

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES (Revised)**

*WEDNESDAY, May 9, 2012*

**Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road**

**Present:** Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo and Drs. Glass, Pascarella, Ms. Thompson and Mr. Arum from Administration.

**Absent:** Eileen Alberts

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Gladys Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:16 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Cooper asked Kathleen Molinaro to do the Roll Call.

**RECOGNITIONS**

**2012 CABA Student Leadership Awards**

Dr. Pascarella stated that the CABA Leadership Awards program was developed to give the Board of Education the opportunity to recognize student achievement and potential. 300 students across the State are being recognized. This is quite an accomplishment. I thank you for sending your youngsters to our schools; we appreciate the parents coming out and making our schools special. The following students will be receiving the award this evening:

Danbury High:	Ashley Winch and Ashish Rao
Alternative Center:	Marisa Brown and Robert Frey
Broadview:	Makayla Reid and Adam Habshey
Rogers Park:	Lorena Curtis and James Clary

The Superintendent called on the principals of the four schools to give the award to their students.

**Gary Bocaccio, Principal of Danbury High School**

Mr. Bocaccio said two absolute wonderful students are receiving the award. Ashley clearly exemplifies the best of what Danbury has. Ashley and Ashish are the two people I go to for their support and get the feel of the building. Ashley has a GPA of 4.12; she is taking several AP courses; she started on the road to leadership; she is the council rep; Vice President of the Board of Governors; a student representative to the Board; an athlete and works part time at American Eagle. In September she will attend the University of CT majoring in biology. Ashish has a GPA of 4.14. He also is taking several AP courses; started out as the Freshman class officer and is now President of the Board of Governors; a student representative to the Board; member of Peer Leadership, plays basketball, football and baseball and volunteers at Danbury Library and Danbury Hospital. He will be attending Rennselaer majoring in Bio

Tech and in the Premed program. Mr. Bocaccio congratulated their parents ... the audience applauded.

Linda Schreiner, Principal of the Alternative Center

Linda asked Marisa's guidance counselor, Laura Blake, to tell the Board about her involvement with Marisa. Ms. Blake said she participates in all school activities and community services; she also volunteers for community events and works part time doing kids parties. She is very deserving of this award. She has just received a scholarship of \$1,500 for a college she has been accepted to for next year. The principal said that Robert's guidance counselor, Kyle Trocolla, could not be present this evening and therefore she will be happy to tell the Board of Robert's accomplishments. Robert had some problems when he arrived at ACE and very often was absent from classes. Today, he is a high watermark for excellence. In the past 2 years he has had excellent attendance; he thrives on being challenged; is an active member in the Danbury community and volunteers for all community services. Ms. Schreiner said that the school had visitors from Naugatuck who spoke to Roberts and were very pleased. Their comment was that they would like to be principal of this school. We are very proud. Ms. Schreiner congratulated their parents ... the audience applauded.

Edward Robbs, Principal of Broadview Middle School

Mr. Robbs said today is a very special day for Makayla Reid and Adam Habshey. Not often do I get to honor two great students in the same day; they were both inducted into the national honor society. Adam wants to be a Marine Biologist. Makayla wants to go to Yale to become a doctor. They are both model students in character, academics as well as service and all around good people. Mr. Robbs congratulated their parents ... the audience applauded.

Patricia Joaquim, Principal of Rogers Park

Ms. Joaquim told the Board that Lorena Curtis is a member of the student council; plays tennis and is part of grass roots tennis; volunteers to help with crafts in the senior citizen homes; she is already involved in the community which is quite an accomplishment. What stands out about James Clary is that he is such a quiet individual and quiet sometimes does not get the recognition that they should. He is a hard dedicated worker and is recognized by his peers as a great student. His teachers all admire his hard work. Ms. Joaquim congratulated their parents ... the audience applauded.

National School Nurse Day – May 9, 2012

Dr. Pascarella said that nurses are an integral and essential part of our schools. Dr. Pascarella asked Kathy O'Dowd, to ask the nurses that were present approach the Board table for recognition. Ms. O'Dowd introduced Ellen Calle, Lynn Meeker, Dale Ahearn, Carmen Alonzo and Susan Conlon to the Board. It was mentioned that Dale is retiring after 20 years in our system. The Superintendent stated that today is National School Nurses Day and the Governor of Connecticut, Daniel P. Malloy, has issued an Official Statement on behalf of the State of Connecticut, stating that he takes great pleasure in recognizing today as School Nurses Day, which recognizes the important role school nurses play in the State of Connecticut providing students with access to health professionals is a critical component to ensuring our

students are ready and able to learn and that this recognition highlights the important role the nurses play in our State. Kathy thanked the Board and said she is proud of our staff that services our children every day. The Board thanked the nurses for all they do.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A.Vines, Coach of Pop Warner told the Board that Head Start is very important and we have to keep Head Start in our schools.

Monica Bevilacqua thanked the Board saying that they are in a very tough position trying to service our children and staff in the program.

Elizabeth Hofps stated that all day is important to prepare the students for first grade. Morris Street School has 446 students speaking 65 different languages at home. The large amounts of students are ESL learners – Morris Street is crowded. We need all day at Morris Street. She thanked the Board for their consideration. The audience applauded.

Ralph Mancini, chemist and attorney, stated that he moved to Danbury 15 years ago because of the school system and has now seen a decline in the K-12 education. In view of these lean times we have to put money and effort into our K-12 programs to close the achievement gap, if we don't, we are failing our children. We should not spend one penny on programs that are not legally mandated. Whatever benefit the kids get from Head Start, set some priorities – I don't care what you do with Head Start - closing the gap should be the priority of the Board.

Elizabeth DiResto, soccer coach and teacher at Shelter Rock, asked if the Board was considering putting paras back in our schools. She stated that 23 of the 44 students coming in cannot write their names or know their numbers. Reading starts in January and the achievement gap gets bigger and bigger. If I need to work with some students in the class, the others are not doing anything. We need to focus on this in and not wait until they are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and then panic about the CMT'S. Thank you for your time. I hope you will take this into consideration.

Melissa Gabriel, stated that she is in her 8<sup>th</sup> year teaching at Morris Street School and has taught both half and full time. We need paras without a doubt. Quite a few Morris Streets parents are here tonight. Being the only one in the classroom means you can't help them all at the same time. First Grade teachers said the students are lowest they have had in a long time and these are students who did not have paras in . We need to rebuild our foundation.

Carm Fernandes thanked the Board for all their hard work. She is an advocate of all day and para educators. I have seen take a step backwards; we have many ESL students that need a lot of help. She asked the Board - if "I were to triple your work and take away the secretary and shorten your day – do you honestly think the quality of your work would be the same"?

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

**MINUTES**

Board Workshop (Budget)	4/25/12
Board Meeting	4/25/12
Supt. Evaluation Committee	4/30/12
Board Workshop (Lighthouse Training)	5/2/12

**PERSONNEL**

Accept Leave of Absences:	Sarah Morelli	Lauren Scott
Accept Resignations:	Teyonte Best	Mary Christine Braga
	Katie Wolfe	Catherine Monroe (Advisor position only)
Accept Retirement:	Dale Ahern	

**The motion carried at 7:50 pm.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** – Cindy Mirochine told the Board that teachers have been busy meeting with administration and they are pleased with the reform bill that was reached this week. Representatives from the Compact school model will be coming into ACE next week.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Danbury High School – None

Alternative School for Excellence - Vanessa Grant, student representative told the Board that nine students went to Lincoln College to celebrate the academic success of the school year and did a presentation with students from other alternative schools in Connecticut. ACE participated in the City-wide Poetry Contest and two of the winners are from our School. Nicole Edelman won second place and Joshua Ferreti's poem won honorable mention. They will be attending the Poetry ceremony at WESCONN on May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Last week a group of students and alumni went on a 3 day, 15 mile hike. Each student carried a 50 pound pack. Kyle Trocolla, our history teacher, said "this was probably the best camping trip we have ever been on".

**DISCUSSION**

**Conditional Funding**

Dr. Pascarella told the audience that prior to the Board meeting this evening the Board had a Finance Committee Meeting. Additional funding is part of next year's budget with an increased cost savings of \$1.7 million to come directly to us. We are going to have the ability

to do some things. We think the funding should last 5 years and we will do what we can. We will talk again about this later on.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **April 2012 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)**

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved seconded by R. Hawley that the Board of Education accept the April 2012 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

For the month of April 2012, the District expended \$8,431,642 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$83,560,699.

Mr. Arum said you will see a couple of changes in May in worker's compensation and legal fees both as deficits. The legal fees will increase to \$10,000 due to pending cases.

R. Taborsak had questions on worker's compensation asking how it is going to affect the budget. Mr. Arum explained that we are expecting refunds coming back to the district which would take care of that.

**The motion carried at 8:00 pm.**

### **April 2012 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)**

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Jannelli that the Board of Education accept the April 2012 Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

Mr. Arum said next month we will give you some ideas on carryovers. S. Steichen asked what he meant by carryovers. He said an example is the IDEA Grant which gives us 2 months of carryover for instance if someone leaves or does not take fringe benefits, or purchase items – those we use at carryovers. R. Jannelli stated that he does not believe we pay much attention to the operation part of the grants. He would like to know some of programs in the grants, what they do and a little more clarity of what these grants promote.

**The motion carried at 8:04 pm.**

### **2012-2013 Budget**

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve and set the School District's Budget in the amount of 115,795,291 for the fiscal year 2012-2013

S. Steichen asked if we are approving Dr. Pascarella proposed recommendation or are we approving the total budget. Dr. Pascarella said we are approving the total budget. Ms.

Steichen then read to the Board a document she wrote concerning Head Start which is as follows:

“When I was elected to the Board I promised my constituents that I would focus on K-12. And I have learned since then that adult education is a state mandated program which I also need to support. We are taking a substantial amount of money about \$1.5M in total if we include administration, teachers and building for Head Start. Meanwhile our children in K-12 don’t have textbooks, don’t have laptops and in the schools we often can’t even provide soap in the bathrooms and we are going give a non-mandated program, a non k-12 program over a million dollars. And as I dig deeper into the head start program two glaring facts come out. The money we provide goes primarily to pay the salaries of people, some who makeover \$160,000/year, in a non profit, so 60 cents of every dollar that we fund goes towards salaries and overhead. So every time we give money to this non-mandated program, salaries of those people increase as well. The other glaring fact is that a recently released congressionally mandated study calls into question the effectiveness of this program. I strongly believe in early childhood education which is why I completely support all day which until we started questioning the funding was on the chopping block of the superintendent’s budget. All we hear from the district administrators of this school district is how they do not have enough money, but always manage to fund their pet programs”.

S. Chilian asked if the \$50,000 to Head Start is back in the budget that we are voting on tonight. Dr. Pascarella said the reduction to Head Start of the \$50,000 is in the budget. He stated that he promised the Board to get back to Mr. Maloney with some funding mechanisms – there are not a lot of funds to work with. I have asked Jim to look at the reduction. The Superintendent read a statement from Mr. Maloney’s letter dated May 8, 2012:

*“Based on your perspective that the School System wishes to reduce, over the next series of years, its current annual commitment of fund to the Head Start (from the current 2011-2012 level of \$585,000 to approximately ½ of that amount, i.e. mathematically \$292,500, but subject to upward adjustment due to DPS union agreements, and other cost inflators), Head Start would agree to an annual reduction of \$50,000 until that reduced level is reached”.*

*“Head Start will be responsible for making up the annual difference by seeking funds from other sources, such as charitable foundations, additional state and/or federal funds and the like”.*

S. Steichen stated the Board of Education is reducing the Head Start funds (2012-2013) by \$50,000 to \$535,000.

Kara Watson Wanzer said she is a Danbury Public School staff member and Education Coordinator of Head Start. She told the Board that their program is quite different; compared to the programs that are in the Impact Study. The children in our program receive two years of Head Start compared to nine months in the Impact Study. Our program is of a higher quality than the Impact Study due to the fact that we scored in the top 5% during our federal review. Our classroom reports are double the national average. The Impact Study talks about only modest positive gains, but they recommend more funding and more community engagement in order to seek positive results. Our program has good community engagement therefore it is successful because of Danbury Public Schools. She went on to say that there are several issues with the Impact Study. The Study was considered faulty due to the control group that they used; there were methodological problems with the study. Other studies have confirmed that Head Start decreases criminal activities, the need for grade repetition, mortality rates and the need for special education. She stated that she supervises the public schools classroom staff in the program. Dr. Glass also spoke in the last meeting about the study saying that the research is outdated. In 2007 the Head Start Act changed the complexity of Head Start. Ms. Watson Wanzer said the salaries quoted are inaccurate and she is the only coordinator that is on the Danbury Public School payroll. She stated that no Danbury Public School money is spent on anything other than Danbury Public School staff. Mr. Arum said he will give the Board our payroll list.

S. Chilian said she is uncomfortable. I wish to apologize to the Head Start people and I don't think it is your role and I'm sorry that you have been put in that position. That program is going to escalate when we will have to be paying certified teachers. I feel we need all day; you can't work with needy students without help. Dr. Pascarella mentioned that we have student interns as substitute. A discussion ensued about student interns as substitutes.

R. Taborsak said he looks at treating Head Start with a phase out due to the economic climate – the Superintendent and staff has done everything with the contingency plan. I think this is the best case scenario. It is not the perfect budget, but I am going to support it. A. Fluskey-Lattin said it is our discussion and our fight. If we ask people to come to the table we should be able to ask questions and they should answer them. We have limited funds. If children attend the quality Head Start preschool program and then go to what I think is a weakened, half day and without teacher aides, they will regress, losing the benefits of the preschool program. I guarantee that you will not see that type of growth involving those children. How do we get to continue to support those children and the other children in Danbury—there's your gap. We do not have a fabulous program. We need classrooms to have paras. G. Falkenthal said much of what was just said is what he wanted to say. It does no good to get these kids up and running with Head Start and not supporting our. The tax payers are picking up \$8 million for the Head Start building. Dr. Pascarella read part of a research and then said, "let's deal with the \$1.7 million that we are going to receive".

P. Tranzillo said why couldn't use part of the \$1.7 to put paras into at least the ½ day classes. The Superintendent said that the budget plans are developed by the school. They want to use their money for intervention. Dr. Glass said the Board is in an untenable position. Doing it

correctly includes all of the above. A strong Head Start Program, a strong program and paras in all classes. I agree with all the comments.

Ms. Cooper said we have a motion on the table and asked Ms. Molinaro to repeat the motion. After the motion was read the second time, Ms. Cooper said we will now vote on the motion:

<i>In favor:</i>	P. Tranzillo R. Jannelli	S. Chilian K. Molinaro	G. Cooper R. Taborsak
<i>Opposed:</i>	G. Falkenthal A Fluskey-Lattin	R. Hawley	S. Steichen
<i>Absent:</i>	E. Alberts		

**The motion carried at 8:45 pm.**

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### Connecticut's P-20 Council, Teacher Preparation

The Superintendent said they spoke about the entry level of teachers into the program. Right now the GPA is lower than a B average. People are going to need to have a B or B+ to get into the areas. It focused a lot about time in school: a freshman, sophomore, junior and seniors will have to have 900 hours before they become a teacher. Everyone in that room all came around to those points. He told the Board he will keep them informed.

#### Update SB-24

Dr. Pascarella said SB-24 passed today. Most important is the focus on early childhood education, which is essential to ensure that students don't show up for already far behind their peers; also a new focus on literacy. The final bill includes 1,000 new preschool seats, twice the number originally proposed in 10 districts and I think we will be in the expanded group. I am currently trying to find out if we can apply for some of those seats. We are now there and were not there 3 years ago. Governor Malloy is an advocate for universal pre-school. There is going to be a reading assessment, which includes all things we already do.

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Ms. Cooper said she does not have anything to report but did ask the Board members to be sure to e-mail or call Debbie Warner if they are not able to attend a Committee Meeting or the Board Meeting. Ms. Cooper also said at this time of the year schools are having many events and she feels that the Board should be represented at as many as possible. If Board members are invited and no one from the Board is able to attend, she would be happy to represent the Board.

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



Superintendent Evaluation Committee, K. Molinaro, Chair  
Ms. Molinaro said they will be working on setting up a meeting.

*(There were no other Committee reports.)*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing updates on negotiations and the year-end review of Superintendent's Goals.

#### **Motion carried at 9:05 PM**

**Present:** Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo Drs. Glass, Pascarella and Ms. Thompson.

**Absent:** Eileen Alberts

Kim Thompson reviewed a meeting with CIGNA to discuss HSA insurance program. After lengthy discussion and so that the board is fully informed, we will ask CIGNA to make presentation review of HSA Insurance Program possibly on May 22nd, before we consider offering in any negotiations of pending contracts.

Update on hiring:

Down to 1 candidate for Director of Special Services

5 candidates for Director of Finance

Interviews to begin next week.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

S. Steichen moved, seconded by S. Chilian that the Board of Education adjourn their meeting of May 9, 2012 and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

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Richard Hawley, Secretary