

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2015

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Annrose Fluskey-Lattin

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

RECOGNITIONS

Board Members: Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, 2011-2015
Robert Taborsak, 2005-2015
Phyllis Tranzillo, 2011-2015

Eileen thanked them for their time and patience as members of the board. Tonight was their last meeting. Everyone applauded.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 15-175 through 15-178, as recommended:

MINUTES

November 10, 2015 Sites & Facilities Committee Meeting

November 10, 2015 Board Meeting

November 16, 2015 Finance Committee Meeting

PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Jenny Ortiz

Accept Resignation: Richard Klemenz (Coach Only)
Monitha Na

Accept Retirement: Paul Gagain, 19 years, 3 months

New Hires: See Exhibit 15-178

Motion carried at 7:05 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Lori Woodruff and Donna Bosworth, teachers from AIS spoke. L. Woodruff began by thanking the Board for the new laptops the teachers received at AIS. She continued to describe the activities that this school participates in throughout the year: A couple of weeks ago the school did a service project where they packed 160 shoe boxes filled with goods for children overseas who are in real need; D. Bosworth gave an update about what was happening at the Magnet School that include new initiatives and some things that are continuing: Art Link grant where they exchange with international students. This program is run by a local organization called Creative Connections. This year it was opened to students in the 4th & 5th grades and connecting with Nigeria and Japan. This grant extends to about \$4,000. In this program, students exchange art work with Japan students as a gift. The Japanese respond and there is an understanding of both cultures. Students need to apply to this program; Program of Kindness that goes throughout the year and throughout the school; About eight staff members who participated in a Green Leaf training. They are trying to become a Green Ribbon School. This has been running throughout two summers as well as a school year. This program provides environmental studies for the children and curriculum that fits very well with the Recycling, Composing Program and Gardening Program; a strategic planning committee that looks at school wide data; three Odyssey of the Mind teams competing this year; participation in the Connecticut Cult Program, which is a celebration of international languages. Because they teach Spanish from K through 5, they have hosted the Cult Production; participation in the Trout in the Classroom Program through the State of Connecticut. The students go to Still River; their third grade has partnered with Western Connecticut State University Theater students. They work on Play writing and acting. Their first Read and Write will be in December led by one of their first grade teachers; a Gardening Club after school starting in February for all grades. They have a Gardening Program already through the school day, this will be their first time for after school; the International studies team is revising the international studies curriculum to see where they can improve on. They are trying to see how they can connect it to other areas of the curriculum as well; a Newspaper Club just released their first edition of the year. It is digital and students sell them for ten cents; first grade as one of the celebrations for Earth Day make Earth Necklaces that they make out of earth; the only school in Danbury that is going on a yearly school Bio Video field trip where they connect it to the International studies and their Environmental studies. This year it will be on Born in China where the focus will be on Panda studies with follow up activities; will have their annual Art show and Ice Cream social; kindergarten class collected and donated Thanksgiving Gift Baskets; a K through 5 Gardening Program. This is the second year they have a Hydroponics Garden Towers that fifth grade takes care of; 6 reading dogs so that the children feel more comfortable practicing their fluency with the dogs; a comfort dog, Addie, that comes and works with the kids; the Music Program where the Music teacher does a concert for each grade level, especially the third grade level where the students sing a whole concert in Spanish plus they learn Spanish dances with the PE teachers; lastly, the Special Friends Program. Dr. Pascarella thanked them and they were applauded. E. Alberts asked for a calendar of all those events at AIS.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Sophia Pompilio and Emily Barese introduced themselves to the Board stating that they are part of the Board of Governors Executive Council. They said over the past few weeks they have had: Parent-teacher conferences on November 16th, which had an extremely well turn out with many attendees; there was a Financial Aid as well as a College night, these two presentations were geared towards those who speak English as their second language. It was given in Spanish and Portuguese, with over 90 families attending; there was a PTO meeting for parents and students for middle schools for the early opportunity program also known as DECO. At this event there were over 60 families; the National Honor Society will be having their fall induction ceremony next Monday for those admitted into the next

chapter; all fall sports have ended, with the exception of football, their last game is tomorrow against Ridgefield at 6:00 pm. Boys cross country ended their season taking FCIACs championship first place.

ACE: Jasmin Valverde gave the Board the following updates: 14 ACE students successfully completed the fall hiking trip on the Appalachian Trail. Students hiked 7 miles on the Kent portion of the trail, set up camp, slept out in tents, and cooked their own food. Many students found the trail to be quite challenging and other students demonstrated support to assist others in being successful; on Friday, October 30th, students at ACE participated in a Focus Group with members from the Midwestern Council on Alcoholism to provide input regarding latest trends in substance abuse that they witness in their community ad among their friends. The results of the focus group will then be used to formulate plans of action that can be implemented to help address this very concerning issue; On Wednesday, November 4th, Seniors participated in the Financial Literacy Fair at WCSU being hoisted by Western Connecticut Credit Union. All students attending had to complete two surveys surrounding career interests and financial planning. The surveys assisted students during the fair as they began to understand costs of education, budgeting and good financial practices that will assist them in their future. This was a great event for students; 11th and 12th grade ACE students will have an opportunity this spring to participate in an after school celebration at Henry Abbott Technical School. Students who meet criteria for acceptance will be able to enroll in either a Culinary Course or Certified Nurses Assistance and will receive a .5 credit that meets a high school graduation requirement.

PRESENTATION - None

ACTION ITEMS

Sodexo Food Service Contract

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education remove from the table the contract with Sodexo for school lunch services.

Motion carried at 7:04 pm

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve the 5-year contract with Sodexo for school lunch services

Motion carried at 7:05 pm

October 2015 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the October 2015 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Motion carried at 7:07 pm

October 2015 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education accept the October 2015 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Motion carried at 7:10 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

DHS Architect Meeting

Before Dr. Pascarella began talking about the DHS Architect meeting, he reminded the Board that the new Board member orientation meeting will be on December 9.

At the DHS Architect meeting recommendations were given to G. Boccaccio. The contractors will do a presentation with all the requests in the near future. Some of the requests were a Black Box Theatre, an additional 26 classrooms. The addition of a top floor was suggested. The contractor thought it would be costly and might not be viable. They will start working on the roof in the summer therefore no summer school at DHS. It will have to be relocated to another school or schools. Addition 8 or 9 support services will need to be hired over time. This will include support staff because of increasing number of students, 1 Counselor, 1 or 2 custodial, 1 nursing. Both Ellsworth and Shelter Rock are also having issues of limited space. There is no place to redistrict to at this point.

2016-2017 Budget

J. Martino has explained that this is still in the early days. The budget will include DHS renovation and the increase of ELL students

Update K-5 Technology Lease

Mr. Levy and Fox will meet on December 1 for approval. NEA Danbury and S. Buck will also be there.

Transportation Study

Mark Walsh has been asked to come up with a plan. He has been interviewing several people and will take all information acquired and will present a plan. This may include times changes, new equipment if possible such as busses that seat 77 students. The plan should be ready by mid-December.

New Board Member Orientation

Orientation will be held on December 9 from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. It will be followed by the Field Trip Workshop from 8:00 to 9:00 pm.

DISCUSSION

Calendar Discussion: Columbus Day vs. Indigenous Day. E. Alberts thought it was an interesting concept but not yet approved for such change.

INFORMATION

DHS Student Trip to Germany/Switzerland, April 12-23, 2016

Dr. Pascarella spoke that the Board approves all international field trips. He said due to the travel alert that is extended to February 24th, it would be wise to have a conversation about the International field trips in-place. Dr. Pascarella had asked Gary Boccaccio, DHS Principal, previously if there were any possible alternatives.

Mr. Boccaccio began to address the Board that there are two overseas trips planned for April break: one to Paris and Spain and another to Germany and Switzerland. In both cases many have given at least the \$500 deposit and others have made payments towards the full amount of the trip. In some cases, because there was an option provided if they prepaid early they would save money, paying the entire amount

which is approximately \$3,000. In talking with the representatives, students would lose their \$500 deposit and others possibly losing the entire amount. They explored the option of some students going and others remaining because there are 8 seniors on one of the trips, if they could go on their own. The answer was yes, but the price would increase due to smaller number of students going. They would need a minimum of 25 students for the reduced group rate. They also explored the option of postponing the trips, possibly to the summer giving both seniors and other students an opportunity to still go. The only factor there would possibly be an increase on the air fare. Airlines might not refund money because fares are non-refundable and non-transferable. Both trips have about 45 students; 30 for France and 15 for Germany. They are concerned about the situation and that now there is an alert until February 24th but they do not know what it will be like in April. It could be worse or better.

Kathy Molinaro asked if Gary had heard anything from the parents and what they wanted to do. Gary responded that some parents have asked if it could not be cancelled. K. Molinaro also asked what could they experience if in Paris there is a curfew and lock down. What would the students be able to visit? Mr. Boccaccio responded that the discussion he had with the representatives, they had told him that in perspective, Paris would possibly be the safest due to all the security. Gary has explored with airlines and the only way to get money back would be if the United States declared that all travel was banned. Therefore, Board of Education, Principal or Superintendent does not hold any weight with them. E. Alberts asked about the postponement. Gary responded that it would be doable but the only thing that would be an issue would be the air fare that would not be refunded by the airlines. There would probably be a cost increase as well because summer is prime time.

Dr. Pascarella sent an email to about 50 schools and there was a high number of schools that have canceled or postponed their trips. He also mentioned that one of our trips could be postponed according to their insurance and asked if this was correct. Another DHS teacher involved in organizing the Germany/Switzerland trip told the Board that it was feasible, but would have approximately a \$200 increase if postponed for the summer.

Mr. Jannelli asked G. Boccaccio what would be the downside if they decided to stop any further process until a decision can be made. G. Boccaccio responded that trips have to be paid by January 20th. R. Jannelli asked Kim Thompson what the Board's liability would be if they decided to cancel. K. Thompson responded that the company presented Parent waiver. She does not think that parents would adhere to something of this nature. She also thought that it is more important if the insurance company would cover an act of terrorism. As far as these trips go, the insurance does not have coverage for acts of terrorism. Dr. Pascarella informed that if something would happen he could not guarantee no liability. Mr. Hawley asked if this could be revisited in January. He suggested this go to a vote if trips are cancelled or not. E. Alberts said no vote would be done, but would like to know who would like to get more information and revisit it in January. The consensus was as follows:

- R. Hawley – no
- R. Taborsak – no
- D. Metrena – more info
- P. Tranzillo – more info
- M. Ferguson - more info
- E. Alberts – more info
- K. Molinaro - no
- R. Jannelli –more info
- G. Cooper - more info
- R. Pietrafesa– more info

Because the majority wanted more information, it was decided that the trips are on a hold and a workshop be processed before January.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Update on CABE Convention

At the Convention G. Cooper was recognized for her 24 years of service. Dr. Pascarella also represented the Danbury Board of Education very dignifying. He was highly respected there. M. Ferguson thought it was a very good experience. G. Cooper thought the workshops were good, but that the presenters took too much time to talk about unnecessary information before the actual workshop.

E. Alberts mentioned that Anne Mead was doing a fundraiser

The Board's Annual Meeting will be on December 2nd at 5:30 pm at the DHS Media Center.

G. Cooper took this opportunity to thank R. Taborsak for his ten years of good conversation and thanked him for being a true friend as well. G. Cooper also said that P. Tranzillo was a good person to work with, especially during negotiations.

New Board orientation – Wednesday, December 16th – Administration Center

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS - none

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none

PUBLIC SESSION - none

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by P. Tranzillo, that the Board of Education adjourn its November 24, 2015 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(meeting was video recorded)