

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

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

Absent: Richard Jannelli, David Metrena

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Alberts called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll call was taken by K. Molinaro.

RECOGNITIONS

CT Pre-Engineering Program (CPEP) students, Best in the State for the 9-12 high school division Of Verizon App Challenge

Dr. Pascarella said the CPEP program is up and coming and Jack Tracey is here with his students., Tommy George, Anjali Pai, Lexie Pendergast, Steven Schwab and Sameena Shaffeeullah, who submitted their cell phone app idea long with a rigorous application to the Verizon App Challenge. They were informed last week that they took Best in State for the 9-12 division. Congratulations to the teachers, students and parents. This is a great honor for all of them. Jack Tracey spoke about the challenge and a plaque was awarded to each member in the program. It is a hands-on engineering program with almost 40 students involved. There are nine app designs developing at the present time which the students work on independently.

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

Budget Workshop, 2/6/14
Policy Committee, 2/11/14
Community Relations Committee, 2/12/14
Board Meeting, 2/12/14
Adhoc Committee, 2/21/14

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Carole D'Alessandro, Lindsey Lucchesi
Accept Resignations: Andrea Bria, Christine Armstrong,
Ilieana Cartegena, William Foley,
Sharice Gibson, Mark Goodwin,

Maria Laura Kuyuk, Norma Maldonado,
Thais Silva, Melissa Teel (Coach only)

New Hires Feb.7-10, 2014:

| | | CERTIFIED |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Name | Location | Subject |
| Sabrina Miele | Hayestown | L/T Sub Psychologist |
| Tara Jugler | South St. | L/T Sub Social Worker |
| | | NON-CERTIFIED |
| Name | Location | Subject |
| Jenifer Paige Silva | Morris | Tutor |
| April Cortez | DHS | Math Interventionist |
| Norma Maldonado | DECEC | Ass't Teach - School Readiness |
| Christopher Nazro | WERACE | Computer Tech - Adult Ed |

The motion passed unanimously at 7:20 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - None

PRESENTATION

Promise for Children Partnership

Caroline LaFleur, the Partnership Director, is here with others and made a Power Point Presentation to the Board. Danbury's Promise for Children Partnership brings together parents, educators, healthcare providers, family support agencies, businesses, the faith community, and others to ensure the healthy growth and development of Danbury's young children. Ms. LaFleur introduced Gene Eriquez. He said many of the grantors, those whom they seek to receive grant dollars from, are looking for a strong commitment from the City and Danbury Public Schools. He explained the importance of pre-school involvement for each and every child in Danbury. He is seeking funds for the Partnership and hoping that the City will provide the schools with such funds, and they in turn, would donate scholarship dollars to the Partnership. Various Board members asked qualifying questions which were answered by Ms. LaFleur and a discussion ensued. A handout was distributed by Eileen Costello.

ACTION ITEMS

A. January 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the January 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

J. Martino reported that during the month of January, 2014, the District expended \$7,503,086 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$52,397,039. The FYTD expenditure represents 44.29% of the General Fund total budget.

J. Martino said the only concern right now are the natural gas and heating bills. We are seeing some savings on insurance.

The motion passed unanimously at 7:50 p.m.

B. January 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION : K. Molinaro moved, seconded G. Cooper by that the Board of Education accept the January 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

J. Martino reported that during the month of January, 2014, the District expended \$1,794,490 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$9,356,159. The FYTD expenditure represents 38.3% of the Grants budget.

The motion passed unanimously at 7:51 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Long Range Planning

Dr. Pascarella spoke about the handout that was put before the Board. Focus groups will be formed. The actual process is included in the handout. There are important dates which should be noted. The Board will have its own time with the consultant to do prioritizing in your list of things that you deem are important. The date for this is April 2. It will be a night for actual working. Everyone will be working through a ninety-minute block. We will start at 6:30. We will go through the process with each group. Jonathan Costa, the consultant, will be working with each focus group. June 4 is a workshop night. He will bring to you the information gathered and recommendations. Dr. Pascarella would like the project completed so that the Board could vote on it at the first Board meeting in June. The planning process will guide us through the next 3 to 5 years. Dr. Pascarella said all the meetings are scheduled for Wednesday evenings that are not scheduled Board meeting dates.

CT Council for Education Reform

Dr. Pascarella said part of the Alliance Grant is that we have access to different consultants in the State. This group came in about one month ago to do an assessment of our data processing system. They were here today to speak with us and gave us a two-hour presentation. Dr. Pascarella will make a copy of the presentation for the Board members. They have been working with a number of districts of the same size and number of students, so it is relevant data for us to have. They still have some work to do to complete the assessment, and Dr. Pascarella said they are doing an excellent job.

Alliance Update

Dr. Pascarella reports that they met with the State Department on February 25 for a progress report and everything is moving ahead. We talked about Coherence Pathways and they were very receptive to it. J. Martino said his prior district used Jonathan Costa and it worked out very well.

Other

Ted Carroll has done some work with the Board in leadership development work. Dr. Pascarella was asked to contact him to see if he is interested in returning to do a workshop for the Board. He is available and will send a proposal about what the workshop will encompass.

With regard to the lottery into the new middle school, 166 students applied to both the STEM Academy and the Exploration Academy, and 39 students were accepted into both. With the STEM

Academy, for sixth grade, there were 243 applicants, for the seventh grade, 46 applicants, and for the eighth grade, 15 applicants. For the Exploration Academy, there were 215 applicants for just sixth grade. J. Martino reported that letters are going out to the parents with a deadline. Dr. Glass said the parents have to confirm that their child will attend, and to the parents whose children were accepted into both, they will need to declare which program they will attend. Once we receive that information, a letter will go home to all those on the waiting list to get in. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked clarifying questions which were answered by Dr. Glass, Dr. Pascarella and J. Martino.

INFORMATION

Food Allergies

Dr. Pascarella said the Policy Committee met, and a letter was sent to the parents on February 19 to review the issue of food allergies that impact many children in all of our district schools. A meeting was held with the principals and K. O'Dowd made a presentation to them. A presentation will be made to the PTO on Monday. Dr. Pascarella said everyone would like to continue celebrating the children, and there are other options other than food, but one idea to celebrate with food was to have each youngster bring their own snack.

Regional Calendar

Dr. Pascarella proposed a three-year calendar. The meeting is Friday to look at next year's calendar. There is a little variance with ours this year. They are starting a little later than we are. That was basically the difference. On Friday, they will be looking at the calendar from one year from this September. That is the one we have to follow. Dr. Pascarella would like to publish that early so the parents can plan.

Educator Evaluation

Dr. Glass said the teacher evaluation program in CT has been a moving target. He asked everyone to look at the last exhibit in their packet, two things to call attention to are the Student Growth Goals/Objections and the Observations.

There is an option for the remainder of this school year of going from two student growth goals down to one. The burden of this is placed on everyone and the teachers are really buckling under this because it is all brand new and they have the Marzano training on top of it. The State is being responsive to us, so one option they have allowed us to submit by March 30 is instead of having two goals, we can shrink down to one. This will be much more important for the future.

More importantly, the term "Observations" is a huge one for us. The Teacher Evaluation Task Force has said repeatedly to the Board that their prediction is that this cannot be implemented. There are not enough evaluators to implement this model. The new model would take us back to how we did our observations in 2001, which were fewer. The consensus of the Task Force was unanimous that it makes sense for us to apply because we are not sure we want to put someone out for three years when we see them once every three years. There are subcommittees now that will be studying this. K. Molinaro, A. Fluskey-Lattin, R. Taborsak, and R. Pietrafesa asked clarifying questions of Dr. Glass and he answered accordingly and a discussion ensued. Dr. Glass also shared that the State and others have said that Danbury has been "very clever and very nimble" in the way it has maneuvered through this. In a large part, Dr. Glass feels it is because of the large Task Force we have that represents both

unions, elementary, middle and high school practitioners and classroom people, Central Office and building-based Administrators, and Board Members.

DISCUSSION

Ad hoc Committee recommendation for name of the new middle school “Westside Middle School Academy”

Chairperson Alberts thanked the Ad hoc Committee for a recommendation and A. Fluskey-Lattin thanked Dr. LaBanca for attending the Ad hoc Committee meeting and working with them. Dr. LaBanca shared that the team really discussed what they were interested in in terms of names and location, and his feeling from their conversation is that it was important that the name represent a middle school environment which was not captured in the previous name. There was discussion about the word, “Academy.” At times the word “Academy” can have an elitist feel to it, but in the educational circles, “Academy” is really being used to signify a smaller community and that is what we are focusing on -- small learning place for children. Dr. LaBanca said the Committee decided that the students would have an opportunity to determine school colors and also a school mascot. A. Fluskey-Lattin thanked the Committee members for their efforts in making a timely recommendation.

Chairperson E. Alberts expressed her feeling that she is in favor of the new name. She reminded everyone that we already have an academy in existence at the high school. It is the Freshman Academy, a school within a school. K. Molinaro thanked the Committee for including “middle school,” because that is what it is, and she understands the word “academy” is used for a smaller learning environment, and she feels it is up to the Board to make sure the public understands that it is not an elite school, but simply a third middle school with a smaller learning environment.

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by A. Fluskey-Lattin that the Board add an Action Item to the Agenda.

The motion passed unanimously at 8:30 p.m.

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by M. Ferguson that the Board accept the recommendation to name the new middle school, The Westside Middle School Academy.

In favor: Eileen Alberts, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo

Against: Gladys Cooper

The motion passed at 8:31 p.m.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Chairperson E. Alberts shared the Governance Council Meeting dates with the Board. P. Tranzillo And R. Taborsak asked clarifying questions which were answered by Chairperson E. Alberts. Dr. Pascarella reminded the Board that in statute, they are advisories to the Principal, and the Board members need to be mindful of that.

Chairperson E. Alberts shared that she was contacted by a person who specializes in food allergies and she has helped write policy in a variety of different districts. Kathy has the information for those of you that are on that Policy Committee to contact her to find out if we would like to take advantage of her services. R. Pietrafesa asked what was being done with regard to notification to parents, and Dr. Pascarella said that the principals and PTO are informed and on March 29, at the Parent University Conference, there will be a forum in Morning Sessions 1 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. The Board will have to modify the policy, and when they do, it will go out to the public for comment. The Board will take those comments into consideration when they vote on the policy.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

M. Ferguson has an update from DSABC that they are participating in Fairfield County Giving Day, which is March 7. An email was sent to the Board members. Basically, this is a Fairfield County Community Foundation. Bank of America and others will be awarding prizes and matching donations to local non-profits for 24 hours only. DSABC is part of this. It starts at midnight and continues to 11:59 p.m. on March 8. The website is: fcgives.org, Search DSABC and the list of organizations, and you will be able to make your donation.

Chairperson E. Alberts wants to know who will be participating in Dr. Seuss Day on March 3. She encouraged all the members to participate. She feels it is one of the best things she does all year.

Chairperson E Alberts talked about the agendas for the Board meetings that get sent to most online. Some already receive hard copies. She shared that formerly the agendas used to be sent to the member's home the Friday before the meetings and felt that it was most beneficial to have a hard copy to read when time allowed at home. Also, she added it was helpful if a question arose and calls could be made before the meeting so the member would be more informed at the meeting. The agendas are ready the Friday before a scheduled Board meeting. Anyone wishing to pick it up can do so by calling Debbie Warner in the Superintendent's Office.

P. Tranzillo attended a Hayestown PTO meeting, and she was pleasantly surprised that 30 parents were in attendance. She said the principal has made it her goal. She was outside with the buses and made it obvious to parents that she wanted them there. R. Pietrafesa reported Stadley Rough and Great Plain had decent turnouts as well.

J. Martino reported that the Great Plain School roof issues are being monitored. He also reported that the new middle school is coming together and will be on time.

ADJOURNMENT

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education adjourn the February 26, 2014 Meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary