

Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting

Of the School Board of Independent School District No. 709 held at the Historic Old Central High School, 215 North First Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, on

Tuesday, March 17, 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

Others Absent:

Student Rep. Nabihah Imtiaz (East)
Student Rep. Phoenix Ocean (Denfeld)

Members Absent:

No public presence was allowed at the meeting due to Mayor Larson's Emergency Proclamation regarding public meetings due to the COVID-19 outbreak. There was a TV set up in the Area Learning Center gymnasium for people to view the livestream.

➤ Chair Lofald called the Regular School Board meeting of February 24, 2020 to order at 6:30 p.m., she read a statement regarding the events of the last few weeks, and the pledge of allegiance to the American flag was given.

M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Durick Eder, to approve the agenda.

M-Oswald, S-Trnka, to remove the special resolution for board members to attend Duluth Days. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.

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

School and Community Recognition

March 2020

The recipients weren't in attendance (no public presence was allowed at the meeting) they will be recognized again at a later date.

Jeff Horton:

Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to introduce the Denfeld Music Listening Team for recognition. They are coached and guided by their advisor Clare Chopp.

2 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting
March 17, 2020

In February, Logan Griggs, Phoenix Ocean and Aidan Anderson took part in the regional Minnesota High School Music Listening contest.

This is the "Knowledge Bowl of Music," contest materials cover classical music, global perspectives and a variety of musical influences.

During the competition, students are asked to identify titles and composers by listening to musical excerpts. They must answer multiple choice questions relating to the study materials.

The team took the top spot at regionals with a score of 94. They also earned a spot at the State competition.

At State, the team took 1st Place and were named Champions of the 2020 Minnesota High School State Music Listening Contest.

We know this took a lot of hard work and study on your part – and it paid off. This is a huge accomplishment, we're so proud of you all. Congratulations on your success!

Public Comments

March 2020

Public comments were read into the record by the Board Chair (no public presence was allowed at the meeting).

Loren Martell, 623 East Seventh Street, shared concerns with transparency related to recording, videotaping, and live streaming committee meetings and the superintendent interviews.

Stacey Achterhoff, 1409 East 10th Street, shared her concerns with the Achievement and Integration Plan and that it still partners Lowell with Myers-Wilkins.

Communications, Petitions, Etc.

March 2020

Superintendent Gronseth stated that there were no communications received.

Superintendent's Report

March 2020

I'd like to begin by thanking our staff, students and families as we address this continually evolving situation. We appreciate the support of the Cities of Duluth and Rice Lake local townships, the Minnesota Department of Education, Department of Health, The Duluth YMCA, and the many other organizations that have reached out to support our response.

3 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting
March 17, 2020

These are extraordinary and challenging circumstances. We learned about the short-term closure to allow for staff planning early Sunday morning. We have had many staff and partners working nearly around the clock since that time to prepare for this short-term closure. Things have been moving very quickly to prepare for tomorrow. We have been trying to work through all of the details for the short-term closure.

We have two things to prepare for: a short-term closure for planning; and the possibility of a long-term closure. Over the past two days we have had teams working on details for the short-term closure starting tomorrow. The very tight timelines have not allowed for a lot of input to be gathered. The things we have in place will serve as a foundation for the plans to come. This closure will allow for 8 days to plan the details for a possible longer closure. The input of our staff and community will be important as we plan for the possibility of a longer-term closure.

I think it is important to remember why we are taking the steps we are and the purpose behind the services we will be providing. Our community may be very near to experiencing what we are witnessing across the globe. This is a worldwide pandemic. Our services are in support of the community in what could be the most challenging period of time our country has gone through for decades.

We are providing child care to our students whose family works in emergency response and health care fields as well as our own staff. We are doing this so they can in turn do their work of supporting our whole community in our times of greatest need--when we need medical attention, the police or the fire department or a myriad of other supportive services. Without our services, first responders may not be able to do this important work. To access these services, families must provide verification that they are employed in fields indicated in the MDE guidance. Healthcare staff including: Health care providers and systems, including hospitals and clinics Post-acute and long-term care facilities, including nursing and assisted living facilities Other health systems and organizations, such as: Home Care workers, Personal Care Assistants, Ambulance/emergency, Direct Care and Treatment, Other emergency staff, including: First responders, Firefighters, Personnel providing correctional services, Essential Court personnel, Minnesota State Veterans Homes staff, State and local public health agency employees, MNsure Navigators, County financial/eligibility workers, County case managers, Or any county staff in emergency management or health and human services. Services will be provided at all elementary sites for students age 4-12 starting tomorrow through March 27. Hours of operation will be 6:30 am to 6 pm. We will continue to refine plans for these services in the event of a longer-term closure. More information regarding these services can be found on our website at www.isd709/updates.

We are also providing breakfast and lunch to our community's children. This is to provide nutrition to our most vulnerable students but also for all students to access. With the widespread closures of businesses, we are experiencing, this will be of growing importance. We know that many families will be experiencing financial difficulties due to closures and to illness. We will have free breakfast and lunches available to Duluth students 18 years of age and younger weekdays beginning March 18 through March 27. *No paperwork necessary, the student must be present to receive the meal.*

- Bagged breakfast will include fruit or fruit juice, cereal or breakfast bar and milk.
- Bagged lunch will include a sandwich, veggies, fruit and milk.

Both breakfast and lunch will be served from a school bus in designated locations and times. Any student from any school can pick up a breakfast & lunch at any location. This information is also available at www.isd709.org/updates

There will not be educational services provided over the short-term closure, however, in the event of a longer closure we would be providing distance learning experiences. The purpose is not only to continue students on their path of learning, but to provide some sense of normalcy for our students, to continue the supportive relationships they have with adults at school. To provide a source of strength and support in what may be a very unsure environment.

As we develop these services we need to hold our most vulnerable students and families at the center of our discussions, ensuring that they have access to the services we are providing.

As we progress through this pandemic, we have been told that many of us may become ill. For some, perhaps even many, of us it will be mild. For others it may become a life-threatening situation. If we look around the globe we see statistics involving high percentages of populations becoming ill at some point. We need to see beyond our current reality of 51 people in the state being diagnosed with COVID-19. Our role in the community is important to the continued functioning of essential services. We must also recognize that members of our team may also become ill and not able to continue their work. Our approaches must be systemic so that we can continue to provide services to our students and their families. If we are taking individual approaches to distance learning, we will not be able to ensure continuity of services. We must work together on the development of these services over the next 8 days. This short-term closure will allow us the time we need to best be able to meet the needs of our students, their families, and our community.

We will continue to communicate regularly with families and staff as this situation evolves. Information is being regularly updated on our website at www.ISD709.org/updates. It's also being shared through email, automated calls, social media, local media and other communication venues.

Please know that ISD 709 stands ready to do all we can to support our community in the trying days, weeks, and months ahead.

We are all trying to navigate uncharted waters in gale force winds, seeking to help and serve our students and families. Thank you for your support and continued patience as we work to respond to this situation.

Student Representative Phoenix Ocean: Many teams of Denfeld had been doing well and picking up speed until the spread of COVID-19 necessitated the postponement and cancellation of most activities. Denfeld's robotics team received the Engineering Inspiration Award which qualified them for the robotics world championship that has since been cancelled. A Knowledge Bowl team qualified for the regional championship which was later called off. Denfeld student Blake Eaton was planning on heading to the USA-Canadian Adaptive National Championship for mono-ski in early April. A Denfeld teacher, Mr. Jungman became a semifinalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award.

5 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting
March 17, 2020

School Board Members made comments regarding the events of the past couple of week and the COVID-19 outbreak.

Policy Committee Report
March 2020

There was no Policy Committee meeting in March.

Monthly Committee of the Whole Report
March 2020

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

Board discussion took place regarding the Achievement and Integration Plan.

M-Oswald, S-Sandholm, that all school board meetings from April forward will take place via teleconference or other electronic means. Upon a vote, the same was approved – Unanimously.

Human Resources/Finance Committee Report
March 2020

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

School Board discussion took place regarding the superintendent interviews:

- Rubric
- Ranking
- Interview questions
- Livestreaming / posting interviews
 - Rescind or amend something previously adopted

M-Lofald, S-Trnka, to rescind the motion from the March 9th Special Meeting to not record or livestream any of the candidate interviews in the superintendent search.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Upon a vote, the same was approved – Unanimously.

M-Lofald, S-Loeffler-Kemp- to live stream and post the superintendent interviews on YouTube for viewing until 10:00 PM on Friday.

6 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting
March 17, 2020

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

M-Lofald, S-Trnka, to amend the motion that we will video record (not live stream) the superintendent candidate interviews and place them on YouTube shortly after the conclusion of the interviews on Monday, 3/23/20 at 8:00 AM. Upon a vote, the same was approved – Unanimously.

Discussion took place regarding what the finalist interview days will look like.

Consent Agenda
March 2020

M-Trnka, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Member Oswald requested a separate vote on Item 3.A. Achievement and Integration Plan.

Upon a vote on the consent agenda, with item 3.A. pulled, the same was approved – unanimously.

Discussion took place regarding the Achievement and Integration Plan.

Upon a separate vote on the Achievement and Integration Plan, the same passed – 6-1 as follows:

Yea: Durick Eder, Kirby, Loeffler-Kemp, Lofald, Sandholm, Trnka
Nay: Oswald

Special Resolutions/Other Action Items
March 2020

None

Other
March 2020

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

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of March 17, 2020 at 10:12 p.m.