

Danbury City-Wide Parent-Teacher Organization
Meeting Minutes - No Quorum
Monday, September 12, 2016
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), Bonnie May (Barnes & Noble), Molly Anderson Diker (Junior Achievement), Wendi Wright (Shelter Rock), Ralph Pietrafesa (BOE), Tricia Coe (DHS/Danbury Titans), Dr. Sal Pascarella (Superintendent), Scott Keating (Great Plain)

Call to Order

- ✓ Meeting was called to order by Lynne Lukasik and began at 6:32pm.

Welcome/Introductions

- ✓ Lynne welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the school year. Introductions were made at this time.

Approval of Minutes

- ✓ Minutes from the May meeting were reviewed and accepted. The minimum number of members to hold a quorum was not met.

Treasurer's Report

- ✓ As of the May meeting, there was \$811.37 in the account. There have been no deposits.
- ✓ \$59.99 was used for cards and gift cards for Debbie Warner and the custodian at the DPS administrative building. Debbie handles communications and copies of minutes for the board.
- ✓ Broadview, Mill Ridge and Rogers Park did not pay dues last year.

Superintendent's Report

- ✓ Dr. Sal gave a brief overview of recent developments around the CCJEF case, in which Dr. Sal had testified. Danbury, along with about 25 other towns, is part of the coalition in a lawsuit against the state. Dr. Sal was present at last week's ruling, at which the judge determined the state education funding system was irrational and unconstitutional. Additionally, the judge called for other modifications to the education system, such as high school exit requirements and special education. The main concern is the funding aspect. Danbury is due about \$30MM above the amount it currently receives. CT has about a \$1.2B to \$1.4B deficit going into the biennial budget. The state has 180 days to present a new plan. Afterwards, the plaintiffs will have 60 days to respond.
- ✓ Enrollment continues to increase by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ % each year, which is about 250 - 300 students. Additional classrooms are being placed mostly at the elementary level. The high school is also strained for space, while continually adding sections. Teacher and

administrator retention is an issue, more so for high school specialized teachers in areas like English, Spanish and science. There are some positions that have yet to be filled.

- ✓ About \$1.7MM, as part of an alliance grant, was spent on building repairs over the summer. At ACE, sidewalks were repaired and the sign was replaced. The playground turf was repaired at AIS. Due to water and asbestos, carpeting was replaced, offices were moved and painted at the administrative building. At Broadview, cafeteria tables were added, the gym was painted and the floor screened/recoated, and the hot water expansion tank replaced. At DHS, the media center carpet was replaced; new tables were purchased from the operational budget; and entrances were rebuilt. Due to limited space at Ellsworth, an office was put into the media center in order to create a new classroom. The main entrance at Great Plain was reconfigured and matting was installed. Hayestown received repairs to the front sidewalk and entrance, as well as new white boards. New carpeting and partitioning walls were put in at the KSP media center. At Morris Street, the orange carpet was removed and replaced with vinyl tile; vinyl tile was installed in some of the classrooms; and the concrete walls were painted. All classrooms faucets were replaced at MRP. At Park Ave, the cafeteria tiles were replaced and the gym floor was refinished. The main entrance at Pembroke was reconfigured with an added door for security purposes. Some of the flooring was also replaced at Pembroke. The hallway at RPMS was abated and replaced with luxury vinyl tile that picks up dirt and is wax-free. At Shelter Rock, the media center carpet was replaced. Module classrooms are expected to be installed at Shelter Rock sometime in October. Until then, there are two classrooms where students and teachers are sharing one space. South Street received new tile and mats in the main office area, as well as epoxy floor in about 20 rooms. The Stadley Rough gym received a new floor and paint; hallway counters and sinks were replaced. Some vehicles were bought for the district, as some were too costly to maintain; others were repaired.
- ✓ The high school construction is going very well and as planned. The district is working with the city, inspectors and Fire Marshal, in order to work through all possible issues, such as dust, noise, gas smells, etc. It has been requested that the Fire Marshal makes periodic inspections.
- ✓ Current enrollment is over 11,000. All schools are currently at capacity. The BOE approved a current study happening across the district with respects to the student population. It has been about 4 years since the last redistricting. The only other solution is to continue to add modules; however, this is not an option for some schools due to limited space.

Proposal for October "Meet the Candidates Night"

- ✓ Traditionally, the C-W PTO hosts a Meet the Candidates Night, at which parents and community members can attend to hear a panel of candidates for local office. Lynne passed out a list of candidates that are up for election this November. This would be in lieu of the October C-W PTO meeting. There were no objections from present members. The NEA had sponsored a similar event in the past. It was suggested that they be contacted to possibly co-sponsor with the PTO. Lynne agreed to reach out to them. It

was agreed upon that Broadview Middle School is the best location to host the event. Lynne will work with Debbie for all other logistics.

PTO Treasury Procedures

- ✓ The C-W PTO would like to assist all other PTO's by offering some financial controls in order to protect accounts. Janet has worked with the Finance Director's assistant to provide a list of best practices for all PTO treasurers. There was discussion around several items listed. If it is not feasible to deposit funds within the suggested 48-hours of receipt, funds should be held in a locked place. Having two signatures on checks is highly recommended. Other general bookkeeping procedures are to keep supporting documentation for all expenditures, deposits and bank reconciliation. Copies should be provided at all PTO meetings. Maintain records in a central storage binder. Dr. Sal and Janet will send a letter to all PTO's with this information. If any PTO would like some assistance with their account, Janet is available to review it with them.

Updates from School Representatives

- ✓ Shelter Rock is having their Welcome Back Party in the form of an ice cream social. It is a PTO sponsored event.
- ✓ Great Plain is having their Open House for grades 3 - 5 tomorrow. Last week, they held an Open House for grades K - 2. The PTO is in the middle of a fundraiser with Charleston Wrap. They have yet to have their first PTO meeting of the school year.
- ✓ Janet mentioned the new traffic exit configuration at the high school, which has helped ease congestion and the flow of traffic.
- ✓ AIS is holding its first Apex Fun Run with the goal that this will be the only major fundraiser for the year. PTO meetings are scheduled for every other month, instead of monthly, in hopes that more parents will attend the meetings.
- ✓ Lynne expressed appreciation for the updates to the high school media center.
- ✓ Last year, DHS PTO raised about \$5200 through the Buick Test Drive. They are polling the students to see how they would like to use the funds. They had success in raffling off free driver's education lessons that were donated to the PTO, so they plan on doing that again this year. There will also be some college financial planning resources available through the month of October. The PTO will do a bake sale again at Open House. It was very successful last year with donations from Dunkin Donuts. They will also sell car magnets and clings. The first PTO meeting is in 2 weeks, where they will introduce the new school principal and new freshman academy principal. Parents can connect through Facebook as well as visit the new web-page, off of the DHS website, to find meeting schedules, bylaws, etc.

Presentations by Community Partners

- ✓ A representative from Barnes & Noble came to speak about their fundraising programs. They offer various kinds of events, such as book fair, story night and gift wrapping that schools or PTO's can host. The Danbury Learning Center and the Mill Ridge Primary PTO have already taken advantage of some of these offerings in the past.

- ✓ Molly Anderson is from Junior Achievement, which teaches financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship as a free program for schools. She is replacing Jennifer Murphy as the JA liaison.
- ✓ Tricia Coe spoke on behalf of the Danbury Titans. She is the assistant general manager for the professional hockey team and has two children at DHS. Flyers were distributed with details of their fundraising programs for schools. Great Plain held an event last year. Scott said he and his child enjoyed it. Schools will be seated together and will be mentioned over the PA system. The event does not have to be a fundraiser, but could be used as a family fun night with discounted tickets. Stadley Rough purchased tickets to give as summer reading incentives. The Titans will also come to the school to do a short 30-minute free assembly for students. Events do not require any money up front. Sunday games are available, after which students may skate with the players. There is a brand new team this year with new ownership. It is a family-friendly atmosphere.

Other Discussion

- ✓ Dr. Sal informed members of an issue with a travel agent that was used for a school trip to France. The travel agent cancelled the trip due to an illness. Travel insurance did not cover funds lost by students, teachers and chaperones, because the cancellation came prior to the trip. The travel agent is no longer in business. Other BOE's have ceased all school trips. The Danbury BOE is working on ways to allow these kinds of trips, while also protecting its students from situations like these. Dr. Sal recommends using a larger company even though it may cost more. Dr. Sal has leveraged the district and state attorneys, as well as wrote to CAPSS to make them aware of the situation.
- ✓ There was a question about which BOE members represent each PTO. Lynne will provide members with that information.
- ✓ A question was asked about a City-Wide PTO website. Rachel will reach out to Deb Kuilan who used to handle the website and also set up a Facebook page.
- ✓ There are 3 additional busses this year and possibly 2 -3 more that will be added on top of that. Next year, the district will acquire slightly larger busses that hold 72 passengers.
- ✓ The new registration center that is centrally located has made registration more efficient than in previous years.

Next Meetings (All meetings are open to the public)

- ✓ Board of Education Meetings: September 14 and 28, at 7pm.
- ✓ TBD: Meet the Candidates Night
- ✓ City-Wide PTO November 7, 2016 at 6:30pm.

Adjournment

- ✓ The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
 Rachel Chaleski
 City-Wide PTO Secretary