

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

CALL TO ORDER

The chairperson, Ralph Pietrafesa, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gladys Cooper, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Eileen Alberts, Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston
Absent: Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Holly Robinson, Richard Hawley
Also Present: Dr. Bill Glass, Kelly Truchsess, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson, Dr. Sal Pascarella

RECOGNITIONS:

March is Board Member Appreciation Month.

R. Pietrafesa and Dr. Pascarella thanked Board members for their service and light snacks were provided.

Start With Hello Campaign

Several Danbury staff members and students presented their Start With Hello projects. Schools in attendance were Great Plain, Westside Middle School Academy, Pembroke, Hayestown, Academy for International Studies, Shelter Rock, and Stadley Rough. Each school had different activities for the project bulleted below:

- Starting the day with “hello” in different languages.
- Games to inspire students to be kind.
- Members of the community went to schools to eat breakfast and lunch with students.
- 358 Valentines Day cards made for troops overseas.
- Social Media and News outlet coverage.
- Demonstrated acts of kindness towards each other.
- Students wore name tags and had a goal of saying hello to others they didn’t know.
- Students ate lunch with other students they didn’t know and made it a point not to let others eat alone.
- Participated and presented skits to peers.
- Learned about the “buddy bench” so students weren’t left alone at recess.
- Bridges of Peace and Hope Club.

R. Pietrafesa thanks the staff and students for their dedication and making a difference in the schools. Dr. Pascarella mentioned that the Start With Hello project was an outcome from the Sandy Hook incident in 2012.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Kate Conetta presented to the Board. She was joined by representatives from CT Students For a Dream, Danbury Area Justice Network and Action Together as well as parents, teachers, students and other community members. On February 22, 2017, Governor Malloy stated “Above all, we are obligated to protect the rights afforded to all our residents and ensure that students attend safe, welcoming schools. The best approach for local communities is to have a plan in place so that everyone in our state including young students, are supported respectfully and fairly under the laws of our state and our nation”. For this reason, Ms. Conetta and other community members asked the Board to please make the

commitment in protecting students in the community who are most vulnerable at this time. They requested the following:

1. The drafting of a detailed protocol for schools to follow for situations involving ICE.
2. A letter signed by Dr. Pascarella, provided in both English and Spanish, to go home with each student that would express the school district's dedication to creating welcoming and safe spaces for all. Letter would outline the procedures that the school will follow with regard to requests from ICE.
3. A brief "Know Your Rights" information packet to accompany the letter. The above groups offered to provide pertinent content.

Ms. Conetta stated that community members are confused and scared. In addition, they might feel reluctant to reach out for assistance because of isolating factors such as language, social engagement or other circumstances. By sending home a supportive statement and outlining facts it is their belief that this will put vital information directly into the hands of our undocumented immigrants and help the community at large be ready for any possible outcomes.

Ms. Tracy Kelley presented to the Board on behalf of Danbury Prospect Charter School. The Danbury Prospect team is currently seeking approval to become a thriving K-12 free public school option for Danbury families and they are urging Governor Malloy and Commissioner Wentzell to approve their application. Danbury Prospect is modeled after four currently operating charter schools in Brooklyn, NY. The school will educate students using a curriculum built around the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework to engage students in inquiry-based learning, nurture curiosity and grow critical thinking skills. The school would be Danbury's first public charter school and also the first public school in Connecticut modeled around the pillars of the IB program throughout all K-12 grades. Danbury Prospect plans to start with 6th grade and grow a grade every year until they reach capacity of 1,000 K-12th grade students. Their hope is to alleviate middle and high school overcrowding yet still maintain a small school feel. Ms. Kelley clarified a few misstatements made during the Board's discussions during the February 22, 2017 meeting.

- Charter schools may not charge tuition.
- Charter schools are public schools, open to all children.
- Charter schools do not take away money from district schools. If a child decides to go to the charter school, DPS would keep 94% of the money that would have been spent to educate that child. Danbury Prospect would be funded by the state, except for a small portion pertaining to social, emotional and developmental health needs of students which CT state law requires districts to pay.
- CT state law requires schools to pay into the CT pension system for teachers.
- CT state law allows teachers at a charter school to form a union if they decide they want one.

Mr. Kevin Haddad presented to the Board. Mr. Haddad is a Danbury resident and 4th grade teacher at King Street Intermediate. Mr. Haddad reminded the Board of the impact that the sub shortage has on the district's staff and students. Mr. Haddad formally requested a full time Math Coach in each school, not just part time. Due to their part time schedule, the coaches are not able to take students in small group settings and they don't have time for SRBI services. Mr. Haddad also requested tutoring programs for struggling students. He stated that while there is an after school tutoring program, it is for SBAC testing. Mr. Haddad ended by stating his opposition to a charter school in Danbury and urged the Board to educate themselves as much as possible on a charter school.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 17-31 through 17-33, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

2/22/17 Board Workshop (Charter School)

2/22/17 Board Meeting

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Laurie Beth Cerrone

Accept Resignations: Denise Bard, Janice Edmond, Emily Robertson

New Hires: See Exhibit 17-33

Motion passed at 7:50 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - none

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - none

PRESENTATION

Antonio Iadarola, City Director Public Works, presented to the Board on the Danbury High School project, Black Box Theater and ACE study. He was joined by Mr. Tom Hughes and Mr. Dan Petrovich. Mr. Iadarola is currently seeking approval from the Board for the 5th phase (out of 6 phases) of the DHS project. He stated the following:

- Every roof is being replaced at about \$5.7 million.
- Roofs on buildings D, E and F are done.
- Two very large generators have been replaced.
- Sprinkler installation in buildings A, B and E is complete which now makes the entire school equipped with sprinklers.
- New parking lot near the East Gate Road entry.
- Large in ground oil tank removed and new above ground tank installed.
- New fats, oil and grease separator installed outside the kitchen area which is a new DEEP requirement.
- The new classroom addition is fully under construction. Concrete has been poured throughout the winter at every open opportunity.
- Site utilities are almost 80% complete.
- Sewer and water connections are ready to go.
- Steel erection will begin at the end of March with anticipation of a one week delay.
- The entire building is scheduled to be up in April of 2018.
- Incorporating putting wider doors in areas to allow students to get to the new addition more effectively and quickly.
- The work that will begin in the summer of 2017 is the addition to the cafeteria, the Black Box Theater and the main entrance addition.
- There will be a brand new bus sloop, extensive site improvements and auto shop improvements.

- Presentation to the state for approval will be on March 22, 2017.
- There will be a Building Committee Meeting which will give more detail and be more in depth of the project. Several Board members will sit in on that meeting.
- A scaled model of the high school was presented to the Board.
- Indoor lockdown area at new parking lot entrance being built with a well thought out security safe zone. Area will be equipped with a special film that gives the same protections as bullet proof glass.
- New concrete sidewalks and dressing up of existing columns. A facelift of the front entrance.
- Will also install a bypass driveway so there is a safe way for emergency vehicles to access school when buses are dropping off and picking up students.
- New floors and new ceilings for the front lobby.
- The school has a “saw tooth roof” that has lost its life. They will try and put a screen to hide it. Mr. Iadarola believes this needs to be addressed but this is part of an alternate bid, not the base bid. Something to be addressed if there is money left after most important items are taken care of.
- Mr. Iadarola felt that if money is going to be spent on fixing the front facade, the Board should also look at replacing sidewalks and re-curbng the front of the building as well.

Next, Mr. Iadarola presented the Black Box Theater.

- The Black Box Theater is located near the A Building.
- Connection between the existing school and the new theater is perfect with minimal interruption to the school day.
- About 9000 square feet with a beautiful vestibule, open atrium feel and skylights.
- LED accent lighting and glass panels will add to the theater feel.
- Pre-assembly area with a receiving desk.
- State of the art lighting and sound controls.
- Choral room, control room, band room, storage, offices, electrical room, custodian closet and own bathrooms.
- Capacity of the little theater will be 131 people with retractable bleacher seating.
- All level floor.
- Cost estimate is about \$4.6 million, which is more than originally anticipated.

Mr. Iadarola then went on to discuss the ACE study.

- ACE is a building with historical significance.
- Code work done many years ago that has limited considerable opportunities for the architects to do something different on the site.
- Challenge of a small footprint and the inability to go higher on the existing building.
- Underground pipes under the volleyball area that takes storm water and infiltrates it into the ground.
- Limited parking and a significant miss on parking requirements for zoning.
- Ultimate goal is to go from the existing population of 96 students to about 150 as well as creating some common spaces, such as an assembly area.
- As soon as phase five is out to bid for DHS, the architect will start to work on the ACE study.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Danbury High School Project

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education authorizes the Chairperson of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to approve the final plans, contract specifications, and cost estimate for Phase 5 of the Additions and Alterations with Safety Improvements at the Danbury High School Complex project, and sign the SCG-042 form and submit it to the State of Connecticut for approval.

Motion passed at 8:37 pm.

B. Healthy Food Certification

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to submit form ED-099 to the Connecticut State Department of Education stating that the Board will participate in Section 3 of CT General Statutes Section 10-215f

Healthy Foods – Exemptions

As per Section 3 of CT General Statutes Section 10-215f, the Board of Education may permit the sale of other food items that do not meet the Connecticut nutrition standards provided that:

- 1) The sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend.
- 2) the sale is at the location of the event.
- 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Motion passed at 8:38 pm.

Exemptions to Section 3 of CT General Statutes Section 10-215f Healthy Foods

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education allow the sale to students of any legal foods not listed in Section 3 of CT General Statutes Section 10-215f at all co-curricular sponsored events such as sporting events, school performances, school dances, PTO sponsored events, theatrical products and school fairs provided that the exemption criteria are met.

Motion passed at 8:38 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Pascarella stated that he produced a document and sent it out to principals on how to deal with immigration officers so they have a protocol on how to protect our students.

Universal Service Fund Grant Award

J. Martino stated that the district received a \$700,000 grant to replace the bulk of wireless infrastructure in the schools and will be upgrading wireless access points.

Legislative Update

Dr. Pascarella stated that he will be heading to the Capitol on May 16, 2017 where lobbyists will organize the day. Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass and J. Martino have testified a few times. Dr. Pascarella stated that the committee that M. Ferguson is on has been looking at funding mechanisms. The proposal of determining free and reduced lunch that was moving forward didn't recognize calculations for ELL students. Husky insurance is being considered as a determining factor but Dr. Pascarella feels that both should be looked at to better determine which students need the service. SPED and transportation are also being looked at. Dr. Pascarella will be setting up paperwork with M. Ferguson so he can have on hand what positions to advocate for.

Schools of Distinction

Dr. Pascarella stated that for the past few years they have been talking to the state department for recognizing the work that teachers and principals are doing for student's academic growth. The state looked at a number of different characteristics in the schools and Danbury received six nominations. Two of which are in the top 10 and one as the best in the state. They will be at the next Board meeting to be recognized. Dr. Pascarella also stated that being a school of distinction gives us access to special funding.

DHS Student Walkout Update

Dr. Pascarella stated that the walkout was very difficult to handle. He acknowledged the Danbury Police Department on doing a wonderful job and he will be meeting with the police chief and others to debrief on the incident. Dr. Pascarella also acknowledged Principal Dan Donovan and staff for getting the students back in the building. This was an intense situation that was controlled and turned into an educational opportunity for the students. J. Martino added that it was a complicated situation that deescalated slowly.

R. Jannelli asked Dr. Pascarella if there was a protocol or policy on what Board members should say to parents or community members who ask what the district is doing to protect the students in regards to immigration officers. Dr. Pascarella stated that he received documents from the Governor and that the laws have been reviewed. K. Thompson stated that the Governor's letter tried to clarify any concerns on where ICE agents can and cannot go. The letter was to reiterate that nothing has changed and we still do not disclose student information, even if it is ICE. Administrators have been instructed to immediately contact Central Office if any such instance occurs. K. Truchsess stated that guidance was also provided to PPS staff on how to handle questions from parents and how to reach out and support students and families who might be struggling at this time. Dr. Pascarella will send out a detailed procedure to members of the Board and would appreciate any feedback. Dr. Glass stated that there is a tremendous fear in the community of wondering if it is safe to send children to school and if ICE will take them away. He stated that ICE is looking for human trafficking and high end drug dealers but the community does not perceive it as such. They are scared. Students are concerned that their parents will be taken away, wondering where they will live and who will take care of them.

DISCUSSION - none

INFORMATION

DHS trip to London, England, April 14, 2018 through April 21, 2018

Dr. Pascarella asked members to review the London trip info that was sent out to the Board.

Education Committee Public Hearing March 1, 2017

Dr. Pascarella reminded the Board that there was no guarantee that we would get to speak at the hearing. There were 106 people from the public who were there to speak. Dr. Glass did submit testimony that members of the committee were able to review.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

R. Pietrafesa stated that the annual Invention Convention will be held on March 13, 2017 at Westside Middle School Academy. The middle school will present from 7:45 - 10:00 AM and the elementary schools will present from 3:30 - 5:30 PM. R. Pietrafesa also stated that Family Camp (formerly known as Family University) will be held on April 1, 2017 from 8:30 - 12:30 PM at Rogers Park Middle School.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

R. Jannelli commended the Start with Hello program and encouraged children in schools to practice that all year long.

M. Ferguson stated that March 9, 2017 is Fairfield County Giving Day. DSABC has participated in this for three years. He stated that last year around \$7000 was raised.

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved, seconded by K. Molinaro, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of March 8, 2017 and the meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Kathy Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)