

## 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, January 19, 2021

### Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

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

### Student Representatives:

Stella Schutz (East)  
Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld)

### Members Absent:

Alanna Oswald

➤ Chair Lofald called the Regular School Board meeting January 19, 2021 to order at 6:36 p.m.

**M-Trnka, S-Sandholm, to approve the agenda. Upon a vote on the agenda as presented, the same was approved – 6-0.**

## School and Community Recognition

January 2021

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Anthony Bonds:

Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to welcome back former Student Representative Phoenix Ocean for recognition.

The ACT is a college entrance exam. Of the 1.8 million students who take the ACT every year, only a few thousand get the highest possible score, a 36.

This year, Phoenix earned a 36 on her ACT exam, a truly rare and impressive accomplishment, especially given the challenges faced by students during the pandemic.

In addition to being an active and valued student representative to this Board, Phoenix's high school career includes:

Orchestra, Drama Club President, Theater, Music Listening Team, One Act Play, Math Team, Knowledge Bowl, and National Honor Society, among other activities.

Congratulations, Phoenix, for your accomplishment on the ACT and for inspiring us with your passion and dedication.

**Public Comments**  
**January 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 returning elementary students to in person full time including - lack of vaccinations for teachers. class size, inability to social distance and general safety concerns: Richard Updegrove, Marlys Axelson, Dave Mayou, Jeanette McCallister, Scott Dulas, Brandy Forsman, Tom Maloney, Liz Holte, Kathy Peterson, and Maija Jenson

Audrey Devine Eller – spoke to the board to voice her support for returning students to in person full time learning, but to ask that teachers be provided with the personal protective equipment they need to be safe.

Ethan Fisher, on behalf of the DFT Executive Board, wrote to express their concerns with the plan to return to full time in person learning citing safety concerns and the lack of collaboration with the DFT in the process.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**  
**January 2021**

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Chair Lofald stated that there were no communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**  
**January 2021**

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Student Representative Stella Schutz (East): Reported – The Duluth East Daredevils robotics team had their season start on January 9th. This year they will be competing in at-home challenges rather than building a robot. The team will be sending out a survey to the student body to get their input on one of their challenges, the innovation challenge which entails creating a solution to help a community regain mental health. One Act will be performing a show called The Terrible Infants, which is sort of a distorted, creepy take on classic children's stories. Since the MSHSL guidelines don't allow for them to do it in person, they are doing it all over zoom. The competition will be happening within the next month. The sports teams definitely seem to be taking things very seriously. I talked to a member of the basketball team and he said "When we show up and wait outside, the whole time we're socially distanced. We take this quiz that asks us how we feel, we have temperature checks, and our courts are basically separated into pods, one court for JV, one court for c team, etc. We have hand sanitizer all over, everyone is wearing masks, for games our chairs are distanced, there's only a certain amount of people allowed in and of course, no high fives. "The winter sports teams have really just started competing and this is obviously foreign, but

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everyone seems very happy to be able to participate in some capacity. Boundless, one of East's mental health advocacy groups has created a canvas page which is a great place for students to access the resources they need, and we are working really hard to try to publicize this to the student body so that the people who could benefit from this right now have access. During our second semester supply pick up in early February, Exec will be holding a food drive for CHUM where we will also be collecting Super One gift cards to donate to those in need. There will be a blood drive on February 3rd in honor of AJ Amatuzzio, an East junior who was recently diagnosed with leukemia. For each donation given on behalf of East, a 10-dollar scholarship will be awarded to graduating seniors.

Student Representative Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld): Reported - Winter sports finally started and there many games in the northland beginning last Thursday. Girls basketball played Marshall last Thursday. Unfortunately, they lost but it was well fought! Boys basketball played Hibbing last Thursday. They also have a game tonight so hopefully, they pull out a win. Boys hockey tied Duluth East last Thursday 4-4 in overtime. From what I hear Denfeld's practice the next day was not the most fun. Key Club has been meeting with some elderly people at Ecumen for an hour every two weeks. These people are super interesting. Denfeld's yearbook has been coming up with creative ways to make a meaningful yearbook despite the fact that we are not at school. Exec board is making a mental health PSA video. Every person made a statement regarding their own mental health. They are letting everyone know that a lot of people are going through the same thing right now due to the pandemic. They provided mental health resources so students can get help if they need it. The Denfeld girls soccer team is starting leadership training for all of the seniors this week. It is going to be a great opportunity to prepare for a strong 2021 soccer season. NHS has been making book reading videos for the elementary students at Piedmont. It was really cool to reminisce while reading our favorite childhood books. HS is also offering tutoring during the day a couple of times a week. The math team has their next meet on the 25th. Their season has been going pretty well this year. Mr. White teaches them well. The Junior Rotarians have been continuing to attend the Harbortown Rotary meetings. It has been quite interesting talking to the members and listening to the people who are speaking that week. A couple of weeks ago a gastroenterologist spoke and the Rotarians learned the importance of colonoscopies. In Debate - Vivian Shaffer - Junior - placed 7th in the Debate Section Tournament last Saturday. Just missing advancing to State Debate. I am not surprised she did so well as I've been in many classes with her when we debate topics. She always does so well. Speech Team - Junior Tessa Schauer led the Denfeld Speech Team with her medal for performing in the Drama event. The one-act play has been cast and has been rehearsing remotely. The band has been able to practice in person. I spoke to Dylan Hilton and he seemed very excited about it. The cross-country ski team has been going pretty well. The team grew more than ten people this year and has more than doubled in size over the past three years. Denfeld exec is soon going to begin working on a COVID-friendly athletic court.

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**  
**January 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**  
**January 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**  
**January 2021**

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

**Consent Agenda**  
**January 2021**

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**M-Trnka, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a vote the same was approved – 6-0.**

**Special Resolutions/Other Action Items**  
**January 2021**

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None

**Other**  
**January 2021**

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**M-Sandholm, S-Trnka, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a vote, the same was approved – 6-0.**

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of January 19, 2021 at 10:10 p.m.