

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, M. Ferguson, R. Hawley, D. Metrena, R. Pietrafesa, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo, Board Members; Dr. W. Glass, J. Martino, Dr. S. Pascarella, Atty. K. Thompson, Administration

Absent: A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Alberts called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll call was taken by G. Cooper. A Moment of Silence was held for Louis Rotello, Board Member from 1991 to 2003 and for Ken Robbins, Assistant Principal, Rogers Park Middle School

RECOGNITIONS

March is Board Member Appreciation Month

DECA Celebrate My Drive (Carrisa Miguel, Melissa Piscotta, Charles Cunningham)

Dr. Pascarella welcomed everyone and thanked all for being great ambassadors for our school system. Carissa told the Board that they are purchasing bumper stickers for students and parents and signs at the exit and entrance of the student parking lot. They met with one of the Director of Teen Safe Driving Program from the DMV and they will be working with DECA to do assemblies and invite guest speakers in order to raise awareness about distracted driving. They are also in the process of purchasing an electronic sign to be erected in front of the school that will list events and slogans. On March 28, DECA will be going to WFSB and Nick Goetz, School Council President, will be speaking on the show about Celebrate My Drive and how the money will be used.

DHS Boy's Indoor Track, FCIAC Western Division Champions, FCIAC Champions, State LL Champions, State Open Champions; Head Coach Rob Murray, Assistant Coach Nick Fraticelli

Coach Nick thanked all of the DHS track and field athletes for coming tonight. They have won numerous Divisional Conferences, State Class and State Open Titles through the course of the years. However, he said the biggest thing they are proud of this year is that on the Indoor Track Roster, there were 102 athletes, and each one was academically eligible for the team. He said the athletes work hard with a lot of dedication to their academics as well as to their athletics. Coach Nick said they are what establishes the culture of excellence that has been brought to DHS. He said that as a teacher and coach, he is very proud of their accomplishments. He thanked the parents for their support as well as the Danbury community at large. The members of the team introduced themselves. Nick Fraticelli has been named the Assistant Coach of the Year and was congratulated by Dr. Pascarella and the Members of the Board.

DHS student, Janine Kerr, 1st Place Life Science Award at CT State Science Fair

Dr. Harry Rosvally spoke about Janine Kerr, who has done outstanding work in the science fair. The CT Science Fair has been going on for close to sixty years, and she has done some tremendous work

with a mentor at WCSU. She came in first place in the State in Life Science, and she will be continuing at the INTEL Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles where there will be another level of competition.

DHS student, Jin Wang, Math Team High Scorer Fairfield County

Dr. Harry Rosvally, STEM District Coordinator, talked about Math Team at DHS . Thai Nguyen has been running the program for the past seven years. They have moved up the rankings with Fairfield County. There are approximately 24 schools in Fairfield County and the top twelve get to go to a State level competition and Danbury is No.6. The highest scoring senior and student for all of Fairfield County is Jin Wang, who is a senior at Danbury High School. He has been presented with a \$1,000 scholarship from Fairfield County Math League.

CT Invention Convention – Danbury Schools of Distinction Plaques

Dr. Harry Rosvally is joined by Jake Mendelson of the CT Invention Convention. Danbury has been participating for the past four years much more vigorously thanks to the support of Boehringer Ingelheim and Praxair. They have given us some scholarships to get some start-up programs in several of the elementary schools and middle schools. In the past four years, we have been recognized as the district that has grown the fastest in the State. Plaques were handed out to the following schools: Broadview Middle School, STEM Academy, Western CT Academy for International Students., South Street School, Shelter Rock School, Rogers Park Middle School, Pembroke School, Hayestown School, Great Plain School, King Street Primary, King Street Intermediate school, Stadley Rough Elementary School. Dr. Rosvally recognized the fantastic work of Izzy Varejao who helped to pull off the Danbury Invention Convention last week. She wrote to over 300 people to find judges, organized the 50 judges, and in addition, she balanced all of the numbers for the budgets for the programs and we managed to have nearly 400 students competing at the Bill Williams Gym at WCSU. We thank her for all her hard work associated with the program. We have 34 students who will continue on to the State Invention Convention, which will be held on Saturday, May 3, at UCONN.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - G. Cooper moved, seconded by R. Hawley that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

- 3/5/14 Board Workshop
- 3/10/14 Special Board (Exp)
- 3/10/14 Special Board (Exp)
- 3/12/14 Sites & Facilities Committee Meeting
- 3/12/14 Board Meeting

B. PERSONNEL

Accept Leave of Absence: Susan DeMato

New Hires 3/7/14 – 3/20/14:

Name	Location	Non-Certified Subject
Kayla Borges	DHS	Literacy Interventionist
Jason Howard	Adult Ed	English Teacher
Susan Miles	Os. St.	Data Entry Power School
Meegan Meeks	Pembroke	SPED Tutor
Amanda Sheldon	Hayestown	.5 ESL Para
Eileen Thayer	Hayestown	.5 SPED Tutor

The motion passed unanimously at 7:33 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES -

DHS: - None

ACE: -Natasha Mendoza

On April 1, graduating seniors and parents will have an opportunity to complete their Financial Aid forms through collaboration with WCSU. All parents will be paired with assistants to provide them support in completing the FASSA. Students are participating in their first Outdoor Education trip of the year. Approximately 20 students and two teachers will be hiking the Appalachian Trail and learning the concepts of teamwork, healthy fitness, and cooperative learning. On April 24, ACE will host a Parent Night that will consist of a dinner and a short presentation by staff members on positive discipline. ACE will offer to parents a six-week workshop regarding the use of positive discipline with their adolescents which will hopefully assist them in becoming more successful and build healthier relationships. On May 17, ACE will be celebrating its 35th anniversary at Hatter's Park. Five students are being trained by UCONN to be student ambassadors. These five students will act as educational providers in a 4-H Program at Morris Street School, which will take place twice per week after school. ACE is currently exploring the possibility of collaboration with Henry Abbott Technical School. ACE is interested in pursuing an after-school program where ACE students can earn hours in a vocational trade to complete an apprenticeship in a trade of their choice once they graduate from high school.

PRESENTATION

Technology Update & CT Council for Education Reform Analysis

J. Martino distributed a handout and gave a Power Point Presentation to update the Board on the current status of technology. He said the Board has made significant investments in technology and he gave an overview on where we stand with devices, present state of technology, readiness analysis on where we are, future technology purchases, Total Cost of Ownership, why we talk about the cloud, funding issues, and solutions. Board members asked clarifying questions and a discussion ensued.

ACTION ITEMS

A. February 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept the February 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

J. Martino reported that during the month of February, 2014, the District expended \$7,745,750 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$63,892,685. The FYTD expenditure represents 54.01% of the General Fund total budget.

Board Members asked qualifying questions, which were answered by J. Martino and Dr. S. Pascarella.

The motion passed unanimously at 8:08 p.m.

B. February 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the February 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

J. Martino reported that during the month of February, 2014, the District expended \$1,580,672 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$10,932,963. The FYTD expenditure represents 44.7% of the Grants budget.

Board Members asked qualifying questions, which were answered by J. Martino and Dr. S. Pascarella.

The motion passed unanimously at 8:11 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Report on Bills in CT General Assembly

Dr. Pascarella asked the Board to take some time to look at the House Raised Bills, Senate Raised Bills, House Proposed Bills, Senate Proposed Bills, and Governor's Bills included in the packet given to the Board. He elaborated on each of the Bills and gave an explanation of each. Dr. Pascarella shared that he did receive a call from Senator McLaughlin asking if the Board might want to have a forum with him on some of the Bills and common core.

Redistricting Parent Notification Update

J. Martino spoke about the letter that will be sent to parents which will be personalized and he spoke about another letter going out to the second graders of Mill Ridge Primary and the fourth graders of King Street Intermediate giving them the option to choose to stay at their present school or move on to the school to which they have been redistricted.

LEAD Connecticut

Dr. Pascarella referred to the article that is included in the Board's packet from the CAFE Journal. LEAD Connecticut is an unprecedented collaboration initiated by the State Department of Education and spearheaded by the Center for School Change. It is designed to create and sustain an educational

leadership development pipeline that strengthens student learning across all Connecticut districts, schools and classrooms. We recommended Dan Donovan and they have accepted him in the program. This program will provide Dan and a cohort of principals and aspirants to look around the country, at the Alliance expense, to see what is happening across the country with regard to good and sound practices. They can bring this information back to our district to see how it might fit into our district's plans or create support for the things that we are doing. Dan will start this up in the summer. He is presently working on his doctorate.

NVCC Regional Advisory Council

Dr. Pascarella has been asked to be on their Advisory Council.

DISCUSSION

High School Course Assessments and Benchmarks

Dr. Pascarella said a quasi-TDEC meeting was conducted today and a workshop was suggested to look at our assessment at the high school relative to our mid-terms and finals. Dr. Glass thanked M. Ferguson, P. Tranzillo, and R. Taborsak who met with Dr. Pascarella, G Bocaccio, and M. Martins and asked in-depth, probing questions. Dr. Glass said that each year we shut down a considerable amount of time to do this testing. It provides very little information to anyone that is useful. A final exam is given, the student receives a grade, and there is no chance to do anything to improve that grade. There is no understanding why that youngster got the grade that he or she received. Secondly, Dr. Glass said we are now required to do benchmark assessments. The question becomes if we do two tests, mid-term and final, what happens when we do three more benchmark assessments? The question becomes, "Are we over testing the students?" An opposing view is that it does prepare students for college because so many colleges have these very lengthy, rigorous assessments. Dr. Glass also said there are also a number of associated emotional concerns. Dr. Glass said that Miami Dade in Florida has abolished their mid-terms and finals. Dr. Glass will reach out to them to get their views. Dr. Martins is in the process of obtaining information from recent graduates to get their views as well. Various Board Members expressed their opinion, and Dr. Glass said there are multiple options we can consider over a period of time. Dr. Glass suggests a workshop so everyone can ask questions and then be in a better position to make a formal presentation of the pros and cons.

ECS/Alliance Grant Update

Dr. Glass distributed a one-page handout to the Board members that provides all of the necessary information. He discussed each initiative and rationale, increase in staff, and cost. Board Members asked qualifying questions which were answered by Dr. W. Glass and a discussed ensued.

INFORMATION

DHS Field Trip to Ireland, April 10-19, 2015

Ms. D. Stence, a teacher at Danbury High School, could not be here tonight but will be here at the next Board meeting.

DHS Sign

Chairperson Alberts asked the Board Members to view the sign that is included in the packet.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

DHS Production – “Legally Blond, The Musical,” March 27-29

Chairperson Alberts encouraged the Board Members to attend the production to support Danbury High School.

Chairperson Alberts had the pleasure to be a judge at Invention Convention. She talked about each of the inventions she witnessed and found the experience very amazing. The students developed the product, marketed it, and presented each of the products. She encouraged the Board Members to participate if they are asked.

Chairperson Alberts distributed a handout with regard to the ACE Governance Council and talked briefly about the good work that the teachers do to support their students.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

G. Cooper reported that the Superintendent's Evaluation Committee met today and thanked all the members for being there. She encouraged all members of the Board to attend the meetings even though they would not be able to participate. By doing so, this will keep everyone informed and when all come together as a Board, everyone will be aware and advised, which should make the decision making more time efficient.

R. Taborsak reported that there was a TDEC Meeting and Board members voiced their concern and opinions on doing away with midterms and finals.

On April 1, the Mayor will make his presentation of the City's Budget.

On April 2, there is a Board of Education Workshop with Jonathan Costa, Education Connection, with regard to Instructional Coherence Plan.

On April 30, there will be a Board of Education Workshop with Ted Carroll with regard to Board of Education Orientation.

Dr. Pascarella asked the Board Members to check their calendars as there is a tentative workshop date of May 2 with Jonathan Costa, of Education Connection.

Chairperson Alberts also asked the Board Members to mark their calendar for a meeting on Wednesday, May 7, which will be a Board of Education Workshop with regard to DHS midyear and final exams.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Taborsak moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education adjourn its March 26 meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary