

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES **May 16, 2017**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Mayanne Briggs, Chair
Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair
Kevin Coughlin
Joshua Donati
Lisa Laprade
Melissa Pearrow
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 for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Dedham Middle School Library

Meeting commenced at 7:05 p.m.

Recognitions

The Committee recognized the 2017 Cambridge Science Festival Curiosity Challenge winners. Oakdale Principal Holli Caulfield and Greenlodge Principal Ashley Bodkins introduced the winners from their schools.

The Committee recognized the Dedham High School and Middle School Spanish Spelling Bee winners. Foreign Language Department Chair Alison Guifarro was present to announce and congratulate the winners.

The Committee recognized the Dedham High School National Foreign Language Exam Winners. Ms. Guifarro announced the winners and presented them with certificates for their performance on the Spanish, French and Latin National Exams.

Student Update

Kayla Haney & Evan Landry updated the School Committee on happenings throughout the Dedham Public Schools. This evening was Ms. Haney's last meeting as she is a graduating senior. The Committee thanked Ms. Haney for all her work keeping the Committee apprised of the activities occurring at all the schools throughout the year.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Michael J. Welch

On May 12 Supt. Welch sent out the sixth edition of the "Superintendent's 30-Day Update".

Supt. Welch made a clarification on the last day of school, Friday, June 23. This day is a full day of school for all educators, but only a half day of school for students. Dismissal at all buildings will be at the normal half day release time. The last day of school for students at the ECEC will be a full day on Thursday, June 22. Teachers at the ECEC will conclude with a full day on Friday, June 23

On May 18, Supt. Welch will attend the 2nd Annual DHS Debate Championship & Awards Night.

This afternoon the Committee's Negotiations Subcommittee held its third collective bargaining session with the Dedham Education Association's Unit A bargaining team. The next session is scheduled for May 24.

The FY18 Operating Budget was passed at last night's Town Meeting. The budget includes the implementation of full day kindergarten, a reduction in athletic user fees, the reduction of Advanced Placement exam fees, the implementation of Chromebooks for all students in grades 3-5 and the redeployment of iPads for grades K-2.

Last Friday, Supt. Welch attended the TEC Superintendent's Luncheon with about ten other area Superintendents. Discussion included district budgets, district initiatives, and the use of sick bank benefits for non-union employees.

On Thursday, Supt. Welch will be attending the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents annual spring meeting in Marlboro. Governor Baker is the featured speaker.

The seventh edition of "Ask the Superintendent" is now available on Dedham Cable TV.

The Outstanding Alumni Awards will be presented at Class Night on May 30. This year's recipients are Linda Magee Hurley (DHS '74) and Georgio Petruziello (DHS '98).

Old/New Business

Discussion & Vote on DHS Spanish Exchange Program

Alison Guifarro refreshed the committee on the details of the exchange program. Students from Spain will visit Dedham for a week in the fall. They will stay with host families and attend DHS. In turn the students from DHS will go to Spain over February vacation, stay with host families and attend school in Spain.

Mr. Donati inquired as to how many students will be going on the trip. Ms. Guifarro stated she needs a minimum of ten students to participate in the exchange. She was waiting for the School Committee's approval before presenting the idea to the students. Mr. Donati asked about a deadline. Ms. Guifarro is hoping to have an estimate by the end of June, but will keep it open to September for any incoming students.

Ms. Pearrow commented on the packet presented to the Committee stating that it was very informative, especially regarding safety and medical information

Ms. White motioned to approve the Spanish Exchange Program for the Fall of 2016 and Spring of 2017, Ms. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Discussion and Vote on Field Trips to Roger Williams Zoo

Principal Clare Sullivan and Principal Bodkins explained to the Committee that Avery and Greenlodge 4th grade students would be visiting Roger Williams Zoo in Rhode Island as part of their studies on adaptation and rain forests.

Ms White motioned to approve the Avery School 4th grade Field Trip to Roger Williams Zoo on June 7, 2017, Ms. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve the Greenlodge 4th grade School Field Trip to Roger Williams Zoo on May 22, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Discussion & Confirmation of the Last Day of School

Supt. Welch confirmed the last day of school for the 2016-2017 school year is Friday, June 23, 2017. It will be a half day for students and a full day for staff.

Discussion & Vote on Connolly Bus Contract

Mr. Rippin provided the Committee with information regarding the Connolly Bus contract bid in the shared folders. The Committee thanked Mr. Rippin for the informative packet.

Mr. Donati stated he would like to see the five-year outlook. Mr. Rippin estimated it would be between 1 and 4 percent.

Ms. White motioned to accept the bid from Connolly Bus Company, Ms. Pearrow second; a roll call vote was taken:

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

Reports

Dedham Middle School Proposed Schedule Change for 2017-2018 by Dedham Middle School Interim Principal Margo Fraczek.

The presentation will be available on the DPS district website. The presentation included the current middle school schedule, the proposed schedule, an explanation of “Specials”, the introduction of “Exploration Block” and elective courses.

Questions and comments from the Committee followed.

Mr. Coughlin asked who received the survey. Dr. Fraczek stated it was sent out to twice, once to parents and once through the Superintendent’s 30-Day update. There were approximately 123 responses.

Ms. Pearrow inquired into the “Second Step” courses and how they would be coordinated with the staff. Dr. Fraczek explained that the lessons will be taught by homeroom teachers. Ms. Pearrow inquired into the training needs. Dr. Fraczek explained the staff would need some training, but that the guidance counselors are well versed and the training can be done internally.

Supt. Welch noted that Dr. Ashley Dube will begin as the Director of Counseling Services and will oversee all the guidance counselors across the district. The district will be providing training and professional development. He also said that the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey will help them determine a benchmark of what is needed in the Health curriculum. Dr. Kelly gave an overview of how the curriculum will be implemented and monitored.

Mr. Donati commented on the rotation schedule and how he felt it would benefit teachers and students. He inquired as to how the elective choices were generated for the survey. Dr. Fraczek explained the teachers participated in the selection process which included listening to students, examining what teachers were trained to teach, and incorporating out of school activities. Mr. Donati inquired into switching to trimesters. Dr. Fraczek explained that a large piece of any marking period was parent communication. There are progress reports and access to PowerSchool that are readily available. Dr. Fraczek feels that improvements need to be made in linking school and home. Supt. Welch noted that the issue of communication was discussed by the Policy Subcommittee and that with any new implementation, there may be unforeseen issues. Mr. Donati inquired whether parents would be able to expect defined communication by September. Supt. Welch responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Billafer questioned if the staff were equipped to teach the Technology electives being suggested. Dr. Fraczek stated that the Technology teachers are greatly in favor of teaching these courses and came up with the elective subject courses. Supt. Welch said he would like tap into the resources at the High School as well. He feels confident the district has teachers with the appropriate expertise.

A discussion occurred about the grading of these classes. The Core Extension Classes will be graded by effort and the elective classes will have a regular grading scale.

Ms. Laprade inquired into how parents will be brought into the decision making process for selecting electives. Dr. Fraczek explained that parents will be notified when it is time to select electives which will allow them the opportunity to discuss the options with their child. Ms. Briggs asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Jen Shuley, parent of a 6th grader, asked if the Core Extension classes would be comprised of the same kids as the main curriculum class. Dr. Fraczek explained that the Core Extension class will be comprised by level, so it may not be the same students. This will allow teachers to be able to give students the help they need. Ms. Shuley inquired into the homework help. If students don't need help, will they just be doing homework. Ms. Fraczek explained that in the beginning this is probably what would happen.

Kara Bender, parent of an 8th grader, stated that she appreciated the new rotating schedule and feels it will be a benefit to students.

There were no further questions from the audience.

Metro West Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) Review by Lead Nurse Gail Kelley, Director of Health Mark Carney and Elementary Curriculum Coordinator Debra Gately.

The presentation will be available on the DPS district website. Supt. Welch explained the background of the MWAHS and the catchment area. The presentation included past DPS health surveys, an overview of MWAHS, preparation and administration of the survey, survey categories, and preliminary results on mental health and substance use, action plan, and expectations moving forward.

Questions and comments from the Committee followed.

Supt. Welch thanked Mr. Carney, Mrs. Kelley and Ms. Gately for all of their hard work. He noted it is difficult to interpret the data because there is no trend line, but it is still informative comprehensive information.

Ms. Laprade asked if there were examples from other districts that have participated in the survey of how the data has affected them. Ms Gately noted that it allows them to apply and secure grants to enhance the health curriculum and programming. Mr. Carney stated he will be going to a MWAHS meeting in June and is hoping to find ways to incorporate the information into the curriculum. Ms. Kelly was able to give an example of how a past survey was able to help enhance the suicide prevention program. Dr. Kelly mentioned that in his previous district, the information not only assisted with school programs, but with community programs as well.

Mr. Donati expressed concern that when the data is released, there will be a lot of questions from the community. He feels the Committee needs to have a conversation to make sure families are fully informed when the data is released.

Ms. Pearrow inquired if protective factors were assessed in the survey. Ms. Gately stated they were.

Ms. Pearrow asked how the data was aggregated. Supt. Welch stated that the district will be provided with the software that allows us to make our own comparisons. The preliminary data can provide tendencies which can help us make necessary changes to the curriculum. Supt. Welch used bullying as an example.

Ms. Pearrow inquired if there will be any flexibility to address questions in the fall. Mr. Carney stated that at the elementary and middle school level, there is definite flexibility in the curriculum. He noted the high school curriculum is a bit tighter, but that his staff is flexible and adaptable to new topics.

Mr. Bilafer agreed with Mr. Donati and feels this data will start broad community conversations and the Committee will need to partner with other town departments. He feels it is important to listen to the students to help them get through the day.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Ms. Laprade noted that the next meeting for the Policy Subcommittee will be on Monday, June 5 to continue with MASC policy review of general school administration and fiscal management.

Minutes

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of April 25, 2017 as presented, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor. Mr. Coughlin abstained as he was absent from the April 25 meeting.

Ms. Pearrow motioned to approve the minutes of May 2, 2017 as presented, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Donations

Mr. Bilafer motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$500 from Virginia Melendez and the Wells Fargo Bank's Matching Gift Program to the Avery School. Ms. White second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

The CF Walk at the Endicott Estate will be Sunday, May 21.

Friday, May 19, the Dedham School of Music will be holding a Comedy Night fundraiser at the VFW Post.

The DEF is holding its annual Flamingo fundraiser. Information is available on the DEF Facebook page.

Saturday, May 20 is Dedham Trails Day at the Dolan Center.

Tuesday, May 23 is the Boosters Spring Sports Banquet at Dedham High School.

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

Ms. Laprade 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

Kevin Coughlin- Yes

Tracey White- Yes

Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair- Yes

Mayanne Briggs, Chair- Yes

Ms. Briggs announced that the Committee would not be returning to regular session.

Regular meeting concluded at 9:30 pm.