

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

APRIL 6, 2021

Attendance:

Committee members: K. Conetta, R. Jannelli, A. Spallino

Additional Members: K. Casimiro, G. Cooper, M. Ifkovits, C. LeBorious, A. Mead, K. Walston

K. Conetta called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to review the community engagement meetings.

R. Jannelli, the PTO liaison for Pembroke school, stated the feedback from the budget meeting with parents was very positive. A group of parents are developing a form letter to encourage further support for the budget. They also want to encourage other administrators and parents to email council members.

K. Conetta stated that after the Citywide PTO presentation, she sensed that many more parents than in previous years seemed interest in advocating for the budget. K. Walston noted that there was a petition letter and a call to action being drawn up by parents for distribution.

At the PLTI budget presentation, K. Walston commented that these parents were very interested in understanding the budget. They expressed interest in getting educated so that they can educate other parents. He felt we should continue to find more opportunities to help them get involved in advocacy.

A. Mead observed that parents are engaging more now with the staff and administration in these meetings due to doing them on Zoom. The turnout was much improved. She stated that parents appreciated being listened to and have their opinions validated. Both C. Leborious and K. Walston agreed that the success of these meetings developed a platform for future conversations for the budget and Career Academy.

The meeting with the NEA yielded some requests from teachers, K. Walston explained. They asked for an upgrade in infrastructure for remote learning and online engagement, especially strategies for STEM, like remote science labs. They were also interested in restorative circle conversation for teachers and peers to discuss social issues.

Parent meetings were held in both English and Spanish. English speaking parents were interested in student enrichment, remediation, SAT prep, and extracurricular activities to bring children back together. Spanish speaking parents also requested extracurricular activities so that their children can be with their peers again and "get back to normal." C. Leborious commented on the interest of parents in learning more about technology and the new math.

A.Mead and K. Walston commented on the sense of ownership and pride the parents at Morris St. had for their school and their family theater night.

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BY: 

K. Walston explained that these meetings were a condition required by the grant. He stated that it pleased him and the team to find good will towards our schools in the community. Not only did they help the community to understand the budget but they gained a better understanding of what the community desires for our schools. He also stated his meetings with students were also very informative. He has also contacted the Dominican club and has a contact in the Brazilian community.

Discussion ensued about the time being short until the budget goes up for a vote to the city. R. Jannelli suggested an editorial be written to the newspaper. He inquired about what is our lobbyist, Ryan, doing in Hartford? He suggested enlisting Robin Provey to get out some PR for us quickly.

G. Cooper asked if the NAACP had been contacted. She suggested calling Julia Horn.

Motion to adjourn made at 7:25 p.m. K. Conetta, second by R. Jannelli.

Amy Spallino