

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

August 10, 2020

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chris Oliver at 4:00 p.m. and was held remotely via Zoom Technology. The Chair stated the meeting is streaming live on the DHS Media YouTube channel and noted the meeting was being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV. The Chair advised viewers that comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org to be read during Public Comment.

Present were the following members: Mr. Oliver, Dr. Jenkins, Mrs. Amaral, Mrs. Waite and Mr. Nunes.

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

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to adjourn to Executive Session in order to provide an update with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel to reconvene in open session at 4:30 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously: Mr. Oliver – Yea, Dr. Jenkins – Yea, Mrs. Amaral – Yea, Mrs. Waite – Yea and Mr. Nunes – Yea.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to reconvene in Open Session at 4:34 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously: Mr. Oliver – Yea, Dr. Jenkins – Yea, Mrs. Amaral – Yea, Mrs. Waite – Yea and Mr. Nunes – Yea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Oliver noted that School Committee members have received and reviewed many emails containing comments regarding items on tonight's agenda from parents and the general public: although these comments will not be read at this meeting in the interest of time they will become part of the meeting minutes once the same are approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent's Recommendation for Return to School Plans: Dr. Gifford briefly summarized the three Return to School models: full return; hybrid and fully remote while sharing her PowerPoint presentation which was provided to the Committee members in their meeting packets.

Dr. Gifford provided updates on the hybrid plan chosen: noting the plan was chosen because it was felt to be more pedagogically sound as well as making transportation easier to coordinate.

Dr. Gifford clarified information reported on last week pertaining to virtual learning and the learning management system as initially presented by Department of Elementary and Secondary Information (DESE) to public school superintendents.

Dr. Gifford reported that DESE presented two options as an alternative for parents who do not want their

children to participate in a hybrid or full return to school model: the first being virtual learning where DESE is recommending two virtual Commonwealth Schools: Greenfield (GCVS) and TEC Connections Academy.

Dr. Gifford explained the second option - the learning management system – which requires the school district to provide the instructors not just supervision or monitoring student progress which is making the option not cost effective.

Dr. Gifford clarified the distinction between remote learning and home schooling: students opting remote or virtual learning would still be considered enrolled in the Dartmouth Public Schools whereas parents who choose to home school their children would be solely responsible for their children's education and the students would not be considered enrolled in the Dartmouth Public Schools.

Dr. Gifford stated the District will continue to work on its remote learning plan given the recent clarification of DESE's virtual learning recommendations.

Dr. Gifford stated the full return model is not feasible and could not be implemented at the start of school.

Dr. Gifford highlighted the comparisons of a hybrid and remote model noting the difficulties parents will face with either plan have been carefully considered as well as the impact on student learning and wellbeing.

Dr. Gifford stated that should a remote plan be chosen it would allow the district to focus more planning on teaching and learning; a phased-in approach from remote to hybrid would support staff preparedness to provide optimal learning experiences for students.

Dr. Gifford reported the District has been meeting with the Dartmouth Educators Association which represents teachers and non-instructional staff.

Dr. Gifford stated the District's recommendation for the start to school plan is a Phased-In Approach: Remote to Hybrid to Full Return: Phase 1 (August 31st to September 14th) – teachers return to school for professional development including relationship building meetings between staff and small student cohorts; Phase 2 to start September 15th – students return to full remote learning; Phase 3 start time to be determined – Implement Hybrid Learning Model; Phase 4 start time to be determined – full in person return.

Dr. Gifford stated that a second survey with more details regarding the hybrid model will be sent to parents.

Dr. Gifford asked for the Committee's vote to change the school start date to September 15, 2020; this is in line with DESE's reduction of school days from 180 to 170 for 2020-2021 to allow for staff professional development.

Dr. Gifford asked the School Committee to vote on the District's Return to School Plan this evening.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to change the start date for the Dartmouth Public Schools to September 15, 2020. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously: Mr. Oliver – Yea, Dr. Jenkins – Yea, Mrs. Amaral – Yea, Mrs. Waite – Yea and Mr. Nunes – Yea.

Mr. Nunes stated he supports a hybrid model return to school model.

Dr. Jenkins stated she would vote for a full remote plan to start school and requested that discussions on changing to a hybrid model be had regularly in order to make the decision to move to that model as soon as possible.

Mr. Oliver stated the recent facility and classroom inspection convinced him that, at this time, a full return or hybrid model over a full remote model would not benefit students; adding the ultimate goal is to get students back in to the classroom.

Mrs. Waite provided comments as to why she supports a full remote plan to start the school year.

Mrs. Amaral provided comments pertaining to students prioritized as high needs or high risk as well as students who are not so prioritized but who are struggling and stated she would like to see the District enhance its listing of prioritized students: Mrs. Amaral stated her support for a full remote start to the school year.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adopt a remote plan to start the 2020-2021 school year. On a roll call vote, the motion passed (4-1): Mr. Oliver – Yea, Dr. Jenkins – Yea, Mrs. Amaral – Yea, Mrs. Waite – Yea and Mr. Nunes – Nay.

Mr. Nunes asked what a remote start would do to extracurricular activities.

Dr. Gifford responded we want to provide as many experiences for students whether remotely or in small groups adhering to safety guidelines but a decision has yet to be made.

Mr. Nunes asked if the grab n' go program will be restarted.

Mr. Kiely stated he would have more specific information to share at the next meeting; the District is hoping to get approval from the USDA to provide some food service moving forward.

Dr. Jenkins suggested Committee members forward specific questions to the Administration in preparation for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Title I Ed-Flex Waiver Request: Dr. Gifford introduced Tracy Oliver, Director of Teaching and Learning, who runs the Title I Program.

Mrs. Oliveira stated that she received clarification from DESE that a waiver was not required for the Title I Ed-Flex Program and took the opportunity to provide an overview of the federally funded Title One Program.

Mrs. Oliveira shared a PowerPoint presentation to highlight specific points of the Title I Program which “helps to ensure that all children have equal access to challenging state academic standards.”

Mrs. Oliveira made the distinction between Title I funding and services: a District’s Title I funding is based on the percentage of children from low-income families and Title I services are provided to students based on an academic and not a financial need.

Mrs. Oliveira stated in 2018 the funding equation of how money is allocated was changed; District wide low income percentages are determined from census data, free and reduced lunch data and economically disadvantaged family data such as students who receive Medicaid services and even though our numbers have increased our funding hasn’t.

Mrs. Oliveira stated which schools in Dartmouth are designated Title I schools and explained the staff that support the program and educational supplies which are obtained with program funds.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford reported:

- 11 new teachers and 2 administrators were hired for 2020-2021 replacing positions vacated due to resignations and/or retirements; new teachers are required to participate in Project Time which starts August 18th and 19th.
- 2 high school computer science teachers recently completed Project Lead the Way Training.
- Pre-K screening is scheduled tentatively starting the week of August 24th.
- Parents of elementary aged students were sent a letter regarding "kid kits" as well as advice on what to purchase to support remote learning.
- We are hoping to coordinate small groups of kindergarten students to meet with their teachers during the 10 day professional development session.
- We will ensure that everyone who needs a Chrome Book will have one.
- The District Leadership is planning on hosting a live streamed virtual Q&A; parents will be asked to submit their questions about the remote learning plan to questions@dartmouthschools.org.

Report of the Chair: Mr. Oliver scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, August 18 at 4:00 p.m.

Mrs. Amaral mentioned that the Special Education Parent Advisory Council has invited Beth Townson, Pupil Support Services Administrator, to a virtual Open House on August 26th at 4:00 p.m. Persons interested in submitting questions or wanting a link to the meeting can go to the Dartmouth SEPAC Facebook page or email DartmouthSEPAC@gmail.com.

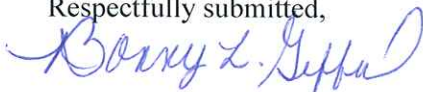
Other Matters that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom technology.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:04 p.m. in order to provide an update with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel and not to return in to Open Session. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent