

**Darien Board of Education  
Darien, Connecticut**

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Darien Public Schools' Administrative Offices**

**35 Leroy Avenue**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order .....Mrs. Tara Ochman
  
2. Presentations/Discussions
  - a. Discussion and possible action.....Dr. Alan Addley  
on April Break and establishing  
a date for Graduation
  
  - b. Discussion and possible approval of temporary  
powers granted to the Superintendent of Schools.....Mrs. Tara Ochman
  
3. Adjournment .....Mrs. Tara Ochman

**\* MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO COMMENT ON AN AGENDA ITEM MAY EMAIL ALAN ADDLEY [aaddley@darienps.org](mailto:aaddley@darienps.org) or TARA OCHMAN [tochman@darienps.org](mailto:tochman@darienps.org) BY 3:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MARCH 24.**

**To:** Members of the Board of Education  
**From:** Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools  
**Subject:** Regular Meeting Agenda for March 24, 2020  
**Date:** March 23, 2020

**Executive Session:** No Executive Session Scheduled

**Discussion and possible action on April Break and establishing a date for Graduation:** The administration will discuss recommendations and suggested changes to the planned April break and the establishment of the graduation date.

It is the recommendation of the administration to cancel the existing April Break and continue with eLearning in an effort to maintain educational continuity and momentum; however, we would recommend the use of two days for the April break: Friday, April 10 and Monday, April 13 for a long weekend. This gives teachers, parents and students time to adjust and focus on the ever-changing environments within their own homes. Under this scenario (taking a two-day long weekend), the date of graduation would be established for Thursday, June 11, 2020. (2019-2020 calendar attached)

Background: Governor's Lamont's March 10<sup>th</sup> Executive's Order #7 waived the 180-Day and 900 hours of instruction school year requirement for the 2019-2020 school year for schools that close for any period of time due to COVID-19 risks and, upon the reopening of the schools, hold school sessions through June 30. Distance learning days could be approved by the Commissioner of Education. On March 16, Darien submitted a waiver request for distance learning to count towards the 180 days. The same night the Commissioner terminated the application requirement for a waiver.

School has been closed from Thursday, March 12 due to COVID-19. With one snow day, and assuming we leave the April break intact, graduation is currently scheduled for June 16. By utilizing four days of April break as educational days, we also create the most flexibility in the very unlikely case school reopens by April 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion and possible approval of temporary powers granted to the Superintendent of Schools:** Specifically, during the period of school closure, administration will need the suspension of the following two policies along with the modification of some business office operations and processes:

Suspension of Policy 3050 (Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers). This would allow the Superintendent or designee the ability to transfer funds if necessary due to the closure, providing we do not exceed the total appropriation. Given the uncertainty, we would need the ability to transfer funds under emergency situations or to keep running the district under eLearning model. We would report out all transfers and adjustments once school is re-opened. The Superintendent will keep the Board apprised with informational emails about any transfers and adjustments.

Suspension of Policy 3125 (Purchasing). Given schools are closed we cannot issue RFP's for potential services or equipment needs. We would need this waived should we need any

emergency equipment primarily for Technology. Additionally, should we finalize the Food Service Agreement if we are not open by mid-April, we would likely have to suspend an RFP for Food Service Management Company for next school year. An RFP can only be issued if management companies can tour the facilities, which they cannot. We have had two companies review our facilities prior to the closure, so we would limit the proposals to those two companies (Chartwells and Sodexo). It will also take time for any management company to staff the facilities for next school year.

#### Impact on the Business Office Operations and Processes

- The formal monthly financial reporting will be suspended; however, financial reports will be shared with the Board periodically.
- Refunds to parents (Food Service Accounts and Student Activities) will be postponed until school is re-opened.
- Payroll will continue bi-weekly; however, payroll advices will only be available on Tyler Content Manager (TCM) online.
- Accounts Payable will be issued once a month (cannot be done remotely).
- Transportation Study (two submissions) will commence when school re-opens.
- Portable/Library study is on hold until the buildings are re-opened.
- Purchasing will be done remotely and centralized on an as needed basis.
- Depending on the length of the closure, open enrollment for the health and dental insurance carrier change (from Connecticare to Anthem) will be done remotely. Typically, this would be mid-May. We are working with MUNIS to add this to TCM so employees can file enrollment changes online. This would be an issue if the closure extends past mid-May.

To assist with these needs the Board will consider the adoption of the proposed motion: To grant temporary powers to the Superintendent of Schools in order to address the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

Authority is granted to:

1. Suspend provisions of policies 3050 (Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers) and Policy 3125 (Purchasing) and other Board policies the Superintendent shall deem necessary for the health; safety; delivery of instruction and curriculum; emergency repairs; and, normal business operations.
2. Take any lawful actions necessary to ensure the continuation of public education, to provide for the health and safety of students and employees, or to respond to direction from appropriate health and government authorities. Such action may include, but are not limited to, adjustments to the curriculum and the provision of alternate educational program options; modifications to the school calendar; adjustments to the delivery of school-provided meals; limitations on access to District property; applying to any governmental body for financial or other aid as may be available; and applying to any governmental body for waiver of regulations or requirements, compliance with which is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

3. Enter into contracts without Board approval for any dollar amount for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, or other needs directly related to the COVID-19 emergency situation, provided such action is consistent with all applicable State and Federal laws.
4. Close any school facility without further action by this Board. Such closure shall continue during the emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic until such time as the Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate health and government authorities, deems it in the best interests of the District and its students to open schools.
5. Direct staff assignments during District closures, including but not limited to essential employees who must report to work, employees who may be reassigned, and employees whose services are not needed.
6. Limit access to public school grounds and District buildings during school closures.
7. Waive the requirements requiring advertising for bids and competitive bid procedures for purchases which may be necessary due to the emergency. The Superintendent will document the reasons for which prompt remedial action is necessary to prevent physical injury to persons or to property of the District.
8. Modify business office operations and processes. Such modification may include monthly financial reporting, the issuance of refunds through Food Service Accounts and Student Activities, issuance of online payroll advices, centralization of Accounts Payable, deferral of Transportation and Portable/Library studies, Centralized Purchasing. Online open enrollment for the health and dental insurance carrier.

#### Consultation with Board of Education

The Superintendent shall consult with and report to the Board as feasible, appropriate and timely regarding emergency closures and efforts to implement written guidance from health and government agencies as disseminated by CSDE and other state agencies pertaining to this pandemic situation.