

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2020- 7:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM

English: https://youtu.be/Egl4cjtP_HA

Spanish: <https://youtu.be/ilExC6Uri2Q>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Absent: n/a

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kim Thompson, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro

RECOGNITIONS

● **Retirees**

Charlene Bartko, KSP Teacher, 34 years
Martha Chamber, Park Avenue SPED Teacher, 36 years
Karen Chance, DHS Guidance Counselor, 14 years
Mary Cronin, MRP Principal, 53 years
Marie Dillon, KSP SPED Teacher, 26 years
Nancy Michael, Pembroke Teacher, 19 years
Kathleen Murray, BVMS SPED Teacher, 44 years
Anne Marie Cardillo, AIS Music Teacher, 45 years
Peter Sweeney, DHS Tutor, 13 years
Patrick Driscoll, DECE Custodian, 33years
Jennifer Moy, STR SRBI Para, 24 years

- Dr. Pascarella stated that he was very appreciative for all of the staff members who have given their years, dedication, passion and good guidance to our students. The Board will be sending an appreciation letter along with a gift to each retiree. They were wished a happy and healthy retirement.
- **Donna Bosworth – 2020 Connecticut Elementary Art Educator Award**
 - C. Roche, Principal of AIS congratulated D. Bosworth on her award. She is dedicated, driven and knows how to build positive relationships with all students. She runs an art link, does student leadership and is also the Vice Chair of the Celebration of Danbury Arts. Always going above and beyond and a blessing to have on staff.

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2020 SEP 24 P 2:57

BY: JRC

- D. Bosworth thanked all the teachers she has had the honor to work and collaborate with. Thanked administrators who trust and treat teachers as professionals who encourage and support the divergent and innovative thinking and ideas that have helped her do the best job that she can for her students. For many students, arts are a hook that brings them into the school, it is really important that we recognize the role of the Arts as not just that extra or special during the day, but as an essential learning that students need. It is one of the most basic and important foundations of communication within and between societies. We turn to Arts in times of joy and also in times of crisis (music, murals, etc) to find a way to express big feelings and trauma. Going forward the Arts will be even more critical to our students as we help them make connections both with the academic contents and also to support social emotional health and growth.
- Dr. Pascarella and the Board thanked D. Bosworth. Arts is an integral part of what we do and the Board has been really mindful to respect the work and the role it plays in educating the whole child. Great to have D. Bosworth represent the Arts for danbury.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Cheryl Radachowsky
 - While I accept the decision made by the district to implement a policy where the students are held harmless for their remote learning, i.e. students may elect to OPT IN to receive the numerical grades earned for their course work or simply accept Pass/Fail, I do not agree with the decision to eliminate the ranking and the honor roll for Q4. For those students, such as my own children, who worked hard and made the decision to go with grades instead of Pass/Fail, they did so with the expectation that those numeric grades would have meaning. And for that, there should be an Honor Roll where they receive recognition for their efforts. I am requesting that this decision be revisited, and the Honor Roll for Q4 be reinstated.
- Julie SanSeverino
 - Thank you for taking the time to read comments submitted by the public while we forego in-person meetings. I am writing to express my opinion about the lack of Honor Roll standing at DHS. Yes we were informed that there would be no Honor roll for Q4 but these students who would qualify for Honor Roll, based on numeric grades, chose to continue to do their best work and keep up the high standards they set for themselves. They should be acknowledged for that work. They decided to not settle for the pass/fail and to accept the challenges that Distance Learning presented and still, they persevered. Please consider awarding Honor Roll and High Honor Roll status to the kids who have earned it.
- Tracey Reda
 - I would like to know why the class rank for highschool was not updated at the end of the year. Having a rising Senior, who will be sending transcripts in the Fall to colleges, he will need to have an accurate class ranking. Seeing that his GPA changed from Semester 1 to Semester 2, you would also expect his class rank to change - which it didn't because he is the same number as he was after S1.

Incoming Seniors need this to be accurate, in my opinion if you are calculating GPA you need to calculate class rank. Why was this not done?

CONSENT CALENDAR

Exhibit

MOTION: A. Spallino moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 20-68 through Exhibit 20-72, as recommended:

MINUTES

6/9/20 Special Board Meeting (5:45 pm)	20-68(pg.4)
6/9/20 Special Board Meeting (6:00 pm)	20-69(pg.5)
6/11/20 Sites and Facilities Committee	20-70(pg.15)
6/17/20 Board Workshop	20-71(pg.16)

DONATION

Principal Chris Roche, Principal, Academy for International Studies (AIS) donating \$2,614.10 for a new GaGa pit at AIS. 20-72(pg.17)
***Information in Employee Representative below.

R. Chaleski stated that the minutes for 6/9/2020 had question marks in Action Item B section. To be revised and presented at the next Board meeting.

Motion unanimously passed at 7:16 pm

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

- Principal Chris Roche, Principal, Academy for International Studies (AIS) donating \$2,614.10 for a new GaGa pit at AIS. 20-72(pg.17)
 - Chris stated that the GaGa Pit is a generation of dodgeball. Over the course of the years, the pit at AIS had wood that was starting to rot. He received an official quote and would like to donate the new, top notch/high quality GaGa pit to the school in dedication of the AIS Class of 2020. These students missed out on much of the 5th grade experience and this is for the amazing community that he serves.
- Erin Daly
 - Congratulated D. Bosworth on being a tireless worker for NEA of Danbury. She works to serve teachers in addition to all the work she does for students. She recently became an Executive Board member for NEA of Danbury. Thrilled to see her get these wonderful accolades. Arts is very important, especially in this time to make sure that we are focusing on the social emotional learning piece for our students.
 - NEA of Danbury usually puts on huge parties for the retirees each year. The fanfare and closure that retirees usually have to say goodbye to their students and career of service was robbed from them. Wants to make sure we echo congratulations to retirees and dedication of service to our community and to our school district and students. Also congratulated Nancy Michael who was Teacher

of the Year a few years back. She is an amazing science teacher who has led this district in science innovation. She has led Invention Conventions for many years to the state level. Last year she even took one of her students to the national level in Michigan.

- Thanked Dr. Pascarella and Dr. Casimiro for their listening sessions. They have been very positive and she has received great feedback from teachers who participated. The teachers felt that their voices were heard.
- Teachers firmly believe at NEA that those two extra days at the beginning of next year's calendar will be desperately needed. NEA wants to go on record that two PD days frontloaded at the beginning of the year are supported but the emphasis needs to be on reentry work and Covid work to get teachers up to speed and not working on any new programming.
- The announcement from the governor on 6/25/2020 which will give us guidelines on how to plan. It is essential that we have a strong teacher and employee representation on the reentry committee to make sure that we are trouble shooting and thinking through all of the aspects that may not be thought of. There are upwards of 50 teachers that have expressed a desire to be part of that conversation and hopes the Board takes employees up on that offer.
- In regards to the item on the agenda regarding providing flexibility with teacher evaluation dates, that is something NEA is working through with Dr. Pascarella. There are some issues from wrapping up last year's evaluations and NEA will be working through some of that in the weeks to come.

ACTION ITEMS

A. May 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Fund/Grants/Projects)

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve the May 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Funds/Grants/Projects) in accordance with 20-73(pg.19)

R. Chaleski stated that there was information received on 6/24/2020 that was inadvertently left and asked for it to be included in the minutes for the next meeting?

C. Leborious pointed out that \$550,000 of the Matrix funding was removed from the budget for this year.

Motion unanimously passed at 7:28 pm.

B. Revised Calendar 2020-2021

MOTION: J. DaSilva moved, seconded by J. Britton that the Board of Education approve the revised Calendar for 2020-2021, in accordance with 20-74 (pg.25)

Motion unanimously passed at 7:29 pm.

C. Teacher Evaluation Plan

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by A. Spallino that the Board of Education approve the Teacher Evaluation Plan, in accordance with 20-75(pg.26)

Dr. Pascarella stated that they are working through the evaluations. The State waived a lot of things, just like GPA and Honor Roll. We have some agreements and some understanding to work through.

Motion unanimously passed at 7:30 pm.

D. Superintendent's Contract 2020-2021

MOTION: J. Britton moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education accept the Superintendent's Contract and Salary for 2020-2021, as recommended.

7 votes yes:

J. Britton, K. Conetta, G. Cooper, J. DaSilva, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro and A. Spallino.

4 Votes no: R. Chaleski, L. Daly, K. Hodgdon, A. Russo

Motion passed at 7:32 pm.

E. Cabinet Members Contracts 2020-2021

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education accept the Cabinet Members Contracts for 2020-2021, as recommended.

Motion unanimously passed at 7:33 pm.

F. All Exempt Salaries 2020-2021

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by A. Spallino that the Board of Education accept the Exempt Employee Salaries (including Cabinet) for 2020-2021, as recommended.

9 votes yes:

J. Britton, K. Conetta, G. Cooper, R. Jannelli, K. Molinaro and A. Spallino, R. Chaleski, L. Daly, K. Hodgdon, A. Russo

1 abstention: J. DaSilva

Motion passed at 7:34 pm.

G. Budget 2020-2021

MOTION: R. Janelli moved, seconded by K. Molinaro that the Board of Education approve and set the Budget for 2020-2021 in the amount of \$135,686,000 (.92%) in accordance with 20-76(pg.27)

R. Chaleski thanked C. Leborious for all the help and her presentation to the full Board. Reminded all that this doesn't include the braided funding that has been previously discussed, the \$10 million that gets us really close to the original ask.

R. Chaleski asked about the Student Support Specialists. They touch all K-5 and work with Coaches so all K-5 students are supported. Are there Student Support Specialists for each elementary school?

Dr. Pascarella stated that the intention is to have one at each elementary school but he is a little worried with what may happen in September and they may need to reallocate those funds. If students come back to school with Distance Learning, they will not be able to implement that as planned. If they do come back to the schools in September, the students will have the planned support.

J. DaSilva also agreed that C. Leborious did an amazing job, as well as Dr. Pascarella and the Cabinet, trying to piece all of this together. This budget gets us close to our ask, but there are things that were part of the ask back in the winter that we are not doing now due to Covid related spending that has been added. To be clear, the \$1.2 million increase from the City of Danbury is very low and does not keep up with our contracted increases and collective bargaining salary increases. Understands challenges facing the City but this is not enough support from the City of Danbury. Again we will be last in funding, with a less than 1% increase, with the challenges we are already facing combined with current challenges. Very worried about next year and asked the City of Danbury to find a little bit more because we could absolutely use it.

Motion unanimously passed at 7:40 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Virtual Listening Forum, Monday, June 22nd at 6:00 pm
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that there were over 100 participants. There was a subscription that did not get operationalized so there will be another forum on 6/26/2020 at 9am with up to 1000 members if needed.
 - Appreciates the input from the community.
 - Thanked the Board members who attended for listening
 - Notes were taken and will be discussed with the Cabinet.
 - Thanked A. Mead for her help in running the forum.
 - Parents expressed that if we go Distance Learning, they would like to see it enhanced.
 - Some parents were concerned with cleanliness in returning to schools.
 - Parents appreciated open communication.

- Will be hearing from the governor before the forum to be held on 6/26/2020, so comments should be much more clear and useful.
- There were also comments from teachers, which were appreciated, and they sent recommendations which were forwarded to K. Walston to use those as future ideas for when we return.
- Parents were on point and helpful.
- Reopening 2020
 - Governor expected to make his announcement on 6/25/2020.
 - Regional group will convene as soon as the governor puts out his plan.
 - Reopening committees will be figuring out how to reopen elementary, middle and high schools. Will get some feedback from staff members as well. Groups will have to come together along with the city health director to speak about the safest way to reopen.
 - Regional superintendents will be able to see if on 6/25/2020 and then it will be available to the public on 6/26/2020.
 - K. Walston is the reopening district liaison.
 - K. Walston reached out to EdAdvance as soon as he was made aware that the commissioner and governor would be updating the districts with something more formal. Now anticipate considerable flexibility for the districts. EdAdvance did an initial workshop on the reopening. They stopped planning meetings waiting for official information to come from the governor's office. The school districts that are part of the EdAdvance region will reconvene so they can revisit the template for all districts to use. Some of the mitigation strategies that the subcommittees have developed will be put into this template. The big work is determining how we will reopen schools and then all other strategies will follow. Want to all be on the same page with other districts given a lot of our staff are in neighboring towns. Hoping to help each other in this work.
- Summer School Update
 - K. Walston stated that Summer School continues to move forward.
 - On top of all the changes we had during the school year, Summer School had to be completely revamped as well.
 - Summer School will run from 7/6/2020 through 7/30/2020.
 - 6-12 Summer School will run Monday - Thursday from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. The high school will also have a PM session that will run from 11:30 am - 2:30 pm.
 - DHS will be running an accelerated course that will run from 6/29/2020 through 7/30/2020.
 - K. Truchsess stated that there will be approximately 250 special needs students who will be participating in a SPED extended school year program. Numerous SPED teachers, support staff, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists and counseling staff have been hired. Have divided students into small groups and they will be scheduled for at least an hour of virtual instruction a day with their SPED teacher, plus individual or small group sessions with all the related services. In addition to that, they will also receive online supported activities for online reinforcement through the utilization of Google Classroom which is a model used during the school year. Very small group specialized to target their needs. The sole purpose of the SPED Summer

School program is to keep consistency with the scheduling and to avoid regression of skills.

- K. Truchsess thanked her Special Education supervisors who have been working tirelessly to come up with 250 individualized unique schedules for every single student participating. Tried to build off of a lot of the things placed this year and heard a lot of feedback that virtual live instruction was very helpful.
- Similar to the secondary model of AM and PM sessions running from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- Individual schedules will be mailed to parents on 6/29/2020. Teachers will get their classlists and assignments on 6/26/2020.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that some parents may ask what students are to be working on during the summer months. Asked for members to please refer them to the K-12 interactive site that has grade level suggestions. Parents can be assured that what is there is vetted. Typically the district closes out their licenses for the programs during the summer (IXL, Raz Kids, etc). Licences will be left open through 8/7/2020 so students can continue their summer work and have a seamless transition. Safe place for grade level practice.
- CAS-CIAC Resocialization of High School Athletics/Danbury High School Athletic Program.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that CIAC has created a resocialization program for highschool athletics. They will have conditioning beginning 7/6/2020 at the highschool. With that requirement, D. Donovan and C. Salvestrini have been meeting with nurses and in consultation with the city setting up rules and guidelines regarding safety.
 - Fully expect to have some kind of season next year, just not sure if it will be with spectators.
 - There will be a morning session followed by a break for cleaning and then another group will enter.
 - K. Molinaro asked if this will be all sports. K. Truchsess stated that this will be voluntary participation for students/coaches on sports teams. Limited to 10 students at a time.
 - K. Molinaro asked how athletes will know to sign up. Dr. Pascarella stated that staff reviewed the information on 6/23/2020. Information will be shared on 6/24/2020 on the DHS website so that all athletes and parents are aware. A robo call will go out to the community along with use of social media. There is an outreach plan starting with orientation of the coaches.
- K. Thompson spoke about the hiring update.
 - Now just starting to ramp up hiring season.
 - There have been meetings of elementary teachers in particular to measure the eb and flow of enrollment around the district. Process of relating and transferring elementary teachers is more or less complete and in the process of getting those teachers settled. This was done in collaboration with NEA of Danbury. There have been some volunteers. As a result, not a whole lot of elementary hiring will be needed.
 - In the process of trying to fill some of the harder to fill secondary positions in the highschool and middle school level and in special education.

- The HR team is doing everything via email and direct links online. ID cards are being done remotely as well. Trying to get everyone in as quickly as possible. Lighter hiring year for us than in years past. No layoffs or furloughs.
- Summer school employees are all in. Staff have all been transitioned into their new positions.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that it looks like student enrollment has slowed down.
- Part of the Board's responsibility is to give notice when things are going to happen in the district. In the cases of the grading at the highschool, it was a difficult decision but we did put parents and students on notice. The state was very explicit about equity and that grading should not have occurred. DPS went the extra step. We knew there would be some positive and negative about it.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that parents did have the choice of numerical GPA or selecting to opt in to the pass/fail system. DLPs and DLFs will not impact GPA. The district made sure students had an option for numeric grades for reasons such as college, scholarship opportunities and different requirements from programs that are very highly competitive.
- Class rank will still be run for all students. Class rank is important for a variety of reasons and that is why it will still be run. District was not able to run class rank until all proofing with grading was done. Transcripts were sent out to colleges to make sure they arrived by their deadline. Class rank will be run in the next day or two. If anyone wants an updated transcript, they can request it and pick it up at the office.
- The DHS team and Data department worked very hard to get all of this done.
- It is not appropriate to run Honor Roll this year due to not all kids having the same opportunities. Students did have the opportunity to preserve GPA prior to shutdown. Fair to everybody and honor everybody's situation to the best of ability.
- J. DaSilva asked for clarity of grading. Dr. Casimiro stated that it preserved grades where they were prior to the disruption. If you entered into the pass/fail system you froze your grade. If you chose numerical, your GPA would be averaged out cumulatively and that would be weighted and fed into class rank. Students had an opportunity to improve status if they chose to. Either preserved grades where you left off or you were able to enter your numerics into the GPA which feeds into class rank. Students made choices on what was best for them and their situation.
- Dr. Pascarella publicly thanks all the staff members involved with the grading including D. Donovan and his team, counselors and registrars.

DISCUSSION

- Summit/Academy Project Update
 - Dr. Pascarella participated in a walkthrough at the Summit (Matrix) with the state delegation on 6/22/2020.
 - State was looking at ideas to get a building to accommodate enrollment in Danbury.
 - David Arconti has been terrific at working out the details in legislation.
 - Dr. Casimiro stated that she took the tour as well and the space and plans are very exciting. The first hurdle is to make sure the project itself can go through.
 - This will not be just a singular program at the Summit. Part of a complementary program under Danbury Highschool that would include multiple pathways. One or two of those pathways would exist at that location.

- It is an unusual approach. Usually build from ground up. This would be buying an existing structure, refurbishing it and getting approval for reimbursement which hasn't been done before. Have to figure out how to get around that and navigate that. A few hurdles to get over.
- Programming fits some of the visions we have such as programs along the STEM lines. Have done some work with the Northwest Regional Workforce to see the types of programs that are in demand right now in this area. Programs such as architecture, construction, finance, health science, information technology and high tech manufacturing.
- Some exciting tenants currently in the building and coming in. Figuring out how to utilize the resources down the hall to help build, support and maybe even fund the program. A lot of work in vetting those potential ideas.
- First phase is getting the project approved and moving forward before we get to fun stuff.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the district has given parents choices such as AIS, programs at DHS (early college, culinary, nursing) and WSMSA.
- Do we permit more choice for parents? Yes, we would like to do that. With this building, we not only solve a space problem but enhance the challenge that the state has put before all of us; Is the district preparing students for the workforce? Are they the proper areas? Will they be certified? Are they not just dead end jobs?
- This is why members went to Nashville, to see how it was done at that program. Academy has to be with Board collaboration of what we want to do. We can simply say to just have another 6-12 school, redistrict and put students up there. Conversations need to be had with the Board. This would be another magnet school supporting parent choice, an alternative to a normal pathway up at the high school.
- K. Conetta asked if there is a concern about some of the limitations in that space since it is already built? Dr. Pascarella stated that numbers will require another pod. Physically, it will be a larger structure. Dr. Casimiro stated that the 6-12 piece was tricky, such as keeping middle school students separate from high school students. The broader vision is that 9th graders would receive an exploratory college and career pathway course that exposes students to different pathways and understand what those pathways can lead to not just at entry level but an end game with bachelor's degree or a high tech certification. One of the things we want to make sure with the pathways program is for students to graduate with some other certification besides a high school diploma so they can enter the workforce or go off to college. Multiple tiered options to give kids choices when they graduate. Exposure happens through an exploratory course in 9th grade. Students then have a knowledge base to choose their pathways for grades 10 through 12.
- The building has enough space to accommodate the 6-8 space crunch as well. Have to consider that those 6-8 kids might not choose the pathway that is located in that location. They have to be able to make a choice and maybe DHS has the program they want. Want to see students having an opportunity to choose their pathways. Would not be an automatic rollup, rather give students the option.

- In terms of the building, see that location as an opportunity for STEM related pathways. All of the STEM related pathways in Nashville included some type of design, projects and builds. They need project rooms and space. No matter which way we go, we need project rooms space and certain types of electrical plugs for machinery. An ambidextrous project space building with the future in mind. Tony Iadorala was as excited in terms of the possibilities of design.
- K. Conetta stated that the 9th grade doing an exploratory year is similar to what they do at HATS, it is a very successful model to use. Will there be caps on these different areas? Dr. Casimiro stated that we would have to work that out and different schools handle that in different ways. The goal is to have enough great pathways for everyone. This would be student driven. If experiencing a greater demand in a particular pathway, how do we find ways to expand. If there are pathways that are not meeting student's needs, how do we look to remodel that?
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the goal is to try to create an academy that is not mutually exclusive to DHS. There would be opportunities at DHS for students to move in and transition if they change their mind and want another pathway, which creates more of an opportunity for students to make a choice. Doesn't want to narrow kids too quickly when they are just learning to explore.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that the more we can do in STEM, the better. Foundational STEM work for all students is important. There is a STEM Academy at WSMSA that is very popular. There have been programs started at WSMSA that have been successful and have adopted those components into all the middle schools. It is an opportunity to roll out more STEM courses for kids.
- R. Chaleski asked if there has been any thought on the admission process? Instead of the usual lottery system, could there be an application admission? Dr. Pascarella stated that would be a Board level conversation.
- J. DaSilva stated that he is available for Sites and Facilities meetings if needed over the summer. Dr. Pascarella stated he will keep members up to date.
- J. Britton stated that he is a huge fan of the academy model. We have a unique opportunity to build it from the ground up. Once there is more information, he would like to hold a workshop.
- Dr. Casimiro stated that there is a lot of conversation happening about graduation requirements such as with Portrait of a Graduate and what the end game is for our students in Danbury. All of this fits in together. Would like to make sure we are giving our students the best we can.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- G. Cooper thanked all Board members for their support and working together to make sure that they listen and do the right thing that they were elected to do. Has been amazed working with everyone and all bring different talents. Wished everyone a safe and happy summer.
- G. Cooper asked A. Spallino to contact Nick Larusso in August to have a workshop.
- As a group, the Board has decided to be available this summer (pending not being on vacation). Board would like to be part of any discussion on moving the district forward.
- Sites and Facilities were asked to inform G. Cooper of any meetings that need to be held.

ADJOURNMENT

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by R. Chaleski, that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of June 24, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)