

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

September 27, 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 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 Dartmouth Community 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, Mr. Nunes and Mr. Oliver.

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 the public comments that were received and provided to the Committee for its consideration.

No further comments were received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve the Regular Session Minutes of September 13, 2021 as presented. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Dr. Jenkins invited Student Representative Joshua Moniz, a senior at Dartmouth High School, to provide an update of recent activities and events happening at the high school.

-DHS students met with advisors during P.A.S.E. period on September 22nd and will continue through October 12th to set *S.M.A.R.T. Goals*.

-DHS Marching Band and Color Guard won its first competition held in Bellingham MA.

-DHS Marching Band and Color Guard will host its first home show of the season is Saturday, October 2nd at Dartmouth Memorial Stadium.

-DHS Football Team plays Apponequet on Friday, October 1st at Dartmouth Memorial Stadium.

- DHS Counseling Department met with all members of the senior class on September 23rd to discuss post-secondary plans.
- On October 5th, DHS will host a college fair during P.A.S.E. period for members of the senior class.
- On October 7th, a club and activity expo will be held during all lunches.
- Key Club will be hosting a fundraising drive: *Socktober*. New socks will be collected during the month of October and donated to a local shelter.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Gifford recommended the following activity request to the Committee for its approval.

- **Dartmouth School Music Association (DSMA) – Request to Participate in National Championship in East Rutherford NJ from November 6th through November 7, 2021**

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the DSMA activity request as presented. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Gifford provided comments regarding the District's decision to utilize parts of the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education's (DESE) acceleration roadmap explaining how the district schools will be teaching grade level standards while providing support to students. Dr. Gifford stated administrators were given priority areas to focus on when forming their improvement plans while embracing the district's philosophy of "moving forward" rather than "catching up."

- Foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families
- Continuously monitor students' understanding
- Ensure strong grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds when they are needed

2021-2022 DHS School Improvement Plan: Principal Ross Thibault with the support of Associate Principal, Rachel Chavier, presented the school improvement plan for Dartmouth High School using a PowerPoint presentation while providing comments how the plan addresses the three focus areas.

Mr. Nunes asked about chronic absenteeism and whether it is currently an issue.

Mr. Thibault explained how it remains a concern.

Mr. Nunes asked if many students utilize P.A.S.E. period.

Mr. Thibault explained the ways students use P.A.S.E. period.

Mrs. Amaral asked Mr. Thibault for some direction for parents who feel their child's issues are not being addressed.

Mr. Thibault responded personnel are ready to assist students (teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists); students/parents should reach out to them per their need.

Mrs. Waite asked if staff have noticed any learning disparities between students who attended virtual learning schools last year: TECCA or Edgenuity.

Mr. Thibault responded no one has brought concerns to his attention adding “we” are taking a look at 10th grade MCAS and we will look to see how well 10th grade VLA students performed.

Mrs. Waite commented that the S’Mores which the high school emails weekly to families are very informative and asked if the high school receives data as to how many parents engage either opening the email and/or links.

Mr. Thibault responded that analytics come with S’Mores so “we” can see how many parents view the email and/or links.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to accept the DHS 2021-2022 School Improvement Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

2021-2022 DMS School Improvement Plan: Dr. Gifford introduced the middle school administration in attendance and stated that the middle school will present their plan which will focus on the same priority areas as the high school.

Principal Darren Doane, Associate Principal Sarah Decas, and Assistant Principal Marc Hayes presented the school improvement plan for Dartmouth Middle School using a PowerPoint presentation providing comments highlighting how the plan addresses the three focus areas.

Mr. Doane noted Assistant Principal Peter Rossi was not able to participate in tonight’s presentation.

Mr. Nunes asked if the on-line learning center beginning in October will be in school or accessed while at home.

Mr. Doane stated students will be able to access the on-line learning center from home.

Ms. Decas clarified the difference between the on-line center and the Student Success Center.

Mrs. Waite asked if the gap between students learning disparities has grown.

Mr. Doane responded as to how the middle school assesses students’ learning needs.

The Committee thanked the middle school administration for its presentation and for its efforts to meet the needs of the students.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to accept the DMS 2021-2022 School Improvement Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

School Committee Policy – Second Reading and Vote: Dr. Gifford presented the following School Committee policies for a second reading and vote while providing further explanation of the recommendation for the proposed new SC Policy ACA as well as providing clarification of SC Policy ACAB.

-SC Policy ACA – Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex
-SC Policy ACAB – Sexual Harassment

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Amaral to approve School Committee Policy ACA – Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex and School Committee Policy ACAB – Sexual Harassment as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Gifford reported that language changes to SC Policy FF recommended by the Committee at the first reading were added to the policy noting the Committee should have received the revised policy in the meeting packet.

-SC Policy FF – Naming Facilities or Subsections of Facilities

Ms. Waite moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve School Committee Policy FF – Naming Facilities or Subsections of Facilities as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Mr. Kiely reported that recommendations for SC Policy KF the Committee had made at the first reading were incorporated into the policy.

-SC Policy KF-R – Regulations and Fee Schedule Concerning Use of Dartmouth School Facilities (Including Grounds) Pertaining to Dartmouth School Committee Policy

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve School Committee Policy KF-R – Regulations and Fee Schedule Concerning Use of Dartmouth School Facilities (Including Grounds) Pertaining to Dartmouth School Committee Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Update on District's Procedures and Practices as they pertain to and are affected by COVID-19: Dr. Jenkins explained why she asked that this topic be included on the agenda.

Dr. Gifford provided an explanation as to district decision making process as it is affected by the current health situation and as it concerns matters such as Open House events and field trips.

Dr. Gifford stated no “enclosed” field trips are being planned right now but outside are events are being planned such as the Halloween parade at the elementary schools as well as outside field trips.

Dr. Gifford explained that the district is doing everything it can to bring normalcy back to the schools but the priority is to keep students in school.

Dr. Jenkins commented about the importance of parents making connections with their children's teachers and appreciated the middle school's plans to hold a virtual open house.

Dr. Jenkins continued noting that not all students participate in athletics and band so it is important to continue to hold as many school events as possible to engage all students while remaining safe.

Mrs. Waite asked if there are plans for a *Homecoming* dance.

Dr. Gifford responded Principal Thibault has met with students to discuss the matter.

Dr. Gifford reassured the public that the school district is proceeding normally under the circumstances and that parents and students are notified by the schools once a decision has been made on matters.

Dr. Jenkins stated the times are not normal and parents need to know what plans are being made.

Dr. Gifford reiterated that schools are communicating with parents.

Dr. Jenkins asked if “we” can assume schools are considering holding some events outside that are normally held inside.

Dr. Gifford stated that is a safe assumption.

Mr. Oliver stated he would like to see virtual Open House events for the elementary level.

Dr. Gifford responded she thinks the schools were hoping to schedule in-person Open House events.

Mrs. Amaral encouraged parents to reach out to their children’s teachers if they have concerns.

Mr. Nunes commented the Committee’s job is to set policy and procedures and “we” charge the Superintendent and others to operate the district adding he is not clear why we are having this discussion.

Dr. Jenkins respectfully disagreed with Mr. Nunes adding as elected officials we have a duty to be clear and transparent to our constituents.

NEW BUSINESS

Capital Improvement Plan Update: Mr. Kiely referred to a memo provided to the Committee in the meeting packet which outlines where the district is in the process.

Mr. Kiely explained the information in the memo noting the 2 recommendations - furniture and vehicle articles – to be voted on at the Fall town meeting.

Mr. Oliver asked if any projects have been completed or started.

Mr. Kiely provided an update on current projects.

Dr. Jenkins asked if “we” have come in “on budget.”

Mr. Kiely responded that “fortunately” we have managed well with these projects.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford reported on the following:

- District purchased a new math program: Bridges; implementation is going well.
- Elementary schools proceeding with PBIS programs.
- Potter School will be working with Feinstein Program.
- Commissioner extended the mask mandate extended to November 1st.
- Test and Stay Program is being run successfully by the schools with assistance from the Board of Health and outside vendors as necessary; Dr. Gifford provided data regarding the program.

Dr. Jenkins asked that a link to DESE COVID data be put on the district website.

Dr. Gifford stressed that parents not send their children to school who are symptomatic or unwell; the program is for close contact, unvaccinated, asymptomatic students for the purpose of keeping them in school.

Dr. Gifford noted that symptomatic testing is done throughout the day for students who become unwell during the day; certain symptoms may send a child home.

Dr. Gifford reported the district has a mobile unit at its disposal; it is located at the high school but is available to support any of the schools.

Report of the Chair: The Chair opened the discussion regarding physical access to committee meetings.

The Committee agreed to continue with not allowing physical access to their meetings.

Mr. Nunes provided information regarding upcoming DHS Band competition on Saturday.

The Committee has a workshop on Wednesday, September 29th at 5:00 p.m. at Bush Street.

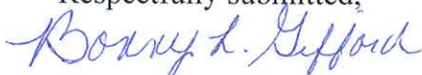
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Media Center on Monday, October 18, 2021 at 6:30 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. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn from Open Session at 8:26 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent