

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

**November 23, 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](mailto:kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org) to be read during Public Comment.

Present were the following members: Mr. Oliver, Mrs. Amaral, Mrs. Waite and Mr. Nunes. Dr. Jenkins was present via a remote link.

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](mailto:kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org).

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 9, 2020. The motion carried: 4-0. Dr. Jenkins abstained.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 9, 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 (Quinn, Potter, DeMello and Cushman Schools)**

Dr. Gifford thanked Mrs. Oliveira and the elementary level administrators for their collaboration and hard work particularly in light of the difficulties presented this year.

Dr. Gifford invited Tracy Oliveira, Director of Teaching and Learning; to begin tonight's presentation noting all SIPs are aligned with the district improvement plan (DIP).

Mrs. Oliveira began by highlighting the work that has been done on the DPS District Strategic Plan – as noted in the Plan PowerPoint presentation shared with the Committee - which included the following and noted that this is the first year presenting the unified school improvement plan which is the result of work done over the past few years.

#### Teaching and Learning

Develop and sustain a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum.

- To build internal capacity to design calendar maps and units of study that address academic gaps, redundancies, and misalignments for purposes of improving the overall coherence of the district's curriculum and, by extension, its effectiveness.
- To create system of assessment of students to evaluate student growth, provide targeted interventions and allow teachers to adjust instruction to improve student achievement.
- To enhance and expand the K-12 STEM programs, and enrichment activities, and develop related curricula.
- To enhance the K-12 mathematics programs to ensure vertical alignment, focusing on mathematical practices to provide pathways to calculus.
- Using personalized and blended learning, we will create a rigorous, relevant and risk rewarding culture that fosters ingenuity and curiosity, inspires collaboration and exploration beyond borders and consequently develops employable, responsible citizens who live interesting lives (new Yr 2).

#### Access and Equity

Strengthen practices and procedures that promote equal access to ensure social and emotional learning and college and career readiness for all with an emphasis on engagement, high expectations, and shared responsibility.

- Build upon and enrich a technological structure which supports all teachers and students, capitalizing upon their enthusiasm, and allowing for equal access to individual instruction.
- Expand and enrich current systems and practices to support the academic and social and emotional well-being of all learners.

#### Community Engagement

Expand partnerships with families and community members to enhance social and emotional learning and academic growth for all learners.

- Increase communication with students, parents, teachers and the general Dartmouth Community by maximizing the use of technology and the media.
- Support and expand outreach and engagement with parents, family and community.

Mrs. Oliveira reported that a Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Team (C.I.A.) and a Leveled Literacy Leaders Team (L3) were formed with representation from each grade of every elementary school who met monthly to coordinate curriculum efforts across the district

Mrs. Oliveira continued focusing on the *Teaching and Learning* portion of the elementary level SIP presentation.

#### Teaching and Learning

Develop and sustain a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system to support growth of all learners.

- Implement ST Math in Grades 3-5
- Identify end of the year level computational fluency standards
- Complete implementation of balanced literacy K-5  
-Virtual Videos (reading, writing, phonics)

- Vocabulary Instruction
- Phonics Grade 2
- Monitor and update scope and sequence and unit plans to support hybrid learning

Kyle Grandfield, Principal of Quinn Elementary School, and Rick Porter, Principal of Potter Elementary School presented the *Access and Equity* portion of the elementary SIP presentation.

#### Access and Equity

Strengthen practices and procedures that promote equal access to ensure social and emotional learning and college and career readiness for all with an emphasis on engagement, high expectations, and shared responsibility.

- Support the use of technology for all staff and students to access the curriculum in both full remote and hybrid learning.

Mr. Grandfield reported that the elementary schools were coordinated in their efforts to utilize technology particularly in setting up classrooms for remote and hybrid learning.

- Design a broad spectrum of purposeful experiences to meet the needs of diverse populations in all curriculum and social-emotional areas.

Mr. Porter reported that it is a primary concern that all students have equal access to learning. Mr. Porter stated “we” need to remain mindful of the different “at home” learning experiences of all students.

Katie Pavao, Principal of DeMello Elementary School and Justine Dale, Early Childhood Director at the Cushman School, presented the *Community Engagement* portion of the elementary SIP presentation.

#### Community Engagement

Expand partnerships with families and community members to enhance social and emotional learning and academic growth for all learners.

- Capitalize on technology platforms to keep the community informed of school topics and happenings.

Dr. Dale reported on the similarities as well as the unique technology platforms that the elementary schools utilize.

- Network with community partners in creative ways in which learning experiences can be brought virtually to the students and staff.

Mrs. Pavao reported on the need to “think outside the box” during this time when considering our community partnerships: PTOs, Fire Department, Lloyd Center, and the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Nunes asked if there are students who do not have internet access.

Mrs. Oliveira responded that “hotspots” were able to be purchased through a grant to assist students who did not have internet access.

Mr. Porter provided an update on hybrid learning which included preventative measures and changes to the school day: an orientation was provided to students/families to show what a school would look like with physical distancing restrictions implemented; lunch is taken in classrooms; structured recess; flexibility of staff to cover for colleagues; bathroom protocols; custodial hours have been increased for more cleaning and sanitizing; signage to assist students.

Mrs. Waite asked if some group work is still being done.

Mr. Porter responded that there are some limited group activities or meetings that follow physical distancing.

Mr. Oliver asked how students are doing.

Mrs. Pavao responded that her own children love going to school; it brings a sense of normalcy to their lives adding the day at home is not necessarily creating stress for students because they know they will see their teachers the next day.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite, to approve the School Improvement Plans for Quinn, Potter, DeMello and Cushman Schools, as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Equality and Diversity Committee Update:**

Mr. Oliver started the discussion noting that this is not just about the Dartmouth “Indian” it is about diversity and equality throughout the Dartmouth Public Schools.

Mr. Oliver stated, after a recent discussion with Dr. Gifford, that it is important the high school form its own committee.

Dr. Gifford stated Mr. Thibault has plans to create a committee which would be open to all students with staff members advising the group; the student committee would then nominate two student members to report to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Mrs. Waite agreed with a student committee.

Mr. Nunes agreed with a student committee.

Dr. Jenkins stated she is not opposed to the idea of a student committee but would like to see the administration proactively recruit students known through research not to respond to generic calls for participation.

Dr. Gifford stated she would speak with Mr. Thibault.

Mr. Nunes recommended that the Committee hold off on the matter until such time the Committee can focus on the matter giving it the “due diligence” it deserves.

Mrs. Amaral stated she supports setting up the Committee now.

Mrs. Waite stated she would like to articulate the goals of the Committee and at the next meeting discuss who will serve on the Committee.

Dr. Jenkins stated she is opposed to any delay on moving forward with forming the committee.

Dr. Jenkins added she agrees with Mrs. Waite about setting up the membership of the Committee.

Dr. Jenkins stated she supports Mr. Thibault and Mr. Hayes' for the two administrators to serve on the Committee.

Mr. Oliver stated he would like to move forward and asked the recording secretary to email the people who expressed an interest in serving in order to request additional information as to why they would like to serve on the committee.

Mrs. Amaral asked that interested parties be asked "what they could contribute" to the conversation on equality and diversity.

Mrs. Waite asked if we want to set the task or scope of the committee or will the committee set that up themselves.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes, that we solicit input from the faculty/staff and town members who indicated interest that they provide us with more information about why they want to serve, what they bring to the table and what their experience and training is around these areas and for town members what their connections to the schools are. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Jenkins, seconded by Mrs. Waite, moved to nominate Mr. Hayes and Mr. Thibault to be the two administrative representatives to serve on the Equality and Diversity Committee. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Mrs. Waite asked to settle the scope of the committee.

Mr. Oliver responded the discussion needs to start within the group and would ultimately like to have the committee, with the assistance of the Administration, present its findings to the School Committee.

Dr. Jenkins suggested that 2 School Committee members draft a "charge" for the committee that we can review collectively at our next meeting adding that specific issues do not need to be named in the charge.

Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Waite volunteered to draft the committee's charge.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**FY22 Budget Timeline:** Mr. Kiely provided a timeline that was included in the Committee's packet.

Mr. Kiely noted the timeline is consistent with what has been presented in the past.

Mr. Kiely stressed the need to plan but to be able to "shift gears" as necessary.

Mr. Kiely noted the State is behind - still working on this year's budget - and there are indications that Town tax revenues are not "great"; these are the District's two funding sources which could pose problems for FY22.

Mr. Kiely stated that the school improvement plans are the foundation of the budget; if “things get really bad” the administration will collaborate district-wide and adjust accordingly but we have a plan as to where we are going to start.

Dr. Jenkins asked if the State is taking into account the fluctuation in enrollment particularly in preschool, kindergarten and early grades and how this will effect district budgets when enrollments go back to normal.

Mr. Kiely responded that, from the perspective of the Department of Education finance people that I am involved with, they understand the changes districts are facing and that we should have an expectation of being held relatively harmless to the dramatic fluctuation based on COVID-19; whether they ultimately have the funds to implement holding districts harmless remains to be seen.

Mr. Oliver asked if it is known the amount of students who transferred to home schooling or to private school.

Mrs. Roy stated there are 30 fewer students in kindergarten and 70 additional home school students; private school information is not known at this time.

Mrs. Amaral asked about ESSER funding.

Mr. Kiely responded the CARES Act includes multiple grant sources that could go to school districts or municipalities: the bulk of the monies in Massachusetts were directed to municipalities.

Mr. Kiely stated the Town has been very supportive providing the district with funds for HVAC and technology needs.

Mr. Oliver asked for clarification on funds that are expiring at the end of 2020.

Mr. Kiely stated, from a school perspective, the Coronavirus Relief Act funds expire on 12/31/2020; the \$788,000 grant the district received will expire at that time but the monies will have been spent before the deadline on the virtual academy teachers, Edgenuity, TECCA, cleaning products and additional custodial staff hours; we will have the ESSER funds remaining which can support some additional costs for the rest of the year.

Mr. Oliver asked if we have funds to cover Edgenuity.

Mr. Kiely responded that we will have the funds by reverting to other sources.

**Personnel Update:** Ms. Roy directed the Committee members to the personnel spreadsheet which she emailed to them.

Ms. Roy explained the personnel issues and challenges and how the District is handling vacancies and absences.

Ms. Roy explained the teacher assistant position challenges and how the District is managing those challenges.

Mr. Oliver asked for clarification on the teacher assistant positions.

Ms. Roy provided clarification.

Ms. Roy explained that 6 positions were vacated and not filled noting 6 positions were added: 5 virtual academy teachers and a nurse.

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

- Weekly meetings with the Board of Health continue: the issue of quarantine varies for each case and the length of time could vary but we continue to collaborate with the Town's Board of Health
- MIAA issued new guidance last Friday; the start date has been extended to December 14<sup>th</sup> and they are looking at basketball and ice hockey
- The District is required to implement the guidance of 6 feet of physical distancing in school and with transportation and we will continue school under the current model.
- Middle School (DMS) teachers have created plans of action to enhance connection with students.
- December 1<sup>st</sup> DMS will start an active learning online support center which will be available to all students 2 days per week from 2:30 – 4:00 pm; a link will be provided to students.
- Parent conferences will be held December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Roy will be retiring in December; Dr. Gifford asked that a discussion of the plan for the position vacancy be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

**Report of the Chair:** The Chair commented that the fall sport season was successful with no major issues.

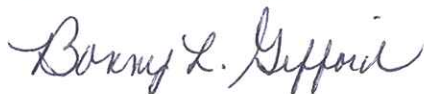
**Other Matters that May Not have been anticipated at the time of the Agenda posting.**

### **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 7, 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>.

Mrs. Waite moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:43 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