

**DANVERS SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

October 6, 2025

School Committee Members Present:

Michael Shannon, Chair
Eric Crane, Secretary
Sean Doherty
Gabe Lopes

VOTED Wellness Policy for a second reading - Mr. Crane moved to approve The Wellness Policy for a first reading. Mr. Doherty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: School Improvement Plans K-12 2025-2026: Mr. Crane moved to approve the School Improvement Plans K-12 2025-2026 as presented. Mr. Doherty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Policy IKFE - Competency Determination for a first reading: Mr. Crane moved to approve Policy IKFE - Competency Determination for a first reading. Mr. Lopes seconded. The vote was unanimous

VOTED: Policy JEB - Entrance Age for a first reading: Mr. Crane moved to approve Policy JEB - Entrance Age for a first reading. Mr. Lopes seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Minutes - Mr. Crane moved to approve and release the minutes from the August 11 and September 8, 2025 regular meeting and approve but not release the minutes from the September 8, 2025 Executive Session. Mr. Doherty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Consent Agenda: Mr. Crane moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Doherty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Adjournment – Mr. Crane moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Doherty seconded. The vote was unanimous.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Shannon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Danvers Public Schools Mission statement were recited. Mr. Shannon inquired whether the meeting was being recorded by audience members and announced that the meeting was being broadcast on DCAT. Channel 7 indicated they were recording the meeting.

II. ITEMS OF INTEREST

Community:

Mr. Jim Morose spoke to the Committee regarding social media posts. He expressed if there is an interest in starting a Turning Point chapter to go to their website for information.

Ms. Julie Bolduc DiFilippo provided the Committee with a quick SEPAC update. The recent unified basketball game is just one of the ways in which the community is supporting its students. Chronic absenteeism is still an issue when performing assessments to students.

Mr. Guy Onorio addressed the Committee in regards to a book currently in the 8th grade curriculum. His concern is there are over 200 inappropriate words in the book as well as underage drinking and drug use. He will be asking for a reconsideration of the book.

Danvers Teacher's Association - The Teacher Union read a statement to the Committee

expressing their concern with the objections to the first ELA unit of the school year. The curriculum is chosen by a Committee who does not take the topics lightly.

Mr. Mark Zuberick spoke to the committee on his belief that having more technical classes would bring more students to the district. He also believes that the state is controlling the curriculum and not the town.

Ms. Andrea Sherman has students in the 8th and 10th grades. She would like to speak to her approval of the book being read. It is her belief that this is an age appropriate award winning book. The content has conflicts which allows for dialogue on coping. St. John's Prep selected the book in 2018 and has had speaking engagements with the students over the years.

Ms. Deb Gesualdo works in Malden but lives in Danvers because of the school system. You cannot erase what you do not agree with. Sometimes you need to read the difficult text to learn how to engage in conversations and move past them.

Ms. Ellen Graham Need to be able to teach students to be able to critically think.

Christine Parker new resident to town. Need to be supportive to topics that are difficult.

Kerry was impressed with the choices at curriculum night. Kerry read the book herself - suggested to those who have not yet read it to read it along with their students.

Alyssa Devlin came in support of the teachers. She has a son in the grade and asked him what he thought about the book. He enjoyed the book. Having this curriculum ties to the mission statement.

School Committee member Gabe Lopes stated to those who are not in favor of the book - he hopes they have at least read the book. Books should challenge you to critically think. He thanked the teachers for their hard work. Mr. Crane stated that the teachers are professionals and are not choosing books to harm students. Have faith in the students who are reading the books. Mr. Doherty also stated he read the book and the language being used in the book is no different than how some students speak now. He applauds the teachers for taking up the conversations. Mr. Shannon thanked the community for their voices and for being respectful.

III. INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Student Representatives Report: Olivia Marshall and Nathan Silva updated the Committee on the events that have occurred so far in the district. DECA has begun their endeavors for the year, the junior and senior class had a combined homecoming dance in the courtyard and students attended an assembly on 504s. The band & color guard placed first place in their competition over the weekend. The concert band is trying a new program for this year. The big news was the unified basketball team. The community came together to support the team with over 800 spectators including cheerleaders, band and members of other sports teams to cheer them on. For seniors the college application process is in full swing.
- B. MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence Recognition: Superintendent Bauer asked Principal Strauss to introduce and say a few things regarding Joselyn Vogel. Mr. Strauss spoke to Joselyn's accomplishments while attending Danvers High School. From her academic standing to her participation in athletics. The Committee congratulated Joselyn on all her accomplishments.
- C. Branding, DHS transition and retention: Superintendent Bauer asked Principal Strauss and Colantuoni to speak on the efforts being made to address the transition from elementary to middle school as well as middle to high school and what has and is being done to help to retain the students currently enrolled. As well, what recruiting efforts are being made to have students come to the Danvers Public Schools.
- D. Bullying & Harassment Audit Findings: Superintendent Bauer introduced Attorney B. Patrick Nevins who provided the findings of the Bullying & Harassment Compliance Audit. Interviews were performed over the summer with a multitude of people. The interviews helped to identify strengths, areas of improvement as well as policies and procedures to be revised.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Financial Reports: Pam Crum presented the financial report to the Committee. The budget was

closed out in spite of the challenges. There continues to be challenges with transportation although there has been a collaborative effort with regards to the Consortium. The district has begun the year with an inhouse substitute program which will help to reduce costs.

- B. Wellness Policy: Mr. Crane moved to approve the DPS Wellness Policy for a second reading. Mr. Doherty seconded. As voted.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Curriculum, Instruction priorities and Assessment Data overview: Assistant Superintendent Anderson spoke to the Committee on the results of the assessments given in September/October. These results will help the district align the curriculum with areas that need support.
- B. School Improvement Plans K-12 2025-2026: Superintendent Bauer asked the three levels to present their improvement plans individually but the School Committee was going to vote on them as a whole. Mr. Crane moved to approve the School Improvement Plans K-12 2025-2026 as presented. Mr. Doherty seconded. As voted.
- C. Policy IKFE - Competency Determination for a first reading: Secondary Curriculum Director Peter DiMauro spoke to the change in the policy. Mr. Shannon asked how this change differs from the previous policy. Mr. DiMauro explained the additional criteria. Mr. Bauer added the recommendations to the additions are recommended from DESE. Mr. Crane moved to approve Policy IKFE - Competency Determination for a first reading. Mr. Lopes seconded. As voted.
- D. Policy JEB - Entrance Age for a first reading: Superintendent Bauer explained that as the current policy reads students must be 6 to enter grade 1. The proposed policy would allow for flexibility by the Principal where a child demonstrates readiness. Mr. Doherty explained this had been discussed at the subcommittee meeting. Mr. Crane motioned to approve Policy JEB - Entrance Age for a first reading. Mr. Lopes seconded. As voted.
- E. Superintendent Goals for 2025-2026: Superintendent Bauer presented his goals for the current school year. The goals are in line with the Strategic Plan with the addition of a 5th goal. This year the concentration is to support what has been put into place. Mr. Crane commented on the depth of the goals.
- F. October 1 Enrollment Report: Superintendent Bauer reported on the October 1 enrollment. Although the numbers appear to have declined, the numbers are up at the high school level as well as the retention of students going from middle to high school has increased. The middle school retention numbers have remained steady. The majority of the decrease in numbers are due to the EA students leaving the district.

VI. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. Minutes: Mr. Crane moved to approve and release the minutes from the August 11 and September 8, 2025 regular meeting and approve but not release the minutes from the September 8, 2025 Executive Session. Mr. Doherty seconded. As voted.
- B. Consent Agenda: Mr. Crane moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Doherty seconded the motion. As voted.
- B. Communications - none
- C. Legislation - Mr. Crane spoke with Representative Kearnes who reported the House is taking up the cell phone issue. Everyone is keeping an eye on the shutdown.
- D. Subcommittee/Liaison Update -
 - Curriculum & Assessment - No update
 - Policy -
 - Safety - The new safety broadcast system has been tested and is working
 - DEEP - No update
 - DanversCARES - No update
 - SEPAC - Previously given
 - DHRIC - Previously given

The next meeting will be held on November 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Eric Crane, Secretary
Danvers School Committee