

MINUTES
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
June 25, 2020

Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly Board of Education Meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2020, at approximately 6:32 p.m. via Zoom video conference call.

Board Members Present: Mike Lee (Chair), Bettina Umstead (Vice Chair), Minnie Forte-Brown, Steven Unruhe, Xavier Cason, Matt Sears, and Natalie Beyer

Administration Present: Pascal Mubenga (Superintendent), Dr. Nakia Hardy (Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services), Julius Monk (Chief Operating Officer), and William “Chip” Sudderth III (Chief Communications Officer).

Attorney Present: Rod Malone

Recorder: Nicole Smith, Board of Education Executive Assistant

Call to Order:

Chair Mike Lee called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence.

Spanish Translator Present:

Interpretation services were provided by the DPS Multilingual Resource Center

3. Celebrations

William Sudderth introduced the first recognition, The Durham FEAST Program. The team did a fantastic job of bringing together a great feeding program for students and families based on the summer feeding program and then for a variety of logistical concerns related to the closure and to the emergency leave that was offered, the district was not able to continue. A partnership was created with the Durham Public Schools Foundation and the Food Inside Group working together to perform uncommon service at social service for our families. He introduced Megan Gonzales Smith from the Durham Public Schools Foundation to share information about the next effort.

Megan Gonzales Smith gave instruction on how to view the video about their efforts on their website. She thanks the volunteers and everyone who came together to make the video and effort possible.

She shared that there were over 2200 individuals and businesses who contributed to ensure that all students had meals. They are now calling on the community to rally again around ensuring that every student has access to high quality digital instruction so learning gaps won't widen because of this crisis. DPS is working hard to plan for scenarios for returning to school this fall. There is a long-standing need for all students to be able to access high quality digital instruction, but this is a monumental task and calls on our whole community to rally around our public schools in meeting this need. She announced a new major campaign led by the Durham Public Schools Foundation to accelerate digital equity through this campaign and aim to raise at least \$1.5 million from supporters across the community to support the district's efforts and ongoing professional development for ensuring teachers are prepared and supported to deliver high quality digital instruction. This campaign is being co-chaired by three community leaders and current DPS parents state representatives.

William Sudderth proceeded to the next celebrations items:

Recognition of donations and grants: Kenan Charitable Trust and Lenovo

Tanya Giovanni shared that the DPS thanks Lenovo Foundation for its substantial donation of 400 devices to support our students in response to this pandemic. She also thanked Sidney Collins, Lenovo Foundation Project Manager and Libby Richards, Community Engagement Manger.

She also thanked them for the generosity and support with their donation of \$200,000 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds assisted the district in purchasing devices for its one to one initiative. In addition, a portion of this gift was used to purchase PPE for custodians, maintenance and operations teams as they work to clean disinfect and service our buildings. DPS also used a portion of this gift to purchase touchless infrared thermometers.

Libby Richards, Community Engagement Manager, gave her remarks to the presentation and sentiments of appreciation.

William Sudderth introduced Laura Parrot to present the students that were nominated for Governor's School.

Laura Parrot said there were 26 students nominated. The students chosen were:

Charlotte Aspinwall – Jordan High School
Lillian Baker – Northern High School
Quinn Barbosa – Durham School of the Arts
Daniel Beier – Jordan High School
Rosie Berman – Durham School of the Arts
Elena Daster- Riverside High School
Alexandra Durham – Jordan High School
Elizabeth Extren – Middle College
Molly Furman – Jordan High School
Jayden Hall – Jordan High School
Emily Jackson – Riverside High School
Suzannah King – Durham School of the Arts
Daniel Kriegermaker – Durham Performance Learning Center
Isabelle Kuhn – Riverside High School
Eliza Miller – Jordan High School
Alexander Penn – Northern High School
Aurora Robot – Riverside High School
Lindsey Sample – Riverside High School
Nicholas Tsangvi – Jordan High School
Campbell Thomas – Jordan High School
Noah Bowen – Durham School of the Arts
Arianna Whittick – Durham School of the Arts
Sophia Wilcox – Jordan High School
Sarah Williams – Jordan High School
Skylar Williford – Northern High School
Celine Zine – Jordan High School

Mike Lee stated this meeting would be the last meeting for two board members: Minnie Forte-Brown and Steve Unruhe. A gift was presented to both members as well as an opportunity for board members and administration to give sentiments. Minnie Forte-Brown and Steve Unruhe gave remarks

expressing the gratitude for being on the board.

Steve Unruhe made a special presentation informing everyone that the DPS Staff Development Center will be renamed The Minnie M. Forte-Brown Center for Staff Development. Minnie Forte-Brown was very surprised and gave emotional remarks of appreciation.

Mike Lee accepted a motion to instruct the administration to tentatively name the staff development center the Minnie M. Forte-Brown Center for Staff Development. In honor, the motion was seconded by all board members and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Natalie Beyer suggested that the poem written by Xavier Cason for Minnie Forte-Brown be placed on a plaque and displayed in the newly named staff development center.

4. Agenda Review and Approval

Bettina Umstead (Co-Chair) asked that the agenda be amended by adding an item for the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force. Mike Lee said to add the item after the Academic Services (Re-Entry Plan item). Xavier Cason moved that the agenda be approved as amended. Natalie Beyer seconded, and the agenda passed unanimously via roll call vote.

5. Board of Education Meeting Minutes dated May 20, 2020

Steve Unruhe moved to approve the minutes dated May 20, 2020. Matt Sears seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

6. General Public Comment

William “Chip” Sudderth stated there were 395 public comments. They were regarding a range of subjects such as school resource office removal, technology, return to school, etc. The comments were sent to the board members for review and posted on the website.

Mike Lee provided Steve Unruhe and Minnie Forte-Brown an opportunity to give special remarks and thanks.

7. Consent Items

- a) Alternative School Accountability Model
- b) Visual Impaired Contract
- c) CTE Local Plan
- d) Budget Amendment #2 FY 2019-20

Mike Lee asked if there was any discussion regarding the listed Consent Items.

Steve Unruhe moved to approve the consent items. Minnie Forte-Brown seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

8. Operations Services

- a) Facility Rental Management Presentation

Dr. Monk mentioned the decline in facility rental revenue since 2011. The district dropped from \$489,000 to \$179,000 in the 2018 academic year. Policies haven't been reviewed or updated since 2007 and he feels like the current facility rental plan/process is not moving the district closer to the

strategic plan goal.

Dr. Julius Monk and Dr Travis Anderson reviewed a PowerPoint presentation detailing the following:

- ✓ Overview
- ✓ Priority 5: Ensure Fiscal and Operational Responsibility
- ✓ Facility Rental Challenges
 - Expense vs Revenue
 - Policy vs. Practice
 - Rates
 - Impact to Facilities
- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Next Steps
- ✓ Software Selection (Facilitron)

This item was presented for information only. It will be presented again in September to have a discussion on rates and policy structure. Mike Lee said the board will handle the policy portion but not the software selection.

Minnie Forte-Brown said that the community needs to be made aware that they've been getting a great deal that was way below market rate for a long time and so now they have enough advance notice to plan their events and expected to be charged the right amount for DPS facilities. There have been times when the facilities aren't left in good condition after a rental so this new process should allow for new expectations.

Xavier Cason appreciated the professional approach to this. He stressed how important it is that we value our buildings. Having in place a tool that can ensure there is more ownership and value in the process.

9. Academic Services

a) Re-Entry Plan Update

Dr. Nakia Hardy and Dr. Julius Monk reviewed a PowerPoint that detailed the following:

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Rationale
- ✓ Re-Entry Plan Focus Areas
- ✓ Task Force Members
- ✓ State Guidance
- ✓ Update: COVID-19 (Nurse Thompson)
Numbers were presented showing:
 - Current Active Cases: 677
 - Released from Isolation: 2202
 - Deaths: 60
 - Total: 2939
- ✓ The Trajectory of Lab-confirmed cases in increasing
- ✓ Proportion of Race and Ethnicity among Confirmed Cases
- ✓ Confirmed cases by zip code
- ✓ Mass Gatherings
 - Recommendations

Board of Education
Regular Monthly Meeting
June 25, 2020

- Athletics
- Arts Events/Gatherings
- ✓ New Student Enrollment
- ✓ Illness Prevention
- ✓ Contact Tracing and Communications
- ✓ School Nurses
- ✓ Cleaning and Disinfecting
- ✓ Daily Operations
- ✓ Questions and Discussion

Matt Sears expressed his concerns regarding the amount of face to face instruction being suggested for one group and not the other. He mentioned the need for social and emotional development that would be at risk with the suggested plans. He suggested developing a blended approach, maybe 10% face-to-face instruction instead of 100% virtual learning. He is aware that there are tremendous operational challenges with his suggestions.

Xavier Cason thanked the task force for the work they've done and constantly trying to balance the academic needs of the students with the changing data from day to day when it comes to their health and wellness. He too feels like the social and emotional development of our students should also be at the forefront.

Steve Unruhe thinks that there is still more work to be done but appreciate the plans that have been presented in such a short amount of time. He feels that there are no real good plans in this situation. The district will not be able to deliver instruction in the same manner that it used to. Communication needs to be clear regarding what the district is prepared to do. Teachers must be encouraged to focus on delivering a basic education as best we can. We need to be clear about what we are asking of our staff in this difficult time. He asked how the district plans to get enough teachers for all the classes since the max number in each class is 15 students.

Natalie Beyer echoed the sentiments of appreciation and gratitude for the complexity and thoughtfulness of this plan. She would like to know what is needed as far as staffing, cleaning supplies, etc. She to advocate for what is needed and tap into available federal money to help with financing these needs. She also agreed with the concerns regarding social and emotional development for the high schoolers. She suggested several methods to involve the community in the plans as well as keeping our teachers safe.

Minnie Forte-Brown appreciated the time and thought put into the different scenarios presented. She feels that IGNITE is a great plan for virtual learning. She also asked that the parents and community understand that the district is being as thoughtful as they can when developing the logistics for these plans.

Bettina Umstead feels that the task force is working hard to develop a good plan and she shares the sentiments of other board members regarding their concerns. She asked that the presentation be translated and posted for the Spanish speaking families who are interested in trying to figure out what's happening this fall. She also wanted to know how we reimagine this vision for DPS igniting limitless potential and what that looks like in this fall. What we can expect from learning as we move forward ensuring that every student and family moves along as well. She agrees that there needs to be

some robust communication plans to make sure everyone is informed what types of planning is happening as we navigate how to make this work in the best interest of students, staff and families.

Natalie Beyer shared that Minnie Forte-Brown was interested in renaming the re-entry task force to recovery task force.

Dr. Pascal Mubenga thanked the board members for their feedback. He understands the concern of having one group 100% then the other group 0%. The rationale for that was space consideration. There was an initial option of four days for elementary and middle school and one day for high school students. Principals that were on the task force pushed back because they saw no benefit of face to face instruction for only one day and thought it more productive to develop some sort of check point that enables students to go to campus and be able to interact with staff. More work is being done to iron out details. Monday to Friday face to face instruction for elementary and middle schools was suggested to bring stability for working families. He also mentioned other options and reiterated that details are still be worked out.

Dr. Nakia Hardy stated we will be using all our staff and that includes our instructional assistance in other certified personnel to provide support to our smaller classrooms. So that we can complement the instruction that is happening, we will also be working very closely with the middle schools with CTE teachers that will be pushing into provide electives, but across elementary and middle, arts teachers as well as media will make sure that those activities are pushed into the classroom because under Plan B there is restricted movement within the building so that throughout the day. Multiple options are being discussed that would make sure that we're providing a varied experience opportunity for every child in every classroom throughout the school day even though they would remain in that room and making sure that the activities are adjusted such that they almost would forget they are remaining in that classroom during the day whole day because they are so engaged.

Bettina Umstead wanted to know the estimated costs. Presenting this information in the process is going to be important as we're going through this year because this is going to be challenging logistically and paying for it may be expensive.

Matt Sears noted the blackout dates in Dr. Monk's presentation and wanted more information. Dr. Monk explained the blackout dates are for the summer to conduct deep cleaning, so no school staff need to be in the buildings. There are no blackout dates during the school year.

Natalie Beyer asked about regular updates to the community. Dr. Mubenga said the updates will be weekly.

Dr. Nakia Hardy said there are plans to work with Dr. Kristen Bell to procure masks for the early learners, like clear masks or face shields.

Xavier Cason wanted to know if the work of the task force pretty set or is there ongoing additional work planned. Dr. Mubenga stated the information presented is the plan but here is still more detail to be worked out.

Mike Lee asked if this needs to be voted on as a tentative plan or vote on it as a plan but still working on more details. Dr. Mubenga said his pleasure is vote on the plan as tentative with the understanding

that updates and changes will be presented when/if needed. Mike Lee asked what the board members thought. Xavier Cason and Natalie Beyer expressed unreadiness to adopt this as a full action. Mike Lee stated the vote is on the ability for the administration to start moving on a plan since there is only five weeks left to handle the logistics of how this is going to work.

Steve Unruhe motioned to give the administration permission to move forward with this plan and that this be moved to an action item. Matt Sears seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (absent Minnie Forte-Brown) 6:0.

Community Task Force

Bettina Umstead stated this item was discussed earlier this year and wants to make sure that the board is comfortable with the bylaws. She's spoken with Jillian Johnson and they will include five school board representatives. This was not included in the latest version of the by-laws, but they will be amended reflecting this change. She would like to confirm that the board was still in support of this and they would like to see a formal action after the consensus earlier this year. She is asking for a vote on this item so the process can get started.

Natalie Beyer motioned to approve participation in the Community Task Force with the suggested changes to the by-laws. Matt Sears seconded and the motioned passed unanimously via roll call vote (absent Minnie Forte-Brown) 6:0.

Mike Lee and Bettina Umstead read some of the board accomplishments.

10. Closed Session

At approximately 10:05 p.m., Steve Unruhe moved to go into Closed Session for the reasons stated on the agenda. Bettina Umstead seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Reconvened Open Session

The open session reconvened at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Matt Sears made a motion to approve the personnel reports dated June 25, 2020. Steve Unruhe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:32 p.m.



Mike Lee, Chair
Board of Education



Pascal Mubenga, PhD
Superintendent