

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

October 5, 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 in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center; the public was not allowed to physically access the meeting. 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Oliver stated public comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org.

Mrs. Genthner reported no public comment emails were received concerning tonight's agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Regular Session Minutes of September 14, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 14, 2020 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until such time as the matter or matters for which the session was held have been completed. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of the Joint Meeting with the Select Board of September 21, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 21, 2020 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until such time as the matter or matters for which the session was held have been completed. The motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION

Dartmouth High School AP Report: Dr. Gifford reminded the Committee that the District had partnered with Mass Insight last year to assist in improving the high school's AP program noting that there are positive results to report.

Dr. Gifford introduced Ross Thibault, Principal of Dartmouth High School (DHS), to present a report on the DHS Advanced Placement (AP) results for 2019-2020.

Mr. Thibault joined the meeting via Zoom technology and shared his PowerPoint Presentation; Mr. Thibault started by thanking the District for its support as well as AP Coordinator Rachel Chavier for her hard work and the work of instructors and students.

Mr. Thibault provided an overview of the DHS AP program which included the following: enrollment statistics; participation trends; exam statistics; DHS AP performance trends.

Mr. Thibault pointed out the program's focus on encouraging students who would not necessarily enroll in AP courses.

Noting the Committee's request made last year for a report on the high school's partnership with Mass Insight, Mr. Thibault highlighted the benefits noting Summer Institute and workshops provided to instructors and Saturday study sessions as well as mock exams provided to participating students adding these benefits are included in the cost of the partnership.

Mr. Thibault provided statistics that highlighted improvements in the AP program which can be related to the partnership with Mass Insight; adding that a portion of the fee for the partnership with Mass Insight is returned which funds are used to purchase supplies that support the AP program.

Mr. Nunes asked if students receive college credit for AP courses.

Mr. Thibault stated it varies from college to college.

Dr. Jenkins asked that in any future reporting if the number of students participating in AP classes be included in order to see the "democratization" of the program; Dr. Jenkins asked if more AP courses could be opened to freshmen.

Mr. Thibault responded that this is an ongoing conversation with lead teachers.

Mrs. Waite asked how "you" are minimizing the prerequisites for some AP classes.

Mr. Thibault explained the prerequisites that he is looking to eliminate.

RESOLUTION

Resolution 20-01 – Request for Unpaid Leave: Dr. Gifford explained the original request received by the Teacher Assistant was unable to be approved by the District as it is not provided for in the contract; Dr. Gifford stated counsel asked if the Committee is inclined to approve the

leave it would be through the end of this school year adding the District has no issue with the request

Mr. Oliver invited discussion on the request for unpaid leave sent to the Committee by a Teacher Assistant.

Mr. Nunes commented that Miss Miller states in her request that if the District is mandated to return to a fully remote model or shifts to a fully in person model that she be given the opportunity to discuss revoking her leave request; is that “something that is out there for her”?

Dr. Gifford responded in the affirmative.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve Resolution 21-01 granting a temporary unpaid leave of absence to Miss Miller for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year as requested and in accordance with the DEA Assistants contract. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent’s Update on the Start of School: Dr. Gifford provided an update on the start of hybrid phase of the return to school plan.

Dr. Gifford reported that all departments were prepared for the start of the hybrid phase: administration, instruction, transportation and food service, which was evident in the smooth start last Thursday.

Dr. Gifford explained the process when individuals become sick; noting the District is in frequent contact with the Town’s Board of health.

Dr. Gifford stated information will not be given out about specific individuals; the District will provide general information as well as assist in any contact tracing.

Dr. Gifford discussed student absences commenting that it is a difficult issue to address generally and we are looking at it on a “case by case” basis.

Dr. Gifford asked Jonathan Gallishaw, Chief Technology Officer, TECCA Coordinator, to speak to the issues the District has been experiencing with the virtual learning platform offered to Dartmouth middle school students.

Mr. Gallishaw provided a brief history of how the District came to signing on with TECCA.

Mr. Gallishaw explained what is being done by the District specifically the technology department and reported that 54 middle school students are learning through TECCA.

Mr. Gallishaw added that he and the middle school guidance department are now able to monitor students’ progression.

Mr. Gallishaw stated that technical issues are still being worked through.

Mr. Gallishaw stated he has received feedback from parents about the structure of TECCA's program specifically the number of times per week students are live taught.

Mr. Gallishaw stated some parents have opted to leave the remote version and will move their children to the hybrid model when available.

Mr. Oliver iterated that Dartmouth is allowing students to leave the remote model and to move to the hybrid model.

Mr. Gallishaw stated the move will be allowed at the most logical time in the student's learning.

Mr. Oliver commented that TECCA offers only two 30 minute live lessons per week and one is recorded which he stated is not acceptable and directed his ire at the Department of Education.

Mr. Oliver asked Mr. Kiely about ventilation in the classrooms.

Mr. Kiely stated it has been challenging to acquire air purifiers that will work effectively in classrooms noting smaller units are more readily available.

Mr. Kiely reported orders placed in early July will not be delivered before March 2021 which we may end up cancelling

Mr. Kiely reported 60 air purifiers have been installed; installation is being done on a priority basis: nurses, isolation spaces, staff with doctors' notes and windowless spaces.

Mr. Kiely stated efforts continue to be made to obtain air purifiers.

Mr. Kiely stated we are taking measures while the weather still allows for it (i.e. taking more outside air.)

Mr. Kiely continued explaining what is being done regarding disinfectants (hand sanitizers, wipes, electro-static sprayers, etc.)

Mr. Kiely added he has been working with the custodial union to discuss additional hours for extended cleaning as well as changing shifts to have more custodians in the buildings during the day for continuous cleaning.

Mrs. Waite asked why students cannot "zoom" into their classroom when they are at home.

Dr. Gifford responded technology was going to be an issue and it was a decision that the District came to.

Mrs. Amaral asked if parents would be able to change from hybrid to full virtual.

Dr. Gifford stated, at this time, parents who have requested to change their initial decision have not been told no.

Mrs. Amaral asked knowing that TECCA does not provide modifications -individual or comprehensive- for special needs students how is the District handling the need.

Dr. Gifford responded a special education teacher at the middle school has been assigned to grade 6 students in the virtual school and that other special education teachers are working with students in the other grades.

NEW BUSINESS

Request to Vote to Approve Utilization of School Choice Funds: Dr. Gifford provided the current school choice enrollment statistics: Total Enrollment: 109; Grade 9 - 32; Grade 10 - 30; Grade 11 - 23; Grade 12 - 24.

Mr. Kiely requested the Committee's approval and vote to utilize school choice funds to pay for the renewal of the District's Chrome Book lease with Hewlett Packard Co. in the amount of \$79,729.32 noting, with the Committee's approval this evening, this will be the third year the District will have used school choice funds to pay for this lease.

Mr. Kiely reported the balance of school choice funds is \$550,300.87.

Mr. Kiely stated this is the final year of the lease and the District will own the Chrome Books after this year.

Mr. Kiely directed the Committee to the memorandum which was provided to them in the meeting packet.

Dr. Jenkins asked that a conversation be had, at some point, about what the plan is to expend school choice funds.

Mr. Oliver asked that the matter be put on a future agenda.

Mr. Kiely listed some of the items that school choice funds have funded and which the District hopes to use in the future noting that the FY22 budget cycle will be challenging.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to authorize the expenditure of school choice funds in the amount of \$79,729.32 per Mr. Kiely's memorandum. The motion carried unanimously.

Proposed School Committee Meeting Dates Through December 2020: Dr. Gifford referenced proposed meeting dates provided to the Committee in the meeting packet for approval: October 19, 2020; November 9th and 23, 2020; December 7th and 21, 2020.

The Committee agreed to all the proposed dates.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford provided the following:

- DMS Honor Society Induction was held last week; 37 students were inducted.
- DHS Honor Society Virtual Induction is scheduled for October 15th at 7:00 p.m.
- Jeanne Sheridan, DPS Director of Nutrition, announced the District Food Service Program was awarded a grant in the amount of \$65,307 from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and she plans to purchase equipment for Quinn and DHS and increase refrigeration at DeMello.
- Athletics Update: field hockey, volleyball and soccer have advanced to game competition and

the golf team has played 3 matches; football starts tomorrow and unified basketball is in planning stages for the “wedge” season.

-Music Update: remote learning instrumental and vocal classes are going well; marching band has been divided into 3 smaller ensemble for the fall season to meet state guidelines; color guard did its first video performance and DPS music has been invited to participate in a live streaming event in October.

Mr. Oliver asked if fans are being allowed in athletic games.

Dr. Gifford said no and she asked for the Committee’s support.

Report of the Chair: The Chair had nothing further to add.

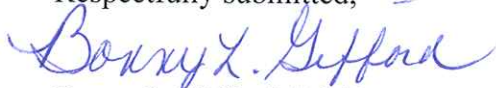
Other Matters that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center on Monday, October 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.; the public will not be granted physical access to this meeting but will have continued access to meetings via live stream at the DHS Media YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/dhstvmedia>.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to close the Regular Session at 8:41 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent