

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017 – 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Ralph Pietrafesa, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Ralph Pietrafesa, Frederick Karrat, Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper,  
Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley, Patrick Johnston, David Metrena,

Absent: Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Holly Robinson

Also Present: Dr. Glass, Kelly Truchsess, Dr. Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Joe Martino

**RECOGNITIONS** - none

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - none

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - R. Hawley moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 17-14 through 17-18, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

1/25/17 Finance Committee

1/25/17 Policy Committee

1/25/17 Board Meeting

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Resignations: Katrina Barlowski, Stefania Benicewicz,  
Wendy Burgos, Nadine Crowder,  
Mary Gregory, Michelle Ihrig,  
Mary McCormack, Nancy O'Dell,  
Christina Schlupp, Barbara Wetmore

New Hires: See Exhibit 17-17

**MOTION** - R. Hawley moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board accept two \$500 grants from the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance Program for King Street School and Broadview Middle School.

**Motion passed at 7:04 pm**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** - none

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES** - none

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Family & Community Engagement Goal Update**

Mrs. Anne Mead presented the Family & Community Engagement Goals Update. Mrs. Meade started with stating the district core beliefs on how families and school staff can work together and be equal partners in a child's education. The presentation outlined the following:

- Parent engagement increases student scores, reduces absenteeism, creates a higher rate of students going to college and less of a summer learning slide.
- Discussed importance of working together between schools and parents as well as engaging families with children, family and school.
- Goal one is to create effective family, school and community partnerships to meet the needs of children and to ensure continued support for school programs that benefit the whole Danbury community (i.e. Park Ave Walk to School Day, Family Camp).
- Goal two is to explore strategies and specific objectives to maximize opportunities for the creation of partnerships between families, community and the school district using both traditional and new emerging channels of communication engagement. (i.e. "Remind app", STEM Scouts, Family and Community Engagement Center).
- Mrs. Meade stated that the Gifted and Talented Program currently has 43 children enrolled.
- Moving away from using the word "parent" and focusing more on using the word "family" as our community is so diverse.
- Mrs. Meade stated that new families registering at the FACE Center receive goodie bags with books and language appropriate information packets. The new registration center now has three full time secretaries.
- Goal three is to identify strategies and target objectives for enhancing public trust and confidence throughout DPS through community projects (i.e. Grow Truck).
- Goal four is to identify strategies and targeted objectives for reaching out to the entire community including increasing of the REAL Program and other community sponsored reading programs (i.e. Pitney Bowes, All Food Matters Program through Walmart, Jericho).
- Mrs. Meade calculated volunteer hours total 5590 per year. At \$25 per hour that would total \$139,750 a year in volunteer hours that DPS has received.
- Mrs. Meade stated that moving forward they will be concentrating on training for secretaries, teachers and new staff. Family Camp is scheduled for April 1, 2017. Building district and school websites. ESL Transition Nights. Encouraging families to visit schools and making schools feel safe and welcoming.
- E. Alberts and R. Pietrafesa both thanked Mrs. Mead on behalf of the Board for everything she does for the community and to please let the Board know what they can do to help.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **2017-2018 Budget**

#### **MOTION:**

R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2017-2018 budget in the amount of \$131,934,919 (a 4.72% increase) for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter.

Dr. Pascarella stated the importance of understanding that these numbers are not yet set in stone and

depends on the Governor's budget.

Mr. Martino stated that the Governor's ECS proposal is responsive to the CCJEF decision and makes our school funding system more fair and equitable with changes to the following grants:

- Special Education Grant increase of \$10 million.
- Alliance/ECS Grant increase of \$2.3 million.
- Teachers Retirement Fund billed back to Danbury at \$7.4 million.
- Net total increase in funds to Danbury of \$12 million.

**Motion passed at 7:40 pm.**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### Governor's Budget

Dr. Pascarella stated that Governor Malloy is proposing a plan for greater accountability by municipalities receiving higher levels of state aid, coupled with relief from municipal mandates for all communities. This will create the Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB) with nine members. The Governor's proposed budget includes funding of \$200,000 for necessary staff expenses to support the work of the Municipal Finance Advisory Commission (MFAC) and the MARB. Mr. Martino stated that the new formula will no longer consider free and reduced lunch numbers. The formula will now look at Husky A insurance numbers. Mr. Martino stated that we have 700 more students file for Husky insurance than free and reduced lunch and this will better show the poverty rate in Danbury.

### Employee Exit Interview Feedback

Dr. Pascarella discussed the Public Participation portion of the last Board meeting where former DPS employees expressed their concern over staff leaving the district. Dr. Pascarella stated that the bottom line is that staff members are working harder. Dr. Pascarella also stated that while the adults in the district are important, the students are what matter most. Ms. Thompson also stated that in some circumstances she does get to speak with exiting staff members and welcomes them back to the district. These meetings are not always possible as it is difficult in the Spring and Summer with more staff resignations. Ms. Thompson stated that there has been a trend with losing staff to districts that pay more. Ms. Thompson stated that they are working on an automated survey system that will be given to staff when they leave to collect data. A similar survey was done several years ago with substitutes and it provided useful information.

### Metamorphosis Study

Dr. Pascarella stated that there will be a group coming in and working with the district math program on February 10, 2017. The group will be observing the actual work we are doing. The group will interview teachers and administrators. Dr. Pascarella stated that we are not getting the results we need to be getting so the Metamorphosis Study will help us review what changes need to be made. Dr. Pascarella will let Board know how the study goes.

### High School Trip Reimbursement Update

Regarding DHS trip to France that had to be cancelled in 2016. Dr. Pascarella stated that 33 families have not been able to get reimbursement for the cancelled trip. The district is working with an attorney and has filed with the State's Attorney. There will be a meeting at DHS on February 16, 2017 in regards to the issue.

### Substitutes and PD Days

Dr. Pascarella stated that there is a challenge with getting substitutes in buildings. We also do a lot of embedded PD work which has gotten too invasive and if we have a bad day with illness, we can have up to 140 people out and staff can not be covered properly. Dr. Pascarella stated that the district is working with a group on how we can better deliver PD and be more effective on covering classes. One of the things the district will consider is different uses of PD days. Dr. Pascarella is looking at a number of ideas that he will present to the Board in regards to PD days and coverage.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Legislative Update

Dr. Pascarella stated that he went to Hartford and met with delegation team to advocate for DPS and laws that will be beneficial for Danbury. Mayor Boughton and a group of Danbury city members were also present. The group discussed getting a large gathering of Danbury residents to go up to Hartford to represent the city. M. Ferguson stated that they discussed more than just funding and a wide arrangement of issues for both the city and board were discussed.

## **INFORMATION**

### Revised Regulations for Policy 7-301, High School Graduation Requirements

Dr. Sal stated that the current policy states that in order for a student to graduate from DHS, they must have a minimum of 21 credits. According to a bill passed circa 2010/2011, the graduation requirement has changed to a minimum of 25 credits. The bill has been delayed year after year but it is being brought up again. A Personal Finance class has now been added to the course requirements.

An Alternative Graduation Plan (AGP) will be developed for students who require an alternative to completing the high school graduation requirements (SPED, IEP, 504's, ACE, Reach). The policy also states that students who do not meet graduation requirements due to deficiencies with required courses or elective courses may enroll in alternate or remedial courses designed to help master the standard, return for a fifth year (1 or 2 semesters), enroll in Adult Ed/Summer School Program or enroll in credit recovery during or after school.

### Use of Trained Drug Sniffing Canines at DHS

Dr. Pascarella stated that the use of trained drug sniffing canines will be implemented. The policy is now in the handbook and parents have been notified. The canines will be both outside and inside the school. Dr. Pascarella has asked Mr. Donovan to make sure the students understand that other than punishment, we look at the counseling side too. This is not just about catching the students, it's about helping them.

## **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

R. Pietrafesa stated that he will be doing some school visits on February 13, 2017 if any other Board member wants to join him. Mr. Pietrafesa also attended the Stadley Rough PTO meeting on February 7, 2017 and everything was great there.

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

G. Cooper personally thanked Dr. Pascarella for attending the Martin Luther King event at her church on January 16, 2017. Ms. Cooper is hoping that next year, more Board members will also attend. Ms. Cooper stated that the DHS Jazz Band was outstanding and complimented Director Ted Adams on his

talented and well mannered students.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - none

**ADJOURNMENT**

E. Alberts moved, seconded by M. Ferguson that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of February 8, 2017 and the meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

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Kathy Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)