MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 22, 2021

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairperson John Nunes 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 comments regarding items on tonight's agenda can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org to be read during Public Comment.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Public Comment regarding the discussion pertaining to the COVID Update was received via emails from 3 individuals.

An additional email was received prior to the meeting.

All emails were provided to Committee members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Regular Session Minutes of February 8, 2021. The motion carried unanimously: 3-0.

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Executive Session Minutes of February 8, 2021 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 unanimously: 3-0.

RECOGNITION

South Coast Educational Collaborative (S.C.E.C.) - Francis W. Gallishaw Memorial Scholarship Award: Dr. Gifford invited Ross Thibault, Principal of Dartmouth High School (DHS) to introduce this year's recipient of the S.C.E.C. scholarship award.

Mr. Thibault introduced Mya Leonardo this year's scholarship award recipient for Dartmouth High School; Miss Leonardo was present along with her parents.

Mr. Thibault recognized Miss Leonardo's accomplishments: academics (DHS *Top 10 List*); athletics (soccer and spring track), arts (Tufts University Scholastic Silver Key Award in Digital Photography), and, more impressively, her commitment to leadership and service.

Mr. Thibault highlighted Miss Leonardo's leadership and service achievements: mentor to incoming freshman students; Founder, Community Ambassador and President of the *Best Buddies Chapter* at DHS; class of 2021 president for her freshman and sophomore years; founder of *Happy Feet Shoe Drive* and founder of *Empower*, a website that aims to spread positivity through inclusivity in the Commonwealth and being named *Miss Quequechan's* Outstanding Teen as well as *Miss Freetown's* Outstanding Teen.

Miss Leonardo thanked the Committee for this recognition.

PRESENTATIONS

Spotlight on the George H. Potter Elementary School: Dr. Gifford introduced Principal Rick Porter and Assistant Principal Melissa McHenry of the George H. Potter Elementary School as well as "administrator-in-training" Kristen Martinho, a first grade teacher at Potter School.

Mr. Porter thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide information about the Potter School as well as to report that the presentation was created through the collaborative effort; a video was shown during which students and staff can be seen hard at work and play keeping engaged and the Potter mantra alive – *Our Happy Place*.

Mr. Porter continued adding that Potter School is not only *our happy place* but it is *our safe place* for learning as well: information and video was provided to explain the safety measures implemented on a daily and in some cases continuous basis.

Mr. Porter, Mrs. McHenry and Mrs. Martinho provided examples as to how Potter School has overcome the challenges created by the pandemic by revisiting – "Potter's Positive Plan" – "Our P to the 3 Plan" to create a safe and more effective school: 1. PAWS to be Kind, 2. PAWS to be Safe, 3. PAWS to be a Learner.

Mrs. McHenry recognized specific staff: teacher assistants, custodians, technology integration specialist Sandra Chicca and school nurse Paula Lassey.

Mr. Porter noted Sylvie Melancon, Potter School Cafeteria Manager, and her staff, have done an "amazing" job along with assistance provided by custodians.

Mr. Porter explained how the different models of instruction are working successfully to improve learning: a chart showing STAR Renaissance Benchmark Data was provided.

Mr. Porter reported that all K-5 students participate in STAR benchmarking every 6-8 weeks which provides consistent data to track student progress.

Mr. Porter emphasized the tremendous amount of work and dedication shown by teachers particularly in their efforts to provide synchronous learning so that students can "be" with and learn "with" their classmates.

Mrs. Amaral asked how the school keeps in contact with families that chose to have their children learn remotely for the year.

Mr. Porter responded that Potter staff maintains communication with the virtual academy teachers to offer assistance.

Mr. Porter reported that, starting in the spring, work will begin on developing a protocol on how best to reach out to parents who chose virtual learning, home-schooling or sent their child to another school in order to transition students back to Potter school; some of whom have not been in a school for more than a year.

Mrs. Waite asked if teachers who commit to synchronous learning teach that way all day.

Mr. Porter explained the model of teaching has grown "organically" from the instructors themselves by determining what works best, what is most effective.

Dr. Gifford commented that the "out of the box" thinking happening at Potter School and throughout the District has made the experience of education as close to normal as possible this year noting administrators and educators are keenly aware of the social and emotional toll the pandemic has taken on students, families and colleagues.

FY22 Budget: The matter was held until the next meeting of the Committee due to member absences at tonight's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID Update: The matter was held until the next meeting of the Committee due to member absences at tonight's meeting.

Dr. Gifford reported that she and Mr. Kiely met with Mr. Oliver, Dr. Jenkins and Chris Michaud, the Director of Public Health, to lay the groundwork to start bringing more students back.

In an effort to prepare the Committee and others for the continued discussion on the matter of returning more students to school starting with the youngest learners, Dr. Gifford explained what factors are being considered and who is participating in the planning.

Mrs. Waite asked if Mr. Michaud could be invited to next week's discussion.

Dr. Gifford responded she would extend an invitation to Mr. Michaud.

Mrs. Amaral asked if students in the virtual platform will be able to remain in that platform.

Dr. Gifford responded in the affirmative.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford provided the following:
-Virtual TEDx Talks will be starting on March 4th.
-Pre-K Virtual Orientation will be happening tomorrow night; notices are posted on our Facebook page and the district website.

Report of the Chair: Mr. Nunes noted the following:
-Fall II Sport Season started today: football, cheerleading, boys and girls indoor track.
-Indoor Percussion Color Guard virtual shows started this past Saturday.

Dr. Gifford reported that the fan "pilot program" presented at the last meeting went well.

The executive session scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. to address the FY22 Budget presentation and the COVID-19 discussion; 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.

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn from Open Session at 7:38 p.m. The motion carried unanimously: 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonny L. Gifford

Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent