

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

May 4, 2022

(Approved 5/18/2022)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Victor Hebert
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati
Christopher Polito
Cailen McCormick
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael J. Welch, Superintendent
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Edward Gotgart, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Avery Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Update

Today was the 147th day of classes for the 2021-22 school year. We have only 33 days left! The last day of the school year is a half-day for students and is currently scheduled for Tuesday, June 21. There have been only 5 days since our last meeting, so this update will (hopefully) be correspondingly brief...

This week in elementary schools was the start of the spring 2022 Math MCAS testing. These tests began with Grade 3 on Tuesday and will continue through next week. The full MCAS testing schedule can be seen on the DPS website [HERE](#).

Last week was quite busy with the finalized submission of MA School Building Authority [Statements of Interest for the Greenlodge and Riverdale Elementary Schools](#). These were required by the MSBA in the event the Town wants to consider consolidating any of our elementary schools as a part of the approved Oakdale MSBA submission. The calendar of next steps in the MSBA process includes the solicitation and selection of an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) firm. The SBRC will be fully involved in this work later on this month. Please see this [calendar](#) that outlines next steps in the OPM Selection stage of the Feasibility process.

I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous efforts and many hours of work by all our school nurses in recognition of [National School Nurses Day on Wednesday, May 11, 2022](#). Since we will not have a meeting next week, I wanted to make sure that we marked this event and took a moment to thank our nurses in advance of this day. They have gone above and beyond during the past year and I am very appreciative of their efforts under the guidance of DPS Health Services Director Maria Antonuccio.

On Thursday last week I participated as a member of the Horizons Board of Directors Program to discuss possible modifications to the Horizons summer program for DPS students at Dedham Country Day School. The [Horizons at DCD Summer Program](#) provides 6 weeks of FREE summer camp experiences for nominated students from Dedham and Boston beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through middle school.

Also on Thursday last week Dr. Oneida Fox Roye and I participated in the 6th session of [DESE's Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community](#) seminars. This was another outstanding opportunity to network with other districts regarding the ongoing need to diversify the teacher workforce and develop programs to encourage more students to enter the education field.

On Friday I participated in the [TEC Superintendents](#) April seminar where we learned about efforts underway to provide better support and guidance for School Committee Chairs and Superintendents next year. The idea is to provide training for Chair/Superintendent teams from each of the TEC districts 3 times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring). More information will be coming out shortly.

This past Monday evening I conducted our [Spring Town-Wide PTO Officers Meeting](#). There were over 20 officers in attendance representing all DPS schools, and it was another great opportunity to network and compare activities across the district.

As seen during last week's School Committee meeting, summer enrichment programming is now [open for registration on the DPS website](#). ESD/ESY Director Alyssa Freda has worked with DPS Communications Coordinator to enhance the [DPS summer programs website](#) to add even more detailed information. Parents can now sign up for individual programs and view capacity information and descriptions for each offering. Please spread the word about the availability of these offerings!

Yesterday DPS welcomed DESE Associate Commissioner of Education Rob Curtin to the Aspiring Leaders Academy spring seminar at the [MIT Endicott House](#). Rob talked about his personal leadership journey and provided an excellent overview of the movement by the Board of Education to increase the MCAS graduation requirements. This was a fascinating conversation and everyone benefited from Rob's insider information and overview of the process. I would encourage the Committee to view Rob's presentation [HERE](#).

Lastly, I am apologetically asking for retroactive permission for the 2nd graders at Oakdale School to visit Roger Williams zoo on May 19 as detailed in this [attached letter](#). This clearly does not meet the 90-day advanced notice requirement for out of state field trips and the teachers are aware that this may not be approved. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Mr. Polito motioned to approve the Oakdale 2nd graders trip to visit the Roger Williams Zoo on May 19, 2022, Ms. White second, motion passed 7-0.

Superintendent's COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Welch provided the following update to the Committee:

This week's pooled testing at all schools showed an increase in positive pools over last week's results, with positive pools being detected at 5 of the 7 district schools. On Monday and Tuesday of this week we tested a total of **299 pools** that included **1424 individuals**. We received 6 positive pools out of those 1416 individuals for a percent positivity of 0.20%. 2 of the positive pools were at Greenlodge and there was 1 positive pool each at Avery, DHS, DMS, and Riverdale. There were **NO POSITIVE POOLS** from ECEC and Oakdale this week.

It should be noted that we had two additional positive pools that were positive because two different students accidentally returned to pooled testing prior to the 90 day window of exclusion after testing positive for COVID. Therefore, these 2 pools turned up as positive due to the addition of those students.

The increase in cases this week is consistent with reports of slight decreases in schools across the state. Recent wastewater COVID-19 concentrations have shown a bit of an up and down pattern in the past week. These readings have proven to be pretty accurate in predicting future cases 2-5 days in advance. A graph that includes this past week's data from MWRA wastewater is shown below:

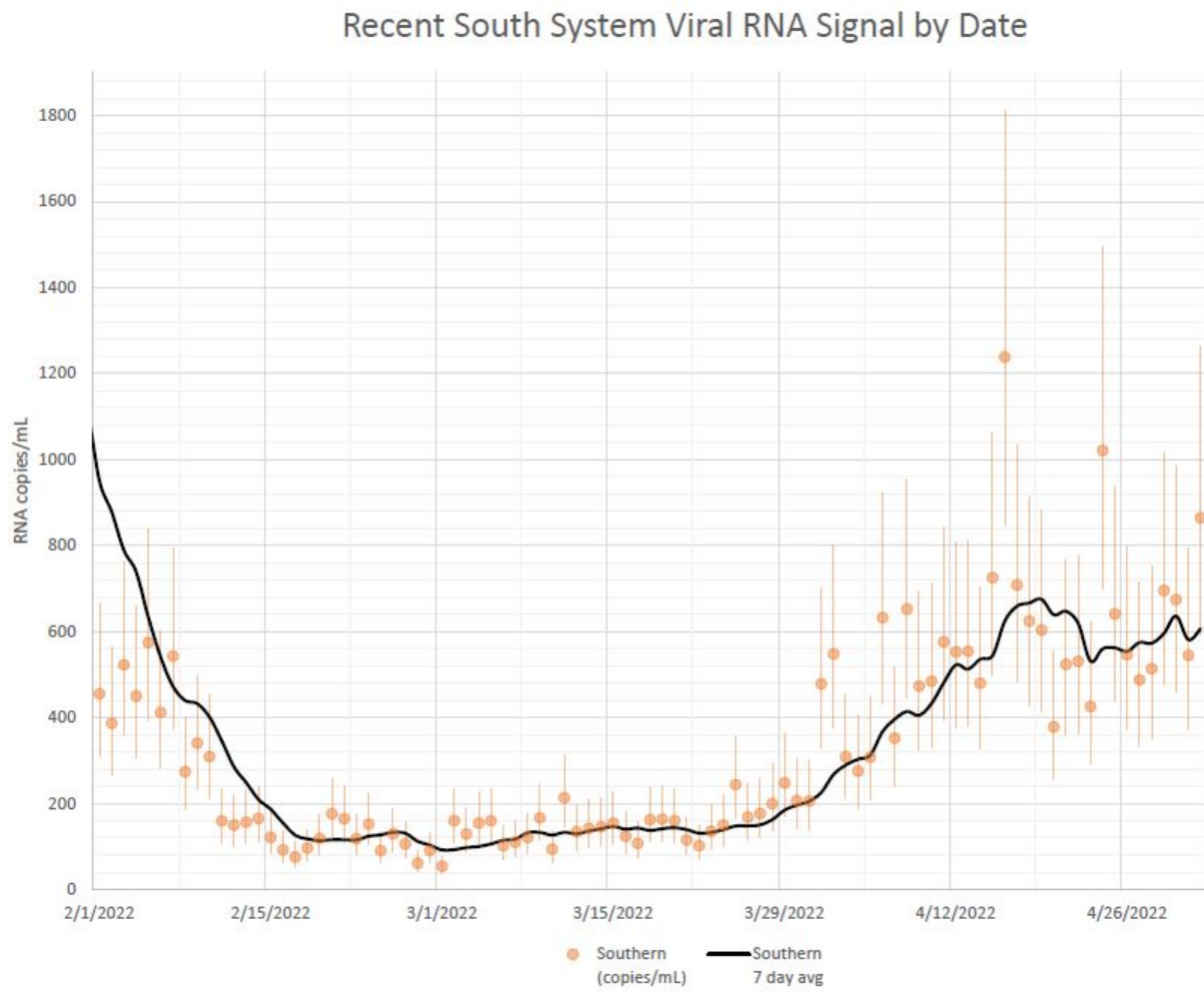
The most recent data regarding COVID cases in Dedham and the Dedham Public Schools are below.

[COVID-19 data for Town of Dedham](#)

[COVID cases in MA schools](#) (For comprehensive statewide results, click [HERE](#))

[Positive COVID Cases in DPS Schools](#)

DPS Pooled Testing Participation and Results



Discussions followed regarding COVID pool testing and rapid testing.

Reports/Updates/Requests

Update on Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance Search - Asst. Supt. Dr. Edward Gotgart

The Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance advertisement was submitted on the School Spring and the MASBO websites and constituted a screen/search committee consisting of Chair Dr. Pearrow, Mr. Polito, Amy Hicks, Don Langenhorst, Dr. Ian Kelly, Mark Bisbee, Kim Taylor, KimHermesch, and Mike Emery.

The committee interviewed four candidates, after which two candidates withdrew. The remaining two candidates were able to visit the schools and town hall departments, followed by feedback with the

committee members, and then completed problem solving exercise spreadsheets. The Committee recommended both candidates to the School Committee.

Mr. Welch announced that Mr. Liam Hurley had been recommended to the School Committee, and invited Mr Hurley to the podium to provide background information about himself. Mr. Hurley is currently working for the Newton Public Schools as the Assistant Superintendent Chief Financial Officer. The Committee followed with questions.

Mr. Hebert motioned to move Liam Hurley into the contract negotiations phase, Ms. Briggs second, motion passed 7-0.

Review of Winter Student Performance Data and Growth Comparison - Asst. Supt. Dr. Ian Kelly

Dr. Kelly stated this is the last presentation this year, gathering the data and assessments that are used for student growth, and to shape interventions and how it is working for Dedham. The focus of this presentation is on grades K-8. Dr. Kelly welcomed Heather Smith, Ed.D., PK-8 Humanities Coordinator and Linda Kobierski Ph.D., PK-8 STEM Coordinator, who presented extensive information on student growth in the Dedham Public Schools. The slide show presentation is available on the [Dedham Public School website](#).

Discussions followed from the Committee.

Draft of Superintendent's Strategic Planning Review/Goals

Mr. Welch presented his information that has been presented to PTO meetings throughout the district. This is a rough and broad overview of where Dedham is headed, and states this needs to be refined over the next few months into a more comprehensive plan.

The three large broad categories are:

1. High Student Learning Expectations and Rigorous, Student-Centered Instruction
2. District Equity, Beliefs, Culture and Climate
3. Social Emotional Learning and Student/Family Supports

Subcommittee Updates

Budget - Mr. Hebert

Met today before the School Committee meeting, to continue conversations regarding the proposed budget cuts, not prepared to present recommendations yet. At the next meeting in a few weeks, they will be prepared to present and discuss a vote on the recommendations.

Communications - Mr. Donati

Next meeting will be Tuesday May 10th, with exciting ideas.

Curriculum Advisory - Ms. McCormick

Did not meet this week.

Policy - Mr. Donati

- Second Reading of Policy BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings. The draft is located on the [District Website](#), Mr. Donati read through each of the numbers.

SBRC - Ms. Briggs

Haven't met again, the next information meeting will be May 12th. On April 25th there will be a 7:00pm meeting and June 6th will hopefully be interviewing the OPR candidates.

Traffic Communications- Dr. Pearrow

None

Negotiations - Ms. White

Met yesterday, and went well with the ground rules.

Donations

Mr. Donati motioned to accept a generous donation to the Dedham Middle School for \$75 from Donahue Real Estate Co. to support the Dedham Middle School Drama Dept and the spring play production of *The Sound of Music*, second by Mr. Polito, motion passed 7-0.

Review and Approval Vote of Previous Meeting Minutes

None

Old/New Business

State Representative Paul McMurtry sent a letter to the Chair and the Superintendent stating the House Budget has included extending one more year of universal free breakfast and lunch for all students in the Commonwealth as part of the public education system. If approved, students will continue to receive breakfast and lunch at no charge through the summer of 2023.

Discussion & Vote on Annual District Decision regarding School Choice

Superintendent Welch recommended Dedham not participate in School Choice, not to accept in-coming students into the Dedham Public Schools. Mr. Polito motioned for Dedham not to participate in School Choice for 2022-2023, Ms. White second, the motion passed 7-0.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. White suggested that a letter be sent to the Department of Education regarding the new MCAS requirements from the Communications Sub Committee.

Ms. Briggs acknowledged how hard the teachers have worked throughout the past few years, Ms. White suggests the Committee write a letter to the Board of Education.

Mr. Polito motioned to adjourn at 9:17pm, Mr. Hebert second, the motion passed 7-0.