

# **DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 14, 2015 – 7:00 PM**

**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ROLL CALL**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo

Also Present: Drs. Glass, Pascarella and Joseph Martino

Absent: Kim Thompson

## **RECOGNITIONS**

Dr. Frank LaBanca, CAS Outstanding First Year Principal Award

Dr. Pascarella congratulated Dr. LaBanca, principal of Westside Middle School Academy, on his award. He will be presented with the award on November 9<sup>th</sup> in Southington. Dr. LaBanca said it is great to be a part of Danbury School district's family. The audience applauded Dr. LaBanca's. The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts thanked him for all he has done to make the new Westside Academy successful.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Rachael Chaleski, parent, spoke to the Board about AIS siblings. She feels the new plan will affect the fabric of the school community. She asked that they reconsider their position. She said she has collected signatures from the school district and also from the surrounding school districts that attend AIS.

Kathy Snow said she is still concerned about the middle school four lottery process. She stated that AIS is all about fairness, although the middle school lottery is not fair. It doesn't say on the application that there are two lotteries for each school.

Franklin Illescas, parent, is requesting a change in the bus stop on Park Avenue. His concern is that it is dangerous because cars go down the road at a fast speed. Another parent is concerned about the bus stop on Westville Avenue. The bus stop use to be at 12 Burch Street and asked if the Board could change it back to where it was.

Tom Young, a teacher at Morris Street School thanked the Board for their support. He told the Board that the kids have adjusted. The school has a diverse population. He invited them to stop by to see Morris Street's playground. He told them that a former student that he had 2 years ago wants to come back to the school – he loves the playground. There were several staff in the audience from Morris Street School, they were thanked for all their efforts for the children and the Board applauded them.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 15-156 through 15-158, as recommended:

### MINUTES

September 22, 2015

### PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Blenda Prak, Andrea LaRosa  
Amanda Fuller, Elizabeth Shea

Accept Resignations: Anyelina Cabrera, Shelby Ingrao,  
Diane Martini, Shannon Ring

New Hires 9/18/15 – 10/9/15:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b><u>CERTIFIED</u></b> <b>Subject</b>
Michael Altopp	WSMA	English
Michele Coppotelli	DHS	SPED Dept Head

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b><u>NON-CERTIFIED</u></b> <b>Subject</b>
Amanda Swayne	Hayestown	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Russell Moore	Park Ave.	Custodian
Ebony Spruill	BVMS	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Leslie Lucero	South	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Lynnisha Webb	Ellsworth	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Tanaysia Willis	Ellsworth	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Nicole Schirmer	Pembroke	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Stephanie Almonte	Pembroke	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Lindsay Williams	Stadley Rough	Tutor
Colin Mayo	DHS	Job Coach Tutor
Dean Smith	DHS	Job Coach Tutor
Sheila Morley	South St	FRC Coordinator
Brian Mc Carley	BVMS	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Taylor Green	Pembroke	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Mary Ellen Huntley	BVMS	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Dean Smith	DHS	Job Coach Tutor
Sandra Scott	Stadley Rough	Interventionist
Tara Nygaard	Rogers Park	Interventionist
Amy Davis	South St	Interventionist
Tatiana Saba	Rogers Park	Tutor
Zaida Coraizaca	South St	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Ashlie Pysa	Pembroke	CRC Enrich. Assoc.
Ann Ufracia	Osborne St	ESL Interpreter
Judith Endres		SUB Teacher
Pierre Henry		SUB Teacher
Deborah Hollrah		SUB Teacher
Constance Hope		SUB Teacher
Beth Mistril		SUB Teacher
Ava Mazzella		SUB Teacher
Sharon Magner		SUB Secretary
Maria Lopez		SUB School Lunch

Melissa Bona  
Lyneth Lawrence  
Linda Heywood  
Rosana Beaver

AIS

SUB School Lunch  
SUB Nurse  
SUB Teacher  
Long Term Sub

## GRANTS

Danbury Promise for Children Partnership and United Way of Western CT Grant(s), 7/1/15 through 6/30/16:

\$60,640 – Literacy Training & Coaching for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers  
\$19,865 – Parent Liaison at Ellsworth Avenue School

Ms. Alberts thanked Danbury Promise for Children Partnership and United Way for their generous donations.

**Motion carried at 7:16 pm.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** - None

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

ACE representative, Jasmin Valverde, told the Board that ACE is now offering after school clubs for students; during launching week students participated in hiking, peer leadership, yoga, 5K running club, School of Rock, Yearbook, Board games and robotics clubs. We will be offering for the first time, a robotics club lead by math teacher Anthony Hellmann. Students visited with Erik Savoyski at DHS to gain further information about robotics. Fifteen students will be participating in a hiking/camping trip on the Appalachian Trail.

Students are participating this year in our newly designed daily advisory class, called Career and Life Skills covering career exploration, financial literacy, work readiness, responsible decision making and further planning. Development of assets is also a main theme of this course. WCSU students assisted during their Day of Service at ACE by painting our downstairs computer lab. Our September students of the month are: Melissa Cruz and Michael Summa. Students with perfect attendance during the month of September were recognized and will be rewarded with a Subway lunch.

The Superintendent said that the principal, Sandy Atanasoff, has been constantly finding venues for students for after school. She is investigating culinary arts and technology. Jasmin, would you please tell her that we say thank you and that we think the whole building looks beautiful.

State BOE Student Representative: Alexandra Prendergast - Miss Alberts said she has just be informed that Alexandra has been selected as a finalist for the 2016 United States Senate Youth Program. Alexandra said that the final interview will take place on Friday, October 16, 2015 at the CREC Central building in Hartford. Students may not drive themselves to the interviews and must be accompanied by a family member or school staff member.

Mr. Ferguson asked Alexandra if she gets her information from a State representative. She said she has a State representative that she goes through, Dave Maloney, who is in the same room when the meetings are taking place. That is her contact person.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **GPS on school buses, Joe Martino**

Mr. Joseph Martino presented to the Board the new GPS system that will be on all buses for the Danbury School district. Administration will be able to know where the buses are at all times, what they are doing, watch routes and view historical data. Mrs. Lucas will be able to see what time a bus arrives at a particular street and all the streets that it served after that with actual times. We will be able to see if the drivers follow the routes that were set forth. For parents/guardians, there is a mobile app available for iPhone or Android mobile devices or access the web application on your PC, tablet or other device to view ETA of the bus to the student's bus stop. It will allow parents/guardians to log in easily, with minimal setup required. The mobile app version includes push notification broadcast messaging capabilities.

There will be a return on investment savings: fuel savings through managing by exception of the fleet's idle time should reduce fuel usage; reducing miles will ensure that the efficient routing plans that we have come up with in Versatrans Routing and Planning are being followed once the drivers leave the yard. The Off Path Route Report will show you if the driver is not following their route path. Fixing this will help to reduce the miles that the bus travels. Eliminating as little as 300 feet per vehicle per day can add up to a large savings; reduced miles leads to reduced wear and tear on the vehicle. The less time that the buses spend on the road the less wear.

A parent in the audience had a few questions about the app for parents and Mr. Martino was able to explain to her the information that she would get if she had the app on her phone, PC or tablet of any other electronic device.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **Westside Middle School Academy Lottery**

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that included in the Board packet are suggestions for modification of the lottery process. He briefly explained that there are currently families who wish to enter the lottery for a seat at Westside Middle School Academy that they have three options:

1. Apply for the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Academy
2. Apply for the Global Studies Academy
3. Apply separately for both Academies

Students who apply for both Academies do so independently with two separate applications. Since the lottery draws are not tied together, the student and family do not indicate a preference. Each grade level seats 100 students at each Academy. The proposal suggests an alternate method of the lottery process to expedite the list generation without reducing choices. The three options that are mentioned, would remain. If a family has selected the third option and is selected for both Academies, the higher seat number will take precedent and the child will be eliminated from the other lottery. Dr. Pascarella went on to say that there is no policy covering the lottery there are only regulations. The intent of the lottery is to have a balance.

Dr. Pascarella called on Dr. LaBanca. He said a student could enter both lotteries and receive a seat in both and the family and student would have to make a selection. He said, we started this in January and we were still filling seats in July.

Several Board members had recommendations on how the lottery should work. Mr. Hawley felt changing it to a 55-45 split would help; the Superintendent said he wants to keep it at 50-50 because he feels it is more equitable. Ms. Fluskey-Lattin asked if our driving force had to do with balance. Dr. Pascarella replied that it did.

Mr. Metrena asked if we are now saying that we have to balance the two schools. Westside is a choice and equity. One lottery, there are 1,000 at each school; it doesn't matter – take the first 100 students that apply and they get the slot. We can't take percentages from this school and that school.

Dr. Pascarella told the Board we have to be OCR cognizant. OCR regulates this for us. A certain number needs to be in balance otherwise we are considered racially unbalanced. If we are racially unbalanced, we have a year to get in balance or our funds could be withheld.

After further discussion, Ms. Cooper recommended that the Board sit down and hash things out. Mr. Jannelli said you can take it to whatever committee you want, but if we change something it is the band aid approach. I agree with the Superintendent that we need to stay status quo; we need to get more feedback under our belt.

Mr. Taborsak said the population is our major goal. We have been reducing the differential between the two schools. Stay with what we are doing, it is going in the right direction. Maybe we should have some meetings to discuss this.

Ms. Alberts said we need more conversations and asked the Board if they wanted to have a workshop. The comments were we should leave it alone; should we have a policy; we don't have to change it but we could talk about what is going on. The Superintendent said we have to follow State policies. Someone needs to say we need to create a policy. He explained that we do not have a Board policy, only regulations which are guidelines for the program to be administered.

Ms. Alberts then called for a vote on holding a workshop or meeting on the lottery. It was decided that only three Board members were in favor of discussing this at another level.

#### Office of Legislative Research Report 2015 Education Legislation Highlights

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that the 2015 Connecticut General Assembly passed Education legislation and gave a summary of all the Public Acts as follows:

Public Act 15-237 - (effective July 1, 2015)	Graduations Requirements – no change
Public Act 15-238 - (effective January 1, 2016)	Mastery Testing – SAT has been adopted
Public Act 15-94 - (effective July 1, 2016)	Changes to Curriculum (cardiopulmonary resuscitation training and safe use of social media.
Public Act 15-215 - (effective July 1, 2015)	Student Internships
Public Act 15-141 - (effective July 1, 2015)	Seclusion and Restraint
Public Act - 15-174 (effective July 1, 2015)	Vaccination Exemption on Religious Grounds
Public Act 15-96 - (effective July 1, 2015)	Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsions for students in Preschool and K-2
Public Act 15-5 - (effective July 1, 2015)	Parents' Rights and Paraprofessionals' Attendance at PPT Meetings
Sections 243, 244, 286 under Act 15-5	Bilingual Education Programs and ELL Student Services

Sections 290 (Effective July 2, 1016)  
Public Act 15-225 - (Effective July 1, 2015)  
Public Act 15-239 - (Effective July 1, 2015)

Chronic Absenteeism  
Charter Schools

### October 1<sup>st</sup> Enrollment

Mr. Martino said he is concerned about K, 1 and 2 – the caution is that Shelter Rock is moving up. If those numbers keep moving up that could be a problem. He also stated with the \$1.7 million dollars grant, we are going to need more space.

### Update DHS Expansion Project

Mr. Martino said we should know about the expansion soon; the contractors have been selected. Two great architect firms are bidding with the City. Ms. Alberts proposed a Sites and Facilities meeting and Mr. Martino agreed.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Update on School Funding Forum held October 5<sup>th</sup>

Only a couple of Board members attended. The Superintendent and Mayor Boughton explained to the residents and the City's five-member state delegation that Danbury's diverse and lower-income student population should trigger more state aid than neighboring schools with predominately white and affluent enrollments – particularly since Danbury's enrollment is growing while suburban enrollment is shrinking.

Dr. Pascarella said the group, The CT School Finance Project, did a presentation. This group does not lobby. They would come to speak to our PTO if we want them to. The goals of the CT School Finance Project is to build knowledge about how the current school funding systems work; bring together stakeholders who are impacted by how schools are funded and identify solutions to Connecticut's school funding challenges that are fair to students and taxpayers and strengthen schools and communities. Founded in 2015 it is a nonprofit organization aim to fix this broken system and be a trusted, nonpartisan and independent source of accurate data and information. They work with a diverse group of Connecticut leaders and organizations and are not lobbyists.

Mayor Boughton is considering hiring a full-time lobbyist to look after the City's interest in the state capital. The lobbyist would make a stronger case in Hartford for specific City causes, such as Danbury's call for a greater share of State aid to education. The lobbyist would rally public support, trace the progress of bills and keep the City's plight in the forefront of the legislative agenda. If we share the lobbyist it would be done by a person to advocate for Danbury and the school system. The investment would be \$20,000 for the year and if the Board wants to do that, the City will do that as well, said the Superintendent. Can we afford to do it? If the Board thinks they want to do it, it would keep this thing moving along. He also stated that he and Dr. Glass will be testifying at the Connecticut Coalition of Justice in Education Funding as witnesses. Ms. Alberts said we need to be proactive. If Mr. Martino says yes to \$20,000, we should chip in. The Board agreed. Dr. Pascarella said he would communicate that to the Mayor.

## **INFORMATION**

### Elementary Technology Lease

Mr. Martino said the Board now has two leases for technology equipment that funded replacements at our high school and middle school levels. In our 2015-16 Alliance District Grant we are funding an elementary technology lease that will replace all elementary teacher's laptops, provide laptop carts for students and projectors for classroom instruction. The total financing will be for \$550,000 over 5 years with an \$110,000 yearly payment. These expenditures will cover 400 13-Macbook Air, 275 Chromebooks, 51 Class Room Projectors and 9 charging carts. Our latest grant is for \$900,000 and it will replace much of our network infrastructure.

"Meet the Candidates", October 21

The Chairperson stated to the Board that we all should try to attend the "Meet the Candidates" evening at Broadview Middle School at 7:00 PM. The Candidates are: Gladys Cooper, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David J. Metrena, Emanuela Palmares, Holly Robinson and Daniel S. Rosemark.

**BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

CABE/CAPSS Convention Registration

Ms. Alberts said that Kathleen Molinaro, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Ralph Pietrafesa and she will be attending. The hotel reservations have already been made. If for some reason you can't come, please be sure to contact Debbie Warner by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

Mr. Ferguson was DHS. He said the PTO had a very good meeting with 12-15 parents and Mr. Bocaccio did a great job on what courses are being offered. The next meeting is November 23<sup>rd</sup> and will be a presentation on DECO. They are reaching out to 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents. Mr. Ferguson handed out a flyer to all Board members on the Hatters Foundation. He stated they are looking for contributions to fund different programs that we cannot afford; they are looking for big corporations.

A Board member asked about dates and what schools hold meetings. Ms. Alberts said she would get back to the Board on that information.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None

**PUBLIC SESSION** - None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ralph Pietrafesa moved, seconded by Kathleen Molinaro that the Board of Education adjourn its October 14, 2015 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

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Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(Meeting was video recorded)