

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—March 10, 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: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 835 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent announced the Senior Class of 2010 will perform their Musical – Zombie Prom – on March 12 and 13. Admission is \$10.00 per person.

Congratulations to Manual Troncosco who was selected by the MA State Track Coaches Association as this year's recipient of the prestigious "Frank Kelly Adversity Award". He will be honored at the annual MSTCA banquet on May 2 at Lantana's in Randolph.

Congratulations to Molly Downing, Mike Fay, and Keegan Schofield, winners of the Odd Fellows Essay Contest. Kevin Mawe and Tara Celata were chosen as alternates. They will be participating in a two week trip this summer to New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Ottawa, Canada.

Online registration for next year has gone very smoothly. Thanks go to Joanne McCormick, Mike Dewar and Paula Marini. A reminder to parents to log on, and click on class registration to view their child's requests.

The High School Football team (Coach Comeau) is requesting approval to travel off campus for a pre-season football camp. The trip is to Camp Cobbossee, in Winthrop, ME and is scheduled for Friday, August 27th through Tuesday, August 31st. It is open to all Varsity and JV team members. The cost is \$275 per person.

Elementary School Update – tabled to the end of the meeting

Superintendent Doe wanted to mention it is MCAS time of year. Grades 4, 7 and 10 will have the ELA Composition on March 23rd. ELA Reading Comprehension for Grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 will be March 22-April 12, Grade 4 and 7 March 24 – April 12, and Grade 10 March 24 and 25.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

Invitation to attend a meeting of the energy management services contract on Monday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lower Conference Room, but there may be a request to change it to the Middle School.

Draft copy contained in SC packets titled: **DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY**

The Chair attended the Selectman's meeting and received a copy of this document. It is a working document for a footprint and they are looking for input.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. White recommends every go see the Senior Musical "Zombie Prom" this weekend. The winter sports banquet is on Tuesday, March 16. MCAS delayed openings on March 23rd through 25th. There is an option for seniors to participate in Red Cross first aid and CPR training. College acceptance letters are coming in for a lot of seniors. Mr. Santamaria recently gave a "What Don't You Get" speech in the announcements last week. She explained to the committee members the context of his speech. Erica

shared with the committee she was accepted to the University of Bridgeport and was recognized for substantial financial aid scholarship. She is also participating in the play this weekend.

Reports:

The Superintendent introduced Meredith Laban from Horizons Partnership, sponsored by the Dedham Country Day School. Three principals, Clare Sullivan, Heidi Dineen, and Doris Claypool worked closely with Meredith to get this program up and running. Ms. Laban described the main part of the program as a six week summer enrichment program. Last year was the first year of the program and they enrolled 16 students. Half of the students are from Dedham and the other half from Roslindale, Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain.

She provided background on Horizons National. The company has been in existence for 45 years and they started in Connecticut. There are 16 sites around the country with only one site in MA. The program this summer will double in size to 32. Transportation is provided. The focus is on math and reading instruction to prepare for the upcoming school year. They offer swimming as well. Field trips are included although focus is on academics. DIBELS testing was performed last summer. At the beginning of the program, 7 out of 16 met benchmark on entry. At the end of program 14 out of 16 met the benchmark. Ms. Laban showed a brief slide show of the camp activities from last year. The program follows the students through the eighth grade.

Curriculum Initiatives Updates:

Guide sheets were distributed to committee members. Some of the initiatives the district is working on and is able to bring forward.

Apex Learning, presented by: John Murray, Joanne McCormick

There has been a lot of behind the scenes research and involved looking at what other districts are doing to determine what opportunities to provide to students who have not been helped by the conventional methods already available to them. This is a pilot program that has been launched to support students who are struggling and in danger of failing. On-Line Credit Recovery – gives the student a lifeline to meet content standards for a course they are currently enrolled in but they are failing. It focuses on students at risk, right now. The major courses offered at DHS are offered in Apex Learning, connected to state standards and where it is web-based, the student can access the program anywhere. It is a hybrid model of blended learning. Students work on their own but a content teacher monitors the progress of the student. A lab is run once a week with written material handed in and graded. The student is afforded instant feedback on how they are doing. Identified students for the pilot program are: seniors at risk for not graduating, students at risk for being retained a grade, potential dropouts, and students who have missed classes due to significant absences. There are 100 slots available. There are currently 63 students enrolled in the pilot program. Mr. Murray provided a demonstration of the program to the committee. Every staff member has access to the curriculum with the ability to use the information available in their classrooms. The plan is to go forward with our own summer school as well.

The Superintendent spoke on a collaborative effort with The Education Collaborative (TEC) on program development to offer student courses on line beginning 2010-2011 school year. It is available to the 16 member communities. They are high quality, online courses developed by teachers in the member's districts for enrichment. They also volunteered to train one teacher per district. Lynda Samp is developing a course for the second semester. TEC will be compensating teachers. Dedham would have 5-10 student seats. There is a cost of \$300.00 per student. These are enrichment courses, not for GPA, and not to meet the academic requirements for graduation.

We envision an explanation on a student's transcript of what the TEC on-line course is. Mrs. McCormick spoke about the selection process. Open to all students, explain the initiative. Students who are interested can apply and indicate their interests. The student will be interviewed to review the requirements and make sure it is a good fit.

Virtual Assessment Project sponsored by the Harvard Graduate School of Education working with the Dedham Middle School. An opportunity was presented through the Superintendent's Round Table to

meet some of the leading researchers in on-line education. We visited an 8th grade classroom in Watertown. Principal Gately spoke on their visit to the Middle School. The program uses “Avatars” within a context where the students assume the role of that person. The students explore an Alaska habitat. The engagement level for students is significant due to the elements of the program. This year, one class is set up in April to gather data as a pilot. The data will be used to improve the program and will be returning next year to work with the 8th graders in a year long study. It is a research based initiative.

DESE has formed the Greater Boston Middle School Principals Network (10 district members). The purpose is to work directly with the Office of Math, Science, and Technology/Engineering at DESE to target and develop effective instructional leadership for mathematics in middle school. The focus is on improving middle level math instructional practices. Overwhelming consensus from superintendents and principals, nobody is happy with 8th grade scores, yet each district was able to identify that the 10th grade scores were amazingly strong (same student group).

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

none

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

none

MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Ryan to approve the minutes from the February 11, 2010 meeting. Approved: Unanimous

Executive Session Minutes approval – moved into Executive Session for discussion on minutes.

DONATIONS

none

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. La Francesca reported the Dexter School Lease is up for renewal and needs approval from the committee to allow and RFP to go out. The current lease is up on August 31. He is seeking a two year lease with the potential two, one year adjustments, due to plans to move ECEC to Dexter.

Motion made by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. Connolly to allow the RFP on the Dexter School.

Approved: Unanimous

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Chairman Roberts wanted to clarify the upcoming meeting schedule.

3/24 – executive session only, for a level III grievance. No regular business meeting.

4/7 – full business meeting, please email the Chair with items for the agenda

4/14 – regular business meeting is canceled

4/28th – full business meeting

Capital Project meeting will be held at 11:15 on Saturday 3/13 at the Town Hall.

The Chair announced the need to enter into Executive Session under Exemption 3.

Motion made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Healy: Vote conducted by roll call: Mr. Ryan-yes, Mr. Coughlin-yes, Mr. Heisler-yes, Ms. Driscoll-yes, Mr. Healy-yes, Ms. Connolly-yes, Mr. Roberts-yes.

Open meeting adjourned at: 8:35 p.m.