

## Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting

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

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

### Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

John Magas, Superintendent  
Cathy Erickson, CFO  
Melinda Thibault, Secretary

### Student Representatives:

Stella Schutz (East)  
Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld)

- Chair Lofald called the Regular School Board meeting February 23, 2021 to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

### School and Community Recognition

February 2021

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Anthony Bonds:

Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to welcome Jamie Bennett and Phil Thouin, to accept recognition on behalf of the Duluth Area Learning Center.

Our Duluth Area Learning Center is the recipient of the 2021 MAAP Alternative School of the Year Award.

The Duluth ALC was nominated for their outstanding efforts in several areas. They include:

- Their digital components/curriculum built by Duluth teachers;
- The open door policy that has hosted a state conference and invited dozens of districts to tour and help develop their digital reach;
- The school's outdoor education component with the Wilderness Elite students;
- Their Restorative Learning model to decrease suspension.

Each year, MAAP recognizes the contribution of exceptional individuals and programs to the mission and vitality of MAAP and to the overall well-being of Minnesota education. Being honored by MAAP reflects the quality and dedication of our ALC teachers and staff.

Congratulations, and thanks for all you do for our Duluth students and community.

**Public Comments**  
**February 2021**

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Public comments were played via voice messages, or attached as emails to the agenda (no public presence was allowed at the meeting) as follows (some spellings/names may be incomplete due to lack of information via voice messages):

The following people spoke/wrote regarding concerns with the proposed hybrid plan for secondary students asking that there be more in person learning time for students and concerns for the students mental health, lack of socialization, failure rates, and bordering schools offering more than our districts: Maglina Lubovich, John Svobdny, Teresa Hanson, Dan Winkler, Alison Cone, Branson Martinson, Kelly Reinking, Judith Christianson, David Chura Lisa Maciver, Ruth Jimenez, Kelly Goetzman, Marla Halvorson, Marina Udd, Jeff Goetzman, Christa, Nordheim

Carol Furchert wrote to express her concerns with returning elementary students to full in person learning.

Carl Sack spoke to express his concern with the lack of travel quarantine/protocol for teachers.

Ethan Fisher, on behalf of the DFT Executive Board, wrote to express their concerns with the plan to hybrid plan for secondary students citing safety concerns, the unrealistic work load it will place on teachers, and the lack of collaboration with the DFT in the process.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**  
**February 2021**

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Chair Lofald stated that there were no communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**  
**February 2021**

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Student Representative Stella Schutz (East): Reported – In recent commitments, William Schaub committed to play soccer at Tiffin University and John Butler has committed to play lacrosse at North Central College. East's red and grey week will be starting soon, although it will definitely have a different appearance than other years. Since I gave my last report, students have had more time to acclimate to synchronous learning. From what I've seen, it's been pretty well received by both learners and teachers. A few people asked me to bring up the fact that workload is still the same but now there is significantly less time to complete said work because students are in class and also no longer have those extra two days. I know that there has to be tradeoffs and there is no way that this will be perfect, but it is something that students are feeling. There has been a lot of buzz from students about hybrid learning, but also a lot of confusion. I've heard curiosity over how the groups will be split up, how sanitizing and transportation will work, and also I think the

overarching question has been how will distance learners be ensured the same quality of learning as those attending in person? I recently met with a few students and professionals to hear concerns about SROs. I know that was something Nabiha was really adamant about discussing and I'd love to continue that conversation. Last month a handful of student leaders participated in a program called vids for kids. Where the older students sent some words of encouragement to younger students in video form. We've also got some students who have agreed to have an Ecumen nursing home pen pal. No emails, nothing virtual, it's all snail mail. From what I've heard, it's all anyone can talk about there! the folks at Ecumen have absolutely loved it. Our school supply pickup and drop-off was about a month ago, that went well, and during that we also hosted a food drive and blood drive. The blood drive was fully booked and we got a ton of food donations, including grocery store gift cards that'll be distributed to East families who are in need.

Student Representative Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld): Reported - Knowledge bowl has finally begun their season and have done pretty well. It was a challenge at first learning to navigate discord and google meet at the same time but the team figured it out. Girls basketball played TH tonight. It was well fought despite the loss. Eric Reinertson has been working with the girls' basketball team. He gave the girls his allegedly famous golden nugget speech and ran his screening camp with the girls last week. The yearbook is almost finished. It will be interesting to see how the yearbook turns out considering the circumstances. SOS is working out a way to welcome everyone back to school. The athletic court is going to be announced in the next couple of days which is pretty exciting. Elliana Jouppi has set up a winter clothing drive for the homeless because of the extreme temperatures we've been having. So if anyone has any extra winter clothes feel free to contact Elliana Jouppi or I. Boys hockey is doing really well. They beat AA Cloquet and played great against Hermantown despite the score what the score may have suggested. Speech has been doing very well. Tessa Shauer was the champion of prose and Maddie watts was the champion of drama at their meet in Hibbing. Robotics has been designing an obstacle course for their robot from last year to navigate through. No inter-team competitions this year. A lot of students are really excited about finally going back to school because it's been nearly a year without seeing everyone.

Superintendent Magas gave an update on the return to learn planning and discussion took place regarding the update.

Chair Lofald reviewed the schedule of meetings.

### **Monthly Committee of the Whole Report**

**February 2021**

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

### **Policy Committee Report**

**February 2021**

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Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the Policy Committee report which was available electronically to each school board member.

**Human Resources/Finance Committee Report**

**February 2021**

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

**Consent Agenda**

**February 2021**

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**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Trnka, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a vote the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Special Resolutions/Other Action Items**

**February 2021**

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None

**Other**

**February 2021**

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**M-Kirby, S-Sandholm, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.**

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of February 23, 2021 at 9:55 p.m.