

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

April 8, 2024

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kathleen Amaral at 6:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center. The Chair announced the meeting is being recorded for future broadcast over DCTV.

On a roll call the following members were present: Kathleen Amaral, Christopher Oliver, Elizabeth Coughlin, Mary Beckwith and John Nunes.

Also present: Dr. Saba-Maguire, James Kiely and Ms. Genthner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 25, 2024 as written. The motion passed: 4-0. Ms. Beckwith abstained.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the Executive Session Minutes of March 25, 2024 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matters under consideration are resolved. The motion passed: 4-0. Ms. Beckwith abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment was offered.

SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS – James M. Quinn Elementary School: The Chair invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to introduce tonight's presenters.

Dr. Saba-Maguire invited the Quinn School Administration Team and Staff to come to the podium to deliver tonight's *Spotlight* presentation.

Principal Kyle Grandfield and Assistant Principals Audra Thomas and Stephanie Yermalovich provided background information on the video to be aired which will spotlight tonight's topic: being inclusive and unified as it relates to the Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS) and Peer Assistance Leadership and Service PALS program classrooms at Quinn.

The following Quinn teachers whose work will be highlighted as well as providing "voice-overs" in tonight's video were in attendance: Stephanie Melo (PALS teacher); Corie Deus (Occupational Therapist); Sandy Alpoim-Raposo (Speech Language Pathologist (SLP); Kim Carreiro (PALS teacher); Lindsey Vafides (PASS teacher); and Katie Noyes (Psychologist). Not in attendance: Maryann Sorenson (SLP) and Michael Cappello (Adaptive Physical Education teacher.)

It was noted in the video that the Unified Games or School Day Games which promotes inclusion and creates awareness will be held on May 17th at Dartmouth High School.

It was noted in the video that this year adaptive music and art were added to the schedule.

Ms. Coughlin asked how long the school has utilized technology for communication, does every student who needs or would benefit from that technology have access to it and are there funding “gaps.”

Ms. Alpoim-Raposo responded that families sometimes are not aware that devices can be paid for through insurance and Dartmouth has helped to facilitate that process with families to access devices for home use as well as school use.

Ms. Beckwith commented on the “range” of student “outings” and asked approximately how many the school does per year.

Ms. Melo responded that Mr. Cappello organizes the student outings and the “cycle” for each class is approximately once every month and a half.

Dr. Saba-Maguire complimented the school and instructors on their work with students in the program classrooms particularly how students are integrated into the greater school community.

PRESENTATION

Dartmouth PreK Program Overview: Mrs. Amaral invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to introduce tonight’s presentation.

Dr. Saba-Maguire introduced Laurie Dionisio, Director of Student Services, who will explain the Dartmouth PreK Program.

Mrs. Dionisio provided an overview of the Dartmouth PreK Program explaining the “Why,” the “What” and the “How.”

Mrs. Dionisio stated we do not have “universal” preschool; however, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities fall under the purview of public education at age 3 and districts are required by law to ensure developmentally appropriate early childhood special education (ECSE) programs and services.

Mrs. Dionisio stated the Early Childhood Special Education is a department within the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) which guides the work for those programs including all children with disabilities have a free and appropriate public education (FAPE.)

Mrs. Dionisio explained what the law and DESE requirements mean for Dartmouth’s preschool program noting, so far this school year, the district completed 70 evaluations for preschool aged students some of these students will receive services only particularly speech and language assistance.

Mrs. Dionisio explained that the district provides preschool education through “inclusive” practices which means students with disabilities learn along-side typically developing peers.

Mrs. Dionisio reported Dartmouth has 8 integrated classrooms (7 at Cushman School and 1 at Potter School) and noted each classroom has 7 seats for students with disabilities and 8 peer partner seats.

Mrs. Dionisio explained “rolling admission” and the “lottery” process stating the 2024-2025 school year currently has 42 open peer seats and 21 open special education spots.

Ms. Coughlin asked about the peer partners and the ratio; is it a mandated ratio.

Mrs. Dionisio stated DESE sets the ratio adding there are other ratios but Dartmouth “sticks” with the 7 to 8 model.

Ms. Coughlin asked if parents of peer partners are aware of the ratio.

Mrs. Dionisio stated she is not sure how well known that is but it is part of the reason for her presentation this evening adding the information is part of the preschool presentation.

Mr. Oliver stated he would like to see these kinds of highlights throughout the school year to showcase what the district does for the students of Dartmouth.

Mrs. Amaral thanked Mrs. Dionisio for her presentation adding that the necessary and required services provided by the PreK program are expensive.

Dr. Saba-Maguire responded to the comment about the lack of universal preschool stating there is a lot of attention on universal PreK at the federal level which is “trickling down” to the state level and provided information around that work including MA CCPI grants (Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative) which is meant to expand opportunities for access to PreK in collaboration and partnership with local child care providers and how that funding might help us to expand PreK in Dartmouth.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMITTEE

Appointment of Chair:

Mrs. Amaral invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to address the matter.

Dr. Saba-Maguire sought nominations for Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to nominate Chris Oliver as Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee for the next school year. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

No further nominations being offered, nominations were closed and Mr. Oliver was appointed Chair of the School Committee.

Mr. Oliver accepted the appointment and provided a few comments and welcomed Mary Beckwith the recently elected school committee member.

Ms. Beckwith provided brief comments and is looking forward to doing this work for the town of Dartmouth.

Appointment of Vice Chair:

Mr. Oliver sought nominations for Vice-Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to nominate Elizabeth Coughlin as Vice-Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

No further nominations being offered, nominations were closed and Ms. Coughlin was appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Ms. Coughlin accepted the appointment.

Appointment of Secretary:

Mr. Nunes, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to appoint Dr. Saba-Maguire, Superintendent of Schools, as Secretary to the School Committee. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Saba-Maguire accepted the appointment.

Chairperson Comments:

Mr. Oliver provided brief comments.

School Committee Assignments:

Policy Committee	Mrs. Amaral & Ms. Beckwith
Fields & Facilities Committee	Mr. Nunes & Mrs. Amaral
Budget Committee	Ms. Coughlin & Mr. Oliver (Mr. Nunes back-up)
Dartmouth Education Foundation	Ms. Coughlin
Southern MA Educational Collaborative	Mr. Oliver
MA Association of School Committees	Mr. Nunes
Negotiations Representative	Mr. Nunes (Mrs. Amaral and Ms. Beckwith - back-up)
Technology Committee	Mr. Oliver
Town Charter Committee	Ms. Coughlin and Heidi Brooks
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee	no appointments were made at this time
Town Open Space and Recreation Plan Steering Committee	Mr. Nunes (Ms. Coughlin alternate)
Curriculum Council	Ms. Beckwith

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated “we” can update the committee on the district’s work as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Mr. Oliver asked that our policy and budget sub-committees have standing meetings scheduled every other month or quarterly.

School Assignments:

Mrs. Amaral asked whether or not the school administrators would prefer to have a school committee member assigned to their school.

Mr. Oliver asked Dr. Saba-Maguire if she could send out an email to get some feedback from school administrators.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated she would check in with administrators for their feedback.

Mr. Oliver took the opportunity to thank Mrs. Amaral for her service and spoke briefly about his thoughts about the upcoming year and his concerns about the Town Finance Committee's recent comments directed at the school district's budget.

OLD BUSINESS

FY25 Budget - Vote: Mr. Oliver invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to speak on the proposed FY25 Budget.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated we have been having this discussion since December and thanked Mr. Kiely for his transparency as well as his patience to explain every detail of this budget.

Mr. Kiely thanked Dr. Saba-Maguire for her kind words and asked the Committee for a vote on the FY25 budget noting the motion process.

Mr. Oliver recommended that "we" invite Finance Committee members to attend our budget sub-committee meetings, as well as the Town Finance Director and Town Administrator.

Mr. Oliver stated he would like to see the school department extend an invitation to elected and appointed Town officials to tour schools in the district so that it can be seen what is happening within classrooms now and not how "we" remember them.

Mr. Oliver stated he would like to see a better working relationship across the town.

Mr. Nunes responded to statements made by Finance Committee members at its last meeting and stated he thinks tonight's video and presentation should be sent to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Oliver agreed.

Ms. Coughlin stated she endorses this budget.

Ms. Beckwith stated she is very appreciative of the amount of detail provided over the course of the budget process.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve the FY25 budget appropriation for Potter School Classroom Teachers in the amount of \$2,013,111.00. The motion passed: 4-0. Mr. Oliver abstained.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the FY25 budget appropriation for the total budget, excluding the item voted individually in the previous motion, in the amount of \$51,143,727.54. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the District.

-MCAS Update

-Kindergarten Registration Reminder – Kindergarten Showcase at Quinn School on May 15th

-Strategic Planning Update (over 37 people participating in the process (including a core group that was previously involved in strategic planning as well as parents, students, school committee members as well as other Town officials adding not all 37 people are working on the same thing)

-HR Update

-Climate and Culture Update – 367 students are participating in Spring Sports Update; DMS author visit; 4 DHS TV Media students will be recognized on April 30th at Children's Hospital in Boston for their burn awareness video

Report of the Chair: The Chair had nothing further to report.

-Band Update

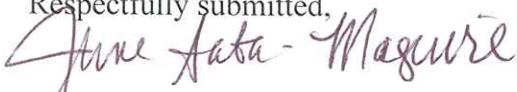
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School on Monday, April 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to adjourn at 7:51 p.m. into Executive Session for the purpose Union Personnel Matters and not to return to open session. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously; 5-0: Ms. Amaral – Yes; Mr. Oliver – Yes; Ms. Coughlin; Ms. Beckwith - Yes and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



June Saba-Maguire, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Agenda

Brief

Regular Session Minutes for March 25, 2024

Spotlight on Kids (Quinn) – Video

PreK Program Overview PPP

SC Policy – BDA School Committee Organizational Meeting

Current SC Officer Roster and Committee Assignments

Memo – Budget Votes