

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

December 7, 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, Mr. Nunes and Mrs. Waite.

Also present: Dr. Gifford, Ms. Roy, and Mrs. Genthner. Mr. Kiely was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mrs. Genthner reported one public comment was received; the comment was read.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 23, 2020. The motion carried: 5-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 23, 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: 4-0. Dr. Jenkins abstained.

PRESENTATION

School Improvement Plans for 2020-2021 (DHS)

Dr. Gifford invited Mr. Thibault to present the high school's School Improvement Plan (SIP.)

Mr. Thibault began his presentation recognizing the work of faculty, staff and school counsel who worked to put together the SIP.

Mr. Thibault provided a brief summary of the 2019-2020 school year adding that much of what was written in that year's SIP was able to be accomplished: including, the establishment of the second cohort of educators for the blended/personalized and project based learning team which was done in concert with the Highlander Institute embracing these methods as core instructional strategies.

Mr. Thibault presented the 2020-2021 SIP – a copy of which was provided to Committee members in their meeting packets – iterating Dr. Gifford's comment that no new initiatives are being introduced; the focus this year is to continue the work that is already in process.

Teaching and Learning

- Establish a formal, standing STEM team at Dartmouth High School responsible for reviewing and revising existing STEM related pathways as well as for growing enrollment in STEM related courses
- Continue to expand AP enrollment and access including implementation of the AP Research course to provide students access to rigorous, real-world learning experiences and the opportunity to earn an AP Capstone Diploma

Access and Equity

- Review Student Support Team protocols implemented during the 2019-2020 school year to ensure interventions are data-driven and effective in meeting the needs of our students

Community Engagement

- Conduct survey of parents and community members to determine most effective methods of communication and engagement

Mrs. Waite asked how the school communicates with students experiencing hardships during this time.

Mr. Thibault responded there are a number of ways including through the advisory program now in its second year which is done in person and meets every 3 weeks.

Mrs. Waite asked what the sense is regarding how students "feel" being in school.

Mr. Thibault responded that the feeling is mixed.

Dr. Jenkins provided data and commented on research as it pertains to the effect the pandemic is having on the mental health of students as well the effects of students' education.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral, to approve the Dartmouth High School *School Improvement Plan* for school year 2020-2021, as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Equality and Diversity Committee Update:

Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Waite proposed the following as the charge for the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) which was based on their research of other school district diversity committee charges.

1. Examine the cultural aspects of our community including language, cultures, student performance and program participation, and discipline data to inform our policy/or procedural recommendations.
2. Solicit input from diverse members of the Dartmouth School Community around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including but not limited to current policies, procedures, curriculum, facilities, communications, and messaging from the Dartmouth Public Schools.
3. Review and recommend equity, diversity, and inclusion-related policies for the District.
4. Review district and school plans through an equity and inclusion lens and research best practices and innovative methods for cultivating a safe, equitable and inclusive environment with an intent to recommend best practices to the School Committee.
5. Make recommendations to the School Committee on equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the district with regard to allocation of resources, ongoing activities and strategic investments to shape future direction.
6. Recommend practices and policies to provide ongoing professional development for staff and training for students and families in issues of diversity and equity.
7. Educate and inform the community on equity, diversity, and inclusion issues.
8. Establish appropriate timelines to complete tasks and make recommendations to the School Committee.

Dr. Jenkins added that this would be a committee that would look continually at best practices and make recommendations to the Committee and Administration.

Mrs. Waite asked if the School Committee would want to impose a time commitment on individuals appointed to the EDC: Mrs. Waite suggested a 2 year commitment.

Mrs. Waite asked if the School Committee would determine how often the EDC would report to the School Committee or if that would be left to the EDC.

Mrs. Waite asked if the School Committee would set the mission statement or would that be left to the EDC.

Mr. Oliver agreed with a time commitment and asked the Committee Members if it wants to set a date for the establishment of the EDC.

Mr. Nunes suggested that we look at the Committee's next meeting (December 21st) to establish the EDC.

Mr. Oliver noted the two administrator appointments were voted on at the last meeting.

Dr. Jenkins noted her agreement in waiting until the next meeting to make appointments; Dr. Jenkins stated she would like to see the charge and term approved this evening.

Dr. Jenkins added she agreed to a two year commitment but recommended initially, making the appointment for one year with a one year renewal whereby naturally creating staggered terms which would establish continuity and "institutional knowledge."

Mrs. Amaral stated she would like to see representation from English Language Learner and Special Education populations.

Mr. Oliver asked if the Committee would like to make a separate motion on the “makeup” of the EDC.

Dr. Jenkins asked that it be a separate motion.

Mr. Nunes asked for confirmation that the Committee already approved the “makeup” of the EDC.

Dr. Jenkins confirmed from the minutes of the July 20, 2020 school committee meeting that a vote was taken to establish the EDC which would consist of 10 members: 2 School Committee members; 2 DPS faculty or staff; 2 DHS students; 2 Dartmouth Community members and 2 DPS Administrators.

Dr. Jenkins proposed that the School Committee not change the composition of the Committee but give the EDC an opportunity to have meetings and report back, if necessary, that representation is missing.

Mr. Oliver commented he would like to see one or two faculty members appointed.

Dr. Jenkins stated that at the next School Committee meeting the 2 faculty/staff and 2 Community members would be appointed.

Mrs. Waite recommended that Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Amaral be appointed to the EDC.

Mrs. Amaral stated her willingness to serve on the EDC.

Dr. Jenkins stated her willingness to serve on the EDC.

Mrs. Waite asked if there would be a Chair.

Mr. Nunes stated there would need to be a Chair, Vice-chair and a scribe.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the charge of the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) as presented with further amendments as necessary and establish one year terms with the potential for one year renewal for the initial members of the EDC. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to appoint Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Amaral as the School Committee representatives to the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC). The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed School Committee Dates (January 2021-April 2021): Dr. Gifford offered the following school committee meeting dates for the Committee’s consideration: January 11th and January 25th; February 8th and February 22nd; March 8th and March 22nd; April 5th and April 26th.

The Committee agreed upon the dates noting flexibility may be necessary.

Discussion of Approaching Position Vacancy – Assistant Superintendent: Mr. Oliver recognized the service of Michelle Roy, Assistant Superintendent, who will retire on December 11th.

Dr. Gifford referred the Committee to information forwarded to them in preparation for the matter specifically to School Committee Policy CCB- Line and Staff Relations which illustrates - through a flow chart - the working relationships in the school district: Dr. Gifford noted the policy's flow chart is outdated and provided a more current example in order to reflect what currently exists in the District.

Dr. Gifford recommended elevating Tracy Oliveira, the District's current Director of Teaching and Learning, to the position of Assistant Superintendent and to eliminate the position of Director of Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Gifford explained how the District would delegate some of the duties as they currently exist for the Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Gifford explained stipend positions are proposed to administer the CIA and L3 teams as well as Project Time which are currently administered by the Director of Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Gifford stated the District would save the District approximately \$136,000 by not filling the position of Director of Teaching and Learning.

Ms. Roy commented on the financial aspect of the proposal as well as noting the discreet skill set necessary to perform duties of the Assistant Superintendent which were illustrated in a chart provided to Committee members.

Dr. Gifford reminded the Committee that 1-1/2 administrative assistant positions were absorbed in the Central Office this year.

Mr. Oliver provided comments supporting the work of Mrs. Oliveira however stated he could not support the Superintendent's proposal at this time due to budget uncertainties and recommended that the matter be tabled indefinitely.

Mrs. Amaral agreed with Mr. Oliver and stated she would like to revisit the matter at a later time.

Dr. Jenkins stated her agreement with the recommendation to wait on the matter.

Mrs. Waite expressed her agreement with waiting on the matter.

Mr. Nunes was not in agreement with waiting and expressed his support for the Superintendent's proposal at this time.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to table the matter to a later date. Dr. Jenkins – Yea; Mrs. Amaral – Yea; Mrs. Waite – Yea; Mr. Oliver - Yea and Mr. Nunes - Nay. The motion passed: 4-1.

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

- Dr. Gifford mentioned the social-emotional professional development ongoing in the District.
- Mediation was held last week; there is nothing to report except a further mediation will be scheduled and for this reason tonight's scheduled Executive Session is cancelled.

- Andrew Crisafulli was named District D Athletic Director of the Year which encompasses over 40 school districts.
- Ice Hockey and Basketball will be run this winter and Dr. Gifford stated she is not recommending fan access which is supported by the Town's Health Director.
- Parent Conferences will be held on December 9th.
- Meetings continue every Monday with the Town Board of Health; there continues to be no evidence of transmission within the schools.

Report of the Chair: Mr. Oliver asked Committee members to consider for discussion with the Superintendent a slow roll back in to the hybrid model when students and staff return from the holiday break in January.

Committee members held a brief discussion on the matter with the majority agreeing to keep informed of current trends making sure parents are notified in advance that a change will be implemented; Dr. Jenkins commented that perhaps this discussion should not be "one size fits all" and to consider having different models for different learning levels.

Committee members agreed that staffing more so than in school transmission is likely going to be the greater issue.

Mr. Oliver commented that the Committee would support the Superintendent's decision.

Mr. Oliver noted the *Standard Times* reported the New Bedford Public Schools one of a 121 school districts that had qualified for rapid testing from the Department of Elementary Secondary Education adding districts had to apply to be considered.

Dr. Gifford responded the district did apply but was not chosen.

Mr. Nunes stated the Dartmouth High School Theater Company will present a radio show of *It's A Wonderful Life* this weekend; tickets are available on line.

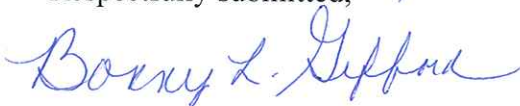
Other Matters that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.

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, December 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.; the public will not be granted physical access to this meeting but will continue to have access to meetings via live stream at the DHS Media YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/dhstvmedia>.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn from Open Session at 8:21 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent