

**DANVERS SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**

August 10, 2015

Francis Mills Communication Center, E115, Danvers High School

**School Committee Members Present:** Eric Crane  
Jeffrey Kay  
Arthur Skarmeas  
David Thomson

**VOTED:** Support of a 3-year moratorium on state testing – Mr. Skarmeas moved to support a 3-year moratorium on state-implemented testing as outlined in proposed MA House Bill 340. Mr. Thomson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** K-12 Student /Parent Handbooks – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the 2015-2016 K-12 Student/Parent Handbooks, second reading. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Domestic Violence Leave Policy – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the Domestic Violence Leave Policy, second reading. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** 2015-2016 Danvers Public Schools District Goals – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the 15-16 DPS District Goals, first reading. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** K-12 School Improvement Plans – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the K-12 School Improvement Plans, first reading. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Secretaries and Food Services contracts - Mr. Thomson moved to approve the contracts for the DPS Secretaries and Food Service workers. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Homeschooling Proposals – Mr. Thomson moved to approve seven home school proposals. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Out of State Field Trip Request – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the out of state field trip request for DHS students to travel to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador on April 15-23, 2016. Mr. Kay seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Fundraising requests – Mr. Thomson moved to approve the fundraising requests from the Danvers High School Football Team, Field Hockey Team, Volleyball team, girls & boys Soccer Team, Football Cheerleaders, the Galapagos Island trip fundraiser and class of 2019. The Superintendent also recommends approval of the 2015-2016 fundraising requests from Holten-Richmond Middle School, Riverside, Highlands, Great Oak and Thorpe Elementary schools. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Minutes – Mr. Thomson moved to approve and release the June 8, 2015 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**VOTED:** Adjournment – Mr. Thomson moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:25 p.m. Mr. Skarmeas seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

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

Mr. Crane announced that Mrs. Pawlak would not be in attendance at this meeting.

Mr. Crane also appointed members to all subcommittees for the 15-16 school year: Policy – Dave Thomson and Connie Pawlak; Negotiations – Arthur Skarmeas and Jeffrey Kay; Transportation – Arthur Skarmeas and Jeffrey Kay; Special Education – Eric Crane and David Thomson; SEPAC

Liaisons – Arthur Skarmeas and Jeffrey Kay; DanversCARES, DEEP and Wellness – Connie Pawlak; Legislation – Eric Crane; Signatory – Arthur Skarmeas; Secondary Signatory – David Thomson

## **II. INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1. Information on State Testing – Dr. Dana presented a position paper from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents on student assessments/testing. The paper focused on student testing as a whole, and did not take a position on what test should be used (i.e. PARCC vs. MCAS).

Mr. Crane inquired about MA House bill 340 and whether MASS took a position on that bill.

Mr. Crane invited discussion on whether the School Committee would support the moratorium on testing as outlined in H340 and whether there was a motion to support the bill.

Mr. Skarmeas moved to support a 3-year moratorium on state testing. The members discussed the specifics of the bill, including whether the tests would be administered, whether the results would be part of the teacher evaluation process and would the results be a graduation requirement. Dr. Dana did clarify that DESE needed to vote on what test would be administered, which is a separate issue from the proposed bill.

Mr. Skarmeas clarified that he was only making a motion to support a 3-year moratorium on state testing only and not to support the bill as a whole.

2. Fields Update – Mr. Taverna updated the committee on the schedule of project meetings and that the work has begun to demolish the tennis courts, the bleachers, fence removal, etc. Much of the ground work will be done before winter.

Mr. Thomson asked whether the Burley Street fields and JV soccer fields would still be available.

Mr. Taverna confirmed that they would still be in use. He stated that the project would be completed by June, 2016 for the high school graduation.

## **III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. K-12 Student /Parent Handbooks – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the proposed 2015-2016 Student /Parent Handbooks, second reading. As voted.

B. Domestic Violence Leave Policy, The Superintendent recommended the approval of the Domestic Violence Leave Policy, second reading. As voted.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. 2015-2016 Danvers Public Schools District Goals – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the 15-16 District goals, first reading. As voted.

Dr. Dana and Curriculum Director, Mary Wermers, answered specific questions from the committee members regarding specific goals and actions in each of the four themes of the strategic plan.

Ms. Wermers spoke about the district's new Writing Initiative for the 15-16 school year and the ability to give students immediate feedback on their writing. She also noted that the 1:1 Chromebook Initiative at HRMS will allow for "real time" feedback from teachers to students to assist them with their writing. She outlined the timeline for rolling out the initiative with regards to professional development and the skills necessary for teaching writing. Mr. Thomson expressed the need for emphasizing spelling in conjunction with teaching writing skills.

Dr. Dana noted that the Theme 2 administrative team focused on communicating better with parents on the work being done by the curriculum department as part of the 15-16 goals.

Mr. Skarmeas asked about technology and how the websites would be used to increase communication. Dr. Dana outlined plans for direct Twitter feeds to parents; continuing the use of ConnectEd; creating pages on the individual schools' websites for each grade; registrations;

Facebook postings; homework assignments posted on the websites. She also noted that the district is investigating a mobile app for parents to connect them with the district. The successes of all these would be measured by Google Analytics and through the Perspective on the Schools and District surveys.

Mrs. Ambrozavitch spoke about the partnership between DCAT and the district and ideas discussed to promote the district throughout the school year through video productions. She also outlined the timeline/process for DHS accreditation.

- B. K-12 School Improvement Plans– The Superintendent recommended the approval of the proposed 2015-2016 School Improvement Plans, first reading. As voted.

Dr. Dana stated that she hoped the committee members would see the connections between the district goals/strategic plan and the individual school improvement plans.

All of the committee members stated how pleased they were with the plans, the connections made, the emphasis on writing in all of the plans and the use of technology.

Julie Posternack addressed the committee to explain the Writing Workshop process to be used in the elementary classrooms.

Mr. Crane expressed his gratitude to all of the administrators for their work in preparing the school improvement plans.

- C. Secretaries and Food Services contracts – The Superintendent recommended approving the contracts of the DPS Secretaries and the Food Services department. As voted. Mr. Crane thanked the administrators for their work in negotiating the contracts, which are in line with the new teachers’ contract.

- D. Homeschooling Proposals – The Superintendent recommended the approval of seven homeschool proposals. As voted.

- E. Open Meeting Law – The Superintendent requested the signatures of the School Committee members on the Open Meeting Law Certificates of Receipt. The four attending committee members submitted their signatures to be given to the Danvers Town Clerk.

- F. Out of state field trip request– The Superintendent recommended the approval of DHS students (TBD) to travel to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador on April 15 – 23, 2016. As voted.

- G. Fundraising requests – The Superintendent recommended the approval of fundraising requests from the Danvers High School Football Team, Field Hockey Team, Volleyball team, girls & boys Soccer Team, Football Cheerleaders, the Galapagos Island trip fundraiser and class of 2019. The Superintendent also recommends approval of the 2015-2016 fundraising requests from Holten-Richmond Middle School, Riverside, Highlands, Great Oak and Thorpe Elementary schools. As voted.

## V. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- A - **Communications** – Dr. Dana reviewed the communications in the packet, which included thank you notes from DHS scholarship recipients.

- B. **Legislation** – none

- C. **Subcommittee/Liaison Update**: - none

DEEP – Dr. Dana reminded the committee member of the DEEP Winetasting in October.

DanversCARES – Dr. Dana stated that DanversCARES is in the process of interviewing for the Assistant Director position.

**VI. MINUTES** – As voted

**VII. PERSONNEL**

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

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, September 14, 2015 at 7 p.m. in the Francis Mills Communication Center at Danvers High School.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Thomson, Secretary  
Danvers School Committee