

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

April 6, 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 Kathleen Amaral at 6:30 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 or during the Public Hearing on the proposed FY21 Budget.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Oliver stated there are approximately 18 viewers watching the live stream.

An email from Renee Vieira, DEA President, Dartmouth High School Teacher and parent was received and read as it concerned remote learning.

Another email from Ms. Vieira was received and read as it concerned April vacation and the last day of school for the 2019-2020 year.

An email from Heidi Silva-Brooks, Principal of Potter School, was received and read as it concerned April vacation and the last day of school for the 2019-2020 year.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 23, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Oliver asked that the minutes of the Executive Session for March 23, 2020 be held until he has had a chance to address a question he has about "a sentence" included therein with the Chair.

OLD BUSINESS

FY21 Budget - Vote: Mr. Kiely stated that with some discussion he would not recommend moving forward on a vote this evening.

Mr. Kiely added that he had a meeting with Mr. MacInnes and Mr. Barnes this afternoon; given all the uncertainty at this time it would not be beneficial to move forward and “define a number” tonight.

Mr. Nunes commented at some point we will need to get a “number” to Town Hall and asked that the vote be scheduled for the next meeting on April 27th and, barring any radical changes, we go forward with the budget “that we have.”

Mr. Oliver asked Mr. Kiely if he received any indication from Town Hall that there is a potential for our funding for next year to be affected.

Mr. Kiely responded the Town is preparing preliminary estimates based on reductions in local receipts and state aid.

Mr. Kiely continued stating what the reductions will not be known for some time; he stated he agree with Mr. Nunes that a vote on the budget will need to be taken soon but having more information or certainty would be preferable and “I” don’t see a big risk waiting a couple of weeks for more answers.

Dr. Jenkins addressed a public comment matter from the March 23, 2020 meeting wherein an email from a student was read as it concerned high school student parking fees.

Mr. Nunes added that the District did reduce the student parking fee a few years back

Dr. Gifford and Mr. Kiely added that Mr. Thibault and Mr. Martin, DHS Principal and Assistant Principal respectively, met with the student and explained what the fees are used for.

Mr. Kiely continued stating that approximately eight years ago he met with student groups and made a recommendation to the school committee to reduce the fee from \$100 to the present \$60 per year.

It was agreed that, as much as they would like to, the current fiscal times do not allow for the Committee to remove or reduce parking fees.

The Committee agreed to table its vote on the proposed FY21 Budget agreeing to wait a few weeks for any updates and to discuss the matter again.

NEW BUSINESS

Last Day of School for 2019-2020: The Chair asked for a status of the last day of school as it currently stands.

Dr. Gifford stated that if we did nothing and continued on with April vacation as planned the last day of school would be June 19, 2020. If we did not continue with April vacation as planned and used the four days as learning days then the last day of school would be June 15, 2020.

Dr. Gifford reported the results of a staff survey wherein 2 options were provided to choose from: (1) observe April vacation making the last day of school June 19th or (2) cancel April vacation making the last day of school June 15th (taking in to account one snow day on December 3, 2019).

Dr. Gifford noted there were 410 responses: 74% opted to forgo April vacation and end school on June 15th leaving 26% opting to keep April vacation.

Mrs. Amaral asked how a change would impact the senior class.

Dr. Gifford replied the high school administrative team is making plans for senior class activities which may take place in the summer as they do not want to hold these activities virtually.

Mr. Oliver asked for clarification on Ms. Vieira's email read during Public Comment regarding Good Friday and the long weekend.

Dr. Gifford stated Good Friday will be observed as well as the Monday (Patriots Day) holiday.

Mr. Nunes provided his opinion as to why he would be in favor of forgoing the April vacation and observing Good Friday and Patriots Day.

Dr. Karafotis commented she can see the argument for either option.

Mr. Oliver gave his reasons why he is more inclined to support forgoing April vacation and observing Good Friday and Patriots Day.

Dr. Jenkins asked if the Governor's statement that the school year would not be extended beyond the 5 additional days for snow days still stands.

Dr. Gifford clarified that it was the Commissioner of Education who made the statement and that any extension of the school year beyond the 5 additional days would be left to the discretion of the local school committee.

Dr. Jenkins gave her reasons why she is inclined to honor the April vacation and set the last day of school as June 19, 2020.

Mrs. Amaral stated she is inclined to agree with Dr. Jenkins.

Dr. Karafotis asked for clarification on the survey and Ms. Vieira's position.

Mr. Nunes moved, Mr. Oliver seconded to have the Dartmouth Public Schools cancel April vacation (4 days) and to continue virtual learning on those days. The motion carried 3-2-0: Mr. Nunes – yea, Mr. Oliver – yea, Dr. Karafotis – yea, Dr. Jenkins – nay and Mrs. Amaral - nay.

Dr. Gifford recommended waiting on voting on the last day of school until more information can be learned from the State and/or Commissioner regarding whether or not schools will reopen on May 4th.

Dr. Jenkins asked families to email their thoughts on the “end date” for school to Committee members to help us make a more informed decision.

Dr. Gifford clarified that by cancelling April vacation, as it stands now, last day of school for 2019-2020 would be June 15, 2020.

Proposed School Committee Meeting Dates: Dr. Gifford asked if the Committee would table the matter so that more information can be received from the State regarding a return to school date as well as information from the Town regarding Town meeting dates and elections. It was noted that the Committee has meeting dates currently scheduled: April 27th, May 18th and June 22nd.

Dr. Gifford added meetings can be called as necessary to provide updates.

The Committee agreed to table the matter.

Superintendent’s Update: Dr. Gifford briefed the Committee on the District’s Remote Learning Plan (Plan) which does not substantively differ from what staff was asked to do several weeks ago when school buildings were closed.

- The Plan references the Extended Learning Page which has had many more tabs added to it including updates and trainings to the technology tab as well as a special education tab.
- Most recently an activities tab was added and staff has been asked to forward examples of students work to be included on this tab to give a sense of what is happening with students.
- The Plan was built upon information, recommendations and guidance received from the Department of Education (DESE); from DESE’s Special Education Division as well as from Dartmouth Public School legal counsel.
- The Plan was a collaborative effort with Building Administrators and the Dartmouth Educators Association (DEA); DEA was asked for its feedback and a meeting was held with the District Leadership Team (DLT) on the final version.
- A “zoom” meeting was held with the DEA leadership to highlight the plan.
- The Plan was sent to Staff this past weekend and they will hold “zoom” meetings this week.
- The Plan is not meant to replicate school; this was made clear by DESE.
- The Plan is meant to deepen students’ learning.
- The Plan is meant to have teachers create enrichment activities for their students to refine and deepen their learning.

Dr. Gifford provided a sampling of the Plan’s contents:

- The Plan asks teachers to take this opportunity to collaborate: video conferencing.
- The Plan asks teachers to provide feedback to their students: video conferencing.
- The Plan asks teachers to read disclaimers to parents.
- The Plan asks teachers to check emails twice per day.
- The Plan asks teachers to respond to parents’ emails within 24 hours: we are asking teachers to work Monday through Friday not on the weekends.
- The Plan asks teachers to hold 2 meetings per week with their students.
- The Plan asks teachers to create 3 enrichment lessons per week and to post them at various

- times: these activities are created in collaboration with colleagues, specialists and coaches.
- The Plan advises Special Education Teachers to review IEPs and to prioritize what students' needs and how best to serve students to diminish any regression they may experience.
 - The Plan asks Special Needs Teachers their students' parents to ask them for feedback.
 - The Plan provides a template for Special Education teachers to create enrichment plans (Another Remote Learning Plan) for each student with an IEP: these plans are created in collaboration with related service providers (occupational, physical and speech therapists.)
 - The Plan encourages the use of the google classroom platform.

Dr. Jenkins addressed Ms. Vieira's Public Comment inquiry as to whether or not the Committee had provided any input regarding the Remote Learning Plan; Dr. Jenkins commended the Administration on its Remote Learning Plan.

Dr. Karafotis asked what extra support is being offered to students who are in need.

Dr. Gifford stated that district specialists are holding their own google classrooms for students who need extra help and added that building principals are reaching out to families that they have not yet heard from as well as keeping the FLIP program running at the high school.

Mr. Oliver commended Dr. Gifford, her team and those who collaborated to create the Plan.

Dr. Gifford stated that the "Grab and Go" program is going well.

Mr. Kiely updated the Committee: the District received word on Sunday that it is eligible for a waiver as part of a statewide waiver from the USDA for communities that have less than 50% free or reduced school lunch making the District eligible for some reimbursement which will be helpful as we are now serving 2500 meals per week.

Mrs. Amaral made comments to address parents with students receiving Special Education.

Report of the Chair: The Chair did not provide further comment.

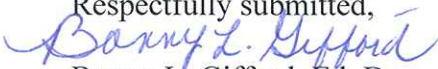
Other Matter that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place on Monday, April 27, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Karafotis to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:05 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