

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

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**MINUTES**  
**April 25, 2017**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Mayanne Briggs, Chair  
Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair  
Joshua Donati  
Lisa Laprade  
Melissa Pearrow  
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Kevin Coughlin

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent  
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent

Meeting Location: Avery School

Meeting commenced at 7:13 p.m.

**Student Update**

None

**Superintendent's Update**

Superintendent Michael J. Welch

US News and World Report ranked Dedham High School one of the top 50 high schools in Massachusetts. DHS ranked number 48 out of public and charter schools and 39 out of public-only schools.

The next scheduled session of contract negotiations with Unit A with the Dedham Education Association is tomorrow.

Last night, Supt. Welch attended the regularly scheduled SBRC meeting. A new site work/demolition schedule was put forward by contractor C.J. Mabardy. Mabardy is on track to finish its work by July 5. A demolition permit for the school building was approved by the Town on April 24. The contractor expects to begin building demolition right away.

Ron McCarthy and four DHS Students were featured on the cover of the Ralph Browne, Jr. Chapter B.I.G. (Blacks in Government) newsletter. The four students were given training in communications and public speaking. The students featured in the newsletter are Maleka McBarnett, Shakendine Kelkboom, Leen Nellant, and Akosua Obeng.

On April 24, Supt. Welch attended the monthly Community Mental Health meeting at Town Hall. The school department has agreed to produce flyers promoting the INTERFACE Referral Service (a mental health counseling service) that will be inserted into sewer bills for all residents later this spring. The inserts were created through Fire Chief Bill Spillane's office.

Today the district uploaded its biannual Civil Rights Data Collection report to the Federal Department of Education. This is an extensive report that involves enormous amounts of data collection from many areas of the district. Supt. Welch gave special thanks to Administrative Technology Assistant Mike Dewar for his hard work completing this report.

On April 13 Supt. Welch participated in his final Superintendent's Seminar at William James College hosted by Teachers21. In attendance were Superintendents from Cambridge, Newton, Needham, Winchester, and Billerica.

Yesterday, Supt. Welch met with Shelly Pagnotta and Chris Nadeau who are coordinating the TREK summer program for current 5th grade students. TREK is a thirteen-day program designed to provide an effective and smooth transition from elementary school to middle school.

## **Reports**

### CIA Report on Professional Development

Asst. Superintendent Ian Kelly & Science Department Chair Linda Kobierski presented an update on Professional Development. The presentation will be available on the district website. The presentation included a review of the 2016-2017 Professional Development centered around "student engagement" as well as future program development.

Mr. Donati inquired about how differentiation will be incorporated into professional development and Dr. Kelly explained how differentiation is embedded in all of the professional development noted in the presentation. He used the coaching model and 'Foundations' as examples. Supt. Welch added that creating a foundation of expectations for students, as well as the use of coaches, will help teachers with differentiated instruction in the classrooms.

Ms. Pearrow inquired about student engagement and whether students are participating in the conversations and providing feedback. Dr. Kelly stated that there are three perspectives to consider, those of the teacher, parent and student. The School Department has just contracted with Panorama to conduct surveys on all three demographics which will provide valuable data and feedback.

Ms. Pearrow questioned the work being done on the math curriculum. Dr. Kelly stated that the main focus has been with the reading/writing curriculum and that he has just started working on the math curriculum.

## Old/New Business

### Discussion- DHS Spanish Exchange Program

Discussion on the DHS Spanish Exchange program is postponed until the May 2 meeting.

### Discussion & Vote- DMS Class Trip to Washington, D.C.

Dr. Fraczek explained the details to the Committee regarding the 8th grade class trip to Washington D. C. The three day trip is led by Close Up and is an educational experience including participation in a mock congress, meeting with a State Representative, and visiting monuments.

Ms. Laprade asked if this were the third year of the trip and inquired into the difference of flying versus taking a bus. Dr. Fraczek responded that it is the third year and the difference is about \$100 plus the students lose a day off the trip. She stated that fundraising helps to defray the cost of the difference.

Mr. Donati asked how many students were not going on the trip and whether it is because it is an educational trip or because of cost. Dr. Fraczek said about 85 students were not participating in the trip. She noted that some students are not interested in the trip and some opt out because of emotional separation. The school offers 50 percent scholarships for students who receive free or reduced lunch.

The Committee discussed the benefits of the trip, its cost and the number of students attending. The cost of the trip is \$998.

Supt. Welch mentioned that he has begun a partnership with Dedham Savings this year to help students save money. Dedham Savings provided a donation for any student who opened an account to save for the trip. He would like to see more corporate sponsors to help with the financing as well as see participation numbers increase.

Ms. White inquired if plying sports prevented students from attending. Dr. Fraczek did not think so and had not really heard of that excuse.

Supt. Welch suggested distributing a survey as to determine why students are not attending.

Ms. Briggs suggested starting saving for the trip in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. White motioned to approve the 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to Washington D.C., Ms. Pearrow second; Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

### Discussion & Vote- DHS Physics Class Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park

Principal Ron McCarthy and Science Department Chair Linda Kobierski were in attendance to answer questions.

Ms. Briggs asked why the trip had been changed from Maine to Canobie Lake Park. Ms. Kobierski stated it was closer and more affordable.

Ms. Kobierski explained the concept of the trip is to take physics principles learned and apply them to the rides at the amusement park. The students are responsible for solving problems in a

workbook. About 90 students on two to three busses would be traveling to New Hampshire for this experience.

Supt. Welch added that the park is closed to the public and available only to physics students for this event. He also complimented physics teacher Amanda Harden for all of her work with her students.

The Committee discussed different physics projects as well as the increase of interest in the physics class over the past several years.

Ms. White motioned to approve the DHS Physics Class trip to Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

#### Discussion & Vote- Increase to School Lunch Fees

Ms. Pearrow questioned how the proposed increase would affect the reduced lunch scale. Supt. Welch stated he was uncertain and would investigate. Ms. Pearrow stated that she would not hold up the vote for the answer, but would like to know.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve the increase of twenty-five cents to the lunch fee at each level, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

#### Discussion & Vote- Parks and Recreation MOU

Ms. Brigs asked if there were any follow up questions related to the Parks & Recreation MOU.

Ms. Laprade motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dedham Public Schools and the Parks and Recreation Department, Ms. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

#### Discussion & Vote- School Choice

Supt. Welch reviewed the history of school choice. It allows students from other district to attend school in Dedham. A vote must be taken by the School Committee every year and reported back to the State. Supt. Welch has provided the Committee more information in their shared folder. He described the reimbursement process which is only about \$5,000 per student. He also explained the effects of Special Education costs associated with school choice. Supt. Welch feels it would not be beneficial to the District.

Mr. Donati asked what the benefits of school choice are. Supt. Welch explained that in the western part of the state, districts with a less dense population need the revenue to help keep their schools operational. These schools tend to focus on a specific strength to recruit students.

Ms. Pearrow noted that there are no towns abutting Dedham that participate in school choice.

Ms. White motioned not to participate in school choice, Ms. Pearrow second, the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

#### Discussion - District Strategic Improvement Plan and Restructuring

Supt. Welch updated the Committee on the current recruiting and hiring. Dr. Heather Smith has been hired as the new PK-8 Humanities Coordinator. Instructional Coach interviews have been completed. The final interviews for the Director of Counseling Services position will take place tomorrow.

## **Subcommittee Reports & Updates**

Ms. Laprade reported that the Policy Subcommittee met before tonight's meeting to discuss the scheduling changes for Dedham Middle School. Dr. Fraczek attended the meeting to present the new schedule and answer the subcommittee's questions. There will be a more complete follow up at an upcoming meeting.

### **Minutes**

None

### **Donations**

None

### **Public Comment**

None

## **Acknowledgements and Announcements**

Ms. Briggs announced that several Dedham Public School students participated in a science program at MIT this past Saturday.

Ms. Briggs announced the need to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, Ms. White second; a roll call vote was taken:

Lisa Laprade- Yes  
Joshua Donati- Yes  
Melissa Pearrow- Yes  
Tracey White- Yes  
Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair- Yes  
Mayanne Briggs, Chair- Yes

Ms. Briggs announced they would not be returning to regular session.

Regular meeting concluded at 8:26 p.m.