

Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)
Unofficial Notes on Dorchester County Board of Education (DCBOE)
Monthly Meeting, Thursday, February 17, 2022

Submitted by Tom Puglisi

Note: Supporting documents may be found on the CAN website at CambridgeCan.org and the DCPS Board Docs website at <https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public>

1. Closed Session, 4:00 p.m.

2. Regular Session, 6:00 p.m.

- 2.01 Pledge of Allegiance
- 2.02 Approval of the amended Regular Agenda for February 17, 2022
- 2.03 Calendar
- 2.04 **Legislative Update.** A number of bills under consideration by the State Legislature are of interest to the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), including proposals to (a) establish an American Studies Curriculum Board (opposed by MABE), (b) establish requirements for virtual schools (supported by MABE with revision), (c) establish requirements for personnel trained to deal with seizures (supported by MABE with revisions), and (d) establish requirements for Career and Technical Education (CTE) for bus drivers (supported by MABE with revisions).
- 2.05 **Student Board Representative Comments.** PowerPoint presentations from NDHS, CSDHS, and DCTC Student Representatives may be found on the [CAN website](#) and [DCPS Board Docs](#).
- 2.06 **Mask Discussion.** Superintendent Bromwell presented local data on COVID-19 and indicated that no schools or grade levels have needed to be closed due to COVID during the 2021-2022 school year, even though Dorchester is considered a high transmission county. It was noted that Maryland law requires local Boards of Education to comply with orders of the MD State Board of Education (MDSBOE), including the current mask requirement. However, the Carroll County BOE has filed a lawsuit challenging this requirement. After extensive discussion, the DCBOE approved (by a 3-2 vote) a resolution to send a letter to the MDSBOE requesting that the mask requirement be rescinded.
- 2.07 **COVID Relief Days.** Superintendent Bromwell announced that, subject to bargaining unit approval, teachers who contracted COVID will be offered 8 COVID relief days (retroactive to the beginning of the school year) in lieu of using their regular sick days.
- 2.08 **Opening Board of Education Meetings.** The Board voted (5-0) to lift restrictions on in-person public attendance at its future meetings, even if COVID restrictions require a larger venue.
- 2.09 **Comments from the Public.**
 - (a) A DCPS teacher announced that he is resigning due to the blatant and repetitive disrespect and chronic disruptive behavior exhibited by students, the lack of accountability for such behavior, and the inability of DCPS administration to provide an adequate solution to the rapid decline in the mental health of a significant number of students. He indicated that additional mental health intervention resources and alternative placement options are desperately needed.
 - (b) Maryland State Delegate Johnny Mautz spoke in favor of lifting mask mandates, treating students equally regardless of vaccination status, and supporting the DCBOE.

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- (c) A member of the public stated that the DCBOE's continued silence in response to the MDSBOE mask mandate is unacceptable. It is time for the BOE to listen to parents, exercise common sense, and act on behalf of our children to end the mask requirements.
- (d) A member of the public who is a firefighter and emergency medical technician stated that masks do not provide protection from COVID, and children should not be required to wear masks. The BOE needs to take a stand and comply with the will of the people
- (e) A member of the public objected to the need for teachers to use U-Tube to teach students to recognize facial expressions, indicated that children should be allowed to learn facial expressions naturally, and state that mask mandates must be removed.
- (f) Superintendent Bromwell stated that two additional comments were submitted electronically in support of the BOE taking action to lift the mask requirements.

2.10 **SkillsUSA Presentation.** PowerPoint presentation may be found on the [CAN website](#) and [DCPS Board Docs](#).

2.11 **Instructional Update.** Dr. Mike Collins (Director of Curriculum & Assessments) and Mr. Kirk Howie (Director of Student Services) presented data on student attendance and testing scores for the fall semester. Roughly one-third of the student population is chronically absent. Steps are being taken (i.e., reaching out to family via letters and phone calls, 5000 home visits, court and juvenile service programs, and incentive systems) to address truancy, but it remains a significant problem. Progress has been made in terms of student achievement, but much more needs to be done. Board members requested that such data be presented to them on a quarterly basis. The Instructional Update PowerPoint presentation may be found on the [CAN website](#) and [DCPS Board Docs](#).

3. Consent Agenda – Note: Text of items may be found on [DCPS Board Docs](#)

- 3.01 Approval of Personnel Items for February 17, 2022
- 3.02 Approval of the Minutes of the January 21, 2022, Regular Board of Education Meeting
- 3.03 Approval of the Minutes of the February 8, 2022, Board Budget Work Session
- 3.04 Second Read/Approval of new BOE Policy 180.10 – Board of Education: Meetings; School Board Member Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communication
- 3.05 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.00 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Use of School Facilities
- 3.06 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.01 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Priorities of Use of Facilities
- 3.07 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.02 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Special
- 3.08 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.03 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Application for Approval Procedures
- 3.09 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.04 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Fees
- 3.10 Second Read/Approval of BOE Policy 850.05 – School Community Relations: Use of School Facilities; Liability
- 3.11 Approval of Obligation and Payment to High Road School of Anne Arundel County -Student 1
- 3.12 Approval of Obligation and Payment to High Road School of Anne Arundel County -Student 2
- 3.13 Additional Grants Acceptance

4. Items for Board Action

- 4.01 **Proposed Budgets for Fiscal Year 2023** – Deferred to Special Board Meeting on February 24.
- 4.02 **First Read – Review of BOE Policy 450.09 - Students:** Student Conduct/Discipline; Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying and/or Discrimination. Text may be found on the [CAN website](#) and [DCPS Board Docs](#).
- 4.03 **First Read – First Read of new BOE Policy 502.15 – Personnel Policies:** Employment; Lactation Accommodations. Dorchester County Public Schools will accommodate nursing mothers by following Section 7(r) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

5. Items for Information – Text may be found on the [CAN website](#) and [DCPS Board Docs](#).

- 5.01 **Appropriations and Expenditures Report.** Minor variances were reported.
- 5.02 **Capital Projects Report.** Minor variances were reported.

6. Other Business

- 6.01 **Board Comments.** Members of the Board thanked those attending in-person and virtually, members of the public who provided comments, and DCPS Directors who presented reports and information. President Layton noted the death of Past Superintendent Dr. William Potter who dedicated his entire life to the education of the children of Dorchester County. President Layton and Dr. Morgan reiterated that Maryland law requires adherence to requirement set by the MDSBOE.
- 6.02 **Announcements from the Superintendent.** Superintendent Bromwell stated that his goal has always been to provide what is safe, fiscally responsible, and in the best interests of DCPS students. He noted that the Board had previously been poised to make masks optional but that the DCBOE is obligated to comply with State law and MDSBOE requirements. He indicated that when masks are made optional, DCPS can expect its COVID numbers to increase but that the goal will be to keep schools open. Finally, Superintendent Bromwell paid tribute to Past Superintendent Dr. William Potter, who died recently; congratulated the athletic teams on their successful season; acknowledged School Counselor Day and School Resource Day (noting the support of the County Sheriff and the Cambridge Police Chief), and thanked DCPS teachers and staff for everything they do every day.

7. Adjournment