

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

August 10, 2021

The warrants for bills payable were reviewed and signed by the School Committee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Shannon Jenkins 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 is being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV. The Chair informed viewers that public comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org to be read during Public Comment.

On a roll call the following members were present: Dr. Jenkins, Mrs. Waite, Mrs. Amaral, and Mr. Oliver. Mr. Nunes was not in attendance.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Dr. Jenkins confirmed and acknowledged public comments were received and provided to the Committee for its consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of a District Mask Protocol: Dr. Jenkins stated that the school committee has a policy in place regarding face coverings that is in effect until repealed. Dr. Jenkins noted that under current CDC guidelines masks are required on buses.

Dr. Gifford noted the district has received guidelines from DESE, the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as the CDC, as they concern the wearing of masks and all guidelines are considered when making decisions this matter for the district.

Dr. Gifford stated, more importantly, information from the district's discussions with the local Board of Health with its local data and trends will help in the district's decisions concerning the wearing of masks in schools.

Dr. Gifford reported she and Mr. Kiely have met with Chris Michaud, Dartmouth's Director of Public Health, and plan to meet with him again as well as meeting with the district's nursing staff to plan for the coming school year.

Dr. Gifford noted she will attend a DESE webinar regarding the *Test and Stay Protocol*.

Dr. Gifford reported the district will not be offering a remote option to students this year; all students will be returning to school.

Dr. Gifford responded to a request made by Dr. Jenkins at the last meeting for a presentation on how the district will support student learning; Dr. Gifford continued noting in place of the usual School Improvement Plans presented each year, principals will be given 3 priority area themes on how to develop strategies in their schools to support accelerated learning and these will be presented to the committee at future meetings.

Dr. Gifford recommended that the entire district start the school year wearing masks adding the matter will be monitored with the hope of being able to remove the mask requirement soon.

Dr. Gifford noted the controversy surrounding this topic but the district feels this is the best decision at this time.

Dr. Gifford asked for a vote from the Committee on its recommendation either tonight or at the next meeting.

Dr. Jenkins responded that the mask mandate is in place until the Committee repeals that mandate explaining that a vote is not necessary at this meeting.

Mr. Oliver agreed with the District's recommendation and keeping the mask mandate at this time.

Mrs. Amaral agreed with keeping the mask mandate in place.

Mrs. Waite agreed with her colleagues and asked Dr. Gifford what Mr. Michaud had to say.

Dr. Gifford responded stating Mr. Michaud thought the District's decision to return to school wearing masks was a good recommendation.

Dr. Jenkins agreed with the recommendation but the decision should be revisited at the next meeting with the full Committee.

Dr. Jenkins asked that information about what will be done to keep students safe in school be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

The Committee agreed a vote is not necessary at this time since there is a face covering policy currently in place.

Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

Mrs. Amaral reported SEPAC will be hosting 2 webinar sessions: on August 25th will be an information session from 1:30 – 2:00 and 5:30 to 6:00 regarding opportunities for ESSER funds.

Mr. Oliver asked for more specific information about the newly created positions that are being funded through ESSER grants.

Dr. Jenkins reiterated her request for a report on where ESSER funds are being spent.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Media Center on Monday, August 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.; at this time the public will not be granted physical access to this meeting and will continue to have access to meetings via live stream at the DHS Media YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/dhstvmedia> and comments can be emailed to kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn from Open Session at 7:00 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0: Dr. Jenkins – Yea; Mrs. Waite – Yea; Mrs. Amaral – Yea, and Mr. Oliver – Yea.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent