

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

January 25, 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 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 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.

Present were the following members: Mr. Oliver, Mrs. Amaral, Mrs. Waite and Mr. Nunes. Dr. Jenkins was not present.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

No public comments were received.

PUBLIC HEARING

School Choice – 2021-2022

Mr. Oliver opened the Public Hearing on School Choice for the 2021-2022 School Year at 6:48 p.m. inviting those who wish to speak on the matter to come forward to forward comments to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org.

Mr. Oliver asked the recording secretary if any public comment was received on school choice; the recording secretary responded no public comment has been received on the matter.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to close the Public Hearing on School Choice for School Year 2021-2022. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

Mr. Oliver closed the public hearing on school choice at 6:50 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Regular Session Minutes of January 11, 2021. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Spotlight on Dartmouth High School: Dr. Gifford explained after speaking with Principals and finding the usual showcasing of students' work would be difficult to present this year; the school *Spotlight segments* will showcase what is happening in the schools to support students, teachers and staff during this year.

DHS Principal Ross Thibault gave a *State of the School Address* wherein he explained what programs are taking place at Dartmouth High School.

Mr. Thibault presented his information in categories: Academics; Student Counseling and Support Services; Student Activities and Athletics; Tech Integration and Faculty & Staff.

Mr. Thibault stated that not a single "thing" has been cancelled which indicates the hard work demonstrated by educators who continue to provide our students with a quality education.

Mr. Thibault reported new academic programs have been "launched" this year including Project Lead the Way (PLTW) as well as record enrollment in AP courses.

Mr. Thibault stated students and their families have been provided several live instruction options this year and explained how they work: hybrid, asynchronous learning as well as a virtual learning academy.

Mr. Thibault provided information on the high school's School Counseling and Support Services including the high school's new therapy dog, Augie.

Mr. Thibault stated that Student Activities and Athletics including the music and performing arts are on-going and thriving.

Mr. Thibault reported the DHS Marching Band earned another National Championship in Color Guard, Percussion and "Winds."

Mr. Thibault reported 5 new clubs were created this fall highlighting how students remain engaged despite the pandemic.

Mr. Thibault reported on the athletic program noting the successes of the girl's volleyball and soccer teams.

Mr. Thibault commented the "silver lining" during the pandemic is the substantial advancement the district made in integrating technology in its instruction.

Mr. Thibault concluded by thanking the faculty and staff at Dartmouth high school who have made the successes of the past year possible specifically recognizing support staff - school nurses, secretaries, counseling staff, security guards and custodial staff.

Mrs. Waite stated she was grateful that PSATs will be administered tomorrow.

Mrs. Waite asked about senior class activities.

Mr. Thibault stated a meeting is scheduled for the beginning of February to discuss end of year activities.

Mr. Nunes asked how students in the virtual learning platform are doing.

Mr. Thibault stated that students who “are putting in the hours” are doing fine; we have staff to reach out to students who are not “where” they should be.

Mr. Oliver asked about the FLIP program and the types of safety “nets” that are in place for students that are struggling.

Mr. Thibault responded that the FLIP program is still in place and this is the time of year that “we” look to see which students need assistance particularly with motivation.

Mr. Thibault noted this year’s school wide policy allowing for “retakes” and “revisions.”

Mr. Oliver asked if the district is flexible allowing students to move from virtual learning platforms (ie Edgenuity or TECCA) in to the hybrid model.

Mr. Thibault responded no student has been denied moving in to the virtual learning platform; however, moving from virtual to hybrid we have asked students to wait for an appropriate semester break.

The Committee thanked Mr. Thibault for his thorough presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Update: Dr. Gifford provided a brief update on matters affected by or related to COVID-19.

Dr. Gifford stated that there have been no new developments noting weekly meetings with the Town’s Board of Health continue to be held.

Dr. Gifford iterated that guidelines and precautions continue to be adhered to by the schools adding that the high school will return to the hybrid model on Monday, February 1st joining the rest of the district which has been in hybrid model since January 19th.

Dr. Gifford reported the Town will run a vaccine clinic at the high school beginning Thursday, January 28th adding it will be a very controlled program as well as providing secretarial and custodial support.

Dr. Gifford reported that Massachusetts Association of School Committees (M.A.S.C.) and various Superintendent Groups have been petitioning the Governor to include educators in Phase I of the vaccine.

Mr. Oliver provided comments on the matter of including educators and staff in Phase I of the vaccine.

Mr. Nunes asked if “deep cleaning” will take place.

Mr. Kiely stated that there will be cleaning of the area used for the clinic.

Mr. Kiely stated the Town will be paying for the secretarial and custodial support from its COVID grant.

Mr. Nunes asked when the clinic will run.

Dr. Gifford responded the clinic will run from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. and some Saturdays stating the Town is working on the schedule.

Mr. Nunes asked what affect this will have on the athletic and music programs.

Dr. Gifford responded Mr. Crisafulli, the Athletic Director, has been included on all meetings and he is rescheduling and planning on using the middle school gym if necessary.

Mr. Nunes asked if the Committee could send letters to the Governor, MA Department of Health urging the inclusion of educators in Phase I.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to send a letter to Governor Baker, the MA Department of Public Health and Representative Christopher Markey to urge the inclusion of teachers and school employees in Phase I of the vaccine. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Introduction – Deloris Joseph, Town Youth Advocate: Dr. Gifford welcomed Deloris Joseph to the meeting and reported that meetings were held this past week in order to introduce Ms. Joseph to the district leadership teams to open the conversation of collaboration between the schools and her office.

Ms. Joseph, via zoom technology, provided some personal and professional background and stated that she is looking forward to collaborating with the school district on providing advocacy and connection to services for students and families.

Ms. Joseph added that her role in the position of Youth Advocate is to provide support, advocacy, guidance and services to all Dartmouth youth and their families not just students who attend Dartmouth Public Schools.

School Choice – Vote to Participate in the 2021-2022 School Year: Mr. Oliver invited Committee members to discuss school choice for the 2021-2022 school year prior to taking a vote on the matter.

Mr. Oliver asked Dr. Gifford and Mr. Kiely to explain the information regarding school choice enrollment and funds that was provided in the meeting packet.

Dr. Gifford reported there are currently 110 students enrolled in the school choice program: 25 are in the senior class and Dr. Gifford asked to “build” the number of seats to compensate for the number graduating and keep enrollment around 125.

Mr. Kiely explained the financial information provided in the meeting packets which show where school choice funds have been spent directing the Committee's attention to the amount spent on technology which has been invaluable during this pandemic year.

Mrs. Waite how many students go to "Voke" or "Bristol Aggie"?

Dr. Gifford responded she does not have those figures but will get them "to you."

Mr. Nunes commented his position remains unchanged regarding school choice but appreciates that school choice funds go to support students.

Mrs. Waite moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral, to approve school choice for the Dartmouth Public Schools for the 2021-2022 school year. The motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Nunes opposing.

2020 Annual Report - Vote: Dr. Gifford submitted the 2020 Annual Report for the Committee's approval.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite, to approve the 2020 Annual Report as submitted. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

MCAS Discussion: Mr. Oliver opened a discussion on MCAS.

Mr. Oliver referred the members to the M.A.S.C. resolution language as it concerns MCAS which was provided in the meeting packets and asked the Committee for its thoughts on forwarding a resolution to the Governor, the Commissioner of MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and legislative leaders.

"BE IT RESOLVED, that MASC rejects the calls for the students of 2022 who missed their tenth grade MCAS testing to be required to make it up in the 2020-2021 school year or ever. We demand those students be held harmless for not taking the MCAS and that their graduation requirements shall be determined by locally controlled voices of the School Committee and School Administration within the remaining graduation requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Additionally, we reiterate our call for a moratorium on all high stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year so all students can benefit from their time being focused on direct instruction and we urge the legislature to enact a moratorium on high stakes testing of three years."

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to send the aforementioned resolution to Governor Baker, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) Commissioner Jeffrey Riley, Senators and Representatives. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to authorize Mr. Oliver sign the letters discussed this evening concerning Phase I of the COVID vaccine and the MASC resolution on MCAS on the Committee's behalf. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

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

- Pre-K and Kindergarten screening is being organized
- The Kindergarten registration portal will be open in early February
- Jeanne Sheridan, District Director of Nutrition, and the Food Service staff continue to provide seven day food boxes which can be picked up on Thursdays at the middle school; an evening

time has been added for families who are not able to get to the school during the day.

-Approximately 100 boxes per week are provided; when the district was fully remote 400 boxes per week were provided.

-Mr. Kiely thanked Lauren Pusey, his administrative assistant, for her work with the Town's energy consultant; the District received a check in the amount of \$18,000 (air purifier rebate.)

Report of the Chair: Mr. Oliver did not have anything further to add.

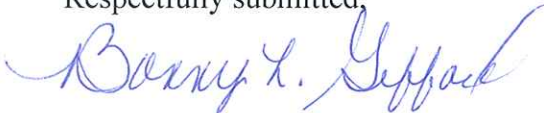
Mrs. Waite stated 7 DHS DECCA members are advancing to the State Competition.

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, February 8, 2021 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 to Executive Session at 8:35 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: 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent