

APPROVED

3-6-24

**DENNIS-YARMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Minutes of a School Committee Meeting**  
Monday, February 5, 2024

A Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School Committee meeting was held on Monday, February 5, 2024, at the Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate/Middle School in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

Members Present: Jeni Landers, Chairperson; Jennifer Rose, Vice Chairperson; Marilyn Bemis, Secretary; Tomas Tolentino, Treasurer; Joseph Tierney; Student Representative Rose-Anna Joachim.

Members not Present: Phillip Morris; Joe Glynn.

Others Present: Dr. Marc Smith, Superintendent of Schools; David Flynn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Maria Lopes, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Instruction; Eileen Whalen, Recording Secretary to the School Committee; Betsy Pontius, Director of STEM; Kendra Bennett, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School; Michael Bovino, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Middle School; Timothy Blake, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate School; Michelle Dunn; Catie Depuy; Carl Depuy; James Plath; Emily Gould; Vida Morris.

At 6:31 p.m., Chair Jeni Landers opened the Public Budget Hearing.

**Public Hearing**

i. Presentation of FY 2025 Budget

Superintendent Smith began the presentation of the FY2025 budget. The presentation is included in the packet. He pointed out that the Committee has already seen most of this information at prior meetings. He spoke of the overall goal; factors influencing the budget; ESSER funds ending, inflation, and lower state aid than anticipated. Mr. Flynn reviewed the ESSER funds; a longer school day; timelines; the governor's budget; student enrollment data; student populations; college plans; staffing levels; budget by category; foundation enrollment. He will learn more about the health insurance rates this Wednesday.

Dr. Smith continued the presentation by reporting what steps have been taken so far including "right sizing" to meet student needs including class size normalization and student service caseload normalization. Recommendations have been made about programs not providing results; other offsets; level funding of most non-contractual obligations. He reviewed elementary class sizes; some classes were at 20 students while others were at 13; there should be equity among the elementary schools. He then reviewed high school course enrollment; numerous sections had less than 12 students per classroom. He did not include special education courses or subsets in this review. He also described other steps taken regarding tiered instruction; 80-90% of students are in Tier 1 core instruction. The remaining students are in Tier II and Tier III Intervention. Data analysis shows a low impact on investment. Restructuring intervention to utilize

well-trained interventionists to work with more students and focusing strategy on supporting quality Tier 1 instruction. He then reviewed the additions/reductions.

Mr. Flynn continued the presentation by describing the result of the steps taken.

ii. Public Comment

Chair Landers asked for comments from the public.

Vida Morris asked about the immigrant children who are staying in Yarmouth but attending Ezra Baker Elementary. She asked about the trend of declining enrollment without a corresponding decline in staffing. Have the increased hours at school resulted in MCAS score improvement? She had gone to the recent Finance Subcommittee meeting and questioned the difference in budget amounts; Mr. Flynn said that is a result of the health insurance rate change.

Michelle Dunn spoke of the assistants and how much they are needed. She does not want to see them cut from the budget.

Emily Gould said that there have been a lot of assistant principal positions added and that perhaps one of them should be cut instead of a teacher or assistant who works in the classroom.

Jim Plath said that he is encouraged by the work of the new superintendent in trying to lower the budget. He said the district should use E & D toward debt. He spoke of the district's capitalization fund and that the town paid for improvements at the Ezra Baker School. He said that the voters in Dennis have never passed an override if the Finance Committee and Select Board did not recommend it.

Public Comment ended at 7:27 p.m.

iii. School Committee Comment

Chair Landers said that each Committee member would have a chance to speak and then once everyone had an opportunity they could add additional comments.

Tomas Tolentino said he is on the Finance Subcommittee; no one wants to see positions being eliminated. School safety is a concern. It is not up to the Select Board, it is up to the people to vote for the budget. A lot of work has been done to lower the budget.

Joseph Tierney said that digging deep to try to lower the budget by right sizing classes is something that has never been done in the previous administration. He asked about the federal funding for the immigrant children; Mr. Flynn said that there is federal funding of \$104 per student per day. Dr. Smith said that funding is received for 26 children. Mr. Tierney also asked if there has been an increase in students wishing to attend the brand new intermediate/middle school. He asked about attrition; Dr. Smith said that preliminary conversations have begun with the heads of the unions; there will be some unfilled positions. Mr. Tierney said that the budget is a work in progress; we can



increase the budget amount right up until the final vote. What would it cost to keep the staff that are being eliminated. He asked about the School Resource Officer cuts; there are 2 SROs at the high school and 2 at the intermediate/middle school. The resulting cuts would leave one SRO at each. Mr. Tierney asked who the SROs report to; they report to the Chief of Police. Mr. Tierney said that he feels the police department should fund the SROs. Mr. Tierney asked if with teacher reductions would the district still be in compliance with special education requirements; Assistant Superintendent Lopes said that yes the district will remain in compliance.

Mr. Tierney asked how much the budget would cost individual taxpayers. He also said that we need community support and hopes the taxpayers will support the budget. He also thanked the administrators for their work on the budget.

Mr. Flynn added that this should be considered a one-time reset in order to preserve programs. Dr. Smith added that both towns have shown significant growth and that property values have increased.

Ms. Bemis said that as a retired educator she sees the values and priorities; young people were very much affected by Covid. The influx of federal funds was to help students get what they need; she feels that other districts know this. As a Dennis resident she appreciates that keeping the town affordable is very important but she would like to work together with the town to support the schools.

Ms. Rose asked about the speech pathologist position vacancies. Dr. Smith said that hiring for these positions is the goal rather than contracting the service to an outside vendor. The district's enrollment-to-staff ratio is very low especially as you look across the state. There will be some attrition and some positions left unfilled; this is not going to put us in a bad position.

Student Representative Rose-Anna Joachim spoke of being from a family of immigrants; how helpful all her teachers have been and how they want the best for their students. She would not want students to miss out on the opportunity to take a particular course.

Chair Landers mentioned the many emails of support she has received. No one wants to reduce staff. She is on the Finance Subcommittee and supports right-sizing. She said that the 2 ½% is unfeasible. The Capital Stabilization Fund is for capital improvements. She believes it is a well thought out budget.

Dr. Smith said that for the next presentation the cost per taxpayer would be provided.

Mr. Tierney asked what the impact would be on some of the proposed movements. Could we look at administration levels of staffing? He asked about mixed levels within a classroom such as honors along with AP. Mr. Tolentino asked if there are plans to eliminate AP classes; Dr. Smith there are no such plans. Dr. Smith also said that the district owns the high school building as well as the intermediate/middle school building

and that having a stabilization fund is necessary; these are very large buildings with a lot of needs.

iv. Close the Hearing

At 8:20 p.m., Chair Landers closed the Public Hearing and returned to the remainder of the regular agenda.

**Reports and Discussions**

i. Student Representatives Report – Rose-Anna Joachim

Rose-Anna reported on the success of the Robotics program. Dennis-Yarmouth senior Elisabeth Turner received the “Foundations Award” at the UMass Dartmouth Emerging Young Artist and Designers 2024 Show. Out of 808 art entries, there were only 13 awards, one of which Elisabeth received. On Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Black History Month presentation including a fashion show. The World Languages clubs are working on Valentines for patients at Cape Cod Hospital and at local nursing homes.

ii. Tentative FY25 Budget

Superintendent Marc Smith

Assistant Superintendent David Flynn

On a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Joseph Tierney, and carried unanimously 5-0 it was

VOTED: That the School Committee adopt a tentative FY2025 budget of \$80,999.651. \$76,990,501 Operating, \$4,009,150 Debt.

iii. Assistant Superintendent Report

Maria Lopes

Ms. Lopes informed the Committee that there has been a revision to the Employee Handbook under Reporting Bullying and Cyberbullying.

On a motion by Joseph Tierney, seconded by Tomas Tolentino, and carried 5-0 it was

VOTED: To approve the revision to the Employee Handbook regarding Bullying.

**Subcommittee, Representatives, Liaison Report**

i. School Building Committee Report – Joseph Tierney

The punch list items are continuing to be completed.

ii. School Committee Liaisons to the Boards of Selectmen

Yarmouth: No report.

Dennis: No report.

**Superintendent's Report**

i. Recognition of Donations and Acknowledgments

Dr. Smith acknowledged with thanks the donation of a binding machine and accompanying materials to the WAVE2 program from Teodolinda Gonzalez-Osorio and Douglas Bashaw.



ii. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Dr. Smith referenced the memo and materials which were included in the School Committee packet. He recently met with Chair Landers regarding the superintendent evaluation process. He reviewed for the Committee the steps for completing the evaluation. Each School Committee member will receive their individual copy of the Summative Evaluation Form for completion. The Committee has already approved the superintendent's goals; the focus indicators are new. Dr. Smith reviewed upcoming important dates including February 12<sup>th</sup> where he will report his progress on goals to the Committee. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> he will provide the Committee with summative data on goals and associated focus indicators. On or before May 2<sup>nd</sup> each Committee member will complete their individual summative evaluations and give them to Eileen for organization for the Chair. On May 20<sup>th</sup> the Chair will provide a summative report to the full committee (summarized from individual member documents) and the full Committee votes on the evaluation presented by the Chair.

Chair Landers asked the Committee when completing the sections of the form to remember to keep comments relevant to the referenced indicator.

Superintendent Smith will have Eileen email materials to the Committee once they are ready. He asked the Committee to please contact him with any questions.

On a motion by Joseph Tierney, seconded by Marilyn Bemis, and carried unanimously 5-0 it was

VOTED: That the Superintendent's 2023-2024 evaluation will be determined using the following indicators:

Standard I.A – Curriculum

Standard I.B – Instruction

Standard II.A – Environment

Standard III.C – Communication

Standard III.D – Family Concerns

Standard IV.A – Commitment to High Standard

Standard IV.C – Communications

Standard IV.D – Continuous Learning

**School Committee Business**

**Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Joseph Tierney, and carried unanimously 5-0 it was

VOTED: To approve the following items as presented in the Consent Agenda:

**Donation:**

Move to accept a donation of a binding machine, laminator, and laminator sheets to the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School WAVE2 program from Teodolinda Gonzalez-Osorio and Douglas Bashaw as per Mrs. Bennett's January 10, 2024 memo.

**Minutes:**

January 22, 2024

**Bills, Requisitions and Payroll**

The warrants were signed by the Committee.

**Calendars**

The upcoming calendars were reviewed.

**Public Comment**

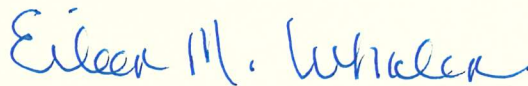
Principal Blake told the Committee about the recently Harlem Wizards event which was sponsored by the PTOs at DYI and SAE. Dr. Smith participated in the game. Mr. Tolentino said it was a very successful event with approximately \$9000 raised.

**Adjournment**

At 8:50 p.m., on a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Joseph Tierney, and carried unanimously 5-0; it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Minutes recorded and prepared by,



Eileen M. Whalen, Assistant Secretary