

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2011 – 7:00 pm
Administrative Center - 63 Beaver Brook Road

A G E N D A

Present: E. Alberts, M. Fazio, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak
Dr. S. Pascarella, Mr. E. Longo, Ms. J. Emmett from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, J. Scozzafava, S. LeRoy, K. Gailliard, G. Cooper
Dr. William Glass, Ms. K. Thompson from Administration

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Irving Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Mark Boughton presentation of Danbury Education Foundation Grant Awards postponed to the February 9th Board Meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Three DHS seniors, Benjamin Altman, Allie Bukowski, and Greg Azevedo, express their desire and concern that the district forego mid-year exams because of time constraints on teachers due to weather and student preparedness for the exams.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

A. MINUTES

- 1/13/11 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
- 1/13/11 Bi-Monthly Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- 1/19/11 Board Workshop (Budget Meeting w/City Council)

The motion carried at 7:22 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danbury High School: Nadine Edwards

Nadine reports that parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for March 21, and on February 11, the Smile Train Committee is presenting the second annual Mr. DHS competition, where 13 DHS senior boys compete for the title of Mr. DHS 2011. Tickets will be sold for \$8 at the door. On January 30, there will be a College Bowl Sunday at WCSU on the Westside campus.

Alternative Center: None

PRESENTATION

ACTION ITEMS

A. November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by M. Fazio that the Board of Education accept the November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Mr. Longo told the Board that for the month of November 2010, the District expended \$8,580,411, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$32,209,516. Fiscal year-to-date expenditure as of November 30 is 28.3% with encumbrance's year-to-date at 37.8% as compared to the theoretical expense rate of 42%.

Chairman Fox questions the textbook account. He states that we have only expended one-half of the amount. He asks if we typically spread the cost of textbooks over the course of the year, or is it really more towards the beginning of the semester. Mr. Longo reports it is more towards the beginning of the semester. The dollars were allocated to Dr. Glass. Dr. Glass then works with the various department chairs and coordinators to meet their needs.

The motion carried at 7:25 p.m.

B. November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education accept the November 2010 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Mr. Longo told the Board that for the month of November 2010, the District expended \$1,573,224 for a fiscal year-to-date expenditure as of November 30, 2010 of \$6,308,422.

The motion carried at 7:26 p.m.

C. December 2010 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education accept the December 2010 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Mr. Longo told the Board that for the month of December 2010, the District expended \$10,585,751, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$42,795,266, approximately 37.6% of the General Fund total budget with encumbrances as of November 30, the year-to-date expenditure rate is at 35.6% as compared to the theoretical rate of 50%.

M. Fazio asks a question on custodial overtime. His recollection is that this is not a reduced number from previous years. He feels we are more than half way through the school year and we have spent \$53,000 out of \$170,000, or 31%. He asks if we have cut back or did we appropriate too much. Mr. Longo explains we have in the past years had vacant positions. We, in turn, were forced to provide overtime for the remaining staff. We filled the vacancies, and again, tried to manage overtime, which goes out at a minimum of time and a half. Chairman Fox comments on the textbooks. Although the amount expended went up, the amount of encumbrances stayed the same, does that mean we did not deliver any new textbooks in the month of December. E. Longo said we have not. The encumbrances are met with purchase orders.

Dr. Pascarella said they are doing business at the high school as they normally do. Many of them had class sets and they utilized that same process. This year they we are going to order in May, but going through the budget the way we did, many of them did not think funds would be there, so they were making due with what they had. This past month, they have selected a new group who is writing new curriculum for the other areas that they will be purchasing textbooks for.

The motion carried at 7:35 p.m.

D. December 2010 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, M. Fazio seconded by that the Board of Education accept the December 2010 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Mr. Longo told the Board that for the month of December 2010, the District expended \$2,410,855, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$8,719,277. The fiscal year-to-date expenditure represents 33.4% of the currently reported Grants and Projects awards.

The motion carried at 7:36 p.m.

E. AIS Magnet School Contribution Rate

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve the AIS Magnet School contribution rate of \$1,784 for the 2011-2012 school year.

The Board asks Mr. Longo if this is the same rate as last year, and Mr. Longo states it is.

The motion carried at 7:37 p.m.

DISCUSSIONS

INFORMATION

A. DHS Field Trip to London, England, April Break 2012

Jaclyn Gronwoldt, an English teacher at Danbury High School has given everyone an itinerary and pricing information and asked if the Board had any questions. Question was raised about the insurance and she explained that it is offered to each person individually. R. Taborsak asked how many students are going. Ms. Gronwoldt responded that one adult goes free for every six students, and she can take as many students as sign up. The trip is not grade specific. R. Jannelli suggests that if time allowed, the students might want to visit a local high school, and Ms. Gronwoldt agreed and thought it would be a great idea. She will look into it.

Mr. Longo asked Ms. Gronwoldt to contact Pat Zeiss in the Business Office to register the trip with CIRMA for international travel insurance, which is part of our general policy.

B. Board Member Attendance 2010

Information on Board Member Attendance is attached to each Member's packet.

C. Middle School Parent Survey

Information was also included in each member's packet with regard to possible dress code. R. Jannelli asked if this will come before the Board to create a policy. Dr. Pascarella stated that we have a dress code. He expressed his concerns and support. We can make recommendations for parents, but we cannot force a student to wear a uniform, unless it relates to gang-related activities. If we feel that we are at a point where it is detrimental to the educational process, the Board then could invoke a policy that would require each to have a uniform. Right now we are collecting the information. R. Jannelli asks if it will be voluntary. Dr. Pascarella responded that it is voluntary.

D. DHS Exams postponed one week – now February 1-4, 2011

Dr. Pascarella spoke with Dr. Rossi today and he will talk with his leadership team and faculty. There are students who don't want to take the exam because it may impact their grades. As of now, exams are scheduled for February 1 through 4.

E. Weather Related Closings (6 closings to date, tentative Graduation June 23rd)

Dr. Pascarella explains that our calendar states that if we go beyond the designated snow days, we have classes until June 30. If it goes beyond that, we will start to take the days off our spring break in April, starting with the first day, which is April 18.

Dr. Pascarella is moving to a two-hour delay versus 90-minute delay. The road crew needs the time. This is effective immediately. The Board has always had a 911 emergency dismissal. We have created a new emergency schedule and that will be effective January 31, 2011.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. 2011-2012 Proposed Budget (handout at meeting)

Dr. Pascarella spoke about the TDEC meeting. He reports we are finalizing our plans and they are more data driven. He states that we are going forward with the TDEC plan and will keep everyone apprised.

With regard to the 2011-2012 Proposed Budget, Dr. Pascarella reports that we are not guaranteed what we received last year. We could get less, the same, or more. More is not likely. Dr. Pascarella proceeded to go over the handout with the Board. One area he spoke about was the consideration of no new programs. The question under no new programs is graduation requirements. Dr. Rossi and the chairmen are looking at what the costs would be if we were to do it. It will probably not have an impact until three years, but he is looking at what type of staffing will be needed.

A moratorium has been placed on new technology equipment. We are reallocating existing staff and resources to meet basic operational needs, and we are continuing to aggressively pursue cost containment and savings measures. One problem we are having with technology is that we do not have the staff to support more technology. As we get gifts from fundraisers and they bring in new equipment, we don't have the staff to support it.

Dr. Pascarella instructs the Board to look at the bullet with regard to mission critical -- the most basic level of the Board's mission is to support reading, writing and mathematics instruction. Dr. Pascarella invites the Board to visit the classrooms. He is impressed with what they are doing. They have individuals helping them, they demonstrate lessons, sometimes they work with students. Support to the teacher in the classroom has to be there. We need to support the teachers as much as we can.

Dr. Pascarella further explains the points that are given to the Board in the handout.

Dr. Pascarella talked about the transportation situation and how we are increasing our enrollment and our equipment is staying the same. The bus company needs more time to deliver the students, and we are looking at maybe adding some time during the day to accommodate that so we don't have to add any more buses. Dr. Pascarella's concern is having the late elementary students home too late.

ARRA - Job Funds is currently at .4, and we have saved that from this year. Dr. Pascarella said that depending on how ECS is funded to the municipalities, it might be included into the ECS grant. These are the rumors we are hearing.

Mr. Longo has been able to work with the City so we have a .3% increase or roughly about \$400,000. We have about \$600,000 in staffing just for enrollment. We will know more as the high school starts their registration and as we start getting kindergarten enrollments. We are going to lose

the ARRA money this year, and in order to replace that money and have the programs that we did not cut, we will have to put about \$800,000 into the budget.

General fund revenue sources - \$114 million dollars . The City of Danbury taxpayers, approximately \$91 million dollars; reimbursements in the form of ECS grants from the State to the City of Danbury, approximately \$19.8 million dollars. We have a subsidy from the federal government known as ARRA-SFSF for a total of \$3.2 million dollars, so approximately 91 cents on a dollar for education is funded at the local level. The next slide is on a dollar basis. On a dollar basis, the City of Danbury taxpayers fund approximately 80 cents per dollar for education spending; 17% is reimbursed by the State of Connecticut, and we have a federal subsidy passed through the state representing 3 cents on a dollar.

Chairman Fox asks that with all the cost increases we have had, and assuming ECS stays flat, does this 17% actually decrease by a certain amount. That would be a shift of burden to the taxpayers. Dr. Pascarella clarifies that if the ECS money does come to fruition, this budget as it stands now would be roughly 7%.

Current year cost composition slide – Mr. Longo explains that salaries for district employees total approximately \$60 million dollars, plus cost of benefits of approximately \$20 million dollars, we are at 80%. I. Fox asks if the budget includes the lighting and solar projects. Mr. Longo said best case scenarios, combined value of the solar and lighting, we would have a positive cash flow of approximately \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year. By combining the two projects, we stand to realize approximately \$70,000 of positive cash flow.

Mr. Longo states that we have been asked by many of our partners to be more efficient with our practices, and we believe we have been more efficient. We went back to 2006-2007, and the per pupil expense comparing Danbury to our partner districts, known as DRG H category and the State of Connecticut average of all school districts. In 2006-2007, Danbury's per pupil expense totaled \$10,700. DRG H spent \$11,900 per pupil while the state average held at \$11,558. In 2007-2008, Danbury's per pupil came in at \$11,200 compared to DRG H at \$12,300 and the State average of \$12,150. In the fiscal year of 2008-2009, Danbury's per pupil was \$11,700, DRG H was \$13,000 and the state average was \$12,800. Mr. Longo states that it is quite evident that on a per pupil expense analysis, Danbury not only came in under the state average, but is well within the per pupil expense of DRG H.

Dr. Pascarella and E. Longo continue to explain and go through each slide.

Dr. Pascarella summarizes by going through each critical point. He states that we have to keep working on the achievement gap, and maintain clean, safe, and orderly learning environments for our students.

Mr. Longo explains that the budget has since been revised to 4.16%. There remain a few minor housekeeping efforts which will take place soon, and we should have the Superintendent's final number ready for the Board and the public on Monday, January 31.

R. Taborsak asked if we updated our curriculum, and Dr. Pascarella states we are working on secondary and middle school. Elementary has done a lot in reading.

Chairman Fox suggests that the Finance Committee meet, and the meeting was set for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, February 2, at Beaver Brook Administration Center.

R. Jannelli questions if the demographer took into consideration the new condos going up in the Rivington project. Dr. Pascarella will look into it.

K. Molinaro inquired at looking into targeting redistricting. A discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: R. Taborsak moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education adjourn its January 27, 2011 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously at 8:33 p.m.

Kathleen M. Molinaro, Secretary