

# **DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016**

**Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, Eileen Alberts, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ROLL CALL**

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

Absent: David Metrena

Also Present: Sal Pascarella; William Glass; Joe Martino

## **RECOGNITIONS**

- Broadview Middle School Student, Jendry Padilla
- Pitney Bowes donation of a community garden at King Street School
- CABE - March is Board Member Appreciation Month

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Wendi Wright, Lisa Shafer, Sharon Amalfitano, and Tom Saadi spoke on behalf of the class size issue at Shelter Rock School.

Kevin Haddad spoke on behalf of the Danbury Grass Roots Tennis Association, the importance of not linking teacher evaluation to the SBAC testing results, and the need to even the playing field across middle schools, and not just offer exceptional programs at the magnet school.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION -** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by R. Pietrafesa, that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 16-43 through 16-47, as recommended:

### **A. MINUTES**

- 2/22/16 Special Board Meeting (Exp)
- 2/24/16 Board Meeting
- 2/29/16 Special Board Meeting (Exp)
- 3/2/16 Special Board Meeting

### **B. PERSONNEL REPORT**

- Accept Leave of Absence: Jaclyn Aaron (Coach Only)  
Sheri Blount, Amanda Fuller,  
Melissa Gabriel, Alyson Powers,  
Katherine Williams
- Accept Resignations: Mark Cordoano, James Gonzalez,  
Divon Jackson, Mariah Santiago

Accept Retirements: Roseanne Britton, 23 years, 4 months  
Mary Connell, 18 years, 8 months  
Stephen Varga, 30 years  
New Hires: See Exhibit 16-47

Chairperson Alberts thanked Roseanne Britton, Mary Connell, and Stephen Varga for their dedicated years of service.

**Motion carried at 7:33 pm**

### **EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE**

King Street Campus – Ellen Adamski and Kurt Knoernschild spoke on behalf on ongoing projects happening on the King Street Campus. They thanked the Board for their hard worked and commitment to the school and district, and also presented the Board with obstacles and difficulties that they have concerns about including class size and the need for teacher prep time (suggested duty free periods).

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Stephanie Hottes, ACE Student Representative, presented information about activities and events happening at ACE including the “Too High forthe Price” FCI women inmates presentation, Read Across America day, the project based learning assignment titled “Alternative Choices to School Lunch”, and SAT/CAPT testing and participation.

### **PRESENTATION**

Superintendent Goal Update – Data Presentation by Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass and Kara Wanzer

Dr. Pascarella introduced the topic. Dr. Glass discussed the Context for Data Review and Analysis – 8 Key Drivers, and importance of each category.

Kara Wanzer spoke about the Data Wise Improvement Process, specifically student outcomes and student work, and spoke about the data overview of the district. The reading and math STAR assessment is being administered grades K – 9. Ms. Wanzer briefly explained the benchmarks, the SGP (student growth percentile), and the Read 180 program. She continued to explain the fall baseline testing in comparison to the winter assessment, and their relationship to the norm reference group (national).

R. Hawley asked for clarification regarding the timeframe of the 3 benchmarks. K. Wanzer explained that they are September, January, and April. R. Hawley asked if there was a state baseline number. Ms. Wanzer and Dr. Pascarella explained that it is a national comparison. R. Pietrafesa asked how this compares to the DRA. K. Wanzer explained that this test allows us to collect data with norm reference data and collect and track information, and evaluate outcomes over time. This allows the district to see the progression of learning and vertical alignment of grade levels.

The STAR assessment is aligned to Common Core standards, and provides an indicator as to how students will perform on the SBAC.

Ms. Wanzer continued to present information regarding the SGP for both reading and math, then the benchmark summary. R. Hawley asked if benchmarks can be drilled down per school. Ms. Wanzer replied that it could be, and that it was being done with school Principals. R. Jannelli asked for clarification of what the benchmark is. K. Wanzer replied that is a national comparison to same grade level, and ranked according to peers in same grade level on a national level. This assessment allows us to create norms, and see how students are moving across the continuum.

R. Pietrafesa asked for clarification of what this data represents. K. Wanzer stated this is a data overview being done at Central Office, building, and grade level. The goal is to extract what the problems of practice are, and how to solve them. P. Johnston asked if this data was really more for providing benchmark data in the first year, and Ms. Wanzer said yes. However, goal is also to be able to see if students are meeting growth targets, which is a 40 SGP.

H. Robinson asked for further clarification surrounding the drop off between grade level. Ms. Wanzer explained that was the topic of district discussion today, and is currently the highest leverage issue to deal with. Dr. Glass explained this assessment provides the deepest level of diagnosis that the district has ever been able to do. Not only can data be collected for a school, grade, or class, but also for individual students.

Ms. Wanzer continued to explain that the Read 180 is a reading intervention program for 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students performing two grades below grade level. Current data shows many students exceeding annual growth targets already. The result for this group are very encouraging, and the determination of students and the commitment of teacher is exceptional.

K. Wanzer also presented the data in relationship to graduation rates in comparison to the cohort, as well as those students considered still enrolled, and other (drop out).

F. Karrat asked if there was any reconsideration in regard to the assessment that was chosen. Ms. Wanzer stated that the state will not accept the DRA as a reported benchmark assessment, and that most districts are using either MAPS or STAR. District Administrators and teachers feel very comfortable with the STAR assessment for many reasons.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Transportation Contract**

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by H. Robinson that the Board of Education shall waive compliance with its Regulation No. 3-501 insofar as it pertains to advertising and/or competitive bidding, for the sole, limited and express purpose of contracting with STA of Connecticut, Inc. for the provision of transportation services for the period July 1, 2017 through August 31, 2022.

F. Karrat stated that he thinks the Board bidding process should be followed. H. Robinson stated that she agrees with Mr. Karrat, however that in this situation she thought the bidding process should be waived. M. Ferguson reminded the Board that he will not be participating in the vote as he has a close family member that works for STA. P. Johnston agreed that the bid process should be followed; however that he also agreed that in this particular circumstance the cost savings by waiving the bid were. J. Martino reminded the Board that STA would rescind their offer if the contract went to bid. Chairperson Alberts reminded the Board of the long standing relationship the district has with STA.

K. Molinaro and R. Hawley also abstain from vote as they did not participate in the STA presentation.

**Motion carried at 9:10 pm**

## B. Danbury High School Project

**MOTION:** R. Jannelli moved, seconded by P. Johnston, 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 Electric Service and Generators - Phase 2 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.

**Motion carried at 9:12 pm**

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. SBAC/SAT Update  
Achieved 93 % participation at ACE and 94 % at DHS. SBAC is coming later in the spring
- B. Reading/Organization Audit Update  
Exit interviews were conducted with Administrators, and conference call being Scheduled. Organizational audit being conducted by outside agency and is due in 2-3weeks.
- C. Hartford Lobbying Efforts  
Danbury met with Representative Sharkey, and he knows our main issues which will create unity of focus with legislators..
- D. Board Workshop on Expulsions/Teacher Negotiations with Tom Mooney, May 4<sup>th</sup>  
Tom Mooney will be conducting both workshops. Board workshop scheduled for 7:00 pm.
- E. New State Ranking System Results  
ACE now a turnaround school and DHS is a focus school. This is primarily based on graduation rate. Dr. Pascarella stated the real opportunity is at ACE, and the district is working on continuing to improve the programs there. There is no state funding for the turnaround schools. R. Hawley asked how we can control costs at ACE, especially with no state reimbursement, and that ACE is the most expensive school per pupil. Dr. Pascarella replied this can be investigated through the upcoming study, and there may be some possibility of raising money and offering spots to other districts.

**DISCUSSION** – None

## **INFORMATION**

School Funding Meeting, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at Broadview. R. Jannelli reminded the Board about the meeting tomorrow night. They are expecting a large turnout.

Recently had a Community Relations Meeting, which included the topic of school funding. The committee is excited to hire a lobbyist and move forward. He reminded the Board that this is an ongoing process, probably or years to come, and that it will not matter who is on the Board. The momentum must continue. F. Karrat asked for clarification if the meeting would be videotaped. J. Martino it would not be available live, but would be recorded an on You Tube.

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

Chairperson Alberts reported that Anne Mead shared with her that the Family Learning Center runs programs every Saturday for Gifted & Talented students, as well as play groups for a variety of different student groups. H. Robinson reminded the Board that the FLC also runs the Literacy bus, and thanked Anne Mead and Loren Daly for their tireless efforts.

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

H. Robinson shared information about the Stand Together and Make a Difference program, which is a drug prevention program. Community Forum on April 7<sup>th</sup> about substance abuse and opiate addiction.

Family University April 9<sup>th</sup>

Ms. Cooper reminded that Superintendents Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for April 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

Invention Convention March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> – looking for judges

### **ADJOURNMENT**

P. Johnston moved, seconded H. Robinson, that the Board of Education adjourn its February 24, 2016 meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 pm.

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Michael Ferguson, Secretary