

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—April 7, 2010
Town Hall, Lower Conference Room

PRESENT

Dave Roberts, Chair
Margaret Connolly, Vice Chair
Thomas Ryan
Tracy Driscoll
John Healy
Kevin Coughlin
Joe Heisler

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager

Student Representative, Erica White

Convened: 7:05 PM

Adjourned: 8:40 PM

The Superintendent announced the introduction of student winners of the Odd Fellows Essay Contest. Andrew Morton, Department Chair shared information on the program. Students in the sophomore and junior classes were given the opportunity to write essays. Twenty –five essays were received from students and from that group, twelve student essays were selected. In March, the students read their essays before a panel of judges at the Odd Fellows Hall. Five students were selected (3 winners and 2 alternates). The students will be going on a two week trip to New York City, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Ottawa, Canada. The Odd Fellows present a scholarship to a senior every year.

The Essay Winners and Alternates are:

Molly Downing, who wrote an essay on “Education for Children in Africa” - winner

Mike Fay, who wrote an essay on “AIDS Epidemic” - winner

Keegan Schofield, who wrote an essay on “Earthquake Relief in Haiti” - winner

Tara Celata, who wrote an essay on “Unite to End Violence against Women” - alternate

Kevin Mawe, who wrote an essay on “Putting an End to Child Soldiers” - alternate

The Superintendent expressed her pride in the students for taking the initiative to participate in the essay writing and for representing Dedham Public Schools.

In addition, Mr. Morton reminded the committee Student Town Government Day will be held on April 13, 2010. Thirty-five students have run for various positions.

SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE

All Schools: MCAS is complete at the elementary level. All schools will return it by Monday April 12th.

Officer Pucci will visit the schools for an anti-bullying program the week of April 12th. He begins on Monday at Riverdale School.

Riverdale School: April is very busy at Riverdale: Events: Grade five wax museums, visit from DMS staff to visit the fifth grade, grade two Poetry in Motion. Enrichment programs - Digging Dinosaurs gr. 2 and Mammals gr. 1. Field Trips - Grade 5 will see Aladdin at Dedham Middle School, grade 5 visits Minuteman National Park, Grade 4 visits Lowell Historical Park. We examined the data from the Acuity Program very carefully on Feb. 24 and March 24. Teachers assessed selected students who should meet after school one day per week. They will rotate each week through May with a staff member to review a Strand in math. The Acuity Program has assisted our staff to determine each child's strengths and weaknesses in math throughout this academic year.

Oakdale: Students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 have completed their ELA MCAS. The students felt well prepared and we are looking forward to seeing positive results in the fall. We are excited to be sending 5 more classroom teachers as well as Music Teacher and one of our PE teachers to the Responsive Classroom Training next week. The following students were chosen winners of the 2010 Curiosity Challenge Contest: In Grade 1 Patrick Leone, John Tigliandis, Alondra Msallem, and in Grade 2 Sammy Welch, Rochelle Casey and Jack Tocci. Students were invited to submit original artwork or an original piece of creative writing. We are very proud of these students!

Avery School: Avery School 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students completed the English Language Arts MCAS with the final students making up the Long Composition today. The students are taking a breather until the Math assessments begin in May. The spring brings many events. Students in fifth grade will be traveling to the State House and the Old South Meeting House. The book fair will be running all week. On Wednesday, April

16th Peter Reynolds will join Avery families for a presentation, a book signing and a spaghetti dinner. Avery School recently hosted a training session for architects who will be completing the MSBA surveys of school buildings. Over twenty architects toured the building and met with District officials. Avery was recently granted the FY10 Academic Achievement Grant to Schools and Districts Demonstrating Progress in Closing the Achievement Gap for LEP Students, Phase I. A review of promising school practices for closing the achievement gap at Avery School will be completed by Class Measures in the near future. As part of this grant we will be able to offer additional professional development and purchase materials for use with our ELL students. We are pleased to be recognized and look forward to the process.

Curran Center: On Friday, March 5th, students celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday. We gathered together to read Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can you? We also took the Reader's oath where we promised to read every day. We also conducted a reading incentive program with Discovery Toys from March 15-26. Each child was asked to read daily both in school and at home. Families were asked to sponsor children. The teachers purchased educational products for the classrooms. The Mobile Dentist will be back for their 6 month visit on Friday, April 30th. Watch for information from our school nurse, Jane Moy. There will be registration forms available for anyone who did not sign up in the fall.

Greenlodge School: The fourth grade students at the Greenlodge School traveled to Lowell last week for a field trip to the Lowell National Historical Park. They visited the Boot Textile Mills to see the machinery in the factories and also saw where the mill girls lived. They participated in a hands-on activity where they were greeted by an official of Ellis Island and given a passport. They then got to experience some of the things that the immigrants went through upon arriving in America such as unpacking their suitcase and learning about the kinds of things that the immigrants brought with them when they came. The trip to Lowell supports the study of immigration in the social studies curriculum and was funded through a grant by the Dedham Education Foundation.

The Superintendent added that a total of 25 teachers are being trained in responsive classroom the week of April 12 through April 16th.

Building update: Design development is finished. Construction documents are now being prepared with an anticipation of an August bid award. Timeline with Dore and Whittier is current.

Avery received the Academic Achievement Grant, demonstrating progress in closing the achievement gap in limited English proficient students (ELL). We were awarded \$55K to provide teacher training and Project Read training.

Ms. Doe informed the committee that the Department of Education has a plan to regionalize centers for improvement. They are targeting schools not meeting AYP. They reached out to this geographical area and invited MS principals, curriculum leaders, superintendents to improve and focus on MS math. Last month the first meeting was held in Canton and the Middle School hosted the group in Dedham today.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. White reported to the School Committee that the Senior Play was very successful, both nights. Student Town Government Day is April 13th. There are twenty-seven days left for seniors. May 21st is the last day. The Prom is May 14th. The 5th Annual Scully Awards are May 19th. There is a yard sale at the middle school this Saturday. All proceeds go toward funding the "All Night Graduation Party". Boys and girls lacrosse lost to Walpole yesterday. Boys baseball and girls softball won this week. Boys and girls track lost. Administration reminded students today with the warmer weather to dress appropriately. Page 6 section 4-1 of the Handbook – dress code.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair recognized the outgoing members, Ms. Margaret Connolly and Mr. John Healy, on their last night. First, Mr. Healy was recognized for his contributions for the last three years; his perspective as an attorney provided much insight into the issues the committee deals with. His work on the Policy Sub Committee and joining the bargaining committee this past year were recognized as well. Mr. Roberts presented Mr. Healy with a plaque on behalf of the School Committee.

Mr. Roberts next acknowledge Ms. Connolly's six years as a member of the committee. He spoke of three constant themes – knew what was on her mind, where she stood on any position, and never hesitant to make her feelings known. She sparked many lively debates and discussions. Mr. Roberts presented Ms. Connolly with a math textbook as a reminder of her very first meeting as a school committee meeting. In addition, Mr. Roberts established "the Connolly Rule" as part of meeting procedures. Anyone wishing to address the board

must come to the microphone first so that people listening at home can hear. Ms. Driscoll recited a history of the past eight years of Ms. Connolly's accomplishments prior and during her terms on the committee. Ms. Connolly was presented with a parking pass to park anywhere at the high school for all of eternity. Mr. Ryan presented Ms. Connolly with a framed portrait of the Middle School on behalf of the School Committee. Ms. Connolly thanked everyone and read a prepared statement, thanking her family for all their support, and acknowledged it was an honor and a privilege to serve the Dedham school community.

REPORTS

Ms. Marge Bohan presented a report on CPR training for students at the High School. This is the 4th year offering CPR training for seniors. In conjunction with Gail Kelly, they decided to offer the program in-house this year. The CPR training counts toward seniors PE requirement. 155 seniors were trained in 3 days. The final session remaining is May 17th for 23 seniors who still need the training.

Energy Saving Performance Contracting - Mr. La Francesca provided the committee with an overview. The process started over 12 months ago. Performance contracting is a legislated process which allows municipalities to procure infrastructure projects without the need for any capital. The repayment of all costs is over time and based on on-going utility savings (Escrow project). Two outside consultants were hired: one for the bidding process and the other for the engineering side. Seimens (located in Canton) was chosen for the \$12M project. Would like a vote from the School Committee endorsing the project to go forward to the Town Meeting on May 17th. Vote from School Committee to endorse the project: - tabled

MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Connolly, and seconded by Mr. Healy to approve the minutes of February 24, 2010 and March 10, 2010. Approved: Unanimous

DONATIONS

DEP: Members present, Cheryl Ann Sheehan, Lauren Timmins, and Dimitria Sullivan. The DEP was created in 2005. "Dancing with the Dedham Stars" has been a very successful fundraiser. She recognized the sponsors for their contributions: Prime Honda and Toyota, Whole Foods, Dedham Savings, and Needham Bank. She thanked committee members for volunteering their time and other businesses who provided assistance for the event.

Donations to the district this year include: \$1500.00 to assist with translations, \$1000.00 HS sports complex – Walk of Fame, and \$10,000 to purchase the math books for the 5th grade to complete the elementary schools math program. Future donations were mentioned regarding the science project and the hope is to address that at a future point because they are still receiving sponsorships.

The Superintendent recognized the substantial donation from the DEP and the math program would not have been able to go forward without the hard work of this organization. The Superintendent made a recommendation to the School Committee to accept the donations from the DEP.

Motion to accept moved by Ms. Connolly with grateful appreciation and seconded by Ms. Driscoll with grateful appreciation.

VOTED: to accept the donations.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Members of the Sub-Committee reported on the meeting where the policy was discussed. There has been discussion over the past few years on Boys and Girls State Policy. There was some confusion over the qualifications. School Council worked on it but not unanimously voted, but felt it is much better than what was previously used. At the policy sub-committee meeting on April 5th it was voted to recommend this policy to the School Committee. Copy of policy was not available to committee members for review – table vote until next meeting.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Next meeting – 4/28

Endorsement of Siemens project

Policy on Boys Girls State

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Healy, and seconded by Ms. Driscoll. Approved: Unanimous