

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017 – 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The chairperson, Ralph Pietrafesa, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Danbury High School ROTC Cadets.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gladys Cooper, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson, Eileen Alberts, Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley, Patrick Johnston

Absent: Richard Jannelli, David Metrena

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

RECOGNITIONS

Mill Ridge Primary Student, Emma Martini, was recognized for winning \$1000 for her school after winning first prize in an art contest from C&W Services. Emma participated in the art contest during a visit to her father's place of employment for Bring Your Child to Work Day.

Debbie Warner, Sandy Sanchez and district Administrative Assistants/Secretaries were recognized for Administrative Professional's Day.

Also recognized was Joe Martino for purchasing new microphones for the Board meetings.

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 17-49 through 17-52, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

4/5/17 Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting

4/5/17 Board Meeting

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Resignations: Elizabeth Frost

Accept Retirements: Susan Petsch

New Hires: See Exhibit 17-51

C. GRANTS

Approve the submission of a request for proposals to the State Department of Education for Program Enhancement Projects for Adult Education.

Motion passed at 7:09 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Rogers Park Middle School

Principal Pat Joaquim thanked the Board for allowing them to present their school achievements. She also thanked teachers Pat Stevens and Charles Duff for creating presentation as well as staff members in attendance.

The following achievements were presented:

- Community Garden that expanded academic focus. Students researched culturally traditional dishes prepared with items from the garden.
- Health Teacher Carrie Rowe has been working with the Women's Center of Greater Danbury and often brings them in to do presentations for the students. This year she was invited to speak to the center and had the opportunity to tell them the impact they have on RPMS.
- Student of the Month and People Respecting Others awards. Students receive certificates and are invited to a celebratory breakfast.
- The Guidance Department has a student run service program. Students go through the lost and found and wash and organize clothing. The clothes are then put in a closet in the Guidance Department for students who may need clothes. This has particularly helped newcomers who did not have proper winter attire.
- The Nurses run an after school club for female students which focuses on socialization and life skills such as cooking and facials. The students are able to speak about things relating to young females in a safe environment.
- The Hispanic night parent meetings continue to be very well attended.
- Virtual reality introduced at RPMS and has been used in some classrooms. The students have had a wonderful reaction to it.
- A flat screen welcome display with announcements is updated weekly in the Media Center.
- Tournament of Books in March.
- Media Center is updating collection and weeding out old books. They have acquired some new books through Donors Choose and other donations.
- Robotics Club.
- A large scale color printer that will be housed at BVMS and RPMS will be allowed to utilize it.
- Mr. Duff presented a video encompassing what has been done at RPMS which included pictures from the community garden, History Day, special education social activities, Puerto Rico trip, virtual reality, Carnival Celebration, Career Day, student versus faculty basketball games, PI night, CCSU Production trip, Project Based Learning work, Wizard of Oz musical.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Samantha Mortara from DHS presented the following notes to the Board:

- The first Unified Prom was a big success.
- Peer Leadership is wrapping up their community exchange projects such as the ALS Golf Tournament, Be You Campaign and Middle School Leadership.
- The Be You Program set up a booth in the cafeteria with a white board that said "What makes me unique is...". Students wrote down ideas on what made them unique and then were invited to take a picture with their writing.
- Graduation will be held on June 19, 2017 at 5 pm. All Board member were invited to attend.
- Junior Prom will be held on April 28, 2017.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 26, 2017.

- Construction is making nice progress.
- Students have expressed concern over the track and quality of the tennis courts.
- A survey created by Principal Dan Donovan was assigned during Advisory classes. Students were able to express what they were dissatisfied with in the school. Most discussed were bathrooms, food and Safety Advocates. A large majority of the students however felt all was going well. For the next survey, they will focus on what is going well to have a better idea of what students are happy with versus hearing “everything is great”.

PRESENTATION

Kim Thompson presented the following Hiring Initiatives Goals:

- The district will continue to expand network of teacher preparation programs that include more minority applicants.
- Fund and expand “grow your own” teacher initiatives through WCSU pipeline.
- Continue to work with SDE initiatives to enhance teacher preparation programs.
- Use cultural competency training as a way to enhance the working environment.
- Dr. Pascarella and Ms. Thompson attended the HBCU Forum at Yale University in December.
- Broaden list of potential recruiting sites.
- District has sent out 15 different Administrators to 10 different schools (UConn, WCSU, University of Bridgeport, SCSU, CCSU, College of New Rochelle). Four new sites include CUNY Medgar Evers, Delaware State, University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Howard University. These four were identified as having solid educational programs.
- District has enhanced and personalized follow ups after Job Fairs by identifying best candidates, offering in-district demo lesson opportunities across different schools, early identification of target candidates and follow up through Applitrack to match interested candidates for interviews.
- Expanded visibility for job openings through web based advertising such as posting target jobs on HBCU web page and enrolling in Top School Jobs.
- Participating in a program through Applitrack called “Handshake”.
- Enhanced marketing materials for job fairs, including content and curriculum samples.
- Show sample articles on why Danbury is a top place to live and current events.
- Trying to implement “grow from within”.
- Revisited Minority Recruitment Pipeline Project in partnership with WCSU where DHS students explore teaching careers.
- Currently exploring new opportunities for grant funding to expand the project to over 40 students.
- Launch expansion of Student Teachers of America (or similar group) to expose students earlier to teachings as a potential profession. Start at the middle school level and continue throughout high school in hopes of having these students return to the DPS work field.
- Collaboration with NEA Danbury.
- NEA representative, Sam Buck, went to Virginia Education Association's Teacher of Color Summit during winter of 2017.
- Ms. Thompson attended SDE Winter Convening for exploration of Yancy Forum.
- Identifying non-certified staff with advanced credits that would make ARC (Alternate Route to Certification) more attainable.
- There are nearly 500 members of the Paraprofessional/Tutor Union.
- Expansion of in-house PD opportunities.
- Continue personal outreach to resigned/retired employees.
- Implement an eight question online survey for staff leaving the district to identify systematic

issues.

- Expand benefits such as tuition assistance, loan forgiveness, closing costs, local perks to all employees.
- Early screening is already beginning for shortage areas and classroom positions for 2017 - 2018 school year.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Revision to 2017-2018 School Calendar

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the revisions to the 2017-2018 School Calendar.

David Metrena was not able to attend the meeting but addressed the following suggestions and concerns via email:

- Eliminate the following holidays to pick up five days of instruction time: Rosh Hashana, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, February 20th and to change November 22nd to an early dismissal.
- By doing the above mentioned we can move the last day of school to June 18/19, saving a week.
- Spring break needs to be in-line with surrounding districts, this cannot be negotiated.
- Mr. Metrena has issues with Tuesday early release days for PD as the district already has three full PD days in the calendar.
- Mr. Metrena suggested moving the January 16th PD to December 22nd and eliminate December 19th's early release.
- In May, the district has an early release on the 22nd and then a full PD on the 25th.
- There is almost a full week of PD built onto the calendar (assuming a 6 hour school day).
- Do surrounding districts have these many PD days?
- What is Danbury doing that requires so many PD days?
- Mr. Metrena strongly encouraged more discussion and negotiation around the upcoming school year calendar.

Dr. Glass stated that a few years ago, there was discussion on having school on Veteran's Day and doing a commemorative event at each school. At that time, a group of veterans came to the district and stated that they felt that would be disrespectful to veterans. Dr. Glass also stated that local Rabies came to the district and asked for more days off so the district compromised on the two highest days. With that said, removing Jewish holidays and Veteran's Day is risky.

R. Hawley asked why there was a PD early dismissal on September 19th and 26th and if the district could move these PD days into full days. Dr. Pascarella stated that the reason we have these specific PD days in September is because assessments are done in the first few weeks of school and these PD days are to give teachers time to sit down and identify those students who need intervention. K. Truchsess stated that removing these days puts the teachers at a disadvantage on identifying students early enough in the school year.

Dr. Glass also stated that the two PD days in September is new for the district. Schools have found that they didn't have the data due for their growth plans which are due on September 29th. The growth plans are based on the measurements of the early assessments and meeting on those PD days.

Also brought up as a concern was the pattern of meeting one week then skipping a week then meet again the following week is not productive because too much time passes in the interim period so valuable meeting time is used to refresh everyone's memory. Dr. Pascarella stated that the study team reviewed the calendar and tried to accommodate parents needs for consistency to the greatest extent possible. Most of the early dismissal sessions follow a two-week contiguous pattern. Those that do not are due to the federal holidays or the April vacation. The April vacation is scheduled as a result of the state mandated regionals common calendar sessions and is in direct alignment with all surrounding districts. The team felt that if parents were given the calendar far enough in advance, they could make the necessary arrangements.

On a final note, Dr. Pascarella stated that the state allows districts to identify a "guaranteed graduation date" if five snow days are built into the calendar. This is the district's practice. However, even with the late start date for the coming school year, without the five snow days, the last day of school for students in June 15th.

Motion passed at 8:05 pm.

B. Board of Education Meeting Dates 2017-2018

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education approve the Board of Education Meeting Dates for the 2017-2018 school year

Motion passed at 8:06 pm.

C. March 2017 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board of Education accept the March 2017 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Motion passed at 8:08 pm.

D. March 2017 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: R. Hawley moved, seconded by M. Ferguson that the Board of Education accept the March 2017 Operating Results Analysis (Grant/Projects)

Motion passed at 8:10 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. State Budget Update

M. Ferguson stated that this week was a very important week at the Capitol. There are two committees that deal with budget. Appropriations Committee passes a budget and the Finance Committee determines how that budget will be paid. The Appropriations Committee deadline is 5:00 pm on April 27, 2017. The Finance Committee deadline is 5:00 pm on April 28, 2017. The Appropriations Committee convened with a budget on April 25, 2017. It is possible that the Appropriations Committee will not vote by April 27, 2017 on a budget. If that happens they will have an emergency bill to present a budget later on in session. This brings a lot of uncertainty to the district. The session ends at midnight on June 7, 2017. Whatever bill is not passed essentially dies and the budget works the same way. However, there can be a special session and that would be after June 7, 2017 to deal with the budget. If the budget

is not passed by June 7, 2017, hopefully it will be by July 1, 2017. If this still does not happen, the Governor can run the state on Executive Order until the budget is passed. The Speaker of House has said that he is confident that budget will be passed by June 7, 2017. Dr. Pascarella stated that agreements had between the Board and Mayor still stand and we will assume that the district is getting the Alliance money and we will move forward with hiring and anticipated openings.

B. State Graduation Rate Report

Dr. Pascarella stated that their will will be a full presentation at the next Board meeting.

C. Administrator Vacancies and Hiring Protocols

Dr. Pascarella stated that there are three Principal positions open at the elementary level and one Assistant Principal job position open at the middle school level. There are some internal requests for transfers to these positions.

D. \$200,000 School Improvement Grant from State Department of Education for the Alternative Center for Excellence.

Sandy Atanasoff and her staff received a \$200,000 grant to work with high risk students. This is a one year grant with possibility of renewal.

INFORMATION

June 13	WERACE Graduation, 7:00 pm at WCSU
June 14	Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 pm
June 16	Middle School Moving Up Ceremonies: Broadview at 12:00 (note change in time) Rogers Park at 4:00 Westside at 7:00
June 19	High School Graduation, 5:00 pm (rain date June 20)
June 20	Last day of school, early dismissal

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A. Memorial Day Parade

R. Pietrafesa asked the Board who plans on participating in the parade so they can figure out how many cars will be needed. The decision was made to get two cars for parade.

Dr. Pascarella stated that the DHS cheerleaders who won this year's competition will also participate. Dr. Pascarella also asked that the Board to consider inviting more students to be involved.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

G. Cooper stated that the Superintendent Evaluation Committee met on April 26, 2017. The full Board will need to meet on May 8, 2017 at 6:00 pm for the final evaluation of the Superintendent.

M. Ferguson invited the Board to attend the annual scholarship breakfast for DSABC which will be held on May 18, 2017 at 7:45 am at the Amber Room.

E. Alberts stated that City Hall was turned blue for Autism Awareness Month during Spring Break. The Board was represented in attendance by M. Ferguson, Anne Mead and E. Alberts. M. Ferguson also stated that E. Alberts was recognized at this event.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by H. Robinson, that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing communications received concerning the performance of an Elementary Administrator.

Motion passed at 8:28 pm

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

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: M. Ferguson moved, seconded by P. Johnston, to return to Public Session.

Motion passed at 9:25 pm

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: M. Ferguson moved, seconded by P. Johnston, that the Board of Education adjourn the April 26, 2017 Board of Education Meeting.

The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Kathy Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)