

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING MINUTES February 15, 2017

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Susan Butler, Chair
Mayanne Briggs
Tom Ryan
Kevin Coughlin
Lisa Laprade
Stephen Bilafer
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Sam Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

Mrs. Butler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

DEDHAM FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM

Monica Wilkinson, parent volunteer, introduced four students who participate in the Dedham Future Problem Solving Program, an extracurricular academic program for students in grades 3-6. Each student spoke about the program and how they explore science and improve problems in the community. The Science Fair next month will take place at the Middle School Library on March 24, 2017 from 4:00pm- 6:00pm. For more information visit www.dedhamfps.com. Mr. Welch thanked the students for doing a nice job for promoting science in the schools. School Committee members followed up with questions to the students.

REPORTS

Dedham High School Teaming – Presented by Principal Ron McCarthy, Michelle Singer, Kristy Yankee, Jim Forest, and the Grade 9 teachers.

- 12th Grader Veronica Melnik discussed how the LINK Crew focuses on making 9th grade students more comfortable throughout the year. Mr. Carney and Dr. Dudley provide freshmen orientation. The 9th grade is made up of two teams, Crimson and Grey.
- English Teachers outlined their Writing Bootcamp offering resources, writing tips and experiences to help students with English and supports Writing across the Curriculum at Dedham High School. Teaming provides teachers with a better understanding of each student. . This program was launched last September.

School Committee members and Administration members followed with questions and comments.

- Guidance Interim Director, Michelle Singer, Andrea Andrews and Erica Stone talked about the Guidance Dept overview with incoming 9th graders offering 8th grade parent coffee hours, meeting with families and following up with any issues.
- Mr. McCarthy explained how the Assistant Principals split the grades and introduced the two Assistant Principals, Mrs. Yankee and Mr. Forrest who spoke about the grade 9 teaming, design and intended outcomes. Mrs. Yankee explained that the word “Academy” was dropped breaking the “all or nothing concept” and tailored the intensity of the academic experience to individual needs and abilities. Increase course options are based on student’s interests/ aptitudes / curiosity. It’s a more personalized experience with flexible scheduling. Mr. Forrest spoke about the trending of A’s, B’s going up and C’s and D’s going down and also the grade 9 retention trends from 2008-2016.

Discussions followed.

SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE

- Today is day 101 of school.
- Mr. Welch provided the members with a map showing which schools stayed opened during the last snow storm with no school for three days. There were some communities who had two-hour delays, Mr. Welch asked the members for their input. Discussions followed.
- Due to the three snow days, the last day of school will be June 22.
- FY18 budgeting process meeting tonight.
- On February 7th a site abutters meeting was held regarding Dexter – a blasting company met with the abutters.
- TEC Director Don Langenhorst and Mrs. Welch attended an entrepreneurs technology seminar.
- There is a strong field for the Middle School principal search – 14 members, the finalist will be selected shortly.
- The DEA impact bargaining session will be held February 27th.
- Dedham High School will be looking for host families from Dedham for international families from China April 2- April 9. Other towns participating will be Northbridge and Mashpee. If interested call Principal McCarthy.
- Dedham High School will be showing *Screamagers*
- Key indicators will be released in March, Dedham students are a part of the survey.
- Parent survey report – regarding substance abuse prevention. Part of a four town collaborative. School Committee members will review the report – Gail Kelley is coordinating this collaborative.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Vote on 2017-18 School Calendar

Mr. Ryan motioned to accept the 2017-18 calendar with the following corrections, Mrs. Briggs seconded.

VOTE: 6-1

Mrs. Laprade – Yes

Mrs. Briggs - Yes

Mr. Bilafer – Yes

Mr. Ryan – Yes

Mrs. White – Yes

Mr. Coughlin – Yes

Mrs. Butler – No

Corrections to the 2017-18 School Calendar

- Include a 1/2 day prior to the Winter vacation break in December
- Move September 21st Professional Development day to September 20
- Move December 6th Professional Development day to December 7th

Discussion – Blackboard Connect Message Alert System

Mr. Welch suggested that the School Committee members be added to Blackboard Connect, to receive messages when there is no school.

Discussion – Snow Days and School Cancellation Communication

Mr. Welch asked School Committee members for feedback, if any, regarding snow days and school cancellation. Mr. Welch received parent feedback regarding a 2 hour delay and discussed the difficulty with buses if that took place. He stated he was open to hearing the members' opinions. Mr. Ryan reiterated that Mr. Welch's decision on the snow day was fine. Mr. Bilafer stated if parents know the night before the storm it's enough notice and good job. Mrs. White stated safety comes first. Teachers may be traveling from a town that has not been shoveled. Mrs. Laprade received a few phone calls from parents regarding a 2 hour delay. Time for judgment calls was good. Mrs. Briggs stated she has seen it go both ways and suggests putting out the parent survey asking their opinions. Conditions were not great and safe. Facebook isn't an appropriate place to go. Mr. Welch also stated that the facilities folks were exhausted with the last storm.

Discussion – Search Committees

Ms. Laprade – can interview sessions be pushed from 2-3 in the afternoon for parents?
Mr. Welch – will suggest that to the committee

REVIEW AND APPROVAL VOTE OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

- Mr. Coughlin motioned to accept the January 18, 2017 School Committee Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mrs. Laprade, voted unanimous.
- Mr. Ryan motioned to accept the January 25, 2017 School Committee Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Coughlin, voted unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL VOTE OF DONATIONS – ASS'T FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE SAM RIPPIN

No donations

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ACKNOWLEDEMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mrs. Butler stated that contract negotiations were going smoothly.
- Mrs. Butler stated that the Superintendent's Strategic Plan is directionally correct with a solid foundation and she fully endorses the Superintendent's plan.

Mr. Ryan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Briggs, voted unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Jacobs

