

**DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
REMOTE MEETING**

MINUTES

May 5, 2021

(Approved 5/19/2021)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Tracey White, Chair

Dr. Melissa Pearrow, Vice-Chair

Mayanne Briggs

Joshua Donati

Victor Hebert

Cailen McCormick

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Christopher Polito

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION REMOTELY PRESENT:

Michael J. Welch, Superintendent

Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent

Sam Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location:

Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A sec. 20, the meeting was held via Zoom as posted on the agenda: <https://dedham-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/98807925022>

Remote meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. White read the following statement regarding the remote meeting:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Dedham are being conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. We have arranged for a call-in number for those who would like to listen to this meeting. While it is possible that some members of the public may be invited to comment, it is also possible that despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide for real-time involvement, we will post a recording of this meeting as soon as we are able.

Ms. White called the School Committee meeting to order.

Ms. White took a roll call attendance:

Mayanne Briggs - Present

Joshua Donati - Present

Victor Hebert - Present

Cailen McCormick - Present

Dr. Melissa Pearrow, Vice-Chair - Present

Tracey White, Chair – Present

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Update

Supt. Welch provided the following update to the Committee:

Today was the 137th day of the 2020-21 school year. We have 33 school days left this year.

This week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and all schools are celebrating the exhaustive efforts and tremendous commitment of our educators over the course of the past year. This has truly been a year like no other, and I am grateful for the investment of so many of our loyal educators and employees. Thank you!

In addition, May 12 is National School Nurses Day. Since we will not have a meeting next week, I know the Committee wishes to send thanks to the additional efforts invested by all our nurses during the pandemic over the past year. We will be inviting all DPS nurses to our next School Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 19 so they can be appropriately recognized.

On Monday this week we welcomed back all DHS students in Grades 9-12 to full time, in person learning. About 82% of students have returned and each grade is being treated to a "Welcome Back" breakfast sponsored by the parent community each day this week. The building definitely felt more alive and there was an air of excitement as some students were entering the school for their first time...ever.... So far, it has been a great return! Data regarding in person vs. remote learning selections for DHS as of Friday, 4/30/21 are below:

DHS In Person Survey Results - 4/30/2021												
GRADE	9		10		11		12		TOTALS		TOTALS	
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT	IN	OUT
DHS	133	22	128	32	131	28	136	26	528	108	83.02%	16.98%
TOTALS	133	22	128	32	131	28	136	26				
Responses =	155		160		159		162		636			
% In Person =	85.81%		80.00%		82.39%		83.95%					
Enrollment =	163		173		165		180		681			
% Responding	95.09%		92.49%		96.36%		90.00%		93.39%			

On Monday night, May 3 the community participated in a virtual event called Courageous Conversations about Race in Dedham sponsored by the Dedham Human Rights Commission and the Select Board. Just over 250 people participated, and about 40 of them were faculty/staff from the Dedham Public Schools. I particularly want to thank School Committee Member Victor Hebert for being a part of the leadership panel, as well as Dr. Oneida Fox Roye for her facilitation of the Education breakout room. I also want to thank all the members of the School Committee who participated. The number of participating members from the community and the schools was very inspiring to see, and I look forward to the next steps that will be accomplished from this initiative.

Next week our elementary school PTO's will also be sponsoring Cultural Week. This is a weeklong effort to highlight the many cultures present in our schools and ways to recognize and appreciate the ways in which our lives are enriched by this diversity. Thank you to our PTO's for their extensive collaboration on this effort!

As Committee members are likely aware, next Monday night, May 10 is the annual Spring Mini Town Meeting beginning at 7:00 PM. This annual meeting will be virtual this year, and provides a platform at which Town Meeting members can ask questions about this year's articles. I provided a zoom link in a separate email. Just as a reminder, Dedham's Annual Spring Town Meeting will be held in person on Monday, May 17 at 6:00 PM at the Dedham High School's Veteran's Field at Stone Park.

This Friday, May 7 a group of educators and others from the ECEC and greater Town of Dedham will be participating in a group visioning and systems thinking process to help outline a plan for addressing school readiness needs for our incoming Kindergarten students. This work will be done with guided facilitation by the Leadership Matters program of the Public Sector Consortium, part of the Lincoln Land Institute in Cambridge. This program will be used to develop a plan for a "Kindergarten Jump Start" summer program to hopefully close the gap between our students' current functioning and necessary Kindergarten skills. I look forward to the evolution of this work!

Next Wednesday night, all Dedham Public School PTOs are co-sponsoring and funding a virtual community screening of the documentary "SCREENAGERS: Uncovering Skills for Stress Resilience," on Wednesday May 12, 2021, at 7:00 PM. The film is about an hour long followed immediately by a Q&A Session with Dr. Don Langenhorst, DPS Director of Technology, Dr. Ashley Dubé, DPS Director of Counseling Services and Dr. Melissa Pearrow, Dedham School Committee member. Participants must register in advance.

Superintendent’s COVID-19 Update

Supt. Welch provided the following COVID-19 update to the Committee:

Dedham’s case numbers as reported each week by DPH.

DPH COVID-19 Case Data For Dedham									
DPH COVID-19 Data Website									
			Average Daily Incident Rate	Relative Change In			Total	Percent	Change In
MA Map	Total	Case Count	Per 100,000	Case Counts	Total Tests	Positive Tests	Positivity	Percent	Percent
Week Of	Case Count	Last 14 days	Last 14 Days	Case Counts	Total Tests	Last 14 days	Last 14 days	Last 14 days	Positivity
Apr 29	2405	68	17.7	Lower	70771	3303		2.33%	Lower
Apr 22	2377	86	22.4	Higher	69150	3565	86	2.69%	Higher
Apr 15	2333	71	18.5	Higher	67606	3616	71	2.32%	Higher
Apr 8	2292	62	16.2	Lower	65649	3508	62	2.25%	Lower
Apr 1	2264	81	21.1	Lower	63966	3293	93	2.82%	Lower
Mar 25	2226	100	26.1	Higher	62140	3276	111	3.39%	Higher
Mar 18	2186	84	21.9	Higher	60528	3569	99	2.77%	Higher
Mar 11	2134	74	19.3	Lower	58867	3938	87	2.21%	Lower
Mar 4	2097	86	22.4	Lower	57033	3879	98	2.53%	Lower
Feb 25	2053	116	30.2	Lower	54861	3938	135	3.43%	Lower
Feb 18	2013	157	40.9	Lower	52898	4147	181	4.36%	Lower
Feb 11	1941	254	66.2	Lower	50926	4414	277	6.28%	Lower
Feb 4	1866	349	91	Higher	48783	4979	377	7.57%	Higher
Jan 28	1705	282	73.5	Higher	46410	4727	315	6.66%	Higher
Jan 21	1518	274	71.5	Lower	43770	4773	306	6.41%	Lower
Jan 14	1407	274	71.5	Higher	41732	4279	301	7.03%	Higher
Jan 7	1242	182	47.5	Lower	38972	3412	203	5.95%	Higher
Dec 31	1129	184	48	Lower	37177	3654	200	5.47%	Higher
Dec 24	1040	188	49	Higher	35496	3951	202	5.11%	Higher
Dec 17	941	176	45.9	Higher	33420	4055	190	4.69%	No Change
Dec 10	850	141	36.8	Higher	30887	3329	154	4.63%	Higher
Dec 3	760	93	24.3	Higher	28833	3058	100	3.27%	Higher
Nov 27	700	69	18	Higher	27523	3313	77	2.32%	Higher
Nov 19	655	52	13.6	Higher	25623	3132	60	1.92%	Higher
Nov 12	622	38	9.9	Lower	23997	3296	43	1.30%	Lower

Elementary School. Thankfully, none of these cases resulted in close contacts within the Dedham Schools Dedham remains in the “Yellow” category of the state’s color-coding system. There has been a subtle decrease in cases week since the lowest readings were recorded during the week of April 8.

Since last week’s School Committee meeting the district has had four new positive student COVID-19 cases. Two of these cases were uncovered through the district’s pooled COVID-19 testing program. One case was at Avery and the other was at ECEC. In both of these cases, students had no symptoms and were verified as positive through individual “reflex” testing on Tuesday after their pooled testing samples were taken on Monday. This is yet another indication that the district’s pool testing program is continuing to be a valuable part of our overall strategy to keep everyone in the Dedham Public Schools safe.

In addition, our third and fourth cases identified since our last meeting (discovered from outside testing sources) were at Dedham Middle School and Oakdale that require quarantine.

In addition, none of these 4 cases appear to have any connection to transmission within the schools themselves.

Pooled COVID-19 testing continues at all seven DPS schools. We continue to urge parents to sign consents to have their children participate in this voluntary program, as it is another effective layer of protection for all faculty, staff, and students. Now that all students in grades PreK-12 have now returned full time, this is more important than ever.

To provide an additional check on possible COVID-19 cases after the April vacation, all students who have provided consents were tested TWICE last week. On Monday and Tuesday of this week alone, the district tested 1186 individuals through 135 testing pools. This is a monumental effort and Emily Kadehjjan and Gail Kelley continue to provide excellent leadership in this project along with our nurses and school secretaries. Overall statistics for the district's COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program are shown below:

DPS Testing Summary To Date:			
Totals To Date:		Positives	Percent
Pools	Tests	Cases	Positivity
934	7876	6	0.08%

Reports

DHS and DMS Return to School Update

Ms. Hillman updated the Committee on the full return of students to the middle school.

- Thanked the PTO for recognizing teachers during Teacher Appreciation week
- 580 students are in the building
- Sixth grade transitioned with tours over April break
- Two locations for lunch
 - 135 students in the gym
 - 80 student in the cafeteria
- Ms. Hillman read some student reflections on being back in School
- Paper and pencil are back in use

Following questions from the Committee, Ms. Hillman discussed how the Curriculum Instructors are working on a balance between using paper/pencil and technology. Students are participating in extracurricular activities such as band and chorus. Physical Education is taking place at Memorial Field for physical distance purposes. The students do have mask breaks and are allowed to choose their own seats at lunch. Ms. Hillman also sends out weekly communications to parents.

Ms. Forrest updated the Committee on the full return of students to the high school.

- Over 500 students are in the building
- PTO greeted students with a lobby filled with DHS balloons
- Students are wearing masks and are getting used to the one way hallways
- Lunch is running on a regular schedule

- Two students per table in cafeteria
- Overflow go outside to the stadium or to the gym
- Students are reminded to social distance
- Spring athletics is underway
- Thanked PTO for recognizing the teachers during Teacher Appreciation week
- Thanked Vice-Principals Kristy Yankee and Peter Cavanaugh, Athletic Director Stephen Traister and all the nurses for helping to get students back to school
- Announced that Director of Health Service Gail Kelley will be the guest speaker at graduation

Committee thanked both Principals for their updates. They asked the Principals to let them know if they needed anything. Both mentioned additional microphones would be helpful.

Third Quarter Budget Report

Mr. Rippin provided the following Third Quarter Budget Report to the Committee:

Third Quarter Overview

In summary, we have expended and encumbered \$27,021,535 of the \$42,576,992 Education Operating Budget or 64.47% of the total budget.

For School Facilities, we have expended and encumbered \$3,022,758 of the \$4,143,010* that Operating Budget or 72.96% of the total budget.

*Note that for School Facilities \$74,273 (\$52,801) of FY2020 encumbrances carried forward to FY 2021 were not segregated as in the Education Budget and rather were commingled with line items for FY 2021. This issue will be rectified for FY 2022 reporting purposes. The remaining \$21,472 was due to a budget transfer from Town Facilities that was referenced in my First Quarter report.

Budget Highlights

As of this writing, I am pleased to report that the Dedham Public Schools is on track to finish FY 2021 in a balanced and fully expended position. As you can see from the accompanying spreadsheet, all of our seven schools have spent approximately sixty percent of their Operating Budgets which is typical given that only fifteen (of 26) teacher payrolls have been expended as of 3/31/21.

I am pleased to report that our daily substitute budget of \$264,827 for FY 2021 has only \$37,513 expended as of 3/31/2021 or 14.17% of the total budget for FY 2021. This is largely due to the flexibility of allowing teachers who are absent to work from home delivering remote instruction to students. Even with all students being able to attend in person five days per week as of 5/3/21; we anticipate that much of this budget will remain unused at fiscal year end.

Additionally I am pleased to report that our School Nutrition program has been performing remarkably well during the 2020-2021 school year. Every employee has been working above and beyond to provide nutritious meals for all of our students as well as distributing meals and boxes of food to families in Dedham (provided free of cost by USDA). As I write this, USDA has authorized all students for the 2021-2022 school year to be classified as eligible

for free breakfast and lunches. Additionally, we plan to run a robust summer feeding program during July and August as well. The resulting revenue will allow us to invest in our infrastructure (equipment) without relying on taxpayer dollars to do so.

Areas of Concern/Exposure

As I am sure you recall, FY 2020 was tighter than past years with respect to having excess capacity for end of year purchases as well as prepayment of Special Education Out-Of-District Tuitions. Unbudgeted cost increases in Out of District tuitions (planned for in our FY 2022 budget request) along with Out of District Transportation (planned for via anticipated Student Opportunity Act funds in FY 2022) are determining factors with respect to increased expenses that offset favorable budget variances noted above.

Following questions from the Committee Mr. Rippin discussed Out of District transportation costs. He explained there was not a huge savings in this area because of the additional costs of cleaning and sanitizing. He added that drivers, insurance and other overhead still had to be paid. Mr. Rippin also talked about the Student Opportunity Act funds not covering this year's out of district transportation costs. He noted he built the FY22 budget being cautious that these funds may not come through again. The Committee discussed the fact that although out-of-district placement and transportation costs are high, the district has saved a significant amount of money having extensive Special Education programs in the district which benefit both the students and families of Dedham.

Old/New Business

Superintendent's Goals 2021-2022

Supt. Welch provided a draft of this 2021-2022 goals to the Committee:

Professional Practice Goals:

1) Support and guide the district through the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. By September 2021, develop screening mechanisms to provide data that will accurately assess overall district needs. Provide to the district an analysis of and resources for possible regression and design academic, social, and emotional programming to remediate necessary learning losses and social/emotional needs and/or support services for student/family/community well being. This will be a multi-year process with ongoing student and programming assessments including a review of summer 2021 supports.

2) Attend, present, and participate in available regional and statewide educational leadership organizations and professional development opportunities to better evaluate and incorporate "best practices" in the Dedham Public Schools.

1. Summer, Mid-Winter, and Spring M.A.S.S. Superintendent Meetings/Conferences
2. M.A.S.C./M.A.S.S. Annual Fall Convention
3. Monthly Tri-County Superintendent Roundtables
4. Monthly T.E.C. Superintendent Meetings
5. Bi-Monthly Superintendents Meetings with Teachers21 and William James College

3) Continue to seek better work/life balance through improved distribution and allocation of high-level district leadership tasks. Limit evening obligations to an average of three nights per week during the school year.

Student Learning Goal

1) Provide guidance, support, and training to all Leadership Team members and educators to better analyze data regarding student academic learning performance. In October 2021, provide to the district an analysis of all available state and local data to evaluate the effectiveness of educational services delivered throughout the district. Analyze and promote understanding of district, school, grade-level, and student growth measures as a focal point for increases in student learning.

2) Continue to guide the evolution of the district's knowledge of and improved practices regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Provide data-based evaluation and updates to practice and student learning outcomes based upon in-depth study of available metrics. Work collaboratively with Dr. Ian Kelly and Dr. Oneida Fox Roye to advance the contractually agreed upon 15 hour Implicit Bias/Cultural Proficiency training to at least 50% of employees by June 2022 during allocated professional development time. Develop hiring goals and metrics as a part of the district's overall strategic plan that increase the diversity of DPS faculty and staff membership.

District Improvement Goals

1) By January 5, 2022, coordinate with school, district, and community stakeholders to develop the district's next 5-year strategic plan. Present to the School Committee for review and public vetting prior to endorsement by Committee vote in spring 2022.

2) By November 15, 2021 work with the SBRC and the MSBA to complete the Feasibility Planning process. Use the MSBA's process timeline to prepare/complete all documents and submit all appropriate correspondence in advance of MSBA deadlines. Prepare and present warrant agenda article to fund the Feasibility Phase of the Oakdale Elementary School repair/replacement process at Fall 2021 Dedham Town Meeting.

3) Work with all stakeholders (including Town of Dedham and Norfolk County officials) to strategically plan the ongoing utilization of one-time ESSER 1, 2, and 3 funds to equitably serve the needs of all students and families in the Dedham Public Schools. Meet monthly with the Town Manager to monitor the allocation and disbursement of these funds through June 2023 and provide fall, winter, and spring updates to the Budget Subcommittee throughout this sequence.

Supt. Welch explained how he followed the directive from the DESE Educator Evaluation implementation resources which focused on creating SMARTIE goals:

- Specific and Strategic
- Measurable
- Action-Oriented
- Rigorous, Realistic and Results Focused
- Timed and Tracked

- Inclusive
- Equitable

SMARTIE goals intentionally center two additional components relative to SMART goals:

- Inclusivity – the extent to which a goal brings traditionally marginalized people into processes, activities, and decision-making
- Equity- the extent to which the goal includes an element of fairness or justice that seeks to address systemic injustice, inequity or oppression

The Committee expressed their support for using data to analyze student learning. Mr. Donati would like to see student voice and hiring diverse educators woven into the goals. Dr. Pearrow would like to see the SMARTIE goals initiated at the Principal level as well. Supt. Welch explained (and presented slides showing) that the DESE guidance principles for teaching and learning for the 20-21 school year included the SMARTIE goals. Dr. Pearrow noted that these goals should be supported by the School Committee.

Donations

None

Subcommittee Updates

Policy Subcommittee

The Subcommittee met on May 4 to continue their discussion on consistent signage across school properties. The goal is to have this completed by September. The next meeting will be in three weeks.

Minutes

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. White noted that the Fine Arts Department has put out their schedule for the remainder of the school year.

Ms. Briggs motioned to adjourn the meeting of May 5, 2021, Mr. Donati second; a roll call vote was taken:

Mayanne Briggs - Yes

Joshua Donati – Yes

Victor Hebert – Yes

Cailen McCormick - Yes

Dr. Melissa Pearrow, Vice-Chair – Yes

Tracey White, Chair - Yes

Motion passed 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.