

APPROVED

April 1, 2020

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

*The April 1, 2020 School Committee (SC) meeting was called to order by Brett Argall at 7:00 PM. He reported that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting is being streamed live on YouTube, broadcast through Facebook, and recorded for future rebroadcasting. Participants were invited to join the meeting remotely (Zoom).*

*School Committee Members present: Brett Argall (Chair), Lisa Brown (Secretary), Becky Charniak (joined 7:26 PM), Kelli Grady (Vice Chair), Julie Moulder*

*School Committee Members Absent:*

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

### **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:* There was no new business.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### **COVID-19 Response**

*Superintendent Maines stated that the State has declared that schools are to remain closed until 5/4/20. He summarized his email/letter to parents and staff, which emphasized the district's commitment to continuity of education, the importance of communication, and MCAS status. He asked the school principals to reach out to teachers to see if they would consider doing a short video to reach out to students and staff, and to keep a record of all they do.*

*The State has received a federal waiver for mandated competence exams. Superintendent Maines has not heard back from the State as to whether or not they will waive this year's MCAS. Mr. Romano stated that the AP exams will be done online and will be abbreviated.*

*Superintendent Maines next spoke about remote learning, which takes advantage of a number of different vehicles to bring lessons to the students. Mr. Romano, Mr. Delaney, Ms. Socha and Mr. Bell spoke about how each of their schools is approaching remote learning. Mr. Delaney stated that the students know that nothing they do now is mandatory or graded. Grading will consist of credit and no credit. Ms. Urquhart spoke about how her team is reaching out to families of Special Education students.*

*Superintendent Maines summarized the Commissioner's letter, which has been posted on the website.*

*Superintendent Maines asked for the SC members' feedback on how they and their students are handling the remote learning and social distancing. Overall, everything is going well.*

*Ms. Sousa stated that there are some recourses available to help secure technology connectivity. Ms. Sousa suggested a One Call with the phone number for Spectrum be sent out to reach students with connectivity issues. A discussion was held regarding the use of One Call.*

*The Grab and-go meals will continue for pick up at DES.*

*Students will be receiving most of their money back for the cancelled Disney trip.*

*Mr. Romano stated that the Prom has been moved to 6/7/20. All students will be asked to sign the off-site guest waiver. The current date for graduation is 6/7/20. Graduation may need to be moved to July or August.*

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Mr. Romano stated that seniors are anxious about losing prom and a graduation ceremony. It was the consensus of the SC to keep as many activities/ceremonies as possible.

*MIAA is attempting to save the spring season and have assembled an abbreviated season to start and playoff system.*

Ms. Charniak stated that some parents of students with health issues have expressed that they will not send their children back to school for the remainder of the school year should school resume. Superintendent Maines will pose that situation to the Superintendent's Commission.

#### FY2021 Budget Considerations

Mr. Argall stated that the Board of Selectmen have not made a decision regarding the annual town meeting and budget process. They all agree that the date of May 4 will need to be moved, however they do not know when. There was some talk of moving Town Meeting out to September, 2020. This would leave the Town and School District operating on a 1/12 budget for FY2021.

Superintendent Maines stated that how deep the cuts have to be needs to be known. Contractually, any reduction in force needs to be notified by 6/1/20. Reduction in Force letters may need to be issued, and they may need to reduce, and then hire back.

The last they heard, the Town was planning for a 2% increase over FY2020's appropriation. Mr. Argall stated that a 2%, 1%, and 0% increase over FY2020 will need to be prepared. Ms. Keegan does not feel that a 0% budget would meet Net School Spending requirements. Mr. Argall asked if the 6/1/20 notification date could be moved. Superintendent Maines stated that the latest possibility to move the notification to would be 6/19/20.

#### School Committee & Sub-Committee Report

##### Accounts Payable Report

Ms. Brown reported that on 3/12/20 she signed 7 batches totaling \$31,006.62, on 3/19/20 she signed 8 batches totaling \$146,072.02, and on 3/24/20 she signed 6 batches totaling \$418,282.74.

#### Consent Agenda

##### Minutes: March 4, & March 18, 2020

Mr. Argall asked Superintendent Maines to check for the February 25, 2020 minutes.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the March 4, 2020 School Committee meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the March 18, 2020 School Committee meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

##### Payment of School Dept. Employees through 5/3/20

*Mr. Argall stated that district employees are still working, the money is already budgeted, the discussion held at the last meeting still holds, and the Federal Relief Fund package requires that they continue to pay their employees if they are to see any financial relief.*

-Ms. Brown made a motion that the School Committee approve payment of salary and wages for all regular employees of Douglas Public Schools due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 health and emergency. Hourly employees will be paid their regularly scheduled hours. "Regular employee" is defined as those who have been appointed by the Superintendent of Schools for a specific, ongoing position with assigned regularly occurring hours. This does not include any day-to-day staff. This approval is for the period beginning Tuesday, April 7, 2020 through Sunday, May 3, 2020. Further votes may or may not be necessary going forward as the situation may change with guidance from the State or Federal Government as the situation evolves. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

### **School Business and Operations Manager Report**

#### **School Bus Transportation**

*Ms. Keegan stated that on Monday, there was a DESE teleconference regarding School Transportation. There is a nationwide concern that school bus companies could go out of business. DESE has conferred with the Dept. of Revenue and they have prepared a listing of one lead person to look for contractual language to amend the contract so that the bus companies can be paid a reasonable amount. Ms. Keegan will want Superintendent Maines and the SC's input, as well as legal counsel's input once something is proposed.*

#### **Special Education Update**

*Ms. Urquhart stated that all of the day schools that their Special Education students participate in are closed through May 4. When she gets an update for an out-of-district placement, she sends the update to Mr. Argall, Ms. Keegan, Superintendent Maines and others. Online resources and virtual opportunities are being provided to their students.*

*From the information she has received to date from DESE, Douglas will still be responsible for paying the out-of-district placements and "they" will reimburse Douglas as they would through Circuit Breaker. Residential programs are still open, except for Perkins School for the Blind. Ms. Keegan spoke about the Maintenance of Effort requirement. If Douglas does not meet that requirement, Douglas could lose a \$300,000 grant.*

#### **Transfers and Reclassifications**

There were no transfers or reclassifications.

#### **Other Topics**

Ms. Urquhart gave an update on Circuit Breaker. Extraordinary Relief was due this week. but has been extended to 4/13/20. She and her secretary, Lois, are participating in training.

#### **Future Meetings**

The next SC meetings are scheduled for 4/8/20, 5/6/20, and 5/20/20. Rep. McKenna and Sen. Fattman will be virtually attending the 4/8/20 meeting. The Town has a restriction of one Zoom meeting per night, and there may be a Zoning Board meeting on 4/8/20.

#### **Executive Session**

-Ms. Brown made a motion at PM to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining and litigation because the open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the committee. When the Executive Session is concluded, the public session will be adjourned and there will be no further public business conducted this evening. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall – Aye, Lisa Brown – Aye, Becky Charniak – Aye, Kelli Grady – Aye, Julie Moulder – Aye. The Executive Session will include Superintendent Maines and Ms. Urquhart.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Wright  
Recording Secretary