

**DANVERS SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

April 10, 2017

Francis Mills Communication Center, E115, Danvers High School

School Committee Members Present: David Thomson, Chair
 Jeffrey Kay, Secretary
 Arthur Skarmear
 Eric Crane
 Mary Beth Verry

VOTED: 17-18 School Calendar/Early Release – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the 17-18 School Calendar/Early Release Days. Mr. Crane moved. Mr. Kay seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Substance Use Policy Update - The Superintendent recommended the approval of the Substance Use Policy in Schools Policy, JICH, first reading. Mr. Skarmear moved. Mrs. Verry seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Out of State/Overnight Field Trip Request – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the out of state field trip from DHS DECA to Anaheim, CA from April 25th – May 1st , 2017, Smith School to Rye, NH on June 8, 2017 and DHS Math to Canobie Lake Park, NH on May 26, 2017. Mr. Thomson moved to approve. Mr. Crane seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Fundraising Requests – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the fundraising request by SEPAC. Mr. Skarmear moved. Mr. Crane seconded. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Minutes – Mr. Kay moved to accept and release the minutes from the March 13, 2017 regular meeting. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VOTED: Adjournment – Mr. Crane moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m. Mrs. Verry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thomson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and DPS Mission statement were recited. Mr. Thomson inquired whether the meeting was being recorded by audience members and announced that the meeting was being broadcast on DCAT and recorded by the Danvers Herald.

II. ITEMS OF INTEREST TO SUPERINTENDENT, SCHOOL COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY

There were no items of interest for the April 10, 2017 meeting.

III. INFORMATION FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Daisy Powers presented news and events from the seven schools.

IV. INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Danvers Pride Presentation** – Ms. Powers, Principal of Riverside School gave a presentation on “Communication through Technology”. Kourtney McKallagat, Riverside’s K-2 Special Education teacher, presented a video showing her students using their Augmentative Alternative Communication Device (AAC). These devices assist the students that are unable to communicate verbally by allowing them to select pictures that coincide with their thoughts and create sentences. Each device is programmed and altered to the specific student. These devices allow the students to have a voice in their day. Ms. McKallagat spoke about bringing one of her students, Desmond, into a 5th grade class to share the technology and the way it enables students, who may otherwise struggle, be successful. 5th graders Kaitlyn Cicerone, Avery Maynard and Abby Sher shared their experiences with Desmond and his AAC. Ms. Powers ended the presentation by thanking technology and Student Services for making this program available as well as the teachers and students of the 5th grade for always welcoming other students into their classes. She also read a letter from a parent regarding the first day her son came home with his AAC device. The mother shared the excitement her son showed in being able to communicate with his parents. She finally was able to understand what he had been asking for days. The members of the school committee felt that the AAC was a life changing device and thanked the students for assisting in the presentation. Ms. Verry asked if each student was entitled to a device. Ms. McKallagat answered that each student needed to be evaluated to see what program and device would work best for that individual. Mr. Kay felt the video was very informative and would like to see more.
- B. Community Service Update** - Mr. Federico, Principal of Holten Richmond Middle School, spoke on Project 351, a program created by former Governor Deval Patrick to inspire a generation of “community first” citizen leaders. Project 351 honors students that show personal excellence. Communities in Massachusetts send an ambassador to the Project 351 launch day held in Boston each year. This year’s ambassador Leanna O’Brien shared her experience in the program. She stated that launch day was a day of community service. Student were broken up into groups where they would make blankets for shelters, organize care packages, make card or other services to benefit people in need. Leanna has continued with her community service and plans to volunteer even more. 12th grader Joe Distasio returned to share his feelings and happenings with Project 351 stating that it really made a difference in his life and he also continues to give his time to others in need. Mr. Skarmeeas felt this was a great program and congratulated the ambassadors. Dr. Dana shared her pride in the students participating in Project 351.
- C. Facilities Update** - Mr. Taverna gave an update on the Smith School Project. In April, interviews for a Project Manager were conducted and a firm has been selected. Reference are being checked. When that process in complete negotiations will begin and then be sent to MSBA for their final approval in May for their June board meeting. Mr. Thomson asked if we were looking for a specific person and Mr. Taverna answered that we are hiring a firm. Mr. Crane is glad that the project is on track.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS -

- A. 17-18 School Calendar/Early Release** – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the 17-18 School Calendar/Early Release Days for a second reading. Mr. Thomson

asked if there were any changes made from the first reading. Dr. Dana answered that there were no changes. Attendance before the December break was reviewed and shown to be of no significant difference from attendance before another break or on a random Friday. As voted.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Substance Use Policy Update - The Superintendent recommended the approval of the Substance Use Policy in Schools Policy, JICH, first reading. Mr. Thomson spoke on review of the policy approximately a year ago. He noted that originally there had been 2 policies which seemed unnecessary. Dr. Dana said work had been done with the attorney to meld the 2 policies into one. The next step is to align this with the handbook which will take place at the June meeting. Mr. Skarmeas noted there are no changes in what the intent of the policy is. Mr. Thomson said some of it is just language update, changing the word “abuse” to “use” things like that. As voted.
- B.** Out of State/Late Night Field Trips - The Superintendent recommended the approval of the field trip requests from DHS DECA to Anaheim, CA from April 25th – May 1st, 2017, Smith School to Rye, NH on June 8, 2017 and DHS Math to Canobie Lake Park, NH on May 26, 2017. As Voted.
- C.** Fundraising Requests – The Superintendent recommended the approval of the fundraising request by SEPAC. As Voted.

VIII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A.** Communications – Dr. Dana shared the NEC website link.
- B.** Legislation – Mr. Crane stated MASC is encouraging the committee to support the State fully funding the foundation budget.
- C.** Subcommittee/Liaison Update
 - DEEP – Mrs. Verry said DEEP will hold their monthly meeting on April 12th at 7:45 am. The grant committee will award teacher grants at the June School Committee meeting.
 - DanversCARES – Mr. Kay shared DanversCARES focus for this month is on “Supervised or Unsupervised”, Understanding where your student is. There is a lot of good information on the website. The Teen Health and Safety guide was sent out in the Danvers Herald this week. Light the Night Purple, to raise awareness on the stigma regarding substance abuse, will be on May 17th.
 - SEPAC – Mr. Savage was not present however, Mrs. Verry attend SEPAC’s mindfulness meeting with guest speaker Sally Palmer. She felt the mindfulness approach really helps to alleviate stress and calm your body and mind. Dr. Dana announced that they are looking to relocate the resource fair to the Riverside School in the month of September.

IX. MINUTES – As voted

X. BUDGET

Mr. Taverna presented the March 2017 budget report stating we are on budget. He also recognized the donations for Light the Night Purple Walk made by Lahey Health, Recovery Centers for America, East Boston Savings Bank, St. John's Preparatory School, Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery, Maple St. Congregational Church and First Ipswich Bank.

XI. PERSONNEL

Announcement of Resignations, Leaves of Absence and Appointments – Mrs. Ambrozavitch presented her memo dated April 2017, sharing the appointments of Paula Jones as the Highland School principal and Jason Colombino as the Danvers High School principal and asked the committee to contact her with questions.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, May 8, 2017 at 7 p.m. in the Francis Mills Communication Center at Danvers High School.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Kay, Secretary
Danvers School Committee