

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES **February 27, 2019** *(Approved 3/20/2019)*

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Steve Bilafer, Chair
Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Lisa Laprade
Dr. Melissa Pearrow

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Avery Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Student Update

Dedham High School Student Representatives, Senior Abigail Jiminian and Junior Caroline Kelleher, updated the Committee on events and happenings occurring throughout the Dedham Public Schools.

Superintendent's Update

There was a one-hour early dismissal of all Dedham Public Schools due to an early afternoon snowstorm on February 12.

Supt. Welch has completed mid-year goals reviews with all principals, directors, and Central Office administrators. He is preparing an end-of-cycle progress report on his own goals for the next School Committee meeting.

On February 8, Chair Stephen Bilafer, Supt. Welch and State Representative Paul McMurtry attended the TEC Legislative Breakfast. The group heard from a panel discussing the Governor's

FY20 Budget, compliance with recent legislative requirements around FOIA requests, and the ongoing challenges of funding Special Education Circuit Breaker commitments.

On February 8, the district (in conjunction with Dedham Police, Fire, and EMS) conducted the third “Active Shooter Drill” at the Oakdale Elementary School. Drills at the remaining four schools are scheduled for March and April.

On February 11, Supt. Welch served as a member of the Dedham Country Day Horizons Summer Program Board of Directors in its second meeting of the year. This program serves high needs Dedham Public Schools students in grades 1-8, providing them with access to high quality summer camp experiences.

The second annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration was held last night at Dedham Middle School. Supt. Welch thanked the members of the Equity & Inclusion Task Force and the Dedham Human Rights Commission for their work.

Due to the snowstorm and one hour early dismissal on February 12, the scheduled Unit A collective bargaining negotiating session was cancelled. There are two more sessions currently scheduled, March 5 and March 25.

The next three months will include annual state MCAS testing for all students in grades 3 through 10. This is the first year that high school students will complete their testing online. A comprehensive training occurred today for high school faculty.

For the first time in many years, every single Dedham High School athletic team qualified for their respective sport’s postseason tournament.

The new ECEC officially opened on Monday, February 25. There was an orientation for current parents on Saturday, February 23. Supt. Welch stated there were many people to thank in getting this significant achievement for the district and the town.

Old/New Business

Discussion and Vote of Preschool Tuition Increases

Supt. Welch presented a comparison of preschool tuition of neighboring communities. He explained that there is some room for preschool expansion in the new building. The current yearly cost is \$6,318 for five day, full day PK. After comparing 17 districts and their cost per hour (average of \$7.25), he is suggesting an increase to \$6.67 per hour. (\$7,500 for full day and prorated for all other programs.)

Principal Taylor reviewed her preschool proposal of eliminating a 2 day and 3 day morning session and adding a 2 day full day, 3 day full day, plus an additional 5, full day program. This will allow for additional full day preschool options for parents.

Supt. Welch noted that the proposal will allow about 40 new families to enter the school at the preschool level. This can only be achieved by an increase in tuition to cover the cost of additional staff.

Mr. Rippin added the preschool tuition cost has not been increased for 10 years.

Supt. Welch stated he is not proposing an adjustment to the child care rate which is currently \$7 per hour.

The Committee discussed the breakdown of the programs by 3 and 4 year olds. Principal Taylor explained that 5 day programs are typically for 4 year olds, 2 day programs are typically for three year olds and 3 day programs are a mix. Special Education spots always need to be filled first.

They also discussed the impact of space that increasing the preschool program would have on the ECEC kindergarten space. Supt. Welch explained using the current kindergarten numbers as well as forecasted numbers, there is enough space to expand the preschool program. However, since preschool is not mandated by the state, if kindergarten numbers should increase past capacity, preschool programs would then need to be adjusted to meet the needs of kindergarten enrollment.

Principal Taylor explained that letters requesting a deposit have not yet been mailed out to parents, because she is waiting on a decision from the Committee regarding tuition cost.

Ms. Briggs inquired about the new DELTA program at the high school and asked if that would be expanding as well. Supt. Welch stated that due to infrastructure needs that would not happen this coming school year, but he is hoping to expand the early learning program in the future.

Mr. Coughlin noted that the tuition increase was already voted by the Budget Subcommittee as part of the Operating Budget.

Ms. Briggs motioned to increase the preschool tuition to \$7,500 for the five day, full day program and prorated for other programs, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Discussion and Vote of 2019-2020 School Calendar

Supt. Welch explained that due to primary voting day on March 3, 2020, he is proposing a full day of professional development on that date and changing the November 5, 2019 full day of professional development to a half day.

Supt. Welch noted a request from the leadership team not to have half days of professional development on Fridays. Contractually on Fridays, teachers are not required to stay 30 minutes past the school end time. This creates a loss of professional development time on Fridays.

Supt. Welch is also proposing a full day of school on December 20, 2019 the Friday before December break.

The Committee discussed the past practice of frontloading professional development days at the beginning of the year and if they could be spread out into the spring. They talked about the number of days off in November and if there should be a half day of professional development the first week in December. Lastly, they discussed the impact to the community and on student learning if December 20 is a full day versus a half day of school.

Mr. Bilafer proposed holding off on voting the 2019-2020 until the next meeting. There was no opposition from the Committee.

Ms. Briggs brought up a letter that was sent to the Committee regarding eliminating February break and just having a spring break. She stated this difficult to do when all districts are not consistent. If consideration is given to this idea, it would need to be brought to the bargaining table.

Supt. Welch agreed noting other districts have tried to make this change and it has failed. He is not ready to recommend this, but is willing to listen.

Dedham Police Department Community Survey

The Dedham Police Department is conducting a Community Survey and is asking for all Town Boards to help with its distribution. The letter from the Dedham Police containing the link to the survey has been distributed to all Dedham Public School families.

Appointment to Town Manager Search Committee

Mr. Bilafer is looking for a member of the School Committee to serve as representative on the search committee for the new Town Manager.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Budget

Mr. Rippin attended the Capital Expenditures Committee meeting on Monday evening where they deliberated on all capital projects. The CEC is recommending the educational technology request be funded in full. The Facilities budget request was about \$1,000,000 and the CEC recommendation is around \$700,000. The RTU units at the High School were recommended to be bonded and removed from the capital budget.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

Nothing further to report.

Negotiations

The next negotiating meeting with the Dedham Education Association will be March 5.

Policy

The group will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to continue working on policies.

SBRC

There is a punch list of items still being worked on at the new ECEC. They are also waiting on some furniture that has been held up. The SBRC is continuing to work on closing out the finances of the construction.

Minutes

Mr. Coughlin motioned to approve the minutes of February 6, 2019, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Donations

Ms. Briggs motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$4,756 from Dedham Institute for Savings Foundation to support the purchase of 250 new Chromebook cases, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. White read a portion of Megan McNamara's (Grade 5, Oakdale) winning entry from the Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest.

The Dedham Boosters/Alumni Association Trivia Night will be Saturday, March 23.

Ms. White motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, collective bargaining, Mr. Donati second; a roll call vote was taken:

Mayanne Briggs- Yes

Joshua Donati- Yes

Tracey White- Yes

Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair- Yes

Steve Bilafer, Chair- Yes

Motion passed 5-0. Mr. Bilafer stated that the Committee would not be returning to regular session.

Regular Meeting Ended a 8:25 p.m.