

# DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

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## **MINUTES** **October 17, 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  
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent  
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Oakdale Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

## **Student Update**

Senior Evan Landry updated the Committee on happenings and events occurring throughout the Dedham Public Schools.

## **Recognitions - Oakdale School**

Principal Holli Caulfield introduced the Oakdale School Council who will be working on the new School Improvement Plan: Suzanne Finn, parent; Jayme O'Donnell, parent; Laura Matter Fukushima, parent; Kerrin O'Brien, teacher; Nina Mancinelli, instructional coach; Meghan Delong, teacher (not present); and Meghan Walsh, teacher.

Mrs. Caulfield updated the Committee on the history and condition of the Oakdale School building including improvements made through the Capital Budget and deficiencies due to the age the building. She reviewed the demographic population as well as student programs and initiatives.

Mrs. Caulfield introduced the 5th Grade Student Council. Each student spoke about a different activity that the Student Council would be promoting throughout the year. Student Council Members in attendance included Meryl McCormick, Alison O'Connor, Amalia Mertiri, Paul Wilkinson, Areti Tiglianidis, Teresa Whitfield, Lily Zahka, Alan Shevory, Kyla Taurasi, Derek McGary and Lily Burton. Additional Oakdale Student Council members unable to attend this evening were Tess Park, Kate McLeish, Janiya Sawyer, Luke Ryan and Sophia Coleman.

The School Committee asked the students what improvements they would like to see at Oakdale School. The student responses including learning how to speak a second language, improving the quality of the bathrooms, improving the heating and cooling of the building, instrumental music lessons incorporated into the school day, and additional STEM programs.

Parents expressed the same concerns and improvements as the students.

Ms. Caulfield thanked the Oakdale PTO for all of their support given to the staff and students of the Oakdale School.

Supt. Welch spoke to the parents and students about the increased requirements the state is implementing in regards to taking the MCAS on a computer vs. taking the exam on paper. He also described the aggressive approach Dedham has taken to provide 1:1 technology to all students. Dr. Kelly reviewed the new Parent Curriculum website which can be accessed through the Dedham Public Schools District webpage.

## **Superintendent's Update**

### **Superintendent Michael J. Welch**

Supt. Welch created a Dedham Public Schools Benchmarking Report for the Finance and Warrant Committee. The report provides a wealth of comparisons to other districts. It was formally presented to the Finance & Warrant Committee on Wednesday, October 11.

On October 11, Supt. Welch met with other area superintendents at the Tri-County Superintendents' Breakfast. Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Tom Scott, was the guest speaker. Discussions included the release of Next Generation MCAS test result, elections for the next Commissioner of Education, Circuit Breaker funding and new proposed regulations on ELL education.

Last week Supt. Welch began his annual Senior Interviews. He has met with 20 seniors and hopes to be able to get to the overwhelming majority of students this year.

Supt. Welch has been on several conference calls and webinars with the DESE regarding the upcoming release of the Spring 2017 Next Generation MCAS scores.

Yesterday was the first of three Aspiring Leaders Academy seminars at the MIT Endicott House in Dedham. Over 75 educators were in attendance to hear from the guest speaker, behavior therapist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Jessica Minahan.

On October 16, Supt. Welch hosted a meeting with the PTO Presidents from all schools in Dedham. The meeting was designed to help better align PTO efforts with the district's Strategic

Plan and the 2017-18 School Committee Goals. The group agreed to meet three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring), and the next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2018.

On October 26 the results of the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey will be formally presented to the public at Dedham Middle School at 6:30PM in the auditorium. Shari Kessel-Schneider, Director of the MWAHS, will be present to provide an overview of the survey and its findings. Supt. Welch commended the efforts of Director of Health Services Gail Kelley, Director of Physical Education & Wellness Mark Carney, and Director of Counseling Services Ashley Dubé for their significant efforts and contributions toward the MWAHS presentation and panel discussion.

Tomorrow night Supt. Welch will meet again with the Equity and Inclusion Task Force and open discussions to a broader segment of the community. This meeting is open to the public and will begin at 7:00 PM in the Dedham Middle School library.

All are invited to the official groundbreaking ceremony of the new ECEC at the Dexter School site on Monday, October 23 at 10:00AM.

Asst. Supt. Ian Kelly gave an update for the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The CIA team has been spending a tremendous amount of time organizing and coordinating the district-wide curriculum. Dr. Kelly has created a public link for community members on the main page of the DPS website.

Mr. Coughlin welcomed anyone in the community to attend the ECEC Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Ms. Laprade asked Dr. Kelly for his definition of a “just right” book and how asked how students properly pick them out. Dr. Kelly explained the student should be able to read the book with a 95% accuracy rate. Teachers provide parameters and determine through accuracy which book group is level ready for each student.

Questions from the audience followed.

An open discussion between the Committee and the audience took place. Topics included the STAR360 Assessment which will be administered at least three times a year; selecting just right books for students; LAB classes in which hired consultants help train teachers with the new curriculum; and the possibility of adding foreign language classes to the elementary curriculum in the future.

Dr. Pearow inquired about the Benchmarking data the Superintendent put together for the Finance Committee. Supt. Welch stated the full report is on the District Website.

Mr. Coughlin would like to see what percentage of other Town Budgets is allocated to the schools.

## **Reports**

### District Bus Transportation Report

Mr. Rippin acknowledged the hard work of Trish Sullivan, the Bus Transportation Coordinator for grades 1-12, who was in attendance. Mr. Rippin provided the Committee with an update on bussing and transportation. The report will be available on the Dedham Public Schools website. The review highlighted improvements for 2017-2018 including cameras installed on school busses, an additional bus to the Avery School Route and successfully signing a new contract with Connolly Bus. The report also included bus fees for surrounding neighborhoods, statistical data on rider enrollment, cost and savings to the School Department and the addition of a multi-function activity bus.

Ms. White thanked Mr. Rippin and Ms. Sullivan for all of their hard work.

Ms. Laprade inquired as to why the ridership for the ECEC was only 120 students. Mr. Rippin felt that it probably had to do with the age of the students and the parents comfort level of letting them ride a school bus.

Ms. Briggs noted that many parents drop off and pick up students at the Childcare which reduces the number of students taking the bus.

Ms. Margaret Wilds, Kindergarten Teacher, also noted that parents of Preschoolers have to drive and pick up their students as that age group is not yet eligible for the bus.

Ms. Briggs inquired about having a late bus run at the High School for students who participate in afterschool athletics. Mr. Rippin said he would talk to the Athletic Department about that need.

### Quarterly FY18 Budget Update

Mr. Rippin provided the Committee with an overview of the first quarter budget. The report highlighted that the restructure was budget neutral and out of district placements are down.

Mr. Coughlin inquired about the loss of 3.5 FTEs resulting from the restructure. He explained that the point of the restructure was not about eliminating positions, but about realignment. Supt. Welch explained how the Teacher Assistant positions were reduced and that no one with Professional Status lost a job due to the restructure

## **Old/New Business**

### Budget Timeline Discussion

Supt. Welch stated there has been no change or update since the last meeting.

Mr. Coughlin announced that the Committee will vote on the budget calendar at the next meeting.

### Next Generation MCAS Scores Release and Interpretation

Supt. Welch wanted to give the audience some preliminary information regarding the MCAS scores being released next week. He has spent considerable time on conference calls with the DESE regarding the release of the results. He explained that Dedham's Level 2 status will not

change. The Next Generation MCAS exam will not/cannot be compared to previous year's test scores due to the change of the exam. He also discussed how some districts/students took the exam on paper while others took it on computer. Because there will be a significant change in achievement levels from the legacy MCAS exam to the Next Generation Exam, the Superintendent wanted to prepare families that scores may decrease.

The Committee discussed how the rigor of the test has increased. It is not necessarily that the scores have changed, but the bar has been set higher. They discussed the realignment of the Common Core Standards and its impact on the test as well as the new curriculum. It is difficult to compare to other town's because some towns took the PARCC exam, others took the legacy MCAS and still others took the Next Generation test. This year's test scores will set a baseline for future growth profiles. The message the Committee wanted to get out to the public is not to compare this year's scores to previous year's test scores or to other districts.

Supt. Welch noted the scores will be made public on October 26.

## **Subcommittee Reports & Updates**

### Policy

Ms. Laprade provided the first reading of the proposed policy, CL - Administrative Reports:

The Dedham School Committee will require reports from the Superintendent concerning conditions of efficiency and needs of the schools.

School building administrators will be required to keep such records and make reports as the Superintendent may direct or require.

Upon receipt of the Superintendent's reports, the Committee will take steps to appraise the effectiveness with which the schools are achieving the educational purposes of the school system.

Because statistical information often has a time value, each administrator will give careful consideration to all procedures related to reports, accounting, and general business matters that are required for the administration of the school program and will make accurate and prompt return on scheduled dates of all required statistical and other information.

Ms. Laprade provided the second reading of the proposed policy, CM- School District Annual Report:

An annual report covering the diversified activities of the school system and the administration's recommendations for their improvement will be prepared by the Superintendent and presented to the Dedham School Committee. Upon Committee approval, the report will be made available to the public and used as one means for informing the parents/guardians, citizens, Commissioner of Education and others of the programs and conditions of the town's public schools.

Both Policies will be available on the Dedham Public Schools Website.

Ms. Laprade provided a summary (the third reading) of the proposed policy, BEDH-E Guidelines for Public Comment. The policy has been available on the district website. Ms. Laprade noted that the Policy Subcommittee had voted unanimously to adopt this policy.

Ms. White motioned to accept the policy, Guidelines for Public Comment, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted unanimously 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Laprade noted the Policy Subcommittee meeting will be Wednesday, October 18.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

Mr. Donati stated the next meeting will be tomorrow night. It is open to the public and will focus on the mission of the task force.

Negotiations

Supt. Welch stated there was no additional information at this time.

SBRC

Mr. Bilafer stated there has been activity on the site. The official Groundbreaking will take place this Monday. The Committee is moving forward seeking approval of the offsite mitigation (signage on Route 109.)

**Minutes**

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of October 3, 2017 as presented, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Mr. Donati motioned to approve the REVISED minutes of September 19, 2017 as presented, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

**Donations**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**Acknowledgements and Announcements**

Dr. Pearrow stated she was glad to be at the Oakdale School this evening and thanked everyone involved.

Mr. Bilafer thanked the Chair, Ms. Briggs, for making it a priority to have the meetings at the different schools. Ms. Briggs stated she hoped this would help to improve communication.

The next meeting will be on November 7 and will be held at the Greenlodge Elementary School.

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Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted in favor.

The meeting concluded at 9:13 p.m.