



## MINUTES

### Tuesday, October 6, 2020 Regular Board Meeting MS/HS Media Center, 7:00 PM

#### 1. Call to Order

#### 2. Opening of the Meeting – 7:00 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 Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board accept the October 6th Agenda.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

The first Citizens Comments Section, on any agenda related items, has been moved up in the agenda.

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](mailto:boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org). Please include your name and address.

##### 2.04 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Kennedy seconded, that the Board approve the minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

#### 3. Citizens Comments

##### 3.01 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. There is another opportunity for comments later on in the meeting.

##### 4.01 Annual Audit Report

10/6/20

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Mr. Schwartz introduced Mr. Kassay and explained that the Audit Committee met last week and reviewed the report and support the Board's acceptance of the report during the Board Actions portion of the meeting.

Alan Kassay, from the audit firm PFK O'Connor Davies, LLP, presented the Annual Audit Report for the 2019-2020 school year.

Highlights:

- Audit Report components
- Summary of Communications
- General Fund Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual June 30, 2019
- General Fund Balance Sheet – June 30, 2019
- Other Comments – Summary
- Q&A

Overall Summary

- The Unassigned Fund Balance is equal to 4.27%. The SED waived the 4% cap due to COVID-19.
- No instances of fraud, irregularities, no material errors, fraudulent reporting or misappropriation of assets.

Mr. Schwartz thanked Mr. Kassay, Mr. Clamser and their teams for the getting this audit completed with great financial results.

### 5. Announcements

PTSA

- Jean Lucasey reminded everyone that the beautiful, as usual, PTSA calendar for 20-21 has arrived. Please remember you can still sign up for membership at the PTSA website [dobbssptsa.org](http://dobbssptsa.org).

WPSBA

- Tracy Baron will continue to join the monthly Town Hall calls. If any Board member has questions to raise please let Tracy know.
- Tomorrow, October 7<sup>th</sup>, NYSSBA will be holding a virtual Complimentary Equity & Inclusivity Workshop: Answering the Call to Action – Tracy will be attending and will report back to the Board
- Challenge Success will be holding a free 45 minute live stream event for school members and parents featuring Lori Gottlieb October 23, 2020, Noon-1:30 p.m.

### 6. Superintendent's Report

**District**

Thank you to the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation for the reallocation of the funds from Innovative Classroom Initiative to Metro Steinhardt Center Grant (\$13,000) – Natalie Szwercger to support the District's Racial Equity efforts.

Thank you to the PTSA for help with the staff book read - we will have about 90 staff members reading the book by Isabel Wilkerson "The Warmth of Other Suns".

Schools closed Monday 10/12

Thank you to parents and staff for their daily completion of the health screening forms which help keep our schools open. Changes to the form that have been made to reflect changes in guidance that was released on Thursday. We are sending a K-12 to bring this to the attention of parents.

Thank you to Mercy College for extending a partnership with the Springhurst Children's Center for a change of location now that the colder weather is approaching. Thank you to Jeremy Kohomban, Children's Village, for hosting the Children's Center since the beginning of school.

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Graduation and Stepping Up - Graduation is being planned for June 26th at the Waterfront. Because we have to anticipate restrictions similar to those in place currently, this is being planned as a morning ceremony with social distancing requirements. MS and Springhurst ceremonies will be similar to what we did this year with the car parades.

School Emergency Drills – we are working on modified virtual safety drills due to social distancing requirement. The drills are still required by law. The NYSED has added more yearly drills.

### Springhurst

- We would like to thank SPRING Community Partners for their support in helping our Springhurst families in many ways such as helping to defray childcare costs and to ensure access to technology for some of our neediest families. Robin Larkins in particular has been a tremendous asset to our students, staff, and the DF community.
- Springhurst has earned the distinction of being a NYS Recognition School. It acknowledges our achievement in leading New York State toward the accomplishment of educational excellence in student performance, high academic achievement, growth and graduation rate.
- October is “National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month.” Springhurst celebrated World Bully Prevention Day on Monday, October 5th by wearing blue shirts to school. Later this month, each class will also be taking a bully free pledge.
- October is also Hispanic Heritage Month. At Springhurst, our librarian Lauren Rodriguez & our FLES teachers Kenya Pattera and Marissa Coulehan have joined forces to help highlight this important aspect of October with books and music.
- 5th gr. Teacher Karen LaPorte won 500 bonus points and \$500 to spend on her classroom library from Scholastic. Karen entered a contest and wrote about what she would do with the \$/points (books to engage their interests, etc.).

### Middle School

- DFMS staff created a video to show our solidarity for the World Day of Bullying Prevention.
- The Middle School celebrated Blue Shirt Day to show their support for the No Place for Hate initiative this month.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in creating a Kindness Chain. Students were given a paper strip and asked to write something kind about their neighbor. These kind words will be posted around the school. It was a great celebration and thanks to Sandy Hacker, Rose Mittan, Sheila Kusi-Asare, Julissa Marcano, Justine O’Reilly, and Kelly Foster for their hard work on the project.
- October 14th Full remote - due to the Columbus Day holiday on Monday October 12th the Blue Cohort’s A-Day will be moved to Wednesday the 14th. However, because the High School is having SAT and PSAT testing in-school, the Blue Cohort’s A-day will be fully remote. They will be following their regular A-Day schedule (9 periods, 38 minutes a period) via Google Meets from home.

### High School

- We are pleased to share that it was announced earlier today that DFHS was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2020. The application process was extensive and began last year when our school was only one of nineteen nominees, K-12, from New York State.
- **DFHS “Flex” Days:** We have had an exceptional turnout at all of our in-person “flex” days and have another scheduled for this Wednesday. We are averaging approximately 280 appointments each day. Teachers are using this time for small group instruction, counseling, science labs, and fitness. We are going to add a “mental-emotional” component with offerings from Kelly Foster and John Tessitore in the month of October.
- **PSAT/SAT Day:** We are offering the PSAT and the SAT to all of our juniors and seniors in-person on October 14th. We will not have a flex day that week. We will also have an abbreviated remote only schedule for our 9th and 10th-grade students. More information will be sent to parents.
- **Club Fair:** Our annual DFHS Club Fair will be held tomorrow, October 7th, at the front of the high school. We have over 25 clubs this year.

### Athletics

- Soccer intramurals for 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be starting this week. We currently have 50 students registered to participate in this after school offering.

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- Junior Varsity and Varsity boys and girls soccer, cross country and girls tennis are currently underway. Competitions against other schools are scheduled to begin this upcoming weekend.
- Section 1 regulation, not a Dobbs Ferry Schools regulation - No visiting fans. Governor's orders recommend 2 fans per home athlete and no gatherings larger than 50 people.

Daily Health Screenings go to Andrew Klaich and the nurses and they do random checks. Parents of students that do not have a health screening form for the day are called. Random temperature checks are completed as students enter the schools.

### 7. Correspondence

#### 7.01 BOE Correspondence

The Board acknowledged the following:

- An email concerning The Landing
- An email regarding the September 22nd Board meeting
- Letter from Paul Feiner regarding various programs for residents impacted by COVID19 (link for details): <https://homes.westchestergov.com/housing-help>
- An email regarding Vitamin C vs. Coronavirus
- Emails from a parent regarding homeschooling her child
- An email regarding bullying

### 8. Committee Reports

Curriculum & Instruction - 9/23

- School Reopening
  - In-Person/On Campus
    - In person learning at both Springhurst and the Middle School is going well
      - Tremendous enthusiasm - learning started happening day one
      - At the HS in-person experiences are well received and students are taking advantage of them - today 286 students have signed up to be on campus for learning experiences tomorrow
      - We are exploring multiple options for students at the HS to be on campus on a more regular basis
    - Remote Experiences
      - Remote Learning is off to a good start at all three buildings – feedback from parents has by and large been good
      - Teachers are demonstrating significantly improved ability to effectively use the technology and quality instruction is taking place
      - We are continuing to support teachers through ongoing professional development
  - Challenges Related to Opening
    - Curriculum Pacing
      - The hybrid models with students experiencing in person instruction on a limited basis does present challenges with regard to our ability to “cover” curriculum
      - Being purposeful about how we make use of on campus vs. off campus time will support us staying on track
      - As we are growing within the hybrid structure we are getting a better sense of how pacing will be impacted - it is possible that the smaller class sizes will allow us to individualize instruction more and address content quicker but that is yet to be determined.
      - Ongoing discussions are taking place with teachers regarding their pacing calendars and adjustments will be made with the goal being to cover the majority of course content
      - This challenge is not unique to us
      - Teachers are making expanded use of google classroom functions and having to plan both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities simultaneously
      - Opportunities for small groups (Flex Wednesdays) are allowing teachers to think about specific students and their specific needs and group them together
    - Adjustments to APPR plan
      - We are beginning to enter into conversations with both the DFAA and the DFUT about adjustments to our APPR plan
      - Our current plan was approved by NYSED in 2016

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- Opportunity now to reflect on what is working best and how our APPR plan can best support the goal of improving classroom performance and providing teachers with feedback to support growth
- Are the elements of our current plan making the best use of our time?
- Student Performance
- Classroom Observation
  - What is the right mix of announced and unannounced observations?
  - In Dobbs Ferry APPR provides one small opportunity to provide feedback but is not the only way in which Admins provide feedback

Mr. Berry attended a call today with the Deputy Commissioner for Educator Quality at the NYSED. Topic was APPR with a clear desire to be flexible around today's current environment and in the future. It is one small tool that allows us to think how we can impact instruction.

APPR – Annual Professional Performance Review – It was instituted eight or nine years ago and is how teachers and administrators are evaluated.

### Finance - 9/29

- 2019-20 Fiscal Year Update & Fund Balance Projection
  - Ron provided the committee an update on the 2019-20 fiscal year end and the final fund balance of 4.27%
- Cash Flow Update
  - Ron reported that we have been able to cover cash flow obligations without needing to borrow. He also reported there is no reason to expect property tax receipts from the Town of Greenburgh will be delayed.
- Property Tax Timeline
  - The committee had previously requested that the school attorney provide a memo outlining the various dates associated with property taxes, and the resultant memo was shared with the Board.
- COVID-19 and School Reopening Expenses
  - Ron provided the committee with a list of expenses related to COVID-19 and school reopening for the 2020-21 school year to date. Ron will provide a report at each committee meeting.

### Special Ed – 9/29

- The Committee reviewed the CSE/CPSE recommendations. Questions were asked and clarified.
- The Committee discussed a proposed settlement agreement which the BOE will discuss in Executive Session tonight. Should the BOE choose to move forward with this, the agreement will appear on the October 27th agenda for approval.

### Personnel 9/30

- The Committee reviewed the Personnel Recommendations for the October 6th Agenda.
- The Committee briefly discussed changes to the District's APPR plan as related to the numbers of teacher observations but realized that this is covered on the Curriculum Committee Minutes.

## 9. Board Actions

### 9.01 Annual Audit Report

Ms. Kennedy moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board accept the Independent Auditors Report, performed by PFK O'Connor Davies, LLP, for the 2019-20 school year.

Mr. Schwartz thanked Mr. Clamser, Dr. Brady, Mr. Berry and the Administrators for all the hard work that went into the Audit.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.02 Instructional Service Agreement

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board approve the attached Instructional Service Agreement.

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Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.03 Sports Merger

Ms. Johnson moved, and Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board approve the following team merger:

Varsity Boys Swim: Merged with (Ardley, Hastings, Edgemont and Irvington)

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.04 CSE/CPSE

Ms. Stringer moved, and Ms. Lucasey 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 September 2, 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 September 2, 2020.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.05 Personnel

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Kennedy seconded, that the Board approve the civil service and staff personnel recommendations.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.06 Policy - Second Reading

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

- 5100 - Student Attendance

The changes to this policy included additional language to not penalize homeless students in regard to absence and remote learning and to promote attendance but discourage parents from sending students to school when ill to maintain perfect attendance.

There were no changes since the first reading

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

### 9.07 NYSSBA Proposed Bylaw Amendments & Resolutions

Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board vote in support of WPSBA's consensus with the following exceptions:

- # 2 – Oppose – rationale doesn't match the resolution
- #13 – Abstain – rationale is one directional communication
- #15 – Oppose – what is a professional parent advocate – rationale doesn't support professional
- #16 – Oppose - overly broad – not in line with the law
- #23 – Not Support – committee was split – lot of work involved every five years – premature
- #25 – Support
- #26 – Support

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#27 – Oppose – more of a mandate

The Board authorized Jean Lucasey to cast the Board's vote at the convention and amend the resolutions if required.

Thank you to the Policy Committee for reviewing and to Rita Kennedy, Tracy Baron and Jean Lucasey for attending the convention.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

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](mailto:boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org). Please include your name and address.

### 10. Citizens Comments

#### 10.01 Notice

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None.

### 11. Old Business

None.

### 12. New Business

Jean Lucasey asked about the Governor's Executive Order allowing virtual meetings through November 3.

The Board discussed the following:

- Number of community participants – in-person vs. virtual
- The work required by staff to set up, break down and clean before and after the in-person meeting
- It was decided that the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting will be virtual and the following meetings will be determined on a meeting by meeting basis

### 13. Upcoming Meetings

#### 13.01 Calendar

Tuesday, October 27, 2020 - 7:00 PM - Virtual

- Business Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 - 7:00 PM - TBD

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 - 7:00 PM - TBD

- Work Session

The October 27<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting will be held virtually. The venue for subsequent Board meetings will be decided month to month depending on the Governor's Executive Order being extended past November 3.

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## 14. Executive Session

### 14.01 Executive Session

At 8:22 PM, Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board recesses into Executive Session for the following purpose: *to discuss a student settlement and release agreement, matters relating to the removal of a particular person and ongoing litigation The Landing on the Water at Dobbs Ferry Condominium v. Town of Greenburgh.*

The Board would not be returning to public session to take any action(s).

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, to appoint Ms. Kennedy as Clerk Pro Tem.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

At 9:00 PM, Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, to move back to the Public Meeting.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

## 15. Adjournment

At 9:01 PM, Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

## 16. Approved Minutes

### 16.01 Approved Minutes September 8, 2020



Loretta Tularzko  
District Clerk