

APPROVED

September 4, 2019

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

The September 4, 2019 School Committee (SC) meeting was called to order by Brett Argall at 7:00 PM. He reported that the meeting is being broadcast live and recorded for future rebroadcasting.

School Committee Members present: Brett Argall (Chair), Lisa Brown (Secretary), Becky Charniak, Kelli Grady (Vice Chair), Julie Moulder

School Committee Members Absent:

Non-Voting: Business & Operations Manager Cortney Keegan, Superintendent Kevin Maines

Pledge of Allegiance

Student Representative Report

There was no report.

Public Comment & Communication

There was no comment.

Old Business/New Business

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Superintendent Maines stated that 2 treadmills and 2 ellipticals in the fitness room have been declared no longer usable. They are at least 15 years old. A plan needs to be developed to replace them at a cost of approximately \$18,000.

Superintendent's Report

Opening Day Update

Superintendent Maines clarified that new hires are not all new positions. Many new hires are replacements for staff for which there was a retirement or otherwise did not return to Douglas. Each principal joined the meeting and spoke about Opening Day, enrollment and new hires in their respective schools, including how well the buildings and grounds were prepared, enthusiastic staff and students, and new schedules which include common planning time. Overall, everything went well on opening day.

Ms. Socha of DPS stated that the total enrollment is 251: 61 pre-k, 98 in kindergarten (19-20/class), 92 first grade students (23/class), 14 teachers, and 15 paraprofessionals/ABAs. New hires included the replacement of a school nurse, replacement for a retirement, a new kindergarten teacher, a kindergarten teacher to replace a retirement, and a replacement for a Special Education teacher.

Mr. Bell of DES stated that the total enrollment is 363, 22 of whom are new to the district. There are 79 students in second grade, 96 in each of third and fourth grades, and 92 in fifth grade. He requested that fifth grade be closed to School Choice students. Class sizes range from 19-25 students/class. Hires since the last meeting include an inclusion paraprofessional and a Flex paraprofessional.

Ms. Urquhart joined the meeting and stated that there are currently 262 Special Education students, 89 of whom are on section 504 plans, and many new hires. The Flex Center program exists across the district. She encouraged families to attend the DPAC meetings. She would like to add an annual discussion regarding Child Find. Her discussion included, Best Buddies, the Unified Sports Program, and mid-cycle review due next year. She stated that Teen Night Out for this Friday has been cancelled due to the threat of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

Mr. Delaney of DMS stated that the total enrollment is 309: 84 in sixth grade, 106 in seventh grade, and 119 eighth grade. New hires include a teacher for the STEM program, a new eighth grade Special Education teacher, and a number of paraprofessionals.

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Mr. Romano of DHS stated that the total enrollment 372: 80 in ninth grade, 92 in tenth grade, 93 in eleventh grade, and 107 in twelfth grade. The only new hires are a new Special Education teacher and three paraprofessionals. Two early challenges included EEE and the brief presence of a Swiss film crew. Mr. Romano spoke about new collaborative instruction, e-sports, a DHS fire drill record, and a full peer mentor program. DHS is piloting a new backpack policy where students can walk around school with their backpacks.

Ms. Moulder asked if there is a plan for random backpack checks. Mr. Romano stated that there are privacy laws that would not allow such searches.

Ms. Moulder asked for the policy regarding bug spray, specifically related to outdoor sports. Mr. Romano replied that the district cannot provide bug spray. Ms. Moulder suggested that perhaps the Athletic Boosters could provide bug spray. Mr. Romano suggested that the Team Moms could organize something.

Superintendent Maines stated that the School Choice number is 121 students: 11 at DPS, 29 at DES, 51 at DHS, and 30 at DMS. The following grades have already been closed for School Choice: kindergarten and grades 1, 3, 4, and 8. The following grades have openings: grades 2, 6 and the high school

-Ms. Grady made a motion to close grades 5 and 7 to School Choice for the remainder of the school year. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

Superintendent Maines reminded the public about parking at DES and DPS for Open House.

Enrollment Update

See "Opening Day" above.

New Hires Update

See "Opening Day" above.

School Committee & Sub-Committee Report

Accounts Payable Report

Ms. Brown stated that on 8/15/19 Ms. Charniak signed 4 batches totaling \$76,005.78 and on 8/22/19 she signed 5 batches totaling \$63,259.50.

Consent Agenda

Minutes: August 8 and August 14, 2019

Approval of the August 8, 2019 School Committee meeting minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

-Ms. Grady made a motion to approve the August 14, 2019 School Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-4, Ms. Moulder abstained.

DES-Disposal of Broken Furniture

Mr. Bell joined the meeting and asked to dispose of 17 broken student chairs and one desk.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the disposal of 17 student chairs and 1 student desk at the elementary school that are broken and beyond repair and have no salvage value. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

DES-Instrumental Music Lesson Changes

Mr. Bell joined the meeting and stated that 64 4th and 5th graders participated at the start of last year. Participation significantly declined over the year. Many instruments are not developmentally appropriate for 4th graders. Mr. Bell and the music staff recommend offering lessons to just the 5th grade and reducing the number of lessons from 7 to 5 per week. French horn will no longer be offered. They

are also recommending moving recorder instruction from 3rd to 4th grade. These changes will result in a savings of \$668.

Superintendent Maines has spoken with the Douglas Teachers Association (DTA) and they feel the reduction makes sense and the stipend will be reduced, however documentation has not yet been received.

Ms. Moulder and Mr. Argall spoke in favor of allowing an ambitious 4th grader to take instrument lessons. Mr. Bell agreed.

-Ms. Charniak made a motion to approve a reduction in the FY2020 DES before and after school instrumental music stipend from \$2,338 to \$1,670, a reduction of \$668, due to a reduction in the number of lessons from 7 to 5 per week and elimination of grade 4 lessons. This vote to take effect upon written approval from the Douglas Teachers Association. Ms. Moulder seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

DMS-Out-of-State Cross Country Meet

Mr. Delaney joined the meeting and asked for permission for the DMS cross country team to travel to RI to compete in an invitational. Due to the threat of EEE, no one will be running in the woods.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the DMS cross country team's travel to North Kingston, Rhode Island on 9/27/19. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

DMS-Best Buddies Stipend

Mr. Delaney joined the meeting. He stated that Best Buddies is continuing on from last year and has the opportunity to extend into DHS with unified sports.

-Ms. Grady made a motion to approve a stipend in the amount of \$701 for the DMS Best Buddies advisor beginning the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

DHS-Disposal of Damaged Computer Tables

Mr. Romano joined the meeting and asked to dispose of damaged computer tables.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the disposal of 4 computer tables at the high school that are unusable and have no salvage value. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

School Business and Operations Manager Report

Other Business

Ms. Keegan approved two Saturdays of overtime for those working to get the schools ready to open for the year. The School Lunch Program prepared an Opening Day breakfast. Ms. Keegan, Superintendent Maines and all the SC members thanked everyone involved in getting the schools and grounds ready for Opening Day.

Transfers and Reclassifications

There were no transfers or reclassifications.

School Bus Transportation Update

Ms. Keegan stated that they did not need to use the bus they had on standby. There was crowding on bus #11, however the issue has been resolved as Tellstone will use a 47-passenger bus at no additional charge. Bus #2 on the DES route was late the first few days, and Tellstone has made some adjustments to correct that issue.

Neither Superintendent Maines nor Ms. Keegan are aware of increased traffic concerns or issues caused by the reduction in the number of routes.

Other Topics

Superintendent Maines stated that he received an email that states that the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's FY2020 budget appropriation includes an earmark of not less than \$45,000 to be expended for technology upgrades for the Douglas Public Schools District. This money will be used

to purchase Chromebooks for DMS. The Chromebooks purchased through the School Choice budget arrived yesterday.

Mr. Romano joined the meeting with a request from the cross country coach asking to hold practice this Saturday morning in Thompson, CT due to the EEE threat. Students would provide their own transportation. Mr. Romano will check with Thompson's Board of Health before the weekend to be sure there is no EEE threat

-Ms. Charniak made a motion to approve the DHS cross country team's travel to Thompson, CT to practice as long as there is no EEE threat. Ms. Moulder seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

Adjournment

-Ms. Moulder made a motion at 8:04 PM to adjourn the School Committee meeting. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary