

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2015
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Eileen Alberts, Board Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli

Also Present: Drs. Glass, Pascarella, Kim Thompson and Joe Martino

RECOGNITIONS - None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

Hailey Posmantier, Cindy Fena and Sabina Michaelson, are DHS Students who are in the Social Psychology Class. They spoke to the Board about changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day to bring to light the negatives of Christopher Columbus. His accomplishments are glamorized in education and many educators fail to inform students of his horrific actions. They stated Christopher Columbus was not the first European to cross the Atlantic Ocean; he did not prove that the world was round; he never set foot in North America and was a slave trader. He was driven by money. His motivation was greed for gold. The students told the Board that there are several cities that have done away with Columbus Day, one of which is Bridgeport, Connecticut and they would like Danbury to do the same. They had a hand-out for the Board entitled, "WANTED changing Columbus Day – Join the Movement."

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by M. Ferguson that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 15-170 through 15-171, as recommended:

MINUTES

October 28, 2015 Board Meeting

PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Robin Caione

Accept Resignations: Jennifer Garrity Emily Freundt
Dionne Johnson Nathan Wilda

Motion carried at 7:10 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Academy of International Studies and Danbury High School

Joe Vaz, Social Studies Teacher at Danbury High School talked about Gary Boccaccio’s retirement and Dan Donovan, the next principal at DHS. He said how much Gary will be missed by students and faculty. He is there early in the morning greeting everyone that comes to the school and saying good-bye at the end of the school day. He goes into classrooms and wishes the students well for the day. They feel safe while he is there with them. His leadership is appreciated, he is dedicated and always gives the teachers a fair shake. As one student put it, “He’s a true Hatter in every sense of the word.”

Hiring Dan Donovan was a good Board decision. He has classroom experience and is aware of what the classroom teachers job is every day. There are three things that are outstanding: Our students are much more than just test scores; some groups need more help and attention than others; Danbury speaks in 43-46 different languages. The teachers and other staff at DHS are looking forward to working under Dan. “Once you are a Hatter, you are always a Hatter.”

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Emily Barese and Mariza Lobo introduced themselves to the Board stating that they are part of the Board of Governors Executive Council. They said over the past few weeks at DHS we have had: A DECO breakfast honoring their first 10 students of the quarter; there will be a breakfast this Thursday for our Door Decorating Contest winners, the theme this year was, “What Inspires you?” All grades participated which was very impressive. Today at 2:00 pm the Boys’ soccer team won their first FCIAC game. Starting on Monday, DECA is hosting a canned food drive, all proceeds will go to help fight children’s hunger. The first quarter is coming to an end. The report cards will be passed out this Thursday to all grades during advisory periods.

State BOE Student Representative: Alexandra Prendergast gave the Board the following updates: It was a very short meeting at the State. State adopted new standards for science education. A small wording correction was made to a past vote. Board approved the Department of Education Agenda. Budget cuts were announced, the most significant was a cut for CPEP, Connecticut Pre-Engineering program, cutting about \$250,000.

Statewide Student Advisory Council on Education Updates:
Next meeting is November 16th. Alexandra said she plans on speaking with Dr. Pascarella about attending a committee hearing on high school graduation requirements, would like to ask SSACE members at the next Board meeting to stand with her on this particular issue.

PRESENTATION

ConnCAP/Upward Bound Program - Robert Pote & Jessica Coraizaca

Mr. Pote and Ms. Coraizaca told the Board that the program currently serves under-represented students at DHS for the academic year 2015-2016. Of our 19 graduates in June 2015, 100% were accepted to postsecondary institutions for the fall of 2015. We presently have 132 students in the program; grades 9-12. The Western Connecticut State University ConnCAP/Excel program currently serves 90 under-represented students at the Middle schools: Rogers Park 33 students, Broadview Middle School 36 students and Westside Middle School Academy 21 students. They handed out statistics on graduating classes for the years 2012 through 2015, which listed colleges chosen by each of the graduates for those years.

A DHS graduate student told the Board about how helpful the program was to her. She stated that two of her siblings are now going through the program.

Another student presently at DHS said he is in the Peer Leadership Program. He said he wants to help other people by going the extra mile.

A DHS junior is in the Program. She said her parents didn't go to high school or college and didn't know anything about the program. Going into the program she didn't think she would grow into a relationship with her fellow students and teachers, but she did.

Mr. Pote said they meet with students bi-weekly as a group and weekly individually; the students are on the WCSU campus for 6 weeks during the summer. During the summer we do a lot of team building and college tours. In the middle schools the same activities are starting to go on.

A couple of Board members had questions for Mr. Pote regarding community projects and service.

Ms. Alberts thanked them for coming and giving the Board a most informative presentation.

Dr. Pascarella asked the DHS teachers that were present to stand up to be recognized. The Board applauded.

ACTION ITEMS

Use of Building Rental Funds

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve the use of building rental funds

Motion carried at 7:47 pm.

Mr. Martino asked the Board for a vote to **TABLE** the Sodexo Agreement. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to table the action item:

MOTION: K. Molinaro, moved, seconded by G. Cooper, to table the 5-year contract with Sodexo for school lunch services Agreement.

Motion carried at 7:48 pm.

Sodexo Agreement - *TABLED*

MOTION: that the Board of Education approve the 5-year contract with Sodexo for school lunch services

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

School Enrollment

Dr. Pascarella spoke briefly about the school enrollment. He told the Board this year we have 11,092 students; we are presently in the 900's for Kindergarten. We need to search out more space. We are pretty much growing and we have a challenge coming up. We should not have problems at the high school.

E-rate funding

Mr. Martino stated that the "Universal Service Fund" that you see on your home phone bill or cell phone bill, is money that education can use.

Budget Priorities

Mr. Martino said they are working on contracts for health insurance. They do have rough estimates.

Transportation Study Update

Mr. Marino told the Board that they have hired a consultant. It is an advisory service and they will be coming in next week. They will look over bus routes, staff, etc. and will do a complete study and come back to us with a recommendation. I believe we should have the report by the end of January. Dr. Pascarella said we had parents here a couple of weeks ago about a bus stops. Changing bus stops is a costly proposition. Every bus is \$65,000. Westside is a challenge. DHS start time is not going to change.

Elementary Technology Lease Update

Mr. Martino said he is working with the City. There is a sub-committee that is going to meet next Wednesday concerning leasing.

DISCUSSION

* STAR testing

Reading assessment for students to reach reading goals; computerized test given to students approximately three times a year but can be given more time for those students who do not reach the goal.

Dr. Glass said we work to slim the assessment calendar. We didn't slim the number of assessments but we did the time the students were being tested. We will be providing teachers will real-time data.

The superintendent mentioned that his first Goal is "Growth in Achievement for All Students and College and Career Readiness". He asked Anne Mead to speak about Goal 2 "Parent and Community Engagement."

Goal 2A - Effective parent -school partnership:

Activity: On a volunteer basis 3-4 schools will commit to having 5 of their classroom teachers make a call home to parents to share **success stories** of what their children have accomplished. Calls will be made on a monthly basis. 3 schools have committed

Goal 2B - Explore strategies and specific objectives to maximize opportunities for the creation of partnerships between parents:

Activity: Online parent workshops on varied topics through the Family Learning Center (DFLC). 6 per year. Danbury Family Learning Center will be doing beginning in January. In 2016 Parent education will be Lee Y Seras, Scholastic's Engaging Families in Children's Literacy Development and supporting PLTI Parent Leadership Training Institute.

Goal 2B - Explore strategies and specific objectives to maximize opportunities for the creation of partnerships between parents:

Activity: School readiness Open House and Parent-teacher Conferences-format will be reversed, parents will be given a set of cue-sheets to be able to lead the discussion about their child's progress. School Readiness at Cottage St is doing.

Goal 2C - Identify strategies and targeted objectives for enhancing public trust and confidence in the DPS at all levels: BOE, CO Building administration and classroom teachers:

Activity: How welcoming is your school assessment? We will ask for volunteer schools (at least 3-4) to participate in the assessment. A team will be assembled including a principal (retired), parents, a teacher and community individual. The team will use CREC's or similar tool to assess the pilot schools. Information will be tallied and shared confidentially with the principal by myself. 4 schools have committed.

Goal 2D - Identify strategies and target objectives for reaching entire community:

Activity: Family University March/April 2016 April 9th is Family University and Thursday Nov. 19 is National Parent Involvement Day. The Danbury Promise for Children Partnership is undergoing an intensive strategic reorganization and the Latino Parents group and Community Messengers will be re-energized. Both groups act as cultural brokers interfacing with the Danbury community.

On behalf of the Danbury Schools and the DFLC, I write a column in the *Tribuna Newspaper* that is translated into Spanish and Portuguese. The purpose is to introduce the readers about the wealth of opportunities that Danbury offers for its families, give concrete ideas on growth and development, invites families into engagement activities with our schools and it answers reader's questions about growth and development.

One of the most influencing parts of why or why not parents engage with their schools is the lack of trust with the institution of schools and/or of municipalities. One of the projects the team is working on is gathering information about the lack of and/or evidence of trust between parents and schools and how trust is built. This critical component is being explored through the lens of strengths that parents bring to schools. The team is looking at what factors build trust with families and will be identifying useful ways for schools to use the information.

Construction Grant

\$1.7 is a small grant which we would like to use for minor improvements; bathroom upgrades; lockers in middle schools and playgrounds. We have quite a few projects to do.

* Aspirant/DELTA Program Update

At the Board's places there was a several page document concerning the Aspirant/DELTA Program. It contained information on what the program is about; applicant profile details; 2015-2016 application with a deadline of December 4, 2015; 2015-2016 administrator recommendations and the selection team for 2015-2016.

INFORMATION

School Funding Project – no comments

Board Goals

Dr. Pascarella said as we go through the year we can talk about Board goals. We are going to focus and target certain skills.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Annual Meeting, December 2nd, 5:30 pm, DHS Media Center

Ms. Alberts reminded the Board that the annual meeting on December 2nd at the DHS Media Center is for the election of officers and a Board group photo.

The next Board meeting will be on *TUESDAY*, November 24th at 7:00 pm.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Molinaro passed out a Sites and Facilities Committee Report. She said she would like to thank Richard Jalbert publically for all his efforts. He does a fantastic job.

Ms. Alberts said there will be a Finance Committee meeting on November 16th at 6:30 pm.

A Community Relations Committee will meet on November 24th, prior to the Board meeting.

The Chairperson thanked the staff from Danbury High School for coming to the meeting tonight.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education adjourn its November 10, 2015 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(Meeting videotaped)