

APPROVED

April 8, 2020

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

The April 8, 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, Kelli Grady (Vice Chair), Julie Moulder

School Committee Members Absent:

Non-Voting: Business & Operations Manager Courtney Keegan, Superintendent Kevin Maines, Cindy Socha, Nealy Urquhart, Jon Bell, Desi Vega, Donna Sousa, Josh Romano, Brian Delaney, Julia Dunbar

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

Senator Fattman and Representative McKenna-Discussion

Mr. Argall stated that Sen. Fattman and Rep. McKenna felt it was too soon to come before the SC as much of the State's budget is still "up in the air." They hope to have information on the MCAS testing and the federal stimulus within a week or two. It was decided to invite the senator and representative to the 4/22/20 meeting.

Update on Superintendent Position

Mr. Argall stated that in the winter, an agreement was reached with Superintendent Maines to keep him on into FY2021 under a modified schedule with reduced hours and reduced pay. The contract was not signed, and the COVID-19 quarantine was instituted. Due to the extreme circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the modified schedule has been shelved, and it has been decided to start a superintendent search. Ms. Charniak and Ms. Moulder form the Superintendent Search Committee. Ms. Novick is the Field Coordinator with Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Tracy Novick, MASC Field Coordinator

Ms. Novick introduced herself and gave her background. MASC's cost for assisting in the search will be included as part of Douglas' MASC dues. She stated that it is challenging to do a new search and difficult to hire a new, permanent superintendent this late in the year. One option is to have MASC do the screening and present the options to the SC.

Discussions were held, including length of time for a superintendent to give notice to their current employer, interim terms, an interim vs. a permanent, and the search process.

Ms. Novick will put together a survey for the community.

Mr. Vega suggested that the district look for an interim superintendent and do a search to have someone in by January. A discussion was held. Ms. Charniak is worried that an interim may not be invested in Douglas. She asked if Superintendent Maines could stay on until the end of this year.

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Superintendent Maines said the limitation would be the number of hours he could work and the amount of money he could earn. Ms. Novick suggested looking into the governor's Emergency Declaration regarding the capacity of retirees to earn particular amounts of money.

Mr. Argall suggested another SC meeting Monday, April 13, 2020.

Ms. Novick spoke about the community survey. Ms. Novick left the meeting.

Ms. Moulder stated that she feels it is critical that the SC provides MASC with a list of what they are looking for in a superintendent. She would like the ability to also look through resumes. Superintendent Maines stated that he believes MASC would screen those that will not move forward to an interview. Mr. Argall suggested that they move forward with a community survey and use those results to create requirements to provide to MASC. MASC would use those requirements during screening and present finalists to the SC. Ms. Keegan suggested asking for clarification of the process. Ms. Socha suggested having MASC screen applicants that are clearly unqualified and present a list of semi-finalists to the SC.

It was decided to ask MASC to do an initial "weeding out" of applicants, then have Ms. Charniak and Ms. Moulder assemble a small search committee team to work with MASC to screen down to the finalists.

-Ms. Charniak made a motion to proceed with working with the Mass. Association of School Committees (MASC) on the search for a superintendent. 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 conduct a search for a full-time, permanent superintendent as opposed to a search for an interim superintendent with MASC. Ms. Moulder seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

Good Friday

Superintendent Maines reminded everyone that this Friday is designated a "no school" day. He has sent a letter out to parents.

April Vacation

Superintendent Maines stated that Commissioner Reilly stated that if any district wishes to continue remote learning through April vacation, those dates would count. If Douglas takes advantage of those four days, school would close on June 15, 2020. The Douglas Teachers Association (DTA) is 60/40 in favor of teaching through April vacation. A discussion was held.

Ms. Moulder and Mr. Delaney spoke in favor of teaching through April vacation. Ms. Charniak is concerned about teacher burn-out. Mr. Vega said that DTA President Mr. Riordan texted him and said that, based on the survey, 60% of the district's respondents wanted to work through April vacation, 25% didn't care, and only 15% wanted the April vacation. Mr. Delaney suggested a 4-day week this week and next. Ms. Brown was concerned about AP students losing ground. Mr. Romano is not concerned as the AP exams are going to be scaled back. A discussion was held.

Ms. Moulder made a motion to alter April Vacation by removing April 22, 23, and 24, 2020. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

Superintendent Maines will bring result to the DTA tomorrow for approval and will notify the SC if approved. If approved, he will send a notice out to parents. This change will move the district's final school day for FY2020 from June 19, 2020 to June 16, 2020.

Discussion on Stipend Position

If schools are able to resume for this school year, MIAA has agreed to an abridged sports season. Mr. Vega stated that it has been voted that there will be no State tournaments, just sectional tournaments. The question arose, if they do not resume school, will those stipend positions be funded? Superintendent Maines recommended waiting until early May to make a decision.

Mr. Delaney has spoken with DHS Athletic Director Ms. Sokol, and she stated that the coaches and athletic directors have done the work to prepare for a season. Mr. Delaney recommended they be paid something for services rendered.

Discussion of an Assistant Special Education Coordinator Position

See "Vote to Approve an Assistant Special Education Coordinator Position" under the Consent Agenda.

School Committee & Sub-Committee Report

Accounts Payable Report

Ms. Brown reported that on 3/24/20 she signed 6 batches totaling \$418,282.74 and on 3/31/20 she signed 7 batches totaling \$55,273.26.

Consent Agenda

Minutes: February 25 & April 1, 2020

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the February 25, 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 April 1, 2020 School Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

Vote to Approve District's Student Opportunity Act Proposal

Superintendent Maines stated that one of the requirements for the Student Opportunity Act funding is to submit a short form. They also submitted a three-year plan centered around the collaborative instructional model that started implementation at DHS last year and at DMS this year.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the district's Student Opportunity Act Proposal. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

Vote to Approve an Assistant Special Education Coordinator Position

Ms. Urquhart spoke about the responsibilities of her position and the Special Ed Coordinator position. She spoke about the demands and what is being adversely impacted. The largest increase in needs has been seen for social/emotional/mental health. Ms. Urquhart is proposing a district-wide Team Chair Position, to post immediately.

Ms. Keegan recommended that funding for this position would come from the Special Education Circuit Breaker Revolving Fund.

Superintendent Maines stated that the DTA is supportive of this position. If the hiring is internal, the hire would remain within the DTA contract. Ms. Urquhart stated that she trains the liaisons as Team Chairs.

Ms. Urquhart stated that this is a 183-day position. A discussion would need to be held regarding how adding this position would affect the workload now and over the summer. Currently, she is looking at a virtual model. Superintendent Maines feels that a couple of staff members would be needed over the summer.

Ms. Urquhart confirmed that the unfilled position of long-term sub is off the table.

-Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the addition of a 1.0 FTE Special Education Team Chair for the Office of Student Support Services, contingent upon successful agreement with the Douglas Teachers Association (DTA). This position will be a school-year position, 183 days. 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

Transfers and Reclassifications

There were no transfers or reclassifications.

Other Topics

Superintendent Maines apologized to the SC, the community and the EOC for any negative impacts caused by interaction with the Emergency Operations (EOC) Representatives. Mr. Argall summarized last night's Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Ms. Keegan hopes that the School Bus Transportation payment issues will be straightened out in the next couple of weeks. She forwarded information regarding discussions between Tellstone and a couple other school districts to Mr. Argall.

Ms. Grady stated that her son broke his Chromebook. He was told to use whatever he had available to do his schoolwork. She asked if there is a procedure to replace malfunctioning Chromebooks. Ms. Sousa replied that there is currently not a plan, however if it gets to a point where students are unable to do their work, perhaps something could be set up where students could swap out their Chromebooks. There are no extra Chromebooks available for DMS, but there are some available for DHS. Mr. Delaney stated that the work that they are doing with the students is hardware neutral. He would prefer that all exposure continue to be limited. Mr. Romano has heard from approximately four students with broken devices. He will forward the list to Ms. Sousa tomorrow so that the issue can be monitored.

Adjournment

-Ms. Charniak made a motion at 9:09 PM to adjourn the School Committee meeting. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall-Aye, Lisa Brown-Aye, Becky Charniak-Aye, Kelli Grady-Aye, Lisa Moulder-Aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary