

**DANVERS SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

October 19, 2015

Francis Mills Communication Center, E115, Danvers High School

School Committee Members Present: Eric Crane, Chair
Jeffrey Kay
Connie Pawlak
Arthur Skarmeas
David Thomson, Secretary

VOTED: Teacher Aides Contract – Mr. Thomson moved to approve signing the 2015-2018 Teacher Aides Contract. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Fundraising requests – Mr. Skarmeas moved to approve the fundraising request for the DHS class of 2016, DHS Ice Hockey team, DHS Football Cheering DHS Wrestling Team, and the HRMS Washington trip fundraiser . Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Overnight and Out-of-State Field Trip requests – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the overnight field trip request for 30 DHS students to attend the Model UN conference on March 18 – 20, 2016 in Boston, MA. and for 22 DHS Fine Arts students to travel to New York City, NY on May 5-6, 2016. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Minutes – Mr. Thomson moved to approve and release the September 14, 2015 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Adjournment – Mr. Thomson moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:38 p.m. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Crane called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and Mr. Crane read the DPS Mission statement. He inquired if anyone in the audience was recording the proceedings and identified Jeff Pope, Danvers Herald, in the audience as recording the meeting.

I. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT, COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY

Mrs. Pawlak reminded the committee of the DEEP Wine and Food tasting on October 29, 2015 at Danversport Yacht Club.

Gayla Bartlett spoke about the DCAT Halloween event “A Nightmare on Elm Street” food drive and activities.

II. INFORMATION FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – Olivia Thompson presented information from the seven Danvers schools.

III. INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

1. **MASS Academic Excellence Awards** – Dr. Dana presented the 2016 MASS Academic Excellence Awards to Danvers seniors, Kelly Lewis and Robert Parsons. Mrs. Ambrozavitch outlined both students’ accomplishments and Dr. Dana presented them with award certificates and displayed the name plaque that will be placed in the High School display case. The Committee congratulated the recipients.
2. **October 1, 2015 Enrollment Report** – Dr. Dana reviewed the enrollment numbers for the 15-16 school year by grade and the numbers in class sizes. Dr. Dana reported that enrollment data collected over the past eight years shows a difference of only 6 students. Dr. Dana also spoke about enrollment trends in out of district placements over time.

Mrs. Pawlak inquired about redistricting of the Elementary school districts. Dr. Dana stated that redistricting will not be necessary at this time, as the district re-assesses school enrollment needs on a yearly basis.

Mrs. Pawlak also inquired whether more aides were being hired to address the large 1st and 3rd grade classes. Dr. Dana stated that by reviewing data, needs for these classrooms were identified and addressed. She invited Riverside Principal, Violetta Powers, to speak about the new hires at Riverside who provide at least three hours of reading and teacher support daily to the 1st grade classrooms at Riverside.

- 3. Elementary Safety Planning Report** – Keith Taverna thanked the members of the Safety Team for their collaboration in preparing Safety plans for all of the schools. He reviewed the Safety planning done last year for HRMS and DHS and outlined the staff training and drills dates for the elementary schools. He also read an email from Sean Reardon, Principal of St. Mary's, who thanked DPS for including his school in the enhanced safety planning.

Principals Violetta Powers and Liz Matthews, along with Elementary Curriculum Director Julie Posterack, spoke about the grade level safety materials that teachers will use to instruct students on enhanced safety. All three presenters noted that they received many good feedback questions from teachers that helped with finalizing the materials.

Mr. Taverna noted that the Elementary safety team participated in Enhanced Safety training during the summer. Danvers Police Officer Steve Balldassarre spoke about the training and how the safety plans were tailored for the town.

The committee discussed placing the materials on the website, the location of the parent informational meeting, needs of the individual schools and concerns about specific aspects of the plans. Dr. Dana thanked the committee for their feedback.

- 4. Curriculum/Instruction Priorities & Student Achievement Data**

Curriculum Director Mary Wermers presented an overview of the district's student achievement data, noting that only the High School and 8th and 5th grade took MCAS testing last year, as PARCC testing was piloted for the other grades. She reviewed the DESE data for DHS English, Math and Science and the comparisons with the state averages. Ms. Wermers spoke about the lower science results in grades 5 & 8 and noted that the new science standards for the state will not be released until January 2016 so the district's priorities were focused more on ELA and Math last year. She stated that once the standards are released, the district can focus on aligning the science curriculum with the new standards.

Ms. Wermers outlined the timeline for the release of the state and district PARCC testing results. She stated that she would present the results after the December release to parents.

Professional development opportunities for the 15-16 school year were presented which included the focus on writing with K-12 Writing Workshops, the standards of math and science practice, Skillful Teacher and sheltered English instruction. Ms. Wermers informed the committee about specific work accomplished during professional development sessions.

The committee members discussed the importance of the test results, areas that have been identified that need improvement and prioritizing the needs in curriculum, teaching and assessment. Ms. Wermers, Dr. Dana and Mrs. Ambrozavitch fielded questions from the committee.

5. Fields Update

Mr. Taverna informed the committee about the progress being made on the Fields project with information about the turf, light posts, tennis courts and irrigation system. He stated that the project is still running on schedule.

6. Superintendent's Professional Practice Goal

Dr. Dana presented her professional practice goal for the 15-16 school year, focusing on communication through technology and person-to-person, achievement, community engagement and collaborative school cultures. Dr. Dana reflected on last year's goal and spoke about the accomplishments made by the district, which included a successful launch of all the school websites, work with DCAT, online registrations, online surveys, the high percentage of email communication with parents, Facebook and Twitter sites, e-newsletters and the rebranding of the Danvers Public Schools with a new logo.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Teacher Aides Contract – The Superintendent requested the Committee members' signatures on the 2015-2018 Teacher Aides Contract. All members signed both copies.

B. Fundraising requests – The Superintendent recommended the approval of fundraising requests for the DHS class of 2016, DHS Ice Hockey team, DHS Football Cheering DHS Wrestling Team, and the HRMS Washington trip fundraiser. As voted.

C. Overnight and Out-of-State Field Trip requests – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the overnight field trip request for 30 DHS students to attend the Model UN conference on March 18 – 20, 2016 in Boston, MA. The Superintendent also recommended the approval of 22 DHS Fine Arts students to travel to New York City, NY on May 5-6, 2016. As voted.

VI. ORDER OF BUSINESS

A - **Communications** – Dr. Dana reviewed the communications in the packet, which included a letter from NEASC regarding DHS accreditation and DanversCARES presentations. Mrs. Ambrozavitch spoke about the accreditation timeline.

B. **Legislation** – Mr. Crane stated that the bill requiring a moratorium on state testing is still in subcommittee. Dr. Dana spoke about proposed legislation for a screening tool in schools for opiates, PARCC decision from DESE on November 17th and the Governor's position on Charter Schools.

C. **Subcommittee/Liaison Update:**

DEEP – A reminder for the Wine and Food Tasting was given earlier in the meeting

Mrs. Pawlak asked the committee members for feedback on the MASC resolutions that she will be voting on at the MASC/MASS Conference in November.

SEPAC – Co-chair, Keri Holian- Smith spoke about the first meeting on Basic Rights, which she noted was very well attended. She reminded the committee about the November 4th meeting and the topic of managing difficult behaviors with Dr. David Stember.

VII. MINUTES – As voted

VIII. BUDGET

Mr. Taverna presented the final FY15 budget report, FY16 Adjustment report and the September 2015 monthly budget report. Mr. Taverna noted that due to homeless transportation costs, non-

salary lines needed to be looked at to fund those costs. He also stated that the adjustment report addressed changes in hiring during the summer, personnel changes and salary increases due to ratifications of new contracts.

The committee members discussed the homeless transportation costs and the expected amount reimbursement from the state. Mr. Taverna noted that the amount of homeless transportation was increased to \$281,000 due to reconciling invoices for transportation that identified additional students. Mr. Taverna also stated that the state will most likely only reimburse between 37% - 41% of the total costs.

IX. PERSONNEL

Announcement of Resignations, Leaves of Absence and Appointments – Mrs. Ambrozavitch presented her memo dated October 2015 and asked the committee to contact her with questions.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, November 9, 2015 at 7 p.m. in the Francis Mills Communication Center at Danvers High School.

Respectfully submitted,
David Thomson, Secretary
Danvers School Committee