

# **DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 12, 2014, 7:00 p.m.**

**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Jannelli, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Dr. William Glass, J. Martino, Dr. Sal Pascarella, Atty. K. Thompson, Administration

Absent: Richard Hawley

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Alberts called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll call was taken by K. Molinaro.

## **RECOGNITIONS**

### **Mayor Mark Boughton - Education Foundation Grant Awards**

Phyllis Boughton is here on behalf of Mayor Mark Boughton who was sorry he could not be here tonight. The grants are awarded to teachers who think outside of the box and who go out of their way to help children learn in different ways. The recipients are the Drum to Learn Project, Using Technology to Increase Socialization, Jamison Parker for the Aerodynamic Science Solutions Project at Danbury High School, Instrumental Music Grant Project at various Danbury elementary schools, Nature's Classroom Project at Pembroke School, Maker Space Project of Danbury High School, and the Danbury Lego Robotics Team.

### **DHS Robotics Team**

Erik Savoyski thanked the Board and Drs. Pascarella and Glass for their support. He said Mad Hatters Team 5150 is the best robotics team in the State of Connecticut and received a huge round of applause. The team gave a wonderful demonstration of the robot they built. Dr. Pascarella and Chairperson Alberts thanked the team and E. Savoyski for all their efforts.

### **BMS Production "School House Rock"**

Jill Russell is here with some of her students to talk about the show and invite everyone to come to Broadview on February 27 and 28 at 7:00 p.m. for the show.

Ellen Bell is here from Danbury Lego Robotics Team. They have a total of six teams from Ages 5 through 14. She is here with some of her students and this year's project is national disasters. Each student spoke about what they researched. They won various trophies for their efforts.

Dr. Pascarella introduced Frank LaBanca who is the new principal at the Exploration Academies of Mill Ridge. He is pleased to be here and be a part of the team in Danbury.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

**A. MINUTES**

- 1/22/14 Finance Committee Meeting
- 1/22/14 Board Workshop
- 1/22/14 Board Meeting
- 1/29/14 Finance Committee Meeting
- 1/29/14 Special Meeting (Exp)

**B. PERSONNEL REPORT**

- Accept Leave of Absence: Jacqueline Ziegelmeier
- Accept Resignations: Debra Davis, Rachelle Doring,  
Jennifer Ondek (ELP Only),  
Andrew Mitchell, Roger Hancock  
Kristopher Davis (Coach only)  
Angelo Marrero (Coach only)  
Matthew Laskowski (Coach only)  
Richard Klemenz (Coach only)  
Shaun Ratchford (Coach only)  
Leonardo Lima, Kenneth Keller,  
Brendan Kennedy, Samantha Clarke
- Accept Retirement: Joseph Doutney (40 years)

**New Hires – January 17-February 6:**

<b>CERTIFIED</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Michele Marion	BVMS	French
Jennifer Hanson	RPMS	8th Grade Science
Kahtleen Basso	WERACE	English
<b>NON-CERTIFIED</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Dicel Ith	SHR	CRC Site Facilitator
Melinda Maher	STR	L/T Grade 3 Sub
Jessica Arconti	Ells	CRC Enrichment Associate
Paige Evans	WERACE	WIA Intern
Daniel Gilbert	KSP & Hayes	L/T Math Specialist
Alejandra Mesa	Hayes	CRC Enrichment Associate
Tiffany Singleton	SHR	CRC Enrichment Associate
Rebecca Antonaccio	DHS	Math Interventionist
Amber Alessandro	SHR	CRC Enrichment Associate
Juliane Armentano	DHS	L/T English Sub
Sara-Beth Brehant	South St.	Literacy Interventionist
Katherine Alberto	Hayes	SPED Tutor
Judith Brown	Park Ave.	Literacy Interventionist
Amanda Pelliciarì	DHS	SPED Tutor
Fara-Marie Tomarchio, Pembroke		SPED Tutor

Gina Beeman	BVMS	SPED Tutor
Larry Moore-Mourning		SUB Teach
Dina Quinn		SUB Secretary
Patrick Ness		SUB Para/Tutor

C. GRANTS

No Kid Hungry Grant for \$5,000 for Family Literacy Center

D. DONATION

Accept \$10,000 donation from Gap Inc. for Broadview Middle School

**The motion passed unanimously at 8:00 p.m.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** - None

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

DHS: None

ACE: Johnathon Gonzalez, Natasha Mendoza

Twenty-five new students have joined ACE for the second semester. The students report they are very close to their goal of having 100 students enrolled at their school. ACE will be Marching Into Wellness during the month of March with an annual Wellness Day on February 28. It will be hosted by Housatonic Valley Coalition Against Substance of Abuse. A variety of guest speakers and workshops will be offered to the students. Also during March, after school fitness and physical education activities will be offered every Wednesday at the PAL gym. The Outdoor Education Program will launch their Spring hiking trip and an after-school running/walking club is also in the works. Students will have an opportunity to volunteer their time at the Tommy Fund Event at Thunder Ridge Ski Mountain on March 1. Student volunteers will be paired with special needs children for the day for fun and excitement. ACE will be hosting "Senior Seminar." Graduating seniors will meet every Wednesday during Guidance class to explore leadership opportunities this Spring and firm up their post secondary plans for their future. ACE students will also be collaborating with WCSU education students for Dr. Seuss Day. Students will be volunteering their time in the elementary schools to read to the children.

**PRESENTATION** - None

**ACTION ITEMS**

A. 2014-2015 Budget

**MOTION:** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget as recommended by the Superintendent for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter.

R. Jannelli, Chairman of the Finance Committee, said that a meeting was held on February 6 with the full Board to make a presentation of this budget, and at that meeting, the proposal was adopted that the Board recommend and accept this particular budget in the amount of \$122,989,696 as the

Superintendent's budget to be submitted to the City. R. Pietrafesa and R. Jannelli had comments and questions and a discussion ensued. Dr. Pascarella commended J. Martino for an exceptional job in putting this together with his staff. He said there were a lot of comments last year about trying to make this a little more user friendly and he answered the call very well it is much appreciated. E. Alberts noted that she also received compliments from people in the city that J. Martino did a wonderful job and it was more transparent. **The motion passed unanimously at 8:10 p.m.**

B. Scoreboard for RPMS

**MOTION:** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education approve the purchase of a scoreboard for Rogers Park Middle School from the Building Rental Fund.

J. Martino shared that the board has been broken and we have a couple of groups that use them constantly. They put a good amount of money into our rental fund and it is well worth it to put the investment back to them. R. Taborsak asked if we had any teams from RPMS that use it. J. Martino said two local youth basketball organizations, DAYO and HCYS, utilize the RPMS gym every week for their games. **The motion passed unanimously at 8:12p.m.**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Redistricting Update

Dr. Pascarella said that the bus company and M. Lucas of our Transportation Department are making site visits to the areas affected by redistricting. J. Martino has spoken with R. Haber, and they are recreating the new map. J. Martino said our hope is to get all the information disseminated by March 15. We have taken our current Power School data and reloaded it again. We are also going to send out a robo call. Dr. Pascarella said it does impact the staff because the Board permitted those families of youngsters that are the grade before the terminal grade to declare if they would like to remain at their present school. There is a sign off form for fifth graders if they choose to stay at their present school.

2014-2015 Calendar Update

Dr. Pascarella said he did go out and speak to the teachers and the PTO group. We do have a calendar put together for next year. We have the consensus that the best would be to have full days and not any release days or half days so the calendar we are recommending is that we will dismiss one hour early twice per month and those days would be the first and third Tuesday of every month. We added the -extra time that contractually was negotiated. We have broken it down to 90-90-90: Two will be building-based meeting for principals and teachers to do their work; one of them will be used as not a release day, but time for the departments to meet. We also moved one of the days back so we will begin school on a Monday rather than a Tuesday. By doing that, we have the same ending date. We put one extra professional development day during the year. There are two half days in the calendar and they are there because of the agreement we have with the teachers for teacher evaluation.

Ann Fluskey-Lattin, M. Ferguson, and B. Taborsak asked clarifying questions which were answered and a discussion ensued. Dr. Glass explained how the calendar was comprised and what was involved in planning the calendar.

## Teacher Evaluation Update

Dr. Pascarella said the deadline for our new evaluation plan to the State is March 30. The Teacher Evaluation Committee will be meeting on February 20 at 3:30 p.m. Teacher evaluation will not be tied to the assessment piece. Dr. Pascarella said we would like to make modifications and lessen the burden on the teachers in terms of expectations and allow them more time to implement the teacher evaluation program and feel comfortable with it. The State also backed off on the number of visits and observations. They discovered the casual meetings are much more valuable than a lot of the formal ones. Dr. Pascarella said that the Committee will have to come together and look at all the data with an eye on the knowledge we have this year. Dr. Glass said there is misinformation that the Board has that there we do not have a Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Committee of the Board. There is in fact such a Committee and M. Ferguson is serving on it this year and R. Taborsak served on it for many years. He wants to make sure the Board knows that you have done your due diligence and that Committee does actually exist. The other piece is that there is a Curriculum Subcommittee of the Board that is required and that has been in place also. For the veteran members, he said you may remember that curriculum is defined as the body of knowledge that the community wants its kids to learn as informed by State and Federal mandates. In order for us to do that, the decision was made to make it as collaborative as possible and the thinking around that was to make the district better. From that came the Danbury Enhancement Collaborative. E. Alberts and R. Taborsak worked on it. TDEC is the curriculum subcommittee of the Board. Both those subcommittees have been in place and there has been Board representation. Dr. Glass wanted to be sure we have this in the Minutes and that the Board has in fact been in compliance with State law all along. Dr. Glass said that part of the change in the law says we must have something called “job imbedded professional development.” With the new calendar that you just approved tonight, all the yellow boxes that are seen would be designated for job imbedded professional development. That will put us in compliance with the new State law. Dr. Glass wanted to be sure that there is a good understanding that in 2001, when we created the previous teacher evaluation plan, there was a strong belief on the part of the administrators that there were not enough administrators to be able to evaluate every single teacher every year through direct observation. He continued by saying that we came up with a tiered system: Tier 1: First year teacher; Tier 2: Non-tenured teachers, 2, 3, and 4-year teachers; Tier 3: Tenured teachers who are demonstrating good performance; Tier 4: This was tied to the Fair Dismissal Act. If we had a person who just was not able to perform the way they needed to, we had the Fair Dismissal Process that we went through. Dr. Glass said the prediction on the part of the team was that it would eventually get back to our 2001 model, and as Dr. Pascarella said, that is exactly what has happened. Now if you are deemed proficient, you only have to have one formal observation every three years, which is down from three formal each year for each teacher and three informal. There has been a substantive shift in the thinking at the State Department of Education driven by the ten-district pilot that showed that all ten districts failed when they tried to implement this. Dr. Glass said it is a good sign that people are finally starting to listen. Dr. Glass continued by saying that we are in very good shape as a school system as a result of that 26-member team who really did its due diligence. We are in compliance with State law. He said the two blue boxes on the calendar are teacher evaluation days. They are the only true half days of school and we will publish that up front for parents. Those are the two days strategically placed that teachers will need to come around the requirements that are in our plan as required by the State Department of Education. Various Board members had questions for Dr. Pascarella and Dr. Glass, and all questions were answered and a discussion continued.

## 2020 Update

Dr. Pascarella said he and J. Martino spoke with the Mayor. He will start to reconvene the Committee. We have the new middle school and the three additions at the elementary schools. Our focus now is the high school. We need to be prepared to receive 150 to 200 students in ninth grade in about three years. We are looking at creating academies outside to accommodate more students and ACE announced tonight that they are looking to increase their enrollment to 100, which normally is around 75. S. Atanasoff is doing an incredible job with that. The Mayor will start that Committee and then we are going to start to look at some options for the high school in terms of either additions or off-campus sites.

## DISCUSSION

### Strategic Planning

Dr. Pascarella said this will provide a collaborative vision about where we ought to be with our youngsters three to five years out based on sound practice and priorities that the Board has already established. When Nellie Mae came in and looked at us for refunding, they liked what we are doing, but they wanted to see a little more cohesion in terms of participants from the outside. We gave this proposal to them and they said they would fund it for us. Jonathan P. Costa, Sr., who is an author and futurist, will be doing the facilitating for us. Dr. Pascarella is waiting for Nellie Mae to give the final okay. Dr. Pascarella said that the Board needs this. We need this. The community needs this. It will give us a focus for our work. R. Jannelli's committee met today to talk about parent engagement. This will give us a coherent plan. Dr. Pascarella said there is a time frame. There will be a committee. That committee will start driving into the various sub-groups that will come in and give information. Jonathan will do a lot of reviewing of the information and facilitating. Ultimately, the Board has to adopt it. It is something you need to embrace. He said if it is not in the direction we want to go, then we need to tweak it. He will present sometime to you in May or June. Dr. Pascarella said the cost is somewhere in the vicinity of \$30,000 to \$35,000 for all of the work.

## INFORMATION

### Pilot Program terminated for cameras on school buses

J. Martino said there was a meeting with the City. We did a pilot program for the bus cameras. We met some folks in the Mayor's office and Chief Baker. After reviewing the process and procedures, the City felt we do not need to have the cameras on the sides of the buses. Today, the bus company actually takes notes when someone passes a sign. They give the information to the Police Department and the ticket is written. In a sense, the police can get the full amount of the ticket. With this program, we are in a sense sharing the revenue off the ticket, and if you fight the ticket, they go to court so the revenue is not as strong as we think. They will review this at a later date, but as of right now, we are going to cancel the pilot.

### Exploration Academy application update

Dr. Glass said the applications opened on January 29. They close on February 18. February 20 will be the lottery and then we will notify parents within approximately seven working days. For AIS, 625 kids applied. We have 77 slots available. All 77 have been filled. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked if the company that is doing the lottery will be able to give any information for the Exploration Academies such as how many parents applied to both. She has been hearing from some parents that most parents

who want their child to attend either academy applied to both in the hopes they will get into one. She is also hearing from other parents that if your child has a strong science technology engineering background and they only applied for the STEM, their feeling is their chances of getting in are less, so there has been a lot of talk about whether that was right to allow parents to apply to both academies. Dr. Pascarella said that we know a number of people applied to both. It does hold a spot. The process we have envisioned is that if your child applied and got into both, we will ask you to choose one. When you choose one, you will be taken off that list, and a spot will open up. Various questions we asked in terms of procedures and all were answered and a discussion ensued.

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Alberts asked that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed to name the new middle school. M. Ferguson, R. Pietrafesa, E. Alberts, R. Jannelli have agreed to serve and A. Fluskey-Lattin will chair. She told the Board members that they have three weeks to do this. Chairperson Alberts asked everyone if they talked with the people at their schools they are assigned. She wants to be sure they make a concerted effort and would like members to come forward and have one to two people speak at a Board meeting about what they learned about the school they are representing.

### **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

K. Molinaro said the Policy Committee met this week and they had a wonderful presentation from Kathy O'Dowd, our nursing supervisor. She did a fantastic job of informing us of the problems faced with food brought into schools and how it affects children who have food allergies. Currently, the policy is to only have store-bought items come in for celebrations. They are supposed to go through the nurse's office first in order to be sanctioned by her to be served in the classroom. That is not happening in all the schools. Some of the students with allergies are being accidentally exposed. We have 552 students that have a food allergy. Her recommendation to our Committee is to have zero food during school hours. She did give us all other things to celebrate with. She said it is a very emotional subject. Dr. Pascarella will bring it up to principals at the elementary school level and at the Citywide PTO. D. Metrena suggested there be an education piece to it.

R. Jannelli said the Human Relations Committee put together a set of topics that are constantly out to the public to inform them as to what we are doing in the district, such as the budget. Other things would be under something that Dr. Pascarella is heading up called Parent University. Under that program, we will discuss the problems such as the food recently mentioned. We are looking to put the major items as an Agenda Item so that the public is made aware. We need a Public Relation Program and system whereby we can automatically get out flash reports in a systematic way to educate parents on the favorable stuff and also educate them on the stuff that we need help with.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education adjourn the February 12, 2014 Meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

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Richard Hawley, Secretary