

Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting

Of the School Board of Independent School District No. 709 held remotely via video conference, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, on

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

Members Present:

Kelly Durick Eder
David Kirby
Rosie Loeffler-Kemp
Jill Lofald
Alanna Oswald
Paul Sandholm
Sally Trnka

Others Present:

Bill Gronseth, Superintendent
Cathy Erickson, CFO
Melinda Thibault, Secretary

Student Representatives:

Nabiha Imtiaz (East)
Phoenix Ocean (Denfeld)

Due to the current federal and state emergency declarations, the Minnesota directive to residents to stay at home, and guidance about limiting person-to-person contact due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, this meeting of the Duluth School Board is being conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.021— Meetings by Telephone or Other Electronic Means.

- Chair Lofald called the Regular School Board meeting April 21, 2020 to order at 6:30 p.m., and read a statement regarding the remote video conference meeting process.

M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Durick Eder, to approve the agenda as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.

School and Community Recognition

April 2020

Often when times are hard, when we're challenged by events we can't control, it helps to sit back and take stock of what's good. Some call it practicing gratitude, and this month we have much to be thankful for.

In the face of the pandemic, we as a Board recognize and commend the response of the employees of ISD 709. Across all departments and bargaining units, the work is awe-inspiring. Creating a distance learning plan over several days. Feeding children, delivering curriculum packets, providing childcare for critical workers. Keeping buildings sanitized. All of the work behind the scenes to support all of these efforts. Our lives have changed, the commitment to serving the children and families of Duluth remains.

We honor the families and students of ISD 709, for their flexibility and willingness to support a new way of doing things, for their patience and partnership in their child's education.

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We extend thanks to citizens and community partners who are providing additional food for families and children, cloth face coverings for our staff, messages of support and thanks in social media and other venues.

As we move forward, and I'll quote Superintendent Gronseth, "Let's support each other and rely on one another like all those people we learn about in our history books. People who found strength together in times of great struggle."

May all of us, our families, our students and school families be safe and well during these unprecedented times.

Public Comments

April 2020

None

Communications, Petitions, Etc.

April 2020

Superintendent Gronseth stated that there were no communications received.

Superintendent's Report

April 2020

I'd like to start tonight by again thanking our staff for their incredible work in response to COVID-19.

We have continued to provide child care to families of critical workers. We have seen about 85 students daily on average. Our paraprofessionals and our partners at the Y have done an amazing job working with these students. I would also like to note that we have screenings every morning to monitor temperatures and check for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff doing daily health screenings are wearing personal protective equipment as outlined by the MN Department of Health and staff providing child care have been asked to wear cloth face coverings which was also recommended by the Department of Health.

We have continued to provide breakfast and lunch to about 1800 students each day. Staff making meals are wearing gloves and cloth face coverings, and those delivering lunches have also been asked to wear cloth face coverings.

Thanks also goes to the many people who have donated cloth face coverings. We have received over 200 and are still in need of more. If you are able to donate face coverings, please see our website for more information.

Distance Learning has continued with materials both online and through paper packets available at each site and at hubs throughout the district. As a point of reference, about 30% of our students are receiving paper packets rather than accessing them on-line. This is one of the

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reasons we have been providing these emergency learning services the way that we have. From the start we wanted to ensure that our distance learning model was accessible to all students. We estimate approximately 1000 students who do not have internet service to access on-line materials.

The Governor's Orders for Distance Learning currently has students returning to school on May 5th. He has, however, indicated several times that it would be "unlikely" that students would return for the rest of the school year. No official announcement has been made yet, but we are hopeful that an announcement will be made one way or the other very soon to allow for planning.

We have our student representatives with us tonight and I am looking forward to their reports!

Student Representative Nabiha Imtiaz (East): Reported to the board that after spring break East held a virtual spirit week where students could participate by sending pictures of them dressing up for the different theme days. They had applications sent out for programs like the Executive Board, Yearbook, and Hound Pack. There have been multiple Instagram accounts made by students, teachers, and clubs to help motivate students during this shutdown.

Student Representative Phoenix Ocean (Denfeld): Reported to the board that there is not a lot going on as far as activities go, but there have been some good shows of support from students and staff including some posters put up in the clock tower that are messages of support for the senior class. The senior class is hoping they will get to return and sign their names in the tower as tradition calls for.

Superintendent Gronseth added that he did a live virtual tour of the Historic Old Central High School clock tower and it has over 20,000 views on Facebook. He also did a virtual tour of the Denfeld clock tower.

Board Chair Lofald reviewed the schedule of meetings.

Policy Committee Report

April 2020

There was no Policy Committee meeting in April.

Monthly Committee of the Whole Report

April 2020

Member Lofald presented the Monthly Committee of the Whole report which was available electronically to each school board member.

Discussion took place regarding the attendance regulation.

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Human Resources/Finance Committee Report
April 2020

Member Trnka presented the Human Resources Committee report which was available electronically to each school board member.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed contract for incoming Superintendent John Magas.

Discussion took place regarding the draft budget overview.

Consent Agenda
April 2020

M-Sandholm, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to request a separate vote on the superintendent contract Item C.1)B.(1). Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.

M-Durick Eder, S-Trnka, to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda. Upon a vote on the consent agenda, the same was approved – unanimously.

Special Resolutions/Other Action Items
April 2020

None

Other
April 2020

Chair Lofald reminded board members that board meetings in May will be held remotely unless there are changes that warrant coming back and holding them in person.

Member Oswald mentioned that board members have been invited to a remote meeting with the Governor on Friday, April 11th.

Member Durick Eder asked that work be done on a transition plan for the new superintendent.

Member Loeffler-Kemp reminded everyone that tomorrow is Earth Day.

Member Trnka mentioned the City of Duluth virtual community clean up day scheduled for Saturday, April 25th.

M-Trnka, S-Oswald, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of April 21, 2020 at 7:50 p.m.