

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016 – 7:00 PM
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.

Ms. Alberts said in the 15 years she has been on the Board she has never seen so many teachers attend a Board meeting. On behalf of the Board she welcomed them and thanked them for their efforts for the children in Danbury.

BOARD ROLL CALL

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Richard Hawley, Patrick Johnston,
Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa,
Holly Robinson

Also Present: Drs. Glass, Pascarella, Joe Martino and Kelly Truchsess from Administration.

Absent: Michael Ferguson, Richard Jannelli and Kim Thompson from Administration

RECOGNITIONS

Fund for Teachers Fellows: Michael Burnett and Melissa Teel

Dr. Pascarella read a letter that he received from Fund for Teachers telling of their passion and excitement for the work they did in Peru. It urged the principals and teachers to promote the program in their schools and in the hopes that more teachers from Danbury will be on the list for the Fund in 2017. The Superintendent then asked Michael Burnett and Melissa Teel to give a brief summary of their trip. Mr. Burnett said they spent a month in Peru taking Spanish classes. This is a program that you can do during the summer and if the Fund feels it would be good for you, your school and your class they fund it. Ms. Teel said we did three weeks of individual Spanish classes. She stated that she now understands some of the struggles in the classrooms.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Kevin Haddad, teacher at King Street Intermediate, told the Board that he was upset about the number of teachers that have resigned this year. He said he knew that there were complaints and low morale in our district, but he didn't think it was that bad until he saw the resignations. Is this board falling out of touch? More and more demands are being placed on us teachers. Changes in grading scores and entering a myriad of data into Power Schools and busy writing curriculum; my limited time is being chipped away. It has become a top-down district. The Board needs to get out in the schools and see what our teachers are experiencing day-to-day.

Pamela O'Neill, teacher at Morris Street, said none of the data collections has anything to do with teaching. She directed this statement to the Board, "There is nothing like getting out of work early on Friday afternoon, October 14, to join my students and me." She held up a tennis ball in one hand a ball depicting earth in the other and stated they are going to turn this tennis ball into an earth. If at least 9 Board members became involved, it would make my job easier. It is not about testing, it's about teaching kids so they can learn.

Mathew Valente, spoke about the France trip refund. He said forty parents have been waiting six month for their \$3,500 refund for the French trip – each of the 40 parents that lost \$3,500. He asked the Board to look into the parents’ refund as the school is not taking any responsibility. Ms. Alberts said she has made a note of that and that someone will contact him.

Ms. Alberts said she was happy to see all the teachers at the meeting tonight and asked if they would stand up individually, introduced themselves and tell what school and what grade they teach. Every school was represented by several teachers. Some also stated that they were a resident of Danbury, while some stated that they still have children in the district schools. One teacher said, “In the room tonight there are 5 staff members that I were my students throughout the years.”

The teachers got a standing ovation and applause from the Board. Ms. Alberts again thanked them for coming.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-118 through 16-120, as recommended.

MINUTES

9/12/16 Sites & Facilities Committee
9/14/16 Board Meeting

PERSONNEL REPORT

Accept Leave of Absence:	Alyson Femia		
Accept Resignations:	Nabila Hasan Viviane Sikorski Aileen Sullivan	Lisa Ludwiczak Rufus Singleton	Jacquelyn Monteavaro Patricia Smith
Accept Retirements:	Elizabeth Anderson, 30+ years Marion Kallinikos, 9 years	Susan Barnum, 33+ years Linda Soter, 19 years	
New Hires:	(See Exhibit 16-120)		

Motion passed at 7:21 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE – MORRIS STREET SCHOOL

Tom Young, teacher at Morris Street School, told the Board that we had wonderful opening days of school and were happy to be there. The teachers were right there to make the students feel good and comfortable. We had a successful open house last week, which is a testament to our teachers as we are the highest poverty district within the district. He said he wanted to thank Dr. Pascarella and Mr. Martino for all the work that was done over the summer. We got new floors, rooms got painted and they look great.

Sam Buck, Automotive Teacher at Danbury High School and President of NEA, told the Board that a school will be represented at each Board meeting. He said you wouldn’t want to be listening to me twice a month! Morris Street was telling us what was going on. Each school will be coming to tell

about their building. We have the same concerns as the Board. We are upset about the turnover and want to get together with the Board to find a solution. He stated that they want to help out and have a working relationship with the Board.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - None

PRESENTATION

Terry Budlong, Director of Prevention Services, MCCA

Stand Together and Make a Difference Student Survey Data. Ms. Budlong distributed to the Board a summary of the survey results. It covered:

External Assets: Positive family communication, caring neighborhood, caring school climate, parent involvement in schooling; community values youth, and school boundaries

Internal Assets: Restraint planning and decision making

She told the Board that she is working with the local substance council. She said Ms. Robinson, Mr. Jannelli and Ms. Alberts are part of the coalition. The report provides a summary of the comprehensive student survey data that has been collected by the STMAD coalition in Danbury from public school students in 9th through 12th grades since 2010. Information gleaned from the survey data is utilized to assess student levels of involvement with substance use as well as current social norms.

Ms. Budlong said that she wanted to start with the Board to distribute the survey results. She is going to meet with the City-wide PTO on November 5th and would be happy to talk to administration at DHS about getting this information into the hands of the students. She also would like to work with the middle school principals and elementary school principals to help build these assets in kids. She stated that on December 5th there will be a community forum to provide the community this survey information.

ACTION ITEMS

June 2016/Year End Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education accept the June 2016 Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Mr. Martino told the Board that during the month of June 2016, the District expended \$10,983,429 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$119,558,719 which represents 96.5% of the General Fund.

Mr. Hawley asked for a quick synopsis. Mr. Martino said they transferred \$650,000 to the City of Danbury for our reserve fund. We have had some big purchases, but all-in-all we did okay. There will be an audit square off in mid-December. The full reserve \$6.8 million.

Motion passed at 7:46 pm.

June 2016/Year End Operating Results Analysis (Grants/Projects)

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education accept the June 2016 Operating Results Analysis (Grant/Projects)

Mr. Marino told the Board that during the month of June 2016, the District expended \$3,583,667 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$25,626,323 which represents 86.1% of the Grants budget.

Mr. Hawley asked how the grant writer worked out. Mr. Martino said at the moment we are in contact with a grant company on a smaller scope. A lot grants got denied. The Nellie Mae grant is more for technology. Mr. Hawley asked about any net loss for the 2016-2017 year and asked about the decreases on each grant due to salaries. Mr. Martino said it is true, salaries do decrease the total amount of the grant.

Motion passed at 7:48 pm.

Building Rental Funds

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by P. Johnston that the Board of Education authorize the use of Building Rental Funds for the replacement of tile and carpeting in the DHS Auditorium both levels (\$35,000) and replacement of sound system in the main gym at DHS (\$15,000)

Motion passed at 7:55 pm.

Replacement of Oil Tank at Broadview Middle School

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by H. Robinson that the Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications for the replacement of oil tank at Broadview Middle School

Motion passed at 7:56 pm.

Replacement of Oil Tank at Rogers Park Middle School

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications for the replacement of oil tank at Rogers Park Middle School

Motion passed at 7:57 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Shelter Rock Portable Classrooms

Dr. Pascarella said it has been difficult. We finally did award a contract to Nadler Modulars for \$332,806. Mr. Martino said he had hoped that we would have them in-place by the end of October, but it now looks like they will be here the end of November. This company did a lot of work in New York and New Jersey schools. The other bidders were Rizzo Corporation \$645,000 and NAC \$769,000. Mr. Martino said it is a fairly easy process once they arrive. The most time will be building the deck. The power is already on the side of the school. With the money left in the bond, we might be able to do some work on the parking lot. Mr. Martino also told the Board that we are up by 30 students at Shelter Rock; as of September 20th, we have 546 students at that school. The staff have been very patient.

CCJEF Update

Dr. Pascarella said we don't know when the Judge is going to make the decision. They are looking at a funding mechanism.

Danbury Early College Opportunity Program

The Superintendent said we have a small grant. At the moment two courses are being offered this year. We are looking for funding.

2016-2017 Budget Update

Mr. Martino said the budget is not as exciting as I would like to see it. We had problems with busing; Danbury High School had a major overload; four buses cost \$240,000; two teacher added at Shelter Rock. I also didn't like the July and August medical claims. But for right now we are in a freeze. South Street School is up 10% this year. We have four Kindergartens at South Street.

Dr. Pascarella said we are in our fourth year of redistricting. The only difference in our plan was adding the modular. We are going to have to look at this again or add more modulars. Mr. Martino said right now there is nowhere to redistrict to.

DISCUSSION

INFORMATION

2017-2018 School Calendar

The Superintendent said the school calendar that you have in your packet is a draft that you were given on May 23, 2016. We will have it on the next agenda for your approval.

Goals/District Coherence Pathways

Dr. Pascarella said at the next meeting administration will be aligning their goals to the Board's goals.

Citywide PTO Meet the Candidates Night, October 18th, Broadview, 7:00 pm

Dr. Pascarella said a flyer will be going out soon announcing the Citywide PTO Meet the Candidates Night on October 18th.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Board Self Evaluation Workshop, October 5th, 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Alberts told the Board not to forget to fill out the survey and send it back from Ted Carroll and send it back to him before the October 5th workshop.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 18-19, 2016

The Chairperson asked for a show of hand on who will be attending the CABE Convention:

G. Cooper	H. Robinson	K. Molinaro
R. Pietrafesa	F. Karrat	E. Alberts

Sites and Facilities – K. Molinaro

Ms. Molinaro said we had a Sites and Facilities Meeting before the first Board meeting. She asked that it be put on record how valuable our custodians are. They did a great job over the summer. They handled all the heavy lifting that was involved in getting the schools ready. Richard Jalbert, who headed up that whole team, has been terrific. The schools look beautiful. Morris Street looks amazing. Ms. Molinaro said, "Thank you Joe Martino and Richard Jalbert."

AIS

Mr. Karrat told the Board that AIS's PTO has not had their first meeting yet. It is scheduled for October 4th at 7:00 pm. They did complete their one and only fundraiser which was a success. On Sunday they celebrated the beginning of school with the families.

Teachers' Negotiation

Mr. Karrat and Mr. Hawley will be sitting on the Teachers' Negotiations Committee.

Superintendent's Evaluation Committee – G. Cooper

Ms. Cooper said we need to meet and discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation form. I don't know who is going to be the Chair of that Committee. She asked the Board if it would be possible to have a meeting before the next Board meeting on Thursday, October 13th at 6:15-6:30 pm.

Ms. Cooper also spoke about the last report on the hiring process of 90 staff. She said the community is very concerned that we are not getting minorities to apply and that the staff is not recruiting minorities. She was questioning how often do we review our Affirmation Plan? African-Americans fill out the application and never get a call back. My question is what plan do we have to do minority recruitment for our staff and how are we going to go about doing it; we need to work with the community and with African-American colleges. She wants a review of the Affirmation Action Plan. Dr. Pascarella said that Kim Thompson will do a presentation at the next meeting.

Mr. Pietrafesa said Great Plain School had some fund raising at the beginning of the year. The principal's office and new doorway looks great. Joe Martino and Rich Jalbert have done a great job. The little minor things that we do does show appreciation for the staff that work at that school.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal strategy for possible pending litigation.

Present: Eileen Alberts, Gladys Cooper, Richard Hawley, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Ralph Pietrafesa, Holly Robinson

Also Present: Drs. Glass and Pascarella, Joe Martino from Administration

Absent: Richard Jannelli, Michael Ferguson and Kim Thompson from Administration

Motion carried at 8:20 pm

The Chairperson, E. Alberts, called the Executive Session to order at 8:23 pm and turned the meeting over to Dr. Pascarella. A discussion ensued concerning legal strategy for possible pending litigation.

PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Alberts that the Board of Education adjourn its September 28, 2016 Board meeting and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Michael Ferguson, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)