

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES - REVISED**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2012 - 6:00 PM**

**Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Donna Warner, and Joyce Emmett from Administration

Absent: Richard Jannelli, Robert Taborsak, Board Members; and Ed Arum from Administration, (all arrived at 6:55 p.m.)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gladys Cooper, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Cooper asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

**GRIEVANCE HEARING**

Mr. Tom Kennedy, Representative from CEA, stated that the Association, in accordance with his contract, is claiming that Mr. Brian Bardo should have been offered a position with the extended summer school program in 2011 and he was not. Mr. Kennedy compares Mr. Bardo's qualifications with that of the teacher who was hired and believes them to be the same, stating that Mr. Bardo had more seniority and that is the nature of their grievance. He distributed a handout to the Board containing supporting documents. K. Thompson said the contract does not say that we are now required to select the most qualified person. Ms. Emmet explained the process of the extended summer school program and who is selected, when, and why. Ms. Warner spoke about the process that evolves beginning with March of 2011. K. Thompson asked D. Warner how the decision is made of what staff members are hired. D. Warner said the goal is to match the students with a teacher who has a particular qualification to address the needs of the students. K. Thompson said it is a complicated process, and it takes a great deal of collaborating of staff. K. Thompson makes the argument that staff is selected based on their qualifications to give the very best service for the special education children in the program.

Clarifying questions were asked by Board members, and Chairperson Cooper asked the Board if they wanted to adjourn in Executive Session or move it to the end of the agenda.

**MOTION:** S. Steichen moved, seconded by R. Hawley that the Board convene in Executive session at the end of the agenda.

**The motion carried unanimously at 6:59 p.m. and the Board continued on with the agenda.**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Kim Thompson and Ed Arum from Administration

Absent: None

**DISCUSSION**

**Public Participation, Board Bylaw 4-7, 4-8**

Chairperson Cooper said there were miscommunications about the process of Public Participation at the last

Board meeting. Everyone that wanted to speak did not get that opportunity. She continued to say that the time had passed, and while some did not get a chance to speak, there was no intent on her part to offend anyone. She clarified that the Board has a procedure and Bylaws in place to address Public Participation. She suggests that everyone who wants to speak that arrives on time sign up and bring their concerns to the Board. S. Steichen asked if it would be appropriate to announce a last call because she agrees that parents need to be encouraged to address their concerns. G. Cooper stated that according to the Bylaws, thirty minutes of public participation is allowed at the Board meetings. S. Chilian confirmed that if, however, there is a topic that was a real emergency, by vote of the Board, time could be extended. Chairperson Cooper made a last call to the public if anyone wanted to speak who did not sign their name to the sheet.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Stephany Fanning addressed the Board with regard to the G.A.T.H.E.R. (Gifted and Talented Have Equal Rights) Group and distributed a handout to the Board.

Karen Muller is here regarding the school budget for next year. She would like to encourage the Board to increase the budget with regard to the Summit Program.

Wendy Hesse, founder of the G.A.T.H.E.R. Group, thanked Dr. Glass for meeting with them and providing well received information. She advocated for the gifted and talented students and asked the Board to look at ways to increase the budget to provide for these youngsters.

Laurie Brown and Gillian are here to advocate for the gifted and talented students and asked the Board to look for additional resources to help these youngsters.

Irving Fox is here to give an update on behalf of school districts across Connecticut. There is a State task force on the technical high schools, and the Governor had proposed to transfer those to local districts. As a result of the work of the task force, the final report firmly spoke in support of keeping those schools with the State. He is also here as the Vice President of the King Street PTO, and he strongly encourages all of the Board members assigned as PTO liaisons to participate in that process. Finally, he commends Mrs. Hesse and other members of the G.A.T.H.E.R. Group, and he is 100% in favor of continuing and increasing funding for the Gifted and Talented Program.

Sean Council, DHS Class of 1986, congratulated Chairperson Cooper on her new position and wanted to publicly show his appreciation and support for her service to the community.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended:

### **A. MINUTES**

Board Workshop (Orientation), 12-5-11  
Board Special Meeting (Exp), 1-9-12  
Board Meeting, 1-11-12  
Finance Committee, 1-19-12

### **B. PERSONNEL**

Accept Leave of Absence: Joann Stergue

**The motion carried unanimously at 7:26 p.m.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** – Cindy Mirochine – No report

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - No Report

### PRESENTATION

#### Connecticut Association of Schools – 2012 National Distinguished Principal Award

Dr. Pascarella congratulates Keisha Smith, principal of Great Plain School, on being selected by the Connecticut Association of Schools as a finalist for the 2012 National Distinguished Principal Award. She is one of three candidates that they will consider. They will make a site visit on March 23. Dr. Pascarella said that Ms. Smith has been in the district for eight years, and it is quite an honor for her and wished her well

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

#### ESEA Reauthorization

Dr. Pascarella wants the Board to take a look at reauthorization of the ESEA (Educational Secondary Elementary Act), which is formerly known as NCLB. He spoke to the bullets on the AASA Statement which is included in the packet given to the Board.

### DISCUSSION

#### 2020 Task Force Update

K. Molinaro, Chairperson of the subcommittee, reports on the recommendation of the subcommittee, but would like, at the end of her report, through Chairperson Cooper, to ask for a consensus from the Board to go forward with the outlined plan. The subcommittee of the 2020 Task Force has identified the schools that will have additions put on. She emphasizes that this is not a final plan, but where they feel the additions are most needed. Using the sister school concept, they have grouped some of the elementary schools together. Starting with Shelter Rock, South Street and Ellsworth Avenue, five additional classrooms would be added to Shelter Rock School. As for Park Avenue, Morris Street and Mill Ridge Primary, eight additional classrooms would be added to Park Avenue. With regard to Stadley Rough, Great Plain and Hayestown, four additional classrooms would be added to Great Plain. The next step would be to hire an architect and come up with a plan and have studies performed to insure that this plan will work. K. Molinaro said that there will be an increase in enrollment coming through next year and this will address that increase. R. Taborsak asked who the other members of the subcommittee are, and it is comprised of Dr. Glass, a City Council member, K. Molinaro, a parent, R. Jalbert and A. Iadarola. Dr. Pascarella clarified that the subcommittee has met and developed this plan, but it has not come before the entire 2020 Task Force Committee. That meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6, at 4:30 p.m. at Rogers Park Middle School. R. Jannelli asked Dr. Pascarella what his opinion is about this recommendation. Dr. Pascarella said the room is needed, and this will take care of some pocket growth we have. Dr. Pascarella asked if anything was done about the middle school situation. K. Molinaro said they did talk about Mill Ridge Educational Center being used as the alternative for the middle school and to enhance the STEM program, but their major concern is getting the approval from the Board to move forward so that we can meet the State deadlines. S. Chilian has a concern and asked if this plan makes it possible to fix our problem. Dr. Pascarella said we will remain status quo. R. Hawley asked if 17 classrooms would be the max or can it be increased. Dr. Glass said we had a number floated that appeared to address our needs. At a meeting this morning, we came up with 17. That would allow us to insure that we have the occupancy rating correct. He continued by saying that this is monitored very closely by the State, so that if we overbuild, they could come in and say that they will not reimburse us. This would allow us to fit within the parameters, and it would allow us to have the appropriate staffing levels in each of our classrooms. G. Falkenthal asked if art and music classrooms and the like are necessary. Dr. Pascarella said he believes they are necessary to deliver the program we want for our youngsters. A. Fluskey-Latin asked if we add more classrooms to the three schools, will we be talking about redistricting and will we still be considering the sister school concept or eliminating it. Dr. Pascarella said at this time it is difficult to tell. One of the reasons why the cluster is done is for the convenience of contiguous boundaries. If you have to redistrict, you redistrict in the zone. The recommendation from the experts is that we should look at this every five years. He wants everyone to understand this because you risk more problems the longer you wait. He said at any time when there was some redistricting the Board

had permitted the family to remain together. When the Board put together the lottery system for the magnet school, a preference is given to the family. R. Taborsak asked what number of students was factored in to each additional classroom. K. Molinaro responded by saying they used the guidelines of the contract, which is 22 to 25 students. Dr. Glass confirmed 22 students for K-1 and 25 students Grades 2 through 5. R. Jannelli asked if we vote for this, are we saying that we do so knowing that the full day kindergarten does not apply because we do not have the space, and the existing problem we have with the overcrowding would be alleviated, regardless of sister schools or redistricting. Dr. Pascarella responded by saying if you put 17 classrooms in, it will take care of the growth in the district. All this does is identify where the growth is. By doing that, it permits us to put the programs back into the classrooms. P. Tranzillo expressed a concern that Danbury does not have a full day kindergarten program. She further asks that since we have an opportunity to get more space, is there anything we can do make full day kindergarten a reality. R. Jannelli asked if this would have an adverse affect on the public. He speculated that they might see this as spending money on a bandaid, and would they rather spend more to get more. Dr. Pascarella said if they do pass this, there is, in the three years down the road, a financial cost to the district to fund the classrooms themselves, and that is something the Board would have to entertain at that time. R. Jannelli continues by saying that with the negative of not having the ultimate objective of full day kindergarten, would that adversely affect the opinion of the public? S. Steichen added that with regard to the full day kindergarten, in order for people to really grasp this, it will be critical that we be as transparent as possible as to what the intentions are for this expansion and if it will result in redistricting or having sister schools or whatever the long-term effect might be. K. Molinaro wants to caution everyone that this is in the “infant” stage. This could all change. It is their first stab at getting more room in the schools. It is not anything that we have carved in stone yet. R. Taborsak asked how many more classrooms we would need to achieve full day kindergarten. Dr. Pascarella said three years ago, it was 22 classrooms. The enrollment at that time was somewhere in the 700s, and now we are pushing 900. He said we are probably talking about 25 classrooms. E. Alberts asked for a consensus. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked what part of it is in the “infant” stage. She said that when she attended the meeting last Thursday, it sounded like the 2020 Task Force was recommending that we absolutely add 15 to 17 classrooms but did not say where. K. Molinaro said that the “infant” stage is “where.” Dr. Glass appreciates the Board members bringing up the fact that it is absolutely critical that we be very transparent. He said that no one has advocated more strongly for all day kindergarten than he and Dr. Pascarella. As P. Tranzillo had said, there is ample research out there to illustrate the strength of having all day kindergarten and all day universal pre-kindergarten programs. The piece that he does not feel has been brought forward is that if we are looking at 22 additional classrooms, we would take a teacher who has an AM kindergarten program and a PM kindergarten program, and say he or she now has a full day program. The other half of that requires another teacher, so this Board may be looking at 15, 20, 22 brand new teachers on top of the existing budget, and when you start looking at those numbers they are staggering at about \$70,000 to \$75,000 per person, so we would be looking at \$1.5 million dollars just in staffing on top of everything else. Dr. Glass said they are passionate about it, but that is why they have not pushed in that direction.

Chairperson Cooper asked for a consensus. All members are in favor of having K. Molinaro go forward with the outlined plan of the subcommittee to the 2020 Task Force.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

### **2012-2013 Proposed Budget**

Dr. Pascarella spoke about the proposed budget outlined in the packet given to the Board. E. Arum explained the preliminary budget cost drivers, the maintenance budget, enrollment-increase/state mandate, value added items, and assumptions, possible reductions to the budget. Dr. Pascarella said we tried to look at ways to reduce the budget. He indicated having an IT person overseeing the City and Board of Education as a means to save some money. He talked about taking what we have and moving it forward, meeting State requirements and enrollment requirements, as well as having a Value Added budget. S. Steichen asked if we are actively working with the City on the budget and have we inherited this budget. Dr. Pascarella said we have been working with the City since September about all the things we have talked about, but the Board has to determine what goes forward to the City. He explained that this budget is a draft. Chairperson Cooper suggested that if anyone has questions about the budget they should email E. Arum.

## PRESENTATION

### Curriculum Enhancement Initiative, Challenges & Successes, Dr. William Glass

Dr. Glass distributed a handout and narrated the power point presentation to the Board and introduces the members of the team, Dr. Megan Martins, Kara Casimiro, Dr. Harry Rosvally, Chris Pruss, and Ann Lindenmeyer. Dr. Glass said that the instructional program went through a tough time from 2003 on when we went into deficit spending. He feels we are back to a position of vibrancy, back to where the Danbury Public Schools really is positioned as a front runner in the State. This is a five-year curriculum cycle. It is new, and it takes us all the way through 2016. Dr. Glass said some modifications may be made, but there is a clearly articulated plan, and they will adhere to the plan. The work that Chris Pruss has done over the last ten years has been recognized across the State as being exemplary, and if you go on to her website, you will see a wonderfully, rich environment. Dr. Glass said that Ann Lindenmeyer from Education Connection has joined them as their data person. She has a tremendous reputation for understanding data at a deeper level than just about anyone. Megan came down as part of the intervention from the State Department of Education. Cambridge said we do not have enough feet on the street and we are building in terms of instructional leaders, so Megan's position as Associate Principal for Instruction with the related department heads is to address that Cambridge issue. Harry was originally in Danbury and left to go to Westport but came back to Danbury. Kara is working on her doctorate and Harry has had his doctorate for quite some time. Dr. Glass said that Kara has replaced two people and Harry has replaced three people. He said we have slimmed down dramatically at the central office level. Chris wears several hats and Anne is helping us with Power School. Dr. Glass said what is important to us is that "It's All About All Kids." As we go through the budget cycle, this is the heart and soul of our business. It's all about teaching and learning Dr. Glass said we have a difficult task ahead of us because as more groups come before us advocating their initiative, this gets increasingly jeopardized. He would be happy to entertain questions now or they would be happy to come back. R. Taborsak wanted to verify that the revised curriculum is K through 12 and asked if that is what teachers are being evaluated on. Dr. Glass responded by saying that if you look at the work that Chris and Harry have done at the K-5 level, the literacy area at the 6-8 level, and somewhat with the math, he would say yes, that the curricula is new and fresh and its vibrant, and it is continuing to be modified, but it is due for another refresh. He said they are in the process of refreshing all of the curricula, but they have only hit the primary core academics. Chairperson Cooper thanked Dr. Glass and his entire team for their presentation. Dr. Pascarella said that one of the things that S. Chilian pointed out with regard to the ESEA reauthorization is that it will provide an extra year of exemption from State assessment for newly arrived English Language Learners and bilingual students. He feels it will really make a difference in their experiences.

## ACTION ITEMS

### A. December 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

**MOTION -** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept the December 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

E. Arum said the Board wanted a summary of the accounts and that is included in the Board's packet. He changed the Financial Statement a little bit to show the projected balance at the end of the year, and that will change on a monthly basis. As you can see, as of December 31, there is a surplus of \$250,000. Each month the Board will receive an updated version. R. Jannelli thanked E. Arum for the synopsis of the summary and asked E. Arum to explain the meaning of some of the columns and he complied with his request.

**The motion carried unanimously at 9:19 p.m.**

### B. December 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

**MOTION -** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education accept the December 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

E. Arum said this includes all of the things that are not in the budget totaling about \$20 million dollars every year. S. Steichen asked how do we stack up with how many grants and federal funding we receive compared to our neighboring areas. E. Arum said he would try to do that, but at the present time, he does not know. S. Steichen asked if the per student allocation from the State included Federal and State funding. Dr. Pascarella said when you look at the allocation from State, that is purely the State. If you were to add grants to it, it might be 110% of what we have. Dr. Pascarella answered S. Steichen's original question by stating that he thinks we are behind. He continued by saying that we have tried to hire someone to come in and do the work. He feels we are moving up to 50% now, and he feels it puts us in the light where we might be looked at differently by funders. It is something that we would like to pursue but we have not added a position in here to do that. Dr. Pascarella said that Hartford and Bridgeport get more funding. Dr. Pascarella said that right now we get categorical money that we are entitled to and then we get some specialized grants. S. Steichen asked if we need to focus more on the grant area. S. Chilian said it sounds great to get the grants, but when they end, we are in deep trouble. She agrees that if we do bandaids than why not do those bandaids, but she feels there is a cautionary tail involved in all grants.

**The motion carried unanimously at 9:23 p.m.**

## **INFORMATION**

### **Interim Associate Principal at DHS**

Dr. Pascarella announced that Kara Casimiro will replace Dr. Megan Martins for a 12-week period as an Associate Principal to Danbury High School. He feels she will be asset to us.

### **Update AIS Magnet School Applications**

Dr. Pascarella said last year we have 736 total applicants. We have partner schools which have been with Danbury since its inception, and they would be Brookfield, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding and New Milford, and from those districts, we had about 710 students last year, and we have partner districts that participate from non-participating districts. That means they do not sit on the Board. The law changed three years ago to allow students to enter into magnet schools, and we have Bethel, Ridgefield, Southbury, Waterbury, Monroe, Woodbury and Sherman. Dr. Pascarella reported that we have received 1,188 applications this year. Danbury alone has 1,060 applicants. He reports that the magnet school not only pays for itself, but it provides added resources. The reimbursement levels for all those towns that send a student to us, and in this case is 180, we receive \$1784 per student for tuition. In addition, the State gives us categorical money so for every Danbury student, we receive \$3,000 for everyone of our students that come from other towns, we receive \$6,730. The total resources come in and that helps us to replenish what we have to at AIS but also adds to the bottom line of the district to reduce funds. We have had a difficult time with the company that has been doing the lottery. We have an offsite company do it for obvious reasons. We might have to extend the lottery due to the number of applicants and the busy schedule of the company that is servicing us. Dr. Pascarella said we will be able to put more students in Grade 4 and Grade 5 this year and this will also help us with our enrollment numbers. Dr. Pascarella said kudos to Helena for the program and her staff at AIS.

### **Community Forum on Budget Process, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m., RPMS**

We will have a panel and it is open to the public. Prior to that is a 2020 Task Force meeting at 4:30 p.m.

## **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Cooper said she does not have anything to report at this time. She added two people to the Operations/Policy Committee, K. Molinaro and G. Falkenthal. She would like all committees to have at least five people. For the Sites and Facilities Committee, she would like at least two more people. R. Taborsak would like to be added to that committee. She reminded everyone not to forget their PTO assignments. They will start in February. A. Fluskey-Lattin has a conflict and G. Cooper said it can be worked out and switched with someone.

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

Chairperson Cooper announced that the committee reports not be given tonight because there has been much discussion tonight, and there is one other item that needs attention. The Board agreed.

S. Steichen asked Chairperson Cooper how she can add items to the agenda for an upcoming meeting, and Chairperson Cooper suggested she discuss it with Dr. Pascarella, as the agenda is prepared by her and Dr. Pascarella.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** S. Chilian moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of grievance deliberations.

Present: Eileen Alberts, Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Kim Thompson Joyce Emmett and Donna Warner from Administration

Absent: Ed Arum from Administration

**The motion carried unanimously at 9:35 p.m.**

**MOTION:** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board vote on the grievance of Brian Bardo heard this evening.

In Favor: S. Chilian, A. Fluskey-Lattin, S. Steichen, P. Tranzillo  
Opposed: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, G. Falkenthal, R. Hawley, K. Molinaro  
Abstained: R. Jannelli, R. Taborsak

**The motion carried at 10:09 p.m.**

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** R. Hawley moved, seconded by G. Falkenthal that the Board of Education adjourn its January 25, 2012 meeting.

**The motion carried unanimously at 10:10 p.m.**

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Richard Hawley, Secretary