

# DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 7:00 p.m.*

**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

## CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## ROLL CALL

Eileen Alberts asked Kathleen Molinaro to do the roll call.

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo

Absent: David Metrena

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

## RECOGNITIONS

### CABE Student Leadership Award Winners

The Board Chairperson read the criteria for being selected as a CABE Student Leadership Award Winner and handed out CABE certificates to the following students:

Danbury High School:	Danielle Biele	Nicholas Goetz
Alternative Center:	Natasha Mendoza	John King
Rogers Park Middle School:	Sarah Bradsell	Daniel Simmons
Broadview Middle School:	Kristen Bogolawski	John Hoddinott

The Board congratulated the CABE Leadership students.

### CT Invention Convention Winners (Recognized Inventors)

Dr. Harry Rosvally told the Board that this has been a successful year at the Convention. There were more students participating this year than in the past. The following students were the finalists in the Danbury Invention Convention on March 20<sup>th</sup> and advanced to the State Level Invention Convention at UCONN on May 3rd: Those with an asterisk next to their names were Recognized Inventors at the State Level and were awarded certificates and prize money.

### **CT INVENTION CONVENTION – MAY 3, 2014**

#### Broadview Middle School:

Anna Spalding "Zip Clip"

#### Rogers Park Middle School: 6th Grade STEM

DeAvia Bishop "Mail Rider"

\* Braeden Callaghan "Flag-A-Server"

Aidan Castricone "Butter Pump"

- Jaden Cazorla "Amazing Awakening"
- CJ Cianflone "The Cool Helmet"
- \* Clarissa Lugo-Commons "Mobile-Change"
- Alex Meys "Automatic Dog Washer"
- Jesse Patton "Push 'N' Brush"
- \* Jack Pompilio "Easy Carrier 3000"
- Joe Stefanelli "Medi Sip and Smile"
- Nicholas Taylor "Ladder Caddy"

Rogers Park Middle School: 7th Grade STEM:

- Rebecca Benedetti "Don't Forget"
- \* Ashley Corrie "T-Toy"
- \* Sophia Folino "The Guardian"
- \* Nathaniel Hornik "The Yard Net"
- Christopher Hwang "The Gym Bag Air Circulator"
- Madison Iomazzo "Lash Lens"
- Jacob Laham "Keep 'Em In Tune"
- Lauren Pudelka "All in One Trip"
- Justin Solimine "Baseball Dryer"

AIS Magnet School:

Maggie Breault "Vextbook"

Great Plain Elementary School:

Lorenzo DeLuca "Cane Helper"

Hayestown Avenue Elementary School:

Sarah Bekkali "The Use-It-All"  
Kanchan Suresh "Pencil Problem Solver"

Pembroke Elementary School

- \* Grace Carey "Snowy Boot Cozy"
- \* Liam Clark "Police Direction Gloves"
- Sakura Claudio "The Spray Comb"
- Jennifer Grant "Dog Dryer"
- Eddy Jimenez "Stuffed Backpack"
- Gianna Taft "Face Protector"

South Street Elementary School:

Surraya Poham "Magni-eye Bookmark"

Shelter Rock Elementary School:

- \* Audrey Hinh "Thin Heat"
- Natalia Ruiz Loera "Stuffles"

Stadley Rough Elementary School:

- \* Anne Marie Hickey "That's Cold"

Dr. Rosvally said additional information is available at the following sites:  
<http://blog.ctnews.com/offbeat/2014/05/07/danbury-students-excel-at-invention-convention/>

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 14-96 through 14-102 as recommended:

**MINUTES**

- 4-21-14 Policy Committee Meeting
- 4-23-14 Superintendent Evaluation Meeting
- 4-23-14 Board Meeting
- 4-29-14 Special Board Meeting
- 4-29-14 Special Board Meeting
- 5-6-14 Special Board Meeting

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

Accept Leaves of Absence: Susan DeMato Linda Harris

Accept Resignations: Marisol Vasquez Albert Rivero  
Cathy Bruno Barbara D’Addario  
Lauryn Saunders Harry Trohalis (coach only)

New Hires 4/18/14-5/8/14:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>NON-CERTIFIED Subject</b>
Jose Almonte	DECEC	P/T Custodian
Eileen Martino	DHS	Girls Track Coach
Heidi Gonzalez	Ells	.5 Tech Para
Melissa Newsome	Park Ave	CRC Enrichment Assoc.
Lisa Tagliavento	Hayes	Grade 1 L/T Sub

**Motion carried at 7:15 pm.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** - None

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Danbury High

Nick Goetz, DHS Representative, told the Board that the Senior Prom will be held at the Matrix Center on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. May 17<sup>th</sup> will be graduation day. May 31 celebration CoDA from 11:00-5:00 in the court yard at DHS and the induction of the National Honor Society will be on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the auditorium.

## ACE

Natasha Mendoza, ACE Representative, told the Board that DHS students are visiting ACE during the month of May as part of the acceptance process for the fall. ACE students will be presenting Capstone Projects at the annual CAASP Conference for alternative school programs. Eligible ACE students will be able to participate in an upcoming white water rafting trip on June, 4, 5 in Lake George. ACE will celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this Saturday at Hatter's Park from 2:00-6:00 pm.

## PRESENTATION

### Danbury High School Governance Council:

Gary Boccaccio introduced Devang Patel, Chairman of the DHS School Governance Council, who distributed a SGC-BOE Update document to the Board. He highlighted the topics: goals accomplishments, the future as well as areas of focus. He said there are 7 parents, 5 faculty, 1 principal, 2 community leaders and 2 student members on the council. This is year 3. Two new parent members will be needed and 1 community member. The SCG goals are: provide information support for DHS administration to make changes and improvements that result in increased student performance; collaborative work to define and implement change; define metrics and track results; transition well to sustain performance. He continued with the curriculum. Pointed out recommendations and detailed challenges associated with transition, curriculum students, varying learning ability, overall students' performance versus core curriculum. Attendance is also addressed: daily attendance at DHS is approximately 95%. Overall chronic absenteeism through February was 4%. He listed recommendations in his update. Also spoke about parent engagement; technology; budget and plans to move forward. Mr. Boccaccio said they are excited about the Hatter's Foundation. The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, thanked Mr. Boccaccio and Mr. Patel for their presentation. She told them if they needed any help from the Board members, please let them know.

### Alternative Center School Governance Council

Mr. Robert Melillo thanked the Board for electing Ms. Atanasoff as interim principal for the Alternative Center. Mr. Melillo distributed an update of the ACE Governance Council. He told the Board that the membership council consists of 5 out of 7 parent members (one additional member awaiting election by parents); 2 community members; 2 student members and 5 teacher members. Helped develop a plan for Title I funding; plan included purchase of 40 chrome books; 1 Mac books; .2 increase in a math position; after school credit recovery opportunities; obtain community resources directories both in English and Spanish which will be distributed to all parents. Revised the school improvement plan and identified needs in relationship to plan; advised the principal on best methods of maintaining communications with parents; consulted on parent engagement and parent seminar needs and format resulting in a parent workshop; consulted with school governance council regarding high school re-design grant, personalized learning, Pathway Academies and possible future collaborations with Naugatuck Valley Community College and Henry Abbott. Reviewed school attendance from fall 2013 compared with attendance for third quarter of spring 2014. Attached to the handout was an Alternative Center for Excellence contract for success. The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts thanked Ms. Atanasoff and Mr. Melillo for their presentation and also offered any help they may need from the Board members.

Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Plan

Dr. Glass said he wants to make sure that we are not over-resourcing one school and under another. He distributed an Evaluation Distribution for 2014-2015 Example and a Modified Evaluation document, showing Danbury High School with 210 certified staff and 3,000 students vs. Park Avenue School with 40 certified staff and 600 students. For DHS there is 1 principal, 1 associate principal, 4 assistant principals and 9 department heads as evaluators; with support of 2 deans, 1 climate specialist, 2 police officers, 2 school resource officers and 6 safety advocates. For Park Avenue, there is 1 principal and 1 assistant principal as evaluators and for support 1 safety advocate. For tenured teachers who have been deemed to be proficient or exemplary:

Year 1	Formal evaluation, 2 minis, end of year review of practice
Year 2	3 minis, end of year review of practice
Year 3	3 minis, end of year review of practice
Year 4	Formal evaluation, 2 minis, end of year review of practice
Year 5	3 minis, end of year review of practice

Dr. Glass said he shared this information with the Evaluation Committee yesterday. He told the Board that they could vote on this tonight or if they needed more time, they could vote on this at the next Board Meeting.

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa, that a motion be added to the agenda to accept the Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Plan

*In favor:* Eileen Alberts Gladys Cooper Annrose Fluskey-Lattin  
Richard Hawley Richard Jannelli Kathleen Molinaro  
Ralph Pietrafesa Robert Taborsak Phyllis Tranzillo

*Opposed:* Michael Ferguson

*Absent:* David Metrena

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak to accept the teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Plan as presented to the Board of Education for submission to the State Department.

*In favor:* Eileen Alberts Gladys Cooper Annrose Fluskey-Lattin  
Richard Hawley Richard Jannelli Kathleen Molinaro  
Ralph Pietrafesa Robert Taborsak Phyllis Tranzillo

*Opposed:* Michael Ferguson

*Absent:* David Metrena

**Motion carried at 8:59 pm.**

## ACTION ITEMS

### Midterms & Final Exams

**MOTION:** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education eliminates the current structure of midterms and finals at the secondary level to provide more instructional time and opportunities for authentic assessments and feedback beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

Board member, Michael Ferguson, said this is a bad decision He read from a statement he wrote explaining to the Board why he feels this is not a good decision for the students at Danbury High School. He said this should have been brought up at the last meeting to see what our constituents think about it. He told the Board that he would not vote for this action item.

Board member, Ralph Pietrafesa, said he agrees with Mr. Ferguson on some aspects. We should have given the parents an opportunity to speak their opinions. I think that does seem rushed for me. Like a lot of other topics, we need to put it out there in the public forum for parents. Mr. Taborsak said we had presentations and surveys at the high school; whose creditability is most important what Michael stated or the creditability of the staff that works with the students. We have given this enough time at policy and workshop meetings. Michel has brought this up at other meetings. I don't believe we are rushed. We need to leave the decision to professionals who have been dealing with that for years; weighing which one is the most rational in making the decision in the school.

Board member, Richard Hawley, told the Board that he would like to call on Mr. Boccaccio, who was in the audience, and ask him to walk us through the process and how he came up with the terms of the idea on eliminating these tests.

Mr. Boccaccio said the elimination of these tests came out of my frustration over the last several years. These tests took away from instructional time. Talking to administrators, they also had those same concerns. We spoke to parents, the tests are not diagnostic. A parent said their child does not know what he fell down on or what he did well in. It is incredible how many tests kids take: regular test, quiz, ACT, SAT, PSAT, to name a few and the list goes on and on. Physically sitting down for 2 hours taking a test doesn't get them ready for college. We can do a better job teaching them assessments that they are going to do in college like research papers, etc. Initially we shared this at the December faculty meeting. 30 staff came in January and at that point that did research throughout Connecticut and at the colleges and universities to be sure there would be no impact for admission if the tests were dropped. The majority agreed to do away with it.

Mr. Jannelli said, I applaud you for your recommendation. Education is changing. Assessments and grading is also changing. I think we have to go with the bold changes and evaluation and go with it. At Harvard only 297 classes give midterms and there are other colleges that don't give tests. I think Danbury is in forefront in doing this. The stress of taking test every day is stressful. I am in favor of it, we will work hard to make it work and go with the times instead of the same old thing.

Mr. Hawley asked if this affects the AP courses at DHS. Mr. Boccaccio said that it does not. We have 800 students in the AP classes right now. He asked, are you comfortable with this change. He replied he is and that this was his 40<sup>th</sup> year teaching and all in Danbury. Dr. Pascarella said he wants to lend his support. I believe what we are proposing is better teaching for our students. Ms. Alberts said we had a PowerPoint presentation. I sat on the middle until that evening. That present convinced me. This has been before the public for months. We usually do not do anything without having the public involved.

Ms. Alberts asked for a vote on the motion.

<i>In favor:</i>	Eileen Alberts	Gladys Cooper	Annrose Fluskey-Lattin
	Richard Hawley	Richard Jannelli	Kathleen Molinaro
	Ralph Pietrafesa	Robert Taborsak	Phyllis Tranzillo
<i>Opposed:</i>	Michael Ferguson		
<i>Absent:</i>	David Metrena		

**Motion carried at 8:15 pm.**

#### Facilities/Utilities Software

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education authorize the use of Building Rental Funds to enter into contract with SchoolDude for Facilities/Utilities Software

Joe Martino explained what SchoolDude was and what the benefits were.

**Motion carried at 8:15 pm.**

#### Healthy Foods and Beverages in Schools

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa, 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

**Motion carried at 8:25 pm.**

#### 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.

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

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak 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 carried at 8:27 pm.**

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

#### Update on DHS traffic pattern

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that Mr. Boccaccio spoke to the Danbury Police and they were able to take care of the traffic pattern that was of concern. The Superintendent also said that Ms. Janice Giegler came to a Cabinet meeting last week concerning the traffic at DHS in the mornings. We are reviewing the procedure and are looking at egress to see if there is something we can do. More parents are driving their kids. It is a busy highway; there are no problems in the afternoon, only in the morning

#### Allergens Regulations

Dr. Pascarella said we made some adjustments to the regulations. – Kathy O'Dowd said that the policy was not changing it was only the regulations. (Ms. O'Dowd mentioned some of the changes but they were inaudible.) Ms. Alberts asked if she was happy with the regulations. Ms. Fluskey-Lattin questioned the parent permission slip. She said she teaches nutrition and diet in her 4<sup>th</sup> grade class and the kids love the unit. Would these regulations stop me in my classroom from bringing food to class and exposing kids to healthier choices? Before I did this, I would speak to the parent first. We would only have food in the classroom of what the child could eat. Everything had to be approved by the parent beforehand. Ms. O'Dowd said she is happy with the regulations.

#### 2014-2015 Budget Update

Mr. Martino said we just had a Budget meeting on the budget increase of \$3,286,000. He briefly explained how this came about.

#### Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)

Dr. Pascarella said we agreed to move forward, the State gave us \$500,000. The dream here is in the event when we start this they will have experience in companies. They can leave high school with a Pathway to a 2 years university or a 4 year university. Manufacturing is real big in Connecticut. We have one of the best programs with the Health and Bio science. When we start next year it will be a small program. Dr. Glass said there is a lot of excitement about this concept. Dr. Pascarella has done a lot of work with the President of Naugatuck. Dr. Glass said that he served on a Board and there it was said they were interested in our Health and Bio Science Program. Dr. Pascarella said you are going to hear a lot more about it. The focus is on STEM. How we get internships. Mr. Albert Schnieder said he has committed to find 100 students for mentoring. Ms. Fluskey-Lattin has some



questions on timing. Dr. Pascarella said in September it will be a pilot program starting with 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

**DISCUSSION** - None

**INFORMATION**

**RPMS trip to Puerto Rico, January 15-20, 2015**

Pat Stevens and several students attended the meeting to tell of their experience on their trip last year to Puerto Rico. The students told the Board what s their favorite part of their trip was: the rain forest; surprise birthday party; going to the school shadowing with the kids whose school was outside; kayaking in the bay of microorganisms that would glow in the pitch black night; art museums to see the vast pieces of art they accumulated in the years and how it changed in their culture. Ms. Stevens said we have a broad range of activities planned for the children.

**NEASC Special Progress Report of DHS**

**Update on copier bid**

**Solar Projects at Westside Middle School Academy & Morris Street School**

**BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS** – No Reports

**BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Memorial Day Parade, May 26th

**Insurance Coverage Grievances**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, to amend the agenda to add the discussion of insurance coverage grievances.

**The motion carried at 9:30 pm.**

Ms. Thompson said we have three Board level grievances. Mr. Tom Kennedy, CEA Union Rep, told the Board that there are several grievances with the same issue. The three issues: basic facts are not in dispute. Long time teachers in the Danbury Public School system had insurance through the district for a number of years. When their status changed from family to single that should have resulted in the change of the amount deducted from their salary. They recently discovered they have been paying for family coverage for several years. That came about by them talking to other staff about the amount of money being deducted for the family plan due to the recent change in insurance carriers. All three staff members have insurance cards that state they have single coverage. Family insurance rates have been deducted from their salary, even though they have insurance cards saying they have single coverage. Each of the three staff members said they called Beaver Brook Administration to change their status when it happened. They stated that they wrote a letter or called and spoke Betty Anderson in the Human Resources Department asked that the Benefits Department make the change in coverage. When one of them spoke to the insurance carrier, she was told that she had to notify her

HR Department. The reasons for the staff members requesting that family coverage be dropped ranged from a child turning 18, another was a child got married and husband had coverage and one had just gotten a divorce in 2006. None of the three staff members had documentation of their calls or copies of communication letters to Betty Anderson. One staff member notified HR in 2004, another one in 2006 and their family deductions have been going on since then. Ms. Thompson told the Board that in 2004-2005 the family deduction was \$62.69, single deduction was \$24.74.

Ms. Thompson, distributed several documents to the Board concerning how it should be communicated to the HR Department if you want to request a change in insurance. She also distributed a signed affidavit from Betty Anderson, Senior Administrative Assistant, Benefits Office stating that she had no recollection of receiving changes from these three staff members.

Ms. Molinaro asked how staff would get the form. Ms. Thompson said by request. It was then asked how Betty Anderson was notified that long ago. Ms. Thompson said this form has been in existence from time and memorial. It is given to an employee upon hiring. Mr. Jannelli asked if the issue was a lack of definite proof on either parties. Mr. Thompson said we never received it at all.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Administrative Appointments, grievances, and Nurses Contract (AFSCME), with possible action in public session.

#### **Motion carried at 9:50 pm.**

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo

Absent: David Metrena

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

The Chairperson turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson to discuss Insurance Grievances, Administrative Appointments and the Nurses' Contract.

A general discussion ensued.

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

#### **Motion carried at 10:53 pm.**

MOTION: K. Molinaro, seconded by R. Jannelli, to deny grievance and to direct the Human Resource Director to prepare a written response in keeping with the Board's deliberations in Executive Session.

**Motion carried at 10:54 pm**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak to ratify the Nurse's Contract.

**Motion carried at 10:55 pm**

**ADJOURNMENT**

K. Molinaro moved seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education adjourn its May 14, 2014 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 10:56 pm.

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Richard Hawley, Secretary

*(Meeting videotaped)*