

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Dr. Sal Pascarella, Dr. William Glass, J. Martino, Atty. K. Thompson, Administration

Absent: Dr. William Glass

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson E. Alberts called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Alberts asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

RECOGNITIONS - None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Rosemark is here on the issue of redistricting. She is not in favor of having the Great Plain students move to another school. She, along with her neighbors, is not in favor of Proposed Plan #2. She feels that if the goal is to disrupt as few students as possible, then she would be in favor of Proposed Plan #1. She has heard that bussing is a concern and feels her child would have a longer bus ride if moved to another school.

Mary Ellen Barnett has three children in the school district. For one of her children, who will be a fourth grader at Great Plain in September, she feels it would be disruptive to move her. She would like her child to stay at Great Plain School.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

A. MINUTES

Board Meeting, 11/26/13
Annual Board Meeting,
Special Board Meeting (Exp), 12/9/13
Special Board Meeting, 12/10/13
School Safety Task Force, 12/11/13
Special Board Meeting (Exp), 12/19/13

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leaves of Absence: Amy Alonzi, Caroline Anyarogbu-Crouch,
Cara Battaglia, Elizabeth Breines, Mary Peters

Accept Resignations:

Peggy Heine, Ashley Hoefler,
Richard Kevin Holmes, Mitsa Katsiotis,
Caryn MacLean, Harry Mandel, Olga Rella

Accept Retirements:

Brian Bardo (26 years, 3 months)
Elinor Cavallo James (30 years)
Jose Vieira (13 years, 5 months)

New Hires 11/22/13 - 1/2/14:

Name	Location	Non-Certified Subject
Karen Conover	Park Ave	CRC Enrichment Associate
Jessica Lowe	Hayestown	Kindergarten - L/T SUB
Matthew Werenczak	Ells	Tutor
Ellen Perrino	Hayestown	Tutor
Meghann Mynes	AIS	CRC Enrichment Associate
Priscila Johnson	South St.	Title 1 Kind. - Para
Michael Russotti	South St.	Title 1 Kind. - Para
Chelsea Paden	South St.	Title 1 Kind. - Para
Marc Brown	SHR	CRC Enrichment Associate
Rachelle Doring	Morris	School Readiness Asst Teach
Lisa Bras	STR	CRC Enrichment Associate
Cheyenne Skinner	Ells	CRC Enrichment Associate
Vanessa Ith	WERACE	WIA Intern
Hans Guardado		SUB CRC Site Facilitator
Jeanne Harris		SUB Teach
Margaret Scalia		SUB Nurse
Devin Sullivan		SUB Teach
Ashley Veach		SUB Teach
Phoenix Dudley		Math Cadre SUB
Dawn Bartz	RPMS	SUB Admin. - Vice Principal
Ilison Isola		SUB Teach

C. DONATION

Accept \$574.33 donation from Stew Leonard's for the Family Literacy Center

The motion carried unanimously at 7:06 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - none

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - none

DISCUSSION

Redistricting Recommendations – Dr. Pascarella said there was a meeting at Broadview for the public to attend with breakout sessions. He appreciates all the parents who came out that night and the Board Members for being there. Questions were collected and J. Martino recites them and answered them accordingly. Such questions included concerns about special needs children which would be evaluated by the Special Education Department; bussing issues regarding early versus late schools, and no changes would be made to their schedule; length of time on buses for King Street students going to Shelter Rock, which would probably be shorter; extended learning programs, and other schools do

offer ELPs; other options such as renting space, building a new school or constructing modulars, and J. Martino responded that time was taken looking at rental locations, modulars not being permanent solutions, and the idea of a whole new school was reviewed. When the City studied all the schools, the additions were the best most economical and feasible solution. There was another questions raised with regard to consideration for siblings as far as if you currently have a sibling in a school. In speaking with our consultant , he said that giving sibling preference creates a challenge especially if the siblings are far apart in age. Another question about Mill Ridge Primary was the current second graders and they would stay at Mill Ridge Primary. This is a summary of the scenarios we received. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked if the group of parents from Mill Ridge, whose children would go to Shelter Rock under Proposal #1 and South Street School under Proposal #1, were present at the meeting. Dr. Pascarella said there was a group that said they preferred South Street, Proposal #2, over Shelter Rock due to the distance. Also, there were those that would want the least number disrupted and that would be Proposal #1 having them go to Shelter Rock. A. Fluskey-Lattin said that in a district of this size, the numbers being affected by the redistricting are minimal and wants to be sure we are looking at the whole picture down the road. Dr. Pascarella said that we are increasing about 110 students every year, and at some point, we will have to revisit the secondary schools. R. Hawley asked what the current average bus ride is now between Proposal #1 and Proposal #2. J. Martino said it is about 20 minutes to 30 minutes. He felt that either option would not make any big difference as far as busing is concerned. R. Jannelli asked if the representation at the Broadview meeting was a good representation relative to the population of the schools. Dr. Pascarella said there were 250 parents in attendance. K. Molinaro said that what she heard from the parents that night was that they wanted to be sure we thought everything through. R. Pietrafesa also commented that he was with the Great Plain parents, and he felt the main concern was that Proposal #2 did not make sense because it was moving 47 students into a school and moving 47 out. He feels that we should impact the least amount of students. A. Fluskey-Lattin knows many parents that live in the Mill Ridge section that would be affected and they would prefer to go to South Street School because they want the sense of a neighborhood school. G. Cooper asked J. Martino about the two proposals. She would like to know if we can come up with a proposal that will give and give instead of asking the Board to go with Proposal #1 or Proposal #2. J. Martino answered by saying that the Board could take a piece of each proposal and create another proposal. R. Taborsak asked the number of students impacted by that proposal, and J. Martino said it would affect approximately 250 students. R. Taborsak said he is committed to affecting the least number of students. Dr. Pascarella said the consultant studied all the demographics and the build-outs and he is in favor of Proposal #1. R. Jannelli feels that if there are general concerns from the parents that they should be taken into account and an adjustment to the proposals should be considered. Dr. Pascarella said that we can plan to meet at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22, and speak about all the proposals but then will need to vote at that meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. 2014-2015 School Calendar Revisions

Dr. Pascarella said we do a two-year calendar, and part of the waiver that was submitted last year for Connecticut was an idea of some regional work, and they want a regional calendar. We will have to make some changes and next year is a voluntary year and whatever the region adopts, we have to adopt. The two days we moved from Presidents' weekend is common so we do not have to make a change there. They want a common vacation change. Everyone will end differently because of the differences in cancellations and delays, and we are working on that. He wants to eliminate half days. He does not think they are valuable for the students. He put a proposal out and before we start

moving down that road, he wants the Board to think about the three days before school starts. Two of them are professional days and one day was for teachers to prepare for the first day of school. He suggests that we take one of those days and put it in the school year. By doing that, it gives us one extra day to do work. To eliminate all half days, he suggests dismissing one hour early twice per month. The new contract gives us five hours a week to work with teachers. He feels the effort forward would be beneficial. W. Hartford does this once per week. This would give the principals and teachers time to do their work. A. Fluskey-Lattin asks how many half days are dedicated for professional development in the school calendar. K. Thompson said there are 10. Two of the days are exclusively for teacher evaluation. The others are for professional development. A. Fluskey-Lattin wants to know the difference in instruction time by keeping it the same or moving it forward to an hour twice per month. R. Taborsak had the same comment as A. Fluskey-Lattin. He would recommend it if it would give the students more instructional time. The parents need the consistency for babysitting and it provided that. Dr. Pascarella will double check the hours but it sounds comparable.

B. CCJEF Update

Dr. Pascarella said we are part of the Equity in Excess Lawsuit. If Danbury prevails, we stand to increase are ECS quite a bit. We may never see it but it is moving forward. It has been nine years. Governor Malloy and Mayor Boughton really pushed the lawsuit for us. Finally, the judge said we are going to trial. It may cause the powers that be to say we need to sit down and look at it. The amount of money they need to equalize the formula will be very expensive. We are part of that trial, and it is an equity trial.

C. Teacher Evaluation Decoupling

Decoupling means that all of the nonsense you have been hearing about teacher evaluation tied to a student score is what this is about. When the State said submit the plan, it was submitted and we applied for a waiver to permit us to have alternatives in our testing and assessment. We were told that you had to select a test or go with a new testing protocol. We did not feel to go with the SBAC would be fair for our teachers and students. The State said you have to use CMTs and CAPT as a measurement standard for your teachers. Before vacation, we received a call auditing what we said, and when asked why, the State was not clear about what decoupling meant for those districts that had a legacy test, which we did, which is our CMTs. Dr. Pascarella said that if he had the ability to come back and alter our plan, and that plan would not tie testing back to his teachers, he would be willing to go to the Board and ask them to do that. We called for a meeting of the Cabinet. and we think going forward would be smart for us to decouple. We first went to the Teacher Evaluation Committee. We did it by consensus, and everyone was in favor of decoupling, but we cannot apply unless the Board gives permission to do that. He asked to make this an Action Item to permit him to change the teacher evaluation to decouple the testing to teacher evaluation. R. Taborsak said he called Dr. Glass and asked him what they are going to measure in place of the CMTs, and Dr. Glass said the advantage of this will be some kind of test but there would be input from teachers, and the school will be involved with the new test. Dr. Pascarella said the anxiety for teachers has been incredible. Dr. Pascarella said the CMTs and the CAPT really do not align with the work we are doing because the common core is much different. We are teaching students to do this, and the test is doing that. The essence of the plan would permit us to decouple it for ranking and sorting our teachers. That is the message we need to send. A. Fluskey-Lattin said by giving this approval, this would allow 22.5% of their evaluation to be based on student test scores of the CMTs at the moment. This would allow it to be based on an assessment the teacher has designed. She asked if it is like the SLOs (Student Learning

Objective). The teacher would develop the SLO that is approved by the district. It does not have to be approved by the State. She asked if they could continue to use the CMTs as a benchmark measure for students. Dr. Pascarella said the CMTs are done for us this year, but if one of your SLOs happened to be the CAPT and you wanted to use that, the teacher would have to wait until October for that. If that is what the teacher prefers, he would be able to do it. The Committee unanimously voted to do it. G. Cooper asks if once this plan is developed, is there any reaction between the union and the teachers? Dr. Pascarella said they are part of the Committee and they are in favor of it.

ACTION ITEMS

MOTION: G. Cooper moves, seconded by R. Taborsak that a motion be made to the Agenda to add an Action Item.

The motion carried unanimously at 8:00 p.m.

MOTION: K. Molinaro moves, seconded by R. Taborsak that we change teacher evaluation decoupling to the state legacy test.

The motion carried unanimously at 8:02 p.m.

R. Taborsak said this is an example of what the State has been doing over a period of time. They have been mandating certain things which are not workable and then they have to hold back. They did it on suspensions on the buildings. They did it on the academic requirements in the high school. He is disappointed in the State and feels they are losing their credibility.

INFORMATION

Superintendent's Goals

Dr. Pascarella said the goals are in the Board's packet:

- Growth in Achievement for All Students and College and Career Readiness. On Saturday, March 29, there will be a full-day program for parents and children. There is a video on our district website.
- Parent and Community Engagement. We are working on producing a district newsletter, redesigning the website and producing regular press releases.
- Fiscal Responsibility and Planning for Growth. J. Martino will talk about the budgeting system. We did budget a little differently with more explicit expenditure lines and some lines and areas for the Board with regard to enhancements to the budget.
- Professionalism and Accountability. We did talk about implementing the new teacher administrative evaluation system

CSDE Alliance District Year 2 Implementation Tracker

The Board packet includes a progress report that we filed with the State. Each of the initiatives listed has a narrative with it.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2014 Board Committee List; Chairperson Alberts thanked everyone for their wholehearted response to the different committee assignments. She and K. Molinaro talked about the Operations/Policy Committee. As you can see, there are seven people on it. She wants everyone to know that this Committee is basically just “policy.” There are policies that need updating and there is work to be done and the Administration is putting together a book for us of things that have to be done so we can start the year off next month. She is asking all the Chairs of the committees to start scheduling their meetings now.

J. Martino explained the “operations” part of the Committee. He said there would be more operations-type items, such as technology initiatives that are operations based, different pieces related to business office functions, health insurance, etc. These would not necessarily fall on Finance but really falls on just General Operations.

Chairperson Alberts said that in conversation we really all discussed that those items belong with the Sites and Facilities, but there are people that want to be on Operations/Policy, and if you are thinking that that is going to be handled by Operations/Policy, now is the time to move to Sites and Facilities.

The following is a list of Board of Education District Committees and Members:

City-Wide PTO:	K. Molinaro, R. Pietrafesa
DSABC	M. Ferguson
Education Connection	R. Jannelli
Magnet School Trustees	D. Metrena, R. Taborsak
Oral Health Initiative	P. Tranzillo
School-Based Health Ctr	P. Tranzillo
TDEC/Teacher Eval.	M. Ferguson, R. Taborsak (P. Tranzillo, Alternate)
Operations, Sites Facilities &	
City Board Building	R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo
Community Relations	G. Cooper, R. Jannelli, D. Metrena, K. Molinaro, R. Pietrafesa
Finance Committee	G. Cooper, R. Hawley, R. Jannelli, D. Metrena, K. Molinaro
Negotiations-Admin	D. Metrena, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo
Negotiations-Non-Teaching	R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo
Negotiations-Teachers	P. Tranzillo
Policy	M. Ferguson, A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Hawley, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak
Superintendent's Evaluation	G. Cooper, M. Ferguson, A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Pietrafesa, R. Taborsak

The following is a list of PTO liaisons:

ACE	E. Alberts	Mill Ridge Primary	D. Metrena
AIS	R. Taborsak	Morris St	R. Jannelli
Broadview Middle School	K. Molinaro	Park Avenue	R. Jannelli
Danbury High School	M. Ferguson	Pembroke	K. Molinaro
Ellsworth Avenue	G. Cooper	Rogers Park Middle School	A. Fluskey-Lattin
Great Plain	R. Pietrafesa	Shelter Rock	R. Hawley
Hayestown	P. Tranzillo	South Street	E. Alberts
King St. Schools	M. Ferguson	Stadley Rough	R. Pietrafesa

Chairperson Alberts said that what we do the poorest in this district is talk about our schools. We talk about all the problems in our schools, and we talk about all the money that is owed and what everything is going to cost, but we never talk about the wonderful things that actually happen in the schools. We can visit them and meet the parents and spend time at the school. She suggests that the Board members read school newsletters to be aware of what is going on in the schools and bring it back to the Board.

R. Jannelli feels that it is important to attend the Governance Council meetings at Danbury High School, Alternative Center for Excellence, Rogers Park Middle School, Ellsworth Avenue School, Pembroke School, South Street School, and Stadley Rough School. He feels we need to be aware of what achievements they are making. Chairperson Alberts went to the workshop on governance councils, and said we are intrinsic in that process.

Dr. Pascarella announced that the high school is moving their testing schedule due to inclement weather. The new dates for exams are January 22, 23, 24 and 27.

Dr. Pascarella said we received something from the State for clarity on our three projects for the middle school. J. Martino said the enrollment studies and projections that we do with Peter Proda were submitted to the State and they approve it based on what we are doing for the additions based on a scale and reimbursement schedule. They had some questions about Mill Ridge because, obviously being a magnet, there are some questions. It could hold up the approval process with the reimbursements but that will not happen to June and we are taking care of it this month. Dr. Pascarella said the Exploration Academies at Mill Ridge is set. Applications will be available on January 29. There will be a community forum on Monday, January 13 in the auditorium at Broadview Middle School at 7 p.m.

In the event of inclement weather, the Forum will be held the following evening on January 14. There is also an additional community forum on January 27 at Rogers Park Middle School at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Dr. Pascarella asks, for his own clarification, confirmation that we are opening up the new middle school with a sixth, seventh and eighth grade for STEM and a sixth grade for Global Studies. Chairperson Alberts read a portion of the Minutes of the November 26, 2013 Board Meeting pertaining to this item which was on for Discussion. R. Taborsak said he felt the parents' feedback was to do it right from the beginning and phase it in. K. Molinaro said that when we opened AIS, we phased it in so it is not a new concept for parents. Dr. Pascarella would like a consensus of the Board for a plan to phase in the Academy and build a budget to reflect that. R. Hawley asked J. Martino to review the budget numbers. J. Martino said if we move Grade 6 over it is an additional 12 FTEs or \$900,000. If you open up with the full 600, it would be an additional \$590,000, which is 8.5 FTEs. R. Hawley said that 100 students are costing us \$2.3 million dollars. Two hundred more students would only cost us \$1.5 million dollars more. R. Jannelli said that there is no curriculum for it. R. Jannelli said that in our conversations he remembers the hype being to expand and get this for 600 students, but as things progressed and we got more to it, the economics changed as well as the curriculum. J. Martino said that 600 students in would be \$3.3 million dollars for staff only. With supplies, we would be talking about \$5 million dollars. A. Fluskey-Lattin said that we have about 900 sixth graders in the district, and her point last time at the meeting, was to send a robo call to the sixth grade parents to survey them to find out if they are interested in sending their child to the Global Studies Academy. She feels if there is an overwhelming majority to apply, then we are doing an

injustice to those parents and kids if we do not include them in for September. Her point is that she does not feel that the Board got a sense from the sixth grade parents to see if they are interested in sending their children to the Global Studies Academy.

She feels we need that information before we make a decision. R. Hawley feels that this should be done for the seventh grade parents to see if they would want to send their eighth graders to the Global Studies Academy. R. Pietrafesa asks if the program is different than going into sixth grade at Broadview. And if so, how can you start a seventh grader at the Global Studies Academy when he did not attend the program in sixth grade? Dr. Pascarella said that that was one of the challenges we are facing. E. Alberts said that in prior discussions it was felt that it was better suited for the students if we developed the program with the students. A. Fluskey-Lattin said the curriculum in STEM is the same as the other students are getting. It is the approach and how you teach that curriculum. The theme of STEM is in the approach and how you teach it. That is the only difference. Dr. Pascarella is asking for direction from the Board. The Board took a consensus:

In favor of having Global Studies for just sixth graders:

In favor of: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, M. Ferguson, R. Jannelli, D. Metrena, K. Molinaro,
R. Pietrafesa, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo

Opposed: A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Hawley

Vote: 9 in favor, 2 opposed.

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a confidential personnel matter and administrative selection.

The motion carried unanimously at 9:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin,
Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro,
Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members;
Dr. Sal Pascarella, Dr. William Glass, J. Martino, Atty. K. Thompson,
Administration

Absent: Dr. William Glass

Chairperson Alberts called the Executive Session to order at 9:01 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Attorney K. Thompson.

A discussion ensued concerning the process, selection, and hiring of a new administrator for the Exploration Academies at Mill Ridge.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak to return to Public Session.

The motion carried unanimously at 9:47p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education adjourn the January 8, 2014 Meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary