



MINUTES

**Tuesday, December 1, 2020
Regular Board Meeting
Google Meet - Virtual Meeting, 7:00 PM**

1. Call to Order

2. Opening of the Meeting – 7:01 PM

Louis Schwartz called the meeting to order.

2.01 Pledge of Allegiance

2.02 Roll Call

Mr. Louis Schwartz, President; Ms. Rita Kennedy, Vice President; Ms. Shannon Johnson; Ms. Jean Lucasey; Ms. Tracy Baron; Ms. Shannon Stringer; Mr. Massimo Bufalini, Dr. Lisa Brady, Superintendent; Mr. Douglas Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction ; Mr. Ron Clamser, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Facilities and Operations; and Ms. Loretta Tularzko, District Clerk.

2.03 Acceptance of the Agenda

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, that the Board accept the December 1st Agenda.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

3. Citizens Comments

3.01 Anyone wishing to make comments during the two Citizen's Comment portions of the meeting can do so by emailing their comments to boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org. Please include your name and address.

3.02 Notice

Members of the community may comment on any matter related to the meeting's approved agenda. The Board President may request a brief description of the topic the speaker plans to address. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. Presentations should be as brief as possible and no speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than 3 minutes. It is expected that speakers will conduct themselves in a civil manner and will be ruled out of order for any statement that constitutes a direct threat against officers, employees or students of the school district, or that is obscene. Questions or comments concerning matters that are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action.

None.

4. Announcements

NYSSBA

- Institutional Racism: Raising awareness and meeting the needs of all students
Wednesday, December 2nd
Noon - 1:30 p.m.

WPSBA

- There will be a virtual panel discussion on 12/10 at 6:30 PM on how to support our students in the new landscape. It will include how to best teach racism, blended learning and mental health. There is a \$20 fee so register through Loretta.

MINUTES

5. Superintendent's Report

COVID-19 Testing for Students and Staff

Currently, Dobbs Ferry is still not designated as a Yellow or Orange Zone. Community testing in Westchester County is averaging approximately 9,000 tests each day. It is anticipated that communities could be designated as Yellow or Orange by the Governor and that the metric for designation could change, possibly in the Governor's press conference tomorrow. For example, the metric could change from "rate of infections" to "rate of hospitalizations" and this number is still quite low for Westchester County. It is possible that depending on the rising rates of infections that communities could completely bypass being designated a Yellow Zone and go directly to an Orange Zone or ultimately a Red Zone.

In a Yellow Zone, 20% of in-person students and staff are required to be tested over a 2 week period. If the positivity rate is less than the yellow zone's current 7 day positivity rate, testing will no longer be required to continue. If the rate is higher, the school will be required to test 20% of the in-person population on a bi-weekly basis.

In an Orange Zone, under current guidelines, a school must move to remote learning for at least 4 days while a testing process is put in place. 20% of in-person students and staff must be tested over the course of each month for 5 months resulting in 100% of the population being tested. We have asked questions to the Governor's Office about whether it is necessary to close for 4 days if schools already have a testing process "ready to go." And will yellow zone testing "count" toward Orange Zone testing.

We have sent communication to parents regarding testing and Permission to Test Google Form. It has been sent in English and Spanish and a follow up will be sent again tomorrow. Currently, we have 835 returned forms and 95.3% of parents have given consent. We have 1450 students currently assigned to in-person learning so we have 615 students for whom we still need a response. Students in grades K-8 who do not consent to testing will be assigned to asynchronous learning until the next time to switch learning models which is scheduled for February 1st and April 6th.

Understandably, parents have many questions about the testing and we are still working on finalizing our process. Students in grades K-8 will need to be accompanied by a parent and testing will be conducted on two consecutive Wednesdays but two of our school nurses and a nurse that we hope will be provided by the WCDOH. We will use a "drive up" process in front of the Commons at the HS from approximately 8:30 to 2:30 and appointments will be scheduled. We will use the NYS approved BINAX Card Test which is a nasal swab. We will process the tests and parents will be called by 6 p.m. if there is a positive test.

Race Matters Committee

We had an excellent response for the Race Matters Committee with 67 responses among parents, community members, students and staff. We have capped the committee at 45 so that the group is a manageable size which means we could not take everyone who expressed interest. The Race Matters Core Team met last night to review all of the applicants. The Core Team is composed of staff representatives from the BIPOC Affinity Group, Allies Study and Action Group and the Superintendent. This group meets monthly.

- We had 20 students apply and we took all 20 of them since we said from the outset that we were looking for an overrepresentation of student voices. There were 14 students who identify as BIPOC and 6 who identify as white and we thought this was a strong representation of student voices.
- We looked at staff and we prioritized BIPOC staff and then anyone who was on the Core Team since we had agreed ahead of time to limit the Core Team representation to make space for others. From there we looked at building representation, department/position representation, gender representation
- Next, we looked at community members and parents and we prioritized having more BIPOC representation. We looked at the breakdown of race/ethnicity so that we had a balance, i.e., gender, background experience and knowledge could be brought to the committee and the committees the applicants participate in so that we had representation from all school/community groups.

The Committee will consist of 20 students, 15 parents/community members and 10 staff members. This was an incredibly challenging process and we realize that there will be some who will be disappointed but we said from the beginning that this committee is formed to center BIPOC voices and that is what we set out to do. Because there is so much interest, we are hoping to leverage the parent interest with some additional opportunities which might look like at other ways to provide input to the Race Matters Committee.

MINUTES

Notification will be sent this week and the first Race Matters Committee Meeting is scheduled for December

6. Correspondence

6.01 BOE Correspondence

The Board acknowledged the following:

- Five emails regarding "The Landing" tax classification
- One email regarding a holiday pause for schools

7. Committee Reports

School & Community Relations – 11/12

- The Committee reviewed the proposal for two new clubs. Both clubs have been reviewed and are supported by the building principals and administrators.
- High School - BIPOC Student Union
- The Committee discussed the Race and Equity website that is under construction. Dr. Brady shared an organizational chart of the Race and Equity Committee structure prepared by Julia Drake. Diane is going to work on the chart to enhance the design prior to posting on the website.
- The Committee discussed a timeline of some sort to show the progress and work undertaken by the District since 2017. Lisa prepared a narrative of a large portion of the work but it needs to be presented in some type of visual representation. It will also be shared with the Race Matters Core Team and NYU Steinhardt to ensure that nothing is missing.
- Diane, Kevin and Liz will work on the timeline visual for review at the next meeting or before.
- The Committee discussed the production of a video to capture the voices of students, staff, parents and community members. Lisa and Doug will set up an opportunity for Natalie Zwerger to meet with Kevin to discuss this.
- The Committee discussed whether it might make sense for Lisa to do a community video similar to those that she did in the spring. The video would give a COVID-19 update of some kind. Lisa will give some thought to what this might entail.

Curriculum & Instruction – 11/18

- APPR – Annual Professional Performance Review.
 - The district has worked with both the DFUT and the DFAA to make revisions to the existing APPR Plan
 - Revisions are in line with guidance received from NYSED
 - Revisions will allow for greater flexibility and allow teachers to focus on instruction - crucial during current uncertain times
 - Includes tenured and non-tenured (Probationary) Teachers

Personnel – 11/23

- The Committee reviewed the Personnel Recommendations for the tonight's agenda.
- Lisa Honeck, HS School Psychologist will be retiring at the end of the school year.
- Ting Waymouth, currently on child care leave, has resigned. The family is moving out of state.

Finance – 11/23

- Monthly Financial Reports included:
 - Revenue Update
 - State Aid cuts are still an unknown at this time.
 - 3rd Quarter sales tax payment was \$208,967 which is higher than anticipated.
 - The district applied for FEMA aid and Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund
 - Expense Update
 - Year by year comparison of the budget
 - Tax Certiorari Analysis
 - Internal Risk Assessment Audit Report
 - Ron informed the committee that the internal auditor has completed the initial risk assessment and will coordinate with the internal auditor to schedule an Audit Committee to discuss the report and plan next steps.
 - Unemployment Reserve

MINUTES

- Ron shared with the committee that due to the expanded eligibility of unemployment benefits due to the pandemic, the district has over-expanded its initial budget for unemployment claims.

Special Ed – 11/24

- The Committee reviewed the CSE/CPSE recommendations for tonight's meeting. Questions were asked and clarified.
- The Committee discussed a current Impartial Hearing situation and this will be discussed with the BOE in Executive Session tonight on 12/1.
- Jean Gismervik spoke with the committee about the Inquiry/Collaborative Learning Team composed of Hallie Malbin and Lauren Dwyer (Springhurst School Psychologists), Linda Flanagan (SE Coordinator), Jessie Cooper (Springhurst Speech Language Pathologist and SE Dept. Head) and Jean G and how to improve early support and intervention for students.

This meeting can be viewed on TV DFTV - Channel 77 & 47 or visit the website for the video of the complete meeting.

8. Reports to the Board

8.01 Building Level Updates

The Building principal and assistant principals were in attendance.

Ms. Julia Drake, Springhurst Principal:

- Springhurst has been going strong since September 8th and this sets us apart from many of our colleagues in surrounding areas.
- It is a result of extremely hard work, expense and planning by everyone in the school, administration and the community. Thank you to all.
- We're open and it's wonderful but it has been a very big challenge.
 - We needed to rethink every single aspect of school under a typical circumstance.
 - We continually have to be creative with our space as we move from one model or another.
 - Daily cleaning rivals our dismissal challenges.
 - We have 8 different times of day (students coming and going) that requires a lot of people.
 - All of above required a lot of effort on the part of staff to ensure the purposeful placement of students.
- We also managed to hire during the pandemic
 - A number of staff and parent volunteers helped.
 - Our new hires are awesome. Julia has positive feedback about them and they're already making such great contributions.
- Coverage continues to be a real issue with various staff being out for different reasons.
- All of the district teams have been working hard:
 - Teachers, Technology, Andrew Klaich and the Nurses, Custodians, Clerical and Administration
- At present we have just about 595 kids in school and 106 that are remote
- Wednesdays are an important day in our model because it also allows the teachers to meet with kids who might not be able to come into school.
- Thank you again to everyone.

Mr. Patrick Mussolini, Middle School Principal:

- The major tone tonight is to thank everyone that worked so hard to get our school open and to continue to keep it open.
- Thank you to Dave and the entire custodial staff, Ron, Terance (for technology in the classroom and at home) and Anne Pecuina for all she has done to get the school open and keep it open.
- Our school nurse and Andrew Klaich are amazing. Andrew knows more about COVID than some doctors. It is amazing at how involved he's been.
- We created a plan together with little tweaks here and there and it is still working.
- All students would like to be in school 100% of the time across the board but they're really happy to be here when they are in school.
- The hybrid plan has been working smoothly and our students have been great. The plan would not work if the kids didn't participate and cooperate.
- We know that the students, parents and staff are worried about social distancing, masks, etc.

MINUTES

- The students have been absolutely incredible following the rules:
 - Staying to the right side of the hallway
 - Keeping 6 feet apart
 - Rarely do we need to remind a student to keep a mask or to be distanced from each other.
- It has been a challenge. Patrick thanked Anne again because she's taken a lot of this on right from the beginning especially trying to keep our school open while dealing with the number of teachers and aides that are absent on a daily basis. We are working with a very thin crew to fill those vacancies since finding substitutes is very difficult. We are managing the best we can.
- As of the first quarter, we had 12% students who were remote only and about 87% of our students who are in the hybrid model.
- In the second quarter, we had 9 students move to remote and 6 students moved to hybrid so that changed the percentage a little bit, so now we have about 13% students who are remote only and about 87% still hybrid.
- Our students' safety and health is of the most importance:
 - At this point, we only had 6 students and 2 staff members who tested positive in the middle school.
 - So considering everything that is going on the outside our infection rate in the building is zero.
 - I want parents to know that we take this very seriously and we're very proud of how it has been working so far. However, it can change but right now it's holding true and it's because of all the hard work and everything that we put into it this year.
- Lastly, it is good to know that what we put together is working.

Dr. John Falino, Principal and Ms. Candace Reim, Assistant Principal:

- This year the high school won the blue ribbon.
- In addition to all the people thanked by Patrick and Julia, John thanked the Board, Lisa, Doug, Ron and Jean.
- This year the high school teachers really had a tremendous amount of pressure and demand placed upon them because they were there in a model that essentially demanded that they completely rethink and recreate themselves as teachers. Everything they once knew about teaching and learning went out the window.
- Seasoned veteran teachers that had such success in many cases were like 1st year teachers all over again.
- One of our major priorities established for the high school is continuity of instruction and curriculum.
 - We are trying to make sure that we're meeting the demands of an IB Curriculum and a New York State High School curriculum with Regents exams.
- The teachers had to think about how we are delivering instruction and how are we adapting and adjusting to this kind of model.
- We've certainly achieved the desired outcomes that we established for a high quality instruction.
- When you start a new model, you have a plan and you never quite know exactly how it's going to work out until it rolls out.
- On Wednesdays, we were averaging approximately 300 appointments from students for additional support, small group instruction with teachers, science labs and club activities.
- We had lots of counseling activities, mental wellness and school spirit components.
- Our model was implemented very well. The instruction has been good and the schedule has been running smoothly.
- We have made some adjustments after getting lots of feedback from students. Dr. Falino is meeting with the legislative branch again tomorrow.
- It has been tough for the seniors. Some struggle as far as demands of curriculum and then four months of being a senior and not having as much in person opportunity as they'd like.
- John met with a group of high school teachers last week to talk about student stress and pressure and what adjustments can be made with the curriculum between now and the holiday break.
- We have not been told by IB that exams would be canceled so we have no expectation that they will. They may be adjusted or modified but we don't think they will be canceled.
- John pops into classrooms and the instruction looks really good but then the question that he always asks his teachers is how do we know students are learning? Therefore, they have lots of conversations around different types of assessments.
- Dr. Falino stated that Lisa was a visionary and progressive all the way back in 2012- 2013 pushing the school to move towards one to the one. This made this transition seamless. The HS was far better prepared as far as our teachers and students and their readiness levels to move into remote learning. We could not

MINUTES

have known at the time when we made that investment, but it really did pay off tremendously so that's a shout out to her.

School spirit and mental wellness component – Candace Reim

- Candace wanted to shout out to her Spirit Squad – Scot Patrillo, Maria Addona, Connor Cohn and Kerri Kastanis for arranging several events. A Halloween Party on the turf field, a tie dyed party for the seniors and a 12-day wacky party in the Commons later this month.
- All students are socially distance and masked.
- The squad is looking for ways for kids to connect to a school in a non-threatening, friendly, feeling normal way. Candace and the squad are thrilled at their Instagram coming this this month which is going to make you laugh for sure.
- She also thanked her colleagues and counseling staff.
 - They have been doing a great job reaching out to kids.
 - They are seeking outside support from organizations like the JCK Foundation and John Tessitore for coming and speaking to groups of seniors about overcoming challenges and planning and to push through obstacles. Their relationships with the kids, the outreach and programming they do allow our students to be successful, along with finding ways to continue their support going forward with new innovative ways.

Dr. Brady thanked all the Administrators for their updates and for attending tonight's meeting. Lisa stated that even after all the planning in the summer, we didn't think we'd be in school this long. It's an honor and a privilege to serve the children and the families in this District. We learned a lot about ourselves through this process and as school leaders these are things we never could have imagined. She really believes that there's a light at the end of the tunnel, but we are not quite there. Lisa sees it and hopes that you all see it too. After this, we are going to be a different organization but better because of all the things that we've learned through this process. We're almost there. Thank you.

Mr. Schwartz and Ms. Kennedy thanked all the teachers and administrators for dedication of to our students.

9. Board Actions

9.01 COVID-19 Testing Resolution

Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Kennedy seconded, that the Board adopt the attached resolution regarding COVID-19 Testing. The resolution will be sent to the following:

Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York
Thomas Abinanti, New York State Assembly Member
Carl Heastie, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly
Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
Michael Benedetto, State Assemblyman, Chair, Committee on Education
Shelley Mayer, State Senate, Chair, Committee on Education
Dr. Howard A. Zucker, Commissioner of Health Betty Rosa, NYS Interim Commissioner of Education
Andrew Brown, Vice-Chancellor, NYS Board of Regents
Frances Wills, NYS Board of Regents
Karen Belanger, Executive Director, Westchester Putnam School Boards Association

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.02 2021-2022 Budget Development Calendar

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board adopt the 2021-2022 Budget Development Calendar.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.03 District Certification Form for Submission of Section 3012.d APPR Plan to SED

Ms. Stringer moved, and Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board authorizes the execution by the Board President,

MINUTES

along with the Superintendent of Schools, of the District Certification Form for submission and resubmission, to the extent necessary, of the District's Section 3012d APPR Plan Document to the State Education Department for classroom teachers and building principals covered pursuant to Education Law Section 3012-d and Part 30-3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.04 Budget Increase

Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay for unanticipated unemployment claims:

Revenue Account to Increase	Amount	Expenditure Account to Increase	Amount
A815 Unemployment Insurance Reserve	\$30,000	A9050.850.00.0000 Unemployment Insurance	\$30,000

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.05 CSE/CPSE

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board authorize and direct the following:

WHEREAS the Committee on Special Education and Committee on Pre-School Special Education had issued to the Board by written confidential report dated November 24, 2020, its IEP recommendations for the students who are identified therein; and

WHEREAS the Board is responsible for arranging for appropriate special programs and services to students with IEPs, as recommended by said committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District hereby authorize and direct the administration to immediately arrange for the special programs and services as set forth in said report dated November 24, 2020.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.06 Personnel

Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board approve the civil service and staff personnel recommendations.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.07 Policy Revision - Second Reading

The Board conducted a second reading and Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board adopt the following policies:

- 0110 - Sexual Harassment
- 0110.1 Sexual Harassment of Students
- 0110.2 Sexual Harassment of Employees

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

10. Acknowledgements

10.01 Treasurer's Report

The Board acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Report for October 2020.

MINUTES

10.02 Warrants

The Board acknowledged receipt of the following warrant:
Warrant No. 21 Multi.

11. Citizens Comments

11.01 Anyone wishing to make comments during the two Citizen's Comment portions of the meeting can do so by emailing their comments to boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org. Please include your name and address.

11.02 Notice

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None.

12. Old Business

There will be a Board Retreat prior to the January 26, 2020 Board Meeting. It will begin at 5:45 pm for approximately an hour.

13. New Business

None.

14. Executive Session

14.01 Executive Session

At 8:24 PM, Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Kennedy seconded, that the Board recesses into Executive Session for the following purpose: *to discuss a student Impartial Hearing and ongoing litigation - The Landing on the Water at Dobbs Ferry Condominium v. Town of Greenburgh.*

It is not anticipated that the Board will return to public session to take any action(s).

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

At 8:25 PM, Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, to appoint Ms. Kennedy as Clerk Pro Tem.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

At 9:59 PM, Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, to move back to the Public Meeting.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

15. Upcoming Meetings

15.01 Calendar

Tuesday, December 15, 2020 - 7:00 PM – Virtual

- Work Session - Race and Identity

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 - 7:00 PM - TBD

16. Adjournment

At 10:01 PM, Ms. Baron moved, and Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays



Loretta Tularzko
District Clerk