

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: E. Alberts (7:05 p.m.), Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Ed Arum
from Administration

Absent: R. Jannelli

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gladys Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Cooper asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

RECOGNITIONS

S. Pascarella introduced Teacher Lisa Frese and Student Austin Calitro and Austin talked about all the activities that DHS Peer Leadership participated in to help the community, including the 7th Annual Spinathon & Fitness Charity Event, which raised over \$7,840 and the total for the days' events was over \$183,000. Dr. Pascarella congratulated Ms. Frese and the students and said that it's this type of program that molds our students and one the Board might not want to eliminate.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Nancy Almonte, parent of a fourth grader at Park Avenue School, feels there are biases at the school.

Wendy Hesse is here on behalf of the gifted and talented students and would like the Board to consider using some of the proposed increase in funds for the Gifted and Talented Program. She distributed a handout to the Board members from the National Association for Gifted Children.

Cindy Garnett, Treasurer of Save Our Sports, appreciates the huge and difficult task set before the Board. She appreciates that freshmen sports are back in the budget.

Caryn Swenson is here to advocate for freshmen sports.

Lorraine Amaral, Vice-President of Save Our Sports is also here to advocate for freshmen sports and hopes the Board keeps it in the budget for the coming year.

Andrea Syryla, Secretary of Save Our Sports, is aware of the challenges the Board has, and she would like the Board to consider keeping reshman sports in the budget for next year.

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

2020 Task Force, 1/19/12

B. Finance Committee, 1/24/12

Board Meeting, 1/25/12

Board Budget Workshop with City Council, 1/31/12

Board Workshop, Lighthouse Training, 2/1/12

Finance Committee, 2/2/12

C. PERSONNEL

Accept Leave of Absence: Joann Stergue

Accept Resignations: Leslie Aaron Lisa Lapidus (Coach position only)

Jessica Greenwood Sarah Place

Maureen Harkins Eric Williams (Coach position only)

Sandra Sodano

The motion carried at 7:34 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE – Anne Riddle

Ms. Riddle gave the Board an invitation to attend Read Across America on March 2 in our schools.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Ashish Rao, President; Justin Kenny, Secretary

The students spoke about an upcoming dance, “A Night at the Matrix,” on March 23. Proceeds will go to the Dorothy Day Center and the Home for Female Forgotten Heroes. Also elections are coming up for next year’s officers. Sophomore elections will be May 17, Junior elections will be May 24, and Senior elections will be May 31. They encouraged DHS parents to get their students involved.

ACE: Absent

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Congressman Murphy’s forum on reforming NCLB, January 30th

Dr. Pascarella said we were well represented and he was pleased to hear the positive changes being made. He feels it will help the teachers and students of Danbury. He is very appreciative of the people that turned out, and he feels it made a difference. Dr. Pascarella thanked everyone for attending and speaking up on behalf of Danbury.

AIS Magnet School lottery update

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that the person who runs the lottery had an issue with completing ours. We now have CREC, which runs many programs throughout the state. Parents will receive notification by February 18. An application breakdown was given to the Board members in their packet.

The lottery for the STEM Program will be performed on February 17, and parents will receive notification by February 24. Rogers Park Middle School generated 131 applications for Grade 6 and Broadview Middle School had 53 for Grade 6. A. Fluskey-Lattin asked if there would be a 50-50 split of students coming from both schools. Dr. Pascarella said that the goal was to do a 50/50 split. In some years, we could not put 50% in because we didn't have that many applicants from Broadview, so we had to backfill with Rogers Park students. In this case, we will be closer to that match. With regard to AIS, A. Fluskey-Lattin asked for clarification of parent notification. A discussion ensued about the lack of communication to parents with regard to receipt of applications. Dr. Pascarella said he thought a message was put on our website.

With regard to drills, Dr. Pascarella said there are a lot of rumors about why we are having them, especially with regard to a lockdown drill, which is scheduled for February 9. This is routine and being done in case we have a need in the future. Kindergarten registration will be during the last week of February. We will also try to have a Saturday available for parents. This will enable us to have information collected by the end of March. With regard to full day kindergarten, we will run registration in April which will allow parents to have this information much earlier than in the past.

Teacher evaluation system

Dr. Glass said we have a teacher evaluation/professional development team in place. R. Taborsak serves on that Task Force. Subcommittees are formed and they are doing a lot of work. They will present to the whole Task Force about what they have learned. Once we go through that, then we will come together as a large group. The new piece that has come in is the idea of multiple measures of student achievement directly linking teacher evaluation to student performance. There are also parent surveys, student surveys and then direct observations, which is more along the lines of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation. Dr. Glass said we are making very good progress. By the end of March, we will get into high gear because all of those subcommittees will have reported out, and the objective by the end of the school year is to have a preliminary draft of what a model would look like. S. Chilian asked a question about the newspaper article on Page 23 of the packet. She asked if it that will require legislative action to become a law, and then when it is law, will the State Education Department be charged with coming up with regulations to adapt to that law. Dr. Glass confirmed her understanding. S. Chilian is also concerned that if we expand our evaluations of professionals, it will require a large number of administrators, and we do not have that number. She does not want to create an evaluation program that we cannot facilitate. Dr. Glass acknowledged that this is the number one challenge that the team has. What is being suggested right now is an alternate year observation cycle, which dramatically compounds the problems we had in 2001, and we have gone from 52 down to 33.5 administrators, so we have fewer people to go around and do the observations, and we have grown as an organization. Dr. Pascarella said it is poor management on our part to create a system that we cannot implement, but he does not think there is anything more important than a classroom observation. The Board needs to be very careful that we deliver something we can operationalize. We have to do everything we can to ensure that it allows for an administrator to meet with teachers and visit in classrooms. It is the key to instructional improvement. Dr. Pascarella continued by saying we started it early because we wanted to think through what is important and what is good practice and then see how the system would work with teachers and administrators. The State will overlay their issues with surveys and test scores, and we will have to deal with that somehow. Dr. Pascarella said in some states, 51% of the principal's time needs to be spent in

teacher evaluation. It is absolutely the law. It tells you how important it is. We don't do that in Connecticut, but we need to work through it.

Dr. Pascarella tells the Board that when we talk about the budget to talk about some technology issues that are before us. He said we had a great session with CAGE in terms of where we are going, and he has asked CAGE to think about our need to refresh our long range goal, our blueprint for education in Danbury. He is suggesting that perhaps we could coalesce the surveys and information into some goal setting activities for the Board. At some point, perhaps at the next Board workshop with CAGE, that might be something we can spend some time talking about. S. Chilian asks how information was gathered for the survey. Dr. Glass said it calls for 45% of the teacher's evaluation to be based upon multiple measures of student achievement. It could be test scores, portfolios, etc. Forty percent (40%) would be based upon direct observation by a principal with a teacher, and fifteen (15%) would be based on input via surveys from parents and students. S. Steichen asked how it affects the teacher contract when the State changes the rules. S. Chilian said that evaluation is a non-mandatory subject of bargaining in teacher negotiations in the State of Connecticut. Dr. Glass said we have NEA Danbury representation on the Task Force and also the administrative representation on the Task Force as well so it is a team effort.

DISCUSSION

Formation of hiring committee

K. Thompson said there are two cabinet level positions that have not been filled, the Director of Finance position and also the Director of Special Services. We have reposted those positions and we did run an ad in *Ed Weekly* and included a few other positions that we have open. Our hope is that we are trying to cast the net a little bit further, and we are advertising with some finance organizations, particularly for the Finance Director position. Our intention is to close the postings, depending on the reception we get, in March, and what she needs from Madame Chairman is a hiring committee to be convened that includes Board members. There is a policy that is very prescriptive about hiring these cabinet level positions which is a two-step process, and the Board of Education hiring committee members are involved in the second round. There will be a quick training session, and it will be not only for Board of Education members but also for other members of the rebuttal panel. She asks Madame Chair to appoint two people to the hiring committee. In the interest of time, K. Thompson recommends that the same two people serve on both interviewing committees. Chairperson G. Cooper appointed E. Alberts and K. Molinaro. S. Steichen asked if we have decided that those positions are going to be filled. Dr. Pascarella said he is moving forward to fill them, unless told otherwise. Every position is being evaluated and this is his intent, but the Board is in charge. K. Thompson said there are other districts looking for applicants for these positions as well, so we have our work totally cut out of us. G. Falkenthal said there were discussions about having David St. Hilaire act as a combination Finance Director for both city and schools. Dr. Pascarella said with any open position, it is being re-evaluated, but at this point, his recommendation is to keep it. E. Arum reminded the Board that it is not only a Director of Finance position but a Director of Finance and Support Services position.

Proposed changes to Board Bylaws

K. Thompson said current bylaws do provide for amendments or changes to be made upon the suggestion or the recommendation of any one of the Board members, and that those changes are to be discussed at the first meeting and then passed. to a second meeting for resolution. We have had a recommendation to amend the bylaws. They are in the Board packet. S. Steichen said she was hoping that we could go back into the Bylaws and correct all of the misspellings to set the standard of our district. The other problem she talks about is version control because the Bylaws that were sent in the Board packet were a little different than the

Bylaws that were handed out at orientation as far as some corrections had already been made. K. Thompson clarified that these were typos, and they are not substantive changes that reflect the text or the content of the Bylaws.

S. Steichen discusses the fact that the Chair of the Board has extraordinary powers over all the other members, and that Chair position is not an elected position by the public. She feels the Chair should have the same rules and responsibilities that all members have. She feels the Chair should not have priority of setting agenda items that do not require any other Board members agreeing to it as other Board members have to do. She is suggesting that this be changed. She would like to look into how we elect the committee chairs and vice-chairs. Should that be a representation of what the community has elected? S. Steichen feels the most important thing is the fact that the Bylaws state that we cannot speak to each other, and feels it is a bit excessive, and she does not feel that this Board should be held to a higher standard than the City Council and State is held to. Chairperson Cooper does not feel there is anything that is prohibitive in communicating with one another. When we send out emails to each other, it becomes illegal. She does not consider having powers over any one. S. Steichen said the rules should change. R. Taborsak would like to comment on electronic communications. The legal ramifications are tremendous. That is why it took a large amount of time for the Policy Committee, and we used the expertise of our Human Resource person who we hired, among other things, because of her law degree and background in education law. He feels S. Steichen might be mistaken that the same Freedom of Information laws and the same confidentiality laws apply to the City Council. The other item is that we did have a review of the Bylaws. With the Bylaws, we went through the normal process, and everyone on the Board voted, and it was passed unanimously. The practice that has been followed is a practice that is followed in every organization. R. Taborsak feels that the items proposed would be very detrimental to the operation of this Board. A. Fluskey-Lattin said from what she is hearing the amendment is to possibly look at having any Board member put anything on the agenda. She feels the question is, "What if we did have a Chair who did, in fact, stick to those Bylaws?" She further said if it has been happening all along, then why do the Bylaws say three people, and why not change it to correspond with the practice we are using? She is also unclear with electronic communications. S. Chilian feels individuals should have as easy and as free access to adding topics for Agenda. She feels three is an excessive number. She feels that when the original Agenda is constructed by the Chair and the Superintendent, there should be more lead time. She feels we should always bring our Bylaws into compliance with what the actual practice is. S. Steichen said she has done all a little research on other Boards of Education, and their Bylaws do not indicate that they cannot communicate with one another. K. Molinaro said the reason we have our committees is to voice our concerns and disagreements and come to a decision. We have committees on very important issues. She does not see any reason to change what we do. It is very easy to get to other people, even if they don't agree with you. She thinks we should send it to the Policy Committee. E. Alberts was the Chairperson of the Policy Committee when the Bylaws were updated. She said having three people come together to add an item to the Agenda has always worked. She feels three is a good number because otherwise everyone would be making changes every other day. Chairperson Cooper said it was decided to wait until after the election to see who wanted to be a chairperson of a particular committee. She sent out information regarding the chairpersons of the various committees and who wanted to be on those committees. No one except for a couple of people called her and stated that they wanted to chair a committee. There were three chairpersons that she selected because she had a strong reason why she appointed them to those committees. She feels there is not anything that cannot be discussed as a group. She would like this topic to go to the Policy Committee. S. Chilian is not clear how committees make their decision, by votes or by consensus. Chairperson Cooper said the chairperson makes a recommendation and brings that recommendation back to the entire Board, and it is up to the Board to accept or deny. S. Chilian asks for clarity in how committees make their decision and it is by majority of the members of the committee. A. Fluskey-Lattin asks if they should vote on amending the Bylaws tonight, and Chairperson Cooper explained

that it will go to the committee, and the committee will bring it back to the Board, and the full Board will vote to see if we are going to accept the recommendation from the committee. She also explained it was on the Agenda as an item for discussion. When it comes back to the Board of a second time, that is when a vote is taken.

2012-2013 Budget

Ed Arum is distributed a packet of information to each Board member consisting of an announcement of Governor Malloy of an additional \$50 million in ECS Funding, Information of developing and implementing a state-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, proposed 2012-13 Education Cost Sharing Entitlements Comparisons, Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil, H S A Information, State and Federal grants and Other Programs, and the proposed Budget 2012-2013 Dr. Pascarella wants to invite the legislators to a meeting with the Board and this should be on our Agenda. Clarifying questions were asked by Board members and discussion ensued to address the questions.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Sites and Facilities **K. Molinaro** **E. Alberts, P. Tranzillo, R. Taborsak**

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 14, at 4:00 p.m.

Finance **R. Jannelli,** **S. Chilian, G. Falkenthal, S. Steichen**
R. Hawley

The next meeting will be Monday, February 13, at 7:45 a.m.

Operations/Policy **B. Taborsak** **R. Hawley, S. Steichen, G. Falkenthal, K. Molinaro**
It was suggested that a meeting be scheduled after the Finance meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: E. Alberts moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education adjourn its February 8, 2012 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously at 10:08 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary