

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES
September 21, 2016

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Susan Butler, Chair
Mayanne Briggs, Vice-Chair
Steve Bilafer
Kevin Coughlin
Lisa Laprade
Tom Ryan (arrived 7:12p.m.)
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance

Meeting Location: Avery Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 7:03 p.m.

Recognitions and Awards

None

Student Update by Kayla Haney and Evan Landry

Student Representatives, Kayla Haney and Evan Landry updated the School Committee on events that have taken place in the Dedham Public Schools over the past week. Highlights included many back to school socials, the welcoming of new staff, scheduled open houses and upcoming events. A special thank you was expressed to Donahue Real Estate for supplying ice cream for several ice cream socials that were held at the elementary schools.

Superintendent's Update

About 40 people from the MSBA and sub contractor SVT were on site today at the Greenlodge Elementary School and Dedham High School to perform training around classifying all school buildings in the state according to their relative need for repair or replacement.

PowerSchool Parent Portal information was sent home this week. Parents are asked to login and update their demographic information, so the schools have access to their most current contact information.

A press release regarding the INTERFACE referral program will be sent home this week. It will also be distributed through the Dedham Times by the Dedham Police Department. INTERFACE provides information and resources to the public related to mental health issues. The service will be available for all Dedham residents immediately. Supt. Welch thanked Chief D'Entremont for leading this effort.

There will be a professional development half-day tomorrow. The topic will be Student Engagement.

The State is requiring that students in Grades 4 and 7 take the Next Generation MCAS exam on computer. This is not an issue at DMS, because all students have access to Chromebooks. Dr. Kelly elaborated on discussions he has had with Principals and the Technology Director as to whether or not it will be feasible to have all students in grades 3 through 5 take the test on computers. A decision on "computer based" vs. "pencil/paper" for Next Generation MCAS is due by October 14. The District staff also participated in a two-hour webinar with over 300 other districts and the DESE on Monday to discuss this issue.

Episode 5 of "Ask The Superintendent" was taped at Dedham TV studios last week and should soon be available for viewing.

SBRC Public Hearing was held on September 14 at Town Hall. About 50 people were in attendance. Due to public concern, Supt. Welch has created an email distribution list to keep abutters as well as other community members apprised of any updated information regarding the development of the Dexter site. There will be a Planning Board hearing on September 29.

The first SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Committee) meeting was held on September 13 at Dedham Middle School. About 18 parents were in attendance as well as Special Education Director Liza O'Connell, new ECEC Early Childhood Coordinator Rebecca McCabe, and new Secondary Special Education Director Mary Bruhl.

Supt. Welch was invited to participate and attended a two-hour Superintendent's Focus Group hosted by William James College President John Covino and Teachers21 Executive Director John D'Auria. Superintendents from Newton, Needham, Winchester, Tewksbury, Cambridge, Groton-Dunstable, and Billerica were all in attendance. The meetings are designed to be a "think tank" for issues confronting contemporary superintendents. Six more meetings are scheduled over the course of the year.

Supt. Welch updated the Committee on new hires/addition to staff:

- New half time Nurse at DMS/DHS
- New full time Art Teacher
- New full time Elementary Psychologist
- Increased Special Education Administrative Support
- Greenlodge Principal, Ashley Bodkins
- DMS Assistant Principal Peg Szostak
- Secondary Special Education Director Mary Bruhl
- Assistant Superintendent Ian Kelly
- 30 Unit A Educators (Replacements, not adds to staff)
- 15 Paraprofessionals/1 Teaching Assistant (Replacements, not adds to staff)
- 1.5 Custodian, 1 HVAC
- High School Food Service Manager (Replacement)
- Recruited over 15 Substitute Teachers
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Supt. Welch updated the Committee on various leaves of absence:

- 9 Maternity Leaves (8 Unit A)
- 2 Full-Year unpaid career leaves (Unit A)
- 2 Workman's Compensation
- 5 Family/Sick Leave (3 Unit A)
- 6 pending Maternity Leaves (Unit A)

Chair's Update

Ms. Butler noted the last SBRC meeting was very productive and the Committee is committed to successful communication and transparency with the community.

Ms. Butler explained the School Committee had its annual retreat Monday and Tuesday night to work on setting goals for the upcoming school year. Goals are being drafted and should be ready soon.

ECEC at Dexter Site Traffic Mitigation Request

Ms. Briggs spoke on behalf of Nancy Baker & Jim Kern who were unable to attend tonight's meeting. The town manager, Jim Kern, will be presenting Article 9 at the fall town meeting. Article 9 requests \$50,000 for Traffic Mitigation on Rt. 109 to enhance the safety of the ECEC project and address concerns of the abutters. The town is asking for support from the School Committee behind this article.

A motion to vote in support of Article 9 will take place at the next meeting on October 6.

Old/New Business

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Discussion

Supt. Welch discussed the MetroWest Health Survey which is the largest adolescent health survey in the country. Dedham is not covered by the grant process, so the cost associated with participation will be approximately \$13,000. The Health and Wellness Committee feels there is a need for the data that this survey can provide. Funds will be provided from money that was saved from the teacher recruitment software. The survey takes about 45 minutes to complete and there will be disclaimers and options out. The survey will provide comprehensive and valuable information regarding risky behavior, alcohol/drug use, dating, violence and sexuality. A planning session will take place on September 28 for training on administration of the survey. The survey will be available in multiple languages and will be distributed the last week in October or the first week in November.

School Committee Policies Review Project - Lisa Laprade, Policy Sub Committee Chair

The Policy Sub Committee has undertaken a full review of the DPS Policy Manual. They have partnered with the MASC who will help to review and rewrite policies to align with state laws and procedures. The full review could take up to three years.

School Committee Retreat Review - Ms. Butler

Following up on discussions that occurred at the School Committee retreat, Supt. Welch has drawn up goals that have been distributed to the committee for their review. The goals will be discussed at an upcoming School Committee meeting.

Discussion & VOTE on Ballot Question #2

Whereas:

Dedham is anticipating a loss of over \$120,000 in FY 2017 due to attendance of numerous Dedham students in charter schools, largely located in Boston.

Whereas:

Dedham stands to lose more funds as reimbursement levels for these students reduce over time due to the current state reimbursement formula.

Whereas:

We urge a renewed focus on needed updates to the foundation formula for communities that affects the greater than 90% of students that attend district schools

We, the members of the Dedham School Committee, urge a "no" vote on Question 2 that would lift the cap on the number of charter schools in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Ryan and Mr. Bilafer both made statements saying they were planning on voting yes tonight to support the opposition of Ballot Question #2. However, they are not against Charter Schools, but are opposed to this particular bill which does not address the financial strains that are being placed on public school districts. They believe the current formula, that is over 20 years old, needs to be revisited.

Mrs. Briggs proposed the motion to support the resolution presented (see above), Mr. Coughlin second, Committee voted unanimously 7-0.

Committee clarified a yes vote accepts the resolution as drafted and opposes Ballot Question #2.

Minutes

Ms. Butler postponed the approval and voting of minutes until the next meeting.

Donations

None

Public Comments

None

Ms. Butler asked for a volunteer from the School Committee to be a member of The Education Collaborative (TEC). The Committee is required by law to have a member attend. Sub Committees will be announced at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed changing School Committee meeting dates at the end of the school year. The changes would include not having meetings on May 31 and June 14 and having meetings on June 7 and June 21. A vote will be taken at the next meeting to finalize the changes.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Mr. Bilafer announced “Bernie’s Run” will be held on October 2.

Mr. Bilafer announced that Mark Reilly will be the new President of the Dedham Education Foundation.

Ms. White announced that this coming Sunday is Dedham Day at Memorial Park.

Ms White announced Nicole’s Infinity Walk will be held on October 1 at Noble and Greenough.

Ms. White announced that the Mother Brook 375 Celebration will be on October 1 at Condon Park.

Ms. Laprade motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Coughlin second, Committee voted unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.