

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

March 6, 2023

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 6:30 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, Mrs. Amaral, Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Oliver.

Also present: Mr. Kiely and Mrs. Genthner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kerry DeJesus, English Language Education Teacher at the DeMello and Potter schools, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining. Standing with Ms. DeJesus were Kelly D'Ambrosio, Kerry Kagan and Kristin Daggett.

Renee Vieira, Co-President of the Dartmouth Educators Association, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of February 13, 2023 as written. The motion passed: 4-0. Mrs. Waite abstained.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Executive Session Minutes of February 13, 2023 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matters under consideration are finalized. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student Representative Phoenix Dalla Costa, a senior at Dartmouth High School, was unable to be present at tonight's meeting; a student report was not provided.

PRESENTATIONS

Spotlight on Kids – Joseph DeMello Elementary School: Mr. Kiely invited Ms. Elizabeth Correia and Mr. Adam Hill, Principal and Assistant Principal of the DeMello School respectively, to make their presentation.

Ms. Correia and Mr. Hill began with a PowerPoint presentation - included in the meeting packet - which provided a brief overview of what the school has been working on for the past six months; a continuation of the school's focus on learning loss due to the pandemic particularly in literacy and math.

Ms. Correia described initiatives for literacy and math and the positive affects they are having to support student learning.

Mr. Hill provided information pertaining to community partnerships - such as the school's partnership with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, the Harvest Farm/Southcoast Y and the DeMello Community through Community Meetings and P.B.I.S. programs such as "Leader of the Pack" and "Student of the Month."

Liz Voci, Instructional Technology Specialist at DeMello and Cushman schools, commented that two years of COVID protocols had a major impact on authentic opportunities for communication, collaboration and cooperation for students as well as staff.

Ms. Voci explained the decision making behind the creation of STEM TEAMS which was launched this fall.

Ms. Voci aired a video wherein teachers and students participated in STEM TEAM activities.

Ms. Voci explained STEM Champions and invited DeMello "STEM" champions to speak about their experiences: second grader Adilynn Scott, fourth grader Maeve Firth, and fifth grader Bennett Kertscher.

The students thanked the Committee for its support and presented members with STEM champion medals which students designed and created with the school's 3D printer.

18-22 Year Old Transition Program: Mr. Kiely invited Elizabeth Town, Pupil Support Services Administrator; Lori Jodoin, Assistant Pupil Support Services Administrator; Ryan Shea, Principal of Dartmouth High School (DHS); John Breault, Lead Teacher of the Special Education Department at DHS and Ashley Kocur-Pierpont, Special Education Teacher at DHS to make their presentation regarding the proposed *18-22 Year Old Transition Program* and to address concerns expressed by the Committee at its last meeting.

Mrs. Townson provided a PowerPoint presentation –included in the meeting packet – to assist in highlighting the decision-making process as well as describing the components of the transition program noting the agreed upon name for the program is A.T.L.A.S. (Advancing Towards Life After School).

Mrs. Townson indicated how the transition program links to the 2022-2023 district priorities: fostering a sense of belonging, providing appropriate instruction and monitoring understanding.

Mrs. Townson reviewed the logistics of the program: who the program will serve (18 to 22 year old students); what will the program do (transition program that aligns with the district mission "Quality education for all"); where will the program be housed (at DHS and at community sites); and who will staff the program (a Special Education teacher and 2 teacher assistants.)

Mrs. Townson reported monthly planning meetings have been held since September 2022 noting the next meeting is tomorrow.

Mrs. Townson reviewed future goals.

Mrs. Townson stated her colleagues are here to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.

Mrs. Amaral asked if there has been discussion around partnering with UMASS/Dartmouth or Bristol Community College (BCC).

Ms. Jodoin responded that we have talked about partnerships with higher education institutions but not in the first year of the program.

Mrs. Amaral asked who will be building these partnerships.

Ms. Kocur-Pierpont responded stating “we” have established relationships with the community.

Mr. Breault explained the “phase” aspect of the program.

Mrs. Amaral stated she would speak with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) about how it could support this program.

Mr. Breault stated the idea of the program was presented to Ms. Kocur-Pierpont by a family in 2020 adding the program is family and student needs driven.

Dr. Jenkins commented how the program supports equity for students and thanked the group for its presentation.

Mr. Oliver asked who would be overseeing the logistics of the program.

Mr. Shea responded it will be a partnership; the high school will oversee the facility and central office will oversee the program.

Mr. Oliver asked about transportation and is the program “bringing” students back in to the building.

Mr. Shea stated the incoming year was chosen because it is potentially a small cohort of students; Mr. Shea noted a vehicle was included in the budget adding part of the job description for the teacher and teacher assistants is to assist in transporting students.

Mr. Oliver asked if “we” will be ready to go with the space in the fall.

Mr. Kiely responded describing the space in the high school and why it was chosen for the program adding he believes it is “doable.”

Mr. Kiely added information about funding for the program through the budget, the capital improvement plan and the operating budget.

Mr. Nunes asked about what was learned from visiting other area programs.

Mr. Breault responded noting the takeaways from those visits.

Ms. Kocur-Pierpont noted that transportation was one hurdle other programs faced.

Mr. Nunes asked about the hours of the program.

Ms. Kocur-Pierpont responded that “we” thought it best to keep the same hours as the high school at this time: start the day with academics, continue with time out in the community working/volunteering with the expectation as the student moves on in the program time spent in the community will increase in preparation for when the student reaches the age of 22.

The Committee stated their appreciation for the thorough presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent Search: Mr. Nunes opened the discussion inviting Mr. Oliver, as Co-chair of the Search Committee, to report on the matter.

Mr. Oliver asked Catherine Pavao, Co-Chair of the Screening Committee, to come forward, and thanked the members of the Screening Committee for their work.

Mr. Oliver passed out a list of finalists to the Committee Members provided by James Hardy from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (M.A.S.C.) and invited Mr. Hardy to speak on the matter.

Mr. Hardy reported 13 candidates submitted packages for the position of Superintendent of Schools in Dartmouth which were reviewed by the Search Committee; after preliminary interviews and much discussion the Search Committee voted to submit the following candidates to the School Committee for consideration as the next Superintendent of Schools in Dartmouth (in alphabetical order):

- Dr. Jason DeFalco, current Superintendent of Schools, Blackstone-Millville Regional School District Blackstone MA
- Dr. Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., current Superintendent of Schools, New Shoreham School District, Block Island RI
- Dr. June Saba-Maguire, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Brockton Public Schools, Brockton MA
- Dr. Andrea B. Schwamb, Assistant Superintendent, Wareham Public Schools, Wareham MA.

Mr. Hardy reviewed next steps: schedule site visits for candidates to come to Dartmouth; schedule site visits to the candidates' districts; schedule final interviews.

Mr. Nunes opened discussion proposing to bring the finalists in for site visits and final interviews on March 20th and March 21st (interviewing 2 each day) adding the regular session meeting currently scheduled for March 20th meeting would be moved to March 27th which includes the public hearing on the FY24 Budget.

Mr. Nunes amended his proposal to March 20th and March 22nd for finalist interviews to be held in the high school auditorium at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes stated the interviews should not be live streamed.

Dr. Jenkins advocated for providing the questions to the finalist in advance.

Mr. Nunes stated he is in favor of providing the questions to the candidates at the interview.

Mr. Oliver asked for Mr. Hardy's input.

Mr. Hardy stated having the interviews live-streamed may give an unfair advantage to those candidates interviewed at a later date which may happen anyway if print media are present at the first interviews; my recommendation is to have at least one question you are going to ask all candidates then tailor the rest of the questions to the individual candidates.

Mr. Oliver commented he likes Mr. Hardy's recommendation adding he doesn't have a preference.

Mrs. Waite agreed with Dr. Jenkins and asked about the process of creating questions.

Mr. Hardy explained how the list of questions was compiled for the semi-finalist interviews (these questions were handed out to the School Committee.)

Mr. Hardy asked Mr. Nunes about the plan for site visits to the finalists' districts which can be done over the phone or via zoom.

Dr. Jenkins asked if all site visits have to be done the same.

Mr. Hardy stated he spoke with Dr. Gerardi who mentioned a possible phone or Zoom interview since his location presents a logistical challenge.

Mr. Nunes stated he is in favor of sending interview questions to Mr. Hardy to compile; Mr. Oliver agreed.

Mr. Oliver asked about zoom site visits to candidates' districts.

Dr. Jenkins stated the benefits of physically going to the candidates' districts noting the exception for Dr. Gerardi whose district is on Block Island.

Dr. Jenkins presented a request to include a teacher on the site visit.

Mr. Oliver asked when the site visits would be.

Mr. Nunes recommended Mr. Kiely, the high school principal, the middle school principal and 2 school committee members to participate on the site visit.

Mr. Hardy stated he will convey to the candidates the 2 interview and site visits dates to obtain their availability as well as the site visits to their home districts next week.

The Committee agreed site visits will take place the week of March 13th on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will be conducted via Zoom with Dr. Gerardi.

Mr. Hardy asked Mr. Kiely to send him a list of who will be attending and on what days.

Mr. Hardy asked the Committee to email their interview questions to him by March 15th; to prepare and identify one question to be asked of every candidate and to provide 2 or 3 additional questions.

The Committee agreed to send the standard question ahead of time to the candidates; other questions will not be sent ahead of the interview.

Mr. Nunes confirmed the interviews will not be live streamed and public comment will not be allowed at these meetings.

It was confirmed Mr. Kiely, Mr. Shea and Mr. Rossi will participate in the site visits along with 2 school committee members and a teacher.

Mr. Oliver recommended Mrs. Pavao be part of the Site Visits.

It was agreed the district would seek volunteers; interest should be directed to Mr. Kiely.

Mr. Oliver recommended one teacher from each level; each teacher would participate in one site visit.

The Committee agreed.

Pupil Support Services Administrator: Mrs. Amaral, as co-chair of the Pupil Support Services Administrator (PSSA) Search Committee, provided an update as to the Committee's progress noting the Committee will meet on Saturday, March 11th to conduct interviews.

Mrs. Amaral stated it is the intention to recommend three finalists to the Search Committee at its next regular meeting.

FY24 Budget: Mr. Kiely reported the major development since the last meeting is the Governor's proposal on State Aid noting the memorandum that was provided in the meeting packet.

Mr. Kiely stated Dartmouth's increase was less than 1% or \$99,090.

Mr. Kiely noted the Town's increase was equally low.

Mr. Kiely stated he would be meeting with Mr. MacInnes to discuss "where" the Town is on their side of the budget; it is hoped there will be discussion with the Finance Committee at the end of the month.

NEW BUSINESS

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

- Town Tree Committee will assist in helping to plant trees in front of the Middle School.
- The District and its maintenance department is working with New Bedford Voke and students from its electrical program on the lights at the fields behind the middle school.
- DHS AP Art Show happening at the Dartmouth Cultural Center from March 10th through March 25th.
- DHS TEDx Talks are happening on Friday, March 10th during the school day; they will be live-streamed on DHS TV Media.
- MCAS starts at the end of the month.
- Dartmouth's Finest will be held on March 17th; tickets will go on sale next week.
- Through the efforts of Rob Perrotti and Temple Mitchell a MassCUE grant was awarded to the district to outfit a TV studio at the middle school.

Report of the Chair: The Chair reported:

- Athletics Update
- Music Update; Annual Pop's Concert to be held on Thursday, March 9th
- Request received from Ryan Arruda to Interview School Committee Candidates
- DEF Spelling Bee

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

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next sessions of the School Committee will take place in the Auditorium at Dartmouth High School on Monday, March 20, 2023 and Wednesday, March 22nd at 6:00 p.m. to conduct Superintendent Finalist Interviews.

The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School on Monday, March 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. which will include the Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget.

Mrs. Waite asked when the new Superintendent would be announced.

Mr. Nunes stated "we" would probably announce on March 27th.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. into Executive Session for an update pertaining to Collective Bargaining with union personnel and a pending legal matter and not return to open session. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously; 5-0: Mr. Nunes – Yes; Mrs. Waite – Yes; Mrs. Amaral – Yes; Dr. Jenkins - Yes and Mr. Oliver – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Kiely
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Regular Session Minutes for February 13, 2023

Executive Session Minutes for February 13, 2023

Spotlight on Kids -DeMello School PPP and video

18-22 Year Old Transition Program PPP and video

Superintendent Search List of Finalists (handout at meeting)

Superintendent Search – Screening Committee Questions (handout at meeting)

FY24 Memo re State Aid

Executive Session – Documents/Exhibits

Pending Legal Matter – Civil Complaint