

DANVERS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

February 14, 2022

School Committee Members Present: Eric Crane, Chair
Arthur Skarmeas, Secretary
Alice Campbell
Robin Doherty
Jeffrey Kay

VOTED: Temporary Changes to the Administrative Team - Mr. Skarmeas motioned to approve the six week contract naming Mary Wermers and Keith Taverna as Acting Co-Superintendents and asked that the Chair sign said contract. Mrs. Campbell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Acting Co-Superintendents' Extended Contracts - Mr. Skarmeas motioned to amend the above voted contract, extending it for an additional six week period. Mrs. Campbell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: North Shore Educational Consortium Board Member Appointment - Mr. Skarmeas motioned to appoint Mr. Taverna as the temporary North Shore Educational Consortium Board Member to represent Danvers. Dr. Doherty seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Holten Richmond Program of Studies - The Acting Co-Superintendents recommended the HRMS Program of Studies for a 2nd reading. Mr. Kay motioned to approve the Program of Studies. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Danvers High School Program of Studies - The Acting Co-Superintendents recommended the DHS Program of Studies for a 2nd reading. Mr. Kay motioned to approve the Program of Studies. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Consent Calendar- Mr. Skarmeas motioned to approve the Consent Calendar items as presented. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Minutes – (The Secretary) moved to approve and release the minutes from the January 24, 2022 regular meeting. Dr. Doherty seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Adjournment – Mr. Skarmeas moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:40 p.m. Mrs. Campbell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Regular Meeting Call to Order

Mr. Crane called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and the Danvers Public Schools Mission statement were recited. Mr. Crane inquired whether the meeting was being recorded by audience members, with an affirmation from Mark Zuberek, and announced that the meeting was being broadcast on DCAT.

II. ITEMS OF INTEREST

- A. Mrs. Campbell shared that she was able to get approval for all DECA students, regardless of vaccination status, to be able to participate in the upcoming event scheduled in Boston.

- B. Audience member, Mark Zuberek congratulated Mr. Taverna and Mrs. Wermers for their work as Acting Co-Superintendents but asked that more detailed information continue to be included and thanked them for improvements to the agenda.
- C. DeeDee Schiano, representing the NAACP's North Shore branch, informed the Committee that they have formed a Danvers ADHOC committee to understand and address the incidents that have happened in the District over the past years. Ms. Schiano said they are in a working partnership with the ADL and will share their work with the Attorney General's Office, stating their objective is to help the Community. Mr. Crane shared the Committee's intent to meet with the NAACP to assist in their endeavor.
- D. Audience member, Guy Onorio voiced questions and concerns regarding curriculum from Primary Source used for the elementary schools, noting the content is much too involved for young students and should be shared with middle or high school students. He asked that this be taken into consideration.

III. INFORMATION FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Reese MacDonald shared DHS Falconize win at the recent ICHSA competition moving them on to the semifinals and said that Dramafest will take place on March 20, 2022 at St. John's Prep.

IV. COVID STATISTICS AND NEXT STEPS

Mr. Taverna went over COVID statics and vaccination rates for the past 3 weeks. He shared the new Dashboard that is posted on the website giving real time updates. Results from the family/staff mask optional survey were presented noting 74% of families and 66% of staff members that participated felt masking should be optional come the February 28, 2022 DESE date to end the mask mandate. Mr. Taverna appreciated the high response rate to the survey and recommended that the Committee follow the latest DESE guidelines to make masking optional while continuing the mask mandate while on buses and in the health offices, as required by the federal government. He also said the mitigation strategies would continue. The Committee commented on the importance of showing respect to everyone whether choosing to wear a mask or not, noting each person has reasons for their choice. The Committee and the audience, as a whole, showed their approval and shared comments for this latest change.

V. INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Student/Personnel Privacy Laws Presentation - School Counsel, Rosann DiPietro gave a presentation regarding Public Record requests. She explained what a Public Record Request is, the request process of sending the request in writing to the Records Access Officer, timelines and the act of redacting. Attorney DiPietro said the reasons for redacting are to protect the identity of the student or staff involved. Any information that may assist in decoding the identity of those involved must be redacted. She explained the balance of the public's right to know and the employees expectation for privacy and also shared the exemptions noting that student records are always exempt. Questions from the Committee were answered.
- B. Strategic Plan - Mrs. Wermers gave a recap on the 3 pillars of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Taverna joined in and gave a presentation providing an overview of funding from the Covid response funding showing expenses made and to be made to the ESSER funds. These funds have, and will continue to, support programs put in place to exceleration student learning as well as behavioral and mental health supports. A breakdown, by elementary and secondary levels, of last year's and the 2 upcoming years were shown detailing the student support and professional development

options. The planning process of what worked well or did not work well was implemented with the determination of programs to fund in the upcoming year. The addition of teachers, aides and a behavior coach was touched upon. The proposed spending amount for FY23 was said to be \$1,225,114.00. The Committee commented and asked questions regarding funding of programming in future years. Student Representative Reese MacDonald gave her point of view on the increase in behavioral issues.

- C. Grant Update - Mr. Taverna reported on the status of grants noting they are approximately \$3,000,000 higher than the previous year due to the ESSER funding.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Changes in the Administrative Team - Mr. Crane shared that Dr. Dana has been on leave for six weeks and there is a need to retroactively approve a contract for the Acting Co-Superintendents that would run through February 14, 2022. Mr. Crane acknowledge the work Mrs. Wermers and Mr. Taverna has made the change relatively seamless, keeping the ball rolling. He also mentioned the amount of the stipend noted in the contracts. As voted
- B. Extension to Acting Co-Superintendents' Contracts - Mr. Crane shared the need to contemplate an extension for an additional eight weeks which would be considered a working agreement. As voted
- C. North Shore Educational Consortium Board Member Appointment - Mr. Crane informed the Committee that due to the Superintendent's leave of absence, a temporary board member must be appointed to represent Danvers. He asked Mr. Taverna if he would take that responsibility. As voted

VII. PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE DANVERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022-2023 BUDGET

Mr. Taverna and Mrs. Wermers gave a presentation of the draft FY23 DPS budget sharing details for both salaried and non-salary accounts and explaining the budget process. The Administrative Team answered questions asked by the Committee and audience members.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Holten Richmond Program of Studies - The Acting Co-Superintendents recommended the HRMS Program of Studies for a 2nd reading. As voted
- B. Danvers High School Program of Studies - The Acting Co-Superintendents recommended the the DHS Program of Studies for a 2nd reading. As voted

IX. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. Consent Agenda - motion to approve fundraising requests, homeschool requests and field trip requests as presented. As voted
- B. Minutes - (The Secretary) moved to approve and release the minutes from the January 24, 2022 regular meeting. As voted
- C. Communications

NEC - Mr. Taverna said the NEC budget process would begin on Monday with a draft ready for their March meeting.

Legislation – Mr. Crane shared Senator Lovely would be attending the March meeting.

Subcommittee/Liaison Update - Subcommittee/Liaison chart remains on the agenda as a point of reference.

Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - There was no update from the Curriculum & Instruction subcommittee this meeting.

Equity - There was no update from the Equity subcommittee this meeting.

Policy - Mr. Taverna commented that policy work would be taking place at next month's meeting.

DEEP – Mr. Skarmas announced Kalle Allen as the Spelling Bee winner, going 24 rounds. He also mentioned that the annual Wine Tasting would be held on October 27, 2022 and the next meeting would take place on the following Wednesday at 8:00 am at the Brookline Bank.

DanversCARES – Dr. Doherty revealed that Light the Night Purple will be taking place in the Spring and volunteers are welcome and needed and said that the Boston Bridges Grant Health and Unity event, focusing on healing reflection over the past year, is also looking for volunteers.

SEPAC - Mr. Taverna said they will be meeting this week with the Student Services Director to plan the next meeting.

DHRIC - Mr. Crane mentioned the joint effort in the Health and Unity event along with DanversCARES.

X. BUDGET and DONATIONS

Mr. Taverna shared the budget report for January 2022.

XI. PERSONNEL

Announcement of Resignations, Leaves of Absence and Appointments – Mr. Taverna presented his memo dated January 2022 sharing personnel changes.

The next meeting will be held on March 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m in the Multi-Purpose Room at HRMS.

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Skarmas, Secretary
Danvers School Committee