

# DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

*THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011*

Administrative Center - 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, J. Scozzafava, R. Taborsak;  
Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Mr. E. Longo, Ms. K. Thompson and Ms  
J. Emmett from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, K. Gaillard, K. Molinaro, S. Podjahski-LeRoy

## **CALL TO ORDER:**

The Chairperson, Irving Fox, called the meeting to order at 7: 12 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **RECOGNITIONS:**

Gladys Cooper, Board of Education Member 20 Years

Chairman Fox introduces Mayor Mark Boughton who is here to recognize Gladys Cooper for her twenty years of service to the Board of Education. He thanked her for her dedication to the Danbury Public Schools and to the residents of the City of Danbury. He mentioned her great passion for the children of Danbury, and that it is a wonderful legacy and testament of her work here in Danbury. The Mayor issued a proclamation to Ms. Cooper.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Dale Steichen addressed the Board and spoke about the lack of resources that Danbury High School students have to take home. He also spoke about the fact that no entrance requirements are required for students to take honors classes.

## **EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE: Cindy Mirochine**

Ms. Mirochine reports that CEA sponsors a program called Holiday Bear. Staff nominate students in school districts that they feel may benefit from someone sponsoring them for the holiday, and hundreds of Danbury students benefitted from this program. She wishes to thank all the staff that worked so hard to insure that the students had a happy holiday.

Secondly, part of a state statute is to form PD committees with the administration with local unions and teachers. She has offered and shared with Dr. Pascarella that CEA is offering full training on various committees and their different levels. They are looking into getting the training locally.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Danbury High School:

Shaquilla Taylor, BOG Treasurer, reports that midterm exams will be administered on Tuesday, January 25 through Friday, January 28. Throughout the week, the school will be on a half-day schedule.

Rebecca Leonard, BOG Secretary, reports that DHS has a Snowball to be held on Saturday, January 15, at the Amber Room from 7 p.m. to 12 p.m.

Alternative Center:

Vanessa Grant reports that six students will graduate mid-year, and the first week of February is their graduation ceremony. Many students from Danbury High School visited ACE in preparation for attending second semester. Interviews will be conducted on January 22 and Wednesday, January 26. These students will complete community services hours and participate in an interview with their parents as part of the process.

The students are starting the next semester by developing individual goals, working on team building and self-esteem activities. They will be honoring the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King next week through various class activities. They continue to partner with WCSU and other community-based organizations.

Chairman Fox asks the Board for their opinion on having the student representatives more involved in active discussions on Board issues. All three student representatives felt that they would benefit from participating in discussions and felt it would also help the Board in making decisions based on their input. Mr. Scozzafava welcomes their input and feels it would be important. Chairman Fox suggested to the students that they look at the agenda on the website before they attend the Board meeting, and if they want to participate in an item or a concern, the Board will be happy to discuss their viewpoints.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**MOTION** - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by J. Scozzafava that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended:

**A. MINUTES**

- Bi-Monthly Board Meeting Minutes, 11/23/10
- Special Board Meeting Minutes (Exp), 11/22/10
- Annual Board Meeting Minutes, 12/1/10
- Special Board Meeting Minutes (Exp), 12/2/10
- Special Board Meeting Minutes (Exp), 12/2/10
- Special Board Meeting Minutes (Exp), 12/2/10
- Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, 12/15/10
- Board Workshop Meeting Minutes, 1/5/11

**B. PERSONNEL**

- Accept Leaves of Absence: Rosa Marte, Laura Sinapi,  
Tina Tomer, Laura Mead
- Accept Resignations: Christina Franzese, Mary Anne Rapp
- Accept Retirement: Joan Rogers

**C. DONATIONS**

- Accept a donation of \$17,000 from Sodexo Inc.& Affiliates

(\$1,000 for each school) for the Adopt a School Program

Accept a donation of \$1,500 from the Greek Orthodox Church to the Family Literacy Center

Accept a donation of \$1,104 from the Science House Foundation for the purchase of four sets of Lego Mindstorm Robotic Kits

Accept a donation of a 1999 International full size school bus, valued at \$12,360, from Student Transportation of America to be used as the Literacy Center Outreach Vehicle.

Mr. Jannelli spoke about a Board Workshop Meeting with the legislators on January 5. He thinks it is important for those that were not there to know it was a very productive meeting. Some of the points that the Board raised to the legislators were not to have the state or the Board of Education impose any new unfunded mandates on us. We also asked them to put a moratorium on anything that would cost us additional funds, and we discussed the concern about the 14% ECS funding that we have asked them to champion to keep that funding available to us.

Mr. Jannelli would like to recognize the donations and feels that a letter of appreciation should be sent to the donors from the Board.

**The motion carried unanimously at 7:33 pm.**

## **PRESENTATION:**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

### A. Legislative Update

Dr. Pascarella met with legislators last week. We were also fortunate to meet with the new governor, and we indicated our desire to have a commissioner who had background knowledge of inner city and urban education and one who would work collaboratively with us. We asked that the Department of Education create a database that would help us with the achievement gap. We asked that the new commissioner make a determination of what the yearly growth would look like. Currently, the comparisons are not very valuable, and we have asked them to come up with some type of warehousing system. We also asked for some clarity on the new legislature regarding school governance councils. Ms. Mirochine mentioned earlier that we are in the process of setting up training for this.

Mr. Jannelli mentioned the 14%, which is the money on the ARRA funds that was passed through the state. If that does not come to fruition next year, we stand to lose approximately \$3.2 million dollars that would have to be made up. We spoke quite a while about that.

### B. 2011-2012 Budget – Community Meetings

Dr. Pascarella reports that a meeting was held with Children's First which was helpful. Another meeting is being sponsored by the PTO for January 31 at Rogers Park Middle School.

C. Superintendent's Goals Update

Dr. Pascarella states that one of the items we are working on is the Student Management System. We are beginning to in-service our staff. We are running a parallel system at this point. The parallel part is just the training. The data is still in our normal system. We will make a complete transfer on July 1. Dr. Glass is monitoring our Enhancement Plan. He is making progress, as much as possible. As indicated before, there are resource issues. The teachers are working hard. They are going to plan a visit to one of our schools with eight staff members. We spent a few months creating a sensible feedback system for a school and to raise the consciousness of issues that may be interfering with student achievement and success. Another item Dr. Pascarella mentioned is the budget which is ongoing.

Dr. Pascarella also extended his congratulations to Ms. Cooper for her twenty years of service to the Board of Education.

Chairman Fox asks the Board if there is any objection to moving the Executive Session to this point in the agenda.

**MOTION:** R. Taborsak moved, seconded by R. Jannelli that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Arbitration Awards for NEA-Danbury and Danbury School Administrators Contracts and to ratify the CSEA SEIU Local 2001, CTW, Secretaries/IT Workers Contract and other personnel matters.

**The motion carried unanimously at 7:39 p.m.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, J. Scozzafava, R. Taborsak  
Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Mr. E. Longo, Ms. K. Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, K. Gaillard, K. Molinaro, S. Podjahski-LeRoy  
Dr. Dylewski and Ms. Emmett from Administration

The Board discussed the Arbitration Awards for NEA-Danbury and Danbury School Administrators Contracts and the ratification of the CSEA SEIU Local 2001, CTW, Secretaries/IT Workers Contract and other personnel matters.

**MOTION:** J. Scozzafava moved, seconded by R. Jannelli to return to Public Session.

**The motion carried unanimously at 8:04 a.m.**

**PUBLIC SESSION;**

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, J. Scozzafava, R. Taborsak  
Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Mr. E. Longo, Ms. K. Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, K. Gaillard, K. Molinaro, S. Podjahski-LeRoy  
Dr. Dylewski and Ms. Emmett from Administration

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by J. Scozzafava that the Board of Education ratify the CSEA SEIU Local 2001, CTW, Secretaries/IT Workers Contract

**The motion carried unanimously at 8:04 a.m.**

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education adopt the joint recommendation of the Superintendent and NEA-Danbury for the restoration of sick time to a faculty member.

**The motion carried unanimously at 8:05 a.m.**

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- A. November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)
- B. November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

The Board removes Action Items A and B from the Agenda due to lack of quorum.

**DISCUSSIONS:**

**A. School Governance Councils**

Dr. Glass offers his congratulations to Ms. Cooper, and introduces Lisa Romano, reporter from *The Patch*. Dr. Glass speaks about the recently passed state education reform law that includes provisions for School Governance Councils. The intent of councils is to enable parents, school staff, students and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement in three of Danbury's schools who have been identified as not making adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading, Stadley Rough School, Danbury High School, and the Alternative Center for Excellence.

He reports that these councils are not that unique but in many ways they are. Dr. Glass feels that the problem with the legislation is that there is no provision that will allow you to get out of this particular initiative, and there is no provision in the legislation that allows more schools to get into this. R. Jannelli mentioned that we met with the legislative delegation, and this is something that we brought up to them and will continue to do with professional organizations. With this legislation, seven parents are identified through a parent organization, PTO, or some other mechanism. If you have a school the size of Danbury High School, for example, the question is, "Are they reflective of the size of that facility?" The second part of it calls for five teacher representatives, and they are elected through the existing or to-be-created teacher organizations, such as the teacher's union. Again, you can get a biased representation coming through that particular venue. The third person that serves on

that committee at the elementary level is the principal. The difficult part for many of us with this is that the parents have a voting right, teachers have a voting right, but the principal does not have a right to vote.

The group primarily focuses on school improvement issues. The most challenging part is after three years, this school governance committee can vote to recommend reconstitution in one of various incarnations of that school, and that will be brought to the Board of Education and that could lead to a very contentious situation.

We will be following a deadline, which is November, 2011. We will have the councils up and running in each of the schools because we are required to do that. We will also be working very closely with the state as they are figuring this out in other districts. Dr. Pascarella has been working with CAPSS and the state legislative team. Dr. Glass has been working with his counterparts through the State of Connecticut to keep a handle on this. We are many months away from having to do this.

R. Taborsak asks if the councils can go to the Administration and if the Board would have any responsibility. Dr. Glass responded that it is only the three schools and there is no mechanism in the law that will allow any other schools to enter or those three schools to exit. Dr. Pascarella said they have no training except what is written in the law. We have asked them questions and they have given us answers and we now have some direction. They have no function to the Board, nor should you give them any function by statute. Their operation is local with the school, until they move into this area of remediation where they, by law, can come to you and make recommendations to reconstitute the school. At that time, you could turn it over to us and we will research it.

Dr. Glass also went on to say that there are two community members that are also elected and they are elected jointly by the parents and the teachers and the principal has no say in this.

#### B. Gifted and Talented Program Update

Dr. Glass reports that one of the areas that was cut last year was the gifted program. The Board did not eliminate it but did something to take its place. The original gifted program we had at the middle schools centered around a science, math, technology, and engineering model. We are running that as part of the extended learning program after school. Feedback from the students has been very good. The elementary program is different. If we were to run it as an after school program we would have multiple issues. We decided to try it on a Saturday. We polled kids to do it on Saturday, and they said they had activities, but if they knew in advance and it was not every Saturday, they would be interested in participating. The elementary program is not a STEM-based program. It is really a neat model. The kids are taking a community issue, such as anti-littering, and they are using the concept of claymation. With both programs, we have gotten good response. Parents and students are happy and it is running very smoothly. Hats off to teachers involved in it. A good team of educators took matters into their hands. Chairman Fox said there has been a lot of positive feedback.

#### C. Building Utilization Committee Status Report

Dr. Pascarella has placed information in the Board's packets but would like the Board to schedule a workshop. He feels the Board should have a night dedicated to that alone so we can get direction.

R. Taborsak is all for workshops; however, it is difficult to get everyone together. After much discussion, the Board chose two dates, one of January 25 and the other, February 17 at 7 p.m. All

five members present offered their availability and Deb Warner, Secretary to Dr. Pascarella, will call the others and a meeting will be set up based on their availability.

#### **INFORMATION:**

##### A. Magnet School Student Application

Dr. Glass reports that we are receiving many applications.

##### B. Family Literacy Center Update

Dr. Pascarella said we did get the bus and it is a tremendous help for us. We met with Scholastic, and through the Adopt-A-School Program, we should be getting some materials for parents so that bus will be utilized. Dr. Pascarella also talked with Congressman Murphy's office to see if there is any possibility of an extension for the center. Unfortunately, there will not be any more grants through Congress for any activities next year. The center right now will end in August. We are trying to find other funds to keep it running.

Chairman Fox commends Marc Heller for his outstanding work in setting up the center and R. Taborsak visited the center and is very impressed.

#### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

##### PTO Liaisons

Chairman Fox reports that in the packets received by the Board are the assignments for this year. He asks for any questions. He strongly suggests that the Board reach out to the parents and principals of the schools.

##### Board Committee Assignments

Some of the committees have been reduced to the size of three so that we can complete more business. The list of the committees is in the packet. Exhibit #11-26 of the Agenda to this meeting will be modified and R. Taborsak will be the official liaison to TDEC.

##### CABE Press Conference on School Funding, January 6, 2011

Chairman Fox talked about the CABE conference. The point was to encourage the legislators not to cut ECS. We need to continue to press hard on legislators and continue to reach out to them. ECS is not the only priority that the people of Connecticut want to have maintained. We need to fight as hard as we can.

#### **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

##### Sites and Facilities: J. Scozzafava

No report. J. Scozzafava will be working with the Mayor on some funding that is needed.

##### Community Relations: R. Jannelli

R. Jannelli reported on a meeting which was held Tuesday night which was very successful. Fifty people attended. Presentations made by the Board of Education were outstanding. Great reporting job by *The Patch*. In conclusion, we hit a home run in alerting the public how serious the financial situation is without alarming them. We are looking to do another meeting with the community.

Finance: M. Fazio, Jannelli

R. Jannelli reported that at tonight's meeting, we went over the presentation that would support the 4.3% or close to \$5 million. Mr. Longo went through the line numbers. There are a number of line items that we do not have costs for. Current estimate for medical insurance holds at 12%. Dr. Pascarella reports that we have had a number of meetings. R. Jannelli points out that the City has a different carrier than Danbury Public Schools. He asked if Mr. Longo would be looking for the City to switch over. Mr. Longo discussed the pros and cons of having a combined carrier.

Operations/Policy: R. Taborsak

R. Taborsak reports nothing going on right now. They will look into what other districts are doing with regard to use of cell phones, etc. He would like to ask CAGE what they have with regard to their social networking.

Superintendent Evaluation: E. Alberts, K. Molinaro

No report.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** J. Scozzafava moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education adjourn its January 13, 2011 meeting.

**The motion carried unanimously at 9:26 p.m.**

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Kathleen M. Molinaro, Secretary