

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2020- 6:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM

In English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD9dVl6yJbo>

In Spanish:

<https://youtu.be/rXvEToldjTU>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Absent: Joseph DaSilva, Kathryn Hodgdon

Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kim Thompson, Kevin Walston, Kara Casimiro

AGENDA:

- Dr. Pascarella stated that the hybrid model is what he feels would be better and safer for students.
- Mayor Mark Boughton stated that they will be including a letter from our health officials stating that they do not believe it is safe to send students back to school under a full opening, as suggested by the State, with the Reopening Plan for the Governor.
- Mayor Boughton stated that opening school on the full opening plan will jeopardize the safety of our students and all of our residents. Danbury is unique in the amount of students we have.
- Every school district is required to have 180 days of school with 900 hours of instruction. It was recently approved where schools can elect to have 177 days of school and 885 hours on instruction if the Board decides to do so. This will give staff an additional three days for training. **Doing this moves the first day of school to 9/1/2020** and it will not affect the last day of school.
- The state requires a plan in place for a fulltime in school instruction for all students, a hybrid model and a plan for total Distance Learning in the event of a resurgence of Covid-19 in the community.
- 2,947 parents participated in the survey sent out to families in July.
 - 73% of respondents are planning to have their child(ren) return to school in-person.
 - 52% of respondents are planning to have their child(ren) ride the bus.
 - 64% of respondents would choose a hybrid model, if offered.
 - 51% of respondents would choose an exclusive Distance Learning model to start the 2020-21 school year.

- Town Hall Feedback had seven engagement sessions with two community members, two teachers, two administrators and one student.
- Thought Exchange Feedback had a total of 398 participants, 596 thoughts and 8,650 items rated.
- A large purchase was made on one-to-one chromebooks for students, software, Student Support Specialists and an SRBI Admin. Additionally looking at purchasing a lot of sanitizers, sanitizing stations, disinfectant, funding set aside for deep cleaning, add at least one additional custodian to every building, protective shields for desks, protective shields for any engagement points with the public, new signage, PPE (staff and students are expected to provide their own face coverings but there will be PPE available for those who forget, soil or lose them), face shields for teachers, extra protection for SPED staff, money has been set aside for food services.
- Following CDC and American Pediatric Guidelines ensuring that schools meet high cleanliness standards before schools open and maintain throughout the year.
- Signage reminding all to social distance, use masks, wash hands, sanitize hands and dots on the floor to remind students to be mindful of their distance.
- Student lunches will be distributed to classrooms. Cashless, touchless transactions.
- State requires an isolation room in each school with proper ventilation.
- All Merv-8 filters are being replaced and identifying Merv-13 filters to replace. Replace 3x per year after school starts. All ventilation systems will run at full capacity for one week prior to schools opening.
- Flush air inside the building for a minimum of two hours prior to occupancy and one hour after occupancy. Ventilation system will run during all hours that the building is occupied. Windows should be open to allow fresh air in occupied spaces (when temperature allows).
- All students, drivers/staff must wear a face covering on the bus. Drivers will have extra masks in case someone forgets theirs. Intensifying cleaning between each bus run. Windows will be open on all bus runs.
- The district and Health and Nursing Services Coordinator will communicate with the local health official when a student, staff members or member of their household has tested positive for Covid-19 and has possibly exposed others at the school.
- Training all HR Specialists in working under the Families First Protection Act to provide support in the event of a positive test or exposure to positive individuals. Regular communication with employees and HR teams to explain the intersection of FMLA, FFCCRA, CBA leave provisions, Workers Compensation and Disability Insurance planning.
- Dr. Fong stated that the Hybrid Model is the best and wisest model to start with re-opening. Return to school when the pandemic is over, a vaccine is available or Covid-19 is fairly gone.
- Three different models:
 - In-Person Learning: Traditional schedule with health and safety expectations. Students and teachers attend every day with all State guidelines and expectations in place. Classroom learning and instructional activities are adjusted to provide the safest environment. Maintain Digital/Blended Connections as an alternative to returning to school in person.

- Hybrid: Should there be an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in the community, we may move to either a Hybrid schedule (two days a week in person, three days a week of Distance Learning) or full Distance Learning. In this model, Special Education / Bilingual students could be invited to in person learning up to four days per week.
- Distance Learning: Students and parents engage in Distance Learning with materials and support from the school. This is a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning. *Fall Cohort Distance Learning is a voluntary parent selected option for those choosing a full remote option for Semester 1.
- Choices being offered to parents/families:
 - In School - Traditional schedule with health and safety expectations. Students and teachers attend every day with all State guidelines and expectations in place. Classroom learning and instructional activities are adjusted to provide the safest environment.
 - Homeschooling - Homeschooling has always been an option for families and continues to be so during this time. If a family makes the decision to homeschool their child, they are formally withdrawing them from DPS and the parent chooses all instructional materials and is solely responsible for learning.
 - Distance Learning - At the Pre- K - 5 level, this likely means full time remote learning from home. A DPS teacher will be assigned to deliver/instruct using standardized course content. At the 6-12 level, this means that students will be assigned digital courses using a computer based platform and/or review course content independently recorded by the course teacher. Students will work primarily independently in self-paced learning that mirror their current schedule as closely as possible.
- There were several proposed schedules shared for high school, middle school and elementary schools. These schedules were presented for both In-Person Learning and the Hybrid Model.
- Series of trainings for staff across the district for emotional wellbeing.
- Social emotional support for students as well. Series of training on trauma informed instruction. Makes all staff working with children aware that trauma comes in different forms. Make sure staff is providing a safe and supportive learning environment. This will be that much more critical for students who have been out of school for five months now. Want every student to have at least one, if not more, trusted adult in the building that they can go to and seek support.
- More exposure to books regarding race, equity and bias.
- Main focus for the Technology Department is to support the curriculum for all models and all students. Chromebooks have been supplied to established students and will be supplied to new students entering the district. District is currently working to procure wireless internet access to all families. Protocols will be developed for the cleaning of devices.
- Heightened communication to families to understand the new policies and protocols that the health department will be putting in place. A new family school agreement will be shared with parents. Expected for families to read the agreement and adhere to it as we reopen schools. Due to Covid-19, there will be no open access to buildings. District will provide videos of schools, Zoom/Google Meets for new student orientations. More

training for parents on how to understand to better facilitate their children's learning (how to navigate technology, how to be supportive in DL, etc).

- Extending Learning Program (ELP) will be open and is now taking registrations. Start date is pending. Possibility of running full day programs, offsite, to help families while they are working.
- Extracurricular activities are following the CIAC recommendations. CIAC has allowed athletics to implement a phase in approach for participation in activities and athletics. Started on 7/6/2020 and averaging about 350 athletes a week in the program. Athletes train outside in cohorts of ten. Will remain like this until CIAC gives guidance for the next phase around 8/3/2020. Anticipation is that there will be a sports program with modifications. School field trips will be cancelled for at least the first six months. Students in Distance Learning can still participate in extracurricular activities but not if student is homeschooled.

ADJOURNMENT

G. Cooper moved that the Board of Education adjourn its Workshop of July 22, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)