

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES
January 4, 2017

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Susan Butler, Chair
Mayanne Briggs, Vice-Chair
Steve Bilafer
Lisa Laprade
Tom Ryan (arrived at 7:11 p.m.)
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Kevin Coughlin

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

None

Student Update

None

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Michael J. Welch

Supt. Welch reported that Clare Sullivan is back as Principal of the Avery Elementary School. He thanked Dr. Cynthia Kelly for her immense service to the Dedham Public Schools and the Avery community for stepping in during Mrs. Sullivan's absence.

During the next four weeks ELL teachers will be conducting ACCESS testing for all English Language Learners (ELL's) in the Dedham Public Schools. Federal and state laws require that English Language Learner (ELL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency and the progress they are making in learning English. ELL students are required to participate in ACCESS testing.

Assistant Superintendents Sam Rippin and Dr. Ian Kelly have been finalizing the FY18 operating budget requests. This work will be presented to the School Committee Budget Subcommittee next week.

Under the "Old/New Business" Supt. Welch brought up the need to slightly modify one of the capital budget requests. After conversations with the town regarding the construction of a joint school-town fiber optic network, an agreement has been made to move forward with a proposal that would allow the Town and schools to share a single 144 fiber strand bundle that will provide internet data connectivity for most Town and school buildings. This project is eligible through the school's e-rate reimbursement at a 50% rate. The new request is for \$85,000 rather than the original \$70,000 and will allow for \$170,000 worth of work.

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 12, 2017 where the board will continue to discuss off-site mitigation considerations for the new ECEC.

On January 23, the SBRC will be hosting a "community meeting" regarding the upcoming work at the former Dexter Elementary School. At this meeting KBA Architects, CMS (Project Manager), and the selected demolition contractor will make a presentation detailing the schedule, process, and protocol to accomplish the demolition work and how it will impact abutters.

In the most recent edition of the Boston Business Journal (January 2, 2017) the publication listed the top eleven issues to watch in this year's Legislative Session. Education financing was listed as issue number ten.

The "State of the Schools" address will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2017 beginning at 6:30 PM in the Dedham Middle School auditorium. Invitations went out to all Town Meeting Members, appropriate board members and parents.

SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment) screenings will be held for all 10th grade students at Dedham High School. Information will be sent home to parents electronically informing them of this requirement. SBIRT screenings for all students were mandated by the Massachusetts Legislature beginning this year. Next year both 10th grade and 7th graders will be screened.

Supt. Welch turned the meeting over to Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance, Mr. Sam Rippin.

Mr. Rippin spoke on two items that he will be presenting to the Board of Selectmen on January 5. The first item is a request of a grant in the amount of \$80,000 to support upgrading the lighting in the Dedham High School auditorium. The second is a request to give traffic directors Special Municipal Employee status to allow them to work for two separate departments within the town. This is primarily to allow the Traffic Directors to be able to work as food service workers, too.

Supt. Welch was informed today at the Town Manager's department heads meeting that all employees and elected boards (including the School Committee) will need to complete another round of ethics compliance and testing this spring.

Supt. Welch announced that the payroll conversion to the MUNIS will take place this Friday, January 6. He thanked payroll clerk Mark Bisbee and Human Resources Administrator Kathy O'Leary for all of their hard work leading up to this changeover.

Supt. Welch spoke with Assistant Town Manager Nancy Baker to set a tentative date for a School Committee Capital Budget presentation to the CEC on Monday, January 23, 2017. Supt. Welch asked to Committee to check their calendars for conflicts.

In December, Supt. Welch was a guest "Mystery Reader" at the S.A.I.L. (Student Achievement and Individualized Learning) program in Meghan Walsh's class at the Oakdale School.

Supt. Welch announced that with no snow days the last day of school is still June 19.

Ms. Butler thanked the Town for approving the funds for a .5 FTE nurse to allow for the appropriate attention to the SBIRT screening.

Reports

Curriculum Update – Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly

Dr. Kelly has begun creating a website for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. Although it is not ready for release he gave a brief presentation to the Committee. There are curriculum maps by subject for every grade level. He has introduced the website to teachers and has asked for their feedback. The website will include a family section for parents to see what children are learning. There will also be links to the state website. Dr. Kelly has asked for teacher feedback and noted teachers have already posted questions and comments.

Supt. Welch commented that the goal is to create a consistent foundation for students, making information easily accessible to teachers and families and setting parameters around resources.

Ms. Briggs asked when the full rollout would take place. Dr. Kelly is hopeful that implementation will take place in the fall.

Ms. Briggs inquired about the budget implications. Dr. Kelly replied that the only financial resource needed would be for substitutes to cover teachers. Summer curriculum work is already in the budget.

Supt. Welch explained a lot of work had been done to create a qualified substitute pool including an increased pay rate and aggressive recruiting.

Ms. Laprade asked Dr. Kelly to remind the audience of what he had to begin working with. Dr. Kelly explained that most of the documents on file were from 2007. They were mostly articulation of standards. Documents were outdated. He noted teachers were doing well with what they had to work with.

Supt. Welch noted that the last time the district had a Curriculum Coordinator was in 2008. The position was eliminated due to budget cuts. Although the cut did not have an immediate impact there was a delayed effect and now, ten years later, teachers do not have the resources and opportunities to effectively do their job. They need more support from the Central Administration.

Ms. Butler asked Dr. Kelly to summarize his meetings with the Teachers. Dr. Kelly explained he has met with teachers at each grade level at every school which took about a month to complete. Conversations revolved around what each teacher was doing for curriculum and where they were getting their recourses.

Ms. Butler asked for an update on Phonics. Dr. Kelly explained that the preliminary rollout will begin in grade one. Teachers will be going to other schools to see how they use the “Foundations” program. Meetings will follow with hope of some implementation in February. Dr. Kelly is hopeful that in the fall grades K through 2 will be using the program.

Ms. Butler asked if there were any questions from the audience. There were no questions.

Old/New Business

District Restructuring Discussion

Supt. Welch encouraged the audience to look at documents posted on the website regarding the purpose for the restructuring. This includes the recent ELA audit from Teachers21 and the 2013 Special Education Audit. More details will be discussed at the “State of the Schools” address on January 11.

Ms. Butler asked if there were any questions from the audience. There were no questions.

Discussion and Vote to Release Corrected Redacted Executive Session Minutes from 11/18/15

Supt. Welch explained that the Executive Session minutes from 11/18/15 had been redacted by the attorneys. However, after further examination, it was determined a portion of the minutes regarding contract negotiations had been redacted erroneously. The Committee voted in Executive Session to rerelease the corrected minutes. Ms. Butler asked the board if they had any questions, seeing none a motion was presented.

Ms. Briggs motioned to rerelease the Executive Session minutes from November 18, 2015. Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Continued 2017-2018 Calendar Discussion

Supt. Welch noted that calendars from 20 other school districts have been collected and presented to the Committee in their shared folder. He made note of a letter sent to the Committee regarding honoring the Jewish holidays. Of the 20 other towns surveyed, half recognize Jewish holidays. He explained that because of contractual obligations, school cannot start before Labor Day. Unit

A contract negotiations will begin soon and he asked the Committee how they would like to proceed regarding the start of school date. He also mentioned that he received a lot of feedback about not having a half day the day before December break. It is the Superintendent's recommendation to continue having a full week of school before vacation next year. He would like to vote on the final 2017-2018 calendar before February vacation.

Ms. Briggs noted many parent concerns with having a full day of school on the last day before December break. In several cases, busses were over an hour late due to traffic and accidents. She would like to see a half day implemented on the day before December break.

Ms. White agreed that the last day before vacation should be a half day and noted that staff also needs to stay until all students have been picked up.

Mr. Bilafer inquired on a DEA waiver to start school before September 1. He feels the only flexibility in the calendar is at the beginning of the school year. Mr. Bilafer would also favor a half day on the day before December break.

Supt. Welch stated that he will present the September 1 waiver idea to the DEA if the Committee would like him to do so. He explained that this is a collective bargaining year and is something to consider.

Mr. Ryan feels he would like to wait and discuss the 9/1 issues until negotiations. He also feels parents may not be receptive to school starting before Labor Day.

Ms. Butler announced she is in favor of teachers going back to school before labor day and participate in professional development before the school year begins.

Ms. Laprade noted she reviewed other districts calendars and that it would be difficult to observe the Jewish holidays without starting school before Labor Day. The districts that observe the Jewish holidays start school before Labor Day.

Supt. Welch offered to create a survey to circulate to parents.

Minutes

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the minutes of December 14, 2016 as presented, Ms. White second, the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Donations

Ms. Laprade motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the donation of an iPad Air 2 from Mr. and Mrs. Shawn Wilmar and the John Thomas Special Friends Fund to the STAR Program at the Greenlodge Elementary School, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a \$2,500 grant donated from the Norfolk County DA's office to defray the cost of SBIRT implementation during the 2016-2017 school year, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer noted that not all DA's were giving out grants for this purpose and thanked District Attorney Michael Morrissey and his office for their generosity.

Ms. Briggs motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the donation of a 32 inch wide screen TV to Dedham Middle School from the Henao family to be used in a raffle to support the 8th grade class trip to Washington D.C., Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. Briggs announced there was an article in yesterday's Herald on social emotional needs in school. Dedham resident and parent Dr. Melissa Pearrow was featured on the panel. Ms. Briggs thanked Dr. Pearrow for her work in this area.

Supt. Welch followed by stating the town has been very supportive of in district placements and Dr. Pearrow's work has been profound in this area.

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Welch to reiterate the three positions that have been added with the support of the town. The positions are a 0.5 FTE nurse, 1.0 FTE Career Counselor, and a .6 FTE Psychologist.

Supt. Welch announced that the Boosters Club Alumni Trivia Night will be held on Saturday, March 25. All proceeds benefit the Dedham Public Schools.

Ms. Butler asked the audience to keep an eye out for the agenda for the State of the Schools Address that will be posted shortly.

Ms. White mentioned that she saw on the news this morning that automated external defibrillators (AEDs) will become mandatory in all schools as well as certified operators available at all schools. She just wanted the Committee to be aware of a possible cost impact.

Mr. Rippin recently spoken with Gail Kelley and announced there are currently AED's in every school.

Ms. Briggs mentioned that further discussion regarding AED's will take place at the next Policy Subcommittee meeting.

Executive Session

Ms. Briggs motioned to enter Executive Session under Article 3; Ms. Laprade second, a roll call vote was taken:

Susan Butler, Chair- Yes
Lisa Laprade- Yes
Steve Bilafer – Yes

Mayanne Briggs, Vice-Chair- Yes
Tracey White- Yes
Tom Ryan – Yes

Ms. Butler announced the Committee would not be returning following Executive Session.

Public Session Concluded at 8:25 p.m.