

# **DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

*Wednesday, May 28, 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 (7:30 pm), Richard Hawley, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo

Absent: Richard Jannelli

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Joseph Martino

## **RECOGNITIONS**

### Western Connecticut Superintendents Association Awards

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that on May 12<sup>th</sup> the Western Connecticut Superintendents Association had a Students Award Banquet. The award is based on community service and service to others, academic prowess and leadership service to the school community. The following students received awards:

Danbury High School:	Kathryn Shannon & Owen Smith
Alternative Center:	Sabrina Washburn & He'Allah Morris
Rogers Park Middle School:	Olivia Babbino & David Montero
Broadview Middle School:	Olivia Alessandro & Kevin Fong

The students were introduced to the Board. The Assistant Principal for Broadview Middle School, told the Board that Olivia Alessandro has done a tremendous amount of work for the school, volunteers at her church and has helped other students in her class. She was on a trip and could not attend. Her Mother attended on her behalf.

Ken Fong is an honor roll student at Broadview. He has helped many other students at school. He translates Cantonese in a doctor's office. He is well deserving of the award.

Dr. Pascarella asked Kathryn Shannon and Owen Smith Danbury High School students to tell the Board something about themselves. Kathryn said she is going to the University of Maryland; was on the Prom Committee and will be graduating with high honors next month. Owen said he is a member of Peer Leadership; Class President for two years, and he will be going to Mt. St. Vincent College in the fall.

Dr. Pascarella asked the parents and the students to stand up. The Board applauded.

Students from Rogers Park and Alternative Center for Excellence were not in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Monica Benlacqua thanked the Board for inviting her to speak on behalf of Head Start. She stated that in Connecticut’s 5<sup>th</sup> District, Head Start received a perfect score in over 1,800 performance standards. She told the Board that Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a monitoring review and Danbury’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Danbury have been found in compliance. The Program scores are above the national average. The scores were based on: Emotional Support, Classroom Support and Instructional Support. This is a credit to Mayor Boughton, Head Start parents and staff at the Danbury Board of Education. Ms. Benlacqua said unfortunately Head Start did not get any government funds.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION -** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, exhibits 14-112 through 14-116 as recommended:

**MINUTES**

- 5/7/14 Board Workshop
- 5/14/14 Finance Committee Meeting
- 5/14/14 Board Meeting
- 5/21/14 Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

Accept Leave of Absence: Patricia Widmayer  
 Accept Resignation: Jennifer Powers (Coach Only)

**New Hires 5/9/14-5/14/14:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Non-Certified Subject</b>
Francis Houle	ACE/Ells	Custodian
Dorris Cordova	Park Ave	CRC Enrichment Assoc.
Jaimie LaPine	STR & SHR	L/T Music Sub
Tiffany Singleton	GRP	Tutor
Rayan Hage		SUB Teach
Monica Richard		Western Connection

**Motion passed at 7:14 pm.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

DHS: Nick Goetz, President; Jnajmah James, Vice President;  
 Kathryn Shannon, Secretary; Danielle Biele, Treasurer  
 ACE: Johnathon Gonzalez, Natasha Mendoza

Danbury High School representative Kathryn Shannon told the Board all of the upcoming events at DHS for the remainder of the school year.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Rogers Park Middle School – School Governance Council**

Patricia Joaquim told the Board that the Rogers Park School Governance Council started in November. Ms. Joaquim introduced some of the members that were at the meeting, including herself; a parent, Sharon Pereira; teachers Adrian Solis, Barbara Duffy, Sabrina Coito and Jessica Gerace. Other members are: Juan Matias, Teacher at RPMS and Parent Members Joseph Mooney, Malina Schneider, Margarita Turcios and Dinora Solano. She then turned the presentation over to Sabrina Coito. Ms. Coito thanked the Board for inviting them tonight for a presentation. She said the Council met six times. We surveyed students and asked what improvements they would like to see at the school and they came up with eight possibilities including; what ideas do you have to improve the school spirit and list where they would like to see an improvement in school cleanliness. The response to this survey will be put on the website.

- 27% want improvement in school sports
- 24% of the students surveyed sited bathroom cleanliness
- 20% assemblies
- 13% after school activities
- 2% discipline
- 4% communication
- 6% academic help
- 2% mentoring

Ms. Coito said they planted a vegetable garden, built a pond and butterfly garden with a donation that was given to the school as a dedication to a teacher that passed away last year. They will be having tours on June 11<sup>th</sup>. The tour will include the Ecological Gardens, The Hochsprung Outdoor Class Room, Ecological Pool and the Gerard Warner Vegetable Garden. She extended an invitation to the Board for the tour on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **RPMS trip to Puerto Rico**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper, that the Board of Education approve the RPMS Field trip to Puerto Rico, January 15-20, 2015

**Motion passed at 7:23 pm.**

### **2014-2015 Budget**

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Hawley that the Board of Education approve and set the School District's Budget in the amount of \$121,581,291 for the fiscal year 2014-2015

R. Hawley thanked everyone for their efforts and work involved with putting the budget together. He said Joe Martino worked very hard on the budget and the Board appreciates his efforts.

**Motion passed at 7:25 pm.**

April 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the April 2014 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Mr. Martino told the Board that during the month of April 2014, the District expended \$11,682,276 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$87,068,404.

**Motion passed at 7:30 pm.**

April 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education accept the April 2014 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Mr. Martino told the Board that during the month of April 2014, the District expended \$2,703,518 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$15,424,175.

A Board member asked about the new Grant Writer. Dr. Pascarella said she is working on getting additional funding. She is developing a network. Mr. Martino said we have several small grants, she is monitoring the grants. She has five or seven grants that are pending. I can bring that information to you next week.

**Motion passed at 7:35 pm.**

Tuition Rates 2014-2015

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education approve the 2014-2015 tuition rates:

Danbury High School	\$14,245
Middle School	\$11,771
Grades 1-5	\$11,771
Kindergarten – All Day	\$11,771

The recommended tuition rates for 2014-2015 school year reflects a 2.78% increase over 2013-2014.

**Motion passed at 7:36 pm.**

Proposed Transfers April 2014

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education approve the proposed transfers for April 2014

**Motion passed at 7:37 pm.**

Solar Projects at Westside Middle School Academy & Morris Street School

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with American Solar & Alternate Power to act as the Board's consultant for a review of solar projects at Westside Middle School Academy and Morris Street School

Mr. Martino said this is nothing more than a fact finding process. Sites and Facilities have had meetings on this.

**Motion passed at 7:40 pm.**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### Facilities/Construction Update

Dr. Pascarella told the Board that he did a walk through at the new academy last week and it is progressing nicely. The rooms have been converted into instruction classrooms. Mr. Martino said that a Certificate of Occupancy is expected in the middle of July. Public works have been on top of it and have been doing a good job. Shelter Rock and Stadley Rough are okay. We are working closely with the City on all these projects and they have done a great job.

### Redistricting Update

Dr. Pascarella said Dr. Glass has been working hard on identifying students. We are worried about the number of new students. Dr. Glass said when parents' request that a child go to a different school we need to honor that request until we get it sorted. We need to be considerate of the parents' requests. We are trying to work with parents on this issue, as long as it doesn't created any added expense. We have a 39% mobility rate. The principal has the final say if they have room in that school. Mr. Martino said we monitor the classes monthly, in the summer we monitor weekly and in the fall we monitor daily.

### Summer School Update

Dr. Pascarella said the money for Summer School is coming out of ECS. As soon as we get the sign-ups we will bring it to the Board.

### Instructional Coherence Plan

Ms. Alberts said she went to an Instructional Coherence Plan meeting. She distributed some information about what was discussed.

### Board Workshop

Dr. Pascarella said he would not attend. He said modifications based on today's meeting we do have a follow up plan for next year. Jonathan will be here to give you a presentation on it. Focus on teacher evaluation. State is intrigued with the model. They are thinking about adopting it.

### Legislative Focus

The Superintendent said the CT Association of Public School started to get information about the new laws. Members of CAPSS met with Representative Joseph Courtney to discuss our concerns about specific components of the Affordable Care Act (ACA): the tax on Cadillac Health Insurance Plans; the requirement to provide health insurance for employees who work at least 30 hours a week; the restriction on co-pays for health insurance premiums to 9.5% of an employee's salary/wages per year.

## DISCUSSION

### Technology Lease

Mr. Martino discussed the Technology Lease with the Board. He said the lease is \$150,000 over 5 years for a total amount of \$750,000. Once the Board approves the lease, it has to go to the Common Council for approval.

## INFORMATION

### DHS field trip to Italy, April 10-19, 2015

Carmela Calafiore told the Board that the students are excited about the upcoming trip to Italy. She also mentioned that she has worked for the Danbury Board of Education for 41 years.

### 2014-2015 School Calendar Revised

Ms. Alberts said that she met with Drs. Glass and Pascarella to discuss some of the questions that Ms. Fluskey-Lattin had about the revised school calendar. Dr. Glass said that the Superintendent did the calculations independently and he and Sue Morris also did the calculations independently. We made two adjustments. (Below are the dates and their highlighted colors)

August 21, September 19, November 4, 2014 and May 22, 2015 (PINK)

Teachers' contract we didn't take them out

January 30 and May 15, 2015 (BLUE)

Teachers' evaluation days negotiated with teachers union and they feel very strongly about this and we agree to build them into the calendar

September 2, 16, October 7, 21, November 18, December 2, 16, 2014 - these days are flexible

One hour early release for students/PD (YELLOW)

January 6, 20, February 3, March 3, 17, April 7, 21 and May 5, 19, 2015 - these days are

flexible. One hour early release for students/PD (YELLOW)

Dr. Glass said that the state is moving towards a universal calendar in 2015.

Ms. Fluskey-Lattin revamped this year's calendar showing instructional loss. Holding up this year's calendar in one hand and next year's calendar in the other, she explained what she felt was taking away from instructional time. One day that was in question was the day before Christmas. Ms. Alberts asked Drs. Glass and Pascarella if their numbers agreed with Ms. Fluskey-Lattin's opinion. Dr. Pascarella said the pieces that we looked at are a little bit different. The day before Christmas vacation is up to the Board. We will keep revisiting it, if it the Board's prerogative to make it a full day. Dr. Pascarella said we have talked to parents and our administrative staff. Dr. Glass stated in some cases we are talking about minutes spread over 180 days of classroom instruction.

Mr. Pietrafesa asked where this calendar originated that we added the days for one hour dismissal students/PD. Did the staff get together about this? You say you talked to the parents – only 6 people go to PTO. The staff wanted the calendar so we change it, the staff wanted a change in food allergies so we changed it. Who are the parents you are talking to? Staff wants to change something it goes

out to limited channels of parents and we change it. I don't see these parent groups. Ms. Alberts said don't dismiss the PTO's being 6 parents. Dr. Pascarella said we had several groups that gave input. We tried to get as much input from parents. It doesn't always work. When we do a presentation they go back to their PTO parents. Ms. Cooper said that where she works she has had a lot of parents thank her for the Board putting out a calendar that they can hang on their wall. No one has ever asked her a question about time off from school. Never at her agency did any one complain about the calendar. We should leave the calendar to the people we pay for doing the calendar. I am going to put it in the educator's hands.

Ms. Molinaro said she appreciates the ideas that come from everyone, but she said I think we lost our focus. We are trying this as an experiment – we can change it. It is not written in stone. It is silly to talk about it now. Mr. Taborsak said Ms. Molinaro covered what I was thinking. The amount of time that is in there for professional development is the key and it is pretty much as it was before. We need to leave it up to our administrators to work it out.

Mr. Metrena said I do not envy those who put it together. I was requested to make some comments from staff. A number of the staff works summer school – no break at the end of the school year before summer school starts. Six parents come to PTO. When we saw this in February, Dr. Pascarella said a group from the schools saw it. I spoke to teachers and staff at 6 or 7 schools - 30-40 people. None of them was shown this until after it was approved and every single one of them hates it. My concern is this Advisory Council needs to take ownership and reach out to the people they represent. They are making decisions without consulting us.

Mr. Ferguson asked if the calendar was ever an action item. Dr. Pascarella said he brought the revised calendar to the Board on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Can a calendar be revised before coming to us? He asked if we approve all revisions.

Ms. Tranzillo said the two PD days; January 30, May 15, 2015 are negotiated in the contract. August 21, September 19, November 4 and May 22, 2015 (PINK) are not negotiated in the contract. If we go forward next year, I strongly advise that we do not have two professional days in the same week.

Ms. Fluskey-Lattin said she thought the days in yellow were days that could be controlled. And could be possibly changed or reviewed if seen fit. Is that correct? Dr. Pascarella said yes. Regardless of our concerns these days are staying. If you are asking could we removed or change the dates, I would say yes; if you asked me if I recommend it I would say, no.

Dr. Glass stated that we can move those yellow days and the pink days. We try to have one in August and one in September. Mr. Metrena's point is a frustration one. Every administrator comes to Beaver Brook for a meeting once a month. We have gone over and over this calendar with them and they are to share this at the faculty meetings and then come back to us the next month. The kids take this calendar home. Dr. Pascarella said we will try our surveys next year. I hope that it will work. If we were to switch it now, it would create problems for people's activities.

Mr. Hawley said it is all about instructional time for kids. Can we place it on as an Action Item to remove September and May and November 10<sup>th</sup> and have three days parent's conferences rather than four? Ms. Alberts said we will take it into consideration and she asked administration to put it on the

next agenda as an Action Item. She asked the Board to have their questions together before the next meeting. Mr. Hawley said he would like to see the calendar discussions start in November.

Head Start Federal Review

Ms. Monica Benlacqua spoke in Public Session.

**BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Ms. Albert read a letter from the United States Department of State in Washington, DC. congratulating Melissa Nadeau for being selected for the Teachers for Global Classrooms (TGC) Program. Over 400 teachers applied from 46 U.S. states and District of Columbia, and she was among 80 teachers who were selected for participation. She will participate in an online course, the Global Education Symposium and travel on an international fellowship for a two or three week in-country visit.

Ms. Cooper said that we are having a Superintendent Evaluation Meeting on Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm. All Board members should attend. She said the Committee had a meeting last week. Ms. Molinaro distributed information to each Board member. Ms. Cooper said I really need you to be here for this meeting. A sealed confidential envelope was passed out to the Board members. Ms. Cooper asked that they read it before they come to the meeting. She also said if press calls do not give out any information, not even to your wife or husband.

Ms. Alberts said on June 4<sup>th</sup> at Beaver Brook at 6:30 pm there is an Instructional Coherence Plan – the paper work I handed out to you tonight.

Ms. Alberts said if you have spare time to get to any of the graduations, please try to do so. It is another part of our job as being Board Members. It is also another way we can be with the public.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: G. Cooper moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and the copier bid with possible action in Public Session.

**Motion passed at 9:07 pm.**

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

Absent: Richard Jannelli

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Joseph Martino

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 9:08 pm and turned the meeting over to Mr. Joe Martino and Dr. Pascarella. Mr. Martino reviewed the bid process and contracts for copiers. Dr. Pascarella discussed personnel matters.



**PUBLIC SESSION**

MOTION: R. Taborsak moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

MOTION: R. Taborsak moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education allow Mr. Martino to enter into a Copier Agreement with Aztec Technologies.

**Motion carried unanimously**

**ADJOURNMENT**

R. Taborsak moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education adjourn its May 28, 2014 Board Meeting and the meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Hawley, Secretary

(meeting was videotaped)