

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: Eileen Alberts, Shirley Chilian (left at 8:00 pm), Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathy Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Ed Arum and Kim Thompson from Administration

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gladys Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Cooper asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

RECOGNITIONS

Rogers Park Middle School Musical Theater Students performed a song “We are all in this together” from their recent hit play “High School Musical”. Director/teacher, Amanda DosSantos, stated this was the first musical at Rogers Park in 20 years. There were 60 students involved and with the help of parents and staff it was a huge success.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jim Maloney and several parents, students and staff members spoke in support of the Head Start Program and asking that the Board of Education not eliminate the Head Start Program. Many were wearing T-Shirts “Head Start means stronger schools”.

(Board Member, Shirley Chilian, left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.)

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

- Board Meeting, 3/28/12
- Board Special Meeting (Exp), 4/3/12
- Board Workshop, 4/4/12

B. PERSONNEL

- Accept Leave of Absence: Teresa Dovale
- Accept Retirements: Rose Testanaro, Mary Weiner

The motion passed at 8:00 p.m.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - None

PRESENTATION

Dr. Shuanna Tucker, Director of Adult & Continuing Education presented on the Adult Education Program. As of 2010, the State of CT required that all teachers in Adult Ed be certified. All of our teachers are certified. We are 100% in compliance. The average age of our students is ages 17-23. During the past two years, we've seen an increase in the number of students enrolling in Adult Ed at age 17. The two largest Adult Ed programs are High School Credit Diploma program and English as a Second Language (ESL). We are directly connected to the K-12 system through the High School Credit Diploma Program. Students who withdraw from DHS, ACE or a cooperative high school and enroll in Adult Education within two weeks of withdrawal are counted as a transfer as opposed to a dropout. All students must be officially enrolled by Sept 25th to be included in the Oct 1st district reporting enrollment numbers to the State. Whatever the credits earned at the traditional high school are counted towards the 23 hour requirement for an adult education diploma. Unfortunately, we are seeing more students entering adult education with very few credits (8-12) and when tested, their skill level is that of a middle school student.

The Adult Educated Mandated programs are referenced here. As previously stated, our largest enrollments are: High Credit Diploma, ESL and GED. Based on the State of CT's Adult Education Program Profile for 2011, the number of adults in Danbury without a high school diploma is 19,217 a total of 14.44% of our population. The number of those who do not speak English well is 7,545 or 5.67%. So, based on Danbury demographics there is a correlation to program enrollment. We operate on a trimester basis and the maximum credits earned are 23. We provide the basic, core subjects of math, reading/writing, science, social studies and a few electives. We have 65 faculty and staff members within our programs.

Adult Education is the only mandated program in which the State of CT provides a match. For example, Danbury's local contribution is \$292,228 and the State match is \$237,939. This local amount has remained the same since 2008 while enrollment has steadily increased. We are the Regional Site for Western CT with 6 collaborative school districts – Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding and Ridgefield who pay us for their students attending our adult education programs in the amount of \$153,362. Our total funding is \$683,528. Our per pupil expenditure for Danbury Adult Education students is \$482 while those in the traditional high school like DHS is approximately \$10,000 – 12,000. Our cooperating districts spend between \$900 - \$1,700 per student enrolled at WERACE. We do apply for funding from other sources. On an annual basis we apply for federally funded program improvement grants through a competitive process.

Currently, we have approximately 1,100 students in Adult Education who are enrolled in 2,300 courses. The majority of the 1,100 are Danbury residents. The low academic skills of students are of major concern to us. The largest deficiency for students is math. When tested, many of them have basic addition and subtraction skills when tested. Ironically, these are not students that have been out of school for years, they are students coming to us from traditional high schools. Family Literacy can accommodate 16 mothers.

We've continued to do more with less for a very long time. Our local funding has not increased over the past 4-5 years, while enrollment and changing demographics continue to increase. Despite that, we seek to collaborate with agencies that can assist our students in areas where we do not have resources. Many students come to us with some form of a disability. We do not have social workers, nurses or psychologists....but we do have partners who work with us to assist students. This year, we signed an agreement with WeCahr who will work with 10 of our students who have disabilities. We also signed an agreement with NVCC to increase

the number of students enrolling in higher education programs. We provide college week during the Fall and Spring Trimester. Students visit WestConn, NVCC and other schools. At NVCC, the visit includes a tour, lunch with students and admissions counselors, and a Financial Aid workshop. Most notably, starting this fall, our student will be offered dual credit enrollment in specific WERACE/NVCC courses so they may enter NVCC with college credits. Not everyone goes to college, but we encourage our students to seek both higher education and vocations with the goal of becoming productive, self-supporting citizens.

One of major successes is the dedicated faculty in Adult Education. We accept everyone as we cannot turn anyone away. Despite the challenges of any student who enters, they are embraced and encouraged to succeed...while adhering to our policies. We face several challenges. Space is the biggest challenge. We run day and evening programs and are located in 8 locations throughout Danbury. Our main office at 10 Crosby Street has 3 classrooms with the largest holding 12 students and the smallest holding 8. Every trimester we turn away students due to lack of space. Also, students coming from DHS and ACE prefer day school because that is what is familiar to them. When referred to night school at DHS, many prefer not to attend. Also, my 11 faculty members are forced to share workspace which accommodates 4. Students have no library or student lounge so the front lobby becomes the lounge area especially during winter. Our computer lab at Crosby has 10 computers and a low speed internet connection. We are on the same server with Reach, Endeavor and Mill Ridge per our Technology department. When more than 5 people are on the computer at the same time (including employees), it is difficult to get anything done as the cursor becomes the circle that spins, and spins. For those students in the lab working on the CT Virtual HS program (web based courses), on most days they cannot complete a lesson without being kicked off the server. During the fall of 2012, the GED will be administered online. Since we are a GED testing site, we are truly wondering how we will handle this. Last, more students are registering with Adult Education who don't have a clear understanding of what they are entering. State law requires that high school counselors sit and explain to students Adult Education opportunities (and they provide a checklist) before the student officially withdraws. Our guidance counselor continues to work with the high school counselors about this issue, and I am working with the Superintendent and high school principals to ensure a smooth transition for students.

Our Family Literacy Program (formerly known as Even Start) is a High School Credit Diploma program for teen moms. This program is for mothers' ages 17-21 who are seeking to complete their High School Diploma. If they come to us from DHS within a reasonable timeframe, they are considered a transfer and not a dropout. The program provides childcare for the babies, while the mothers are being educated. There is also a strong parenting component. Currently, we are housed at MREC but by the end of the month we will be relocating the program to First Congregational Church of Danbury. The Superintendent fully supports this program and it is funded through a \$50k federal grant. As of this morning, the Coordinator of the program attended a meeting at the High School. There is a large amount of pregnant students at DHS ages 15-16. Unfortunately, we cannot accept them into our program due to federal guidelines. However, we are concerned about the status of these young ladies and their education.

In most districts of this size, with similar demographics and enrollment, the Adult Education program is part of the K-12 system. Meaning, they are housed in one central location and treated like a high School. They tend to invest more funds per student. We are officially a part of the K-12 and I continuously work with the Superintendent as we seek full integration. We are in the top 10 – largest providers in the State. We invite you to visit our Crosby Street location and meet our dedicated faculty and students. We invite you to join us for our grand opening of the new WERACE Family Literacy Program and attend our Graduation June 12th at WestCONN for our students.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Danbury High School Graduation

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts, that the Board of Education approve June 20, 2012 as Danbury High School's Graduation Date in accordance with Policy 7-310.

Dr. Pascarella stated the graduation will be held at 5:00 p.m.

The motion passed at 8:30 p.m.

B. DHS Student Trip to Spain

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts, that the Board of Education approve the DHS student trip to Barcelona and Madrid, Spain, April 11-18, 2014.

The motion passed at 8:30 p.m.

C. Transportation Contract

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak, that the Board of Education shall waive compliance with its Regulation No. 3-501 insofar as it pertains to advertising and/or competitive bidding, for the sole, limited and express purpose of contracting with STA of Connecticut, Inc. for the provision of transportation services for the period July 1, 2012 through August 31, 2017.

The motion passed at 8:35 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Kindergarten enrollment update

Dr. Pascarella stated we held our kindergarten registration earlier this year in the hopes of getting a better picture of what our numbers will be. The number fluctuate between now and September due to mobility.

Facilities/Security

Mr. Arum presented a facilities review. New policy instituted where maintenance technicians check in at the school's main office before and after they work in a school and leaves a copy of the work order when they leave. WERACE Program has leased space at the First Congregational Church. Painting and floor cleaning will be completed before the program is moved in during April vacation. An RFP placed for 60 ADA desks needed as a result of last State review. Tools for Schools Committees set in all the schools. We send an electronic survey out to all staff. CIRMA will be doing training for custodians on proper lifting, use of ladders, and slip, trip and fall prevention. An RFP has been advertised for sanding, painting and refinishing

the gym floors at DHS and will inspect other gym floors. We received proposals to install a demountable wall system at RPMS to make additional classrooms. Inventoried the unusable chemicals at DHS and putting together a proposal for packing and removal of chemicals.

After auditing the Honeywell contract for last year and this year we discovered that several indoor air quality tests were not done. Honeywell will issue us a check for \$42,000 as a credit. At Park Avenue, an upgrade to a larger transformer to handle the solar panels and replace three older breaker panels will be done during April vacation. At RPMS water has been tested from inside the school by the Danbury Water Department and has been deemed safe. OSHA will be sending us a report on their findings from the 3 consultation visits.

Pembroke School make-up date, June 21, 2012

Pembroke School has a school closing day to make up. It was decided students would come in on June 21st with an early dismissal. Teachers would work a full-day as their post closing day.

Public Act 10-108, An Act Concerning Unexpended Education Funds

Mr. Arum reported this act allows each town to deposit into a nonlapsing account any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education, provided such amount does not exceed 1% of the total budgeted appropriation.

Middle School Resource Officers

Dr. Pascarella reported that Officer Pete Tragni at RPMS was promoted to Lieutenant. Officer Hayes at BMS will have to cover both Middle Schools.

DISCUSSION

2012-2013 Budget

Dr. Pascarella stated the Principals see value in the Head Start Program but we can't take more from our K-12 students. We're looking at everything, pay to participate, music, art, ski club, band; open ended negotiations; bid out insurance; we don't have enough nurses; new system for Medicaid; IDEA grant.

Mr. Jannelli asked about the health saving plan. Mr. Arum set up a meeting with the negotiation committee to go to Cigna on Friday, April 27th in Bloomfield.

Mrs. Cooper suggested a Board Workshop to go through the proposed budget reductions. It was agreed that a Board Workshop would be held on Wednesday, April 25th, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. followed by the regularly scheduled Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. These meetings will be held at one of the Middle Schools (TBD).

INFORMATION

Draft of 2013-2014 School Calendar.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - None

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS- None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by G. Falkenthal, that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing confidential personnel matters and updates on negotiations/litigation.

The motion passed and the Board convened in Executive Session at 9:45 p.m.

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

Absent: Shirley Chilian

Discussion ensued on pending litigation, non-renewal procedures and negotiation strategy (paras/tutors).

ADJOURNMENT

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Hawley, to adjourned the April 11, 2012 Board of Education Meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Richard Hawley, Secretary