools. Paraprofessionals have 400 members. We had a reduction force in Literacy and Title I positions which impacted 22 full time and 17 part time employees. For those that were impacted, we managed to eliminate the para positions and put them in tutor positions. Their benefits did not change. They are on recall for the year. Three of the 17 wanted full time positions and we were able to move them there. We hired 83 teachers this year and they are full time; hired 5 administrators. At this point we are in very good shape. My team will work to be sure the substitute group is filled.

#### Revised Governor's Budget Update

Mr. Martino said he and Dr. Pascarella met with Ben Barnes, OPM, on September 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that we were able to tell our story to Mr. Barnes. Mr. Martino said the Governor put out a revised budget with Danbury on the plus of \$2 million, but I will keep the Board informed. Mr. Ferguson said he thinks it is the closest the State has been to a budget. We are going in at 10:00 am tomorrow. I don't have a budget in front of me to review. Rumors are circulating that there is an alternative budget ready to go.

#### Summer School

Ms. Kelly Truchsess, told the Board that they had 300 summer school for the 5 weeks of Summer School. There were 100 staff members that support those students. We are growing in size. In the high school grade 9 program if they did not pass the class they were able to take it free of charge. There were 192 offered in grade 10-12. Lot of students did devote time to the on-line program, but didn't finish it. They have until October 15 to finish the program. The Starr Program for middle school student's summer learning helped them in what they needed to accomplish.

#### Registration Center

Ms. Thompson said that 1,100 plus families went through the Registration Center this year. This has been a tremendous help in the schools. Anne Mead, the on-site Administrator of the Program did a great job. Enrollment took place before the secretaries came back. Registrations were totally complete. A 'tracker' was used so the secretaries knew everything about the students that pre-registered. A nurse was on-site who was able to check on the medical portion of the registration so the nurses at the schools would not be inundated with last minute medical needs for children.

#### Superintendent's Goals Update – No discussion

#### Citywide PTO Meeting, September 11

Dr. Pascarella said the room was filled with parents. They talked about school starting this year after Labor Day due to the construction. The feedback we got from the students and the parents was good. He said he will bring a calendar to the Board showing the start date for school next year after Labor Day for their review. It will show some of days that we will plan to make up if we don't start in August, as we have done in the past few years. The Superintendent told the Board that Citywide PTO is planning to have a 'Meet the Candidates Night.'

Mr. Pietrafesa said the parents felt it was better to start school in September. Ms. Thompson said it was actually better for her department. There is so much that needs to be done before school starts and that gave her and her staff a couple extra days.

**DISCUSSION - None**

**INFORMATION - None**

**BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

2017 CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 17-18, 2017

The Chairperson told the Board to please let Mr. Joseph Martino know if they plan to attend the convention on November 17-18. He stated that he has gone for the past couple of years and it is a good idea to be with the other districts and find out what they are doing.

**BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by M. Ferguson that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and litigation update.

**Motion passed at 8:45 pm.**

Present: Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa and Farley Santos

Absent: Eileen Alberts, David Metrena and Richard Hawley

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess and Joseph Martino

The Chairperson turned the Executive Session over to Kim Thompson.

Ms. Thompson updated the Board on personnel and litigation matters.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

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

**Motion passed at 9:00 pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

M. Ferguson moved, seconded by F. Karrat that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of September 13, 2017 and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

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Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)