

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2013
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

A G E N D A

Present: E. Alberts, S. Chilian, G. Falkenthal, A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Hawley, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, S. Steichen, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. Glass and Pascarella, J. Martino, and K. Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Hawley, G. Cooper

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Sandy Steichen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Steichen asked S. Chilian to do the roll call.

RECOGNITIONS

Chairperson Steichen recognized the Danbury High School Robotics Team. Dr. Pascarella said that every school system has their pocket of excellence and that these students exemplify that.

E. Savoyski is the teacher for this group and he said this is STEM education at its finest. The program began in 2011. They attended their first competition in 2011 and the team pulled "Excellence," which is the top award. Last year's team went to California and they also won "Excellence." The first competition this year was at S. Windsor and this team pulled "Excellence" once again. E. Savoyski said that he is very proud of the students and they are headed to California again.

Rosty Slabicky, a parent and representative from Boehringer Ingelheim commended the team and E. Savoyski for their hard work and presented E. Savoyski with a \$2,000 donation for the Robotics Team. The Danbury Board of Education presented each member with a Certificate of Achievement. The members of the team include: Parviz Alum, Rares Barbu, Zaid Bhujwala, Konstantinos Filippakos, Emily Gardner, Dan Kiselak, Ian Knight, Sean Inouye, Amy McKinstry, Liam Raftery, Brett Schorr, Stephan Slabicky, Timothy Williams, Tadeusz Wusik.

Dr. Pascarella reported we have been chosen to expand some of our STEM programs. He said the students are like ambassadors to our schools. Dr. Rosvally announced the team has been invited from the College Board to apply for an AP STEM award. The AP STEM Access Program would allow us to expand our AP offerings in the STEM areas, which would be in math and science. This would bring us resources of approximately \$7,000 for start-up, and it would enable us then to train additional teachers to expand our capacity.

R. Jannelli said the team has made us very proud. He would like to know if there is a possibility for the high school students to reach out to the middle school students to help them prepare for the high school program. E. Savoyski said this is the third year of the Robotics Team, and they have done summer camps with the middle school students over the last two summers. Dr. Mead announced that a

grant will be reapplied for that is one of the STEM summer grants. We will have thirty students in the summer program and it will continue once per month through the school year.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rob Sanseverino is a parent of a child in the elementary schools. He is here to talk about school safety. He started a petition to have police in our elementary schools on a full time basis. He feels that if we do not put police or armed guards in the school, the schools will be unprepared.

Cindy Garnett is a parent of a middle school and high school student. She is here to speak about school safety. She attended the safety meeting on January 3 and all the safety measures discussed made sense to her. She is not of the opinion that we need more guns in schools. She would like the focus to be of the underlying issue surrounding the tragedy, mental health. She would implore anyone and everyone to address this with their legislator.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

A. MINUTES

December 10, 2012 Special Board Meeting (Expulsion)
December 12, 2012 Special Board Meeting

B. PERSONNEL

Accept Leave of Absence:	Caryn Maclean	Sheila Reuther
	Marquita Hughes	Rachelle Wade
Accept Resignations:	Meghan Andreo	Peter Selca
	Jamie Pandolfi (CRC Para Only)	
Accept Retirements:	George Hochsprung (40 years, 4 months)	
	Dottie Lourenco (22 years, 4 months)	

New Hires 12/10/12 – 1/4/13

Name	Location	CERTIFIED Subject
Booth, Christine	DHS	Math
Leekin, Renee	BVMS	SPED
Name	Location	Non-Certified Subject
Ariniello, Matt	Park Ave.	ELP Enrichment Associate
Bang, Kayla	RPMS	ELP Enrichment Associate
Bond, Jinnette	Pembroke	ELP Enrichment Associate
Felix, Carmen	Pembroke	Tutor - SPED
Fiddner, Vincent	MRP	ELP Enrichment Associate
Hermanowski, Megan	KSP	ELP Enrichment Associate
La Barbera, Teresa	Stadley Rough	Secretary
Luna, Emera	Ellsworth	.5 Grade 1 Para
Mendes, Kara	South St.	ELP Enrichment Associate

Peterson, Mitchell	Park Ave.	ELP Enrichment Associate
Ramirez, David	RPMS	ELP Enrichment Associate
Sansolo, Abby	MREC	Tutor - SPED
Soran, Jennifer	Brookfield High	Tutor - SPED
Boufard, Denis		Substitute Teacher
Brent, Robert		Substitute Teacher
Canela-Drake, Mercedes		Substitute Teacher
Costello, Danielle		Substitute Teacher
Gregory, Lisa		Substitute Teacher
Haber, Kimberly		Substitute Teacher
Hauptman, Eric		Substitute Nurse
Heitor, Diana		Literacy Interventionist
Hricko, Thomas		Substitute Teacher
King, Elizabeth		Substitute Teacher
Maher, Melinda		Substitute Teacher
Moffat, Ashley		Western Connection Mentor
Monahan, Mary		Substitute Teacher
Porter, Victoria		Sub Para/Tutor, Sub Sec'y
Pridgen, Kelley		Substitute Nurse
Rosso, Jessica		Substitute Teacher
Sanchez, Rebecca		Substitute Teacher
Wahlbrink, Caryn		Substitute Teacher

C. GRANTS

Authorize submission of a RFP for the 2012-2015 Interdistrict Cooperative Grant

The motion carried unanimously at 7:42 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danbury High School: **Justin Kenny**

Justin reported that after the December 14 tragedy, the students gathered together to help the victims. They raised over \$2,000 for the victims' families. There will be a meeting this week to decide what we will do with the money raised. He spoke about Adopt-A-Platoon Program, where 65 care packages were sent to troops overseas. Access supplies were donated to local charities. The Above The Influence Campaign is picking up soon. There will be guest speakers coming in to talk with the students about the importance of being above the influence and not using drugs or alcohol. The Sophomore class is preparing for the Snowball Dance. The morale is high in the school, and the basketball team has won four games in a row. He reports things are going well at DHS.

DISCUSSION

P. Tranzillo shares that she is a grandmother of a fourth grader at Sandy Hook Elementary School and her daughter, the child's mother, teaches at Park Avenue School.. She feels the need and wants to thank central administration publicly for the thoughtful, caring, and supportive way they treated their employees who had family at Sandy Hook. She also wants to thank the people at Park Avenue School. This includes everyone and anyone who pitched in to help ease the burden for her daughter so that she could be with her family. She is so very grateful and so proud of everyone for coming

together as a family. P. Tranzillo said that this kindness was a blessing to her family and thanks everyone very much.

PRESENTATION

Head Start, presented by James Maloney, Monica Bevilacqua, Kara Wanzer

M. Bevilacqua is the Program Director at Head Start and thanks the Board and Dr. Pascarella for their continued interest in support of the program. She gave a bit of introductory information about the program and turned it over to K. Wanzer to discuss the program's educational outcomes and then they will conclude with J. Maloney who is here to discuss the program funding. She gave statistics of the students that attend Head Start, and K. Wanzer is distributing a handout to the Board including a Child Outcomes Report.

K. Wanzer explained each page of the handout to the Board. This is a brief glimpse and an overview of what is being done with the Head Start students.

J. Maloney approached the Board. He speaks to the funding environment of the program. He said this is an extraordinary program in Danbury. J. Maloney said the good news is that both the Governor and President are strongly supportive of Head Start. He went on to say that he does not expect any cutbacks from either the federal or state level. However, he said given the budget pressures that we are all under, he does not expect any additional revenue either. He said it is critical that the Board's support be sustained. R. Jannelli commented that the results are impressive. He would like to know what percentage of the students are English language learners. K. Wanzer responded by saying that the data that made up the report comprised of 65% of the children who were English language learners. B. Taborsak asked what the application process is for Head Start and how the students are selected. M. Bevilacqua replied that students are selected based on a criteria that is developed on a community needs assessment. S. Steichen asked when Head Start will begin the move to the new building. J. Maloney replied that he hopes to be ready to go at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. G. Falkenthal asked if the budget for the CT Institute for Communities is available online. J. Maloney advised that it is online and will send G. Falkenthal a copy. S. Steichen asked if the funding at the federal and state level is by grant and J. Maloney responded that it is. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked if the teachers are evaluated. K. Wanzer reported there are a couple of different groups of teachers. Preschool teachers are within their bargaining unit in the Danbury Public Schools as paraeducator tutors, so they are actually considered assistant teachers and paraeducators. They are evaluated annually. There are ongoing classroom evaluations that are documented throughout the year. Most of the preschool teachers have their Associate's Degrees. With the new reauthorization acts, Head Start now requires that teachers have a four-year degree. That is a huge transition process for them. There are 18 classrooms and the people in the paraeducator program totals 26. J. Maloney also said there are seven program helpers who are Danbury Board of Education staff. S. Chilian asks if the funding is based per child. J. Maloney replied that the way it works is that when they set the Head Start Program up in Danbury, they set an amount and then there are cost of living adjustments. He said that is how the federal budget evolved.

DISCUSSION

January 3rd Board Safety Workshop

Dr. Pascarella said he thought the meeting went well. There was a symposium last Monday, and he asked G. Bocaccio, R. Jalbert, and P. Estefan, some of whom attended the symposium, to approach the Board. He said we are trying to teach ourselves. Lessons learned were from people who were at Sandy Hook, and they have communicated to us what would have been helpful. Right now every door is locked. Nine individuals are interviewing for safety advocates. Dr. Pascarella has asked that a Task Force be formed to look at the lessons learned and help the Board sort through some of this and maybe have workshops with parents. Also, Dr. Pascarella is looking into putting up walls in the King Street Schools and what it would require, the cost of doing the work, and the practicality of the project. J. Martino said that he is discussing this with R. Jalbert, and it would cost approximately \$30,000 per classroom. R. Jalbert told the Board that it is more than putting up walls. The cabinets would have to be redone; the light switches would have to be relocated; a fire strobe would have to be installed in every classroom. He feels the cost would be approximately \$250,000. J. Martino said if we put advocates (unarmed) in our elementary schools it would cost \$268,000, coupled with what we have now would be \$416,000 per year. J. Martino said there are four police officers at the high school and one in each middle school. There are six safety advocates at the high school and one in each middle school. If we went to an armed guard in each elementary school, it would cost approximately \$1.3 million dollars. A question was asked as to what the additional cost would be to the City if we had eleven more officers to cover the elementary schools. J. Martino reported that the Mayor estimated roughly about \$100,000 for each. E. Alberts asks if the quote previously given for the armed guards included people that were retired police. J. Martino said that the price for the armed guard is through a private company. The number for the safety advocates is an unarmed guard. The issue then becomes if Danbury Public Schools actually arms them, the district has additional liability that we take on in arming those guards. A. Fluskey-Lattin wants more clarification of the six (armed) police officers we have. She states that we already have a policy in place, and if we were to include elementary schools with armed police officers, she asks if the policy would have to be changed. Dr. Pascarella said there is a national association of SROs (Safety Resource Officers). Right now, according to Dr. Pascarella, the way the statute reads is that if an armed policeman is on our property, they either work for us or the town on duty or they are not permitted to have a loaded weapon. He further stated that if the City were to decide to fund an SRO Program at the elementary schools, that would authorize them to be present. They would have to go through training. Dr. Pascarella said we have to follow the state statute. He stated that it is legally possible to put an armed guard in the elementary schools, but it is a Board decision. G. Falkenthal asks if the Board decides to put SROs in the elementary schools, would it have to be approved by the Mayor. Dr. Pascarella said it is a bifurcated program. The SRO is a police program. It is not a school board program. If we were to go that route, the City would have to approve it, fund it and recruit it, according to Dr. Pascarella. If the Board were to decide to arm safety advocates and they were hired by the Board, they can come into the elementary schools and work as armed guards, but the Board has to accept the liability risks. S. Chilian asks what the job of the Task Force will be. A. Fluskey-Lattin wants to be sure that the parents have a voice in the process. B. Taborsak would like experts to look into school security. G. Falkenthal asked about the open concept being better from an architect's point of view. The Board discussed the formation of the Task Force, and a discussion ensued as to who should be selected and the time frame in which this would be completed. J. Martino said we want to make sure what we do is well thought out and well planned. S. Steichen asked what obligation we have to get the word out as to what we are planning. Dr. Pascarella has asked the principals to host a meeting at their own schools to keep the parents informed.

ACTION ITEMS

Board Meeting Dates 2013

MOTION: S. Chilian moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the 2013 Board Meeting Dates as proposed.

The motion carried unanimously at 8:55 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Budget Update

Dr. Pascarella spoke about the ECS grant and the fact that Danbury has never received their fair share. He said that our formula is not funded and even bringing the funding up to 50% would be a great thing. That cost is prohibitive, so any recommendation that this Task Force is making will be a phase in. They will not put a dollar amount on it knowing they are faced with \$1.2 million dollars. The approach of this committee is that the system will need to be defined and it has to hold everyone harmless. This is not a final recommendation. Dr. Pascarella will share the final draft with the Board. The alliance money that we have has helped us tremendously, \$1.7million dollars. The Governor has said that that money will remain. The rescissions did not affect us. The sequestration at the federal level is questionable. If that happens, it is \$250,000. In speaking with J. Martino, Dr. Pascarella said that a lot of our grants carry our benefits, and that will impact us tremendously.

Dr. Pascarella has spoken to a few superintendents about healthcare and a 21% to 25% increase is not uncommon. We have spoken with the Mayor and had some conversations about self insurance. J. Martino said any fully insured plan is under the Affordable Care Act starting January 1, 2014. The cost on our fully insured plan is roughly \$350,000 of just taxes. Dr. Pascarella said that in the past our monthly reports were averaging about \$1.2 to \$1.3 million, and that some months that have climbed to \$1.9 million dollars. J. Martino said he just resubmitted back to CIGNA for another request against our renewal. He also said that in addition to self insurance and pursuing the state plan for renewal, he is also putting bids out. J. Martino reported he will approach Blue Cross and is looking at more of the traditional groups. Dr. Pascarella added that they are looking at groups that are comparable. J. Martino said we could divide our HSA plans and some could be self funded and our PPO plan could be fully insured. He further said the issue between the district and the City will be what is known as our reserve fund for claims. We do have what is called stop loss insurance within our plans, but if you have a lot of people with a lot of small claims, that chews into your self-funding.

Dr. Pascarella said there are many challenges, including technology, closing the building at MREC and finding a home for 8 to 10 classrooms. All of our kindergarten students will start to register on February 1 so we can have a better indication in September. Dr. Pascarella said as far as the graduation requirements are concerned, we will not have to look at that until 2020. Dr. Pascarella further said that the best case scenario at this point, with self insurance, is about 11 to 12%. Last year we were at 3.2%.

Dr. Pascarella said we are challenged with what everyone is challenged with and that is safety, which you cannot put a price on. He said the Board is a policy-making group, and they are going to have to do what is right and set the priorities for us.

Update on Expansion Projects

Dr. Pascarella reports that there have been meetings and some adjustments have been made. The city has met with administration, architects, principals, and faculty and it has been very good to us. One challenge was a deep concern regarding MREC. The width of the hallways was insufficient; however, out of this problem came a wonderful solution in some ways. Dr. Pascarella said they looked at a common area for lockers that is contiguous to a media center with a cafeteria. There is now a good flow in the building. One of the other challenges is at Park Avenue School. The transportation loop is a problem. Dr. Pascarella reported now that the architect has some ideas, we should have a better sense for what this will cost. J. Martino spoke with F. Khouri and they are in the process of getting some of the estimates. Dr. Pascarella said the projects are moving forward and the city is really trying to push to get the numbers as close as they can so they can deliver the project and make sure that we have a quality space for our kids.

Dr. Glass has put out a paper survey to the parents just to give them a heads up.. Another one is going out on Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey will be an actual survey.

Dr. Pascarella said an idea is whether we should pilot the academy so when it opens we have a curriculum that has been done before. He said if we were to open the building in 2014, there will have to be a planning principal in the budget this year and then start the second semester by putting a staff together.

R. Jannelli asked about the problem at Park Avenue. J. Martino said the main part of the project is the actual physical additions. That is priority first funding. Alternative would be any of the exterior additions, such as repaving and redesign of the parking lots and bussing loops. The “alternative” part of the project would be the first to be scrapped if the budget did not allow for it.

College Board STEM Program Press Release

Dr. Pascarella said that we could send our faculty to other STEM programs to work with others in workshops and for professional development. There is a segment about supplies. Dr. Pascarella is working with the teachers’ union to insure there is no payment involved. If it stays the way it is, they will give our teachers a card to buy supplies for their classrooms. We will plan to move ahead on it if that is indeed how it is intended. The name of the website is DonorsChoose.org. Dr. Pascarella said this will help us tremendously and leads right into what we are doing with the STEM Academy.

Meeting with Commissioner on Teacher Evaluation

Dr. Pascarella said there have been pilot districts who are giving feedback to the Commissioner. The Commissioner convened a group two weeks ago. There was conversation yesterday with some follow-up reports. He said that it looks like there will be some flexibility. At the end of this month, the committee in charge of teacher evaluation will meet with the Commissioner, and at that meeting, they will be making recommendations to us.

Redistricting Committee

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that it is going to have to think about whether they want to continue the liaisons that are there. This will not affect us until one year from next September, but we want to start this now. We did a report last year and have a lot of the criteria. We have looked into some outside groups to help us out and some are very pricey. He went on to say that we might have found someone who is reasonable that can look at our work and give us some outside eyes on this. We need to have a liaison or committee to start working and getting parents involved so we can have some recommendations to the Board by next year.

Chairperson Steichen asked if the expansion project is driving the redistricting and clarifies that the expansion should be done by 2014.

INFORMATION

Honeywell Green Day for DHS

CMT, CAPT, AP and SAT Assessment Results

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Board Members assigned to School PTO's and Board Committees

Chairperson Steichen told the Board that assignments for Board Committees and PTOs have been distributed to them for 2013. She asks if anyone wants to change their assignment to let her know.

Recommendations from Board Workshops

Chairperson Steichen said that when the Board convened for their workshop, recommendations of seven items and sub-item were discussed, such as automated response to emails, what types of information the Board wants to receive at the workshop, and a list of tasks that the Board wants to get done, etc. She would like feedback from the Board and said it could be put on the next agenda for January 23.

She also mentioned that an Ad Hoc Safety Committee needs to be formed. Dr. Pascarella talked about having eight to ten people on the committee and one or two of them would be Board members. She will look into how to go about that. E. Alberts would like to volunteer to be on the committee and A. Fluskey-Lattin has also volunteered.

Chairperson Steichen also stated that some Board members were needed to be on the Redistricting Committee as well.

She said that she will discuss these two committees with Dr. Pascarella and will come before the Board at the next meeting on January 23.

Chairperson Steichen said there were some small changes made to the committee meetings. Some were combined and others deleted that were no longer appropriate. If there are any questions, she would be happy to answer them.

Lighthouse Training

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS - None

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

The motion carried unanimously at 9:25 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Present: E. Alberts, S. Chilian, G. Falkenthal, A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, S. Steichen, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. Glass and Pascarella, J. Martino, and K. Thompson from Administration

Absent: G. Cooper, R. Hawley

Chairperson Steichen called the Executive Session to order at 9:30 p.m. and turned the meeting over to K. Thompson. A brief discussion ensued.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by A. Fluskey-Lattin to return to Public Session.

The motion carried unanimously at 9:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: P. Tranzillo moved, seconded by A. Fluskey-Lattin that the Board of Education adjourn its January 9, 2013 meeting, and the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary