

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

May 1, 2019

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Steve Bilafer, Chair
Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati
Lisa Laprade
Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Avery School

Executive Session commenced at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Coughlin stated that the Executive Session was being called to hear a Level 3 Grievance regarding teacher evaluations being conducted during Instructional Rounds.

Kevin Bresnahan, attorney for the School Department explained this was a class action grievance against unannounced observations being conducted during administrative rounds. A total of 10 observations have occurred in this manner. The Dedham Education Association (DEA) is not challenging the content of the observations only the manner in which they were conducted. The Committee must answer the grievance within 20 school days.

The Committee discussed the general process of evaluations for understanding. TeachPoint is Dedham Public Schools evaluation tool. The Committee discussed the difference between observations and written evaluations.

Supt. Welch noted that the Administration is not breaking any agreements in the contract by performing these types of observations.

The Committee discussed the history of the evaluation system and the current processes and feedback. The Committee agreed the evaluators need to be evaluated and supported

as well as the teachers. Mr. Donati expressed his understanding and appreciation of Instructional Rounds as a practice but not used for written evaluations.

6:20 p.m.

Tim Dwyer -DEA President, Dan Megan- DEA Grievance Chair, and [REDACTED] entered the room.

Mr. Dwyer explained that [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] to discuss her personal experience.

Mr. Dwyer passed out packets to committee which included

- pages of educator evaluation handbook
- elementary assignment flow chart (Mr. Dwyer described the flowchart and who are the evaluators of elementary teachers)
- email from an elementary principal explaining observation during instructional rounds
- thank you note from an evaluator

[REDACTED]

Mr. Dwyer explained that administrative rounds are a training exercise that is disruptive to the classroom. He stated that the faculty involved in the rounds are subordinates of Asst. Superintendent Dr. Ian Kelly. He stated observations should be objective and evidence based. He does not feel that observations during administrative rounds fit these criteria. He is not contesting the results of the observations just the process in which they were attained.

[REDACTED] explained [REDACTED] experience. [REDACTED] stated the Principal Ashley Bodkins, Asst. Supt. Dr. Ian Kelly and Director of Health & Wellness Mark Carney came into [REDACTED] room to observe [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that although the group only stayed 15 minutes, the process was nerve racking. Later that day [REDACTED] received an email from Principal Bodkins who explained that the observation was going to be a formal write up. [REDACTED] could not understand why the Director of Health & Wellness should have a say or contribute to [REDACTED] write up as he is not one of [REDACTED] evaluators

Mr. Dwyer stated that that he felt this process was wrong.

Mr. Bresnahan brought up contract section 11.1 provision of the handbook and asked what exactly Mr. Dwyer was contesting.

Mr. Dwyer said he was contesting the provision of the handbook he presented to the Committee. He objected to the fairness of the process. He stated that people who are not evaluators should not be contributing to an evaluation.

Mr. Bresnahan asked if there was a specific provision being violated. Mr. Dwyer explained that observations in this manner were never anticipated. He feels there needs to be a relationship between the evaluator and the educator. An educator is required to know by September 15 who their evaluator is. He feels this is a change in process and Administrative rounds were never intended to evaluate individual educators.

Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Megan, and [REDACTED] left the room.

The Committee discussed the packet of documents Mr. Dwyer provided them.

Dr. Kelly described the instructional rounds to the Committee. He stated it usually involves three people- Dr. Kelly, a principal and a department head. The Committee discussed the department heads and their participation in the rounds.

Mr. Bilafer asked if the non evaluator contributed to the evaluation. Dr. Kelly explained the principal writes up the evaluation, but all parties discuss the round and lesson.

Mr. Coughlin did not think there was a violation of the contract, but felt there was a need for better communication.

The Committee discussed the tem of "undue influence" that Mr. Dwyer referred to in his description of the grievance.

The Committee was in agreement that the contract had not been violated, however discussed if this was the right practice.

Mr. Bresnahan read the remedy from the grievance that Mr. Dwyer was seeking:

The DEA contends that the remedy for this violation is

- For all evaluators to conduct their observation of educators completely independently, separate and apart from any Administrative Rounds
- Any evaluations already conducted under this flawed methodology would be voidable at the discretion of the educator.

The Committee decided to vote on the grievance at the next meeting. The question to consider is whether the contract was violated or not.

Mr. Bresnahan sated he does not see any violation of the contract. He stated that if the grievance is denied the Union has the right to take the matter to arbitration. An arbitrator will then interpret the contract.

Mr. Bilafer motioned the exit Executive Session and return to the regular meeting, Ms. Briggs second; a roll call vote was taken:

Steve Bilafer, Chair- Yes
Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair- Yes
Mayanne Briggs- Yes
Joshua Donati- Yes
Lisa Laprade- Yes
Dr. Melissa Pearrow- Yes
Tracey White- Yes

All documents were collected by Superintendent Welch

Meeting concluded at 7:50 p.m.