

Danbury City-Wide PTO Council
Meeting Minutes (Proposed)
Monday, April 3, 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), Janet Hamilton (C-W Treasurer/DHS), Rachel Chaleski (C-W Secretary/AIS), Dr. Bill Glass (Deputy Superintendent), Paul Salvatore (Great Plain), Sharon Amalfitano (Shelter Rock), Kathy Snow (WMSA), Victoria Ceylan (Stadley Rough)

Call to Order

- ✓ The meeting was called to order by Rich and began at 6:38pm.

Approval of Minutes

- ✓ Kathy made a motion to approve the March minutes. Paul seconded. All were in favor.

DPS School Lunch - Barry Mollengarden and Carly Marenga (Sodexo)

- ✓ Barry and Carly were introduced to members. Barry is a general manager for the Sodexo school program. Carly is a manager and dietician. Packets of information on programs and services were distributed.
- ✓ On Wednesday, there will be a class on fine dining for 5th graders at Morris Street School in the media center. Next year, the class will be offered at South Street. They will learn basic manners while offered a plated, multi-course meal. Once per year, a school is offered to participate in the Future Chefs Challenge. This year at Stadley Rough, students were given the opportunity to create a healthy comfort food recipe. Sodexo provided portioned/prepared ingredients. Judges included the principal and police chief. Three finalists were chosen and prizes were awarded. Good sportsmanship was emphasized.
- ✓ Sodexo has begun to offer Principal Breakfasts as principals typically meet with a group of students as an award on a monthly basis. Hayestown and Pembroke have taken advantage of the free catering of continental breakfast items.
- ✓ Sodexo also offers sales to support a PTO. The Stadley Rough PTO buys soft pretzels to pre-sell to students for 50 cents each on a weekly basis. Volunteers prepare and distribute the pretzels between breakfast and lunch. The King Street PTO hires Sodexo staff to help with their annual Welcome Back Picnic.
- ✓ Connecticut has a strict policy requiring healthy food choices. The district is reimbursed by about \$110k for its Healthy Food Certification and adhering to CSDE standards for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals. Any food that does not meet regulations cannot be sold to students. This includes food sold in school stores and vending machines. A list of acceptable foods with nutritional information can be found on the CSDE website (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322432>). Barry

cautioned members against any food fundraiser, unless it requires a parent to pick up orders and is not sold during school hours.

- ✓ As a result of certain business partnerships, Sodexo has supplied donations of mushroom farms and water gardens to schools through the Extended Learning Program.
- ✓ Carly offers nutrition education to students and has participated in school lessons and health fairs. Lessons are age-appropriate and include identifying fruits and vegetables, sugars, healthy eating, etc.
- ✓ Every 6 - 7 weeks, a Student Board of Directors with the HS principal meets to sample and provide feedback for new foods for the school lunch program. Barry welcomed members to the next presentation by Kellogg's.
- ✓ Barry explained about the community outreach that is done to assist families in the free and reduced-price meals application process.
- ✓ The office is located on Osborne Street and can be reached at (203) 797-4746.
- ✓ A question was asked about balances on My School Bucks accounts. There was discussion about negative balances as mentioned at the last Board of Education meeting. The BOE feels it is the right thing to do to make sure all students are fed. Dr. Glass noted that research has shown that students who are hungry do not do well academically.
- ✓ There was a question about the school lunch menu, which is no longer distributed on paper and can be found online. However, the menu is not always posted on time. Carly said that they run into issues if it is taken down too early and they are working on posting two months at a time. At the elementary level, magnets with a QR code were distributed to students.

Treasurer's Report (Lynne on behalf of Janet)

- ✓ The current balance remains at \$958.20. Janet sent notices to the school principals whose PTO's have not yet paid their \$25 annual dues. (From prior meeting: The PTO's that still have not paid are from: Rogers Park, Mill Ridge, Ellsworth, Hayestown, Morris St., Park Ave., and South Street.)
- ✓ CoDA ideas were discussed at this time. Kathy Snow suggested a city-wide PTO magnet as a give-away. Members agreed to do a sand art activity. Lynne will look into purchasing necklace sand art kits.

Superintendent's Report (Dr. Glass on behalf of Dr. Pascarella)

- ✓ Dr. Glass gave some background of the CoDa Festival, which began about 5 or 6 years ago as a Celebration of Danbury Arts to showcase the visual arts. It was originally held at WCSU, but was moved to the high school because of the venue cost. Now with the ongoing construction at the high school, the festival will be held at Broadview Middle School, where the arts wing, cafeteria and media center will be used. The media centers at the middle and high school levels are morphing into "learning commons," where a variety of technology is used and collaborative work and talking is encouraged to offer a makerspace for students; and therefore, this space will also be used for the festival. Shuttle buses are being considered to help with parking. Dr. Glass agreed that the sand art activity works well with the concept of creating art. CoDA is scheduled for May 20 at 11am - 4pm.

- ✓ Copies of a draft 2017-18 school calendar were distributed. The calendar has not yet been approved by the BOE. School will begin after Labor Day, because of the construction at the high school. The two dates in October and November that are coded green are regional calendar dates. These are required by the state in order to unify smaller districts for the purpose of Professional Development (PD). Our schools are closed for Election Day. The blue coded dates are for teacher evaluation. By law, each teacher, including Dr. Sal and Dr. Glass, is required to have a professional growth plan. Therefore, the "T-Eval" dates are scheduled at the beginning and toward the end of the school year. Traditionally, there have been four PD days throughout the year; however, a fifth day has been added. The last PD day may be repositioned within the year, possibly in February. The yellow dates are scheduled one hour early release days. After listening to feedback from parents, they were scheduled on consecutive Tuesdays, rather than on every other Tuesday. Again, Dr. Glass stressed that this calendar is in draft form and that parent feedback is welcomed and valued. Since the year will begin later, the year ends in late June. The calendar consists of 5 built-in snow days. With these days, state law allows a guaranteed graduation date to be declared. If the snow days are not used, then the last day of school is earlier. It is illegal for schools to teach beyond June 30. If extra days are needed, then they will be deducted from spring recess.
- ✓ Dr. Glass, along with Dr. Sal, has testified at the LOB in Hartford. He spoke about the state's growing deficit and the Governor's proposed shift of the long-time underfunded teacher pension fund to the individual municipalities. He also attended a legislative breakfast that was held locally. The budget will not be finalized until mid-June, while the city and school budgets are decided upon in the spring. The Alliance Grant was cut by \$250k before the winter recess, which has been absorbed by not filling vacancies.
- ✓ Last month, Dr. Glass attended a community forum on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), at which he, the mayor and police chief were invited to speak with representatives from the immigrant community. Across the country, there is panic among documented and undocumented immigrants. This is particularly evident in the drop of applications for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch program. Dr. Glass assured that no information is shared from these applications, as it is illegal to do so.
- ✓ Standard-based reports cards were piloted this year at Hayestown and Ellsworth elementary schools to provide more consistency between teachers and to assess students using the same metric in relation to national standards. Grades are based on the 1 - 4 numbered rubric. The feedback from parents is positive. It requires more work for teachers, however, it assists them to relay information to parents. The report cards will probably be seen at a few more schools next year and then to all elementary school the following year. This is a movement across the country started by educators.

City-Wide PTO Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/DanburyCityWidePTO>) and Website (<http://danburycitywidepto.digitalpto.com>)

- ✓ There were no updates this month. Please share with PTO members. Any questions, please contact Rachel.

Updates from School Representatives

- ✓ The Shelter Rock PTO's Titans Hockey fundraiser had over 100 attendees; AIS had their hockey night on the same night, but worked well; students performed a song and skated for free after the game. They just finished their Kansas Maid fundraiser. The school recently received much-needed updates to the library, including books and technology. There was a literacy event held for parents last Thursday. There was a school-wide art project, the "Principal's Pin of Excellence", which was based around the core values of character, compassion, community building and courage. The artwork was displayed around the school and parents were invited to do a "gallery walk" to view it. Pins were then awarded to students who demonstrated those core values.
- ✓ Stadley Rough held their first Apex Fun Run in March, which received mixed reviews from teachers. The school felt it was not as organized as originally promoted, however, there was not much work to be done by the PTO aside from collecting and entering the money. The PTO raised about \$12k. Apex promised the teachers that 10% would go back to the classrooms, but was not communicated properly that the funds would be taken from the PTO profit. The run was held indoors due to weather. Vicky scheduled a Fun Run for Hayestown, since spots are filled quickly. It is a great fundraiser that promotes physical activity, but the company promised several things that were not followed through on. Parents complained about the 52% profit margin, however, this is a high amount compared with other fundraisers and there is not much work done by the PTO. Vicky said it was an easy and successful fundraiser, but more work needs to be done to ensure that teachers' feedback is positive. About half of the teachers were dissatisfied. Vicky cautioned other PTO's, if considering this company. Stadley Rough also held a Bounce fundraiser and made over \$1k. The school competed in Invention Convention. Teachers stayed after school on weekly basis for a month to help students with their ideas. They had two finalists that went on to compete at Regionals at WCSU.
- ✓ Great Plain is also hosting an Apex Fun Run. There was miscommunication from the PTO around the date of the pep rally. The overall schedule conflicts with CMT testing. There was discussion about the inconsistency of each fun run among schools - some were promised t-shirts, backpacks or both. The Great Plain PTO understood they would be contacted 2 weeks prior to the event, but were not contacted until 1 week prior. The profit percentage is not received well by parents, nor the excitement of students built around prizes. The positive aspects of the fundraiser are that it requires minimal work by the PTO and can replace something like a silent auction that requires a lot of time and work. Paul will provide feedback after the event. On Friday, the 5th grade will play basketball against staff. (Some Apex Fun Run staff will also participate in the basketball game.) There will be a Disco Dance for the 5th grade on the 21st. The Book Fair will be held during the first week of May and ends with an ice cream social.
- ✓ The play at Westside Middle School Academy went well. The school also participated in the Invention Convention. The PTO raised over \$1k from a Bounce fundraiser. Kathy mentioned it was critical to schedule the fundraiser after the play was completed. They are working on plans for the Spring Dance and 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony. The school recently won a grant in order to create an outdoor classroom. There will be showings of

"Screenager" this week for parents and students. The school is moving toward the elective "block system" that is currently in use by the other middle schools. The 6th and 7th graders will have to choose between taking a language or taking electives, such as art and health. This week is spirit week. The PTO will host a luncheon for the teachers.

- ✓ The AIS PTO is beginning plans for Teacher Appreciation Week. Traditionally, the PTO provides teachers with a continental breakfast, daily treats in all mailboxes, a binder of thank you notes written by students and parents, flowers, etc. The Titans Hockey Night went well. Fifth graders will attend Nature's Classroom the week after spring break.
- ✓ In 3 weeks, DHS PTO will host its second Teenage Safety Driving presentation, which features a representative from Thayer Driving School and a police sergeant. The PTO Secretary is coordinating the "Parent to Parent" night, which will be held in May.

Next Meetings (All meetings are open to the public)

- ✓ Board of Education Meetings: April 5 and 26 at 7pm
- ✓ City-Wide PTO: May 1, 2017 at 6:30pm

Adjournment

- ✓ The meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Rachel Chaleski
City-Wide PTO Secretary