

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—November 4, 2009
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

Convened: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 8:41 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent brought everyone up to date on the Avery Project which is Warrant Article #4 and the renovation of the HS track, field and bleachers which is Warrant Article #5. A second presentation on the Athletic Field Renovations was put before the Finance Committee and after that presentation they voted unanimously to support (7members present) Article 5. Last evening, the Selectmen also voted to support both Articles. We have made a considerable effort to make public presentations. Informational material is being broadcast in brief segments on cable news. Monday evening the Mini-Town Meeting will be held at the Avery School. The administration plans to give tours of the Avery School beginning at 5p.m.

ECEC: November is an important month. Pre-K registration began November 2nd and will continue through November 13th. Applications must be postmarked by November 13 to be eligible for the lottery. The lottery will be held on November 24th at 9:30 a.m. Kindergarten registration will be held November 9th through November 13th. The full day kindergarten lottery will be held in January. Full day tuition is \$3500.00 for the year. The annual Halloween performance and parade was held on October 30th.

Greenlodge: The PTO Pumpkin Patch Fair was held on October 3rd. Matt Wall from "MA Safe Routes to School" met with the PTO on October 6th to share the importance of encouraging students to walk or bike to school.

At all elementary schools, the afternoon recreation programs are in effect. Student council elections have taken place.

American Education Week will be celebrated November 16-20.

Riverdale: Parents Day will be held on November 17th.

We have been having great success with the elementary foreign language program and music program.

Middle School: The sports season for fall sports concluded last week. Principal Gately commended the coaches and student athletes for a great season. The annual Halloween Dance was very successful with approximately 350 students in attendance. The annual Veteran's Day assembly will be held on November 10th. It is a special event we are very proud of and the community is invited to join us.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair would like to emphasize the Veteran's Day Assembly. In addition, the Mini-Town Meeting on November 9th and Special Town Meeting on November 16th at the High School. Would there be a possibility to stagger the Student Council to update the SC on their goals for the year?

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There have been many community service opportunities this fall including Climate Day at the Middle School and Dedham Day. Also the Avery School Halloween celebration had many high school volunteers and overall it was a good turn out. Spirit week starts on Monday leading up to Homecoming Dance on Saturday, November 14th. Monochrome Monday – each grade wears a different color, Tie-Die Tuesday, Wake Up Late Wednesday

(no school) Theme Thursday – each grade has a different theme, Pep Rally Friday and Saturday is the Homecoming football game at 10:00. The fall season has concluded for most sports except for boys and girls soccer. They have both moved on to tournament. The sign up for winter sports starts tomorrow after school. The Superintendent added that a great group of students volunteered to help on Climate Day. One of the activities was the use of the distance learning lab. Students engaged in a dialog with students from Italy. Later in the afternoon, students engaged in a conversation on climate change with people in the mountains of Peru. The HS in Italy has asked us to partner with them for future programs. Ms. Doe commended the HS students who gave up their Saturday to volunteer. Another group received a commendation from the Recreation Dept. Mr. Mucciaccio had a combination of MS and HS students who volunteered for Dedham Day and they received high praise from Mr. Mucciaccio.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Celata, resident. He would like to be placed on the agenda to provide assistance for Avery School project. He wants to find out how much the school will cost the homeowner. He needs to get involved in this project and help in some way. He has information circulating to request reducing some committees in the town to help save money including one to the Board of Library Trustees requesting them to resign and turn over the Library to the school department to run. Mr. Roberts asked Mr. Celata to give him a call to discuss some of his questions and ideas.

Brian Keaney, both resident and reporter. Read a statement so that he would be sure to make several points accurately. He instructed the board members to jump in and interrupt to have a conversation at any time during his statement. He provided examples of other people who have asked questions at previous meetings. He goes on to quote dialog and other instances from many previous meetings as evidence he has been singled out because of his questions. He has made numerous requests to be placed on the agenda to be able to ask questions and has been denied. Mr. Roberts interrupted Mr. Keaney to remind him he has gone beyond the allotted time and to wrap it up. There is further dialog between the Chair and Mr. Keaney before taking his seat.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

None

REPORTS

Safety Committee: Holli Armstrong, Michael La Francesca

Some of our committee members are at the Riverdale School presenting to the PTO on the Avery Project. The Safety Committee is chaired by Chief Weir and Superintendent Doe. Members include:

Asst. Superintendent, Cindy Kelly; Director of Special Education, Kathy Gaudreau; 7 principals, 3 assistant principals; Lead Nurse, Gail Kelley; Director of Guidance, Joanne McCormick; MS Guidance, Tim Geary; Director of Maintenance, Brian Lynch; Head Custodians at the HS and MS; Youth Commissioner, Tom Clinton; Officer Ron Pucci, Officer Fred Matthies, Fire Chief Cullinane, Lieutenant Michael D'Entremont, Joe Cazeault from Nobles.

The committee meets monthly at Middle School. Topics discussed are fire drills, lock down drills, traffic issues, parking issues, general safety, bus issues, emergency protocols. Last year we ran a mock lock down at two elementary schools and HS. MS and ECEC drills have been done this year already. We have met twice this year as a whole committee. Ms. Doe introduced Lieutenant D'Entremont and Mr. Clinton who were in the audience. Mr. Clinton said it is great to have department heads to come together to discuss and practice the issues at hand to keep the children safe. Blue prints of the buildings are in the hands of safety officials. Crisis teams are in place. Police and Fire departments have given us tremendous support. The policies start at ECEC and are consistent throughout the district. We also include and work with the private schools in Dedham so all students have consistent instruction. We are constantly reviewing and tweaking the procedures. As the staff changes from year to year it is important that everyone goes through the protocol.

DPS Post-Secondary Planning – Director of Guidance, Joanne McCormick:

Handouts were given to SC members - Post-Secondary Planning Guide, Dedham High School Guidance Website, Class of 2009 College Profile.

Ms. McCormick gave a power point presentation on the process and tools in place to help students make post-secondary choices.

In grade six and seven, the staff makes connections between courses, student learning and future choices.

Grade 8 – Grade 8 Seminar. A guidance curriculum that focuses on post-secondary planning is one piece and other parts include Go Program, Real Games, Bridges and Naviance. We talk about course selection planning and community services as well as connection to the high school. One of the key things worked on is getting the Middle School and High School counselors to work together for consistency.

Grade 9 – talk to the students about transitioning to HS. There is a presentation “Making College Count” when they enter the high school. Freshmen orientation and an orientation from guidance are held when they arrive. They are told about Schools to Careers and TEC Internship and Naviance.

Grade 10: The focus is on careers. We provide PSAT testing at no cost. We focus on course selection, planning and community service. There is more data available so we use AP potential and PSAT data.

Grade 11: It is important to note some of the dates, The Guidance Website is especially important to refer to for these dates. The Post Secondary Planning Guide is also an important reference.

Grade 12: One-on-one meetings are happening now for any parents who do not know this.

Ms. McCormick reviewed the DHS Guidance Webpage and the Post Secondary Planning Guide. The point of the guide is something the guidance office has compiled for the students so they are aware of time lines and the process.

Also on the website is the Weekly Bulletin, links to scholarships, and the Senior Survey. Ms. McCormick also reviewed the Naviance Website. This tool was purchased to help students in MS and HS that provides student and parent access from home to compile their individual data and profiles when searching for colleges.

A question was asked: How is it being presented to the senior class? The program is just being rolled out. Data is being inputted. Seniors are having one-on-one with the counselors. Juniors will be given a log-in and will share with parents. The sophomores will be worked with as well as the career piece, then freshmen and MS students will be worked with. Ms. McCormick stressed this is only one piece of what the guidance department does. They work with the whole child; the academic piece, the social/emotional piece, and the college/career piece. Some important dates coming up are: College Goal Sunday is a financial aid program that will be held on January 31 at Waltham High School, they fill out the FAFSA for you. December 7th MEFA will have a presentation at Dedham High School to learn about financial aid. On February 8th, we have invited college panels: U Mass Amherst, Boston College and Suffolk University to talk about the application/admission process with a question and answer session. A question was asked how Naviance was selected vs. other programs. Ms. McCormick said it is the most widely used program. In due time, we will be able to submit electronically. It is very comprehensive and has a great track record across the country. Other schools have been using it for over 10 years. How is X Block working out for Guidance? It is primarily used for large group presentations. Ms. Doe wanted to recognize Mrs. McCormick’s work and her staff with guides and handouts that were not available prior to her tenure. The materials are something to be proud of.

MINUTES

Motion made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Healy to approve the minutes of Sept.23,2009. Approved: Unanimous

Motion made by Mr. Coughlin with one correction and seconded by Mr. Healy to approve the minutes of October 14, 2009. Approved: Unanimous

DONATIONS

We are very grateful to the Harvard Pilgrim Community Care Foundation for awarding a Spirit 911 Mini-Grant to the Athletic Department of \$500.00 which will be used to purchase a hydrocollator for the training room.

Francis O’Brien donated two flags, one American and one POW flag for Memorial Field

The Occupation Education Department requests permission to accept the following automobiles:

1999 Chevy Ventura Mini-Van donated by Michelle MacDonald

1997 Oldsmobile 88 donated by Alice Roche

1995 Ford Explorer donated by Alma Epstein

1995 Dodge Cargo Van donated by Dedham Visionary Access Corp.

Motion was made with grateful appreciation by Ms. Connolly and seconded with grateful appreciation by Ms. Driscoll. Approved: Unanimous

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Driscoll mentioned she went to the Riverside Theatre, West Side Story was playing. A junior from Dedham High, Lisa Joyce, she was very good. I felt very proud of her representing Dedham.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

The next meeting is November 18 meeting:

8th grade seminar information – invite teachers teaching seminar

In January – Abigail and John Adams awards at the Middle School

Invite Student Councils in small groups

Question to Mr. La Francesca from the Chair if any word from Town Hall about the financials? We are taking a cut in operating budget and circuit breaker; we are waiting to hear our portion. Budget-Sub met and reviewed the Capital items; we have a 5 year plan and are extending some projects. Auditorium stairs update – contract signed and starting weather permitting on Monday. The time frame start to finish is approximately 17 days. Mr. La Francesca shared the work he has been doing with the screening committee with the town – finalists on infrastructure in town for mechanics of the building to save money through a twenty year plan to replace windows, light fixtures, HVAC. Up front expenditures represent future savings.

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

Motion made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Connolly: 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: 8:41 p.m.