

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

***WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.***

**Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, K. Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Ed Arum and Kim Thompson from Administration

Absent: None

Chairperson Gladys Cooper asked for a moment of silence for Christopher Reyes who lost his life in an automobile accident this month. He was a senior at Danbury High School.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gladys Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Cooper asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

**RECOGNITIONS**

Rogers Park Middle Principal, Patricia Joaquim, stated that Kristy Zaleta is one of the most outstanding dedicated professionals she has seen. She said it is a real honor to work with her and see her grow. She is proud to be here to see her recognized. Dr. Harry Rosvally read a letter of recommendation he wrote for Ms. Zaleta. School teacher, Kristy Zaleta, was selected to receive the CT Science Teachers Association (CSTA) “Excellence in Middle School Science Teaching Award” for 2011-2012 on April 25, 2012. Dr. Pascarella congratulated Ms. Zaleta, and she was given a standing ovation.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Matthew Berger talked about the Gifted and Talented Program. He is happy that the district provides the Summit program for his son, and he would like to know what the district provides for staff development in terms of providing some specific training for teachers that work with the gifted and talented and high achieving children.

Stephany Fanning distributed a letter on behalf of the GATHER Group. She would like the Board to take advantage of the help the GATHER Group is willing to lend to move our education forward.

Tom Saadi, member of the Common Council, is here to speak on the issue of the 2020 Task Force. He has some concern that some of the momentum that many of the folks here as well as the Superintendent and parents have started over the last several months may be lost. He is asking the Board and the Superintendent to consider having bi-monthly updates from the 2020 Task Force either in writing or presented to the Board so that that momentum that we currently have keeps moving forward.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION -** G. Falkenthal moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended:

**A. MINUTES**

Community Relations Committee, 3/12/12  
Board Special Meeting (Exp), 3/14/12  
Board Meeting, 3/14/12  
DHS Adhoc Committee, 3/22/12

**B. PERSONNEL**

Accept Leave of Absence:	Melissa Busnel
Accept Resignation:	Romina Faccennini
Accept Retirement:	Kathleen Kopec

**The motion carried at 7:25 p.m.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

DHS: Ashish Rao, President, reports that DHS held its Matrix Dance and raised about \$1,000 originally going to two charities. However, since the passing of their fellow student, Chris Reyes, they want to also include a donation to commemorate Chris by setting up a scholarship in memory of him. They have upcoming elections for next year's officers. Dr. Pascarella said the high school students were remarkable in coming together for Chris. The behavior was incredible and the caring was wonderful to watch.

ACE: None

**PRESENTATION**

Teacher Evaluation; Dr. William Glass

Dr. Pascarella said we will be instituting a new teacher evaluation program in September 2013. There are a lot of uncertainties as to what the plan has. The State will come up with a model if we do not develop one. Danbury is developing its own model and the Committee has been meeting, and Dr. Glass will update us on that.

Dr. Glass said it is important to emphasize that we have raised the bar for teacher performance, and by teacher, it is anyone under the rank of Superintendent. Recently, K. Thompson, Dr. Pascarella and Dr. Glass met with the administrators in the district, and went through all non-tenured teachers and we went person by person. That is the backdrop upon which we are moving forward with this. He distributed a working document and embellished on it as he read. Dr. Glass publicly recognizes the Administrators' Union and the Teachers' Union. They have two representatives each on the team and they have been wonderful to work with.

R. Taborsak said he was impressed with the large amount of people attending the meeting. He feels for this to work, it has to be bought into by all groups, and all the groups were represented at the meeting. He said, as Dr. Glass mentioned, termination is not the goal, improvement is the goal.

Various Board members asked clarifying questions and a discussion ensued.

## ACTION ITEMS

### A. February 2012 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education accept the February 2012 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

For the month of February 2012, the District expended \$7,819,465, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$66,288,785, representing 57.69% of the General Fund total budget. E. Arum referred to the Monthly Financial Report attached to the Board's packet and explained the items contained in that report.

Edward Arum spoke about the Monthly Financial Report. S. Steichen asked if the summary reflects a savings with Aesop. E. Arum said there was a transfer that was done at the beginning of the year and he will look back to see what that was. He will be doing projections in the next couple of months. Also, S. Steichen asked a question about staff professional development monies being overextended. E. Arum said he likes to wait until the end of the year to see what the overages are, and then funds will to be transferred to accommodate the overage. R. Taborsak asked about the health insurance showing a deficit. E. Arum explained that the dental and drug is on a pay as you go basis, so when our months are higher than usual, it will show a deficit. It is not like our medical, which is a straight fixed amount. The medical includes all of the grants that pay into that account. It also includes all the co-pays in the teachers' and administrators' pay. It is a combination of about four or five items, plus we get money from the State on teachers who have retired. They pay us \$220 per person per family, husband and wife, that comes in to that account. Mostly, it is the dental and drugs using it more than we anticipated that month. G. Falkenthal asked about the Supervisor/Director item and questions the deficit number. E. Arum said he will send out a report next week as soon as he puts it together. He also asked about the regular teachers showing a deficit, and that will be included in his report as well.

**The motion carried at 8:10 p.m.**

### B. February 2012 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education accept the February 2012 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

For the month of February 2012, the District expended \$1,963,359, resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$9,525,660, representing 44.6% of the General Fund total budget. E. Arum referred to the Monthly Financial Report attached to the Board's packet and explained the items contained in that report.

E. Arum said this has been divided into three sections, federal, state and local. It is an update of the month of February. He said you will see more and more expenditures because we charge a number of the grants with medical expenditures and those will be coming in. The auditors like us to finish up before the end of the year. S. Steichen had a question about Line Item 094 that it does not match the expense table summary. E. Arum clarifies that the \$585,000 is all for fringe benefits so we have not charged the whole year for that.

**The motion carried at 8:12 p.m.**

### C. Education Technology Plan

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education approve the Education Technology Plan, July 2012-June 2015

Dr. Glass said that S. Steichen raised a concern and Sue Rice and Dr. Glass read the entire plan through line by line to make sure that it did not encumber us or force us into a position that would be fiscally irresponsible, and he and Ms. Rice feel very comfortable with the plan that was submitted to Education Connection. He shares a letter that Education Connection sent with regard to the plan which they received. Dr. Glass introduced some of the members on the team and publicly thanked them for their help. Sue Rice is here to give a brief overview of the plan to the Board and to answer questions on the plan. A. Fluskey-Lattin thanked the members for their hard work. She said she has not read the plan and asked if parents were on the committee. S. Rice said they worked through the tech leaders and they, in turn, worked through the principals and informally through the PTO. She also communicated with Brian, who is City-wide PTO director. S. Steichen asked what the next step will be. S. Rice said the first part is to make sure that everyone is in agreement and the Board votes to approve it and move it forward. Once that happens, it is submitted to the State. You have to write the plan, and you have to have an approved plan in order to apply for whatever the State decides to avail us when it comes to funding. She said that E. Arum and J. Martino have been working very hard with the leasing possibilities and how we can look at this differently than we have in the past. Dr. Glass said that we just lit up the C-wing at DHS. We do have money in our operating budget for technology, but it is meager, and we rely a lot upon being competitive with outside funding sources. So the money that we needed to light up the high school to the extent we have currently was within our budget. This plan does not obligate us to continue. If the funding does not come through, either by working with the City or the State, we simply will not do it. Dr. Pascarella said we work every day to plan for our youngsters and things happen where we have money to purchase things we need. When we have some money that becomes available, we use it for additional technology items. E. Arum said we are looking to light up the high school with money that is not in the budget. We have a couple of contracts that he has looked into where the district is owed money and that money can be used for lighting up the rest of the high school and various other needs we have for which there is no money in the budget. The Mayor has given us \$88,000 and we have bought laptops for two schools. R. Jannelli asked about the current situation for bring your own device. As we move ahead, does that not conflict with the policy we have with someone having an iPhone, and our policy states no cell phones. He also asks if we do develop the "bring your own device," how can we monitor what the students do in terms of looking at sites that are inappropriate. Dr. Glass said the regulations were modified as to when you can and cannot use the technology. This is always a problem and always will be. S. Rice said that this will be a huge professional development piece. Research shows that kids get really engaged when allowed to use their tools. K. Molinaro asked what the unmanaged wireless in the school means. Y. Sklyar said we have a managed environment at the DHS, Morris Street, and Beaver Brook. He said they can see what the users are doing in general. Unmanaged environment is when we have each individual access point managed individually. He uses Morris Street, for example, where we had 20 access points and each individual access point had to be managed by itself. Right now, we can manage all 20 access points as one device. It has streamlined the process and made the management much easier. S. Steichen asked if there is a project plan to go along with this. S. Rice said the most important part of this piece to the plan is to get everyone on the same page. The district has never had that kind of money in one year. If we all agree on a plan, then the district gets very creative in how we achieve the plan. Dr. Pascarella said there is a City Council meeting on April 3 where we will receive the budget message, and there is some indication that there may be some funding for the technology plan. At that time, we can see

what we are going to do. R. Taborsak asks about the leasing program. Chairperson Cooper thanked the team. S. Rice thanked the Board for their continued support.

**The motion carried at 8:54 p.m.**

D. Revision to Bylaw 4-10, Committees

**MOTION -** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the revision To Bylaw 4-10, Committees, to read “The membership of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board Chairperson. No more than five (5) members of the Board may be appointed to a Committee. Upon the recommendation of the Board Chair, the Committee Chair shall be selected by the five (5) Committee Members. The appointment of Standing Committees will be done within thirty (30) days of the annual meeting.”

R. Taborsak said the committee passed this motion to be voted on by a 3 to 2 vote. He was one of the two that voted against it. In his experience, he has never been appointed to a committee where the person who had the power to appoint did not choose the committee members and the chair, because the committee chair needs the power to have everyone work together in unison. The problem that lies is that you want to make sure that the most important vote that you take is for an adequate and competent chair. He sees something like this leading to a waste of time. He said you can get around this by appointing the people on the committee that go along with the chair’s recommendation. P. Tranzillo asks a question about the language. S. Steichen said that the chair can select the members of the committee but then the actual chair of those committees are selected by the actual members of the committee. K. Thompson also explained the language. K. Molinaro suggests that this go back to the Policy Committee. She feels it is not tight enough. R. Jannelli said this has been a unique year in terms of sending out a questionnaire. He does not approve any recommendation on this. A. Fluskey-Lattin clarified that the only part that we are approving is the part that is underlined. She does not see the problem with this. S. Steichen would like to move the question. R. Hawley seconded.

In Favor Of: E. Alberts, G. Falkenthal, S. Chilian, R. Hawley, S. Steichen, A. Fluskey-Lattin  
Opposed: P. Tranzillo, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, G. Cooper, R. Taborsak

**The motion carried at 9:08 p.m.**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Governor’s Education Reform Meeting

A meeting was held in Bethel two weeks ago with Governor Malloy. A number of people were there. They took questions that went into a pool. Audience was trying to make a point that you cannot put a square peg in a round hole. We talked about the expectation of using test results as part of a teacher’s evaluation. Dr. Pascarella said it was pleasant and the people there from Bethel, Brookfield, and Danbury were very respectful.

City Finance Meeting Update and  
2012-2013 Budget Update

There is a City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 3, at 7:30 p.m., at City Hall. E. Arum said the Mayor is going to give his overview of the budget. Dr. Pascarella said we are waiting for a special follow-up meeting

that we had with the subcommittee. This meeting will happen, then a subcommittee meeting will be called and then a meeting will be scheduled to talk further about the budget. We had a conference call today on the Reform Package Focus. We walked away with things being in flux. Senator McLaughlin was going to get back to us. We did receive the modified reform plan from the CEA office. The original plan was 163 pages; the new one is 50 pages. We have been focusing on the certification and evaluation issues and the whole area of conditional funding. The conditional funding was at \$2.2 million dollars one week ago and is back down to \$1.7 million. In that \$1.7 million, the Board will have greater flexibility on the usage of that money. It will still be attached to our plan that we developed to reduce the achievement gap, but it sounds as though some of the initiatives we have already taken, we may be able to build on, in order to access the money. We have a district plan of operation money that the City may vote to us. Then there will be some resources that will come from the State that we can then use to help implement some of the plans we have within our current budget. That will be predicated on the application to the Commissioner who clearly has the right, in the old reform language and the new, to refuse the plan. It is not a guarantee. R. Hawley asked if there is any indication from the insurance carrier in terms of tomorrow's meeting. E. Arum said they are still working on it but we are still currently at 5.7.

#### CCJEF Update

K. Thompson stated she has been working closely with Les Pinter, the Deputy Corporation Counsel, and he has been very helpful to be sure we are looking in all the right places. There were 43 areas or inquiry. We are good to go for April 6. Dr. Pascarella thanked K. Thompson and said she did a phenomenal job.

#### DISCUSSION

##### Guidelines regarding non-emergency committee meeting dates

Chairperson Cooper said we came to a decision that all our meetings cannot be two weeks in advance. We talked about the second Tuesday. She feels we should not be having any emergency meetings. She would like to see the meeting maybe on the Wednesday we are not here, possibly on a Tuesday. She asks that the chairperson of the committee make the phone calls. We will use the third Wednesday as an alternative. E. Alberts suggested the fourth Tuesday. A. Fluskey-Lattin feels the concern is having meetings that do not necessarily have an emergency to them and the other concern was giving people more time than possibly a couple of days' notice. She feels coming up with the third Wednesday, we all understand that this would be the time for a possible meeting, and the fourth Tuesday was a good suggestion.

#### INFORMATION

##### DHS student trip to Barcelona and Madrid, Spain, April 11-18, 2014

Jaelyn Gronwoldt is here to answer any questions on the trip. R. Taborsak asked about the source of funding saying fundraising "on their own." She wants kids to have adequate time to fundraise. She is more than happy to help fundraise. She clarified that it is individual in the fact that if they want to participate in the fundraising they can.

##### Transportation Contract

Dr. Pascarella said as part of the budget negotiations, we have met with transportation. There is a proposal for reducing that expenditure for next year. E. Arum said we started out with a six year contract. Last year we negotiated and started another five-year contract. We can do that under Statute 10-220, which states you can have a five-year contract. Even though it is a five-year contract and you are renegotiating the last year may be we should look at ending the contract now and starting a new five-year contract so we would not have a one-year and a five-year, which is a six-year, which goes outside Statute 10-220. We negotiated with

the contractor again and told them that instead of one year and then adding a five-year, we want to renegotiate the contract and end it this year and just have a five-year agreement. As you remember, the six-year agreement, over the six years, there was a 1.58% increase. We negotiated a new five-year agreement at an increase of 1.4% over five years. There was also a concern about having a one-year and then five-year contract as to how this would react to the town fathers, so that is why we went with the new idea of ending the four-year and adding a five-year which would only be 9 years instead of 11 years. K. Thompson said that the issue we have now is that the regulations require that we go out to bid for any expenditure over \$5,000. In speaking with the city attorney, in similar situations, what they have done is to waive the regulations of sending something out to bid for more than \$5,000 in this case. We have also talked with Shipman and Goodwin and the CABA attorney. The concern is transparency, and the concern is to make sure that we do not have another vendor coming forward to say they missed an opportunity. It is an operating regulation that is within the Board's purview to waive under the circumstances, and what your Finance Director is telling you, is that the circumstances are such that you can negotiate. Because of the current relationship you have, you are in a position to negotiate a very favorable five-year contract. It would require affirmative action. Dr. Pascarella said if the Board decides to do it, it needs to be in a transparent open format. It is perfectly legal in her opinion, but we could be open to criticism. R. Taborsak asked if we did it with a waiver, would there be any liability on our part. K. Thompson said the Board could find itself in a legal argument over it, and that is why she had the conversation with Corporation Counsel's office and also with the CABA attorney and Shipman and Goodwin. It is an administration policy. It is a policy that governs the way you do business. It is not like the state law that prohibits you from entering into a contract for more than five years. That is why we are all comfortable with your waiving that operating policy of putting out a request for a proposal. S. Chilian asks under specific circumstances, are waivers done by Boards. Is it in the public interest to save money? K. Thompson said that was the purpose of discussing this with CABA and others because the language of your regulation is identical to the City's ordinance. It is exactly the same. This is a policy that, not frequently, but occasionally, they have done for very similar situations and that is why they were the obvious legal source to talk with. R. Hawley clarified by saying that within our current budget, we are proposing a 2.5% increase for bus service and that would go to zero for next year and then to 1.4%.

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

Chairperson Cooper thanked Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass, E. Arum, J. Martino and K. Thompson for the wonderful presentation at the Common Council Education Committee. She said they did a fantastic job representing the Board. She wants to also thank the Board members for coming out that night. She appreciated the support and said we are going to need that support when we get ready to have the public participation.

Another comment she made is that at the last meeting, it was agreed that Board members may call her to have any item put on the Agenda. She is still looking for that to happen. She does not want the Board members to go through Dr. Pascarella or D. Warner to do so.

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

Superintendent Evaluation K. Molinaro

K. Molinaro reports that they will have a meeting next month.

DHS Adhoc R. Jannelli

R. Jannelli distributed a Report of the Adhoc Committee and explained the report to the members.

S. Steichen would like handouts from the committee meetings distributed to all members of the Board.

With regard to the 2020 Task Force, Dr. Pascarella said that, as Tom Saadi had mentioned, the committee is here. He will speak with A. Iadarola, but his understanding is that they are beginning to look at the study of the facilities. Part of this is the preparation of the new building that will be built for Head Start. That looks as though it will happen no later than next January. They still intend to go to the voters in November for a vote depending on what the researchers find regarding the allocation that the Mayor and City have given them for the study. He will try to ask for a report. The next meeting for the subcommittee will be April 9 at 4:30 p.m. at Beaver Brook.

Dr. Pascarella, along with Dr. Glass and E. Arum have been invited by Comcast to participate in a live call in television broadcast on Channel 26 on April 4 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. to discuss the proposed budget. We will try to have the citizens call in with their questions and concerns.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education adjourn the March 28, 2012 meeting, and the meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

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Richard Hawley, Secretary