Danbury City-Wide PTO Council

Meeting Minutes (Proposed)

Monday, January 11, 2021

6:30pm via ZOOM

Attendance: Tim Maroney (President), Jade O’Connell (Vice President/AIS), Paul Salvatore (Treasurer), Kathy Snow (Secretary), Sal Pascarella (Superintendent DPS), Kevin Walston (Ass’t Superintendent DPS), Anne Mead (Director of Family, School & Community Partnerships), Suzanne Welchel (DHS), Genene Morehouse (DHS), Christine Sweeney (Rogers Park), Chrissy Maruffi (Pembroke/WSMSA), Jenn Borst (WSMSA), Tara Carl (King Street), Janine Schonfeld (King Street), Christine Fournier (Mill Ridge), Estela Camacho (Morris Street), Sharon Amalfitano (Shelter Rock), Amy Hutchins (South Street), Janna Masella (Stadley Rough), Rachel Chaleski (BoE liaison), Kate Connetta (BoE liaison), Greg Shugre (intern for Dr. Sal).

Over 20 additional participants.

Call to Order

* The meeting was called to order by Tim Maroney at 6:40pm.

Welcome, Introductions and Updates

* Tim welcomed attendees, meeting was held via zoom.
* Tim announced Mayor Cavo agreed to come to a meeting with School Reps on Thursday, Jan. 21st at 5:00pm. An invitation will be sent for Reps to RSVP and submit questions they have gathered for the Mayor.

Treasurer’s Report (Paul)

* Tabled as we are not collecting dues this year.

Superintendent’s Report (Dr Sal)

* Dr. Sal and team met with medical folks this past Thursday. Dr Beggs, Dr. Fong and Kara Prunty. They talked through the return to hybrid mode of school. Covid numbers are up everywhere in the state. However, they are confident students can safely come back in the hybrid mode with the mitigation strategies in place.
* Phase in return to school will take place, pre-school - grade 5 begins Tuesday, Jan. 19th. Middle school begins Monday, Jan. 25th and High School on Monday, Feb. 1st (which is also the beginning of a new semester).
* Very important that families go through the “self screen” process each day for students. Everyone was encouraged to raise their own awareness of who they are around and continue to social distance. Also stay home if there any concerns or if a student is not feeling well. A robo call by cohort will be sent to further emphasize this message (on each Sunday and Wednesday).
* Some staffing issues being worked through.
* Testing internet bandwidth at the schools where it is known to be weak (i.e. King Street & Pembroke).
* Will have an anonymous dashboard to be transparent with covid positive test cases instead of emailing
* Teachers & staff will likely be on the next phase of vaccination, possibly before next month.
* For contract tracing, students will sign in to each different classroom they enter.
* Kevin is the District’s liaison with the State on re-opening.
* Granville space is coming along, hoping to get a temporary Certificate of Occupancy very soon.
* AIS lottery is now open (over 600 applications). Westside lottery opens Feb. 1st.
* PSAT will be given on January 26th to Juniors. Principal Donovan has contacted those students and families about this already.
* Discussion regarding the Summit Project at the Matrix building (middle/high school) will be taking place an hour before the Board of Education meeting this coming Wednesday if folks want to log onto the meeting early.
* Anne Mead spoke:
  + The District homepage also has a Question & Answer document which has been updated. It can be found under “important facts”.
  + There will be a workshop, A Place at the Table: Parent-to-Parent Conversation about the Importance of Attendance and Supporting Kids in Schools on Tuesday Jan 12 (not Thursday like the flier indicates): <https://www.danbury.k12.ct.us/.../Serve.../File/IMG_1329.jpg>
  + Extended Learning Programs will be held and parents can register on-line. Grades K-5 will begin Jan. 25th, grades 6-8 will begin Feb. 1st.
* Dr. Sal answered questions from attendees:
  + Have a lot of parents changed their decision from hybrid or distance learning? Some have, but not a significant number, incremental increases.
  + Would parents be able to change the choice of distant learning versus hybrid? Yes, but it may take a couple of weeks to process the change
  + Status of Winter Sports - doesn’t know yet, sports are being identified by “risk level”. Sal will know more later this week.
  + School pictures - Dr. Sal believes they can take place. He will speak with Kathy O’Dowd and review procedures with administration so they can be taken.
  + PTO insurance was brought up. Citywide had previously polled School Reps and will share that information. Dr. Sal mentioned functions on school grounds are covered by the umbrella policy (but there is a deductible). It's a good idea for PTO’s to have some form of insurance for events that take place off school grounds.

Updates from School Representatives:

* **DHS:** Currently working on making the blue wall in back of school a “senior year wall”, similar to some other high schools in the area. Had an additional mask sale and sold over 150 masks. Planning on a PTO meeting Monday, February 8th 6:30/7:00pm (firm time will be announced).
* **Rogers Park:** Had a virtual Scholastic Book Fair using profits to purchase books for ELA teachers, working with them on a wish list of books they need. Continuing to help provide meals for school families in need. Next PTO meeting Thursday, Feb. 18th.
* **WMSA:** Sold spirit wear. Planning a PTO meeting the first week of February.
* **AIS:** doing limited fundraising this year. Focusing on family to family help, food drive, toy drive, etc. Collecting items outside and working with the Principal and social worker to distribute goods. Had a mask sale. PTO meeting scheduled for early Feb.
* **King Street:** Held a food drive which went well, worked with Social Worker for distribution. Focusing on family to family help, had a car parade to collect donated items. Helf virtual book fair, did not go over that well. Will be re-grouping once hybrid school starts to discuss plans for spring. Using some funds for welcome back signs to decorate outside of buildings to welcome students back. Having a meeting 1/12 with the Principal to go over re-opening.
* **Mill Ridge:** Held PTO meeting in December and has a meeting 1/12 with the Principal to go over re-opening. Also has parent volunteers to be on the PTO Board and will begin the process of making PTO official by establishing a bank account, by-laws, etc. Held a virtual bingo night, planning a virtual trivia night. Held a mitten drive in December, focusing on how to provide family to family help as well.
* **Morris Street:** having a meeting 1/13 with the Principal to go over re-opening. Mentioned Morris Street holds meetings called “Charlas” (meaning chat or discussion) for those parents / guardians whose primary language is not English. These meetings go over things happening in the community at large in addition to schools. Anyone is welcome, not just parents from Morris Street school. Please contact Estela for zoom meeting information. camacb@danbury.k12.ct.us
* **Pembroke:** held Twelve Days of Reading over the holiday season as well as virtual activities. Having a meeting 1/12 with the Principal to go over re-opening. Thinking of holding a donation book drive instead of a Book Fair.
* **Shelter Rock:** had virtual Spirit Day. Virtual book fair; did not go over well. Yearbook is in process, working with vendor and asking parents to submit photos to be added. Having a meeting 1/14 with the Principal to go over re-opening.
* **South Street:** having 3 meetings with the Principal to go over reopening, beginning 1/12. Meetings will be held in English, Spanish and Portuguese.
* **Stadley Rough:** have not had any additional meetings, have received emails, etc. about reopening but there is no meeting with the Principal scheduled. Asked Kevin/Dr. Sal to reach out to the Principal to ensure communication is being sent to parents.

Next Meeting

* February 1st via zoom, details to follow.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00pm