

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

December 12, 2022

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson John Nunes at 5:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center. The Chair stated the meeting is streaming live on the Dartmouth High School Media YouTube channel and noted the meeting is being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV Channels 9 and 18.

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 21, 2022 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

Mrs. Waite moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 21, 2022 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matters for which the session was held are concluded. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the district.

- Holiday concerts are being held at the schools.
- The orchestra will be performing at the Zeiterion Theatre on December 20th.
- Professional development with Envision Learning was held last Friday.
- The dedication of the Steve Gaspar Court will take place on January 7, 2023.
- A virtual meeting was held today with Attorney Cat Lyons regarding the updated suspension law; the district administration team was in attendance.
- Staff have been sent to public relations and crisis management meetings to keep them updated on practices relative to these topics.

PUBLIC HEARING

School Choice – 2023-2024

Mr. Nunes opened the Public Hearing on School Choice for the 2023-2024 School Year at 5:05 p.m. inviting those who wish to speak on the matter to come forward.

Renee Vieira, DEA President and DHS teacher, gave comments regarding school choice.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to close the Public Hearing on School Choice for School Year 2023-2024 at 5:11 p.m. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent Search: The administration recommended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (M.A.S.C.) to conduct the Superintendent Search; information supporting the recommendation was included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Nunes invited Mr. Jim Hardy, Field Director with M.A.S.C., to speak to the Committee about the services his group will provide to the district.

Mr. Hardy handed out information to the Committee including a sample brochure and proposed timeline adding it is similar to the information and timeline used in the district's 2014-2015 superintendent search which he facilitated; the timeline is shortened for this search due to time constraints.

Mr. Hardy provided an overview of the process; it was stated that more information is gleaned from the on-line survey component than from focus groups.

Mr. Hardy stated the announcement of the vacancy is done predominantly on-line noting M.A.S.C. belongs to 3 on-line websites - two are national sites; the most popular in-state sites are M.A.S.C. and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.)

Mr. Hardy stated there are certain things the Committee will need to do; most importantly the formation of a search committee by February 13, 2023 (per the proposed timeline); this committee will vet all the applicants selecting those to be interviewed and ultimately sending at least two ideally three to five finalists to the School Committee for a decision.

Mr. Hardy stated there are matters he must do, per the law, namely train the search committee on Open Meeting Law as well as Conflict of Interest Law; members must complete the on-line state ethics test and provide a certificate of completion.

Mr. Hardy stated the training must be completed before the application deadline.

Mr. Hardy asked if it could be verified whether or not the Town requires members of the search committee to be sworn in.

Mr. Hardy explained the survey and the purpose it will serve and recommended it should "start" as soon as possible and asked if there are any questions; once the survey is launched it is hard to make changes.

Mr. Hardy stated he can launch the survey tonight noting the district would be responsible for posting the survey on its site as well as the Town's website.

Mr. Oliver asked what was needed from the Committee right now.

Mr. Hardy responded the Committee's permission to speak to Mr. Kiely regarding the brochure.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to hire M.A.S.C. as the consultant of record for the superintendent search. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

Mr. Oliver asked the Chair if the Committee is ready to "take up" the interim superintendent "piece" tonight.

Mr. Nunes responded affirmatively.

Mr. Oliver noted he brought the matter up at a previous meeting at which time he recommended appointing Mr. Kiely, the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, as the interim superintendent through June 30, 2023 and provided his reasons for bringing the recommendation forward again tonight.

Dr. Jenkins stated she is in support of appointing Mr. Kiely but expressed her concerns as to the process.

Mr. Nunes explained the interim superintendent portion of the superintendent search was included in the discussion on the matter at recently held meetings noting it was stated the discussion would continue tonight.

Mr. Nunes asked Mr. Kiely if he would want to wait until January.

Mr. Kiely stated whether the Committee decides to hold the appointment until January does not matter to him; he stated he is honored to be considered adding that the task will not be an easy one while performing his current duties but he would "hold down the fort" in order to make it a good transition for the new Superintendent.

Mr. Oliver stated he understands the concerns presented and will withdraw the motion; but, he would prefer to finalize the matter this evening.

The Committee agreed to go forward with the matter.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to appoint Mr. James Kiely, Interim Superintendent for the Dartmouth Public Schools, effective March 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023. The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

PRESENTATIONS

MCAS/Learning Loss: Dr. Gifford invited Ross Thibault and Catherine Pavao, Directors of Teaching and Learning, Secondary and Elementary Levels respectively, to make their presentation.

Mr. Thibault and Mrs. Pavao explained MCAS and the purpose of the data gleaned from standardized testing and stressed that MCAS results are one point of data adding regular benchmark assessments including formative and summative assessment data which is collected by classroom teachers throughout the year: a PowerPoint presentation was provided.

Mr. Thibault and Mrs. Pavao addressed the impact of COVID-19 on MCAS testing and test scores adding the State is using results from 2022 as “kind of” the new baseline moving forward.

Mrs. Pavao provided information regarding MCAS trends across the State noting significant challenges in early literacy; mathematics and science results fared better.

Mrs. Pavao provided information regarding district MCAS results while noting where local results outpaced State statistics.

Mr. Thibault provided information regarding Dartmouth’s performance as compared to similar districts; using DESE’s D.A.R.T. (district analysis review tool)

Mr. Thibault and Mrs. Pavao talked about priorities in providing interventions and good tier 1 instruction in all content areas as well as “digging in on” Grade 10 ELA and Math student growth percentile (SGP).

Mr. Thibault and Mrs. Pavao explained what the district has been doing to address the impact of COVID-19 on student learning: last year the district streamlined the school improvement plans and adopted the accelerated roadmap (Acceleration Academies) the State promoted.

Mrs. Pavao explained “next steps” by “digging deeper into the data” including reviewing student results in all assessments by subgroups; identify trends and patterns by all students and subgroups; utilize common planning time to address identified problems while continuing to monitor for understanding.

Mr. Oliver asked if the district hopes to continue to offer “these” learning loss programs (i.e., acceleration academies) knowing ESSER funding will end soon.

Mrs. Pavao responded we may hear about grant opportunities after the new year; Mr. Thibault added the Commissioner did “tout” the acceleration academies at the MASS/MASC conference this fall which gives up hope.

Mrs. Pavao noted the district has instructional specialists that provide intervention work to support students at all levels especially at the elementary level.

Mr. Oliver asked about the State’s new MCAS graduation requirements; when will they take effect.

Mr. Thibault reported he “believes” the new requirements will be implemented in 2024 or 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

DHS Program of Studies Update: Dr. Gifford introduced Ryan Shea and Bridgit DaSilva, DHS Principal and Director of High School Counseling and Student Support Services respectively who provided a brief update of the program of studies at Dartmouth High School.

Mr. Shea thanked Mrs. DaSilva for her hard work in collaborating with lead teachers to produce the changes to the program.

Mr. Shea explained that today's information is a way of keeping the committee and the community up to date on the changes and the thought process behind them: a PowerPoint presentation was provided.

Mr. Shea explained the high school will be changing its graduation credit requirement and explained the timeline of the changes.

Mr. Shea reviewed the next steps which includes the DHS guidance department meeting with 8th grade students.

Dr. Jenkins made recommendations regarding more clearly communicating what are graduation requirements and what institutions of higher education will be looking for on student transcripts.

Mr. Shea clarified credit for marching band noting it is not an option for every student; DHS administration approval will be necessary.

School Choice 2023-2024 – Vote: Mr. Nunes invited Mr. Kiely to provide information on the matter.

Mr. Kiely stated the financial information provided in the meeting packet summarizes what school choice has meant to the district from a funding perspective adding, with the future of federal funding being uncertain moving forward, school choice funds offer a potential way to buffer some of the reductions that might be ahead.

The Committee agreed to keep the number of school choice students at 30 to 40 students.

Mrs. Waite moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins, to participate in school choice for the 2023-2024 school year. The motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Nunes opposing.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford invited Robert Perrotti, lead teacher of the Business, Innovation and Technology (BIT) department at Dartmouth High School (DHS) to provide some recent events and activities in the department.

-Mr. Perrotti provided information regarding the department specifically what the department is doing around "coding" as well as reporting the department was awarded a \$10,000 grant from Code.org.

-Mr. Perrotti reported on DHS Esports recent semifinal win to advance to playoffs eventually taking second place.

-Mr. Perrotti congratulated engineering students for building the new DHS TV Media news desk.

-Mr. Perrotti reported Bob's Furniture donated \$2,000 worth of furniture to the department.

Report of the Chair: The Chair reported:

-Sports teams update.

-Music department update.

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

The Chair allotted 10 minutes for public comment.

Kathryn Gollub, Teacher Assistant at the James M. Quinn Elementary School, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

Kathleen Baldwin, Occupational Therapist for the Dartmouth Public Schools, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

Erin Munafo and Corie Deus, Occupational Therapists for the Dartmouth Public Schools, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

Sandra Alpoim-Raposo, Speech Language Pathologist for the Dartmouth Public Schools, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

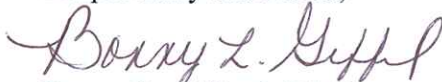
Mr. Oliver asked that a discussion on related services be included on the next agenda.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: Mr. Nunes asked members if they would be agreeable to an earlier start for the next meeting. The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. into Executive Session for an update on collective bargaining with union personnel and not return to open session. On a roll call the motion passed: 4-0: Mr. Nunes – Yes; Mrs. Waite – Yes; Dr Jenkins - Yes and Mr. Oliver – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools