

Highlights from the Board of Education Meeting July 13, 2021

During the July regular Board meeting, the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) Board of Education and Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti recognized the work of Karen Morgan, she retired as the board secretary after 36 years of service at DPS/DPSCD. The board also acknowledged a long-standing community member, Ms. Gunn, who has sewn more than 75 masks for children. In addition, the board recognized a group of students and employees for manifesting the District's core values; the meeting presentations also highlighted new and expanded services for the 21-22 school year and provided additional key district updates.

Core Values Recognitions

The Board and Dr. Vitti saluted the following students for executing the District's Core Value of Excellence during the successful, first annual Student Empowerment Experience (SEE) conference held on June 18, 2021 when approximately 700 students convened virtually to engage in workshops and presentations to help them become better leaders.

- Ta'Jan Gipson-Davis Aerospace
- Nichalas Lang-Davis Aerospace
- Jermaria Morgan- East English Village Preparatory Academy
- Kassandra Negrete-Cass Tech
- Harrison Haywood-Cass Tech
- Rachel Kabala-Ben Carson]
- Jayvonne Simmons-Communications and Media Arts (CMA)
- Jalaya Word-CMA
- Kristia Maxwell-Southeastern
- Bailey Harason-Pershing
- Ana Sanchez-Rangel-Western Intl. High School
- Brooke Snow-Detroit School of Arts (DSA)
- Makenna Monteiro-The School at Marygrove

The Board and Dr. Vitti spotlighted the efforts of District employees Sheryl Millben, Jason McNeal, Abraham Mazeeb, Cleveland Simmons, Joseph Hilliard, Srinivas Dhenuvakonda, Mercedes Boulding and Shreene Danuwakonda for their exemplary service to stabilize District data systems and create safe environments at DPSCD central offices and schools damaged due to the recent major flooding in the City.

Superintendent's Report-Summer Learning, Vaccinations and District Culture:

Dr. Vitti shared that most of the thousands of Summer Learning Experiences (summer school/enrichment) students are safely attending classes in-person through August 5, 2021. Dr. Vitti reported 70 percent of DPSCD employees have been vaccinated. The District is again partnering with the City to provide access to the vaccine at three of the District's Hubs. He also detailed the improvements in the District's work culture based on feedback from the annual districtwide survey.

Other Highlights from Dr. Vitti's Report:

While acknowledging more work needs to be done particularly in light of learning loss due to the pandemic, Dr. Vitti cautiously noted academic gains by sixth, seventh and eighth graders, with more students performing at grade level than in previous years. He also shared how the various academic data reports he presented continue to affirm that students achieve at higher rates when they are learning in-person.

"Nothing replicates being in a classroom with a certified teacher," he said.

Dr. Vitti also shared how plans are being made to expand transportation options for students and families to and from school as well as noting how the District will emphasize smaller class sizes this fall and expand mental health services for students as they adjust to returning to learning in classrooms on Sept. 7.

"As superintendent, I can't wait to see students back in schools," he added.

Finally, Dr. Vitti chronicled the success of the Technology and Family Resources Hubs which has served 26,000 students and family members to date since opening in December. He said the Hubs will continue this fall. He also noted the strong start of the District's On the Rise Teacher Academy as well as the steady progress being made by The School at Marygrove, as it is drawing students from in and outside its neighborhood boundary.

Virtual School Gets Go Ahead- Call Out for Ambassadors:

The Board unanimously approved the creation of DPSCD's new Virtual School which will come online for the start of the 21-22 school year this fall. While details are being finalized, Dr. Vitti said the Virtual School is not just a pandemic response, it will be in place to stay. Further details on the Virtual School, including a survey to the enrollment process, can be found in a letter from Dr. Vitti [here](#). Board members also encouraged the community to consider getting involved with the District as an ambassador to help tout DPSCD's good news and we know by doing our part, we help students to rise.