

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

MINUTES

January 16, 2018

(Approved January 30, 2018)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Mayanne MacDonald Briggs

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Dedham Middle School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent's State of the Schools Address

Superintendent Michael J. Welch delivered his second annual State of the Schools Address. The presentation will be available on the Dedham Public Schools website.

Superintendent Welch reviewed the goals and objectives of the Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plan (District 2020 Vision).

Supt. Welch reviewed the 2017-2018 School Committee Goals. Achievements and progress included the following:

- Goal #1- FY19 Budget
 - One year settlement on all collective bargaining agreements
- Goal # 2 – Safe/Supportive/Inclusive Schools and School Environment
 - Complete review of the Dedham Public Schools Policy Manual
 - Participation in the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

- Distribution of Panorama Surveys (student & faculty completed, family feedback to occur in the Spring)
- Participation in the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (SAPC)
- Formation of the Equity and Inclusion Task Force

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly explained the joint efforts between the Director of Health Services, Gail Kelley, and Director of Counseling Services, Dr. Ashley Dube. Together they work on addressing stress, mental health issues and safe schools.

- Goal #3 – District Strategic Plan Restructuring Information/Oversight
 - Implementation of the Instructional Coaching Model and PK-8 Curriculum Coordinators
 - STAR 360 Universal Screening Assessments for early literacy and math
 - Computer-based assessment with immediate feedback
 - Additions to Special Education
 - Educational Team Leaders
 - Director of Counseling Services
 - Support of Educators in the Classroom/Professional Development
 - Implementation of Foundations (K-3 Literacy Program)
 - LAB Classrooms (Teaching and Learning Alliance, K-5 Reading and Writing curriculum)
 - Level Literacy Intervention (K-5 Educational Interventionist Literacy tool)
 - Teacher's 21 (supporting education evaluation model)
 - Learning Forward (supporting Instructional Coaches)
 - Master Teacher Program (personalized, self-directed, on-line learning for paraprofessionals)
- Goal #4 – Long Range Facilities Master Plan
 - 'On the Road' School Committee meetings to hear from parents and students on building and education needs/concerns
 - Request funding for a new Facilities Master Plan at Spring 2018 Town Meeting

Goal #5 - Communication and Public Relations

- New DPS website
- 'Ask the Superintendent' tapings with Dedham TV
- Welcome packets for Dedham realtors to hand out to new/potential families
- Need work on social media presence

Supt. Welch went on to describe Dedham's Commitment and investment in Early Childhood Education including

- Free full day kindergarten as of Fall 2017
- New Curran Early Childhood Education Center to open 2018-2019 (mid-year)

Supt. Welch spoke about the continued investment in technology use, training and infrastructure, including:

- MassCUE Blended Learning Training

- Fiber Optic Ring Project with Town - Completed in 2017
 - First community to receive a 10% rebate from the State
- Continued work with Level Data to integrate systems
- 1:1 Chromebooks for all students in Grades 3-12
 - MCAS will all be taken on Chromebooks in 2018
- Investment in People Admin, a human resource management system

Superintendent Welch spoke about on-going actions which include:

- The Aspiring Leaders Academy (after school professional development for staff looking to develop their careers)
- Instructional Rounds (Administrative meetings held during the school day to observe best practices)
- Focus on supportive supervision with Teachers21 training in DESE evaluation protocols
- District Team presentations at State and National conferences
- Reduction in Advanced Placement Fees
- Reduction in Athletic Fees
 - Dedham has the least expensive fees in the Tri-Valley League and the Bay State League
- Continued attention to college and career preparation through the addition of a dedicated career counselor at DHS

Supt. Welch concluded his presentation with a look at upcoming initiatives:

- FY2019 Capital and Operating budget approval (Spring 2018)
- Time audit and review of elementary and secondary schedules (Spring 2018)
- Ongoing prekindergarten through grade 12 curriculum alignment work (Spring 2018 – ongoing)
- Development and presentation of School Improvement Plans (Spring 2018)
- Review, alignment, and revision of elementary report cards (Fall 2018)
- Overhaul of prekindergarten through Grade 12 Social, Emotional & Wellness curriculum

Public Comment

Shari King, parent of students at Riverdale and the ECEC, inquired if the Panorama Survey and other survey results would be made public. Dr. Kelly explained the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey results are available on the website. The Panorama results will be presented to the community at a future date. Ms. King also supports the use of Social Media to promote school events and activities.

Ms. Laprade asked how the budget can remain neutral with all the new resources and professional development occurring. Supt. Welch explained that spending is being eliminated in other areas in order to focus on professional development which is an area at which he feels the District is playing “catch up”. He stated that the budget will not be able to sustain this level of Professional Development in the future. Dr. Kelly explained that he is looking at strategic use of funds. Instead of separate teachers being funded for different elements, teachers are now being trained collectively. Mr. Rippin explained that in FY17 there was a reduction of \$500,000 in Out of District placements and that cost

savings was targeted toward redistricting initiatives. He agreed with Supt. Welch that the current spending on professional development is not sustainable over time.

Mr. Donati noted his approval of assessing students and having sensible intervention in place. He feels it is important that both are used together in a proactive way. He complimented the work the Administration is doing in this area.

Dr. Pearrow commended all the staff on the current undertakings. She complimented the technology integration within the school system. She noted the work being done as a result of previous district audits and asked at what point the Administration will bring in an outside organization to assess the changes and provide additional feedback. Supt. Welch explained the schools are only 80 days into the new processes. He wants teachers to feel supported and well trained. It will take a few years to see the results of the changes. He anticipates the District will be ready for another examination at the beginning of 2020.

Mr. Coughlin thanked the Town for its financial support of the schools. He noted he was happy that the information from the audits was being utilized. He also complimented Susan Butler, former School Committee Chair who was in attendance, for all of her hard work supporting the commission of the audits.

Ms. White complimented staff, teachers, students and families for rising to the occasion and embracing the restructure. She is proud of the work the District has done this year.

Mr. Bilafer stated on behalf of the Chair, Ms. Briggs who could not be in attendance this evening, that he wanted to thank Supt. Welch, Asst. Supt. Kelly and Asst. Supt. Rippin for all their work putting together tonight's presentation. From what he observed this evening, the Dedham Public Schools is giving the students of Dedham the best education possible.

Mr. Bilafer noted the next School Committee meeting will be in two weeks, January 30, at the Avery School.

An additional comment was made by resident Susan Butler. She commented positively on Dedham's technology and noted that she was on the Committee seven years ago when Chromebooks first entered the schools. Now the state is mandating online MCAS testing and the District is ready. She noted her appreciation of the professional development being done with the paraprofessionals. She is also happy to see the collaboration between the Director of Health Services and the Director of Counseling Services. She would like to see the College/Career fair expanded to include the promotion of skilled trades. Lastly, she is very concerned about the traffic on Mt. Vernon Street between the High School and Middle School. She would like to see it turned into a School Zone reducing the speed limit. She suggested contacting State Representative Paul McMurty on the issue.

Mr. Bilafer agreed with Ms. Butler on promoting skilled trades. He also agreed that the Master Plan should include the traffic surrounding the Avery, Middle and High Schools.

Supt. Welch also agreed with Ms. Butler regarding promoting skilled trade careers. He noted the new Career Councilor, Ashley Mansfield, has lots of ideas about providing exposure in this area to high school students. He stated the speed limit issue surrounding the schools needs to be looked at as well.

Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting of January 16, 2018, Dr. Pearrow second;
Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 8:29 p.m