
The April 26th Board of Education meeting was held both in person in the Bates Boardroom and streamed online via Zoom to allow the opportunity for all community members to participate during the pandemic.

DCS Spark Program Pilot

The meeting began with a video presentation showcasing the recent DCS Spark program pilot. The video provided a program overview and post-pilot update, including photos and quotes from participating students. During the two-week program, 21 students in grades 3-6 participated in a flexible-schedule learning environment incorporating a collaborative Covid-19-focused unit, Genius Hour, JOLT (Joyful Open Learning Time) and Academic Skills Time.

The Research & Development team comprised of Melanie Dever, Deb Eber, Beau Kimmey, Mollie Sharrar, and David Teddy, presented lessons learned during the pilot, as well as plans moving forward. The vision is to create a Spark learning lab at Wylie Elementary in Fall 2021, as well as develop Spark-style experiences in Wylie classrooms, with the support of SEMIS (Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition). In years 2 & 3, additional classrooms around the District are envisioned, also supported by SEMIS. DCS staff received the same video presentation on April 26, and have been asked to indicate their interest in developing and deploying "Spark experiences" in their classes/teams next year. Relevant professional development for this new program is being planned and will be available for interested staff.

Since 2015, the District's strategic plan has included creating extended learning opportunities with the community; Spark will be a natural pathway to achieve this goal. Some examples of this learning style already implemented at DCS include the Frederick Pelham bridge project and the CommuniTree project. The Spark program will serve as an umbrella for this place-based education, with support and coaching for staff to implement it in their classrooms.

Next year's plans are for one Spark classroom at Wylie (3rd, 4th or combo), as well as a group of teachers across the District (one for each grade level 1st-10th) to implement Spark-style units. Trustee Mara Greatorex shared her experience visiting the Spark classroom for a half-day: when asking a 6th grader about mentoring younger students, the student replied they were actually learning from the 3rd graders. The collaborative nature of the program encourages all students to be both learners and teachers.

[Note: In the Board meeting video, the audio is muted during this presentation because screen sharing with Zoom created a lot of feedback. The Spark presentation video with audio can be viewed here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12WLV0lv13zDlpw6B3URWL33iPI_UeAy8/view.

COVID-19 Data Update

Dr. Timmis presented the [Covid-19 Data Review](#) and [DCS Dashboard](#) update. He noted a total of 75 positive student cases and 19 positive staff cases year-to-date, with 95 students (mostly at Anchor and DHS) and 3 staff in quarantine for the week of April 19. This week's positive case numbers are trending down with only 5 new student cases, but 2 classes at Anchor Elementary are currently in quarantine. In Washtenaw County, the total number of cases are approximately 30 out of 100,000 (as of 4/26/21), with the infection rate dropping below 1%. The county is still seeing an increase in positive cases for ages 0-17. According to MDHHS data, we are at 290 cases per 1,000,000 with a 4.1% positivity rate. DCS sports and clubs continue to administer required weekly testing in order to participate, and this week there were only a couple positive cases out of the hundreds of students tested.

April 26, 2021

Dread Strong Summer Program

There are currently about 500 K-8 students signed up for the [Dread Strong Summer Program](#), which will run 8:00 am – 12:30 pm, June 21 through August 19. DCS is hiring teaching staff to facilitate the program, and also intends to hire high school or college students as assistants. Coordination with Camp Dexter will provide extended care for the remainder of each day (for a fee).

Information will soon be shared about the high school summer program, which will include credit recovery for freshman Algebra, English, Biology, American History, World History and possibly Algebra II (based on needs). The program will also offer strength and conditioning through Iron Dread.

Reading Action Plan

DCS is creating a [Reading Action Plan](#) for our youngest students, including some summer components. The developmental reading work usually done by teachers is hard to do while distanced, because teachers need to sit right next to their students to be most effective. From March through June, the District will review Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) reading levels and NWEA data to determine what skills need to be addressed. Historically, younger students need help with key ideas and details in informational texts, so the plan will focus on these concepts while continuing classroom work on claims, evidence & reasoning.

A coaching model is in development for the fall, and the District has posted a K-4 Learning Coach position to perform intense learning coaching. This summer, DCS will review and update our multi-tier system of supports, as well as implement plans to put print media into kids' hands and partner with Dexter District Library for additional summer reading opportunities.

Schools of Choice (SOC) Application Window Open

DCS currently has more than 180 applications for SOC from out-of-district students (more than twice the usual amount), with the spring application window open through April 30th. Saline is experiencing a similar increase, and most likely many of the same families have applied to multiple districts. The capture rate is usually 60% out of the total applications, but with such large numbers and a significant loss of students this year, the District needs to determine how many can realistically be accepted. As required by law, a second SOC application window is scheduled for this summer (late July). Traditionally, the second window is an opportunity for families whose situations changed over the summer to be able to provide stability for their students. Dr. Timmis anticipates about half of the Dexter students lost in 2020-2021 will return. He shared that some families have found they like home school or to travel with their kids, and may indicate a nationwide enrollment shift. Board members recommended DCS be conservative this spring when accepting SOC applications knowing that new families may move into the district this summer.

MASB Board Member Awards

Dr. Timmis congratulated Board members Mara Greatorex and Julie Schumaker, as well as former Trustee Barbara Read, on their recent awards by the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB). Greatorex was awarded the *Certified Board Member Award* and the Award of Merit; Schumaker and Read earned the *Master Board Member Award*.

Board President Update

President Schumaker addressed the recent letter sent by Dr. Timmis to the community sharing his selection as one of five finalists for the Wayne RESA Superintendent position. She said, "We have been very fortunate to have Dr. Timmis here as our Superintendent for almost 8 years... We are hopeful that you'll remain at Dexter Community

April 26, 2021

Schools to continue to guide and implement new educational programs and initiatives. We very much value your leadership in the District.”

Student Representative Update

Aiden Naughton updated the Board that DHS students have been given the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, and a good number of students are scheduling appointments.

First Public Participation Opportunity

No community members elected to speak during the first opportunity for public participation.

Consent Items

The Board acknowledged the retirement of occupational therapist Melinda Hieber and received the March budget report.

DHS Course Proposals

DHS Assistant Principal Ken Koenig walked the Board through a number of proposed new elective classes for the 2021-2022 school year. When creating the classes, teachers considered three driving concepts: to cultivate student interest in areas of real-life application through electives; to not add to students’ homework load now that the block schedule allows for more classes; and to help students develop and increase self-awareness of others and the community. With these concepts in mind, the following elective classes have been proposed:

- Positive Psychology – one-semester class, open to 9th & 10th graders taught by Tracy Stahl in the Social Studies department. This is an introduction to psychology concepts including practical applications, giving students a toolbox to use during their high school career.
- Science and Practice of Strength and Conditioning – two-semester class for 9th-12th graders, taught by Coach Chris Whittaker in the PE department. Teaches what it takes to become a strength and conditioning coach. Students will rotate into Strength & Conditioning class to assist current Dexter athletes.
- Spanish Films and Literature – two-semester class for 11th & 12th graders in the World Languages department. Intended for students not interested in level 4 or IB language class, but who still want to utilize language and explore culture (will be offered in 2022-2023). Will be the first World Language elective offered at DHS.
- Bearing Witness – one-semester class for 9th-12th graders, taught by Ali Barthol in the English department. Students will evaluate information sources as they examine, discuss, and reflect on events and happenings around our community and the world.
- Foods & Nutrition Science 2 – one-semester class for 9th-12th graders, taught by Lauren Williams (prereq. Foods 1). With so much information presented in Foods 1, students’ actual cooking experience is limited. This course will stretch the information into another semester and allow for more practical cooking applications.
- Makerspace – one-semester class for 11th & 12th graders. A hands-on, lab-based science elective utilizing computer labs, 3D printers, soldering, etc. Students will take an idea through the development process to final product.
- Musical Theater Workshop – one-semester class for 9th-12th graders, taught by Julie Bassett, DHS choir director. DHS puts on a spring musical each year, but there is currently no class to teach the concepts of musical theater. Course will provide introduction to musical theater, as well as techniques to prepare for the spring musical. Students are not required to take class to be in DHS spring production, or vice versa.

April 26, 2021

NSBA Advocacy Institute

Dr. Schumaker informed Trustees about the National School Board Association (NSBA) Advocacy Institute open to all board members. This event, usually held in Washington DC, allows school board members from around the country to learn how to advocate on behalf of their district students. This year's Institute will be via Zoom on June 8 & 9 at the cost of \$299/person (if registered by the end of April). The Board passed a motion to approve registration costs for any interested board members to attend in order to take advantage of the early registration discount.

Quarterly Financial Narrative

Dexter CFO Dr. Sharon Raschke gave an overview of Dexter's financial narrative for March 2021. As is typical, the budget revision to be presented in June will be impacted by many financial unknowns related to COVID-19, but the District expects to end up revenue over expenses by fiscal year-end.

Second Public Participation Opportunity

No one chose to speak during the second opportunity for public participation.

Committee Updates

Trustee Greatorex gave a recap of the MASB Behind the Scenes conference held Monday morning. Trustees Greatorex and Kangas, along with community members Melanie McIntyre, Heidi Patel and BJ Wallingford, attended the virtual conference, learning about upcoming education-related legislation and meeting in a breakout room with State Representative Donna Lasinski and State Senators Lana Theis and Dale Zorn.

Trustee Greatorex updated the Board on the Educational Foundation of Dexter's recent spring teacher grant cycle, which included approximately \$15,000 in funding for items such as a 3D printer for Mill Creek and books for all 2nd graders.

Closed Session Postponed

The scheduled closed session to perform the Superintendent's quarterly evaluation was postponed until the next Board meeting due to the length of the meeting.

The full meeting video can be viewed on the Board of Education website at <https://www.dexterschools.org/district/board-of-education/meetings/videos>.

Upcoming Board Calendar:

* Monday, May 10 – 7:00pm – Board Meeting - Bates School