

JANUARY 7, 2025 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Gildea: Opened meeting at 6:37.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Mr. Gildea: Kim Tovar; Ken Marcucio; Dan Foley and Jim Gildea. Karla Materba is here at 6:43 p.m.

Four members of the Board of Education are here. We will not transact business until that member signs on.

Also Present:

Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Schools

PUBLIC PORTION

Is there anyone from the public who wishes to speak before the Board of Education this evening. Anyone from the public twice. Anyone from the public three times. Anyone from the public remote, once, twice, three times. If we could just flip flop and do the student representative report.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Ms. Mitchell: So, first of all we are starting a committee to plan to become involved in planning in celebration for Derby's 350th anniversary on May 13th. More information will follow up because we're just putting the information together today. Another special committee within our school council that our students is going to talk about our students life at DHS and improvements we can make. But it's a committee that allows students to do the leg work behind the scenes for improvement in our schools. Student council is also providing scholarships for the Hoby Leadership Conference in June. Seniors are going to start up their prom committee which is getting hard to fundraise because we are getting behind and in debt so, we're working up building money to pay the debt off and doing fundraisers for prom. But even with fundraising, there's never enough so we can't fully fundraise for prom until it's fully paid off. And midterms are coming up the 21st of January so teachers and students are getting prepared for that.

Mr. Gildea: So, you said you were fundraising for the prom.

Ms. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. Gildea: So, do students pay for their own tickets?

Ms. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Gildea: So, you guys fundraise to make cost of tickets cheaper.

Ms. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. Gildea: And have you started to fundraise yet? Do you know how much have you raised?

Ms. Mitchell: I'm not sure.

Mr. Foley: How do you have a debt?

Ms. Mitchell: I think because last year student council, I think they put too much more like money for stuff like we didn't pay off.

Mr. Foley: Do you know how much debt?

Ms. Mitchell: I think it's 1,000 maybe two. I'm not sure.

Mr. Foley: 6,000?

Ms. Mitchell: No. No. Not 6,000.

Ms. Olson: Cost of ticket for the prom is flat cost.

Mr. Gildea: So, the prom, the students will pay like they usually do?

Ms. Olson: Correct. The purchase for the ticket, that includes the DJ. The tickets, the menu.

Mr. Gildea: Does the classes make that 75 cheaper?

Ms. Olson: No. Believe it or not. We looked at schools in the area. We have one of the cheapest tickets prices for junior prom. We have certainly been able to work with students, that is the only expense to students. Seniors are given a yearbook. We're very grateful for the PTO.

Dr. Conway: Going back we started receiving COVID funds. We took on a number, we redid our fee policy. We took on our number of the costs that were previously borne by students.

Mr. Foley: We're not collecting past dues?

Dr. Conway: Not class dues but specific events, which are outside of what used to be some. So, we removed some of them from the policy.

Ms. Tovar: The Derby High School PTO is actually doing a super bowl so that goes towards post prom.

Mr. Gildea: Thank you.

Ms. Malerba: I know we raised a lot of money. What did we end up giving the cheerleaders? Did we give them a monetary donation?

Mr. Gildea: I think the Inaugural ball gave the cheerleaders \$500. Yes. Go back to the regular order, number four.

ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Ms. Olson: It gives me great pleasure to introduce two students who participated in the Rotary Youth Leadership. Vincent Trinh and Christian Castellini. We are very lucky to have a partnership with Derby/Shelton Rotary. One of the programs that they want for students in the area is a leadership conference. One in the fall. One in the spring. It brings students around the State

together to explore leadership. To explore service to others. And student engagement. We have Christian and Vincent come to share with the Board and their experience and give a little sense of what the conference is.

Vincent: Sharing his experience with the Board about his experience with the Rotary Youth Leadership.

Christian: Sharing his experience with the Board about his experience with the Rotary Youth Leadership.

Mr. Gildea: It sounds like you had an amazing time. And it certainly sounds like you're an amazing representative of the Derby School System. So, thank you very much.

Ms. Tovar: Can anyone become part of this group or do they get chosen to become part of it?

Mr. Gildea: She's going to answer your question.

Ms. Olson: So, each of the program we put it out to everyone grades 11 and 12. We were very excited to have Christian and Vincent.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Gildea: Any additions, deletions or corrections to the agenda?

Motion that the Board of Education add item number ten, Derby School Plaque update before, add Item Number Ten, add that right before the adjournment, Passed with a motion made by Mr. Jim Gildea and a second by Ms. Kim Tovar.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Yes
Laura Harris	Absent
Melissa Mongillo	Absent
Rebecca O'Hara	Absent
Erica Nuzzo	Absent

Mr. Gildea: Add item number 10 Derby School Plaque update.

Ms. Tovar: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

BIRTHDAY

Alison Conway

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion that the Board of Education move into Executive Session to review the Appointment List of New Hires and the Superintendent of Schools is invited to attend. Passed with a motion made by Mr. Jim Gildea and a second by Ms. Kim Tovar.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Yes
Laura Harris	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent
Melissa Mongillo	Absent
Erica Nuzzo	Absent

Mr. Gildea: Making motion.

Ms. Tovar: Second.

At 6:54.

Back in regular session at 6:59.

Motion the Board of Education approve the Appointment List of New Hires. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Mr. Dan Foley.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Yes
Laura Harris	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent
Melissa Mongillo	Absent
Erica Nuzzo	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Mr. Foley: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries. Welcome to Derby.

Ms. Abakumova: Welcoming and introducing Audrey Anderson, joining us as our Eighth Grade Special Ed Teacher at Derby Middle School.

Ms. McCoart: Welcoming and introducing Cristine O'Connor who will be joining us at Irving School as a long-term substitute paraeducator for our kindergarten class. She will be covering while another paraeducator needs to take a leave to conduct her student teaching.

Mr. Gildea: How many vacancies of paraeducator's do we have?

Ms. Abakumova: Eight.

Mr. Gildea: I would like this report to reflect that, doc. Doc did show me that they are posted. We need to keep the postings up and front and center on our vacancies. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS

ATHLETIC REPORT

Ms. Moffat: Biggest thing to report accomplishment end of fall season, beginning of winter season. Going over all sports. Jayzier Rivera was recently named Connecticut High School Coaches Association Class S All-State for his defense at the d-back position. New rivalry in Powder Puff which is a huge event for us every year is with Oxford. Ended up with a win. Senior Brianna Quiles was MVP. That was an awesome event for her as well. Winter sports are kicked off along with our Unified Sports. At the high school, basketball has started. The Unified Team was picked at the Middle School after their Thanksgiving Day break under new Coach Heather Landolfi. On December 6th, Mrs. Sheridan and I brought 12 students leaders to Southern Connecticut State University. The experience of being at Southern and get to see people and make friendships that will last forever.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Ms. Conway: So, December was all things holidays. We celebrated all the holidays in December. We had a spirit week. We also did a holiday extravaganza, which all the families came. We did a potluck luncheon and the students all performed for the parents. It was the best day ever. But the best part of it was Santa Claus came and he handed out gifts to all the students and they just were in awe.

Mr. Gildea: We start registration for next year soon?

Ms. Conway: We do that usually in March.

Mr. Gildea: All right.

Ms. Conway: We have a really, long waitlist. There's like 14.

Mr. Gildea: And how many people move up?

Ms. Conway: I think there's 26.

Mr. Gildea: So, the 14 waitlist. So, 26 move out and you move the 14 in. I'm sure there's a lot of competition for those spots.

Ms. Conway: A lot. So, the kindergarten age has changed. So, the three of those are there for three years.

BRADLEY SCHOOL

Dr. Ciccarini: Good evening, everyone. I just want to highlight one particular December event. The beginning of December, we hosted our first literacy night of the year. And it was as impressive as a literacy night I ever intended. We've been doing it for a few years. We have a partnership with Literacy out in Trumbull. We had over 125 students and families. All part of getting our parents involved. Getting the children the type of education we've given them. Shout out to our Literacy Team. We have our next literacy evening I believe in March. We're already looking forward to our next event in March.

DERBY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Olson: All right. Before Vincent closed his program, I should have asked him to share with you about his project that he's worked on. They created bags for children entering foster care. And did that as their self-selected project to support the community.

So, at Derby High School we are just ready about to wrap up our second quarter. Our semester two classes will be coming up soon. This past month we rolled out a new tool called the student self-reflection tool. It's really designed by two teachers, Ryan Adams and Molly Sullivan who participated in the cast leadership program. This was their personal leadership project. Students started thinking about their work and monitor their grades and attendance and had feedback from people, help them to be able to set better goals, be able to help them set up and monitor their private progress and make adjustments during this semester. We actually rolled this out school-wide. It is done every Monday. It's actually facilitated to be a tool to facilitate a conversation between the advisory teacher and the student.

Next month I've invited my mock trial students to come here on December 13th our students in the new US Legal Class participated in mock trial. They did outstanding. They were competing against Fairfield Prep. Our actually all-female team was against all-male team from Fairfield Prep on our prosecution and defense competed against Fairfield Prep, excuse me, achievement first. They won both competitions. That was a requirement to be able to advance, you had to win both competitions but then you had to score a certain amount of points. So, they didn't score enough to get to the next level but as a first-year team to win both of their competitions was absolutely amazing. This case this year was a criminal case. You will hear more about it when they come next month, but it was very exciting. And I went to the courthouse to watch them compete and pretty impressive. You'll hear more about that later.

The other thing that our students participated in was mock legislative day. And students from our student council and Ms. Bell took students from student council go to Hartford. It was a program hosted by the Connecticut General Assembly and it really focused on bill analysis, fiscal analysis

and creating legal language to have a bill passed. So, they were on the floor and being able to help advocate for different bills. So, our students were there for a full day. They didn't get back home until 5 o'clock. And that was an exciting opportunity for them. They shared about their ability to share with students around the State, to be able to see law in action and again, civic engagement.

The high school we also had our instant decision week. We had six universities and all of the community colleges represented a hundred percent of our students who participated received one yes and lots of scholarship opportunities.

Vincent and another student are going to be participating in the American Legion Oratorical Contest that is coming up in January. We are really excited to be partnership with American Legion last year we had three students who participated. One actually advanced to the next level. This is a very intense experience. Kids have to be very knowledgeable about the US Constitution. Have to make a claim and defend their position. There can be no notes in front of them. They just have a stage and they have three to five minutes to present to the Judges. Additionally, Hoby Youth Leadership applications are open. We are very excited. We have seven students get accepted into the program. Hoby has gifted us three partial scholarships. And then we've also been able to use some grant money to be able to send more students to experience these great programs. This will be held in June at Southern Connecticut State University. The additional funding very generously came from student council has also offered to sponsor a student. We are very fortunate about that. There is one student that they have a conflict, so we may only have six attend that program.

We want to extend Unified Sports into a Unified Band. We were able to create a beginner class from our Learning Center to come into the band. They learned five pieces for the holidays and are continuing on to learn some beginner music. That program was a startup this year. We purchased new recorders and some other beginner instruments that will be introduced over time and sheet music for those students.

The last thing I wanted to share is the climate and culture committee at Derby High School is something that we started last year. It's a small group of teachers. It has now expanded. We are a 20 person deep group that is represented by teachers, paraeducators, administrators, our nurse and some other support staff that participate. We meet monthly during the school day but the team has actually been working on some large-scale projects to support the overall school community. The project that right now we are finalizing is the sub folder to really help our guest teachers to be able to feel confident about leading a classroom on an absence. And then also really outstanding work that they had done in creating onboarding documents for students so that when we receive students in October versus in September or in February, there's a way to make sure that they have all the same experiences as a new person who might have had an orientation if they came over the summer. And additionally, for new staff members who get hired at any point during the school year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Ms. McCoart: So, I feel like December flew by in the blink of an eye. Lots of events going on. We were able to celebrate Mary Jane's retirement after her 30 years of serving as a paraeducator in District which was a wonderful service to our students. I've been busy as you can tell interviewing for our special education position, which is now filled. Next week our students have a field trip to

Lincoln Tech. They'll be exploring some post-secondary options for some vocational avenues after high school. I've been working to train and support both the PPT Chair and the PPS Department Leader at the Middle School to kind of get them situated in those new roles. I was able to go with Derby High School's team to go visit Ansonia's transition program where the students are creating the uniform shirts for all of the students in the District so that was fabulous to see. I noticed RAISE did not make it on to my report, so I apologize for that. But RAISE is holding right now about 11 students. So, no major changes in or out of the program.

Culture and climate, we did a lot of celebrations for the holidays. Celebrated with students and staff. Best buddies had an event where they made some cupcakes. They made some cupcakes in the lunchroom and in the kitchen and they were able to decorate it with their peers. We're starting to think about planning our autism walk that's going to be coming up in May. So, that's always an exciting thing to start thinking about and start fundraising. It's usually like May 19th. The date hasn't been official yet. It's a Quinnipiac University. We always have a good turnout every year. I'd like to continue with that. So, we already have a team starting to think about our theme, our shirts and all that fun stuff.

December was also a fun month. We were able to provide some professional development. We had some of our bus drivers and bus monitors come to Irving School. We provided some behavioral strategies for some kids that were having issues on the bus so we were able to provide them with some support. We held a paraeducator in-house training on our professional development day. Our coaches at Irving School led that. That was nice to see. Well, also thinking about other ways where we're thinking about purchasing licenses for some online modules to get our paraeducators more support so how they can best support our students during the course of the day.

In operations, we continued our weekly finance meeting with Robbie to go over our budget constantly and how we can make any changes on how we can save money. I have had no new students.

IRVING SCHOOL

Mr. Russo: So, for Irving School in December everyone said really a busy month. Just to highlight a few things. First, in academics, we started our project teach lessons with first grade this past December. Project Teach is run by the Rape Crisis Center in Milford and it is an age-appropriate lesson for kids on how to be safe in many different areas. It's really well done. They use some puppets and some games and it really is a valuable experience. The partnership with the Rape Crisis Center in Milford is excellent and it's continuing.

In human capital, we had our December community meeting, normal community meeting except we did highlight a staff game that was played this December run by our Stem teacher, Holly Smith and our administrative assistant, Ali Vargas Malia (phonetic) who recently got engaged. And she will be changing her name soon. They did a grinch game and it was a one-day they played a flash game where staff members really had to interact with one another. It was awesome. And we're going to do another one in a couple of weeks with a different theme. But it really was a culture building game.

In operations, we had the CT TSG Team out to Irving School to assess our speaker PA System and give some options to increase the level of safety within the building at Irving School. The Team was really great. One of the people that work for CT TSG is a former IT employee here, Gary, he's very knowledgeable and does a good job with that.

And then for culture and climate, tons of things in December. I'm going to let Mrs. Ghiardini talk about.

Ms. Ghiardini: So, Irving School also began its partnership with Literacy How and we held our first literacy night run by our administrative assistant and one of our literacy coaches. The theme was juicy words. And we are not only assisting students and families being able to help their children with their literacy skills and being able to increase their vocabulary and enhance their descriptive writing skills. It was a great night. It really was a lovely night. We'll have another one. We don't have the date yet.

DERBY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ms. Quartiano: A lot of things happening. To wrap up November and December, continuing working with our Commissioner's Network really focusing on kids about their learning experiences and getting their feedback and looking for ways that can improve their overall learning experiences. We had our parent teacher conferences. We welcome Jackie Carlson. She is our new health teacher. Very exciting event at the end of November. Rachel and I did attend the Untied Shoes Concert at the Islanders game at the Total Mortgage Arena and we've been invited back again.

Also in the arts for Christmastime and the holidays, Mr. Atkinson took a few members of the band around some classrooms and wanted them to do some call caroling. That was fun. We took the kids on a field trip to rise up for the arts to downtown Bridgeport to look at the murals. Our Martin Luther King essay contest is wrapping up. We've got over 50 submissions at this point in time. So, looking forward to seeing what that entails and if we get a winner again. And on a personal note of gratitude and thankfulness for this wonderful family. I was personally able to hand over a \$1,573 to Seymour Pink. Thank you all.

Mr. Gildea: Thank you for all the administrators. We appreciate your time.

FY26 BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Gildea: I think the City would like to give it to us on the 17th. Have most of our Board members on the 23rd and be able to vote on it.

Dr. Conway: One additional student PPT for Special Ed. Should we be putting forward a budget that's right to the bottom line. Knowing that number could be going up at any time. It's not the norm.

Mr. Gildea: Right now, as of January, we're only at 19.

Dr. Conway: For '25 and '26 we budgeted for 18.

Mr. Gildea: We've never been at 18 in five years. Can we see what our budget looks like at our next meeting with 20?

Dr. Conway: Yes.

Mr. Gildea: I get it. The cost.

Mr. Marcucio: Does he have to send us an update.

Dr. Conway: We'll send you one with the changes.

Mr. Gildea: There'll be a finance meeting. We'll get back together on the 23rd.

IRVING SCHOOL PLAQUE

Dr. Conway: Jack shared this yesterday. We talked about it last meeting. This is a draft with a plaque the 350th placing on Irving School as part of recognizing Irving as part of the celebration. This is the wording on there, the sample that Jack sent.

Motion the Committee of the Whole approve the wording on the plaque that will be mounted on Irving School as part of the Derby's 350th recognition. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Mr. Dan Foley.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Yes
Laura Harris	Absent
Rebecca O'Hara	Absent
Melissa Mongillo	Absent
Erica Nuzzo	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Mr. Foley: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

ADJOURN

Motion that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Karla Malerba.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Yes
Laura Harris	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent
Melissa Mongillo	Absent
Erica Nuzzo	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Ms. Malerba: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Adjourned. At 7:51.

Marianne Samokar, Recording Secretary