

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES (*REVISED*)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, Rachel Chaleski, Board Secretary, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Frederick Karrat,
Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos, Amy Spallino

Absent: Patrick Johnston, David Metrena and Richard Hawley

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

RECOGNITIONS

Attendance Awareness Month

In the Mayor's absence Dr. Pascarella asked Gabrielle D'Ostilio, Secretary of the BOG at Danbury High School, to read the Mayor's Proclamation. Ms. D'Ostilio read the following:

"The Mayor and the Citizens of the City of Danbury proclaimed: attendance is essential, chronic absence is a predictor of academic trouble, improving attendance challenges the strength in each community; attendance gaps often turn into achievement gaps, and chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, families, and communities work together."

The Proclamation explained in detail Attendance Awareness Month which encourages broad community engagement and sustained civic action so that families can get their children to school every day.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 18-101, as recommended:

MINUTES

9/12/18 Board Meeting

Ms. Emanuela Palmares asked that the Minutes of the Board of Education dated September 12, 2018, be corrected to reflect what she told the Board that evening. Ms. Palmares said, "*There were reports in the community that the lunch is thrown away in front of the student if they did not pay for lunch or if they do not have money for lunch and asked that it be investigated.*"

Ms. Rachel Chaleski asked that her name be corrected in the Board of Education minutes of September 12, 2018.

Motion carried at 7:06 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Ms. Kesha Smith thanked the Board for Spotighting Great Plain School this evening. Ms. Michelle Wittko spoke on behalf of the Great Plain's PTO. She said there are four members; Julie Bell, Roger Chiprious, Taz MacKenzie and herself. She told the Board that at Great Plain they have 170 families with diverse backgrounds. We support all of our families by having translators available at our meetings.

Our vision as an organization is to create a community of parents to support the school. We do this by fundraising, conducting PTO meetings, creating community events like ice cream socials and pumpkin painting. This is a great way for families to get together and support GP. The PTO is part of the 'Say Hello' work done at GP. We support the school by making t-shirts and attending events after school. We believe that we can help kids be their best by working together as a community of parents.

Our PTO raises money to provide materials for Great Plain students. Another way we give back to the school is providing additional books for summer reading to all students. If students are unable to go to the library, or can't afford books, we as a PTO provide those additional books and materials. Our organization believes that by working with teachers, administration and support staff, we can support our students to be great. The school supports us by providing time to meet with teachers during curriculum nights. The school provides materials and up to date data reports so we can understand the objectives and curriculum at each grade level. We support parents in times of need by making meals for their family, supporting the school social worker and fulfilling requests for families. Once again, thank you for your time at this meeting and please feel free to stop in during one of our PTO events. We would love for everyone to see what it takes for our students to be great.

Ms. Patricia Widmayer, a fifth grade teacher at Great Plain, told the Board what they are doing well at Great Plain School: We maintain high expectations and standards for student growth and achievement, We work to foster and maintain collegial relationships and growth mindsets throughout the school, we are a smaller school and therefore we are able to build stronger, deeper and lasting relationships with students and we encourage and achieve consistent parent communication and involvement.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES (2nd Board Meeting each month)

Gabrielle D'Ostilio, Secretary of the BOG at Danbury High School, told the Board that the opening of school went well and everyone was extremely helpful in the transition to the new 'G' building. The new building opened on time and the freshman really like it. It has also helped to relieve the hallway congestion throughout the day. Along with this, we have a new block schedule with flex time. Everyone is adjusting rapidly to the new 83 minute classes, as well as our flex period. This is a 45 minute time period in the middle of the day where students can go to teachers of their choice for extra help or take a study hall period to complete their homework. It has been especially helpful for us, as we are now able to work on homecoming and other events that are a part of BOG.

Alisha Nagarsheth, Vice President of the BOG, told the Board this week is Spirit Week at Danbury High, which will end on Friday with a home football game against Capital Hill from Hartford at 7:00 pm to which you are all invited! Then on Saturday night, we will be hosting our Annual Homecoming Dance in the cafeteria from 7-11 pm. The theme will be "Into the Woods." We are very excited! If you would like to see pictures from our Spirit Week and Homecoming, you can follow our Twitter @DanburyBOG for updates regarding the rest of the week! Also coming up is our PSAT the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will take on October 10th which we would like to thank you for in advance! In the past, we have done Red, White and Blue Day, Decade's Day and Character Day. Tomorrow is Grade Day and Friday is Orange and Blue Day.

PRESENTATION

United Way/Park Avenue Project

Dr. Anne Mead introduced Kim Morgan, CEO of United Way. Ms. Morgan gave a slide presentation on the United Way partnership with Park Avenue school. The goal was to prepare children for success in kindergarten and the early elementary grades and focus on parent partnership in the early years and making parents feel at home in the school environment.

Ms. Morgan told what the funded programs were. She also showed bar graphs showing kindergarten students scores on literacy tests; United Way's involved students graph showing the percentile ranks and growth. She spoke about the Summer Skills Program that makes a difference for at-risk children. The programs not included in the data are Community Garden and Walking School Bus.

Ms. Cooper asked if these students are a diverse group and whether African-Americans students are part of the project. Ms. Morgan said it is largely Hispanic but, is open to everyone. Ms. Morgan also said that Maria Vargas is the Family liaison at Park Avenue and she has been credited with helping the families and students in this program. The Board had several questions that Ms. Morgan was happy to answer. The Board then thanked her for her presentation.

Dr. Pascarella said the work that is being done by Principal David Krafick at Park Avenue is also being done in other schools, but not to the same extent.

ACTION ITEMS

2018-2019 Alliance Grant

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Alliance Grant for submission to the State Department of Education

Mr. Martino told the Board that the Alliance Grant is \$9,434,260.42.

Motion carried at 7:43 pm.

June 2018 – End of Year Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the 2018 End of Year Operating Results Analysis (Grant/Projects)

Mr. Martino told the Board that for the month of June 2018, the District expended \$851,951.99 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$25,197,845.96 which represents 81.5% of the Grants budget.

Motion carried at 7:44 pm.

2019-2020 School Calendar

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Chaleski that the Board of Education approve the 2019-2020 School Calendar

In favor: Rachel Chaleski Gladys Cooper Richard Jannelli
Frederick Karrat Kathleen Molinaro Emanuela Palmares
Amy Spallino

Opposed: Farley Santos

Absent: Patrick Johnston David Metrena Richard Hawley

Motion carried at 7:45 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Enrollment/Budget Update

Dr. Pascarella said the Official Enrollment is October 1st. We are experiencing some graduation requirements. There is also some adjustment in the core area at Danbury High School. Special Education is oversubscription in some classes. We still have some pressures on transportation.

The Superintendent asked Mr. Martino if we were moving along with the portable classrooms. He said that we were. Also that the fire marshal said all classrooms need fire doors to be up to code. Dr. Pascarella said we are going to have to look for more space and said that Mr. Martino and the principals have been working together on this subject. He said as soon as we get the study we can get our plans together. This is a high priority.

Mr. Martino said he will have a budget update for the Board the second meeting in October. We still have some additional hiring and the salary cost will be between \$400,000-500,000. We are running a deficit at the moment. But, asked the Board not to panic because at this time of the year it is always like this.

Transportation Update

Mr. Martino said we had to add one full-size bus. We are shifting some riders. Mr. Santos asked if there are specific areas that are the problem. Mr. Martino said it is the growth in the Westside area. Also a lot of downtown, as well. Once we get the October 1st enrollment data solidified, I should be able to talk about that.

Facilities Update

The Sites and Facilities Committee will meet at 6:00 pm before the October 10th Board Meeting

Training for Staff with LGBTQ student and families

Dr. Casimiro told the Board in response to a community member's concerns about the lack of training for staff with regards to working with LGBTQ students and families, the district is researching resources and training options. We are looking to develop a series of foundational training in many key areas related to working with diverse populations.

School Lunch

Mr. Martino said they are looking into the school lunch line process when a student has a negative balance. Those students are given a cheese sandwich. We do work with social workers and with the families about this. We are definitely going to review our policy and procedures. A discussion then ensued about free and reduced lunch. Mr. Martino gave some statistics. There is a high increase in low-income students which may qualify the district for 100% free lunches, last year it was 56%, this year 65%.

Ms. Palmares said she is okay with the cheese sandwich policy, but not with the lunch workers throwing the actual food away. She wants to know if there are training and policies put in place.

Dr. Pascarella said the blend of culture is changing. We've heard some of that tonight. Summer programs are crucial, they are no options anymore.

DISCUSSION

Draft 2018-2019 Goals

- Goal 1 – Growth in Student Learning, Achievement, College and Career Readiness for All Students
- Goal 2 - Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Goal 3 - Fiscal Responsibility and Planning for Growth
- Goal 4 - Professionalism, Accountability, and Organizational Learning

The Superintendent spoke briefly about the goals and what progress has been made towards each to date. Dr. Pascarella said that these goals are in line with Administration's goals. We have structures in place to move forward. What you have asked me to do, I've done. We will be looking at the benchmarks.

The Superintendent told the Board that Dr. Anne Mead is involved in creating a community calendar of what is going on in the schools so that families can see what is available to them. More details on this will follow.

INFORMATION

Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs – No Comments

DanburyWORKS Initiative

This is a groundbreaking community-led initiative aiming to reduce poverty in the City of Danbury. Contact Sandra Ferreira for more information. E-mail Sandra.Ferreira@uwwesternct.org. (203) 792-5330.

Ms. Chaleski called the Board's attention to DanburyWORKS Initiative to be held on September 28th, 5:00-9:00 pm – 375 Main Street all are invited.

The Testing Report is scheduled for October 10th Board Meeting. We have just received everything and we are putting it together.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 16-17, 2018, Groton, CT

Ms. Chaleski, told the Board that the application to attend this meeting is in your Board packet. You can go one day, two days or not at all. Please contact Debbie Warner.

Ms. Chaleski said there was a conference run by the Council of Municipal Leaders during the summer and another one is slated again for the fall. As soon as she gets further information, she will share it with the Board.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

G. Cooper told the Board that they had an Evaluation Committee Meeting today and felt it was a good meeting. She thanked the members that came out to discuss the goals and the Board moving forward.

Ms. Cooper asked the Board Secretary to ask the Chairperson to set up a Board Workshop to go over the Superintendent's goals and Board Self-Evaluation on Saturday, October 13th from 8:00-Noon at the DHS Black Box Theater. All Board members to be present. It was mentioned if we could get CABE to facilitate the workshop. Goals will be part of the discussion and Dr. Pascarella does not have to attend. Ms. Cooper thanked Dr. Pascarella for going over his goals with the Board this evening.

Ms. Palmares told the Board that the Gala Awards evening was a success. We are very proud that our Sandy Sanchez was the award winner. The Superintendent said it was an excellent evening and that he enjoyed it.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: F. Santos moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the Danbury Schools Administrators Association (DSAA)

Motion carried at 8:16 pm.

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Farley Santos, Amy Spallino

Absent: Patrick Johnston, David Metrena and Richard Hawley

Also Present: Dr. Sal Pascarella and Kevin Walston, Kim Thompson and Joe Martino

The Board Secretary, Rachel Chaleski, called the Executive Session to order at 8:24 pm and turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson. A brief discussion followed.

PUBLIC SESSION

F. Santos moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education return to Public Session. The motion passed at 8:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

F. Santos moved, seconded by F. Karrat, that the Board of Education adjourn its September 26, 2018 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)