

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

January 10, 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 Shannon Jenkins at 6:30 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center. 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 Channels 9 and 18.

On a roll call the following members were present: Dr. Jenkins, Mrs. Waite, Mr. Nunes and Mr. Oliver. Mrs. Amaral attended via remote livestream.

Also present: Dr. Gifford and Mrs. Genthner. Mr. Kiely was not in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lynn Turner, a parent of students who attend the Dartmouth Public Schools, voiced her concerns about discrimination and segregation as it relates to students' vaccination status.

Jeannie Tripp, a parent of former DPS students, asked how the public goes about having an item added to the agenda.

The Committee thanked the participants for their comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 13, 2021 as presented. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 4-0. Mrs. Waite abstained.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student Representative Evan Garcia, a senior at Dartmouth High School, provided an update of recent activities and events happening at the high school.

- Music Department held its annual *Pops Holiday Concert* in December;
- DHS English Department had 9 students compete in its *Poetry Out Loud* event; congratulations to Lauren Lima for winning the competition and to the other participants;
- Club Activities: Unified Bowling has returned to Wonder Bowl; E-sports recently created an e-sports room at the high school; Debate club will compete in its first competition this Saturday; Indoor Percussion is preparing for competition to be held later this month; Best Buddies held 2 Karaoke events in December during P.A.S.E. period providing all students the opportunity to "hang out" and sing together during the school day; DHS theater is hosting auditions this week for its spring production of *Shrek*; DHS TV media continues to video and broadcast events including this evening's committee meeting.
- Athletics were paused temporarily last week and will hopefully resume later this week: DHS hockey has an important game against ORR this Friday at 3:45 p.m. at the Dunkin Donut Center in Providence

RI; many DHS fall athletes have been highlighted on the *Standard Times* Super Team and All Stars list.

OLD BUSINESS

Student Representation to the School Committee: Dr. Jenkins introduced the matter for discussion.

Dr. Jenkins asked Evan Garcia, the current Student Representative to the School Committee, his thoughts on the matter.

Mr. Garcia stated it is an interesting opportunity however he is graduating so it would not apply to him.

Mr. Garcia added that students are more involved than ever; it would be great to have this more formalized student representative position.

Dr. Jenkins asked the Committee for their thoughts about moving forward and “rolling this out” in the spring following the timeline that is established in law: spring election of student council, who would elect a chairperson in early June; who will start attending meetings.

Mrs. Waite asked what the current student advisory council does.

Dr. Gifford responded.

Mr. Oliver agreed “we” should move forward and agreed with the timeframe mentioned noting the law states the School Committee may consider designating a student outreach coordinator.

Dr. Jenkins recommended the committee name a student outreach coordinator now so that that person would have a chance to develop expectations along with input from the high school administration in order to present those expectations to student council members in the spring.

Mrs. Amaral voiced her support for moving forward.

Mr. Nunes voiced his concerns particularly as it relates to students knowing the commitment they would be making serving on the council and as a student representative to the School Committee.

Dr. Jenkins stated she will follow up with Tracy Novick of MASC to see if they have procedures and/or guidelines.

Dr. Jenkins confirmed the sense of the Committee is to move forward with the matter.

Dr. Jenkins asked for a volunteer for the student outreach coordinator.

Mrs. Waite accepted the role.

Dr. Jenkins stated the matter will be brought back to the Committee once there is a “more fully formed” policy.

NEW BUSINESS

Dartmouth Representatives to the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical HS School Committee: Dr. Jenkins welcomed Michael Shea and Cynthia Marland, Dartmouth representatives to the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical HS (VOKE) School Committee. Voke Superintendent Michael Watson was in attendance.

Mr. Nunes made a comment regarding the audio and minutes of the Voke School Committee meetings.

Dr. Jenkins added to Mr. Nunes' comments asking for more detail to be included in the minutes.

Mr. Shea responded he will look into the audio issue.

Mr. Shea explained the direction given to "them" by Massachusetts Association School Committees (MASC); the minutes are a record of a vote taken at a meeting.

Mr. Shea stated he will bring these comments to the board which is meeting tomorrow; he will "get back" to "you" as Chair.

Mr. Oliver asked for more communication between the committees including invitations to the school.

Dr. Marland responded providing information about a "Dartmouth" day which was a pre-COVID idea that will be "revisited."

Mr. Nunes asked about the changes to the admissions policy.

Dr. Marland, who was on the admissions committee, responded stating changes were well researched with over 53 meetings of the committee some with the administration as well as working with a former Department of Elementary Secondary Education (DESE) associate commissioner who gave direction by highlighting what some of the changes should be.

Dr. Marland referred to a "packet" that members received regarding the admissions policy and provided a brief explanation of the changes to the policy noting they are in line with what DESE is looking for: Community Outreach; Eligibility; Application; Scholastic Achievement; Attendance; School Behavior; School Recommendation; Acceptance Process; Lottery; Next Steps.

Mr. Shea directed the Committee to information provided to the members this evening which compares the new policy with the old as it pertains to the "point system."

Mr. Shea provided further explanation of some changes made to the admissions policy.

Mr. Nunes asked how many applications are received each year.

Mr. Nunes asked when the new policy will take effect once DESE approves it.

Mr. Shea responded the policy is for the class of 2026; it is for the incoming freshman class and not the upperclassmen.

Mr. Oliver asked; of the 565 of students admitted does a specific percentage have to come from each community.

Mr. Shea responded there is no "number" and explained.

Dr. Jenkins commented that not knowing Dartmouth's enrollment has a significant effect on our budget.

Mr. Oliver asked if it would be possible to have a "vocational stabilization fund."

Mr. Oliver asked if the state has one funding formula for all state vocational school district.

Dr. Jenkins stated the formula is generic but the calculation is based on the individual district's enrollment.

Mrs. Waite asked if students' "shop" preference is based on the admissions process.

Mr. Shea responded it is based on the point system and explained.

Mrs. Amaral expressed her appreciation for the changes being made to the policy.

Dr. Jenkins stated she hopes to keep the lines of communication open and would like to invite “you” back on other occasions to continue the conversation.

Mr. Shea stated he and Dr. Marland are available to listen to any member’s concern and to please call us.

The Committee thanked Dr. Marland and Mr. Shea for their participation.

Proposed 2022-2023 School Calendar: Dr. Gifford referred the Committee to the proposed 2022-2023 school calendar which was provided in the meeting packet.

Dr. Gifford stated the calendar is “standard” and that this is the first “read.”

Dr. Jenkins stated we don’t need a motion on “this” as it is the first “read.”

MASC Resolution – Regarding Department of Elementary and Secondary Education School District Audits:

The matter was held until the next meeting.

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

- Cushman received another Feinstein Foundation award: *Kindness Tree*.
- S.A.I.L. program “kicked off” offering 16 unique sessions being offered by elementary teachers.
- Information will be released soon on PreK and Kindergarten registration.
- Accumulation of documentation for State audits is on-going.
- Mr. Kiely and I have been scheduling budget meetings and hope to start this week with principals and department heads; preliminary budget requests have been submitted.
- Wednesday is an early release day; we are continuing with the “Master Teacher” program which provides numerous choices for professional development (PD) to staff; instructional technology specialists (ITS) will be offering a PD for technology they have developed to align with our existing platforms which will assist staff with “honing” their technology skills;
- ITS teams are being assembled throughout the district to help create “units” to integrate digital technology standards into the curriculum.
- Athletic program was paused last week; the intent is to restart practices tomorrow; MIAA put limitation on fan participation to 2 per student; the athletic director is communicating with parents.
- As of today, we have implemented the COVID guidance changes DESE put in place last week noting the volume of staff/student cases and absences adding the “Test and Stay” program has greatly helped to keep students in school; data collection was explained; DESE stated any need to cancel school would be considered a “snow day.”

Report of the Chair: Dr. Jenkins stated the Dartmouth Education Foundation Spelling Bee is being planned for Thursday, March 24th from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. to be held at DHS.

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

Mr. Oliver asked that the “Dartmouth Indian” matter be placed on the next or following meeting agenda.

Dr. Jenkins stated it is “on her” to move that forward adding there has not been much to report.

Dr. Jenkins stated there is no need to hold an executive session this evening.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Media Center on Monday, January 24, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.; the public will 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>.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn from Open Session at 8:17 p.m. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent