

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 – 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and those assembled recited the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Alberts asked Mr. Jannelli to do the roll call:

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli,
Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson

Absent: Kathleen Molinaro, Richard Hawley, David Metrena

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

RECOGNITIONS

Dawn Bartz	Interim Principal	Shelter Rock School
Dan Donovan	Principal	Danbury High School
Sharon Epple	Principal	Pembroke School
Edie Thomas	Principal	Broadview Middle School

Dr. Pascarella introduced the new administrators. On behalf of the Board, the Chairperson welcomed them and wished them a successful school year.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - Richard Jannelli moved, seconded by Ralph Pietrafesa that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-111 through 16-113, as recommended:

MINUTES

6/15/16 Sites & Facilities Committee
6/15/16 Board Meeting

PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absences, Resignations, Retirements and New Hires in accordance with Exhibit 16-113 (see attached Exhibit 16-113 for the complete Personnel Report).

Motion passed as 7:07 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE – None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

DHS student representative, Ali Primavera, told the Board that opening day went exceptionally well. Students pushed through the heat of the first few days and made the transition into the new school year smooth and easy. Classes, after school activities, extracurricular and fall sports are in full swing. Monique Delima said students and teachers should be commended for teaching and learning regardless of the distracting sounds of the on-going construction. Adjustment to the busy noises of machines and tools has been handled effectively in the classrooms. Teava Mercado said one of our first projects as BOG officers was to develop a twitter account following in order to be able to relay important school information to student and parent base. We promoted the account by raffling off small prizes to new followers within the first few days of school and now we have a following of almost 800 followers. Samantha Mortara, told the Board on September 16th we will be holding a Club Fair during lunch periods to introduce and involve students in the many extra-curricula's we offer. Additionally, a school-wide open house September 19th. Freshman class elections will be held on October 6th. Our Spirit Week will be October 24-28, followed by the Homecoming Football Game on the 28th and the dance on the 29th. We invite you to attend.

ACE student representative, Deanna Hernandez, told the Board that the school years got off to a great start. They now have a cell phone ban in-place; students turn their phones into the office before school starts and retrieve them when school is over. It is working well and students are more focused and attentive in all their classes. Deanna also said, attendance at ACE for the past two weeks has been very good; so far we are at 90% each day. On September 20th we volunteered at the Annual Taste of Danbury. ACE students have done this for over 20 years. On September 16th, we will be participating in our annual school-wide team building trip to Camp Herlich in Patterson, New York and will be involved in a variety of team events including climbing the 30 foot wall. We all look forward to attending that camp. Deanna said this was her favorite field trip.

Eileen Alberts thanked the students for coming to the meeting and giving their report on the start of school and all the upcoming activities.

PRESENTATION – None

ACTION ITEMS - None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Start of School Update – Enrollment/Class Size Update

The Superintendent asked Mr. Martino to give the Board an update on the start of school and enrollment. Mr. Martino said that as of today we are up 240 students from the first day of school. He stated that they had to add a fourth Kindergarten to South Street School and that we are out of space at that school. Westside Middle School has new 8th grade and Shelter Rock has another Kindergarten. 400 students have been registered since the first day of school at DHS. Dr. Pasarella told the Board that this is an unofficial count. The October 1st enrollment is considered the official count. Mr. Martino added that we are going to have to add to the budget because of the enrollment; the enrollment is challenging this year.

Hiring & Central Registration Update

Ms. Thompson said 870 Kindergarteners were registered through the center and we are expecting more. Everyone new to the district is coming through the Registration Center. The group working there is doing a good job with a lot of registering issues. How to make the process smoother is an ongoing process.

We have hired 70 certified staff. The last week before school started we lost 35 staff. It is hard to find certified people in our shortage areas. We are now losing 40 non-certified. It is not at all that different than past years. We are trying to get more people in a sub pool; we have 200 right now. Due to a mandate, we have considerable work in my department. Anyone who works with kids need to be fingerprinted and the FBI and DCF requests every applicant's name, address, education institution they have every worked for. We need to contact those people to see if they have ever had abuse issue against them. For people who have worked for us we now have to fill out those forms. What makes it more difficult is that our records are off-site.

Richard Jannelli asked if there any professional firms that do this type work. Ms. Thompson said they have looked into that, but they are very expensive. The problem is it takes time look through the files. Mr. Jannelli stated that it is somewhat unrealistic. Ms. Thompson said they are also involved with custody issues with children in our district.

Dr. Pascarella said we have 11,298 kids in our district and I will discuss this when I present my goals.

Transportation Update

Mr. Martino said transportation has been a struggle. We have had to add busses. Right now we are getting extra busses from Milford and Massachusetts. For instance, on bus run number 9 we had 40 students, now we have 80 taking that bus. Westside Middle School's run is also challenging. The cost is \$70,000 per vehicle, whether it is a mini or full size. We have addressed some of the complaints. For Westside we are redoing a whole new routing. Abbott Tech's run is also a problem. He said he has never seen a year like this.

Dr. Glass said his office is also getting complaints from parents. Also, there are different custody issues this year; Mom's showing up at the schools.

Mr. Jannelli asked how many busses need to be added. Mr. Martino said we have now one mini and three full size. After tonight we will have one more mini and one more full. Right now we have to move the kids and we will deal with the financing later. The bus company doesn't want to add more staff. We used to have 67 busses, now we have over 80.

DHS Construction/Air Quality Update/Shelter Rock Modulars

Mr. Martino said that the portable classrooms for Shelter Rock School; 62% reimbursable from the State and should be in-place by early October. A bid for \$332,000 looks promising. Dr. Pascarella said that they have a meeting tomorrow. This contractor has done lot of work in New York City. We are pushing for dates for a mid-November timeframe. Mr. Martino said at the moment all the furniture is sitting in a warehouse waiting for the portables.

He stated that the DHS Project and the jackhammers are working and the demolition has begun. He was concerned that the bids were coming in higher than anticipated. The Superintendent said we had a meeting three weeks ago with contractors and safety folks. They were proactive. The two have been working closely with us.

CCJEF Update

Dr. Pascarella said the Judge upheld the State's intention. We lost the case. On Friday we will have more information and I will bring it to you. Right now it is in limbo.

Mr. Jannelli asked if he is talking about teacher's evaluation and if that needs to be changed and are we waiting until a final decision comes down.

Special Education

Ms. Alberts asked Kelly Truchsess, Director of Student Services, to give the Board report. Ms. Truchsess said that Special Education enrollment continues to increase as it did last year. Our out of district numbers remain consistent with last year.

Ms. Alberts stated that Ms. Truchsess will be joining the Board at the table for future Board Meetings.

DISCUSSION

INFORMATION

School Funding Coalition

Richard Jannelli said that some members of the Community Relations Committee got together this summer to put together a group to spearhead an on-going project. He stated that he worked with Eileen Klein of the Governance Council, and had several meetings with the Superintendent. We formed the name School Funding Coalition since it should be headed by the community and taken out of the Board of Education. It is a Danbury group. On August 18th we had a meeting of about 50 people, City officials and Board members, business people and community people. Some people signed up to actively become involved. Although we want to focus on education, it is a city community of people who are happy and excited about it. It looks as though it is going to be an enlightening committee, and we are looking forward in getting more people interested. I think the meeting went well.

Ms. Alberts thanked Mr. Jannelli for all his time and effort on this project.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The Chairperson asked Board Member, Holly Robinson, to tell the Board about the student survey on drugs and alcohol. Ms. Robinson gave a brief summary on "Stand Together and Make a Difference" survey. She mentioned some of the questions that were on the survey and said she felt the questions were answered truthfully. The survey was fascinating. Ms. Alberts thanked her for taking on that project.

Ms. Alberts also spoke about all that the Family Learning Center is involved in. She stated that she was going to give the Board members a handout that she was given at their Board meeting.

CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 18-19, 2016

Ms. Alberts asked who on the Board would be attending. There was a show of hands. She mentioned that they should call Debbie Warner in the Superintendent's Office to let her know that they are interested. She stated if you plan to stay overnight, Debbie will tell you what you will need to do.

Ted Carroll, Board Self-Evaluation Workshop – October 5th

Ms. Alberts said the topic at this workshop would be the difference between governance and management. She asked for a show of hands if everyone agreed to have this workshop on October 5th. The Board agreed that it would be on that date at Beaver Brook Administration at 5:30 pm. Ms. Alberts also mentioned that Mr. Carroll has done workshops for the Danbury Board in the past.

Ralph Pietrafesa said Citywide PTO had their first meeting on Monday. They requested a list of the Board Member representatives for each school. Dr. Pascarella said he would see that his office provides them with the list.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: P. Johnston moved, seconded by H. Robinson that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations pertaining to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Education and the Teamsters Local 677 (Custodians), with possible action in Public Session.

Motion passed at 8:09 pm.

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson
Absent: Kathleen Molinaro, Richard Hawley, David Metrena
Also Present: Drs. Glass, Pascarella, Kim Thompson and Joe Martino

The Chairperson called the Executive Session to order at 8:12 pm and turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson. A discussion ensued.

MOTION: R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board of Education Return to Public Session to ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Education and Teamsters Local 677 (Custodians).

Motion passed at 8:26 pm.

PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: M. Ferguson moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board of Education ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Education and Teamsters Local 677 (Custodians) as presented.

Motion passed unanimously 8:27 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

R. Pietrafesa moved, seconded by H. Robinson that the Board of Education adjourn its September 14, 2016 Board of Education meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(meeting was videotaped)