

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2011- 7:00 PM - Revised
Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road

Present: E. Alberts, R. Austin-James, G. Cooper, M. Fazio, I. Fox,
R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro, Drs. Pascarella and Glass,
Ms. Emmett, Thompson from Administration.

Absent: D. Metrena, R. Taborsak, K. Gailliard and S. LeRoy

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Irving Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge Allegiance.

RECOGNITIONS

CAPSS Superintendent/Student Awards:

Broadview Middle School:	Sameena Shaffeeullah and Richard Jowdy
Rogers Park Middle School:	Brittany Shear and Steven Schwab
Danbury High School:	Kashish Singhal and Christopher Marin

Mr. Fox read a short biography of each student; Dr. Glass took individual photos of each student.

CABE Student Award: Stephen Dickerson, DHS

Mr. Fox read Stephen Dickerson's biography and congratulated him on being a CABE Student Awardee. He was asked to come forward to receive his certificate and Dr. Glass took photographs.

National Merit Scholarship: Benjamin Altman, DHS, 2011 Recipient

Mr. Fox congratulated Benjamin Altman on his accomplishments throughout his academic career and presented him with a National Merit Scholarship certificate.

Mr. Fox thanked all parents and stated without their support and the support of the community this would not be possible. He then asked that all students that were recognized this evening to group together with him and Dr. Pascarella for a photo.

DHS Air Force Junior ROTC: Distinguished Unit Award 2010-2011

Mr. Fox said we are honoring our instructors this evening for receiving the Distinguished Unit Award for 2010-2011. He stated that only the top 15% win this award. He also told the Board that he attended the ROTC award ceremony and was amazed at all the cadets that receive awards in multiple areas and said this was directly due to our instructors. He then said on behalf of the Board, congratulations to Lt. Col. Brian Holmes and Master Sergeant Hector Hernandez.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Monica Bevilacqua said that some Board members did attend the Head Start Celebration at Mill Ridge and asked to distribute a Press Release on May 21st regarding the celebration for those that did not attend. She then thanked the Board for their continued support of Head Start.

Four parents addressed the Board stating that they did not support uniforms for various reasons; restricts our children from representing themselves; it will cost the parents more money; was not called to answer a survey (neighbor called 3 times and only has 2 children in school); questioning how it will be carried out if mandated; will make kids miserable; view it as a punishment; kids are going to boil in the summer; fund for kids that cannot afford it; if they still wear jeans, they will be wearing them below the belts; it won't solve anything. A student at Broadview also addressed the Board and reiterated what her mother said earlier in the evening in not being in agreement with uniforms.

Two parents addressed the Board saying they were in favor of uniforms; it would ease financial burden, it would never restrict freedom; more concerned about the dress code that the Board currently has in place; feels the Board has bigger issues that need to be addressed such as the high rate of bullying; the principals are trying to make this plan successful, reasonable, flexible; there will be success if we try it.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended:

MINUTES

- Finance Committee Meeting 5/9/11
- Bi-Monthly Board Meeting 5/11/11
- 2020 Task Force 5/17/11
- Special Board Meeting 5/18/11

PERSONNEL

Accept Leave of Absence: John Heine

Accept Retirements:	Catherine Libonate	Mary Pura	Carolyn Schmeltz
	Alma Shuart	Ellen Young	

Mr. Fox wanted to recognize the retirees stating between them they have 100 years of experience – best of luck to all of these staff members on their retirement.

GRANTS

That the Board of Education approve submission of the Special Friends Grant to the State Department of Education

Motion carried 7:45 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE - None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danbury High School: Christopher Marin
Alternative Center: Vanessa Grant

Vanessa Grant told the Board not having Summer School would not be beneficial to parents and may be an obstacle for graduation. The students took a raft trip that was paid for by students and fund raisers.

Christopher Marin brought the Board up to date on the events taking place over the next few weeks before graduation at Danbury High School.

Mr. Fox told the Board that in a recent issue of Hatter's Herald, there was an article about the Board Student Representatives feeling the Board did not have any insight on what the students' perspectives were. He then told the Student Representatives they need to give us their viewpoints and issues that are concerns to students. He addressed the Student Representatives that were present that they have a seat on the Board and have the opportunity to tell the Board about their school's concerns. He cited that fact that Ms. Grant spoke about the summer school program and thanked her for letting the Board know that was a problem at the Alternative Center. He then thanked Christopher for his participation this evening.

ACTION ITEMS

2011-2012 Budget

MOTION - R. Jannelli moved, seconded by M. Fazio that the Board of Education approve and set the School District's Budget in the amount of \$114,895,291 for the fiscal year 2011-2012

Dr. Pascarella said we are working through the budget and have been having a conversation over the reduction for the Head Start Program. There will not be cuts in staff or benefits. We will still be able to sustain the program and we will be able to work with Jim Mahoney to work through this.

Dr. Pascarella briefly mentioned Title I funds and Dr. Glass stated we have had increasing concerns since the demographic profile has been changed. We are working with the 20/20 Task Force to look at large enrollment pockets. Working with our principals to proportion the funds to schools that are particularly challenged – it does not change the bottom line, it means just sifting funds.

Mr. Fox asked about Title I funding at a particular school – have we passed the benchmark and has KSI been evaluated for that. Dr. Glass stated we used our October 1 numbers – we applied to the State twice and we still did not qualify. Mr. Fox stated that he asked the Superintendent to take a look at Kindergarten to put back the aides, but understands it is not cost effective.

Motion carried at 8:00 pm.

In favor: E. Alberts G. Cooper M. Fazio
I. Fox R. Jannelli K. Molinaro

Abstain: R. Austin James

Absent: D. Metrena, R. Taborsak, K. Gailliard and S. LeRoy

April 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education accept the April 2011 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

For the month of April 2011, the District expended \$8,141,385.41 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$80,040,723.28. The FYTD expenditure represents 70.3% of the General Fund total budget.

Motion carried at 8:01 pm.

April 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the April 2011 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

For the month of April 2011, the District expended \$2,161,165.00 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$15,640,190.39. The FYTD expenditure represents 58.8% of currently reported Grants and Projects awards.

Motion carried at 8:02 pm.

Middle School Dress Code

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education supports Administration's recommendation to institute at dress code at the Middle School level for the 2011-2012 school year.

Mrs. Alberts asked Mr. Fox if the principals could step forward to answer some questions. Dr. Pascarella then called Ms. Pat Joaquim and Mr. Ed Robbs to the table.

Mr. Jannelli stated he heard a lot of pros and cons and on a personal note I don't think we should accept this proposal. The school has a policy and we are not doing due diligence to force the policy. It would give too much peer pressure. The dress code should be enforced and the uniform dress code was not going to be through the district only two schools.

Mrs. Molinaro said if the motion does not pass tonight, would it be beneficial for you to put teeth into the regulations so that you would have an absolute code to go through. Ms. Joaquim said if you are considering the dress code it is far too vague. Mrs. Molinaro said we also need to give consequences.

Mr. Fazio said he agreed with Ms. Molinaro. Also, there was no attachment for backup for the agenda item. We do have a dress code. We could do two things we could table it or send it back to Committee and bring it back at a later date.

Mr. Fox stated the way it is, details of the dress code is general – the code would be for regulations. At the last meeting we did not need a vote, but because of the contentious concerns and the confidence of the Board, we decided to vote tonight. Mr. Fazio said nowhere in the motion does it say “uniform” ... it says dress code we already have a dress code. Mrs. Molinaro stressed the urgency to bring it back and stated that she would not let it go until next school year. Mr. Fazio said we are missing four Board members, if we come back in June we will have a full Board for that meeting since it is the night of the Superintendent’s evaluation. Mrs. Austin-James said that this is specific to middle schools; if we are going back we need to do it across the Board – all schools. Mrs. Molinaro said if we send it back to the Policy Committee it will be for all schools – not the dress code we already have; we are going to put in sanctions.

Mrs. Alberts said she was very much for this at the last meeting but since then questions have arisen that were not answered so we need to take it back to the Committee and bring it forward at the next Board meeting. Dr. Pascarella said we have a policy and the regulations exist – we need to know from the Board if they want more descriptive words of student dress. We can re-do our regulations and make a recommendation. At DHS they have been trying to enforce the dress code. We could look at it next year, we cannot do it this year. Mr. Fox in every other case when we have a regulation for the Board it is for information only. Mrs. Joaquim said we worked that plan through our PTO who is the most active group of parents. It initiated at Broadview and that is how we began. We do not have a regulation document – I assume that is what the Board would like to see.

Mrs. Alberts said it needs to be more specific. Dr. Pascarella asked Kim Thompson if there is anything in the regulations. Ms. Thompson said the Policy Committee is prepared but what she wanted to know from the Board if there is avenue and if they even wanted to go down this road.

Mrs. Alberts moved, seconded by Mr. Fazio that the motion be tabled. The following Action Item was tabled:

MOTION: That the Board of Education supports Administration’s recommendation to institute a dress code at the Middle School level for the 2011-2012 school year.

The Motion to Table the above Motion carried unanimously at 8:15 pm.

Mrs. Molinaro asked are we agreeing on cleaning up the dress code. Mr. Fazio said we should have a more restrictive dress code.

Mr. Fox stated if the current regulations were being followed, which we believe is not the case, without the uniforms and adhered to would there still be a desire to have uniforms. Mrs. Joaquim said the regulations are very vague and the students will find ways around them. How do we at building administrators monitor; how can we come up with a series of recommendations on what is appropriate. When you are asking us are we enforcing, where does it say you can’t wear short shorts, tank tops, etc. We are asking for guidance as to what is appropriate.

Dr. Pascarella said this is not an area for suspension. Administration will define the policy. Mrs. Joaquim said look at the dress code policy with restrictions. Mr. Jannelli said we need to send this back to the Policy Committee. It should be across the district, not only the middle schools. It is a waste of time to have a policy that we cannot enforce. Mrs. Austin-James said it's not hard to spell it out. Guides are out there. Getting it done should not take a year. Get a Committee together and look at the best practices. Mrs. Cooper said we all know what is appropriate and inappropriate; there are regulations where she works. When it comes to young people it has to do with home training; if you call the parents they will have leave their job and come to pick them up from school. I am not comfortable at this point and mandating this right now. I agree that we need to go back to Committee, will it be the dress code or uniforms – that is my question. She would like to know how many students have had to be reprimanded for inappropriate dress.

Mr. Fox stated how much are we going to legislate bad parenting without discipline? There should be home consequences if parents see that their children are not wearing appropriate clothing. It is a sad story that the budget cuts, which impact our students, rather than uniforms, were what parents did talked about this evening – it is a sad situation in our community.

Space Utilization – Enrollment Projection Report

MOTION: R. Jannelli moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education adopt the Sites & Facilities Committee's recommendation on building utilization strategies as presented.

Mrs. Cooper asked about the proposal the Superintendent brought before the Board at the last Board Meeting concerning the modules and are they a part of this space utilization plan. Dr. Pascarella said we were asked to stay away from the modules; it is not part of the current plan.

Mr. Jannelli asked if the primary recommendations from the 20/20 Committee were for additional space. Dr. Pascarella said the Committee looked at a 3-5 year plan. We are meeting here on the May 31st at 6:00 pm to further develop the concepts opening up Mill Ridge Intermediate in two years for an Alternative Middle School; it is my understanding that Head Start has redone their grant to the City to utilize the approximate \$10 million for a new design at the Lutheran School. Mr. Iadrola said that he would be able to put up the Head Start building by September 2012.

Mr. Fox told the Board that this set of exhibits caused a concern in the King Street area and the Mill Ridge area and cautioned the administration. The reorganization when we closed MRI was extremely successful due to the outreach in the community. Dr. Pascarella said this is an idea when you have the constrictions of no building, no modules we can't go out to talk to the parents. If you say start planning it, then it would be feasible to bring in the community. If the Board has an interest to do this and look at it and be mindful we need to do a confirmation that the monographer did, it is not cut in stone as to where we are going. I would feel better about it if the Board is okay with it. Mrs. Molinaro reminded the Board that all this hinges on Head Start moving out of our buildings. Mrs. Austin-James asked if we bless this will we have input and updates right now, it seems like give my blessing and go. The Superintendent said if you approve this, the Board has to approve the Ed Specs; it cannot be done by the City, only the Board. That is when it comes back to the Board. Once you decide, with a motion, it is sent to the City for them to put the building together. This simply gets the ball rolling.

Motion carried 8:50 pm.

PRESENTATION - None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Setting New Priorities in Federal Education Spending Act

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that there are schools that are going through transition – they reduced 40 grants in Washington the only one that affected Danbury is the Even Start Program. We have been working with the staff on how to keep that program going. We currently have 15-16 students in that program. We are losing our Even Start funding.

2020 Task Force Update

There will be a presentation on May 31st at 6:00 pm at Beaver Brook. Dr. Pascarella said he can send the Board a draft timetable.

Transportation/Dismissal Times – Late Buses

Dr. Pascarella stated we have had a hard time with transportation. The ridership is up and the equipment being down. The three schools; South Street School, Stadley Rough and Shelter Rock are impacted the most. We are working with the bus company. They have changed leadership and there are some new leaders whom we have met with. We have a number of lateness and we have to look at the whole year concerning penalties for late buses. Mr. Longo is working on that now for charge-backs. There are two more years left on the contract before we go out to rebid.

DPS Goal Setting Survey - Administrators

Dr. Pascarella said the survey for Administrators is anonymous; we will use that for setting goals for next year. Mr. Fox said we are looking at a retreat for late summer before school starts.

Mrs. Austin-James asked as far as the survey will they be truthful and with no consequences if they are truthful? Dr. Pascarella said the survey is totally voluntary. We are hoping that we get a good feedback. Mrs. Austin-James said unless people are comfortable with no consequences, you won't get the information needed. Dr. Sal said that they will be getting the surveys back next week.

TDEC Update

Dr. Glass said on June 9th we have the State team coming. We are exceeding our expectations. They felt our Plan was so comprehensive and did more than we were expected to do. We are up to 40 new curricular guides.

INFORMATION

Graduation Regulations

May 27th Professional Development Day

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Committee Assignments

Mr. Fox stated that there are some Committees than have 3 Board members and he is increasing some Committees to pick up the Committees that Joe Scozzafava was on.

Mr. Metrena, new member on the Board, is not here this evening since he had a previous planned business trip.

Sites and Facilities	Mr. Metrena and Mrs. Cooper
Community Relations	Mr. Metrena and Mrs. Molinaro
Negotiation – Teachers	Mr. Jannelli
Negotiations non-teaching	Mr. Jannelli
Administrative Committee	Mr. Metrena
PTO Liaison:	Mr. Metrena - Broadview and Hayestown

Memorial Day Parade, May 30th, 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Fox reminded the Board about the Memorial Day Parade. He asked who would be marching: Mrs. Albert and Dr. Pascarella responded.

School Governance Council

Dr. Pascarella asked Mrs. Ann Meade about the participants. She stated that there are three schools involved: Danbury High School, Alternative School and Stadley Rough. It will be a combination of parents and staff members as well as community.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Superintendent Evaluation Committee – Meeting on June 1st Dr. Pascarella will join the Board for the first half of the meeting and the second half will be Executive Session.

DSABC – Mr. Jannelli stated that they had a very successful breakfast. He told the Board that Mary Kinnery has been a mentor for 19 years and volunteered in the schools for 26 years. Due to family concerns, she turned in her resignation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

M. Fazio moved, seconded by R. Austin-James, that the Board of Education adjourn it May 25, 2011 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary