

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

August 3, 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 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.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Oliver clarified that only emails noted as public comment and received on the day of a school committee meeting and which address matters on said meeting agenda will be accepted for the meeting record.

Public Comment from Kathleen Baldwin was read.

Public Comment from Joann Avila was read.

Public Comment from Maria Sousa was read.

Public Comment from Jose Fernandes was read.

Public Comment from David Ehrens was read.

Public Comment from Renee Vieira was read.

Public Comment from Brooke Werley was read.

Public Comment from Eileen Pereira was read.

Public Comment from Jessica Couto was read.

Public Comment from Heather Noyes was read.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve the Regular Session Minutes of July 20, 2020, as written. On a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0: Mr. Oliver – Yea; Dr. Jenkins – Yea; Mrs. Waite – Yea; Mr. Nunes – Yea and Mrs. Amaral – Yea.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update on Return to School Plans: Dr. Gifford summarized the three Return to School plans the District has been working on and shared her PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the processes and timelines of the formation of these plans.

Dr. Gifford noted the collaborative effort of administrators and teachers who are working ceaselessly to produce the best plans for our students and staff.

Dr. Gifford reported that the District submitted the required preliminary plans to the Department of Secondary and Elementary (DESE) on July 31st: 100% in person aligned with safety precautions, hybrid model aligned with safety precautions; full remote model.

Dr. Gifford stated that districts must submit its “selected” return to school plan to DESE on August 10th.

Dr. Gifford described what the District has been doing to determine the feasibility of a full return and hybrid model: a full return does not seem possible given the guidelines and restrictions and currently, the District is looking at the hybrid model.

Dr. Gifford noted that having reviewed the recently issued transportation guidelines “we” are confident we would be able to transport students in a hybrid model.

Dr. Gifford provided a list of items of personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been purchased.

Dr. Gifford reported after conducting a feasibility study of the Full Return Model using DESE guidelines we have determined that that plan is not possible.

Dr. Gifford described the proposed Hybrid Model which would be 2 student Cohorts (A and B) attending school on alternating days.

Dr. Gifford added that under the hybrid or full remote model attendance will be taken and students will be graded on their work.

Dr. Gifford noted that DESE is to release information about a learning management system; once that information is received this option will be provided to students who choose not to return to school should a hybrid model be chosen.

Dr. Gifford provided information about the Remote Learning Model and that students would be following schedules with “real time” face to face lessons with their teachers and not “taped” lessons.

Dr. Gifford stated teachers would report to and be teaching from their classrooms.

Dr. Gifford noted no decision has been made regarding athletic activities.

Dr. Gifford stated to the “maximum extent feasible” students with complex and significant needs as well as pre-school students will receive in person instruction.

Dr. Gifford provided an update on additional technology infrastructure and equipment noting there are enough Chrome Books for everyone.

Dr. Gifford stated negotiations with the Union are scheduled for Wednesday to discuss plan options.

Dr. Gifford clarified that the 10 days DESE shortened the 2020-2021 school year by are not “bankable”; the 10 days are meant for staff training; including logistics, health and safety measures, and ensuring that staff know how the remote and hybrid plans will work within their building and classroom.

Dr. Gifford reported the District must submit the District’s Return to School Plan to DESE by August 10th; Dr. Gifford added that DESE will allow a short extension which she will seek since the Committee is scheduled to meet on the 10th at which time it will vote on what plan the District will implement.

Mrs. Waite asked if high school clubs will be running; will they be run virtually, will staff receive stipends.

Dr. Gifford responded that no final decision has been made regarding high school clubs but if they do run stipends will remain the same.

Dr. Jenkins asked if the Town has indicated what it will do with the \$3 million; is there a known timeline.

Mr. Kiely responded that the \$3 million is an entitlement allocated and available to the Town; there is some question about whether there is going to be a change as to what the money can be used for.

Mr. Nunes asked if the District will be providing the curriculum to the learning management platform so that students who choose not to return to school receive “our” curriculum through the platform.

Dr. Gifford stated she is waiting for the vendor details from DESE; it would be a separate learning platform that students would enroll in and the cost per student that the District will be responsible for is unknown at this time.

Mr. Nunes asked if students would receive a full year’s worth of curriculum if they are in school on alternating days.

Dr. Gifford responded that that is a concern but Mrs. Oliveira and a team of teachers are focusing on the essential standards.

Mr. Nunes asked if the District is renting storage containers to store excess furniture and equipment.

Mr. Kiely confirmed that storage containers have been rented primarily to store furniture and are located at all schools.

Mr. Nunes asked about available seating on the buses.

Mr. Kiely stated that the parent data the District is gathering will help with bus logistics.

Mrs. Amaral asked about what the District is doing to keep the air in the schools clean.

Mr. Kiely responded the maintenance personnel are working to keep the ventilation equipment operating properly and changing filters more often; ventilation equipment will remain operational overnight.

Mrs. Amaral asked what the plans are for staff working at multiple schools.

Dr. Gifford stated Ms. Townson and Ms. Jodoin are working on plans for staff within their department who work in multiple locations but all staff will have to adhere to general health and safety protocols that will be implemented in all district buildings.

Mrs. Amaral asked if the plans address students prioritized as high needs and who benefit from inclusion.

Dr. Gifford stated we are working very hard to accommodate students prioritized as high needs.

Mrs. Amaral asked if the District has secured enough PPE.

Mr. Kiely responded that many types of PPE have been purchased adding that he has not found it difficult to acquire any of these products.

Mrs. Amaral asked if parents who choose not to send children to the District will they be able to change and return to school in a hybrid or full return model.

Dr. Gifford confirmed that parents would be able to opt to return to the District but we do not want to encourage too much “flipping” and ask that parents, once they receive more information about the return to school plan, make the best decision for their family.

Mr. Oliver commented that under the guidelines the District cannot choose a full return plan; it is not feasible.

Mr. Oliver asked to tour the schools and classrooms to see what they look like with the guidelines having been implemented before voting on a plan.

Dr. Jenkins asked if a meeting should be posted and should we invite other Town departments.

Mr. Oliver asked to post a meeting for Thursday or Friday.

Dr. Gifford stated she will confer with Mr. Kiely about setting up a tour of the schools.

Mr. Oliver asked if Thursday at 1:00 p.m. was available to everyone.

Mr. Nunes asked if we should visit the high school, middle school and one elementary.

Mr. Oliver agreed but asked that the administrators from the two elementary schools not visited be present.

Mrs. Amaral asked that Quinn School be on the list.

Dr. Jenkins asked if guidance counselors are coming back earlier as per usual and will students be able to change their schedule.

Dr. Gifford responded that we are in the process of looking at class enrollment.

Mr. Oliver asked what would happen if the plan is hybrid and someone tests positive for COVID.

Dr. Gifford stated the District would contact the Town Board of Health for a collaborative response.

NEW BUSINESS

Formation of Equality and Diversity Committee: Mr. Oliver began a discussion on the formation of the Equality and Diversity Committee stating the purpose of the Committee and recommending the number of members to serve as well as come from a cross section of stakeholders.

Mrs. Amaral asked that a voice representing students with disabilities be included on the Committee.

Dr. Jenkins commented we should decide the composition of the committee and provide some items for it to address generally.

Dr. Jenkins recommended no more than two school committee members to serve; 2-3 administration and/or staff, 2-3 community members and 2-3 student members; maybe encourage the high school to form a sub-committee of high school students to report to the committee.

Mr. Nunes commented that the number of committee members needs to be kept to a manageable level; Mr. Nunes added members must be Dartmouth residents with an exception for school district personnel.

Mr. Oliver confirmed the composition of the committee: 2 school committee members, 2 Dartmouth Public Schools faculty/staff, 2 Dartmouth High School students, 2 Dartmouth community members and 2 Dartmouth Public Schools Administrators with a school committee member or administrator to take on the chairperson role.

Dr. Jenkins reiterated her request to have a sub-committee of high school and possibly middle school students who report to the committee.

Mr. Oliver confirmed there would be 10 members and anyone interested in serving on this committee should email their interest to Kate Genthner.

Mrs. Waite asked if this covers the MASC resolution on Anti-Racism.

Mr. Oliver stated that it was agreed at a recent meeting the MASC resolution would be sent to the Policy Sub-Committee.

Mr. Nunes asked to have it confirmed that the MASC resolution is going to the policy sub-committee and not to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Mr. Oliver confirmed that is correct.

Mr. Oliver added that the Equality and Diversity Committee will “get off the ground” once school starts.

Mr. Oliver confirmed that the committee is being established to address a host of topics including matters of race, gender issues, disabilities as well as the Dartmouth “Indian.”

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded Dr. Jenkins to establish the Equality and Diversity Committee that will be tasked to look at issues within the Dartmouth Public Schools to include the Dartmouth “Indian”; the Committee will consist of 10 members: 2 school committee members, 2 Dartmouth Public School faculty or staff, 2 Dartmouth high school students, 2 Dartmouth community members and 2 Dartmouth Public School Administrators. On a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0: Mr. Oliver – Yea; Dr. Jenkins – Yea; Mrs. Amaral – Yea; Mrs. Waite – Yea and Mr. Nunes – Yea.

Report on Parent Survey Specific to Special Education: Mrs. Elizabeth Townson, the District’s Pupil Support Services Administrator, shared her PowerPoint presentation as it pertains to the Special Education Parent Survey on a Return to School Plan with the Committee and which was provided to members in their meeting packets.

Mrs. Townson highlighted points of the district wide parent survey noting 221 surveys were returned.

Mrs. Townson reported the results of parents’ willingness to access return to school models.

Mrs. Townson addressed the common themes in parent feedback on barriers accessing providers.

Mrs. Townson noted that DESE is focusing on a more “robust” services model for the Special Education delivery model in its guidelines for the fall.

Mrs. Townson stated there will be more structure as it relates to special education services than was provided last spring.

Mrs. Amaral asked Mrs. Townson if she was able to meet with staff to talk about their challenges and successes.

Mrs. Townson responded she met with one of the department's task forces and there are many challenges.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford had nothing further to report.

Report of the Chair: Mr. Oliver scheduled a regular and executive session of the Committee for Monday, August 10 at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes reported receiving information from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) regarding new or updated policies: is this something for the policy subcommittee to take up.

Dr. Gifford stated she would have Michelle Roy look at them to see if it is something the subcommittee needs to address.

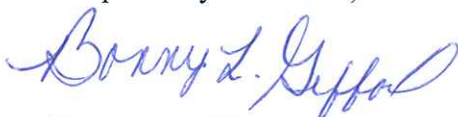
Other Matters that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place on Monday, August 10, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom technology.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:19 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