

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

Eileen Alberts, Board chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa

Absent: Holly Robinson

Also Present: Drs. Pascarella and Glass, Kim Thompson and Joe Martino

RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Pascarella began to explain the Award that the CT Association of Boards of Education created. He explained that it was an award based on Leadership. He continued to say that it was a good thing that students can put in their college application and an honor to receive it. Dr. Pascarella also explained how the students were being presented. Each student will be presented by the school administrator or staff and then began with Mr. Robbs, Broadview Principal.

Mr. Robbs presented the students from Broadview:

Caitlyn Van Tronk excelled academically and enjoys playing softball with the Danbury Crush travel team. She also plays basketball with PAL; received numerous awards, including Principal's award. She volunteers tremendously in school as well as in the community. Caitlyn hosted Kindness Week at Rogers Park Middle School, helped pack rice and beans at ARC, packed food bags at the Hillside Food Pantry, participated in Ben's Bell Program, made cards for Veterans and assisted with the Rake and Bake program through Sr. Gregory's parish. She also participates in the theater program, religious education and is a Girl Scout. He also mentioned about the trip to Florida through the Global Endeavor Program that Caitlyn participated in and when she came back she commented of how much altruism she learned about giving back. She said that she learned that it was the journey and not the destination. She would like to become a History teacher.

Matthew Henry also excelled academically. He enjoys playing baseball and his clarinet. He looks forward to participating in the Danbury High School Band. Mathew received student of the month awards in 6th and 7th grades and a student award in 8th grade. He volunteers at a nursing home assisting patients and helps set up and run a carnival twice a year. Mathew is involved in the school's jazz band and CPEP program. He also is involved in the production of a play in his religious education class. He wants to be a doctor or surgeon.

Val Tracey presented the students from Rogers Park:

Abigail Gumpright is a member of the National Junior Honor Society, and maintains excellent grades. She participated in the Musical Theater production at Rogers Park, mostly recently as Lumiere in Beauty and the Beast Jr. in March. Abby is involved in Girls Scouts, tap dance, piano, basketball, and soccer. Her ambition is to be a social worker as she enjoys working with and helping people.

Jose Mendez is Vice-president of the Student Council. He has helped organize various school events including dances and a dodge ball tournament. Jose has earned the privilege of being a office worker and he is truly one of the most polite and hard working students she has ever met. Jose works hard in maintaining good grades in all his classes. He is a member of the Police Explorers, which entails many community service activities. Jose looks forward to a service career such as police officer or doctor.

Hillary Singer, Melissa Augustyn and Curtis Darragh presented the Westside Academy students.

Rashmi Pai is currently in the National Junior Honor Society. They do many community projects, one of which they did was a community book drive at Mill Ridge. The other, they brought Ben's Bell into the school. She excels in all her classes and is currently in High Honors. She is known to stay after class to continue discussions with teachers and help them out with whatever needs to be done. Rashmi is a member of the yearbook committee and she is also involved with the Mural/Art club and the school play. She is one of the members of the Robotics team. They competed in the winter and did very well. Rashmi swims, skates and plays tennis. She loves to read and hone her drawing skills. Rashmi is a talented musician; she plays piano and violin community piano player. High Honors. She is one of the members in the Robotics team. She is hard working and pleasant.

Braeden Callaghan is a very pleasant and hardworking student. He is the first to help out others as well as the first to bring in his homework. His grades are amazing. Braeden keeps busy with school, band, church, community service and gymnastics. He practices gymnastics every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for two and a half hours. His hard work and dedication has allowed him to compete in level eight. He consistently makes it to the state meet and has even made it to the regional competition, where gymnasts from all over New England compete. Brady plays the tuba in the school band and Jazz band. Braeden auditioned and earned a seat in the Middle School Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra. He can also sing. He is part of the Peer Mediation Club and is active in church and sings in his church's choir. Braeden has also sung and acted in the role of Amahl in West Conn's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* opera. Braeden also likes to perform for people who can't make it to his concerts. For the past four years, he has sung and played tuba for various concerts for the Riverwoods Continuing Care Residential Community in Exeter, New Hampshire.

Laura Blake presented the students from ACE:

Jonathan McKenzie has done an excellent job creating an academic career for himself. He has had some pretty big hardships, but still has maintained an excellent grade point average. He has been accepted to Naugatuck for the fall. He helped start an organization after school to help keep seniors stay up, which means he helped tutor other seniors so their grade point average stayed up so they would all graduate as one group. Jonathan also works full time and continues to keep excellent grades and will graduate with an acceptance letter to college. His community service consists of wrapping cookies to bring to the shelter and is also part of the "Clean up Danbury" project. Not only did he clean around the school and West Conn he also beautified the school by planting flowers.

Shanisha Watson-Danzy is constantly upping her average every semester and striving to make sure that average stays up there. She has participated in community service projects. Today afterschool they were wrapping cookies that would be delivered to the shelter. ACE is part of a program in collaboration with Henry Abott Tech on culinary and CAN. She is also in the CNA program; she has been in that program since it started and will leave with experience and hopefully will be taking the CNA exam this summer. She also has her acceptance letter to Naugatuck Valley. She also was a volunteer for the "Clean up Danbury" Project around the school and West Conn. She also helped beautify the school. She is a peer leader and most students ask for her to be their leader.

Dan Donovan presented the students from Danbury High School:

Sophia Pompilio has been an office worker for the past two years. She is involved in athletics. In Field Hockey she was named captain, BOG executive council member for her junior year and BOG President in her senior year. In the community she was involved in our DECA program that played an instrumental role in influencing 376,000 people with regards to driving also known as *Celebrate My Drive* contest. In DECA she placed first, which means top ten of twenty percent in Nationals. She also raised awareness and collected money for Ann's Place. She will be attending Arizona State University in the fall with a double major in business communication and business management.

Rahul Malayappan has a 4.67 GPA. A few of his accomplishments are as follows: he is the President of the National Honor Society; President of the National Math Honor Society; President of the Math Team; a captain of

a chess team; class valedictorian; also received a perfect score on the SAT; he is heavily involved in the Robotics team where he was the lead programmer and was in 16th place in the world championships in Kentucky; Outside the school he is in the all state orchestra for the violin; associate director (associate concertmaster) of the Danbury Community Orchestra and placed first violinist in the Danbury Symphony Orchestra; he will traveling to Washington, DC on Saturday because the Atlantic Magazine puts out an essay contest worldwide and Rahul is one of the top three finalists. He will be traveling with his parents and Mr. Porcelli to Washington to see if he is the finalist. In the fall Rahul will be attending UC Berkley in California.

Everyone applauded and pictures were taken.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - David Metrena moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-70 through 16-75, as recommended:

A. MINUTES

4/27/16 Superintendent Evaluation Committee
4/27/16 Board Meeting
5/2/16 Policy Committee
5/4/16 Board Workshop

B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence: Denise Bard

Accept Resignations: Steven Aguayo, Morqtika Andrews, Kristyn Brown, Carina Chelso, Deborah Downs, Maria Guaman, Bryan Luchsinger, Timothy Luchsinger, Phetsamone Phengsavath, Hui-Chan Yang

Accept Retirements: Thomas Agnes, 14 years
Rosalia DesBiens, 43 years
Helga Jensen-Ruopp, 30 years
Mary Marston, 27 years, 5 months
Anita McAteer, 28 years
Patricia Seeley, 17 years

New Hires: See Exhibit 16-74

C. DONATION

Accept \$2,500 donation from UTC Aerospace Systems Community and Charitable Funds Committee to the Danbury High School Robotics Team 5150

Eileen Alberts thanked all the retirees for their service.

Motion carried at 7:36 pm

INFORMATION

- RPMS trip to Puerto Rico, January 12-17, 2017

- Revisions to Policy #7-143.1 – Medications Administered by School Personnel
Ms. Molinaro said there are minor changes to the policy. School personal would now be able to delegate to administer injections and medications for diabetes, allergic reactions or epileptic condition. This is more for before and after school and field trips.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Rogers Park Middle School – Patricia Stevens, Adrian Solis and Charles Duff

Pat Stevens introduced herself and said she was there to give a few highlights about what has been going on at Rogers Park. She said that it sometimes is difficult when you look back and see what they have been doing all year and there is a lot to summarize. She said that the key word for today is collaboration and teamwork with Adrian and Charlie to come here and talk, including a small video that Charlie put together. She stated that the Beauty and the Beast production was very successful. Also the Special Ed Department is working on their Unified Theater production entitled “Be the Change”. We will be able to see the production on May 24. They will be working on their social skills and communication skills. She mentioned that they have a Garden Project and they are piloting this year a collaboration between the Science Department, World Language and Health, where they will be planting seeds and learning about the sister plants, talking about healthy eating habits and also incorporating culture things such as recipes using the crops that were grown in the garden. The Food Festival that will be coming from this will be part of next year’s cultural celebration. We are starting with the sixth graders and bringing it all up to the eighth graders. They are also preparing a section of the garden for a Community Garden. They also built a sun wheel in the garden and is now seen by satellite on Google Earth.

Adrian Solis introduced himself then began to tell the Board about more activities. The Social Studies Department is putting together a Museum night on Thursday, May 19th, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm to showcase 6th, 7th and 8th grade Project based learning. For the 6th grade the theme is Civilizations, for 7th grade Civil War and for 8th grade WWII. Also the Math Department hosted two successful Family Nights, PI night and Family Math night. The Pi night was on March 14 with hundreds of students from all three middle schools participating in games, contests and activities dealing with PI. The Guidance Department put together a Career Fair with forty two presenters from all various careers including Mayor Boughton. The 7th and 8th grade students enjoyed the experience learning about potential career options. The National Junior Honor Society raised close to \$1,000 for various causes which included DAWS, Make a Wish and canned food drive. The students combined for several hundred hours of community service in Danbury. The PE department, with some volunteer teachers, has organized a variety of sports tournaments for the students; a volleyball tournament, basketball tournament and a soccer tournament. The winners of this soccer tournament will be playing against Broadview on May 24 at Broadview. He invited anyone that would like to see the tournament. The Rogers Park Governance Council will be holding a Beautification Day for the school on Saturday, June 4 at 9:00 am. They will have teachers, students, parents and community workers all volunteering their time to make the school more beautiful.

Charles Duff introduced himself. He said that he was at a Board meeting last year where Dr. Glass gave a presentation about learning vision for the future and was glad to say that Rogers Park had a pretty good start thanks to Dr. Glass’s support. He hopes that in the years to come that he will continue to provide us with support this wonderful vision in the changing of the Media Center to become much more collaborative, attractive and fun for the kids. He showed a slide to the Board of what they have added in the Media Center/Learning Commons, such as a green screen and filming, labeled all shelves in English, Portuguese and Spanish, Media Scapes and Writable Surfaces. He then showed a small video of the things that go on at Rogers Park Middle School.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS representatives Sophia Pompilio and Taylor Remme gave the Board an update of upcoming events: DHS Production of “In the Heights” was a huge success. The play ran from Thursday through Saturday and they sold out on Friday night; the AP exams began on Monday, May 2 and will continue until Friday, May 13; the National Honor Society held their induction on Monday, May 9th for the upcoming seniors; Junior Prom will take place this Friday at 7:00 pm at the Portuguese Center; Senior prom is on May 27, also starting at 7:00 pm at the Amber Room; finally the variety show will take place on May 20 at 7:00 pm in the Danbury High School auditorium.

PRESENTATION

RE-Imagine High School Project:

Dr. Pascarella began by telling the Board that he wanted to give the Board a sense of what they were doing. He said that the Board gets tired into looking at the operational and deficits and things that we can't do because of limited resources, but the simplest thing to do is to move ahead and challenge the resources. There is something going on in Connecticut that is special, it's national and we were selected to participate in the program out of 19 districts. He mentioned that they heard this evening a discussion about the project based learning; the exploration, the garden work and the learning commons. These are branches of the concepts that are retained in the high school. The most difficult level of change nationally is the high school. He mentioned that he will show a small video clip of reimagining what high school could be. He said that we are not there yet and have little components. They are focusing on this for next year to work with other high schools and get Danbury ahead. He asked that the Board think about this. The video was then shown to the Board.

Meghan Martins introduced herself and said that they submitted an application to try and highlight to the selection committee that we have attempted to reimagine within our resources. They talked about the college opportunity that they got off the ground as well as another high school program which is a flexible way for us to help students regain credits before they fall short for the end of the school year. We were selected for that. She and Dan Donovan met with a group. They have two sophomore students working on the project with them. The students began by a survey or their peers asking three simple questions: What do they love about the high school, what do they hate about the high school and if they were in charge what would they change. This is to try to get a sense of the students where do they want us to go. The big push that the high has had is the idea of being student centered. She stated that the video did a very good job in illustrating how the teachers centered. She stated that everyone has a solid idea of what high school is, but they started to think about changing it and asking, was it wrong for me? The group of the students that they have been working with has been really helpful in this regard. She said that they were preparing students for careers that they don't really understand and that is a tremendous charge preparing kids to do things that don't even exist. The focus for us has been on skills so students have skills to be able to adapt in whatever career they choose. She said she was excited about the opportunity to collaborate with other high schools. They will present their recommendations. There will be legislators and other people of influence there.

Dan Donovan then mentioned that the one thing they have discussed was standing in school and, as seen on the video, the school is run by adults, by a calendar, by water, etc. so they really talked to them this "do whatever you want with it" and the students lit up and said they really wanted to be part of it and were very excited. He mentioned he was not a valedictorian and didn't have perfect SAT scores, but to be able to re-engage students to be personalized in their learning is something to look forward to.

Dr. Pascarella ended by telling the Board that the state of Connecticut has already put in some structures and therefore has been against those graduation requirements. But it is what it is because everyone knows how to run a high school. They are willing to look at some changes. In Danbury, the things that we do in the Exploration Academy, the Magnet School, in online learning will all start to come together. This doesn't start in the high school. It starts in kindergarten and if he could show the Board the demographic of kids coming in, they would be horrified. The amount of kids needing aid is incredible. And yet our teachers persevere every day. They differentiate instruction and they try, but there is a plan and they have to get there. Dr. Pascarella told the Board that he needed their support because it cannot happen with just the three of them, but yes with everyone. He believed this was a good setting stone for next year's budget.

R. Jannelli commented that he believes that Danbury has the gift and/or the talent to make this a success. We have the student body that can give their opinion and he can be very impressed with that. He says that every week he sees talent here from presentations of schools. He backed what Dr. Pascarella said that there are always many students that come here with challenges, in spite of that they excel as a group. As a testament of that on Friday he saw the DHS production, *In the Heights*, it was a magnificent play. He was surprised that most of the cast of the play was the first time that they were on stage. He truly believes with all this talent and energy we have that this could be a success. Yes resources are a necessity but if they have the backing behind them, it will be successful.

E. Alberts mentioned that our staff is excellent as well and that they do amazing things. She thanked Dan Donovan and Meghan Martins for coming and explaining the Re-Image High School Project.

ACTION ITEMS

DHS trip to Ireland and Scotland

MOTION: David Metrena moved, seconded by Pat Johnston, that the Board of Education approve the DHS trip to Ireland and Scotland, April 7-15, 2017

In favor: E. Alberts, F. Karrat, R. Hawley, D. Metrena, P. Johnston, G. Cooper, R. Pietrafesa, M. Ferguson

Opposed: K. Molinaro

Abstention: R. Jannelli

Motion carried at 8:07 pm

DHS trip to Costa Rica

MOTION: David Metrena moved, seconded by Michael Ferguson, that the Board of Education approve the DHS trip to Costa Rica, April 6-14, 2017

In favor: E. Alberts, F. Karrat, R. Hawley, D. Metrena, P. Johnston, G. Cooper, R. Pietrafesa, M. Ferguson

Opposed: K. Molinaro

Abstention: R. Jannelli

Motion carried at 8:08 pm

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

DHS School Governance Council Meeting, May 26th, 7:00 pm, at DHS Media Center

Dr. Pascarella mentioned that the DHS Governance Council invited him to this meeting to dialogue with them and strategizing how they can better support the Board in their efforts in incurring their resources. They have been active with Gary Boccaccio and fundraising. They invited the new Lobbyist. Dr. Pascarella invited the PTO co-presidents to come so they can start thinking about next year. Next year will be an incredibly viable year for us to have our voice there. And for the first time it has made a difference, or at least he believes that our voices in Danbury have been heard. Dr. Pascarella invited the Board if they would like to come and listen. They have been a really supportive group and in Mr. Boccaccio’s point of view, a tremendous in resource. E. Alberts asked if it could be recorded. It will be checked by the video recorder tech and he will get back to Dr. Pascarella.

Legislative Update

Dr. Pascarella asked if anyone knew what the Chaos theory was because that is what he feels is happening. He said everyday it is changing. They are talking about all of the budgets and all of the line items, the reductions, etc. Until the implemented is done and you actually know what it is we’re getting and the city knows what they’re getting, then we can go about the business of figuring out the resources and the reductions. The City is open-minded to helping where they can. But, again, the City does not know yet either. It is totally confusing. They have looked at various reductions and changes, including the high school requirements. And if this goes through and the seniors will need the 25 credits to graduate and they cannot, we might have a number of students not graduating therefore increasing more expenses to get them through. Although he believes that they are looking out

for Danbury, he said if we look too far ahead we get depressed. He stated that he could not tell you that he will cut programs, but we will have to look at what does it mean to counter reduction. Could we re-imagine the High School in this town and not be pulled down by saying that teachers make too much, that they don't require much, there are too many secretaries. He said this was nonsense and that we have teachers that are hardworking, teaching classes of 28 or 29 students. Possibly by tomorrow afternoon we might have something more concrete.

Joe Martino said they are still working on the budget. He explained that there is \$850,000 for ECS, but Mark Boughton is losing about \$600,000 in transportation money, there's a cut in one grant of about at least \$125,000, another grant of about \$150,000. So it's a loss depending on how the Mayor addresses the transportation money. That grant does not come directly to the Board.

R. Jannelli asked what the City's initial budget was. Dr. Pascarella responded \$2.2 million. R. Jannelli asked if what is up in the air for us is the \$850,000 ECS. J. Martino responded yes and depending also on the transportation money. R. Jannelli also asked if they were all in agreement to wait for the amount. Dr. Pascarella said yes because as of right now, he couldn't tell anyone the amount.

Pat Johnston said that there was talk that Hartford might be pushing it out to the election. J. Martino responded that he heard they want to resolve this before elections and get it done as fast as they can.

DISCUSSION

Budget Update

E. Alberts asked if there was any good news to tell. J. Martino said there was a cut of \$400,000 in Health insurance.

Dr. Pascarella said that they had a strategy for the additional Module building at Shelter Rock and they are working with the city. Can we buy them, yes we can. They are going to solicit bids and get an idea of costs. They are going to do the best they can because Shelter Rock is strapped. Then we have the problem for King Street because of Kennedy Center complex, the new downtown project.

P. Johnston asked if we had an estimate of students coming into the schools. J. Martino replied that they have hired a firm to do an enrollment study and they will be presenting a report to the Board in September.

E. Alberts asked again if there was some good news and Dr. Pascarella asked Robin Provey to give the Board some good news. Robin began to look for the information but told the Board that the "Say Something and Start With Hello" from DHS won an award. E. Alberts read the letter from Connecticut Association of Schools that the program won the 2016 Challenge of Education Citizenship Award, a state-wide winner.

Everyone applauded and Dr. Pascarella added that they won over 162 towns. It was a tremendous accomplishment.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

E. Alberts announced that it will be her last meeting for this year. She will be going to surgery on Wednesday. She was upset that she will not be participating in the graduations. She asked that someone go to the DHS graduation as well as the two middle schools. Also someone to participate as a judge at the History Museum at Rogers Park on May 19th at 5:00 pm and at Broadview on May 26th at 6:00 pm. E. Alberts asked if anyone knew why there wasn't one at Westside. Robin responded that Westside did a National History Day earlier in the year.

Memorial Day Parade Participation: Dr. Pascarella says he is trying to get the wagon. He asked how many are going. A total of 5 responded. Dr. Pascarella will find a ride. The Parade will be on May 30.

E. Alberts reminded them of the 2016-2017 Board Meeting Schedule dates along with the Graduation dates, including Adult Ed.

E. Alberts told the Board that she asked Dr. Pascarella that they had to do a Board Self-evaluation that is done annually. Dr. Pascarella had suggested the last Wednesday of the month of June. Dr. Pascarella confirmed that Mr. Carol, out of Hartford, will be doing the evaluation. E. Albert asked the Board if they prefer last Wednesday of June or beginning of September. It was the consensus of having the Self-Evaluation in September.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

K. Molinaro said that the Policy Committee would like to ask the Board for a consensus whether or not they would like to opt-out of giving permission to students who go abroad and only give it to the Superintendent. It was agreed to go back to Committee and brought forth as a regular policy change. Dr. Pascarella said he will work on the mock policy and bring it at 6:00 pm before the next Board meeting on the 25th.

M. Ferguson told the Board that next Thursday, May 19, will be the DSABC annual scholarship breakfast at the Amber Room at 7:45 am. He was asked to see if anyone would be going. R. Pietrafesa said he would go.

G. Cooper told the Board that the Superintendent Evaluation meeting was a great meeting and thanked her co-workers. The next meeting will be on May 23rd at 6:00. It will be a short meeting.

G. Cooper told the Board that on May 18 will be Mr. Robbs retirement party at the Amber Room at 5:30 pm. Gladys will be there.

Dr. Pascarella also mentioned that Gary Boccaccio Retirement party will be on May 23 at Ethan Allen at 4:00 pm. He also said that if anyone would like to go to Mr. Boccaccio or Mr. Robb's retirement to let him know and he will make sure to communicate they were going.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none

PUBLIC SESSION - none

ADJOURNMENT

R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by P. Johnston, that the Board of Education adjourn its May 11, 2016 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(Meeting was video recorded)