

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, April 27, 2021

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

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

Student Representatives:

Stella Schutz (East)
Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld)

Members Absent:

Sally Trnka

- Chair Lofald called the Regular School Board meeting April 27, 2021 to order at 6:32 p.m.

M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Oswald, to approve the agenda. Upon a vote on the agenda as presented, the same was approved – 6-0.

School and Community Recognition

April 2021

Anthony Bonds:

Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to welcome Chales Mims, Denfeld High School, for recognition.

Chales is one of 50 student authors chosen for the next book published on behalf of the Freedom Writers Foundation.

The book will be called Dear Freedom Writers and will include stories from students all over the world.

Chales will work with nationally renowned teacher Erin Gruwell and the original Freedom Writers over the next year.

In addition, Chales receives a new computer, a new web/video cam and will fly to Washington, DC for a Freedom Writers event in April 2022.

Chales was honored by the Denfeld school community earlier this month and we're pleased she can be here to receive recognition from the Board.

We look forward to joining millions of people who will read Chales's story in Dear Freedom Writers next year.

Congratulations, Chales, and thank you for your inspiration!

Public Comments

April 2021

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 regarding their concern with the difference in venue for East and Denfeld High Schools and the inequities it would cause: Marina Udd, Marla Halvorson, Summer LaMonthene

Shawna Mullen expressed his thoughts on the sale of Historic Old Central High School.

David Chura expressed his concerns with the use of personal emails by board members.

Dave Stewart expressed his concerns with the distance learning program for students who chose not to go back in person.

Echo Larson expressed her concerns with not allowing students to leave campus during lunch.

The following people spoke to encourage board members to support a resolution asking the legislature to fully fund education: Ethan Fisher, Bernie Burnham, Carl Soderberg

Communications, Petitions, Etc.

April 2021

Chair Lofald stated that there were no communications received.

Superintendent's Report

April 2021

Student Representative Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld): Tessa Shauer and Madi Watts on the speech team advanced to state. Both did very well!! Lacrosse, softball, baseball, and track kicked off at the end of march. Hanna Hovland hit a homerun against Cambridge. She is definitely one of the up and coming softball prospects in the area. Key Club is helping with the blood drive that is going on next week. Golf played really well at their meet last Friday. The team seems to be growing. Hopefully, 2x state participant senior Cyrus Behinia will continue his streak and hopefully win the championship this year. Baseball beat Grand Rapids and Hibbing recently. Robotics is currently placed fifth in their group of teams. They are hoping to go state and that will be determined by a set of different challenges that will need to be completed remotely. Sources of Strength working on getting information out to students about vaccines: where to get them, why to get them, and debunking myths from false news. Exec board's spirit week is next week. The dress up days are: dress as your favorite holiday, opposite day, beach day,

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and maroon and gold day. Plans for graduation are moving forward. At Denfeld there will be a one big graduation outdoors in PSS if weather permits. If there is bad weather, there will be two graduations in the Denfeld auditorium. Mathematics MCA testing this week for juniors. Attendance action team is working in the summer. This is meant to improve attendance for next year. English teacher Mrs. Mickle went mute today. After the sophomores read Lord of the Flies, Mrs. Mickle uses this social experiment to demonstrate how the boys in the book acted. NHS induction ceremony is next week. Congratulations to Elliana Jouppi, Alexis Abernethy, and Annie Miller on being voted as the 2021/22 dance team captains.

Superintendent Magas gave a return to learn update and answered questions.

Student Representative Stella Schutz (East): Hi everyone! With it being spring, many seniors have officially decided where they will further their education, including Ava White, who has committed to play basketball for Luther college in Iowa. In person learning at East is still well received, though I have heard of many instances of students needing to quarantine due to probable close contact. As someone who is still in distance learning, I don't know exactly what the situation looks like in school, but from what I've heard, more should be done to enforce the mitigation measures or else spread is inevitable. Obviously, prom was canceled due to the unfavorable numbers, which was definitely a disappointment to many, but I'd like to thank superintendent Magas for listening to my peers and I in the discussion we had beforehand and doing it when you did because I think that saved a lot of people a lot of money. Exec and Association are working with sources of strength to put on Spring week- a week that will be dedicated to raising awareness for students mental health while also incorporating spirit building activities like dress up days and a potential movie night. April 21st is leukemia awareness day. Since that day fell during spring break, we had to make do on the 15th, but I don't think anyone minded. That day, a fundraiser was held for AJ Amatuzio, a junior battling leukemia. Shirts were sold for students to wear in solidarity, and posters were put up for AJ to see when he drove by. His family said it meant a lot to him. As you may have heard, before spring break we had a lockdown because of an incident in which a loaded magazine was found in a student's locker. Although there may not have been imminent danger, I think it's important that I address this, especially since it occurred almost two years to the date from a 35 year old man's shooting threat that prompted a lockdown. I distinctly remember that day, I was alone in the lab connected to my science classroom. As I was standing there, holding the door shut with a rope, I realized that our doors open outwards, which seems counterintuitive to me. If we are going to barricade the doors, I believe it would make much more sense for them to open inwards. That way, the barricade would prevent the door from opening at all, rather than just providing a slight obstacle for the threat to get around if they get into the classroom. I'm not sure if this is even possible, maybe there is a reason they have to be the way that they are. I'm bringing this to your attention because I think it could provide students and parents with a little peace of mind, especially since this seems to be a recurring issue at East.

Chair Lofald reviewed the schedule of meetings.

Monthly Committee of the Whole Report

April 2021

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

Policy Committee Report

April 2021

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

Human Resources/Finance Committee Report

April 2021

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

Consent Agenda

April 2021

M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Durick Eder, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a vote on the consent agenda as presented, the same was approved – 6-0.

Special Resolutions/Other Action Items

April 2021

Member Durick Eder presented the resolution:

RESOLUTION

Authorizing School Board Members' Attendance at Workshops/Trainings

RESOLVED, That Independent School District 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, pay costs incurred, as per District policy, for school board members to attend various Minnesota School Boards Association Workshops and the NSBA Equity Online Symposium.

2021 Negotiations Seminar

2021 Officers Workshop

2021 Phase III Workshop

2021 National School Board Association Equity Online Symposium

Resolution SP-4-21-3806

April 27, 2021

M-Durick Eder, S-Sandholm, to approve Resolution Sp-4-21-3806 - Authorizing School Board Members' Attendance at Workshops/Trainings. Upon a vote, the same was approved-6-0.

Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the resolution:

Resolution Asking the Minnesota Legislature to Fully Fund Minnesota's Public Schools

Whereas, most Minnesotans want similar things for our children, including safe and supportive public schools where all students — no matter what they look like or where they come from — can thrive and succeed;

Whereas, public schools in Minnesota have faced decades of chronic underfunding;

Whereas, all Minnesota students are in desperate need of more school social workers, nurses, counselors, psychologists and other support staff;

Whereas, too many students are trying to learn in overcrowded, outdated and under-resourced classrooms and buildings;

Whereas, we need to build culturally responsive schools that reflect the diverse students they serve so all feel welcome and valued;

Whereas, all educators working with our students deserve more respect for the contribution to the care and education of our children — including better pay, affordable health care and safe working conditions;

Be it resolved that the School Board of the Duluth Public Schools call on the governor and Minnesota Legislature to find the courage and the political will to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1 percent and largest corporations and fully fund Minnesota's public schools so all students can receive the opportunities and supports they deserve.

Resolution SP-4-21-3807

April 27, 2021

M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Sandholm, to approve Resolution SP-4-21-3807 - Asking the Minnesota Legislature to Fully Fund Minnesota's Public Schools.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed resolution.

M-Kirby, S-Oswald, to definitely postpone Resolution SP-4-21-3807 to a special meeting to be held on May 4, 2021.

Discussion took place regarding the motion to postpone.

Upon a vote on the motion to postpone, the same was approved 6-0.

Other
April 2021

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

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of April 27, 2021 at 9:53 p.m.