

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley,
Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena,
Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson

Absent: Kathleen Molinaro

Also Present: Sal Pascarella, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson

RECOGNITIONS - none

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

13 participants spoke in regard to the DHS International field trips, and the AIS sibling lottery policy change.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by R. Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-1 through 16-6, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

November 24, 2015 Board Meeting
December 2, 2015 Annual Meeting
December 7, 2015 Special Meeting
December 7, 2015 Special Meeting
December 9, 2015 Board Workshop

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leaves of Absence: Fiona Braca, Eva Caputo, Tamia Gant,
Serfina Greco, Nicole Sanders, Melissa Toscano
Accept Resignations: Sean Colley (Coach Only), Mark Ecke,
Lori Frischkorn, Leah Lepere, Trevon Little,
Theresa McElroy, Sheila Morley, Erik Nardone,
John Novella (Coach Only), Kathleen Quinn,
Margaret Ramgolam, Christina Richa,
Diana Rivard, Alisa Vinci, Joanne Zanella
Accept Retirement: Roberto Gomez, 19 years, 6 months

Motion carried at 7:42 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - none

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Irene Reichl – spoke about upcoming events at DHS

State BOE Student Representative: Alexandra Prendergast – spoke about graduation requirements

PRESENTATION - none

ACTION ITEMS

International Field Trips:

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by R. Hawley that the Board of Education permit 2015-2016 school year International travel to Europe.

Clarifying questions were asked. R. Hawley asked if there were any additional updates from the State Department regarding travel alerts. Mr. Ashford reported that there will always be alerts, but that there was no warning issued as of today. K. Thomson researched online data and read that US Government stated that there was a worldwide travel alert thru February 24, 2016. R. Jannelli asked if, in light of recent events, the travel company had implemented any new procedures. Mr. Ashford stated that they were continuing to use the same airlines, hotels, insurance and security as they have in the past, and that there procedures were exceptional. H. Robinson asked K. Thomson if there was a way to disassociate the district from the trip, or was it now too late, and if the district could be found negligent by approving the trip while alerts were in place. K. Thomson replied that it was a complicated situation, and it would be too hard to predict how a fact finder would perceive that proposal. P. Johnston briefly presented clarification between an alert and a warning, and stated that a worldwide alert including everywhere, including Connecticut and domestic trips. He stated that he believed the decision for a student to participate or not was that of the parents. F. Karrat asked some clarifying questions regarding insurance coverage, which Mr. Ashford answered, and provided another copy of the insurance policy and brochure. M. Ferguson commented that the students who were participating in the trip were from a different generation that has sadly grown up in the age of terrorism. He stated that we live in an age of terrorism, but asked if we were going to let that change how we live.

Chairperson Alberts asked Board to vote individually.

In favor: F. Karrat, R. Hawley, H. Robinson, M. Ferguson, E. Alberts, R. Jannelli, P. Johnston, R. Pietrafesa

Opposed: G. Cooper

Absent: K. Molinaro

Motion carried at 8:10 pm

R. Pietrafesa thanked the public for attending the meeting.

Dr. Pascarella commented that many districts are moving towards severing relationships with field trips. He suggested to the Board that the district can arrange a presentation in regard to this in the spring if they choose to have it. Chairperson Alberts agreed this was an excellent idea, and asked Dr. Pascarella to arrange a presentation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Online registration middle schools and 9th grade: will pilot with incoming 9th graders in the spring
- B. Standard based report cards 2016-2017: discussion is continuing regarding improvement in elementary report cards. Next year 3 schools will pilot new format.
- C. Title 1,2,3 – 95% rule: By law 95% of student need to participate in testing. Below 95% puts a district at risk of not receiving federal funding, which is currently 2.6 million to Danbury. Due to the middle and high school participation, Danbury did not meet the 95% threshold. The state has submitted a 3 tier proposal to the federal government to not impose any fines, especially since CT has now changed the high school assessment to the SAT. No answer has yet been provided to the Commissioner. Dr. Pascarella feels that imposing any fines would be penalizing students for action of their parents who prevented them from participating in the testing. He has also asked schools to run parent workshops to further educate parents regarding the importance of students participating in the testing, and the impact of the percentage rate on funding. P. Johnston asked what Danbury's percentage was. Dr. Pascarella stated it was 80%, but it exceeded 95% without DHS.
- D. Middle School Program Review: Dr. Pascarella stated there is some concern about a lack of progress in some strands, and that in March an external team will be coming to the district to evaluate. They will also be conducting a study on the Administrative structure.
- E. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): This replaces No Child Left Behind. Basic premise is that individual states find and design the systems, not the federal government. This will provide district more flexibility.
- F. 2021 Graduation Requirements: a review of the current status and cited examples are included in the packet.

DISCUSSION

- A. Transportation Study: J. Martino highlighted information in packet. Currently the district has a 4 tier system, and consideration was being made for a 3 tiered system. He discussed the pros and cons of making the change, but stated that the cost saving for 2 busses would not support the significant changes that would be imposed on parents and students. The study was overall a positive report that provided good information to dovetail into the next contract negotiation with STA. He further stated the new GPS app is currently being tested and working well. M. Ferguson asked some clarifying questions about the STA contract and if the Transportation Coordinator should be housed at STA not Beaver Brook. J. Martino replied that the Coordinator should remain at Beaver Brook, and that the whole process with STA was working well.

- B. Space Audit: Results show that enrollment at Shelter Rock continues to grow, and this could be problematic if the trend continues. J. Martino stated that redistricting is not an option, as there is just no where left to go. He and Dr. Pascarella are considering adding modular to Shelter Rock if necessary.
- C. 2016-2017 Budget: J. Martino stated a full presentation would be presented at the next Board meeting.

INFORMATION

- A. Revised Health Services Regulations to Policy 7-106 – Dr. Pascarella referred to the packet.
- B. Revised Education Specifications for DHS Project – Dr. Pascarella stated that the Board approved the specs, and they were now at the city for approval. However now the Board needs to vote on modifications, details of which are included in the packet. This will be on the agenda at the next meeting.
- C. Lottery Update (AIS & WMSA) – AIS currently has 664 applications (573 Danbury; 16 Brookfield; 17 New Fairfield; 4 Newtown; 4 Redding; 34 New Milford; 16 non compact)

Dr. Pascarella clarified that the sibling policy change is not effective until the 2017 lottery process.
- D. Middle School vandalism – minor incident at Westside where an air conditioner was stolen.
- E. Negotiation teams

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Alberts reviewed Board assignments, and asked each member to prepare a brief Report for the next meeting.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

The Board read thank you cards that had been sent to them from Danbury students. The Board also read an email recognizing the participation by Morris Street School students in a community event to support one of their classmates who is very ill.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: R. Hawley, seconded by R. Pietrafesa, moved that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing SBLR/Department Head Status, personnel matters and potential litigation.

Motion carried at 8:40 pm

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson

Absent: Kathleen Molinaro

Also Present: Sal Pascarella, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson

Ms. Alberts called the Executive Session to order at 8:44 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

Motion carried at 9:06 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by P. Johnston, that the Board of Education adjourn the January 13, 2016 Board of Education Meeting.

Motion carried at 9:07 p.m.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary