

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011- 7:00 PM

Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, D. Metrena,
R. Taborsak and Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Ed Arum and
Kim Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, S. Leroy

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Irving Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Barbara Cirella, parent, told the Board that the Gifted and Talented students are underserved at the moment. There is a parents' support group that is hoping to work with the district to change this. They will be coming back to the Board with some ideas and different options.

Richard Matson told the Board that he has two students in the school system. He expressed his thanks to administration on keeping the education fluid; budget cuts; space utilization and the main concern which is morale is the underlying issue in the district. He congratulated the newly Board members and said they must deliver results on behalf of our voters; must attend all meetings, absenteeism is not acceptable especially where children are concerned. He expressed his sincere thanks to Irving Fox who has done a great job.

Stephanie Fanning stated that the parents' support group for Gifted and Talented is passionate about the program and the reason is that her child who goes to King Street scored 93 on a math pretest.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

MINUTES:	Board Meeting	11/9/11
	Operations/Policy Committee Meeting	11/17/11

PERSONNEL:	Accept Leave of Absence:	Karen Hoyack
	Accept Resignation:	Melanie Schroeder
	Accept Retirement:	Marlene Serby

Mr. Fox recognized Ms. Marlene Serby for her 22 years of service to the children in Danbury and wished her well in her retirement.

Motion carried at 7:10 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Vanessa Grant, ACE Representative, told the Board that students and staff have donated their personal belongings and food source so that on Thanksgiving morning we can give out coats, blankets and meals for the less fortunate. This will be held at the “Kyles Outside” which is on the corner of Main and Elm Streets. Mr. Fox, as you may remember, when we have an ACE graduation we complete what is called an “ACE Appreciates” and we have one for you:

“ACE appreciates Irving Fox for his 5 years of service to the young people of the Alternative Center for Excellence. We thank you for your devotion, support, and dedication”.

Mr. Fox, I personally want to thank you for making me feel so comfortable as a Board representative. I wish you the best of luck and all the happiness for the holidays coming up.

PRESENTATION

Gifted & Talented Program - Dr. William Glass & Anne Meade

Dr. Glass gave a presentation on the Gifted and Talented Program in the District. He told the Board that it is the district’s legal responsibility to identify those students who fall into this category. In order to do that, we use the Otis Lennon Mental Ability Test as our screening tool; all 3rd graders take this assessment. Other options to assess the students are the WISC and the Stanford-Binet which carries an individual cost per child. The Board was provided with three programming options with each option costing more money than the previous, but offering more individual screening and greater levels of programming: the Board decided to maintain the current model with some modification. This modification was due to an under identification of students of color. The district then moved to an enrichment model based on the work of Dr. Joseph Renzulli. Identified students continued to be a part of all instructional experiences and additional students were added for a given experience based upon teacher recommendation and student interest. Traditionally, the district served approximately 100 students in grades 4 and 5; also served approximately 200 students in grades 6 through 8. Many districts have eliminated all programming due to budget constraints, but we made the decision to continue to provide some form of programming last year. During the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, the program was changed to “during the school day” model to an afterschool and Saturday model. Three types of enrichment activities are offered: General exploratory activities, group training activities and individual small group investigations – Danbury’s version of “Hands-on Scientific Exploration”. 51 4th and 5th graders, 84 middle school, 27 Broadview and 47 Rogers Park students participated in our programs.

Ms. Anne Meade then addressed the Board telling them that they are moving forward starting with the middle schools: Broadview begins this week; and Rogers Park next week. We have a total of 48 students enrolled. The Science Exploration includes kite flying, bridges, airplanes, robotics, wind generators, rubber band contests, auto racers, other ideas generated from students. In the elementary schools we are offering film making, service learning, community based locations: library, industries, museums, sports, etc. This program will start in January of 2012.

Mr. Fox asked if we service these children are we doing anything to the teaching population to service these students. Dr. Glass responded that teachers are able to modify the instructions to those kids. We try to use the curriculum and accelerate the learning. What we don't have is supplemental activities; we work with the PTO to sponsor programs like that. Teachers have to try to meet the needs of all students. More of the teachers are will be doing the enrichment activities after the test in March. Mr. Fox then asked the financial realities are unserving this population and I appreciate all the efforts you have made over the years.

Staffing/Recruiting Report - Ms. Kim Thompson

Ms. Thompson told the Board about absenteeism and about the pool of 150 of substitutes. She said they have been making a real big push to get more certified individuals in the pool. When it comes to getting a substitute to cover a class, we first look to the certified pool which is a benefit in the transitions process. We used retired teachers from our district as well as from other districts. We would like to increase our pool by 100 substitutes. It takes time to process that many substitutes, but my department is working hard at doing that. At the moment we have two administration positions to fill: Joyce Emmett's position and Elio Longo's position. Typically in the Spring administrators are looking for changing positions so that will be our effort to fill those positions then.

Mr. Jannelli asked if we are getting a large pool of certified teachers to choose from. Ms. Thompson replied that we have and we match the certification with the substitute job.

ACTION ITEMS

Signatory for Child Nutrition Programs

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education designates Ed Arum, Interim Director of Finance, as the authorized representative to sign claims for reimbursement with the Child Nutrition Programs of the CT State Department of Education

Motion carried at 7:43 pm.

November 22, 2011 Transfers

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the November 22, 2011 transfers

Motion carried at 7:44 pm.

October 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education accept the October 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Motion carried at 7:46 pm.

Mr. Jannelli asked Mr. Arum since he is new to the district and basically we are layman, could you present a snapshot of key line numbers where we have large variants so we don't have to look through all the line items to find the key line items, and explain why. Mr. Arum said he could do that on the first sheet. Mr. Jannelli said thank you that would be very helpful.

October 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the October 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Motion carried at 7:47 pm.

Sister School Pilot Program to address enrollment concerns

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approved the recommendation to continue the Sister School pilot that was implemented this year between Shelter Rock and Great Plain Schools and further that the model be replicated with Mill Ridge Primary and Hayestown Avenue Schools

Ms. Cooper asked that the Superintendent give us an update on how the Sister School will work. Dr. Pascarella said he met with the principals. We studied those schools in order to make room at the schools it did pan out for all of our schools, except the Magnet School since we are over-crowded there. We would move students on the Sister Program on a case-by-case basis; we have some issues this year. We need 2 buses to make this work to move 60-70 students. We may have to uplift some programs to another school. At this point, we think this will service us this year. I just receive the updated enrollment - the growth is sustained over time the highest is the 3rd grade followed by Kindergarten, followed by 1st grade. We are one of the few districts that are growing. We ask that the Board allow us to go with the Sister Schools plan. For any student that is moved this year, if there is room in their home school, we would afford them the opportunity to move back.

Mr. Jannelli said with Sister Schools Program we are dealing with events that we have control over. If in March-April the status of the Head Start School would materialize that they would open by September, what would be your space utilization on Mill Ridge? I would like an update on the construction when it is more complete. Dr. Pascarella said he would be giving the Board an update on that.

Ms. Alberts said she doesn't understand changing programs; putting computers on wheels and that became a classroom. All the rooms are saturated and we don't have space for them. Dr. Pascarella said if we do registration and the schools are jeopardized, we will have to have an annex at MREC and the students would be bused there.

Dr. Pascarella said his recommendation is that the Sister School pilot that was implemented this year between Shelter Rock School and Great Plain School continue. It is minimally disruptive and is an efficient and cost effective way to address minor overcrowding concerns.

Motion carried at 7:54 pm.

Superintendent's Goals & Objectives 2011-2012

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the 2011-2012 Superintendent's Goals & Objectives

AMENDED MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts, that the above Motion be amended to reflect a change in the Superintendent's Goal 2: Parent and Community Engagement, Objective 2.1:
"Develop and communicate a pocket mini-redistricting model to address enrollment concerns in selected schools".

Ms. Molinaro thanked Dr. Pascarella for making the goals measurable; recognizing that the Board's goals are 5 years old and we realize the economy has eroded our strategic plan. It is the recommendation of the Committee, that we adopt the Superintendent's Goals and Objectives as presented with the addition of the word "*communicate*" in Goal 2, Objective 2.1. It is also the recommendation of the Committee that a date be set for a Workshop of the full Board to set goals and have a strategic vision; then the Superintendent will mesh goals with the Board's goals as well as following the TEDEC Plan for the coming year.

Motion carried at 7:57 pm.

Policy 7-797, Bullying Behavior in the Schools

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept for first reading Policy 7-797, Bullying Behavior in the Schools

Mr. Taborsak said the Policy Committee met the other day, with the help of Kim Thompson. The policy is about 15 pages from the state of legalese, a lot of explanation, I think it is a complete policy. I hope everyone reads it. It is important in our school systems through the country.

Mr. Jannelli said there are a lot more mandates to bullying. Can the Board be bulletted to better understand these mandates? Ms. Thompson said she could do that. Each building is creating its own plan. There will be a Climate Plan for students, School Climate Plan for parent communications and a Climate Plan for teachers. If you read the third document in the plan it will give you an understanding of the plan, but it would be easy to do the next time you have the meeting to adopt the policy. She stated that there are 3 different documents: one showing the policy red line; one with regulations and individual safe school plan. Ms. Thompson said we also have training to do and not only teachers, it needs to include vendors and administrators as well. The students are going to see a lot of information from flyers and posters.

Ms. Molinaro asked if this was time sensitive - does this have to be put on the agenda for the Annual Meeting? Dr. Pascarella said if the Board approves it at its first meeting in January, we will follow up with a motion. Ms. Thompson said it could be the first meeting in January.

Ms. Alberts said, the policy on bullying is harder for us to understand, but most of the students have a full understanding of what our expectations are. I have spoken to students who fully understand it.

Motion carried at 8:03 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

AESOP (automated substitute placement and absence management)

Dr. Pascarella said this program is working – it is out there and people understand it. It is helpful to have the information that this program produces. We review all the data every week at our Cabinet meetings. If we could save 10% - it is working. Ms. Thompson said the administrators seem to be quite happy with it.

STA Safety Plan

Dr. Pascarella said we have had a number of avoidable accidents. I commend them from coming down to use this in training their drivers. Ms. Cooper said asked how many accidents have we had? Mr. Arum said we have had 9 since the beginning of school. Ms. Cooper said I know we have to have a good relationship with the bus company but I think they need to look into their training and to train the people the right way. Mr. Arum said he is having a meeting with their Director next week. Ms. Cooper went on to say that is a high number of accidents and I don't think we should accept it. Dr. Pascarella said they were not major accidents and I am satisfied that they are being pro-active. They are coming in working with their drivers – they had a number of new drivers this year. I believe they are doing a good job of training their drivers. Their regional safety staff has developed an accident reduction plan that was handed out to the drivers/monitors and all support staff at the drivers meeting on November 16th. Ms. Tymula told me that the Danbury Police Department provided two traffic officers to speak at the safety meeting.

Alternative Center for Excellence Facility Update

Mr. Arum said that he met with the facility director today and they realized that the outside air was worse than the inside air. He said we have done a number of things downstairs; they put up boards that are mold resistance and the City has the money to fix the drains. They did hire an engineer to look at the problem and it will go out to bid. I believe they have \$450,000 in their budget this year. We are looking at it on an on-going basis. Scott Leroy has all the figures and he is comfortable with that. Dr. Pascarella said if something should occur possibly in the Spring, we have a backup plan. Mr. Taborsak wanted to be sure that it will be monitored all the time. Mr. Arum said it will be.

CAPSS Leadership Report & Educational Transformation Proposal

Dr. Pascarella said they are analyzing initiatives that schools have been involved in order to change some things for students. What Connecticut Superintendents are looking at is the only constant thing on the calendar is the time for learning. Should we look at the use of time differently; children needs have to be at the forefront. I am please to say we are going to meet with the Commissioner on December 14th to discuss this.

CCJEF Lawsuit

Dr. Pascarella said Danbury has been involved in this for 8 years. It has to do with the level of funding for all the towns in Connecticut. They are moving forward with this lawsuit. Mr. Malloy and the Mayor had them take a look at our district and get their attention to fund us at a different level. We have lost quite a bit of money in Danbury over time. There was some energy moving forward with our lawsuit. This is sponsored by the Yale Law School. The person that is involved with this at the Law School would be happy to come to Danbury and present all the aspects of the lawsuit to the Board. I will ask the new Board if they would like a presentation.

State Department of Education Circular Letter: School Closures & Calendar

Dr. Pascarella said that the State remains cautious about prematurely considering changes in the 180 day requirement and that all districts are to make every effort to meet the mandated minimum number of school days by June 30th. Come June if we have a problem we will need to discuss this with the State and ask for a waiver.

Revised 2011-2012 School Calendar

What we stated at the last Board meeting we will remain in effect. You have the revised calendar in your Board packet. The State has communicated that we can use permissible holidays and previously scheduled vacation days to make up any time lost.

INFORMATION

Freshman Sports Update

Mr. Arum told the Board that the Freshman Fall sports totaled \$28,214.86. We received \$22,000 from the Booster Club so we will be billing them for the difference of \$6,214.86.

Teacher contract ratification update

Ms. Thompson said we are going through the language now, there were two issues one being the ½ step that need to be discussed. Once the housekeeping is finalized it will be ready for City hall.

American Solar Warranty Roof Work

Mr. Fox said that it is in the works.

Position Statement: Differentiation of Financial and Human Resources to provide appropriate levels of support to identified schools

Dr. Glass told the Board that in an effort to treat all schools with the same degree of attention, the district has been careful to provide the same level of financial and personnel support to each school. As resources become scarcer and the accountability movement increases, there is a need to modify the way resources are provided. Dr. Glass gave Morris Street as an example. He said he spent 1 day a week at the school for 2 years attending every faculty meeting. He said Ann Lindenmeyer also spent 1 day a week going over and collecting data. Morris Street performance team presented their strategy to the whole district. This is a constant moving target – you can look at this idea in a similar way as gifted and talented. Morris Street needed a lot of staff resources. Consideration needs to be given to providing differentiate support to schools. This need has been compounded with the advent of NCLB and complicated by the semi-recent downturn in the global economy.

District Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, Spring 2011

Dr. Pascarella said that the State evaluated our District and our progress is good. We did some things at the high school that they asked us to do. The new program will focus on ELL (English Language Learners) and revolves around those needs to make sure that we are able to support teaching and learning in those schools. The report from the State praised the district for closing gaps in elementary school student test scores, particularly among those with special needs, also the writing the new core curriculum and for changes at the high school. Dr. Glass said the district is challenged because it has reduced administrators by nearly 50 percent, from 54 to 34, to save money. He stated that we have cut as low as we can go. All of this is going to be a big job for the Board. We have to be careful when we have these external interventions as to how

much the district can afford. We have a 5 years curriculum cycle. When there is a very strong program we have been asked to share our program and we put it on our website free – other districts charge for that.

Mr. Fox added that there is a lot of work to be done in the district, but there is a lot of achievement going on, too.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

CABE Delegate Assembly

Mr. Fox said he attended the King Street PTO meeting pretty regularly over the past 7 years. We don't get too many parents to attend the meetings and he hopes that the Board will continue to participate.

Mr. Fox said he attended the National Honor Society and represented the Board. It is a very nice event. We hear a lot about failing schools and failing districts. 150 students are in the Honor Society. There is a lot of achievement going on in our district. The Board needs to stand up for the district.

Mr. Fox said that on November 17th he attend the CABE Delegate Assembly they lobby an agenda for the following year; not much controversial subjects. I gave an update on the Technical High Schools.

Mr. Fox reported that he attended a pasta dinner at Great Plain School which was well attended and the food was great.

Mr. Fox stated in closing, I would like to take the opportunity to say that it has been a great 5 years. I was privileged to have been elected to the Board. I would like to thank the members who voted me as Chairperson and thank the Board members that are leaving: Rachael Austin-James, Michael Fazio, Susan Leroy and David Metrena and wish the new Board the best of luck.

State Task Force on Technical High Schools

Mr. Fox stated that we met at Wolcott. I will stay on that Committee until the work is done. It was all about adult education and they will not be discussing control to the districts any more. Transferring to the local districts would not help the schools. I will update the Board from time to time on the Technical High Schools.

Annual Meeting, December 7, 2011

Mr. Fox reminded the Board that the Annual meeting will be held on December 7th – the details are still to be worked out. Notices will be sent out to future Board members.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

SITES AND FACILITIES – *Kathleen Molinaro, Chairperson*

Ms. Molinaro said the committee wanted an update on ACE to be sure there would not be any harm to students. Ms. Cooper asked for a backup plan where they could go. Mr. Jannelli asked Dr. Pascarella for a dollar figure if we have to rent. The committee got an update on the solar projects. It is on track for Spring 2012 and the contractors have been on tract. The sinks at the high school need to be cleaned in order to be used again and that will cost money.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS – *Richard Jannelli, Chairperson*

Mr. Jannelli said they are currently looking to have another meeting with the real estate people so they can use that as a selling tool and to continue to outreach business leaders to get them involved in the program. Continue Community outreach to the parents so they know what we are doing.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – *Richard Jannelli, M. Fazio, Co-Chairpersons*

The Finance Committee will start meeting in another 6 weeks.

POLICY COMMITTEE – *Richard Taborsak, Chairperson*

The Policy Committee report was given earlier and he thanks the members that attended the meetings to help get some things done. He expressed to the Chairperson, Irving Fox, his appreciation that he was able to make the meetings and thanked him for his dedication.

SUPERINTENDENT’S EVALUATION – *Kathleen Molinaro, Chairperson*

Ms. Molinaro said they are working on it.

DANBURY HIGH ADHOC

Mr. Jannelli told the Board that the profile for the next high school principal is being worked on and will be sent out. Ms. Cooper asked if it has gone out yet, Mr. Jannelli said no, not yet.

CITY WIDE PTO – *Kathleen Molinaro, Member*)

DSABC – *Richard Jannelli, Member*)

EDUCATION CONNECTION – *Richard Jannelli, Member*)

SCHOOL BASED HEALTH - *Eileen Alberts, Member*)

No reports

TDEC

Dr. Glass said they are starting the process of forming a team to do teacher evaluation. Ms. Molinaro and Mr. Taborsak said they would like to be on the team.

MAGNET SCHOOL – *Gladys Cooper, Trustee*

The next meeting will be on December 1st at 10:00 AM.

Mr. Fox thanked all the administrators around the table over the years; it has been a pleasure - thanks for all you do.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by Taborsak that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a confidential student matter with possible action in public session.

Present: E. Alberts, G. Cooper, I. Fox, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, D. Metrena, R. Taborsak and Drs. Glass and Pascarella and Ed Arum and Kim Thompson from Administration

Absent: R. Austin-James, M. Fazio, S. Leroy

Motion carried at 8:55 pm.

MOTION: I. Fox moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining discussions with the Danbury Nurses Association, Local 1303-295, Counsel for AFSCME, AFL-CIO, with possible action in public session.

The Superintendent updated the Board on the confidential student matter. Ms. Kim Thompson updated the Board on the nurses' contract and negotiations. The Board's consensus was to recommend both motions in Public Session.

Motion carried at 9:10 pm.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve the recommendation to enroll the identified student into the Even Start Program.

Motion carried at 9:11 pm.

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education ratify the agreement between the Danbury Board of Education and the Danbury Nurses Association.

Motion carried at 9:12 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Irving Fox moved, seconded by Kathleen Molinaro, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting on November 22, 2011 and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary