

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

**November 4, 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 Chris Oliver 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: Chris Oliver, Elizabeth Coughlin, Mary Beckwith, Kathleen Amaral and John Nunes.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment was offered.

**Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:** Mr. Oliver noted the following recognition was not known at the time tonight's agenda was posted.

Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Dr. Audra Thomas, Interim Principal of the Quinn Elementary School, to recognize staff members for their efforts last Friday.

Dr. Thomas recognized Sarah Martin and Alexandra Whitney, education support professionals at Quinn School, for their quick response performing the Heimlich maneuver on a student in the cafeteria last Friday all without incident or other students realizing what was happening.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of October 21, 2024 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

A student representative report was not given.

**PRESENTATION**

**Overview of MCAS Results:** Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Catherine Pavao and Ross Thibault, Directors of Teaching and Learning/Secondary and Elementary Levels respectively, to provide an overview of Dartmouth's recently released MCAS results.

Dr. Saba-Maguire referenced the upcoming State ballot question that addresses MCAS being used as a graduation requirement adding the focus of tonight's presentation is how Dartmouth students fared because, regardless of the outcome of tomorrow's ballot vote, MCAS testing is not going away and we will continue to administer the test as it is an important measure of how students are doing academically and for us to continue to monitor student progress toward meeting the standards.

Mrs. Pavao and Dr. Thibault described what MCAS is noting the grade levels the test is administered to as well as subject matters and why it matters including accountability for schools and school districts.

Dr. Thibault stated MCAS results should be looked at in the context of how the test was administered over the past 5 years due to the effects of the pandemic on learning noting students just entering the “testing window” were in PreK and kindergarten when the pandemic “hit.”

Mrs. Pavao provided an overview of statewide MCAS results and trends providing reasons for changes; the results for Dartmouth show the District out-performing the State in certain areas.

Dr. Thibault noted the Grade 10 results were level or above the State’s results highlighting the positive growth (11%) made on the science and technology MCAS.

Dr. Thibault reported on the growth of high needs students in Dartmouth as out-performing the State: the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defines high needs students as students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and students who have received English as a second language instruction.

Mrs. Pavao and Dr. Thibault examined the data with Dartmouth’s DART schools (District Analysis and Review Tool); districts with similar demographics including enrollment and low-income percentage.

Mrs. Pavao and Dr. Thibault explained what the District does with MCAS data including how it informs instructional practices and intervention services for students in need particularly in the elementary level where foundational skills are learned noting teaching staff are looking at data for all grade levels not just those grades who take the MCAS.

Mrs. Pavao announced the Quinn Elementary School was named a *DESE School of Recognition* this year; each year DESE recognizes schools that have achieved progress toward their accountability targets.

Ms. Coughlin thanked the Directors for their presentation noting the District surpasses the State MCAS averages and asked what the District is not able to do because of budget constraints.

Dr. Saba-Maguire responded noting the importance of Ms. Coughlin’s question adding it is closely tied to the District’s Strategic Plan noting how effective “we” will be implementing the plan is closely tied to “our” budget.

Ms. Beckwith asked about the data the District will be focused on next year as it relates to the curriculum pilots being conducted.

Mrs. Pavao responded noting the implementation “dip” and how it will affect data across grade levels; we need to be “cautious” but at the same time looking “long range” when analyzing at the data.

Mr. Nunes asked about DESE not releasing test questions as it has in the past; how will the District prepare students.

Dr. Thibault and Mrs. Pavao responded that that is a challenge but information about the MCAS test will be provided by the State and the District will focus on where it needs to improve.

Mrs. Amaral asked about MCAS retake tests.

Dr. Thibault responded noting the new format of MCAS (NextGen) implemented just before the pandemic and provided a brief explanation of the State’s competency data.

Dr. Saba-Maguire added that students have multiple opportunities to retake the MCAS.

Mr. Oliver thanked the Directors for their presentation adding the State data indicates school districts with higher MCAS scores have greater per pupil expenditure (PPE).

### OLD BUSINESS

**Preliminary FY26 Budget – Update on Budget Discussions:** Mr. Kiely reported a Budget Sub-Committee meeting was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> when discussions on “where we are at number-wise” were begun stressing those discussions are preliminary.

Mr. Kiely stated we will continue developing a draft FY26 budget until we are ready to present a budget proposal adding conversations have begun with the Town Administration which are going well and hopefully we can “problem solve” together as we move forward.

**Massachusetts Association of School Committees (M.A.S.C.) Resolutions Discussion:** Mr. Oliver opened continuing discussion on the matter in preparation for the annual Delegate Assembly in November.

The Committee explained its reasoning for abstaining noting it does not necessarily agree or disagree with a given resolution rather the focus of resolutions should be on matters that support all school districts within the state.

-M.A.S.C. Resolution #5: The Committee agreed to abstain from voting on this resolution.

-M.A.S.C. Resolution #6: The Committee changed its initial response and agreed to abstain from voting on this resolution.

-M.A.S.C. Resolution #8: The Committee agreed to abstain from voting on this resolution.

-M.A.S.C. Resolution #9: The Committee agreed to abstain from voting on this resolution.

-M.A.S.C. Resolution #10: The Committee agreed to abstain from voting on this resolution.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Superintendent’s Evaluation:** Mr. Oliver invited Mr. Nunes to open discussion on the matter.

Mr. Nunes thanked Committee members for their comments and Ms. Amaral in particular adding he and Ms. Amaral had a Zoom meeting with Dr. Saba-Maguire this afternoon to go over the evaluation.

Mr. Nunes explained the evaluation process.

Mr. Nunes read some of the comments and terms the Committee members used to describe Dr. Saba-Maguire and her work completed in her first year: dedicated to building “buy-in” from all stakeholders beginning with staff in the classroom, families and community members; high level skill articulating goals, seeking information and synthesizing qualitative and quantitative data; everything stands on the foundation of ethics; Committee members described Dr. Saba-Maguire as effective, intentional, strategic, available and supportive.

Mr. Nunes read the Superintendent’s Evaluation results reporting Dr. Saba-Maguire has met and was found proficient in all goals and standards in all categories adding the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defines “proficient” practice to be fully satisfactory; the expected rigorous level of performance.

Mrs. Amaral did note that some committee members did score Dr. Saba-Maguire as exemplary in certain areas adding the final score is an average of submissions from all committee members.

Mr. Oliver thanked Dr. Saba-Maguire for a successful first year; we look forward to many more.

Dr. Saba-Maguire thanked the Committee for its comments and support as well as expressing her excitement as she looks forward to continuing the work with the School Committee as well as Central Office Administrators, District Administrators, Union leadership, educators, families, staff and Town Officials building and improving on what has been achieved in this first year.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the Superintendent's Evaluation as written. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

**Superintendent's Update:** Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information of work being done in the district that is aligned to the District Strategic Plan as well as current activities and events that are happening.

**-Teacher and Learning Update:** Dr. Saba-Maguire provided a brief update on curriculum pilots; reported the District has been accepted to participate in the *Project 351 Initiative* for this year.

**-Budget and Capital Improvement Update:** HR update; Mr. Kiely reported the District along with the input of District Administrators is working on the FY26-FY35 Capital Improvement Plan and will bring a plan to the Committee.

**-Safe and Supportive Schools Update:** Dr. Saba-Maguire noted Kim Redlon, Assistant Director of Student Services, will lead the first meeting of the District Crisis Team on Wednesday; updates will be provided at a future school committee meeting.

**-Family and Community Engagement Update:** Dr. Saba-Maguire provided an update on student, family and community events held to introduce the District's Strategic Plan to the school and greater Dartmouth community including the Community Forum held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> as well as through an episode of *What's Cooking Dartmouth* filmed with DCTV on October 28<sup>th</sup>; DHS open house held; Unified Halloween Ball held at DHS. Jonathan Gallishaw, Chief Technology Officer, provided an update on the District's new website stating it will go "live" tomorrow; Sports Update.

**Report of the Chair:** The Chair proposed not meeting on November 25, 2024 due to the holiday and light agenda. The Committee agreed to not meet on November 25, 2024.

-Band Update

### NEXT MEETING

**Next Meeting:** The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School and via live stream at [www.youtube.com/dhstvmedia](http://www.youtube.com/dhstvmedia) on Monday, December 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to adjourn from Open Session at 7:49 p.m. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



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

### **Open Session - Documents/Exhibits**

Agenda

Brief

Regular Session Minutes for October 21, 2024

Presentation – Overview of MCAS Results

M.A.S.C. Resolutions

Superintendent's Evaluation