

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 - 7:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Absent: Joseph Britton

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

RECOGNITIONS

- Teacher of the Year: Soraya Bilbao, ESL Teacher, Danbury High School
 - D. Donovan stated that S. Bilbao's favorite quote, "one person can make a difference, and everyone should try", is a model she lives by. S. Bilbao is an ESL teacher at DHS in her 7th year, currently teaching the newcomers' class. But has also taught several other ESL classes along with System 44 for struggling readers. For many new students, she is the first person they come into contact with. She goes out of her way to make sure each one of them feels special and welcomes them with open arms. S. Bilbao is always on the lookout for opportunities to encourage and help English learners to achieve their dreams of attending college. In the 2016-2017 school year, S. Bilbao launched the AP Spanish Independent Program for English learners at DHS. This weekly after school study session provides native Spanish speakers the opportunity to take an AP Spanish exam as an independent study. Since its inception, 102 students have taken the AP Spanish test. Of these, 65 scored 3 or higher which is an impressive 64% pass rate, all while only meeting once a week with these students. Another program is Building Bridges. This program allows ESL students to firsthand experience what it is like to attend college in the United States. 100 ESL students visited WCSU and spent the day with college representatives. In 2017, S. Bilbao took over the role of instructing the Minority Pipeline Program at WCSU. This college course offers minority DHS students the opportunity to explore a career in teaching with an emphasis on ESL and Bilingual education while earning both high school and college credits. These students developed and taught lesson plans that incorporated best practices and sheltered instruction to children participating in the summer program at Ellsworth Avenue School. They observed other peers and other bilingual teachers, reflected on classroom management and teaching strategies and then had a showcase on what they completed in their teaching portfolios. S. Bilbao has also supported advocacy groups such as Connecticut Students for a Dream. S. Bilbao has also testified at the State Capitol in support of

undocumented students attending college for equal access funds. On April 25, 2018 Governor Malloy signed that bill into law. S. Bilbao served as an Advisor to the after school Fight Child Hunger Club, the Brazilian Club, served on the school Governance Council, was a member of the NEASC Steering Committee and currently serves as the NEA Danbury Union Building Chair for DHS. S. Bilbao also worked in numerous non-profit organizations such as AmeriCorps and the United States Peace Corps. S. Bilbao was a community educator in the kingdom of Tonga teaching English at a primary and high school. She worked with youth in programs such as village wide recycling programs, leadership exchange and a community play. It was the Peace Corps experience that inspired S. Bilbao to pursue a career in teaching.

- S. Bilbao stated that since joining DHS and working in DPS, she feels that it has all been a team effort. S. Bilbao could not have done any of it without the support and encouragement from colleagues and administrators who believe in making a difference and making a positive change in young people's lives. S. Bilbao remembers going to her own college tour and immediately feeling "this is where I need to be". She had the same feeling when she interviewed at DHS, knowing she belonged there and could make a difference. S. Bilbao thanked the Board for the opportunity to work with such dedicated and outstanding individuals. Honored to teach and learn from the most exceptional students she has encountered. They want to succeed, and they want to make a difference. Proud to be given the opportunity to help them achieve their goals.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Mini Santosh
 - As a middle school student's parent, my son has Distance Learning and will be there for a while. Did the district take measures to have the privacy safeguards in place for students as they are on the camera through the entire Distance Learning? Can the district work on a digital backdrop to blur the background as it is an intrusion of privacy? You are going into their homes to teach.
 - As a Early childhood educator, how is the district expecting a Pre-K student with special needs to be on a Chromebook for 2.5 hrs. a day doing virtual Distance Learning and assuring that it is a fair delivery of services to the child, and also expecting the childcare centers to coordinate these services for them if they are at their childcare centers, while the centers have up to 15 other students in the classroom with minimum staffing.
- Eric Forman
 - It is clear that some administrators and teachers are working very hard during this challenging time, however there is an overall parent feeling that more needs to be done. Why isn't the BOE meeting weekly? We are in the midst of the biggest generational problem our educational system will ever face and what we receive from our HS principal is "Guess it's Full Distance Learning for everyone!". I know we are trying to position the recent decisions as sound and well thought out but the reality is we are in the bottom 17% of all state high schools in terms of graduation rate. Not having a plan to immediately address the overcrowded high

school is quite frankly insulting. We are spending our time trying to communicate and execute on an overly complex schedule while the kids are suffering. Yes, the kids are suffering, and this is reality. We need leadership and it is sorely lacking. Kids rely on teachers, teachers rely on administration, and the BOE is just a report out tool. Now is not the time for parents to hear 'it's not my decision' or 'we are following state guidelines'. We are looking for a leader with courage to step up and lead us out of the hole we have put ourselves in. Confidence is low and our kids are hurting.

- Melinda Scott

- At the last meeting it was mentioned that there were few problems with technology. Many teachers are finding that is not the case. Wi-Fi connectivity for those who have chosen to go into the school buildings has been troublesome at best. As with some of our students, calls are often dropped, we know Google went down a couple times, and the fantastically awkward "frozen face" has happened for all of us. Despite the issues, I want to point out that we are really making it work, kids and adults alike have achieved great new levels of IT support. I am deeply concerned about the connectivity when we are all in the buildings though, with students and teachers. I know upgrades were mentioned but based on experience I remain concerned.
- To update you on the opening so far, I am so proud of my students for their tenacity and perseverance despite the challenges. I have had better attendance virtually than I normally have in school the first few weeks. I have had several students "leave" for appointments, the usual dentist, doctor or flu shot, and rather than be gone for the day like when we were in school, they hop right back on as soon as they get home. Don't get me wrong, I am exhausted! The pace and requirements for the teacher are extreme, but my students are engaged and working. For that I am very grateful.
- Lastly, I wanted to express my feelings on opening, and hopefully staying, virtual. As I said, for me, the teacher, teaching this way is exhausting and the hours are way too long. It is impossible to get it all done but being in school in an all distance model allows for much needed consistency right now. Parents have made a plan for all five days, and they can be confident in those plans not changing. The kids are also benefiting from this consistency, and teachers too. Unlike surrounding districts who have had to shut down because of positive cases, our teachers, students and families can be assured a regular day every day of the week. I hope this will be considered when making the decision to return to the hybrid model, as that shift alone is going to only exacerbate the challenges.

- Mykel Milligan

- The COVID crisis has caught us all off-guard and unprepared. The second half of the Spring session was a learning experience for everyone, but it was also a time to become better at meeting the challenges presented by distance learning. As a first grade teacher and an employee of the Board of Ed for over twenty years, as well as a product of DPS, I know I have met and overcome the challenges of working from home and effectively reaching and teaching my students. It is not an ideal situation, but it is working. I am unable to see the validity and the value of the "compromise" presented to teaching staff of moving from home to a school

without students two days a week. Why? What is the reason? The result will be the same. There will be no direct contact with children; they will be home, where it is safe. Safety is a major part of the issue. Safety and common sense. How can we be certain that all necessary updates have been completed to assure that proper and safe ventilation exists in each school facility? Has the Board purchased and is it ready to provide the needed PPE required to assure that each teacher has a sufficient supply to guarantee their personal safety? And why should there be these additional concerns for teachers who are working safely at home? Currently, teachers are given the choice to teach from home or on campus. Why must that be modified when teachers who choose to, are working from home, where they have already brought their supplies and are settled and teaching effectively? Why can't we, as adults and professionals, make our own choice as to what is best for us and our classes? I understand that, should I choose, I can stay home and not work under FMLA. I would be earning full salary for ten days and then a portion of that for a predetermined period of time and the system would provide and pay for a substitute in my place. Again, I ask why? Why would you keep an experienced and dedicated teacher home, not teaching, and pay two salaries? I love my job. I want to teach. But I have no interest in exposing myself and, through me, my son and my elderly parents, to the dangers of COVID-19. I feel my back is to the wall as I do not see what is being offered as a legitimate compromise, but as a needless and unwise choice. I would welcome justification and an explanation of the position I am being put in so that I can make a truly informed and intelligent vote

- Ben Doto
 - I want to talk to you about Danbury just doing check-ins on Columbus Day as we won't be in physical school that day. That way we can have no school on 5/28/2021 for a PD Day.
- Dana O'Rourke
 - I have always supported the teachers and staff in Danbury. I feel that they work very hard. I would also like to compliment the administration at DHS for an amazing Virtual Open House. At the DHS Open House this week, flex time was explained and highly suggested for the students to participate in. Has it been considered that if the students were in class time for more than 3.5 hours a day, four days a week, that maybe so much flex time might not be needed? If they were in the building, they would not be getting that much flex time. We are also informed by the administration that too much screen time is not good for the kids. They can't play sports or gather so they get on their phones or video games, more screens. Also, why does school start for DHS almost 30 minutes after it normally would start if they were in the building? If the goal is to eventually get the students back into the building, shouldn't they be starting school at their regular start time so they will be used to it when they go back into the school? Shouldn't the Distance Learning model mirror the Hybrid Model? I brought these questions to Mr. Walston at the Citywide PTO meeting on behalf of the parents who have commented on the DHS PTO Facebook page. He listened to us but we have not heard back regarding any answers or clarifications. Parents have been told that this school year is different than any other and that we need to be flexible and understanding. We have also been told that the situation changes all the time.

Maybe it is time for the DHS schedule to be reviewed to see if it works for all students. We ask that the administration also be flexible and consider that maybe the schedule as it is now does not work for all students.

- Tina Pote
 - Has the BOE considered allowing teachers/staff members allowance to bring their children into the building to complete their distance learning?
- Kathy Snow
 - I would like to commend the administration and teachers on the Open House Monday night. They all did a great job considering the circumstances. My request to the Superintendent, and any other decision makers, is to please revisit the time high school students are with their teachers in a synchronous mode. These students are only learning from their teacher 3 1/2 hours a day for four days for a total of 14 hours a week. This does not seem like enough time in front of their teachers. This was made very clear at the Open House when almost all the teachers I met made some comment about everything taking longer online and running out of time. I understand younger students cannot handle a lot of screen time, but high schoolers can. Screen time high school students can handle versus an elementary student are very different and should be treated as such. As it is, there is the potential that high school students are done with their day in front of their teachers at 11:30am if they are not scheduled for any flex time as the only mandatory flex time is from 8:00am - 8:25 am on Wednesdays.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Exhibit

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 20-95 through Exhibit 20-97, as recommended:

MINUTES

6/24/20 Regular Board Meeting	20-95(pg.4)
9/9/20 Regular Board Meeting	20-96(pg.16)
9/15/20 Board Workshop	20-97(pg.31)

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 7:29 pm.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- DHS Representatives: Jake Goodwin, Rebecca D'Ostilio
 - The school year started off great. A couple internet issues arose, but that is to be expected.

- Google Meets attendance is actually very similar to what a normal school day would look like. There's only about a 1% difference which we are very proud of.
- Some difficulty with Google Meets crashers but teachers now have more hosting privileges that will hopefully deter this from happening again.
- All DHS students were given a free Dell laptop, which we are very grateful for and so many more kids now have access to technology as home.
- We are always looking for ways to connect with students over the internet. We are planning a spirit week for some time in October which will most likely be held virtually. This will all depend if we're in school or not.
- A Club Fair will be held in October as well. We are hoping that this will get more kids engaged with the school, especially Freshman.
- The BOG and Peer Leaders are working with an organization offering scholarship opportunities to students who register to vote. There will also be an opportunity to have parents and families register as well. The school with the most registrations by Election Day will receive a \$10,000 grant.

Dr. Pascarella asked J. Goodwin and R. D'Ostilio to give their perspective as students on how Distance Learning is going in terms of time and the activities in class?

- R. D'Ostilio stated that it is hard to sit in front of a screen for a long period of time. If she was on the screen for the same amount as a normal school day she would be exhausted by the end of the day and could not hold focus for that long. Feels that the current time is perfect. Being in AP class, there is a sense of a time crunch. Teachers are utilizing the Flex time and offering instruction or reiterating what was already taught.
- J. Goodwin agreed that the time works, although it does feel like they are not doing as much as if they were in building but also feels that teachers are still working out the kinks.
- R. D'Ostilio stated that technology has been iffy.
- R. Chaleski asked how the independent workload compares to in person learning?
- J. Goodwin stated that he is taking mostly AP classes. It seems like a bit more work in those classes but feels that teachers are being very smart with how much work they are giving students and how much they think students can do with respect to the situation we are in.
- R. D'Ostilio stated that she feels like she has more than last year but it's also because there is less time than in class to do work, but then on the flip side, she gets out of school earlier so she has that time to focus on her school work. Feels like there is a good balance.

PRESENTATION

CDC Indicators For Dynamic School Decision Making

20-98(pg.32)

- Dr. Pascarella stated that Danbury is seeing a surge in numbers from Labor Day.
- The news recently did an article on the State of Connecticut and specifically referred to Danbury's impact on state numbers.
- K. O'Dowd:

- In July, the Governor stated that all districts should be back full time in school.
- CT uses a three-tier metric system which outlines low risk, moderate risk and high risk.
- These metrics are calculated by looking at a seven-day rolling average of positive cases. When the State puts out metrics, they do it at a county wide level however, we have had to look at just Danbury alone because of the uptick and space constraints.
- In July metrics indicated we were at low risk so we could go to school full time. However, with the building constraints and overcrowding, it was not felt to be safe to go five days a week. That is when Dr. Pascarella appealed to the Governor to have a Hybrid Model.
- In early August, we saw an uptick in cases and that uptick has continued. By mid-August the district had to make a decision based on the seven-day rolling average. At that time, it would not be safe to return in a Hybrid Model and that is why the district chose to go full Distance Learning. That recommendation was given to Dr. Pascarella by the medical team; K. O'Dowd, K. Prunty, Dr. Fong and Dr. Begg.
- Medical team is continuing to review numbers. Currently in our community, there is still a concerning transmission rate of Covid-19. Seeing this uptick as a result of the Labor Day weekend. Through contact tracing, seeing that there were large gatherings, no social distancing and people not wearing masks. In addition, many of the positive cases are children. While we have some positives in elementary, there are more significant numbers at the secondary level. For that reason, still concerned with opening on the Hybrid Model.
- Will meet on 9/25/2020 to review the data.
- Ventilation has been addressed, markers and arrows have been placed on school floors. District has purchased all the PPE that we need.
- Strongly encouraged all to wear masks, frequent hand washing and to avoid large gatherings because that is where we are finding increased cases.
- Very detailed plan in place on how to address possible cases of Covid-19 and confirmed cases of Covid-19. Have looked closely at how it can be managed at elementary and secondary levels. Ability to cohort at the elementary level will make things easier. We are prepared, it is just a matter of community numbers trending down and we are not seeing that yet.
- K. Prunty
 - Right now, our seven day rolling average is 14, which would put us in the moderate level on the metric scale. Numbers have stabilized since 8/21/2020. Trended down a little, but not consistent. Still seeing positivity rates between 5% and 6% every week. Seeing community transmission through contact tracing. Still seeing a lot of spread through small parties and family gatherings. Stressed that this is still out there. Urged all to take

this very seriously so that we can get numbers down and have the ability to open safely.

- When discussing positive rates, it is only for residents with a Danbury addresses.
- Board members
 - K. Molinaro asked if hospitalizations have gone down?
 - K. Prunty stated yes. Cases are a combo of symptomatic and asymptomatic, just not seeing them translate into hospitalization at this time.
 - K. Molinaro asked where we need to be in numbers to return to school?
 - K. Prunty stated it's a combination of the seven-day rolling average, positivity rate and if our numbers are trending in the right direction. All those working together.
 - J. DaSilva asked if Danbury Hospital numbers are down.
 - K. Prunty stated that at this point yes.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that the challenge is spacing. If we can trend to the lower side of the moderate level, we can look at hybrid learning. There is some merit to phasing in. Distance Learning is very difficult for K-3, looking at that in a differentiated fashion. Can't have a one size fits all.

ACTION ITEMS

A. June 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approve the June 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Funds) in accordance with 20-99 (pg.33)

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 7:55 pm.

B. Policy 1250 – Visits to the Schools

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education accept for second reading and Adoption Policy 2150 – Visits to the Schools, as accepted by the Policy Committee. 20-100(pg.39)

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 7:56 pm.

C. Policy 5141.8 - Face Masks/Coverings

MOTION: A. Russo moved, seconded by A. Spallino that the Board of Education accept for second reading and adoption Policy 5141.8 – Face Masks/Coverings, as accepted by the Policy Committee. 20-101(pg.40)

R. Chaleski stated that in the first paragraph, it was discussed omitting the two words “full time”. Would like this to be brought for a third reading.

K. Walston stated that we can approve the motion with the understanding that the adjustment will be made.

K. Thompson stated that it is a clerical change.

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 8:01 pm.

D. Policy 6114.81 – Emergency Suspension of Policy During Pandemic

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education accept for second reading (as amended) and adoption Emergency Suspension of Policy During Pandemic as accepted by the Policy Committee. 20-102(pg.45)

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 8:02 pm.

E. Policy 6114.82 – COVID Emergency Measures

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education accept for second reading and adoption Policy 6114.82 – COVID Emergency Measures, as accepted by the Policy Committee. 20-103(pg.49)

Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Abstain: Joseph Britton, not present

Motion passed at 8:03 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- AIS Magnet School Funding
 - AIS had 504 students enrolled on 10/1/2019: 99 students from partnered towns and 34 from our non-partnered towns.
 - As of 9/23/2020, enrollment is down to 81 students from partnered towns, and 33 from our non-partnered towns. Down a total of 19 students from the 2019-2020 school year.
 - Dr. Pascarella is working with the other superintendents to make sure those other partnered districts still honor their commitment to pay for those students.
 - Neighboring towns are still in school, we are the only school in the area in Distance Learning. Due to this, a lot of those families have chosen to keep their children in their home school districts.
 - The state reimburses our district about \$7,700 per pupil. With the decline of enrollment, the district lost about \$86,000.
 - Drafted a letter sent to legislatures asking to keep us whole and continue what we had for the fiscal year 2019-2020 appropriation. Also working with partner districts because there is a small portion that they contribute on behalf of their students for tuition.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that the district can't just admit Danbury students, still have to stay with committed splits for AIS (70/30 split).
 - Official numbers will be available on 10/1/2020.
- District Enrollment Update (DL Attendance, Connectivity)
 - G. Jasmine stated that as of 9/23/2020, the district enrollment was 11,907. The district had 11,927 students enrolled on 10/1/2019. Difference of -20 students.
 - 920 students is a typical kindergarten enrollment number. As of 9/23/2020, there are 829 kindergartners enrolled, a significant drop. Families may be holding their children back this year and will send them to kindergarten next year.
 - 100 more middle schoolers enrolled than last year on 10/1/2019.
 - Official numbers will be 10/1/2020, still have another week of movement.
 - These numbers also reflect students who are pending enrollment.
 - District has not seen the influx of enrollment as in previous years.
 - Anticipate numbers will rise once travel and borders open.
 - Has been meeting with the State in the Everybody Learns initiative. Vouchers for Comcast should be sent by the end of the week. Voucher numbers will be provided to families in need. Comcast will provide free high-speed internet for one year with that voucher. Anticipate roll out next week. Will work with A. Mead to have a help desk at FACE Center to help families navigate any problems they have with connectivity. State has stated that if any family falls under issue on not falling under the Comcast eligibility rules to reach out to them and they will provide assistance. They are pushing for everyone to have strong connectivity and will work with the district to help those families as well.
 - K. Wanzer spoke on attendance. Very positive trends. Attendance is exactly in line with where it was last year, in fact up .2% from this time last year.

- Increased reporting for State in tracking discontented students.
- Each week the district is collecting the number of students in each instructional model (DPS is all fully remote at all grade levels) and including a reporting number for students who are disconnected that are fully remote.
- Last year they had, across the State, a trend that was finding students who were fully remote and just did not report at all. Trying to prevent that from happening. Each school is tracking students who are not reporting in and completely absent.
- School counselors, administrators and teachers are all following up with those families to ensure that everybody knows where they are.
- Last week 121 students across all school buildings were absent, which is about 1%.
- The amount of effort that is being done at school level to follow up with these families is tremendous.
- There are students who have moved but the district can't drop students until we have confirmation of enrollment in the new district.
- R. Chaleski asked across the schools if there is a big difference in any particular school or grade or is it pretty even? K. Wanzer stated that the highschool has the highest numbers on non-connectivity, comparable across middle schools and at the elementary schools, the highest number was eight students. That could be a high rental movement in those areas. Similar trend across the district.
- Osborne/Ellsworth and Summit at Danbury (Matrix)
 - C. Leborious stated OSB/Ellsworth is still on track. Seven architects were invited, four did walk through. An architect has been selected. On schedule to open next year. Will report back at the next Board meeting.
- Early Education Center at Granville
 - K. Truchsess stated that Granville is coming along. Hope to complete around the first week of October, then final approval and building permits from the City. Taking longer than anticipated. For instance, the company where the district ordered windows from was shut down due to Covid-19. Will report back at the next Board meeting.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that perhaps they could schedule a tour with Board members in small groups or pictures/video as an alternative.
- Citywide PTO
 - K. Walston stated that on 9/11/2020, he and A. Mead met with the new Citywide PTO and team. Shared just under 40 questions and answers that parents were seeking and wanted clarification on. Put those questions in a Google Doc and the Cabinet is answering them. A. Mead will post the district website.
 - Feedback from Citywide PTO meetings are a reflection of what parents in general are asking.
 - Also important to say that families applauded online learning in the first couple weeks of school and how well the launch went.
 - Taking a closer look at more engagement on Wednesday's.
 - Clarification on requiring a vaccine before we return to in person learning. The hope and plan is to go hybrid when it is safe and to return full time once the health officials say it is safe, vaccine or not.
- Status of Accommodations Review

- K. Thompson stated that she has received requests for accommodations from over 125 people.
- The way the process works is for them to provide medical documentation of a serious health condition to the HR office. Each one has had at least one live meeting with J. Gonzalez and K. Thompson to start to explore what kinds of accommodation the district can provide that would enable them to return to full duty.
- Those conversations have been ongoing. In some cases, have sought additional medical information and some cases have just been a dialogue back and forth. Accommodations range from additional PPE, plexiglass, room assignments to complete work from home model.
- Each requires an individual conversation and attention. The goal is to find a sweet spot of the accommodation that the district can provide without an undue hardship.
- Handful of accommodations left. With that information, HR then transitions to “what will this look like if we have staff that need to work from home?”. As a team, working with principals on what a modified model will look like for those staff members. Also working with R. Jalbert and his team on what kinds of accommodations can be put in terms of physical changes such as physical space and provision of supplies on each individual case.
- Surrounding districts are having trouble attracting and retaining substitutes. We will not be alone in that, our substitutes are slipping away. Trying to keep them engaged by providing training on the technology that we are using. Continue to look at options on what substituting may look for us.
- The district has seen some requests for intermittent leave for childcare purposes under Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Anticipate more as we head into the Hybrid Model. These are significant staffing issues.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that there are 72 faculty with accommodations at the elementary level.
- Dr. Pascarella asked if online learners exceed 4,000, they will probably have different teachers. We are working through it, but it has been difficult because of the size of the district.
- J. DaSilva asked if it would be helpful to add a second building substitute to each building? K. Thompson said that is one resolution we are looking at. DHS has three or four subs and a whole cadre of interns. RPMS has NYU interns as well. Looking at a model for putting more at the elementary level.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that Dr. Casimiro will be doing a presentation on Distance Learning at the next Board meeting.
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DISCUSSION

- CIAC - Athletic Update
 - Chip Salvestrini spoke.
 - Football in Connecticut has been cancelled for the Fall. There is a movement right now to try to move football to the Spring in a reduced schedule.

- In the meantime, they are allowing a low immediate risk activity with games. No contact involved but will allow coaches and athletes to remain with instruction and keep moving forward with the football program.
- All other sports are moving in the right direction. Time in August where the athletic program had to be shut down for about 25 days. Allowed to restart on 9/11/2020 and been going every day since. Somewhere between 400-450 athletes train every day.
- This week is the first week allowed to allow athletes to train in full teams. Prior to that, could only train in cohorts of ten. Teams are now training together. Required to wear masks to and from the activity. Required to social distance when athletes are not actively involved in the activity.
- Following CIAC medical guidance. Allowed this week to scrimmage on 9/25/2020. Will be playing games in regions. Instead of playing across the county in 18 schools, reduced it to five schools. In the event of Covid-19, can do contract tracing much quicker. All schedules have been reduced, not playing as many games.
- Anticipate all Fall games starting on 10/1/2020. Will go approximately five weeks.
- Questions on Winter programs won't know how that will unfold.
- K. Molinaro asked if football moves to Spring, what does that mean to other Spring sports who would normally use the field? C. Salvestrini stated that has been part of the debate. What they would like to do with football is start in late February and end in April which would push back the Spring sports two weeks. This way fields are available for all sports teams.
- J. DaSilva asked how many football players play a Spring sport? C. Salvestrini stated about 50-60% playing other sports. Remaining kids are active and condition year-round.

INFORMATION

- Facilities and COVID-19 Spending Update 20-104(pg.55)
 - C. Leborious stated she went through the building entry safety plans with each building. In the process of establishing a safety committee for the administrative building.
 - Certain staff are in buildings such as administrators, secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers and safety advocates. All are safely distanced. Teachers have also been invited back into the buildings at their choice. Feedback is people are feeling comfortable being in the schools at this time. Visits next week to see what it will look like with students returning to the schools.
 - Spending update on pandemic related spending was given to Board members in a Board packet.
 - Projected expenses equal \$7 million.
 - Doesn't include Alliance money. Broken down in categories of last year and projected spending for this year.
 - K. Conetta noticed that the total for the adhering to health category was \$10,898. C. Leborious stated that the amount was corrected and will be distributed to Board members.

- Dr. Pascarella stated that the district will ask for backup funding. There was a grant that was put out that was miscommunicated to all districts. Hoping that the districts that overestimated will not be reimbursable therefore leaving resources for some of the districts like ours entitled to more. Asked the Board to think through the fact that we are still paying our bus drivers and cafe workers due to the executive orders by the Governor. That is an expense we are carrying that we have to look at closely. Will look for backup money to help us out.
- C. Leborious stated that the budget presented does not include anything unanticipated. For example, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This does not include a cost estimate associated with that. As new situations arise, will brief the Board on what changes affect our funding and budget. Also does not include costs associated with feeding families, which we do see a revenue gap every month we are feeding our families. We are continuing to employ cafeteria workers and that is an expense, and revenue is lower because we are feeding less than when we would be in school.
- J. DaSilva asked if this is a good summary of the new things, we approved in June that we weren't thinking about in February to which C. LeBorious replied yes. Includes the Cares Act funding that we were awarded. The State Coronavirus Relief fund may be adjusted upward if it turns out that we have additional needs. The City reserved money that we rolled over for emergencies and a small portion carried over from some underspending last year.
- R. Chaleski asked if there was any change in the three schools who were not receiving free lunches? C. Leborious stated that the district is in the process of collecting information for those schools but thinking we will receive final approval with the State. Hoping to report at the next Board meeting that those three schools will also be free lunch schools, which gives us more flexibility and more revenue.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Thanked Board members who participated in a workshop on the responsibility of Board members. Would like to continue those sessions.
- Important to keep the community informed. Had meetings in July and August to keep the community informed with the issues concerned with education. Things were changing so rapidly that those meetings were a good idea. Thanked Board members for being supportive of that invitation.
- Now we are back to the regular mode of Board meetings. Would like to be efficient and move forward. In regard to public participation, will proceed like normal and have comments stay under three minutes. Public participation will end at 7:30 pm so we can move on with the meeting. There may be some changes later on, but G. Cooper will have those discussions with the Board and inform the community of changes.
- Asked Board members keep her informed if they are participating in conversations with the community. Let's work together so all are informed the same.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- R. Chaleski stated that there was a mention at Citywide PTO that the Spanish translation of the Board meetings was not exactly accurate. Dr. Pascarella stated that we can look into it with Hatters TV.
- R. Chaleski stated that she has received feedback from parents on instructional time. Now in week three and feel like the asynchronous piece is missing to go with synchronous.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that teachers are still trying to get a handle on delivering the lessons. Prioritizing standards so that they are targeting the most important high leverage standards as possible, taking into consideration what went on in the Spring and where students are in the Fall. A lot to manage with navigating the technology piece, delivering lessons, and understanding them before delivering at the K-5 level. Students are building stamina to stay online, particularly at elementary level. As time builds, will be able to give students more independent work. Some are starting to do that now, but more at the secondary level.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that a big portion of time engaging in synchronous and asynchronous will come from Edgenuity. Working with them to get integration up and running. Had first training on 9/16/2020. Originally, the training was set much earlier as part of the front-loading during PD but when the district switched to full Distance Learning, we lost that training date and the earliest available was 9/16/2020. Tremendous integration issues working with Edgenuity. The company has taken on 500 school districts in the last 30 days. As of 9/22/2020, middle school students were locked and loaded in the system. Teachers will start to work Edgenuity at the secondary level which will fill in a lot more of the time. Coming two weeks later than what we would have liked. Like the fact that Flex still provides the opportunity for students to get more support. Asynchronous work will come.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: A. Russo moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with NEA-Danbury.

Motion carried at 8:57 pm

G. Cooper called the meeting to order at 9:00 pm.

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro

Absent: Joseph Britton, Loren Daly

Also Present: T. Mooney, Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

Ms. Cooper turned meeting over to Ms. Thompson and Mr. Mooney for update on negotiations with NEA - Danbury.

After presentation and through discussion the Board, without objection, gave support to the result of the negotiations as presented. Dr. Pascarella will move forward and conclude with acceptance.

PUBLIC SESSION

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education return to Public Session. The motion passed at 9:40 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of September 23, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)