

## 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, March 16, 2021

### Members Present:

Kelly Durick Eder  
David Kirby (arrived at 7:06)  
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 March 16, 2021 to order at 7:01 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

**March 2021**

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Jill Lofald:

One year ago this month, in response to COVID-19, school districts across the state and country began a journey like no other.

Here in Duluth, schools emptied of students, teachers and all but the essential workers necessary to provide food, childcare and keep buildings clean and safe.

Almost overnight, our district and school leaders, teachers and staff had to create a plan to provide education & family support while students stayed home.

The pandemic brought fear and uncertainty. The learning curve was huge. There were so many times when our staff and families wondered how they would rise to meet challenge after challenge after challenge.

But rise they did. And today, one year later, we have much to celebrate.

We learned how to keep our buildings and bodies healthy and safe with masks, social distancing, cleaning, handwashing. We learned how to teach children differently and feed them differently. We learned about contact tracing, testing, quarantining and how to conduct meetings virtually.

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Most importantly, we learned that we're stronger together.

Thanks to the diligence of our Duluth community, local COVID rates are down. Through teamwork, thoughtful planning and heroic effort by ISD 709 staff and teachers, students are back in our buildings. Elementaries provide in-person learning five days a week. Our middle and high schools launched hybrid this month and will soon move to 4 day in-person learning. Distance learners are supported. Most staff who want to be vaccinated have received their first shot.

As this historic journey continues - and we know it's not over - the Duluth School Board recognizes and commends the staff, students and families of ISD 709. To each and every person who works for and in support of our schools, thank you. To our Duluth community, thank you for lifting up our students, staff and families.

**Public Comments**

**March 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):

Echo Larson spoke to the board to express her concerns that students who remain in Distance Learning may not receive an equitable education to the in person students.

Rhett Abrahamson, expressed his thoughts on the sale of Historic Old Central High School.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**

**March 2021**

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Chair Lofald stated that there were no communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**

**March 2021**

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Student Representative Aliyah Bartling (Denfeld): Athletic Court was announced today...Congratulations to swimmer and softball player Lindsay Johnson and hockey goalie Jacob Snyder!!! The dance team concluded their regular season and are now working on their boy-girl dance and what would have been their homecoming dance. As winter sports are coming to an end, kids are beginning to get ready for their spring sports. The track team has begun some preseason runs. The link leaders, exec board, and sources of strength worked really hard to help all the freshmen find their classes last week. It was really fun getting to see and talk to some new faces. My sister is a freshman this year so it will be exciting to go to school with her again. It is music in our schools month... Denfeld has Maroon 16 (which is very entertaining), solid gold which is dance choir, jazz band, pep band, and concert choir, along with multiple other electives for music

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students. Denfeld will be putting on Macbeth for the spring play. The auditions have been going on this week! Math team finished off the season pretty well, I think we got 2nd or 3rd in our conference. Knowledge bowl has been doing their meets over discord and google meets. They are so fun, regardless of how they do. Boys basketball is playing Chisago Lakes tonight and Grand Rapids on Thursday. Girls basketball is playing Silver Bay on Thursday and Grand Rapids on Saturday. Girls soccer has been doing leadership training with the captains, Kamryn Hill, Brooke Thompson, and Aliyah Bartling. Along with that, we captains are going to start organizing some runs and workouts for the girls in order to prepare for the season and for team bonding. Speech team is still competing. Sections and State are coming very soon for the team. Tessa Shauer, Madi Watts, and Reagan Kern are leading the team. They are always placing high in their events and getting medals for their successes.

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

Student Representative Stella Schutz (East): Red and Grey week began at east on Monday, and the theme is Avatar the Last Airbender. For the next two weeks Exec will be putting on some fun activities including a drive-in movie which I know people are pretty excited about. As a member of the board I've gotten to see tons of creativity from my peers when it has come to planning these events. Red and Grey week is happening simultaneously as students are coming back into school, almost exactly a year after it shut down. I personally have not been attending in person, but in order to get a scope of how people are feeling I talked to a few of my classmates and I think even this partial reopening has made worlds of difference. People seem pretty optimistic about the rollout of the new model after this preliminary one as well. As many of you probably know, we had a hockey player test positive for the coronavirus so that means that their season is now over, which is unfortunate timing. They end the season with a record of 6-8-2. On a lighter note, one of our basketball players, senior center Noah Paulson is one of the 10 semifinalists for the Mr. Basketball award. And another basketball player, Giovanni Saldivar, has announced that he is committing to play basketball at St. Scholastica next year. Both our boys and girls alpine ski teams made it to state, which took place on March 10th. Wyatt Shultz took first place in the northland and 23rd overall and Veronica McHenry finished 17th. East overall took 7th place.

Chair Lofald reviewed the schedule of meetings.

**Monthly Committee of the Whole Report**

**March 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**

**March 2021**

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

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**Human Resources/Finance Committee Report**  
**March 2021**

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

**Consent Agenda**  
**March 2021**

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**M-Trnka, S-Sandholm, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

Member Oswald asked to Pull Item 1.D.1)a. – Bylaw 250 School Board Member Compensation for a separate vote. Discussion took place regarding the item.

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

**Upon a vote on Item 1.D.1)a. – Bylaw 250 School Board Member Compensation, the same was approved 5-2 as follows:**

**Yea: Durick Eder, Kirby, Loeffler-Kemp, Lofald, Sandholm**

**Nay: Oswald, Trnka**

**Special Resolutions/Other Action Items**

**March 2021**

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None

**Other**  
**March 2021**

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School board members provided overviews of committees/activities they have participated in.

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

Chair Lofald adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of March 16, 2021 at 9:13 p.m.