

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017 – 7:00 PM

Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

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

RECOGNITIONS

- Teacher Appreciation Week, May 7-13.
 - R. Pietrafesa thanked the teachers of DPS for everything they do each and every day for students.
- National School Nurses Day, May 10
 - R. Pietrafesa stated that district nurses will attend the Board meeting on 5/24/17 for their recognition.
- Major Nancy Bates, a 1984 West Point graduate, officially presented the appointments to West Point to students Joseph Waldron and Michael Halas on behalf of the President of the United States. Major Bates stated that both students received a fully funded four year scholarship which includes tuition, room, board, military uniforms, computer, full medical and dental coverage, life insurance, a monthly salary, and generous military and academic individual development opportunities that will send them across the country and abroad. There were 244 candidates in CT to apply for West Point. Only 19 candidates were eventually admitted or approximately 8%. This is also the national average selection rate, one of the most competitive collegiate selection rates in the country. Danbury High School has not had any students appointed to West Point in recent years. It is extremely unusual to have two appointed at the same time and truly an evening of celebration. It is also a testament to the quality of the education and leadership that DHS provides to its students.
- CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE) Student Leadership Awards:
 - Broadview Middle School – Grace Dyckman and Iain McDuff were recognized by Principal Edie Thomas.
 - Rogers Park Middle School – Riya Patel and Conner Duhamel were recognized by Principal Patricia Joaquim.
 - Westside Middle School – Zoey Kallianiotis and Alek Czereszkiwicz were recognized by Associate Principal Dr. Kristy Zaleta.
 - Danbury High School – Amal El-Mogharbel and Benjamin Shuster were recognized by Principal Dan Donovan
 - Alternative Center – Yolaine Ortiz and Gianni Alessandro were recognized by teacher Rob Melillo.
- Dr. Harry Rosvally, selected by the CT Science Teachers Association (CSTA) to be this year's recipient of the CT Science Educator Fellow (CSEF) Award.

- Dr. Glass recognized Dr. Rosvally in receiving the highest award that the state could give. Dr. Rosvally has made contributions to science across the state and holds many memberships to science programs. Along with his CSEF Award, Dr. Rosvally received a sterling silver pin where past science educator fellows placed it on his lapel in style of a pinning ceremony. Dr. Rosvally then took the moment to recognize the following students who went to the State Finals for Invention Convention:
- Invention Convention State Finals ‘Recognized Inventor’ Award Winners:
 - Ryan Ceylan of Stadley Rough School developed a net slingshot that he could use to draw back and send any sort of ball into the air. Ryan developed it because his mom had a sore shoulder and this would enable her to play catch with him.
 - Juliet Dahlstrom of South Street School developed a solar phone cover. The flip cover keeps the sun from shining onto the phone while using the sun to power the phone at the same time.
 - Faith Evans of South Street School created an emergency teddy bear. This teddy bear has a flashlight in its belly, a pocket in the back for water bottle and snacks and a compass in the paw. Faith has been selected to head to the Nationals with her invention.
 - Nico LaRosa of King Street Intermediate developed a device to protect the hand/arm from pecking chickens when collecting eggs. Nico has been selected to head to Nationals with his invention.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Hawley moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 17-58 through 17-62, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

- 4/26/17 Superintendent Evaluation
- 4/26/17 Board Meeting
- 5/1/17 Special Meeting (Exp)
- 5/3/17 Special Meeting (Exp)

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

- Accept Leave of Absence: Jennifer Ondek
- Accept Resignations: Tyler Ferreira, Shivani Soni
- New Hires: See Exhibit 17-62

Motion passed at 7:48 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Principal Dr. Sharon Epple and Art Teacher (Administrative Intern) Rachel Wade of Pembroke Elementary school presented the following achievements:

- Reviewed STAR test results. The window is still open for testing so they will be analyzing again

once makeups are complete.

- Grades 1 and 5 have surpassed their end year goal in literacy.
- In January, 15 out of 19 Kindergarteners improved their blending skills on the Phonemic Awareness test. 13 out of 19 increased their segmenting scores. Five out of eight ELLs increased their blending and segmenting skills.
- Grade 2 surpassed their end year goal in math.
- Grade 3 improved steadily and just missed their goal.
- Percentage of grade 1 students at or above proficiency on District Math benchmark has increased from 41% to 82%, surpassing their end year goal of 51%.
- Visual Arts events such as Color Day, school wide art show, ice cream social and a staff pottery auction.
- Spring concert where each grade performs.
- Received 26 ukuleles and 26 keyboards through Little Kids Rock.
- All grade levels attend library/media once a week for instruction in library use, safe internet use, website quality, computer skills and reading activities.
- New collection of nonfiction books in the memory of former DPS Teacher, Mrs. Libby Laws, thanks to donations from friends and family.
- PE department received a large grant from DEF and Mayor Boughton where they were able to purchase heartrate monitors and audio-visual equipment to project Polar Go Fit app during classes. Students will be able to monitor their performance in real time while projected on to the wall. Students will learn about target heart rate and exercises to maintain that level.
- Kids Marathon in progress with 33 participants for eight weeks.
- Participated in Jump Rope for Heart.
- The only elementary school that provides in-house basketball program for K-2 and 3-5. This program has 47 participants and volunteers. The DHS Boys' Basketball players provided a clinic for the players.
- New PAWS ticket recognition (PBIS Team) where all grades are highly interested in being recognized and earning tickets. Students will work to fill up a school-wide container and choose a school-wide reward (i.e. extra recess, Hat Day).
- Pinwheels for Peace.
- PTO- True Partners in Pembroke using final cart of chromebooks.
- Instructional Leadership Team made up of grade level representatives, SPED teacher, literacy and math coaches, special area teacher and Principal. Developing, reflecting upon and adjusting SIP. They are analyzing student data to inform and improve instruction.
- Instructional Support Team (also known as CST). Made up of grade level teacher coordinator, literacy coach, math coach, SPED teacher and Principal. Analyze individual student data to improve interventions. Monitoring interventions to track student growth.
- School Governance Council - repaved parking lot, new security entrance, installation of outside classroom. Adaptive playground is a future goal.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Teava Mercado from DHS presented the following notes to the Board:

- Seniors at DHS are winding down. There is a whirlwind of emotions about graduation on June 19th.
- AP exams are coming to an end with only a few left to go.
- SATs were held on April 4, 2017 for Juniors. Scores have recently come in.
- For Teacher Appreciation Week, students provided staff with chocolate, lunch, breakfast and

letters from students in Advisory to be given out on 5/12/17 with ice cream.

- Construction of the new building is making great progress.

PRESENTATION

DHS Graduation Report presented by Principal Dan Donovan and Associate Principal Dr. Meghan Martins. The following points were discussed:

- Most of the students who are dropping out are over aged in terms of credits earned and will not be able to graduate with 21 credits by the age of 21.
- Some students have not earned enough credits by the end of the given school year due to chronic absenteeism or significant skill deficits upon entering high school.
- Overall graduation rate is 80.3%. If you add students who are on a five year plan, that adds an additional 9.5%.
- Students who go to Adult Ed count as a dropout.
- Students who move to another district but do not enroll are considered a dropout.
- The Cabinet has spent a substantial amount of time dealing with students who have a higher amount of emotional and social challenges.
- ELL learners are largest group. Some ELL students come in with extremely interrupted schooling.
- DHS created a Newcomers Class for student with no formal schooling, erratic formal schooling or interrupted formal schooling. Dr. Glass asked board to consider giving students an extra year in middle school level.
- Students who are 17 years old are being encouraged to go to adult ed because it's a better fit for them.
- There is an increase in number of students with significant socio-emotional issues and lack of support.
- ELL services are not required and some students decide to move out of the program without achieving an appropriate exit score. These students often still then have a notable language barrier.
- ELL students are placed accordingly to their LAS Link scores and in some cases if we don't move them to the next ELS level, they will age out.
- State law states that if an ELL student has 30 months or less until they are eligible to graduate, they are not permitted to be in a bilingual class.
- Some of our drop out rates are because students have to work or care for family members.
- The rigor of academic program at the high school level has been increased and the traditional tracks have been condensed thereby making it more challenging to be a student who is not coming to DHS on grade level.
- 89% of our DHS grads who enter college are going back for a second year of college. This is evidence that students are being well taught and well prepared in high school.
- The Twilight Program, which was originally designed for grade 9 students who were under credited, has been expanded to include students who have failed semester one or who have arrived late in the school year. This is an extended learning time for special populations. Students are offered the opportunity to stay after school or do work online. Program is run with funding through Title 3 grant. ESL section created for new immigrants. The credit clock starts as soon as a student enters as freshman. This can be a very big change for some students, especially those new to the country.
- STAR scores also being monitored closely for the growth as compared to students throughout the nation. Real time indicators are showing that we are moving in the right direction.

- D. Donovan has been in contact with some competitive districts with higher graduation rates to see what they are doing to achieve those rates. Mr. Donovan also stated that while those districts have higher graduation rates, our SAT scores are even.
- School Governance Committee created an ESL student engagement subcommittee with an ESL teacher who is now conducting surveys to see how connected and supported students feel in the school and why. They have found that there are higher satisfaction rates with ELL students versus English speaking students.
- There was a school wide fair this year with bilingual tours led by students to welcome families. There was a huge positive feedback from parents on helping them feel welcome.
- The Advisory program has been revised so students could be in Advisory with teachers who speak the student's language.
- A "cohort" is a student who arrives right at the beginning of the freshman year. This does not include students who arrive mid-year. There were 76 new arrivals in January, February and March of 2017. 38 of these students had zero credits.
- The poverty rate has doubled in past eight years at DHS and despite that, we are still maintaining.
- K. Truchsess stated that through the PPT process we are determining that students with more significant needs need more time at DHS and to be in high school for 6 years.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. 2017-2018 Budget

Dr. Pascarella stated that since the district has not received definites on the budget, the district will not hire any new staff, other than teacher positions that are needed in the classroom. The district cannot hire people in, keep our staff whole and then cut them out if we find out we have to cut staff. The district will not add new positions and will save as many positions as possible. This will need to be discussed at finance meeting.

B. High School Construction Update

J. Martino stated that 55% of the steel at DHS is done. A meetings was held regarding the FFE and Blackbox Theater. Everything is on target. Black Box is under construction with two small rooms and a stage. Good size for some of the smaller events. Next study will be at ACE. Also looking at study of adding portables to WSMSA to create a small academy to approach 750 to 800 students. If all goes well with Sacred Heart with sprinkling systems we may be able to relocate some classrooms out of elementary schools. The City Fire Marshall is checking National Fire Safety standards to see if second floor of Sacred Heart can be used for these classrooms.

C. Danbury Day at State Capitol May 16, 12:00-3:00 p.m

M. Ferguson stated that Danbury Day will be held on 5/16/17 with a Danbury Fair theme. The purpose behind it is to highlight our city and the unique needs and challenges we have here. It's an event particularly for legislatures so Danbury can tell our story to members of the General Assembly and people who work in the Capitol. Four long time Danbury residents will be honored as well as our six schools of distinction.

D. Small Improvement Grant

J. Martino stated that the application is due to the state on May 30, 2017. Looking at exploring to fix the tennis courts at DHS. Further discussion will be held at next Board meeting.

Dr. Pascarella stated that there will be a Charter School meeting on May 11, 2017.

K. Thompson stated that there are three panels for the open Principal positions. Screening has been done at the cabinet level of well over 100 applicants. Each school will have 5 to 6 candidates with panels between 14 to 18 people. All candidates have been contacted. Of the 18 applicants that are being interviewed, 2 - 3 are internal.

INFORMATION

A. Agreement with CIFIC re: dental services

J. Martino said we have a proposed agreement contract has been drawn up with CIFIC. There will be an addition of a mobile clinic. Current service will be expanded beyond that.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A. Expulsion Hearings - R. Pietrafesa stated that he would like to see a running rotation of people doing expulsion hearings as it currently seems to be the same members at the hearings. R. Pietrafesa will send out email to see if we can get a rolling group to do expulsion hearings.

B. Memorial Day Parade - R. Pietrafesa asked for a hard commitment on who is attending the parade. R. Pietrafesa, Dr. Pascarella and P. Johnston will be present.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

R. Hawley asked for a Finance Committee Meeting. Decided that the meeting will be held on May 15, 2017 at 7:45 am.

M. Ferguson invited Board members to attend the annual DSABC Awards and Scholarship Breakfast which will be held on May 18, 2017 at 7:45 am at the Amber Room Colonnade.

ADJOURNMENT

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting of May 10, 2017 and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Kathy Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)