# DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016

## Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Michael Ferguson, acting Board Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ROLL CALL**

Present: Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli,

Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa,

Holly Robinson

Absent: Eileen Alberts, David Metrena

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Kim Thompson and Joe Martino

## RECOGNITIONS

## Western CT Superintendents Association (WCSA) Student Leadership Awards:

Michael Ferguson explained what the WCSA Award is. He said that every member WCSA district is eligible to select student awardees from their area middle and high schools. Awards are based on the three criteria: Community service and service to others; Academic prowess (relative to ability); and leadership service to the school community. He said that the award winners were at a recognition dinner on May 16 at the Amber room.

#### Ed Robbs presented the students from Broadview:

**Jasmine Stone** has excelled academically and has been in the honor roll each quarter/trimester since sixth grade. She enjoys cheerleading, playing softball and playing the piano. She has been a part of the theater program at Broadview for two years. Jasmine volunteers at a soup kitchen assisting in feeding the homeless, picked up trash at Hatters Park with her cheerleading team, and participated in the Ben's Bells program. She is active in the Excel program and volunteers during the holidays creating baskets for needy families. She wants to be a pediatrician. She already made the cheerleading team for college.

**Liam Dineen-Herzog** consistently strove for academic excellence while at Broadview. In sixth grade he was awarded student of the year in both English and Math, as well as a top ten student for his cluster. He was also awarded student of the month in seventh grade. Liam is involved with the student council, participates in the Cleanup Broadview day, is part of the morning announcement team and runs the concession stand at social functions. He has been involved with the Special Olympics for many years which led him to his participation in Unified Sports for three years at Broadview. This program led to our *Say Hello Say Something* and was awarded \$10,000. Liam participates in Mathcounts, and is the team captain this year. He plays tuba in the school band, is a part of the jazz band and is on the debate team. This year he was a producer of the school musical *Seussical*.

# Meghan Martins presented the students from DHS:

Ciara Broggy is a conscientious, responsible and determined student who excels academically. She has been the Senior Class President three out of four years and has demonstrated incredible leadership skills. She is an active member of the varsity Field Hockey team that she has been a part of her entire career at DHS and is captain in her senior year. As part of the Peer Leadership Program she ran a four week environmental awareness program at King Street Elementary School this year in addition to other types of community service. She is also a member of the 4H program offered by UCONN which features fitness, nutrition, and gardening. At Danbury High school she challenges herself by taking Advanced Placement in Biology and has recently passed her student CNA exam and has been in high honors throughout her high school career. Ciara plans on attending University in the fall and pursuing nursing.

**Judah James** is a friendly, encouraging and determined young man. He has a well rounded personality and overall good nature. Judah is a good athlete shows good sportsmanship on or off the field. He participates in football, basketball and track and has been recognized as a leader by being selected as a team captain for both the

football and basketball teams. As a member of ECFC, which is a program for students who will be the first to advance to attend college, he was expected to consistently improve his GPA and he has done that.

#### Patricia Joaquim presented the students from Rogers Park:

**Laura Snow** was not able to be present today because she was at Odyssey of the Mind competition. This is just one of the smallest contributions that she has made. She is actively involved in the National Junior Honor Society; also active in the theater and has maintained high honors at Rogers Park Middle School. She has done a great job of making us very proud and she will do well in the high school.

**Gabriel Demelo** is a dedicated student who always puts his best effort into academic endeavors. In addition to academics, Gabe is a member of the Bethel soccer team. He is a supporter of Lokai, an organization that sells bracelets for various charitable organizations. At Rogers Park, Gabe is involved in the school musical, *Beauty and the Beast*. Finally, he is part of the youth group at the Philadelphia Pentecostal Church where he is fine-tuning his Portuguese language skills. Delightful young man and unfortunately he is not here today to be recognized.

Michael Ferguson mentioned that the Westside awardees are **Ayden Byrne** and **Hannah Krate** and are currently on the Washington, DC trip. He also said that ACE students were not present because of a field trip, the awardees are **Ronald Velasquez** and **Skyla Vecchia-Love.** 

Michael Ferguson asked the students to please come up to take a picture with Dr. Pascarella. Dr. Pascarella asked the parents to stand and they were applauded

#### **DHS Peer Leadership – Community Outreach Programs**

Peer Leadership Education Teacher Susan Schullery thanked the Board for supporting Peer Leadership. To bring the program to life, she shared a 3 minute video presentation of many of the Community-wide projects that the students facilitated. From creating a weekly dance program at the Jerico Center, followed by an investor Assembly to Students running an environment enrichment program two days a week for one month at the intermediate school. The programs that were shown were Balls for a Cause, Children and History, Say Something, Collection of Prom Dresses, Epilepsy awareness campaign to Start with Hello. Susan Schullery stated that she was most proud of her students for creating an atmosphere of inclusion among the high school with the leadership teaching program where the Peer Leadership teach lessons with topics of bullying, saying no and overcoming peer pressure and more. She ended by thanking the Board. Everyone applauded. Michael Ferguson thanked Ms. Schullery for the Peer Leadership presentation. Dr. Pascarella mentioned that Ed Robbs will be retiring after 50 years of service. All applauded and he received a standing ovation.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none**

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Patrick Johnston, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-81 through 16-83, as recommended:

#### A. MINUTES

5/11/16 Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting 5/11/16 Board Meeting

#### B. PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Resignations: Diana Bruno (CRC Only) Brianne Cary,
Gretchen Davis Joseph DelGobbo,
Katherine Meerman (Coach Only) Ellen Perrino,

Peter Pisacrita Erica Thompson
Jessica Reyes (Parent Educator Only) Richard Torres

Accept Retirements: Elvia Andrade, 16 years

Diane Arifian, 14 years

Marguerite Calderwood, 10 years

Debra Fantal, 22 years Michelle Rosenthal, 25 years

New Hires: See Exhibit 16-83

Michael Ferguson thanked the retirees for their service and they were applauded.

## Motion carried at 7:78 pm

#### EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Broadview Middle School: Lynn Classey spoke to the Board on behalf of Broadview Middle School. She said that they were beginning a new era at Broadview as they bid farewell to Ed Robbs and wish him well in his retirement; and they welcome Edie Thomas into the Broadview family. She then told the Board about the things that have been going on at Broadview:

- Two 6th grade students entered the Connecticut Women's History Month writing contest this year and won. One student won first prize and the other was the first runner up. They were both honored at town hall by Connecticut state senator Michael McLachlan.
- BMS Futsal Club or soccer club played an hour of soccer and were tutored an hour by Danbury High School tutors.
- *Root & Shoots* group help maintain gardens as well as the new urban garden that has been built with the help of ACE staff and students.
- Global Endeavors had their Florida trip. This program includes character development through the year as well as countless community service hours.
- They have a yearly event where students replace flags at Wooster cemetery; they also honored our veterans in our Veteran's Day assembly.
- This year, student leaders organized the *Say Something* and *Start with Hello* programs of the Sandy Hook Promise, adapted by the Danbury District this year and came in second and first place respectively in the nationwide awards.
- Three 7th grade writers were recognized and Dallas Moore was one of the teacher winners in the Barnes and Noble My Favorite Teacher contest.
- Broadview has had Unified Sports for 16 years. This is run by volunteers.
- They opened the Broadview Boutique which provides food, hygiene items, gently used clothes, shoes and gym bags to those in need.
- Their students run the school-wide recycling program
- They adopted their street and have picked up the litter for 16 years.

She stated that all these activities are in big part because Broadview teachers go above and beyond. Ms. Classey also said they wanted to inform the Board about two issues. The first issue is about the test saturation. She mentioned that this involves the testing and the test-taking environment for their 8th graders. This year they were tested for five weeks, starting with the week of April 4th and continuing through the week of May 8th. The students had the week of April 18th off for Spring break. Students were given multiple tests per day in classrooms without heat. She said she saw one teacher administering the SBAC test wearing winter boots, a winter coat, gloves, and wrapped in a blanket. She said that it was obviously not an acceptable test-taking environment.

She continued to say that the first week students took the History, Math and Reading benchmarks. With the rotating block schedule, the Math benchmark took two days to complete, history needed five days and reading two days. The second week, students were given the Science and English benchmarks, both took four days to complete; the third week was STAR testing in Reading and Math which took two days to complete; and weeks four and five were SBAC testing in Math and Reading. Math had two tests to complete which took a total of five days and Reading had one test which took four days to complete.

The students were totally test saturated.

L. Classey then mentioned that there was a second issue but was asked not to address it at this point and ended her presentation. Dr. Pascarella asked the Broadview teachers present to stand up and they were applauded.

Mr. Ferguson mentioned that he was handed a letter from the Connecticut Association of Schools in regards to the Peer Leadership program. It is about the *Say Something* program and that CAS awarded the Danbury *Say Something* program the Challenge Education Citizenship award. He congratulated the recipients. Everyone applauded.

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS: Han Duong, Vice President and Renee Cunningham, Treasurer

Renee and Han gave the Board an update of events at Danbury High School. They mentioned that last Thursday and Friday there was a voter's drive where students of age could register to vote; last Saturday there was a Buick drive where 250 people attended and 5K was raised. This money will be used for Danbury high's students education; the senior prom is this Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>; the last day of school for seniors is next Thursday and the senior trip to Six Flags Great Adventure is on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>; there was CAN testing this week. People in the class took a test to become certified nursing assistants; both the girls and the boys track teams won FCIAC's this past week; and senior Rahul Malayappan placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in a global essay contest where they received about 2,000 entries. Atlantic Magazine awarded him \$2,500.

ACE: no representatives were present State BOE Student Representative: none

Richard Jannelli mentioned he would like to give recognition, on behalf of the Board, to Robin Provey who has done an outstanding job this year. He said that she is a PR specialist and he loves to read her articles on how great Danbury is. He thanked her for her work. Everyone applauded.

#### **PRESENTATION**

2016-2017 Budget Modifications: Dr. Pascarella mentioned that Joe Martino was going to handout the budget modifications. As everyone knows they proposed a budget to the City and that it was not funded at the level that we had requested. We had over \$3.2 million that we had to reduce. The way they navigated that reduction was to use the Alliance money which is about \$850,000. They still had to reallocate funds and move things within the budget in order to minimize the impact on students and teachers as best as they could. The impacts are not very positive, some of it is large class sizes, reductions of support, reductions of tech support, and others. He said a few months ago when they first looked at the budget they had to come to some consensus on Head Start. At that time it was considered that they would not receive the Alliance funds and therefore not fund the program any longer. During last week they met with legislators and were able to negotiate with the State, the lobbyist and they were able to get the \$850,000. This gave the feeling that they would be able to fund the Head Start Program. He said he still didn't think he could support with the amount of money we had in the budget which was about \$125,000 for Head Start. As it turned out they were able to fund about \$50,000 to put on the table for Head Start in our application that we have been funding over the years. That is why he presented it last night. It is good for the kids to have and he promised he would re-look at it and he did and they got some funds to do that. However, based on what happened today, they were challenged with some reductions and now might not be able to support the program. He said he was asked to see how students were served and he said that this year they served 351 students; 187 four year olds that would be coming into our kindergarten program. He also contacted other school districts. New Haven has a system similar to ours; they are funded under the operational budget. Manchester gives a .8% out of their budget and Bridgeport pays a wrap around portion of their budget. These were the only responses. Dr. Pascarella proposed to consider an option: If at the end of the school year we have a \$50,000 surplus, instead of returning to the City, we allocate that money for Head Start.

Joe Martino distributed a sheet about the budget reductions to the Board. He began by saying it's his 5<sup>th</sup> year and every year it gets more complicated. He said that the sheet he distributed is complicated and told the Board the proposed increase for 2016-17 is \$5,681,777 and the City's increase is \$2,200,000. He read the proposed cuts which includes: Middle School Math and Reading Supports; Special Education Supervisor; Westside Assistant Principal; DHS Counselor FTE 1.0 New; 1 teacher at Westside new; Park Ave/DHS Nurse; Tech Leader; new K5 teacher's cut; additional retirements; New Special Education teacher; adding 3 teachers at RPMS Grade 6; Health insurance cut; Special Ed Tuitions transferred into excess cost; rent Early Childhood Center; supplies; textbooks; NEASC self study. He then read the changes in the grant to offset operational account: Head Start, cut in ECS; Administrator for teacher evaluation; New ECS funding; Magnet and priority grant cuts; cuts in ECS Dean of

Students; cut in ECS interventionists; and cuts in ECS Climate Specialist. The total amount of reductions is \$125,986, reducing the initial increase down to \$2,200,000.

Dr. Pascarella then mentioned that this is what they came up with for reductions. No one will lose their job. They will be reassigning positions. The interventionists are temporary positions, so every year they can change. Same goes for Climate Specialists. He is still concerned that classrooms are large consisting of 25/26 students. Danbury continues to grow and our budget is growing the other way. We can't do the sister arrangements anymore because every school is overcrowded. Shelter Rock will have the modules, but everywhere else they will have to add a class. Adding a class is not just as simple as hiring a person. We are out of space as well and they will have to have teachers on wheels moving from class to class.

Joe Martino said that there are some things that they preserve such as the Westside new 8th Grade; ESL and Science teacher; 2 teachers into the elementary school.

R. Jannelli asked what the two teachers or tech reductions are if Dr. Pascarella said there were no job losses. Joe Martino responded that there are reductions in two Tech leaders, one administrator, interventionists and Climate Specialist. Kim Thompson explained that the reason Dr. Pascarella said that there are no job losses because there will be retirees and open positions and people will be shifting. R. Jannelli thinks that as long as he remembers, the Board has always re-funded and most likely Dr. Pascarella's proposal seems to be a good idea.

R. Jannelli stated that what J. Martino has done along with Dr. Pascarella has been trying to make magic. He said unfortunately the burden falls on the teachers, administrators all the way down to the students. He feels that this is the first year that we are "chiseling" at the budget. The general public does not see this work of numbers. A large factor of money that we should be getting should come from the state. He believes that the general public should also be involved in this. The solution to this problem is to go out and aggressively get money from the state. If we don't get money next year, he said he really doesn't know what is going to become of this. He truly does not think that the teachers should take the burden and that it is unfair. Joe Martino commented that to further Mr. Jannelli's point, he mentioned the increase of the health percent and the increase of the elementary classrooms.

Mr. Pietrafesa agreed with Mr. Jannelli that the people affected the most are the kids. It makes an impact on a child when interventionists will be cut. How can they present it where people can see the impact it has on the child. The state representatives are trying to fight with our money, but what can we do.

Dr. Pascarella said you can't cut your way into excellence in education. He recommends not opening next year the 8th grade at Westside we will have people running us down. We can cut our way to get people's attention. It has to make an impact on them. He gave another example of cutting sports. He said until we make a statement like that, will we be able to have them hear us. It's not to make parents angry but mad enough to get to them to go to City Hall and say, "give them the money they need." He said never thought he could make a difference and they did in Hartford. Ask legislators to have them fight to stop requirements such as high school graduation requirements; number of schools days from 180 to 150 which can cut on salaries; Special education: if a parent wants their child to be tested, as of last year, all they have to do is ask and they will be tested.

Mr. Pietrafesa agrees but there is a breaking point because there are always students who need help.

Dr. Pascarella mentioned that he had a meeting today with Kelly Truchsess, Special Ed Administrator and department heads to see how they can service more students changing the Special Ed requirements. They were working together to find solutions. They were able to increase to about 30 more kids being serviced. Kelly mentioned that there was an increase of 12% of Special Ed students.

Richard Hawley would like to look at the budget in terms of revenue. He said we received \$2.2 from the city, \$350 from the excess cost, \$850 from the State and approximately \$900,000 from the early retirements. Basically \$4.25 million. He asked Joe Martino where that was going. Mr. Martino responded salaries \$280, benefits \$1 million, athletics about \$400, 000, busing about \$350, about \$221 in service and fees, new staff for Westside about \$600, new FT's in elementary about \$140, high school teachers \$140. Mr. Hawley said it was bottom line

all about salary and health. He said that they can scream all they want but that we had to look at are the salary and health issues.

\$850, 000 application to the state will not include Head Start.

Dr. Pascarella said that there is no Action Item for tonight but at the next meeting he will bring the Alliance budget as well and they can do action upon action to send to the state. If they can do that then they can move ahead. Therefore, at the next Board meeting, June 1, there will be an Action Item for the regular budget and an Action Item for Alliance budget.

Richard Hawley just wanted to make sure he understood that they are looking for the possibility for the excess funds at the end of the year sliding, or making available to Head Start. As it stands right now, they are pulling \$50,000 out of the Head Start ECS grant and asked if they are putting that into the operational budget. Mr. Martino responded, no. Dr. Pascarella said then as of July 1 we will have completed our commitment to Head Start.

Patrick Johnston asked what the percentage increase was for teacher salaries. Joe Martino responded 3.2% across the board, includes step and top step. Top step received 1% and the step varies 3% - 5%. Patrick mentioned that top step teachers are retiring and hiring of new teachers will be at a less amount.

Status quo is cut

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

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

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Patrick Johnston, that the Board of

Education approve the Rogers Park Middle School trip to Puerto Rico, January

12-17, 2017

Motion carried at 7:37 pm

April 2016 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Patrick Johnston that the Board of

Education accept the April 2016 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Motion carried at 8:21 pm

April 2016 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Gladys Cooper that the Board of

Education accept the April 2016 Operating Results Analysis (Grant/Projects)

Richard Hawley asked Joe Martino where we stood as far as the 2016-17 renewal of grants. Joe Martino explained that they did not lose any grants but some lost funding.

Motion carried at 8:22 pm

Revisions to Policy #7-143.1 – Medications Administered by School Personnel

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of

Education approve the revisions to Policy #7-143.1 – Medications Administered

by School Personnel

Motion carried at 8:23 pm

**Interschool School Lunch Agreements** 

MOTION: Gladys Cooper moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of Education

authorize the Superintendent to sign Interschool School Lunch Agreements with:

Access/Education Connection, Pathways Academy, St. Gregory the Great School, St. Peter School

R. Hawley asked if St. Joseph was not part of this. Joe Martino said that the agreement might not be ready yet but eventually will be put back on.

## Motion carried at 8:24 pm

## 2016-2017 Board of Education Meeting Dates

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Gladys Cooper that the Board of Education

approve the 2016-2017 Board Meeting dates

Motion carried at 8:25 pm

#### DHS Phase 4 (Classroom Addition)

MOTION: Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of

Education authorizes the Chairperson of the Board of Education and the

Superintendent of Schools to approve the final plans, contract specifications, and cost estimate for the Danbury High School Classroom Addition – Phase 4 of the Additions and Alterations with Safety Improvements at the Danbury High School Complex project, and sign the SCG-042 form and submit it to the State of

Connecticut for approval.

Mr. Hawley asked Ms. Molinaro how the meeting went for DHS. She said that the classroom additions were 63,000 square ft. She told the Board what it will consist of:

- 1<sup>st</sup> floor - gym, basketball, multipurpose office with a divided curtain across, restrooms, locker rooms that can be accessed from the field.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor 12 classrooms, 1 computer lab with storage, adult bathrooms, elevator, and the stairwells will connect with the E building.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor 6 general science classrooms with prep rooms (there will be no chemistry), 5 general classrooms, an office, copier room, elevator, 2 connecting corridors to D and E buildings, and 1 general purpose room.

The whole place will be air-conditioned and lockers will be there for the students.

Motion carried at 8:27 pm

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

<u>Memorial Day Parade</u>: Dr. Pascarella mentioned that they will have two convertibles and the banners. Those that will be in the parade are to meet at 8:45 am at Beaver Brook parking lot.

## DHS School Governance Council Meeting, May 26, 7:00 p.m. at DHS Media Center

Dr. Pascarella met with the committee. They have an action plan. They talked about what happened in Hartford, what the current budget was and what they could start doing this summer to get leverage to get people out to do things for Danbury and not wait for the budget season. Dr. Pascarella along with two other Board members will be going tomorrow night to meet with them.

#### **DISCUSSION**

# **Shelter Rock School Temporary Classrooms**

Joe Martino said there are 4 portables proposed right now. The Board will need to approve these Specs at the next meeting. He said they will need state funding and it will go to the City council. Timing will be tight. Hoping by September it will be okay. They will have to do some adjustments inside the school. They had to make some temporary adjustments for the kids right now. There is no space at the school. These are transportable modules that can be placed somewhere else if needed. They are well built modules, air conditioned. There will be 2 classrooms in each Modules, 2 Modules. The cost is about \$200,000. South St has 2 modules attached and have lasted 25 years.

Ms. Molinaro asked if there are 80 students coming into the school will it be okay with the hire of two teachers. Joe Martino said that the 2nd grade will have five sections or classes, going from three teachers to five. It should be fine.

Dr. Pascarella said he had to thank Joe Martino for this. Applause for Joe Martino for putting this together and making it possible.

# **INFORMATION**

# **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** - None

## **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

Kathy Molinaro said the Policy Committee met. They made some recommendations to Dr. Pascarella that need to come back to the Committee.

Ms. Cooper gave two dates for the Superintendent's Evaluation Committee meeting: June 1 or May 31. It was decided on May 31 at 5:30 pm to meet at BBAC.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION - none**

# **ADJOURNMENT**

R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by P. Johnston, that the Board of Education adjourn its May 25, 2016 meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(Meeting was video recorded)