

Danbury City-Wide PTO Council
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 6, 2017
6:30 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

Attendance: Lynne Lukasik (C-W Co-President/DHS), Rich Matzinger (C-W Co-President/DHS), Rachel Chaleski (C-W Secretary/AIS), Dr. Sal Pascarella (Superintendent), Scott Keating (Great Plain), Paul Salvatore (Great Plain), Sharon Amalfitano (Shelter Rock), Mary Ann Strattner (Broadview), Kathy Snow (WMSA), Chrissy Maruffi (Pembroke), Tim Seibert (King Street)

Call to Order

- ✓ The meeting was called to order by Lynne and began at 6:35pm.

Approval of Minutes

- ✓ Paul made a motion to approve the January minutes. Kathy seconded.

Treasurer's Report (Lynne on behalf of Janet)

- ✓ There have been no deposits or withdrawals since the last meeting, so the current balance remains at \$958.20.
- ✓ Tim made a motion to approve the treasury report. Chrissy seconded.

Superintendent's Report

- ✓ Dr. Sal met with the mayor to discuss a possible increase to state education funding, however, towns will see a reduction in state aid.
- ✓ Dr. Sal proposed a 4.9% increased school budget that will be presented to the Board of Education and then to the City Council.
- ✓ On Wednesday, the Governor will propose his budget. Under the proposed state budget, teachers' retirement pension will be funded by towns. This represents about \$54MM for Danbury.
- ✓ Dr. Sal has been actively meeting with the district lobbyist and local legislators. Parents can also testify at public hearings by the Appropriations and Education Committees and share how the budget has and will affect their families. The proposed budget also restructures funding for Special Education, which represents 18-22% of the district budget. The issue with funding Special Education is predictability. The new structure will only assist with the first year of a new student requiring services. Overall, if funding remains the same, the district will be forced to cut programs and class sizes will continue to grow.
- ✓ There was an enrollment study done to show projections in enrollment will continue to grow exponentially. There are currently about 700 students per grade that could rise to about 900 students. The high school could potentially grow to about 3,600 students. Dr. Sal mentioned possibly expanding ACE from its 90 students to about 250 students and also

placing modules at one of the middle schools. With declining resources and increasing enrollment, Dr. Sal will continue to move forward and work with the city.

- ✓ A standardized report card was piloted at Hayestown and South Street schools to possibly be implemented at all K-5 schools next year. The report card will show more accurate and explicit progress for parents.
- ✓ There was a recent incident at the high school, where a student's relative was shouting at students and appeared intoxicated. There was some physical engagement. The police arrived, allowed him to leave and will follow up with an investigation. More cameras were ordered to be placed in the parking lots.

City-Wide PTO Facebook Page and Website

- ✓ Please find us at <https://www.facebook.com/DanburyCityWidePTO>. Facebook users who click that they are interested or going to an event/meeting will receive reminder notifications.
- ✓ The link for the City-Wide website is <http://danburycitywidepto.digitalpto.com>. The link was updated on the district website on the "Parents and Students" drop-down menu. Rachel will look into recreating on Google Sites. Chrissy offered to assist in obtaining a shortened web address.

Updates from School Representatives

- ✓ The Westside Middle School Academy lottery application is open to any incoming 6th - 8th graders. The theater program is in full gear to feature Cinderella in March, which held a dance and Applebee's fundraisers. The student council is selling Valentine's carnations this week, which are pre-sold for \$1 and delivered during Advisory. Sharon asked about the vendor, as Shelter Rock PTO was considering something similar. Kathy is finding that more activities are happening in the mornings versus after school. There was a question about how many applications are received for the school lottery. Dr. Sal said there were about 900 last year for both academies.
- ✓ The King Street PTO is holding a Bounce fundraiser this month and an Apex Fun Run in April. They hosted a Titans Night with a Star Wars theme for 150 attendees. Tim and his wife coordinate a themed Ice Cream Social each year, which is also coming up and held at the high school cafeteria.
- ✓ The Shelter Rock Yearbook Cover Contest is ongoing. The PTO uses Herff Jones after their contract with Lifetouch expired. For the same cost as Lifetouch, Herff Jones provides a hard cover, more pages and the ability to run a cover contest. Staff members vote on the winner. The winner receives a free yearbook. The PTO will also host a Titans Night. Sharon asked if anyone had experience selling Calloway discount cards. Chrissy offered that there were restrictions with using the cards or if they were lost and suggested using the coupon books instead. Sharon asked if any PTO had experience with the Color Run. She mentioned that the school kicked off the Start with Hello program this week. The staff put together an assembly for the students that included a video and song, which was attended by Dr. Sal, Dr. Glass and members of the City Council. There are other events scheduled for the week, including a mannequin challenge. Teachers and

students moved into the new modules. There were 16 moves, since the modules were installed. All grade levels are now together.

- ✓ The Start with Hello program also began at Great Plain. Middle school students gave a speech to start the week. Students are encouraged to wear bright colors for the whole week. There is a "no child eats alone" day with policemen, firemen, the mayor and other dignitaries present. The PTO held an Applebee's breakfast fundraiser. It was a fun event for the kids and made about \$800-\$1,000. They will also do a Yankee Candle fundraiser and an Apex Fun Run in April.
- ✓ The Titans Hockey Night for Pembroke went well. There was a good turn out and about \$300 was raised. The PTO is also doing a Bounce fundraiser. They will hold a raffle in a few weeks, raffling off activities with staff (e.g., paint nails, have lunch, etc.). Their Movie Night went well. Students voted on the movie "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs." A Square 1 Art fundraiser will be done in correlation with the art curriculum. Orders will arrive in time for Mother's Day.
- ✓ MaryAnn expressed sorrow for the loss of a Broadview Middle School resource teacher, Simone Simon, who recently passed away. A group of special needs students is doing a Valentine's fundraiser, selling hand-made crafts. The PTO is working on a Spirit Day, a Savers fundraiser, and Scholastic Book Fair. MaryAnn said that the honor roll letters from the Mayor mean a great deal to students and their families. She has noticed a high level of student and staff absences recently and affirmed the importance of the separate health care center in addition to the nurse's office.
- ✓ Lynne spoke about CoDA, which is being coordinated by two staff (Donna Bosworth and Kim Noone) and will be held at Broadview Middle School on May 20th from 11am to 4pm. Lynne offered support from the City-Wide PTO. The teachers suggested hosting some kind of interactive art booth (no face-painting) and also mentioned to bring a tent/canopy. Suggestions for activities are welcomed and appreciated.
- ✓ The DHS PTO will host a Cyber Safety Forum with a presentation by a Danbury police officer on February 27th at 7pm in the DHS Auditorium. This is geared towards parents to learn how to protect children as they communicate through social media and smart phone applications. The event is open to all community members. Rich will provide a digital flyer to distribute to all PTO's. The PTO purchased 2 mobile charging stations, which are in the media center. The water station that was also purchased has not been installed yet. Rich has been working with the district office and city. Communication has been slow. The PTO purchased t-shirts for Hatters Heros, which honors 20 students each month.
- ✓ The AIS PTO has completed their fundraising for the year with the Apex Fun Run. A Square 1 Art fundraiser will be done in the spring, but all funds will go towards art supplies. There is a meeting being held tomorrow. In addition to the usual fall and spring spirit wear sales, the PTO is selling winter hats. They are winding down their teacher grant process. Each year, \$400 is allocated per grade. Junior Achievement will begin soon and is run completely by parent volunteers. The PTO will host a spirit week.

Other Discussion

- ✓ A concern came up regarding King Street School's assistant principal and rumored threats. Dr. Sal confirmed the rumor was not true.
- ✓ A question was asked about report cards being translated to other languages. Dr. Sal believed they are being converted in Spanish, but not Portuguese.
- ✓ Tim asked why there is no sibling admissions policy at the Westside Middle School Academy. Dr. Sal answered that the Board of Education decided against a sibling policy to keep the lottery open to everyone who is available. They thought that a sibling policy would limit the choice for other parents. The board had tried to apply no sibling preference to the elementary magnet school, but did not apply it to all students. They also felt it was not creating the right atmosphere for kids, so the sibling policy was reinstated. Dr. Sal has not heard of any movement to apply a similar policy at the middle school level. It was mentioned that families with twins or multiple children must then balance different schools and schedules.
- ✓ Tim also asked about putting in a new sign at King Street. He had previously mentioned the PTO would like to buy it for the school. Dr. Sal sent a message to the facilities team.
- ✓ Board of Education guidelines state that schools should adhere to a schedule for school events: Monday - High School; First Monday of each month - Citywide PTO; Tuesday - Elementary Schools; Wednesday (second and fourth) - Board of Education Meetings; Thursday - Middle Schools. The schedule is to help avoid conflicts for parents of multiple students. However, it was mentioned that the schedule conflicts for teachers to attend on Tuesdays, when they are also expected to attend professional development sessions and faculty meetings.
- ✓ It was asked if any rules existed around what a PTO may purchase. Dr. Sal confirmed the process is to get approval from the school principal. The principal then gets approval from the central office. This is especially pertinent when purchasing technology, because the school may not have the staff to support it. Lynne brought up an example of a printer that was donated to the high school, which had to be returned because the support did not exist.
- ✓ There was discussion about which technology platforms (Windows, Apple, Google) parents should buy for their students. MaryAnn confirmed much of the work done by middle school students is Google-based.

Next Meetings (All meetings are open to the public)

- ✓ Board of Education Meetings: February 8 and 22 at 7pm
- ✓ City-Wide PTO: March 6, 2017 at 6:30pm

Adjournment

- ✓ The meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
 Rachel Chaleski
 City-Wide PTO Secretary