

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES
May 15, 2018
(Approved 6/6/18)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Steve Bilafer, Chair
Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati
Lisa Laprade
Dr. 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: Dedham Middle School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Student Update

None

Recognitions

The Committee recognized the students from Dedham Middle School who scored impressive grades on the New England Math League assessment. Math Consultant Nancy Clement and Principal Karen Hillman presented certificates to the students in attendance.

Superintendent's Update

This week Superintendent Welch completed and distributed his Superintendent's 30-Day Update. The update can be found on the main page of the district website.

Human Resource Administrator Kathy O'Leary and Dedham High School Principal Jim Forrest attended the Bridgewater State University Education Job Fair on May 2.

On May 8, Supt. Welch attended the Tri-County Superintendents' meeting with superintendents from 14 other surrounding districts. One of the main topics was about communications from school districts and the responsibility for this task. It is an issue the Committee is very interested in and will be addressed later in tonight's meeting. Supt. Welch also spoke at length with Needham Superintendent Dan Gutekanst regarding his district's recent equity audit.

The Needham Public Schools Equity Audit was discussed at Dedham's Equity & Inclusion Task Force meeting held on May 9. The group also heard from Kalise Wornum who will be working with the district to set up professional development opportunities in the future.

On May 10, the district conducted its final session of Instructional Rounds for the 2017-18 school year. Principals, directors, and department heads convened at Dedham Middle School to jointly observe a series of classrooms and process their collective observations in conjunction with consultant David Castelline from Teachers21.

Supt. Welch congratulated Avery School Principal Dr. Clare Sullivan and ECEC Principal Dr. Paul Sullivan on their formal "hooding ceremony" for earning their doctoral degrees that took place at Northeastern University's Matthews Arena last Thursday.

Donations

Mr. Rippin announced the Dedham Education Partnership has awarded \$5,000 to the High School Youth and Government Program. Mr. Andrew Morton, the Social Studies Department Chair, spoke to the Committee and explained how the funds support the program.

Ms. White motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$5,000 from the Dedham Educational Partnership to support the Dedham High School Youth and Government Program, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Reports

Health and Wellness Committee Report

Director of Health and Wellness Mark Carney, Director of Health Services Gail Kelly, Director of Food Service Jeanne Johnson, and Director of Counseling Services Ashley Dubé presented to the Committee. The group introduced the new DPS Wellness Advisory Committee website which is currently under construction. The website will include the DPS wellness policies, food and nutrition programs and guidelines, nutrition and health education, and documentation on physical wellness, social and emotional wellness, environmental wellness, occupational and financial wellness, and cultural wellness. The site is expected to be available to the Dedham Public Schools community in September.

The School Committee thanked the Wellness Committee for all of its hard work.

Supt. Welch thanked the School Committee for supporting the restructure and noted the positions of Ms. Kelley and Dr. Dube were a direct result of those changes. He also reiterated the website is not live and that the Committee needed to approve the new wellness policies before anything could be made public.

Ms. Briggs loved all the information that will be available for parents and asked if there were a plan on rolling out the website. Ms. Johnson said the first step was to present to the Committee and then the group will proceed with working on its rollout plan.

Ms. White noted, as a parent of a student with food allergies, that she appreciated all the nutritional information that will be easily available to parents.

Dr. Pearrow inquired as to how the website will be maintained in the future. Mr. Carney explained that the Wellness Committee meets four times a year. He would like to have two additional meetings a year to ensure the website is updated with current information. There will also be an archive feature on the site to make retired documents easily accessible.

Mr. Coughlin asked if Technology Director Dr. Langenhorst had been involved in the process. Mr. Carney stated that his department has guided and supported the group through the Google Website process.

Ms. Laprade noted that the Policy Subcommittee did not rewrite the Wellness Policy knowing that the heads of the Wellness Committee were working in this area. She would like to see the Policy Subcommittee work with the Wellness Committee to rewrite the policies. She would also like to see parents and students involved in the process. Ms. Johnson stated the Wellness Committee would be happy to collaborate with the School Committee in this effort. She stated the Wellness Committee is now ready for parent, student and School Committee involvement.

Ms. Laprade also inquired into the concern of head lice at the elementary level and the shortage of education on this issue. She suggested having a speaker attend PTO meetings. Ms. Kelley noted that last year Avery School did have a guest speaker on this topic. She also explained that Carol Laurino, the ECEC Nurse, is working on this portion of the website.

Mr. Donati noted there was a lot of information for parents to navigate on the website. He just wanted to make sure there was discussion moving forward on how to share the information.

Mr. Bilafer noted that later in the presentation the Committee would be discussing communications and this will tie into the website conversation.

Elementary School Improvement Plans

Asst. Supt. Dr. Ian Kelly, Greenlodge Principal Ashley Bodkins, Oakdale Principal Holli Caulfield, Riverdale Principal Ed Paris, Avery Principal Dr. Clare Sullivan, and ECEC Principal Dr. Paul Sullivan presented to the Committee.

Dr. Kelly explained the new format of the Elementary Improvement Plans. The current plans have been consolidated so all five schools are in one document. The Elementary School Improvement Plans will be available on the district website after it has been approved by the School Committee. Dr. Kelly reviewed the four district goals:

District Goal #1: Data Systems, Structures, and Informed Practice

By June of 2019 the district will establish clear and consistent systems and structures by which all faculty and staff can easily access, analyze and use district performance information to inform decision making, improve practice, and enhance student learning PK-5.

District Goal #2: Writing and Critical Thinking Across the K-5 Curriculum

By June of 2019 the district will (a) establish clear expectations and benchmarks for written output in grades K-5, (b) provide teachers and other faculty/staff with clear guidance and training to support their work with students in achieving the established expectations and benchmarks for written output and (c) develop a system of assessments to that will allow teachers to clearly understand and monitor student progress towards established expectations and benchmarks and, at the same time, allow the district to monitor overall programmatic efficacy.

District Goal #3: Social and Emotional Learning

By June of 2019 the district will (a) establish clear outcomes and standards for social and emotional learning in grades K-5, (b) begin to ensure that curriculum is aligned with and designed to ensure mastery of established outcomes and standards, (c) develop and deploy training and professional development structures to support this alignment of curriculum with standards, and (d) an assessment system in place to track student progress and programmatic efficacy.

District Goal #4: Cultural Proficiency

By the conclusion of the 2018 - 2019 school year the district will conduct a full audit of policies, procedures, communication mechanisms, curriculum, instructional practices, and other district wide systems and structures to (a) gain a better understanding of the district's capacity as it relates to cultural awareness and responsiveness and (b) inform long term strategic planning for adjustments to curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development.

The elementary principals all spoke about the goals they achieved from the 2015-2017 Improvement Plans. Principal Clare Sullivan thanked Bill Gallagher and Lauren Shea, a parent and teacher from the Avery School Council, who were in attendance. Principal Paul Sullivan recognized Margaret Wilds, an ECEC kindergarten teacher and Kimberly Taylor, his newly-appointed successor as ECEC principal, who were in attendance. Principal Paris recognized Elaine Sheehy, the Riverdale School Adjustment Councilor who was in attendance. The goals for the Elementary School Improvement Plans are as follows:

Avery School

Goal #1

The Avery School will continue to create and maintain an environment in which students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected and supported.

Goal #2

To increase two-way communication and opportunities for all families to feel welcome and be involved in their child's classroom and the larger school community.

Goal #3

Over the 2018-2020 school years, the Avery School staff will consistently use instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work; engage all students; and are differentiated to meet the diverse learning styles, needs, interests and levels of readiness of our students.

ECEC

Goal #1

During the upcoming school year, the Early Childhood Education Center and its community will undergo a number of transitions. The most glaringly evident, of course, is the transition to a brand new school facility midway through a school year. However, there is also a transition to be acknowledged and understood when a new school leader assumes authority. This goal for school improvement centers around the recognition and understanding of these impending transitions and the development of the collaboration, teamwork, planning and execution required to overcome the challenges while capitalizing on the opportunities embedded within them.

Goal #2

Increase school/home communication opportunities for all families to feel welcome and be involved both in their child's classroom and the larger school community.

Greenlodge School

Goal #1

Throughout the 2018-2020 school years, the Greenlodge School consistently use instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work; engage all students; and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests and levels of readiness.

Goal #2

Use a variety of strategies and culturally proficient 2- way communication to welcome and encourage every family to participate actively and appropriately in the classroom and school community.

Oakdale School

Goal #1

To continue reorganizing the school schedule to implement intervention and enrichment times throughout the school day to meet the needs of all learners and facilitate collaboration among staff.

Goal #2

Continue to create and foster a safe, inclusive, culturally aware environment for all students and staff.

Riverdale School

Goal #1

Create a more culturally proficient and inclusive schools that is welcoming to students and their families.

Goal #2

Over the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 School Years, we will examine our teaching practices and adjust our schedules to ensure our practices support a more inclusive model for all students of all abilities.

The Committee thanked the principals and Dr. Kelly for the presentation. The Committee was pleased with the collaboration and streamlining of the School Improvement Plans.

Ms. Briggs asked if there were enough funds in the budget to support all these initiatives. She also asked the Principals to please reach out to the Committee if help is needed with any cultural events.

Dr. Pearrow appreciated the goals focusing around cultural diversity while keeping in minds the individual needs of each school.

Ms. Laprade brought up the topic of communications and asked the Principals what they found is the most effect means to get information out to parents. The principals agreed that not one form works for everyone and it is best to try to communicate by as many ways as possible.

Mr. Donati asked if there were any challenges with the new process of creating the school improvement plans and asked if there would be opportunity to revisit the plan during its three year duration. Dr. Kelly explained the he wished he had created the District Goals earlier to allow the principals more time to discuss them with their School Councils. The elementary principals also meet twice a month giving them the opportunity to adjust the plans as necessary.

Mr. Bilafer appreciated the focus on students and that each principal looked at their individual neighborhoods as part of the whole community.

Marketing Communications Update

Supt. Welch presented to the Committee. Supt. Welch along with Chair Steve Bilafer and board member Tracey White recently met with Julie McDonough, a communications specialist for the Newton Public Schools. Supt. Welch explained the need for a coordinated communications strategy and that many districts are hiring individuals to manage these efforts. He feels there is a need to appropriate resources in this area.

Mr. Bilafer reviewed that it was a School Committee goal to improve communication. He also feels it can be a difficult area to manage. He would like the Committee to discuss establishing resources in order to connect with a communications firm. He would like the Committee to come up with a plan and a job description. He would also like to see this position put in place by the beginning of next school year.

Mr. Coughlin agrees that communications is an area that needs work and would like to get all the wonderful things happening in the schools out to the community. He feels it important to hire an expert and supports Mr. Bilafer's suggestion.

Ms. White also agreed. She feels there is a need to share knowledge between schools and across the district. She noted in other districts a communications person is a full time job and should not fall solely on the Superintendent.

Mr. Donati, Ms. White and Ms. Laprade all agreed with the need for a communications expert.

Ms. Briggs motioned to allow Mr. Rippin to find the funds to support the hiring of a marketing/communications firm to help the Committee develop a communications plan and for a full subcommittee to be formed to work with said firm, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Old/New Business

School Choice Discussion & Vote

Supt. Welch stated at the last meeting he noted the need for the Committee to vote whether to participate or not participate in School Choice. He explained voting to not participate does not prevent students from leaving the district; it only restricts students from entering. Supt. Welch does not recommend participating in School Choice and asked the Committee not to participate. He explained the State only provides \$5,000 to the district for each School Choice student. He feels participating would result in significant costs.

No further questions or comments from the Committee followed.

Ms. White motioned to not participate in School Choice for the 2018-2019 school year, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Field Trip Request to Roger Williams Zoo

Principal Clare Sullivan and Principal Ashley Bodkins came before the School Committee to request permission for each to take their fourth grade classes to the Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, R.I.

Mr. Bilafer noted the current policy states that for out of state field trips the Committee must be notified within 30 days. The new policy going into place after this evening will increase that notice to 60 days. Avery's letter was dated April 25 for their field trip occurring on June 6. Greenlodge's letter was dated May 10 for their field trip occurring on May 21. Mr. Bilafer noted the need for a motion to waive the 30 days notice for the Greenlodge Elementary School.

Mr. Coughlin motioned to waive the 30 day out of state field trip notice requirement for the Greenlodge Elementary School for the May 21, 2018 field trip, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Laprade motioned to approve the Greenlodge Grade 4 Class Field Trip on May 21, 2018 and the Avery Grade 4 Class Filed Trip on June 6, 2018 to Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, R.I., Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Discussion & Vote on Superintendent's Goals

At the last meeting on May 1, Supt. Welch presented his goals for 2018-2019 to the Committee. After speaking with Mr. Donati and a parent, he changed district goal #4 to include having more interaction with parents. The goal now reads:

- 4) Expand the options for direct contact and communication with the district and superintendent through a series of increased parent engagement opportunities.

There were no further questions or discussions from the Committee.

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the Superintendent's Goals for 2018-2019 as presented; Ms. White second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Policy

Ms. Laprade stated the Policy Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the new Policy Manual on April 24, 2018. It is their recommendation to the full committee to accept and approve the manual. No further questions or comments followed.

Mr. Coughlin motioned to accept the newly revised Policy Manual as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Laprade updated the Committee on her correspondence with Dorothy Presser from the MASC in regard to their online hosted policy subscription service, Policy Twenty-One. Ms. Laprade was able to get the initial fee reduced by \$1,000. The startup cost would be \$2,500 for Year 1 and then \$950 per year after. Mr. Rippin stated the funds would need to come from the FY19 budget.

Mr. Bilafer stated that in his communication with Ms. McDonough, she noted that having the Newton Policy Manual on the MASC website has been a positive experience.

Supt. Welch believes it would be wise to have the MASC host the Policy manual to keep up with constant changes.

Mr. Bilafer noted that the Committee would vote on this matter at the next meeting.

Budget

Spring Town Meeting is Monday, May 21. Mr. Bilafer stated at Mini Town Meeting there were no questions regarding the operating and capital budget or the Master Plan.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

Mr. Donati stated that at the last meeting Kalise Warnum was the guest speaker. The Committee also discussed the order in which tasks should be accomplished. The next meeting will be on June 13.

Negotiations

The last negotiation meeting with Unit A members was on May 2. Today the subcommittee met with the custodians. Clerical negotiations are also being organized.

SBRC

The ECEC project is 35% complete, on schedule and proceeding within budget. There were some questions at Mini Town meeting regarding offsite traffic mitigation. Mr. Bilafer is hoping to address those questions before Town Meeting.

Minutes

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of April 24, 2018 as presented, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the minutes of April 26, 2018 as presented, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor. Ms. Laprade and Dr. Pearrow attended this meeting via. video call.

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of May 1, 2018 as presented, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Superintendent's Top 30 Academic Dinner- Tuesday, May 29, 2018 @ 6:00pm at the MIT Endicott House
Senior Class Night – Thursday, May 31, 2018 @ 6:00pm at DHS Auditorium
Class of 2018 Commencement – Saturday, June 2, 2018 @ 1:00pm at Veterans Field at Stone Park
Scully Awards – Wednesday, May 16, 2018 @ 7:00pm in the DHS Auditorium
District Wide Art Show – Thursday, May 17, 2018 @ 5:30pm at Dedham Middle School
Riverdale Spring Fair – Saturday, May 19, 2018 @ 10:00am at Riverdale Elementary School
Town Government Day – Tuesday, May 22 at 9:30am at Town Hall

Supt. Welch and Dr. Pearrow will be attending the next meeting of the Drug and Alcohol Awareness Coalition on Wednesday, May 16.

Mr. Bilafer noted the need to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, pending litigation.

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

Mayanne Briggs- Yes

Dr. Melissa Pearrow- Yes

Lisa Laprade- Yes

Joshua Donati- Yes

Tracey White- Yes

Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair- Yes

Steve Bilafer, Chair- Yes

Regular meeting concluded at 9:25 p.m.