

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

November 20, 2019

(Approved 12/4/2019)

MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Kevin Coughlin, Chair
Lisa Laprade, Vice-Chair
Stephen Bilafer
Mayanne MacDonald Briggs
Joshua Donati
Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Riverdale Elementary School

Meeting Commenced: 7:00 p.m.

Student Update

High school student representatives to the School Committee, Senior Macayla Madan and Junior Asal Al-Azzawi updated the Committee on events and happenings at each of the schools.

Recognitions

Board of Selectman Chair Dennis Guilfoyle introduced the new Town Manager Leon Goodwin to the Committee. The Committee welcomed Mr. Goodwin to Dedham.

Superintendent's Update

Over the past two days there have been significant developments in the progress of the Student Opportunity Act school funding formula bill. The bill has emerged from conference committee meetings that combined aspects of both the House and Senate approved bills, and the compromise legislation was filed yesterday morning. The hope is that the Governor will sign this bill sometime in the next month, and that would mean a \$1.5 billion increase in Chapter 70 funding to cities and towns over the next seven years. It is unclear yet what impact this funding will have on Dedham.

The district continues to complete its elementary school off-site evacuation drills with Riverdale School completing its drill on November 7. The drill scheduled for today at Oakdale was postponed due to poor weather. A drill is scheduled for Avery School tomorrow.

During the Leadership Team meeting yesterday, the team continued an overall review of performance on the most recent MCAS tests. Team members also received forms for preliminary requests to the FY21 Operating Budget. Work will occur over the next few weeks to collate and prioritize requests.

Last Wednesday night was the Open House at the Blue Hills Adult Education program at the Capen School. There are over 45 adults from Dedham who are currently taking advantage of the free classes to learn English. This is a huge increase over past years when the classes were held in Canton.

This past Monday night at Dedham High School, a coalition of organizations presented information and guest speaker Dr. Lester J. Hartman spoke on the hazards of vaping. At the same time, the annual fall Mini-Town Meeting was held in the auditorium at Dedham Middle School. There were no questions about school department warrant articles. Fall Town Meeting will take place on November 25 in the DHS auditorium beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Last night Dedham High School held its annual Open House for prospective students in grades 5-8. The high school team provided a full scale overview of the opportunities for students.

On November 13 the Riverdale Elementary School and on November 15 the Avery Elementary School held International Nights celebrating the many cultures and languages represented in their schools.

Supt. Welch continues to complete senior interviews on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He is proud of the achievements of the Class of 2020 and enjoys learning from the seniors and hearing about ways the district can improve.

The annual Dedham High School National Honor Society induction ceremony will take place on Tuesday, November 26th at 7:00 p.m. in the DHS Auditorium. All School Committee members are invited to attend.

Supt. Welch, School Committee Member Mayanne Briggs, High School Assistant Principal Kristy Yankee, and ECEC Instructional Coach Kristen Cannon applied for a \$100,000 grant to assist and prepare struggling students for their Kindergarten experience.

Reports

MA State Seal of Biliteracy

Foreign Language Department Chair Alison Guifarro, English Department Chair Brenda Hagan, ELL Department Chair Jennifer Robins and High School Principal James Forrest came before the Committee to request the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy be added to High School diplomas and recorded on transcripts for students who demonstrate proficiency in two languages. Proficiency will be measured by performance by the ELA MCAS exam and the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) test. Qualifications to earn the seal include:

Award	Standardized Assessment Criteria for English and Partner Language
MA State Seal of Biliteracy	Score of "Partially Meeting Expectations" (472) on Grade 10 ELA MCAS OR Score of "Intermediate-High" on a world language proficiency test
MA State Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction	Score of "Meeting Expectations" (501) on the grade 10 ELA MCAS OR Score of "Advanced-Low" on a world language proficiency test

The full presentation will be available on the District website.

No vote was taken. The Committee expressed its full support of the Seal of Biliteracy.

2019 MCAS Results Presentation by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly

Superintendent Michael Welch and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Ian Kelly reviewed the MCAS scores from the spring of 2019. The presentation will be available on the District website.

The report included MCAS Achievement Levels (Legacy vs. Next Generation), score range (Legacy vs. Next Generation), details of the new Massachusetts school and district accountability system, statewide achievement results in ELA and Math, 2019 accountability data summary, target percentage, progress toward improvement targets, analysis and interpretation of MCAS performance, three year annual mean performance by school, district comparisons, and district evaluation (strengths and focus for growth).

Mr. Coughlin asked if there were any talk of the state changing the test again. Dr. Kelly stated he had not heard anything.

Ms. Laprade inquired into the High School drop-out ranking of 3 out of 4. Supt. Welch explained that any minor change (even 1) can cause a decline. He also explained how EL students who enter the district later in their education can take longer to graduate because it can take 6 years to become proficient in the English language.

Ms. Laprade inquired into what type of feedback was coming from the teachers. Dr. Kelly explained he has had meetings with the Leadership Team and with principals who in turn meet with the staff. He would have to inquire with the principals on this question.

Ms. Laprade then inquired into what actions have come out of these meetings. Dr. Kelly gave the example of writing about reading as an actionable task. Supt. Welch stated he will also share with the Committee the Leadership Team's collaborative task results from their last meeting.

Mr. Bilafer asked about the response plan before tests are taken this spring. Dr. Kelly described the training going on around literacy and writing as well as professional development for new curriculum. He also mentioned common planning time for collaboration as well as a strategic flow from the top down.

Mr. Bilafer noted it was important for people to understand that the work being done is progressive and a focus needs to be maintained on the direction that has been chosen.

Ms. White asked how the district comparisons were chosen. Dr. Kelly answered from DART (DESE-District Analysis and Reporting Tool) and the 2017 benchmarking report.

Ms. White asked about disconnects between the number of students on the Honor Roll and the MCAS results. Dr. Kelly noted that the need to look at grading and how it matches up with standardized testing.

Mr. Donati expressed his disappointment with the MCAS results. He questioned how the coaches and educational interventionists were working with teachers. Dr. Kelly explained that both the coaches and interventionists are working directly with teachers; training, analyzing data, and using common planning time to provide appropriate services to students. Dr. Kelly explained that it will take a while to see the results of the new curriculum instituted in the lower grades.

Dr. Pearrow noted that lower performing students were receiving higher grades. She wanted to know what was being done to improve growth for moderate and high achievers. Dr. Kelly explained the district is starting to get parallels in place for higher learners. For example, this year an Educational Interventionist was hired for a math enrichment pilot program. He understands the need to scale the model up.

Dr. Pearrow asked about progress toward English language proficiency. Dr. Kelly explained that a 0 does not necessarily mean a precipitous decline. It could mean only one or two students declined or did not test at all.

Ms. Briggs asked how parents can help their children and how are we communicating this information to them. Dr. Kelly replied that there are the standard practices of parent/teacher conferences, open houses and curriculum nights. However, he is concerned about engagement and commitment to high needs students and feels more work need to be done in this area.

Ms. Briggs asked how the district is helping students entering the District whose first language is not English. Dr. Kelly explained that there are summer ELL programs funded through Title III grants and

adult education programs for parents. The district also just completed an audit in this area and will be presenting its findings at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. White asked how Riverdale made substantial growth but fell on the chart. Dr. Kelly explained that the growth was less than last year's growth. Supt. Welch noted that the comparisons are also of different students. Following student progress by grade requires a different type of analysis.

Ms. White asked why the results of the restructure are not being seen. Supt. Welch explained that the coaching model is only two years in with an expectation of continued improvement. This is a ten year plan. However, there are significant improvements in the classroom happening now.

Mr. Donati spoke to the budget. He stated that constituents feel the District is spending significant money on schools and that needs to be accounted for and to have something concrete to point to.

Old/New Business

Discussion and Vote on Budget Subcommittee Calendar

The Committee reviewed the FY21 budget calendar presented by the Budget Subcommittee. There will be two public hearing this year instead of one.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to approve the FY21 Budget Calendar, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Budget

The Budget Subcommittee voted unanimously tonight to put forth the Capital Budget. Mr. Rippin will provide the Committee with the appropriate Capital Budget materials. A full presentation of the FY21 Capital Budget will take place at the next at the meeting.

Coalition for Drug & Alcohol Awareness

The coalition has a new name and logo. The group will now go by the title of Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness. The next meeting will be on December 10.

Equity & Inclusion Task Force

None

Negotiations

Paraprofessional negotiations will begin on December 9.

Policy

Ms. White read the third reading of policy KBAA - Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy. The full policy can be found at the end of the minutes. The policy Subcommittee voted unanimously to accept and recommended this new policy to the full Committee. No further discussion occurred.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve policy KBAA -Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

SBRC

None

Traffic Circulation Study

The Subcommittee is waiting for the full report from VHB to review before discussing the next community meeting.

Facilities Master Plan

The Subcommittee met with SMMA last night and discussed the round table community meeting that is scheduled to take place on December 9. They discussed table topics as well as the following Master Plan Goals:

- Comprehensively rebuild or replace Oakdale, Riverdale and Greenlodge Elementary Schools
- Create a plan for schools that will meet the needs of all our students in the future and have the flexibility to accommodate them
- Provide equity of facilities for all elementary children within the town
- To the extent possible, plan for school(s) that foster a small school / neighborhood environment and feeling
- Develop project(s) that are fiscally responsible and politically viable for the community

Minutes

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the minutes of November 6, 2019, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor. Dr. Pearrow abstained as she was not present at the November 6 meeting.

Donations

None

Public Comment

Brian Keaney, 183 Grant Avenue, asked the Committee to consider moving the Public Comment portion of the meeting to the beginning of the agenda. He thanked the Committee for tonight's MCAS presentation. He also quoted a statement from Supt. Welch taken from an article published on February 1, 2017 which referenced seeing improvements to student learning in the next two to three years. Mr. Keaney questioned why he has not seen these increases. Mr. Coughlin stated he would take Mr. Keaney's comments under advisement.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. Laprade commended Dedham High School students on their performance of "Our Town".

Ms. White commented on the move to the Tri-Valley League, noting the significant improvements in athletic performance.

Mr. Coughlin announced that this year's Thanksgiving Day (November 28) football game will be held in Dedham starting at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Donati motioned to adjourn the meeting of November 20, 2019, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Meeting concluded at 9:40 p.m.

Proposed Policy KBAA - Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy

The Dedham Public Schools (DPS) is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a high quality educational experience. Effective parent and family engagement at all levels is critical in making this belief a reality. We define parent and family engagement as an ongoing process that supports parents and families in effectively supporting and enriching learning in the home, promotes clear two-way communication between home and school, and involves parents and families as leaders and decision makers at all levels concerning the education of their children.

To ensure that parents and families have meaningful opportunities to engage in the education of their children and the ongoing development of the programs that serve their children, the Dedham Public Schools ensures that:

1. All schools hold regular School Council meetings where designated Title I programs can be discussed and reviewed regularly.
2. Student progress is communicated regularly through conferences, report cards and informal communication between school and home.
3. A Title I family compact is reviewed annually, revised as necessary and signed by all families participating in designated Title I programs.

4. Relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for families are developed, communicated and implemented annually.
5. Annual surveys of parents in designated Title I schools are administered and used to gather feedback and inform programmatic decisions.

Information about these opportunities will be published annually to all families in identified Title I schools via email, web and print communications.