

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

April 3, 2018

(Approved April 24, 2018)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Mayanne Briggs, Chair
Kevin Coughlin
Joshua Donati
Lisa Laprade
Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Greenlodge Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Student Update

None

Superintendent's Update

On March 26 the Superintendent attended a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education seminar about the new state accountability system. This work is known as the "Leveling System" for ranking schools and school districts across the state. There will be sweeping changes to this system based upon these recommendations, which will be voted on by the Board of Education in the next month. The changes will take effect immediately and will be used to rank schools and districts publicly this fall based upon spring 2018 Next Generation MCAS standardized test scores.

Site visits are occurring this week for the five finalists for the position of Principal at Dedham's Early Childhood Education Center. Finalists are spending a full day at the ECEC and around the district. Site visits to the candidates' schools will take place next week, and a decision could come as early as the end of next week.

Supt. Welch met with students to gather input about the appointment of a permanent principal for Dedham High School. He has reviewed the results of the survey to all Dedham High School and Dedham Middle School parents, and will be meeting with a few additional stakeholders this week. He will use this input to determine the next steps in the process.

Supt. Welch stated he appreciated the Committee's and the public's support at the school department's FY19 Budget Presentation to the Finance Committee last Tuesday, March 27.

Dedham Public Schools have been selected by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents to present the district re-structuring plan at this summer's annual conference on July 11 through 13 on Cape Cod. The title of the conference is "Redefining What Success Looks Like for All Students: Pathways, Opportunities, and Resources". Supt. Welch thanked Dr. Kelly for taking the time to apply for this honor. He is also looking to present at this fall's MASC/MASS conference in November.

On April 2, Supt Welch had a meeting regarding the Middle School athletics program. In attendance were DMS Principal Karen Hillman, DHS Principal Jim Forrest, Athletic Director Steve Traister, Parks & Recreation Department Director Bob Stanley, Assistant Director Deb Anderson, School Committee Member Kevin Coughlin and Chair Mayanne Briggs. Supt. Welch is anticipating sending out a survey to parents and students to solicit input on a clear vision statement.

Supt. Welch thanked everyone who came out to participate in the All Dedham Trivia Night on March 24 sponsored by the DHS Alumni Association. Supt. Welch also thanked Bob Crisp and Nancy Clement for all of their hard work putting the evening together.

Supt. Welch will be meeting with the Superintendent and Central Office officials from the Newton Public Schools on April 13 to learn more about their use of a communications director and social media coordinator. This meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 13. Supt. Welch is seeking to enhance Dedham Public Schools marketing and communications in the community.

Supt. Welch invited members of the committee to next week's spring meeting of the Dedham Public Schools Aspiring Leaders Academy event at the Dedham Endicott House. The guest speaker will be Kalise Wornum, METCO Director for the Wellesley Public Schools. Ms. Wornum is a noted speaker and trainer on issues of cultural proficiency in school systems around the state.

Ms. Laprade inquired into the last day of school and how that will impact the start date of the TREK program. Supt. Welch noted the last day of school will be Monday, June 25, with Greenlodge ending on Tuesday, June 26. He has not yet had an opportunity to speak with the TREK coordinators regarding adjusting the start date of the TREK program.

Ms. White asked how many people attend the Aspiring Leaders meetings. Supt. Welch explained that about 95 people are invited and about 70 people attend.

Ms. Briggs noted that Mr. Bilafer was unable to be in attendance this evening due to a medical situation.

Reports

DMS Schedule Update by Principal Karen Hillman

The Presentation will be available on the DPS district website. The presentation reviewed the goals of the 2017 - 2018 schedule, reflection on the current year's schedule, results of a staff survey on rotating elective blocks, and adjustments for next year.

Questions from the Committee followed:

Ms. White asked about the increase in electives. Ms. Hillman stated there will only be one additional elective. Ms. White asked when the 5th grade parents will be able to see the schedule. Ms. Hillman stated that the next step is for the Guidance Councilors to reach out to the 5th grade students. After that she is planning on holding a parent night to address many Middle School questions new parents may have including an overview of the schedule.

Dr. Pearrow asked about the "team time" being eliminated and as to when teams would be able to meet? Ms. Hillman clarified that the teacher "team time" will not be going away. Teachers will still meet regularly. The morning homeroom "team time" for students is what is being removed from the schedule.

Mr. Donati inquired into the impact of the loss of "core-extension" time and how parents will be able to get extra help for their children. Ms. Hillman felt that amount of time is better spent being part of the day. Parents who feel their child needs extra help should reach out to a teacher, guidance counselor, or the principal.

Supt. Welch added that all Special Education needs will still be met and that electives slots can be utilized for intervention if necessary.

Ms. Laprade asked if students had been surveyed on what electives they were interested in most. She also noted parent's dissatisfaction in the Health electives and asked if any core electives would be added the schedule. Ms. Hillman stated she has looked at adding to the arts and has extended grade offerings. She is constricted by what the staff is able to teach. At this point, she has only surveyed the staff to see what they would like to teach for electives.

Supt. Welch stated that moving to a seven day rotation aligns the middle school well with the high school and may allow the opportunity to coordinate staff and electives.

Ms. Briggs inquired if each grade will have the opportunity to take three electives. Ms. Hillman stated yes. Ms. Briggs also stated she appreciated the lengthening of class time.

DHS National Honor Society and DMS National Junior Honor Society by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly

Dr. Kelly acknowledged Karen Dearborn and Carol Margolis, Dedham High School faculty advisors for the National Honor Society, and Ariel Gordon and Sarah Ascenzo, faculty advisors for the Dedham Middle School National Junior Honor Society. He has been working with the advisors to gain a better understanding of the current process. He is working with the Middle School to make some minor changes to the current processes. He explained to the Committee that he needs to have a broader conversation on how students are recognized and what they are being recognized for. He will follow up with the Committee at a later date.

Ms. White inquired if there is an explanation given to the sixth graders when they enter the Middle School as to what the NJHS is and what they need to accomplish to be accepted into the organization. Ms. Hillman stated that is not part of the current process, but feels it is something that should be considered.

Professional Development Update and Forecast for 2018-2019 by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly

The Presentation will be available on the district website. The presentation included long range planning, 2017-2108 professional development summary, costs associated with professional development, investments in classroom libraries in grades K through 5, projects for 2018-2019 school year in grades PK - 5, review of 2017-2018 projects at DMS, and 2018-2019 long range planning for DMS.

Dr. Kelly thanked Dr. Linda Kobierski, STEM Curriculum Coordinator, and Dr. Heather Smith, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, for all of their hard work organizing professional development.

Mr. Coughlin inquired if the district was taking on too much, concerned it was putting a lot on the teachers. Dr. Kelly is hopeful this year will be less stressful for the teachers and noted that a lot of the work was being done at the administrative level. Mr. Coughlin stated that it would be important for the Finance Committee to see the savings associated with professional development so they could understand the School Department is spending money responsibly.

Dr. Pearrow understood that the number of staff maternity leaves and family leaves can be an issue and inquired if this matter is factored into the planning process. Dr. Kelly stated that long term subs do not have the same expertise as seasoned teachers and that in order to minimize the impact on student learning it is important to place appropriate structures around the classroom. Dr. Pearrow also inquired if the money being spent on text books includes special needs classrooms. Dr. Kelly stated yes, books were purchased for both general education and special education classrooms.

Ms. White inquired into continuing training of staff and the training for new staff. Dr. Kelly stated yes to both. There will be ongoing training with existing staff, but not to the same degree as the initial training. New staff will be trained as well. Ms. White asked if STAR 360 will also allow us to keep following the progress of students. Dr. Kelly stated that the STAR 360 is embedded in the program.

Mr. Donati commented on Professional Development being heavy on literacy and inquired into the plan for the math curriculum in grades K – 5? Dr. Kelly stated he has been researching the Everyday Math curriculum currently being used in the classroom. He discovered that teachers have not been trained on all elements of the program and they need additional training to fully utilize the program.

Ms. Laprade asked Dr. Kelly to explain the co-teaching model at the Middle School. Dr. Kelly explained co-teaching means a special education teacher and a regular education teacher working together to create a heterogeneous environment. Ms. Laprade asked as to when the templates will be complete on the curriculum page of the website. Dr. Kelly is expecting a completion date of July 1 and noted preschool will be included as well.

Supt. Welch thanked the Committee for their support of the restructure and noted he was proud of all the work being done in the district. He stated that the Administration is reviewing how professional status is earned. He would like to see mandatory professional development be a factor along with the amount of time a teacher has served in the district.

Ms. Briggs noted she would like to have a parent's night to allow an opportunity to become better acquainted with the literacy program.

Old/New Business

Discussion & Vote on DHS Physics Student's Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park

Principal Jim Forrest requested on behalf of Physics Teacher Amanda Harnden to allow the physics students to attend a field trip to Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. This is the 9th year the Science Department has taken this trip. Approximately fifty students will participate in applying physics to real life scenarios. Mr. Forrest commended Ms. Harden for her efforts in expanding the physics program.

Mr. Coughlin motioned to approve the Physics Class Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park on Tuesday, May 29, 2018, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Coalition for Drug & Alcohol Awareness

Chief Michael D'Entremont, Selectman Michael Butler, Health Director Cathy Cardinale addressed the audience in order to provide a better understanding of the April 14 ballot question on the retail sale of marijuana. The establishments are strictly for retail sale.

Chief D'Entremont explained that if you want to stop the retail sale of marijuana in Dedham, you need to vote YES. If you want to allow the sale of marijuana in Dedham, you vote NO.

Ms. Cardinale spoke to the concern of public access to children, especially when it comes to edibles. She explained serving sizes of edibles and also that overdoses have increased in Colorado since the legalization of marijuana sales.

Chief D'Entremont added public safety concerns including increased impaired operations, increased traffic flow, roadway safety, lack of standards for marijuana consumption, access of drugs to youth, theft associated with cash basis of operation, and the difficulty for police to prosecute.

Ms. White inquired about the sobriety tests for operating a vehicle. Chief D'Entremont stated that for alcohol there are breathalyzers and road sobriety tests. There are no such measurements for marijuana impairment.

Public Comment

Amy Larson, 50 Mt. Vernon Street, an avid bike rider and abutter to the High School spoke out against the rail trail. She stated was speaking on behalf of the Dedham taxpayers for responsible spending and questioned the Committee for allowing traffic study to be performed on school property.

Eamonn Kelly, Administrative Intern at Oakdale Elementary School, spoke about the collection of books in the Oakdale Elementary School library and would like to see more culturally responsible books added to the reading collection.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Policy

The MACS is almost finished preparing policies from the Policy Review and the Subcommittee will be reviewing and voting on more of the revisions as they are returned.

Budget

Last week the FY19 operating budget was presented to the Finance Committee. Mr. Coughlin is asking for the public's support as the Finance Committee enters deliberations.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 11 at Dedham Middle School

Negotiations

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 11.

SBRC

The SBRC met last night. The next meeting on April 11 will be to discuss color combinations for the new ECEC.

Finance Committee Meeting Update

Ms. Briggs was specifically asked at the Finance Committee on Thursday evening if the School Committee had taken a vote regarding the proposed Rail Trail warrant article. The consistent message from the School Committee will continue to be that the only thing they are able to support is an all inclusive traffic study around the campus and side streets. She reiterated that safety is the Committees number one concern.

Minutes

None

Donations

Mr. Rippin stated there was a donation in the amount of \$1,776 dollars from the Dedham Education Foundation to the Riverdale School in support of the 5th grade class trip to the Boston Tea Party.

Ms. White asked how this field trip aligns with the curriculum. Dr. Kelly stated he is currently in the process of auditing all current field trips so he make sure they are in line with the curriculum and address any equity issues. Mr. Rippin has also worked hard to provide funds in the budget to support such field trips. Supt. Welch noted he recently met with the DEP to discuss such alignment and noted this field was approved by him at that time.

Ms. Laprade motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$1,776 from the Dedham Education Partnership to the Riverdale School to support the 5th grade class field trip to the Boston Tea Party, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Dr. Pearrow attended the All Town Chorus and noted it was a great performance. The All String Concert will be next Tuesday, April 10.

Mr. Donati attended the performance of Johnny Appleseed at the Avery School and noted his appreciation of the event.

Ms. White announced “Shrek” will be performed at the Middle School on Thursday and Friday.

Ms. Laprade attended Dedham High School's career fair organized by Career Counselor Ashley Mansfield. Ms. Laprade complimented Ms. Mansfield's hard work. Over sixty companies participated in the event.

Ms. White motioned to close the meeting of April 3, 2018, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Meeting concluded at 9:10 p.m.