

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

August 28, 2017

The warrants for bills payable were reviewed and signed by the School Committee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dr. Shannon Jenkins, at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the James M. Quinn Elementary School. She noted that the meeting was being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV and is aired on Wednesday and Friday evenings and, also, the DHS YouTube channel

Present were the following members: Mr. Oliver, Dr. Karafotis, Mrs. Amaral, and Dr. Jenkins. Mr. Nunes was absent due to illness.

Also present: Dr. Gifford, Ms. Roy, Mr. Kiely, and Mrs. Boucher.

Visitors present: Mr. Gallishaw, Mrs. Oliveira, Mrs. Townson, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Martin, Mr. Boyle, Ms. Chavier, Mr. Doane, Mr. Robidoux, Mr. Rossi, Mrs. Decas, Mrs. Correira, Mr. Grandfield, Mrs. Yermalovich, Mr. Kingsland, and also members of the community. Ms. Teresa Hamm was present representing the Finance Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered on any agenda item.

PRESENTATION

Facilities Master Plan Project by SMMA

Mr. Kiely was pleased to introduce Phil Poinelli and Ed Frenette from the firm of Symmes, Maini and McKee Associates (SMMA) who presented the outline of the district's facilities master plan. SMMA has been working with central office staff and administrators to evaluate enrollment and the condition of the district's facilities.

The preliminary report found the most pressing issue in the district is overcrowding at the elementary level. The DeMello and Potter Schools' enrollment exceeds building capacities. The largest problem is at the Cushman School which currently has an enrollment of 171 students with a capacity of 90. Every classroom at the Cushman School is at least 20 percent undersized the guidelines of the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Mr. Poinelli and Mr. Frenette reviewed two possible options to alleviate the problems. The first option would close the Cushman School and turn the Quinn School into a centralized early childhood center. A renovation of the Quinn School building would be needed and the redistricting of Potter and DeMello Schools would be required. The estimated cost would be between \$54-\$56 million.

The second option presented would also close the Cushman School. Pre-kindergarten students would be relocated to the existing elementary school. This option would require additions to the DeMello and Potter Schools and a renovation to the Quinn School. The estimated cost of this option would be \$81-\$86 million.

Committee members were appreciative of the preliminary report but stunned with the recommended options.

Dr. Karafotis stated, "our schools have been overcrowded for a long period of time." She inquired, "if pre-kindergarten was held in a central school location would we provide transportation?" Mr. Kiely replied that transportation would not be provided.

Mr. Oliver stated, "nice presentation. I learned a lot from the presentation. It is important that we look at the next step. We need to discuss this material as a committee. You provided us with several options. We are responsible to the town, parents and community members. We need to solicit feedback from the stakeholders in the community. The Potter and DeMello Schools do not reflect a 21st century learning community. A lot of money was invested in the renovation of the Cushman School building. We need to come together as a community and prepare a Statement of Interest."

Mrs. Amaral stated that she would like to hear comments from the community.

Dr. Jenkins shared her thoughts: "We are talking \$25 million for each renovation of Potter and DeMello Schools. Then, we have to go back and discuss renovating Dartmouth Middle School. This town does not have the capacity for overrides. I am concerned that this is not what we can do. It would be nice to have 21st century learning communities in each school. I'm not sure it would happen here. I am really concerned as to our capacity to enact this plan."

Mr. Oliver stated "we asked for a study of our facilities and that is what we got. We received recommendations based on MSBA guidelines. It is important that we continue to form a committee with other stakeholders in the town. Doing nothing is not an option."

Dr. Jenkins continued, "what we would like to have is not what is a reality. Dartmouth Middle School has needs that need to be addressed before 20 years."

Mr. Kiely stated, "we have done a great job maintaining our buildings. There will be a point in time that it is no longer possible. We will be faced with more difficult decisions. We will not be able to maintain the facilities \$1 million at a time. The reality is that we are about 20 years out from addressing the Dartmouth Middle School. This plan gives us the ability to receive MSBA funding."

Dr. Jenkins continued, "we cannot swallow the Dartmouth Middle School pill yet. Not ready to sell this plan yet. I need more time with this. I feel that we got what we asked for. Are there other things we can do at a cheaper price? I am really nervous for an all-out campaign."

Dr. Karafotis inquired to what the cost of a new elementary school would be. Mr. Poinelli replied that new construction runs between \$400 and \$450/square foot. The plan presented this evening runs \$175-\$200/square foot.

Mr. Oliver stated, "we need to form a subcommittee. This conversation needs to be continued at the School Committee level."

Mr. Poinelli stated the full report will be available in the next 4-6 weeks.

PRESENTATION

2017-2018 School Improvement Plan **Dartmouth Middle School**

Principal Darren Doane along with Associate Principal Carl Robidoux and Assistant Principals Peter Rossi and Sarah Decas provided Committee members with the DMS School Improvement Plan for the 2017-2018 school year.

Mr. Robidoux reviewed the areas of focus contained in the Strategic Objective: Teaching and Learning:

- To build internal capacity to design calendar maps and units of study that address academic gaps, redundancies, and misalignments for purposes of improving the overall coherence of the district's curriculum and, by extension, its effectiveness.
- To create system of assessment for students to evaluate student growth, provide targeted interventions and allow teachers to adjust instruction to improve student achievement.
- To enhance and expand the K-12 STEM programs and enrichment activities and develop related curricula.
- To enhance the K-12 mathematics programs to ensure vertical alignment, focusing on mathematical practices to provide pathways to Calculus.

Mrs. Decas reviewed the areas of focus in the Strategic Objective: Access and Equity:

- Build upon and enrich a technological structure which supports all teachers and students, capitalizing upon their enthusiasm, and allowing for equal access to individual instruction.
- Expand and enrich current systems to support the academic and social and emotional well-being of all learners.

Mr. Doane reviewed the areas of focus in the Strategic Objective: Community Engagement:

- Increase communication with students, parents, teachers, and the general Dartmouth Community by maximizing the use of technology and the media.
- Support and expand outreach and engagement with parents, family and community.

Committee members offered the following comments:

Dr. Karafotis stated, "very pleased with the School Improvement Plan. The involvement of the teachers is commendable regarding social emotional health."

Mr. Oliver stated, "very happy with the consistent evolving of the School Improvement Plan. You are always looking outside the box. Commend everyone at Dartmouth Middle School!"

Mrs. Amaral praised the staff of Dartmouth Middle School for the wonderful work they are doing with students.

Dr. Jenkins stated she is happy to see the focus on STEM. "Very happy to see the focus on a path to Calculus. I am excited to see the plan to continue."

OLD BUSINESS

School Choice: Dr. Gifford updated the Committee members on the status of School Choice. We have three (3) Grade 11 students; six (6) Grade 10 students; and twenty-one (21) Grade 9 students entering Dartmouth High School under the School Choice program. Ten (10) students reside in Westport; two (2) reside in Swansea; one (1) resides in Fairhaven; and the remainder reside in New Bedford. All thirty (30) students who attended Dartmouth High School through the School Choice Program during the 2016-2017 school year are returning.

NEW BUSINESS

Dartmouth High School Student Handbook – 2017-2018: DHS Principal Ross Thibault reviewed the recommended changes to the DHS Student Handbook for the 2017-2018 school year.

Committee members offered the following comments:

Dr. Karafotis stated: "are the parents notified with regard to tardiness issues?" Mr. Thibault replied, "we want parents to be partners in their child's education".

Mr. Thibault reported that the DHS Open House is scheduled for Thursday, September 21st and is hoping for a good turnout of parents. He stated that all major changes in the student handbooks will be communicated to everyone.

Dr. Jenkins stated that she hopes changes in the dual enrollment program do not impact credit recovery.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Dr. Karafotis to approve the Dartmouth High School Student Handbook for 2017-2018 with recommended changes. The motion carried unanimously.

Staffing Update: Dr. Gifford reported that approximately forty (40) new staff members have been hired. They are all participating in Project TIME (teacher induction mentoring program) and will be introduced to Committee members at the September 11th School Committee meeting.

School Committee Meeting Schedule: The following is the schedule of School Committee meetings during the fall:

Monday, September 11, 2017
Monday, September 25, 2017
Monday, October 16, 2017
Monday, October 30, 2017
Monday, November 20, 2017
Monday, December 11, 2017

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford reported on the following:

- We have received notification that the recent Coordinated Program Review was successful.
- Mrs. Oliveira was commended for coordinating the pre-session day activities. Keynote speaker was Michael Klein.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular session of the School Committee will take place on Monday, September 11, 2017.

Dr. Karafotis moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral, to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:52 p.m. in order to discuss strategies with respect to collective bargaining with non-union personnel and to conduct three (3) Level III Grievance Hearings. The Committee will not be returning to Open Session. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed.D.
Superintendent