

1 **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—May 28, 2008**
2 **Lower Conference Room, Town Hall**
3
4

5 **PRESENT**

6 **Tracy Driscoll, Chair**
7 **Margaret Matthews, Vice Chair**
8 **David Roberts**
9 **Thomas Ryan**
10 **Margaret Connolly**
11 **Joanne Flatley**
12 **John Healy**

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Christopher Campbell, Asst. Superintendent
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager
Alan Winrow, Principal
Timothy Ruggere, Principal
Clare Sullivan, Principal
Elizabeth Cummings, Principal
Holli Armstrong, Principal
Doris Claypool, Principal
Jacob Santamaria, Assistant Principal
John Murray, Assistant Principal
Andrew Boles, Assistant Principal

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20 **Convened: 7:00 PM**

Adjourned: 10:50 PM

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22
23 **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

24 Ms. Doe announced that the Junior/Senior Prom was held at Luciano's on Lake Pearl in
25 Wrentham last Friday evening. She said 375 students and guests attended and it was a
26 spectacular success. She thanked the class advisors, Mr. Megan and Ms. Bohan, for their efforts
27 to coordinate this event.
28

29 Ms. Doe announced that Class Night is Monday, June 2. The evening begins with a band
30 performance at 6:30. She stated Outstanding Alumni plaques would be awarded to alumni who
31 have gone on to make worthy contributions to society. She said this year's awards are being
32 presented to Kevin Hampe (1969), Francis Sally (1961), and Dianne (O'Sullivan) Zawacki
33 (1972).
34

35 Ms. Doe announced that commencement is next Wednesday, June 4, at 5:30 PM. She said the
36 guest speaker would be former ambassador Donald Gregg, whose mother graduated from
37 Dedham High School 99 years ago. She stated that Mr. Santamaria would be the featured
38 speaker. She stated that, if it rains, the commencement would be moved indoors and only those
39 with tickets would be able to attend.
40

41 Ms. Doe announced the Senior Class barbeque would be held on Friday, May 30, at the Endicott
42 Estate.
43

44 Ms. Doe announced that the staff of the *Dedham Mirror* won the Superior Achievement Award at
45 this year's New England Press Association Conference. She said the award was issued by Helen
46 Smith, Executive Director of the College of Communication at Boston University for excellence
47 in scholastic editing and publishing. Ms. Doe noted this is the third consecutive year the *Mirror*
48 has been honored with this distinction. She said, in addition, 2007 graduate Greg Hurst received
49 a Special Achievement Award in Review Writing for his piece in last June's *Mirror* titled "No
50 Monkey Glory."
51

1 Ms. Doe stated that the top 30 graduating seniors were recognized at a dinner last night at the
2 MIT Endicott Estate. These students were: Peter Hynes, Carolyn Sliwa, Michelle O'Connor,
3 Robert Santamaria, Ryan Murray, Stephanie Welch, Dylan Nauss, Alex Doucette, Daniel Barrett,
4 Elizabeth Kempton, Jose-Anthony Ramos, Krista Bradbury, Daniel Hynes, Samantha Quinn,
5 Daniel Driscoll, Katrina Heisler, Phillip Nash, Katelin Timmons, Jennifer Boudrow, Rachel
6 Luna, Candice Radloff, Meghan Healy, Molly Sullivan, Brittany Walker, Shane Heffernan, Payal
7 Desai, Steven Riley, James McCormick, Kathryn Mariano, and Katelyn Warjas.

8
9 **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

10 Ms. Driscoll stated that most of the School Committee members attended the National Honor
11 Society reception on May 20 and also attended the recognition dinner. She said it was a beautiful
12 event and the committee appreciated being able to attend. She stated they are proud of the
13 graduates.

14
15 **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

16 There was none.

17
18 **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS**

19 There was none.

20
21 **RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM, DEVELOPMENTAL DESIGNS,
22 PEER MEDIATION**

23 *Responsive Classroom*

24 Ms. Armstrong introduced the responsive classroom. She said the approach is based on the
25 premise that learning is optimized when both academic and social skills are addressed. She said
26 this program helps students build both. She reported that the program has been implemented
27 district wide at the elementary level. Twenty teachers have been trained, with staff members
28 training other staff members. She stated that Julie Killgoar, Christine Cummings, Heather
29 Rudolphsen, Julie Lally, and Karen Giannangelo would provide further detail about the program.

30
31 Ms. Rudolphsen reviewed the seven guiding principals of Responsive Classroom. She said that
32 how children learn is as important as what they learn, and the greatest cognitive growth is
33 achieved through social interaction. She said knowing each other well is essential to the
34 children's education. She added that lasting change begins with the adult community.

35
36 Ms. Rudolphsen outlined the practices of Responsive Classroom. She said the program utilizes
37 classroom practices such as the morning meeting, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive
38 teacher language, logical consequences, guided discovery, academic choice, classroom
39 organization, working with families and collaborative problem solving.

40
41 Ms. Lally, kindergarten teacher, spoke about how Responsive Classroom is implemented in her
42 classroom. She said a key component for her students is talking about hopes and dreams. She
43 showed a project her students had done and explained how it achieved the objective of
44 Responsive Classroom. She also referenced a pamphlet published by Responsive Classroom that
45 outlines the developmental stages, which she feels helps parents understand what they can expect
46 from their kindergartener. She stated the premise is to build a safe, caring classroom in a
47 community of learners. She also described what a morning meeting would entail and what is
48 fostered by the interaction.

49
50 Ms. Cummings, Riverdale teacher, spoke about guided discovery. She stated students are taught
51 how to behave both in the classroom and outside of it. They address lunchtime, walking down

1 the hallway quietly, taking care of materials, and cleaning up after yourself. She stated they
2 practice classroom routines and said you cannot always assume children know what is expected
3 of them. She said they hope the philosophy will expand into other behaviors.
4

5 Ms. Killgoar reviewed rules and logical consequences. She said the program strikes a nice
6 balance between looking at feelings and making sure everyone is happy and the foundation of self
7 control and discipline. She said the foundation for a caring community is teaching students to be
8 good listeners and respectful. She said this is achieved through the development of rules. She
9 said that sometimes reactive discipline is necessary, but the lesson is all of your actions have
10 consequences, both good and bad. She stated the students learn to make amends to preserve
11 relationships. She said over the course of the year the kids are becoming more self-disciplined.
12

13 Ms. Giannangelo stated that Responsive Classroom gives teachers a model for a consistent and
14 effective approach for behavior in the classroom. She stated that children learn acceptable
15 behavior and about responsibility. She added that most teachers have been trained and the
16 benefits are being seen in the classroom. The elementary teachers support seeking funding for
17 further training to ensure the success of the program.
18

19 ***Peer Mediation***

20 Mr. Ruggere stated the Middle School has implemented two programs, the first through the
21 SCORE grant, for peer mediation. He stated that research has shown that when peers mediate
22 conflict it prevents the situation from recurring. He stated that next year guidance counselor Liz
23 Fritz will be trained as a conflict resolution coordinator. He explained that peer mediation is used
24 following an unsuccessful attempt by the teacher to address unacceptable behavior by a student.
25

26 Mr. Ruggere reported that there have been over a dozen mediation meetings over the past seven
27 months. He stated that the process begins with a referral by the administration or teacher. The
28 peer mediation leaders, guidance counselors Liz Fritz and Tim Geary, would then meet with the
29 students in conflict separately or as part of an initial screening before the mediation. They would
30 then choose peer mediators not in the same grade as the students in conflict or not friends with the
31 students to avoid conflict of interest. Next, Ms. Fritz or Mr. Geary would inform the mediators
32 about the situation and have them review their training prior to commencing the mediation. He
33 said the ultimate goal of the mediation is to have the conflicting parties come to an agreement that
34 states the terms they agree to follow. He stated the mediation has seemed to be productive and
35 they hope to recruit more peer mediators next year.
36

37 ***Developmental Designs***

38 Andrew Patterson, spoke about Developmental Designs, which is a continuation of the
39 Responsive Classroom and addresses the needs of the Middle School student. He stated that
40 twenty teachers were trained on its implementation in the classroom and the school. He
41 acknowledged Rebecca Weber who trained with him and was assisting with the presentation
42 tonight.
43

44 Mr. Patterson stated that Developmental Designs is community centered and classroom learning
45 centered. He said the five components of Developmental Designs are building relationships,
46 building social skills, engaged learning, responsible independence and adult teamwork. He stated
47 that trust facilitates learning. He said the program stresses avoiding removal from the classroom
48 because then student is removed from learning. He then reviewed how these components are
49 effectively implemented in the classroom.
50

1 Mr. Patterson stated that Developmental Designs fits into the Middle School well because there is
2 already a strong community based environment at the school. He said community building is
3 furthered through the team model. He stated that active learning is encouraged by administrators
4 and students get multiple opportunities to engage in their learning.

5
6 Mr. Patterson stated that ideally, to fully implement the program, the Middle School should
7 provide training for all teachers. He said they recommend establishing a school-wide “buddy
8 room” system for teachers to use as a disciplinary measure when working with students, and the
9 staff should adopt the program’s “common language”.

10
11 Mr. Roberts asked about how individual student issues are addressed at team meetings. Mr.
12 Patterson said he and Sue Lyons came up with the idea of creating action plans. He said they
13 were dealing with some difficult students and decided to have these students outline a behavior
14 plan that is modeled in the affirmative. Ms. Weber said it is important for the student to take
15 ownership of the problem. Mr. Roberts asked how the parental component works. Mr. Patterson
16 said the adult community and teamwork is part of it. He said parents were not included in the
17 training, but the parent receives the checklist and a letter of explanation of the three pronged
18 approach to solving the behavior problem. Mr. Ruggere commented that beginning this program
19 next year at the beginning of the school year should help with the program’s success.

20
21 Ms. Connolly asked if parents at the Middle School are aware of the contract. Mr. Patterson said
22 his team came up with it for their specific students. Ms. Connolly said parents should be made
23 aware of developing problems.

24
25 Ms. Connolly asked if this program is part of the professional development scheduled for next
26 year. Ms. Kelly said they are trying to train another twenty teachers at the Middle School and
27 elementary level. She said they can train five for free through a Northeastern agreement and
28 would have five more trained as well. She said the challenge is it is a full week of training. They
29 had a training for Middle School teachers in March and arranged for coverage of their classes so
30 they could attend. She said the goal is to train two people from each team. Mr. Patterson said
31 modeling is a big part of the training. He said at the end of the week it was amazing to see how
32 well they were developing these skills. Ms. Weber said the teachers being trained were initially
33 skeptical, but ended up buying into it and it is really working.

34
35 Ms. Connolly worried about implementation without full training. Mr. Patterson said it could be
36 done in small steps. He said the kids are excited to make progress looking at their action plans.

37
38 Ms. Rudolphsen said the teachers trained at the elementary level worked with and trained other
39 teachers about the components of the program and its activities and went through a modified
40 version of training. She said the trained teachers offered to let the other teachers to observe their
41 classroom for any of the pieces, which has helped to make it successful.

42
43 Ms. Matthews asked about impact of program on bad behavior outside of the classroom. Mr.
44 Patterson said the students are exposed to modeled behavior for these issues right away and rules
45 and expectations are made known.

46
47 Ms. Lally said part of the program is using common language. She said the teachers say to the
48 students, “remind me”, as an example and they set common expectations. They model behavior
49 on the playground and the assistants working in the classroom use it in the lunchroom and at
50 recess. She said it takes time.

51

1 Ms. Matthews asked how they would be able to measure the success of the programs. She said
2 the School Committee has received sample discipline logs and wondered where the discrepancy
3 would end. Ms. Lally said that Ms. Gaudreau came into a classroom which had been built as a
4 positive environment and she commented that every student was behaved. She said there is a
5 decrease in the discipline problems. Ms. Rudolphsen said the teachers are on board and trying to
6 deal behavior issues within the classroom using the discipline model offered by Responsive
7 Classroom. She said the program is just beginning. Mr. Patterson added that the buddy program
8 would help. He said he talks to students about their behavior plans and this keeps them on track,
9 and this helps them take responsibility.

10
11 Ms. Connolly remarked on peer mediation. She said sometimes students are tougher on their
12 peers than the administrators. It would be interesting to see the results.

13
14 Laurie Reisner spoke about bullying. She said she has worked with the administration to address
15 this issue and reached out to parents. She said there has not been consistency in the district and
16 bullying cannot be tolerated. She stated that research found that bullying can lead to suicide,
17 known as “bullycide”. She said they need to provide children with a safe environment in which
18 to learn. She urged administrators to take a stand against all kinds of bullying and urged parents
19 to speak up. She stated parents should contact central administration if their issue is not resolved.
20 She said she is happy about some of the developments, but they need to keep working.

21
22 Ms. Doe thanked her for her comments. She said that if a parent feels an issue is not being
23 addressed to please bring it to the attention of central administration. She said they would be
24 responsive. She said that addressing it immediately is the most effective way to combat it.

25
26 There was a short break.

27 28 **SUPERINTENDENT’S GOALS**

29 This item was addressed under Items For Next Agenda.

30 31 **DISCUSSION – DESIGNATING NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL** 32 **FOR STATION 250**

33 Ms. Driscoll stated that the committee has a recommendation on designating the neighborhood
34 school for the new development known as Station 250 from the Superintendent. She this
35 evening’s discussion would be facilitated by Ms. Matthews.

36
37 Ms. Doe stated the administrators are pleased to see the parents here to express their concern
38 about the placement of these students. She said they would listen carefully to the concerns and
39 would consider the factual information that will help them reach a decision. She assured them
40 that for the past two years the administrative team has looked at student enrollment in every class
41 in every grade. She said the School Department historically has been responsive to changes in
42 enrollments, up or down. She said she did not anticipate anything different in the way they go
43 about their recommendations, and their interest is in the best education of all students in the
44 district, individually and as a whole.

45
46 Ms. Doe stated that Jefferson Place has not exceeded its anticipated enrollment. She said two
47 years ago they began looking at exactly what the Fairfield development would add to
48 enrollments, and they were worried about Oakdale. She pointed out that the school has 90 more
49 students than any of the other elementary schools. She said it is an additional burden on extra
50 services, such as nursing, special education, and the climate at the school in general. She said it is
51 reasonable to consider this in making the decision about where to place the new students.

1
2 Ms. Doe stated that data points regarding schools have been distributed. She emphasized that as
3 administrators they want to know what the specific concerns are and to use factual information to
4 come to an equitable solution. She stated they could not be capricious. The students' education
5 is their job and what they work on every day.

6
7 Ms. Doe stated that enrollment sheets have been distributed as well. She noted a shift in
8 enrollment at Greenlodge in Grade 1. She said they would be adding another grade one
9 classroom next year to address this. She stated they are anticipating a half dozen elementary
10 students from Station 250 next year and the recommendation has been to assign these students to
11 Greenlodge.

12
13 Ms. Matthews offered a frame for the discussion. She repeated the facts that she has. She stated
14 she has visited Jefferson and Station 250. Her last conversation with Station 250 was at 4:30 this
15 afternoon. She stated Station 250 will have 285 rental units. The development will begin renting
16 in July. There will be nine phases, with 6 to 8 weeks between phases. She said that 25% of the
17 development, or 71 units, are designated for affordable housing per Chapter 40B. She stated
18 phase nine would happen at the end of calendar year 2009.

19
20 Ms. Matthews stated that at this point in time using state guidelines, they are projecting
21 somewhere in the mid twenties of school aged to reside there. She stated that looking at Jefferson
22 as a comparison it is at 93% capacity with 300 units. This development was predicted to bring
23 approximately 25 students and there are 24 students currently enrolled from that address. She
24 stated they came reasonably close to their projections and it is reasonable to expect similar
25 numbers from 250's projection, which is 22 students. She said it is reasonable to assume 6 to 7
26 elementary students, but they could have up to 13 students at the elementary level depending on
27 the occupancy of the three bedroom units.

28
29 Ms. Matthews said the immediate concern is the short term decision of assigning students for the
30 fall. She said the other issue is the new elementary school. She said that Avery is firmly in the
31 pipeline for development and they do not want to jeopardize that. She said they do not know if
32 they have a school yet and therefore commenting on the rebalancing of the schools is somewhat
33 dependent on that time frame. She reiterated the short term versus long term aspects of the
34 process. She also said the parents' input is valuable. She said the committee is in listening mode
35 tonight and no decision would be made.

36
37 Mr. Ryan asked if the data points were the work of the administration. Ms. Matthews said she
38 worked on it in collaboration with the administration. Ms. Doe stated the data points use 2002
39 data from the DOE and the Master Plan. She stated the administration has analyzed the issue
40 thoroughly. She noted that in 2002 the use of classroom space may have been different. She said
41 they should appreciate that there was no library at the Oakdale School then. She also noted that
42 there are special education uses of the space now that may have been regular education space.

43
44 Mr. Ryan asked if there were really 24 classrooms. He said that Principal Cummings said there
45 are 19. Ms. Matthews said that she put the data points together for her benefit and this evolved
46 with the administration. She said she used publicly accessible data. Ms. Doe said Greenlodge
47 has 17 regular education classrooms and three full size, special education classrooms. Ms. Kelly
48 clarified the numbers on data sheet for him.

49
50 Ms. Flatley said she was given a lot of information about station 250 as a Finance Committee
51 member. She stated 6% of the development was to be three bedrooms, which would be 17 units,

1 25% of which would be made affordable according to state guidelines. She said the ratio is
2 approximately eight to ten children per 100 units. The lawyer for the property said the zoning
3 permit shows a range of 22-28.
4

5 A parent stated she found an error in the Greenlodge data points and said the 2002 data is
6 outdated. She stated the enrollment sheet shows current and projected enrollment and noted
7 Riverdale and Oakdale are staying the same and Avery is down 10% and Greenlodge is up 10%.
8 She asked if the numbers include the Station 250 enrollments. Ms. Matthews said no. The parent
9 said there is a 10% increase before talking about the project. Ms. La Francesca said there is a
10 teacher being added to address the increase in first grade.
11

12 Ms. Matthews said she used 2002 data because it is the most recent information available and
13 buildings do not change, the only exception being the addition of the library at Oakdale. In this
14 case, the total classrooms increased from 23 to 24.
15

16 Beth Wolfson said the data points are not helpful. Michelle Hache also noted Greenlodge has the
17 highest class size. She said that even with an additional teacher they would still have the highest
18 class size.
19

20 Michelle Labadini stated that Greenlodge parents attended the April 30 School Committee
21 meeting to advocate for an additional teacher. At that meeting, there had been no mention of
22 adding students to the school. She stated the issue was raised and debated at the May 14 meeting.
23 She stated she is opposed to placement at Greenlodge for several reasons. She said the school is
24 at full capacity; it has three classes at each grade, and takes in out of district students. She said
25 that prior to adding Station 250 there should be verification that students are attending their
26 neighborhood school. She further stated Avery and Oakdale are closer and the class size at
27 Greenlodge exceeds Oakdale and Avery. She noted that according to the enrollment summary,
28 the enrollments are going up. She felt that the new students should attend the school with the
29 smallest class size. She concluded by stating that Station 250 is looking to entertain families.
30 She does not want the development to be redistricted to Greenlodge.
31

32 Ms. Connolly said she was on the committee for this development and there had not been a
33 playground on the plan.
34

35 A parent asked how they could project the numbers; a three bedroom could potentially have six
36 children. Ms. Flatley said the ratios work and it is not unreasonable to assume that the
37 projections are inaccurate. She also stated they were told there would be lease restrictions on the
38 three bedroom units.
39

40 A parent asked why Avery and Riverdale are not being considered.
41

42 Ms. Doe answered that it is established locally and at the state level that Avery is an inappropriate
43 educational space. She said the administrative team would not recommend putting the students
44 into this school. Ms. Doe added that it would not be reasonable to transport the students across
45 town to Riverdale. She said that was not reasonable when you have comparable schools in
46 Greenlodge and Oakdale. She said there is space at these schools.
47

48 A parent also asked about the potential for students to be attending out of district schools. Ms.
49 Doe said the School Department is aggressive about pursuing residency checks. She said prior to
50 two years ago the policy was to accommodate out of district enrollment requests if possible. She
51 said they have tried to keep these out of district students at the elementary schools to finish their

1 education. She stated that if students are not residents or in their neighborhood school they would
2 look into it and use school resources officer and attendance officer to check. The parent said she
3 did not want the students from the development going to Greenlodge.

4
5 A parent asked if there was a place that they could review district boundaries. Ms. Doe said the
6 current boundaries are not on the web site, but they could work with the Town to do that. This
7 parent asked whether students on education plans have been evaluated to make sure the
8 assignments are ratio compatible. Ms. Matthews said that she cannot provide individual student
9 data. She added that only professional staff was included in the numbers she provided.

10
11 A parent asked about the low numbers in the special education classes. Mr. Campbell explained
12 that two grades are combined with one teacher. Ms. Doe said there are 15 teachers this year at
13 Greenlodge and 15 next year.

14
15 David Silver said he was confused about the classroom numbers listed on the data sheet. Ms.
16 Doe stated that there are 17 full size regular education classrooms and 3 full size special
17 education classrooms.

18
19 An Oakdale parent suggested reallocating classroom use and suggested too much space is used
20 for special education. Mr. Campbell clarified that there are two district wide programs at
21 Greenlodge, two at Oakdale and three at Avery. He said they are at every building. A parent
22 suggested sending the new students from the development to Riverdale since it only has one
23 program. St. Mary's and the former administration building were also cited as other options to
24 consider.

25
26 Ms. Doe stated that Oakdale has 22 full sized classrooms, 21 regular education and 1 special
27 education. She said they are using instructional space at Avery that is not full size.

28
29 Jill Jones asked why they were not considering splitting up the new students. She thought other
30 variables were not being included, such as special education service needs and language barriers.

31
32 A Greenlodge parent noted that Riverdale is not changing in class size. She also said that the
33 prediction of a half dozen elementary students is irresponsible. She further stated that the bus
34 excuse does not wash for her. Ms. Doe answered that they have discussed potential solutions to
35 this issue. She said they looked at the data projections for Jefferson, which were accurate. She
36 said they are research based predictions and it is reasonable to go with the projection as opposed
37 to worrying about an enrollment spike that is not based on fact. She reiterated that the district is
38 responsive to changing class sizes.

39
40 Answering to the bus issue, Ms. Doe said she spoke to legal counsel and was advised that the
41 decision cannot be capricious or arbitrary, which means they cannot put these students at all
42 different schools. She said Riverdale is not reasonable, nor does the school have the room.

43
44 Ms. Janet McNeil said they bus from Riverdale to the ECEC, the Middle School and the High
45 School. She did not feel it was impossible to put the new students at Riverdale. Ms. Matthews
46 replied that legal counsel advised that capricious or arbitrary decisions should not be made, and
47 the longer distance can be viewed as discriminatory. Ms. Doe said that Riverdale students are
48 only bused to regional schools.

49
50 Ms. Mercer asked to clarify affordable versus low income. Ms. Flatley said 40B is affordable.
51 Ms. Mercer stated that affordable means that income is 80% of the median; it is not public

1 housing. She said there is no reason to believe that the students will all be special education
2 students. She said they have the Jefferson students at Oakdale and they all speak English. She
3 said the both developments are ¼ mile closer to Greenlodge. She further stated she has not heard
4 of an overcrowding problem at Greenlodge and mentioned that until this year both the music and
5 art programs traveled from classroom to classroom at Oakdale. She said there is not extra room
6 and their classrooms are smaller. She said it is reasonable to split the developments between two
7 schools. She does not agree they should be sent across town. She said they are their neighbors
8 and the children deserve an education. She also mentioned that both developments were not
9 considered to be residentially zoned. It was industrial space.

10
11 Mr. Healy cautioned the discussion participants about their comments without legal counsel
12 present. He stated that regardless of their income they are members of the community.

13
14 A parent asked why Riverdale and Avery were not options. She said both Greenlodge and
15 Oakdale are at capacity. She does not think the situation would make those assignments
16 capricious. She pointed out that the students would still be going to a different school than the
17 students from Jefferson and adjacent residential streets. She said the classroom sizes at Avery
18 might be more appropriate. Ms. Matthews said Avery has the smallest square footage of
19 classroom space.

20
21 Ms. Doe said redistricting would be considered as they look to the future with the new Avery
22 School. She stated they would be updating the master plan and seeking an equitable distribution
23 of the student population. She said it is not possible to simply redistrict everyone for September.
24 She said they would ultimately make a recommendation to adjust districts starting with Avery
25 School once it is built. She said that not every one is going to be happy, but they are making
26 decisions based on what is best for the students at these schools. She said the designation of a
27 neighborhood school for Station 250 must be addressed for September and the larger picture
28 would come later.

29
30 John Rice asked not to include special education classes in determination of class size. He said
31 the low class sizes at Greenlodge are due to special education. Ms. Matthews said the projections
32 are actual class sizes for next year and the special education students are removed.

33
34 Brian Keaney asked where the enrollment projection data comes from. Ms. Matthews said they
35 are actual enrollments, not projections. She said the other enrollment data comes from the DOE.
36 Mr. Keaney asked why the enrollment study was not done over the summer as stated it would be
37 and why redistricting was not done. Ms. Matthews answered that the process for Avery was not
38 known a year ago and they have clearer guidelines now. She said they are working in concert
39 with the School Building Rehabilitation Committee and their work on the project is beginning.
40 Mr. Keaney said they knew Station 250 was going to happen and they should have been more
41 responsive. Ms. Driscoll responded that last year they thought the Baron project was coming
42 online, as well, and that is why it was so urgent then. She said they also thought Station 250 was
43 opening in March.

44
45 A parent who already spoke asked about the increase in fifth grade. Ms. Doe said they are
46 watching the enrollment and, looking at it across the district, there are similar numbers. The
47 parent asked if they would lose grade 1 teacher if they needed additional grade 5 support. Ms.
48 Doe answered no, that grade 1 is a priority. The parent also asked how they would be kept
49 abreast of the enrollment and School Committee decisions over the summer.

50

1 Ms. Matthews answered that they would notify parents of any changes. She also noted that the
2 committee members' numbers were on the website. Ms. Doe said there would be direct parent
3 contact is through Connect-ED and the press.
4

5 A parent who already spoke asked when they would be deciding on a fourth first grade teacher
6 for Greenlodge. Ms. Matthews said the Budget Subcommittee would have to look at it first. The
7 parent asked about the decision on the development. Ms. Driscoll said the committee would
8 discuss it at the June 11 meeting and ultimately take a vote on the matter.
9

10 Mrs. Walko reminded everyone that this development began years ago with the Zoning Board
11 and the Planning Board. She said a half dozen members religiously attended these meetings. She
12 said School Committee members also attended to advocate for a reduction of apartments. She
13 admonished those present that then was the time to get involved.
14

15 Ms. Doe stated that they would make arrangements to contact parents and students to meet with
16 the new first grade teacher once that is finalized.
17

18 Mark Riley, Greenlodge parent, said he was happy to see consideration of the capacity of the
19 buildings. He said there were some assumptions built into the numbers and he would appreciate a
20 more accurate assessment of the facilities' capacities. He suggested the special education classes
21 be removed from the data sheet and the sq. footage of the spaces added.
22

23 Ms. Matthews said she started the datasheet on her own and she tried to stay away from
24 subjective decision making. She said she used publicly available data and drew her conclusions,
25 which she then shared with administration. She said the headcount analysis was added based on a
26 PTO question. She said they could re-look at room use.
27

28 Mr. Silver asked who is responsible for finding out what federal funding is available. Mr.
29 Campbell said federal and state funding is distributed based on census information and free and
30 reduced lunch figures. Mr. Silver suggested that potential qualifying families be identified. Ms.
31 Doe said they do aggressively pursue this.
32

33 Ms. Matthews credited Mr. Campbell and Mr. La Francesca for getting an additional \$264,000
34 from the state in special education funding by being vigilant about funding opportunities. She
35 stated the Avery project is top on the state's list because of this type of attention to detail.
36

37 Mr. Ryan commented he understood the aim of administration and the position of several School
38 Committee members, but that he is uncomfortable with the process. He felt the decision to move
39 Station 250 was made and they were now backfilling the data to justify it. He thought there
40 should be studies and analyses to use to make the decision. He stated Treasurer Cahill was
41 quoted in the paper that because of tight fiscal affairs no community is going to be allowed to
42 build a school that exceeds the capacity of the existing school. He said it would be the same
43 structure with the same number of kids, only bigger and better.
44

45 Mr. Ryan stated that redistricting should not be a two part phasing. He said they should do it now
46 because temporary solutions become permanent solutions. He said he has been on the School
47 Committee for seven years and they have always stressed the importance of neighborhood
48 schools and low class sizes. He said it is what parents want and taxpayers support. He stated that
49 Greenlodge has higher class sizes than other schools even with an additional teacher. He said it
50 also has a higher percentage of special education services.
51

1 Mr. Ryan said the proposal does not make educational sense to him. He felt these principles were
2 still important and urged the committee not to make expedient decisions. He said shifting the
3 burden is not a sound educational decision. He said the proposal should not be based on the
4 interest of one school; it should be a comprehensive plan for the benefit of the entire district. He
5 asked for reconsideration of the proposed plan. He said he would like a well reasoned,
6 comprehensive redistricting plan for every school aged children in town.
7

8 Ms. Flatley said she wants to know where the open spaces are before they give this further
9 consideration.
10

11 Ms. Connolly said she would look at the data. She said she would try to make the best decision.
12

13 Ms. Driscoll thanked everyone for coming and said they appreciated their comments. She stated
14 that regardless of where the students are assigned, one school is being pitted against another. She
15 said the question is whether Greenlodge can sustain the increase. She questioned whether any
16 one school could handle both developments. She said they may have to make the decision
17 without redistricting or a five year plan, although redistricting is going to take place. She also
18 stated that a larger Avery could be built. She said by changing the district lines they can build
19 increased enrollment into the projection. She said they could also add specialized classrooms.
20 She emphasized that there is a process to be followed to redistrict.
21

22 Mr. Healy said that no matter what is decided there can very easily be two different
23 neighborhoods sitting in the audience at another time. He does not want a repeat of tonight
24 simply because a different school is chosen.
25

26 Ms. Matthews said she interpreted Treasurer Cahill's comment as not paying for extras. She did
27 think there is an opportunity to expand. She said they want to balance the schools, which they
28 will have the opportunity to do with the new Avery School and some redistricting.
29

30 Ms. Matthews also agreed with Mr. Healy. She said the School Committee would listen to input
31 and make a decision on one building within six weeks.
32

33 **ACADEMIC REPORTING**

34 Ms. Driscoll said the committee is deciding on the implementation of the academic reporting
35 recommendations. She stated that Plan A is for just grade 9 next year and Plan B is for all grades.
36

37 Ms. Connolly stated that she, Ms. Chin, Ms. Totino and Ms. Widmaier have investigated how
38 colleges look at reporting. They worked diligently to call colleges to make their
39 recommendations. She stated that the data collected supported moving to a weighted GPA right
40 away. She stated that colleges do not recognize QPA. They make a weighted GPA on their own.
41 She said they found that changing to a weighted GPA would not have negative impact on the
42 students. She stated that some schools do not care about the weighted GPA because they do their
43 own, but all other schools said the transition should be noted. Specifically, a letter should be
44 attached to the transcript for the duration of the transition. Ms. Connolly recommended following
45 Plan B.
46

47 Ms. McCormick thanked the parents for their participation. She asked if the colleges have seen
48 this type of transition in transcripts. Ms. Widmaier replied that it is common. Ms. McCormick
49 asked if it has a negative impact. Ms. Widmaier replied there is no negative impact. She then
50 asked how they would deal with the transitional period. Ms. Widmaier replied there are various
51 ways, but the colleges did want attention called to the change.

1
2 Ms. McCormick said there are four pieces to the recommendation: the question of A+/A, which is
3 being recommended for all High School students beginning with the 2008-2009 school year and
4 would not affect prior grades; AP being weighted higher than honors, which would also begin in
5 September; class rank; and weighted GPA. She said the difference is that one proposal
6 recommends beginning the weighted GPA with only the incoming freshmen class and the other
7 offers the weighted GPA for all students beginning in September, which would create a hybrid
8 system. She said the complication is with the existing High School students who would have a
9 combined system resulting in an estimated weighted GPA. She stated that the QPA is not
10 reported to colleges now. It is only used to calculate class rank. She said class rank is reported to
11 colleges. She said the new system does not use all classes and there is no clean way to merge the
12 systems. She said all school districts surveyed only implemented the weighted GPA for the
13 incoming class for the reasons explained.

14
15 Mr. Roberts said the cleaner the transcript the better. He said colleges sanitize the transcripts.
16 Ms. McCormick has said the freshmen class would have the new system and the current grades
17 would have the old. Mr. Roberts asked if it was possible to still come up with solid GPA. Ms.
18 McCormick said they could only estimate the weighted GPA for the existing High School
19 students. Ms. McCormick said it would be a dual system. All students would get an un-weighted
20 and a weighted GPA and they would only report the weighted if it gives the student an advantage.

21
22 Mr. Healy asked what towns were looked at. Ms. McCormick said they looked at several
23 systems. She said one of districts under revision, Norwood, is implementing their weighted GPA
24 with the incoming class.

25
26 Ms. Connolly worried that students would not be looked on favorably without the change. She
27 said the colleges said there is no negative impact with the hybrid situation. She added that two
28 colleges recommended it be done retroactively.

29
30 Mr. Ryan asked if they have numerical grades that could be converted. Ms. Connolly said
31 parents on committee would have liked to see that happen, but they cannot get that. Mr. Ryan
32 said his concern is without number grades there would be some estimating involved. He asked
33 whether a student be impacted negatively were the committee to opt for Plan B. Ms. Driscoll said
34 that was a potential and they did not want to negatively impact the students. He wondered if it
35 would impact rank. Ms. Doe said it does.

36
37 Ms. Connolly pointed out that the High School handbook notes that the grading system is under
38 review. She supported having an accurate reflection now. Ms. McCormick said the question is
39 when it gets changed. She supports the idea philosophically, but thinks it is fairest to establish
40 the parameters at the beginning. They should not change mid stream for existing students.

41
42 Ms. Flatley said there is perceived controversy on weighting AP and honors. She asked if
43 colleges determine the potential GPA. Ms. Doe said colleges determine their own GPA and all
44 do it differently. Ms. McCormick said that they are striving for something the students can
45 understand.

46
47 Mr. Roberts asked the Superintendent for her recommendation. Ms. Doe said there has been a
48 thorough study done and they do not support meshing the two systems. She said the
49 administration supports beginning with this with the freshmen. She said meshing does not
50 provide a mathematically definitive way of determining GPA.

51

1 Ms. Driscoll called attention to the fact that the recommendation to end class rank junior year was
2 abandoned.

3
4 Mr. Murray said meshing two systems might produce many unanticipated permutations which
5 could be very difficult to address. He supported the cleanest possible way of implementation,
6 which is with the incoming freshmen class.

7
8 Mr. Winrow stated that the transcripts have been changed to reflect only the final grades. He said
9 it made for a cleaner, more concise transcript. He also supported maintaining a unified system.

10
11 Ms. Matthews asked if the A+ and A- is set and if they could vote on its implementation in 2008.
12 She was informed they could. She asked if weighting AP higher than honors could be voted. The
13 committee was prepared to vote on that with a 2008 implementation date. Ms. Matthews then
14 asked about the weighted GPA. Ms. McCormick said the committee voted to table
15 implementation, but has agreed to implement it. Ms. Matthews asked if the table was revised to
16 reflect the committee's input. Ms. McCormick said it was. Ms. Matthews asked where that could
17 be found. Ms. McCormick pointed to the tables. She stated Plan A was proposed for the Class of
18 2012 next year and Plan B was proposed in response to feedback from the committee. She said
19 the School Committee needs to decide which plan to implement. She said the weighted chart
20 could still be considered.

21
22 Ms. Matthews asked if the administration was uniformly against meshing the weighted GPA with
23 the QPA. She was informed that was the case. The administration recommends weighting only
24 for the Class of 2012.

25
26 Ms. Matthews asked how weighing AP higher than honors would impact QPA. She was
27 informed that the QPA would be revised to accommodate that. Mr. Winrow said there would
28 have to be columns added to transcripts for A+ and AP.

29
30 Ms. Widmaier said some parents support the mesh and wondered if the possibility existed to
31 calculate the GPA manually. Ms. McCormick said on paper or on computer it is still
32 retroactively applying a new system to old grades. Ms. Widmaier said that the weighted system
33 would make parents happier. Ms. McCormick said the original plan was to implement everything
34 with 2012. She said she has to advocate for all students.

35
36 Ms. Driscoll remarked there has been misperception that the parents are advocating for individual
37 students. She said that the committee could delay a vote until they have something in front of
38 them that is clearer. Ms. McCormick reviewed the matters to be vote.

39
40 Mr. Ryan moved, seconded by Mr. Healy, and it was

41
42 **VOTED:** to implement the change of a higher weighted AP, adding an A+ and changing the
43 point value of the A range for all grades beginning in September 2008.

44
45 Ms. Driscoll stated that part two is the implementation of Plan A or B. She said that Plan A is
46 implementing the weighted GPA for incoming freshmen. She said that the recommendation line
47 about class rank ending in junior year would be deleted.

48
49 Ms. Connolly asked about the allocation change. Ms. Driscoll answered that that section is for
50 review.

51

1 Ms. Matthews said she was inclined to move to postpone vote on this section. Ms. Connolly
2 asked that any reference to class rank be changed to reflect the continuation through grade 12.
3 Ms. McCormick said those changes would be made. Ms. Doe said the administration supports
4 that.

5
6 Mr. Ryan moved, seconded by Ms. Matthews, to accept Plan A, which would implement a
7 weighted GPA for the incoming class, and chart three is removed. Mr. Ryan, Ms. Matthews, and
8 Mr. Healy voted yes. The others did not vote.

9
10 Mr. Roberts asked for clarification of Plan A. Ms. Matthews said it was not clear to her before
11 that administration unanimously supported Plan A.

12
13 Mrs. Walko said the focus should be the students, not on the work this would create for teachers.
14 Ms. Matthews said the administration's recommendation gives her pause. Mr. Roberts said he is
15 not prepared to vote based on this discussion.

16
17 Mr. Murray said it is not about work or data conversion. He said this concerns assumptions about
18 rules and regulations students came to the High School with. He recommended they remain
19 consistent through the end of their High School career.

20
21 Ms. Driscoll said this would be put on the June 11 agenda. She asked Ms. McCormick to put
22 together something the committee can look at to vote.

23 24 **MINUTES**

25 Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Ms. Connolly, and it was

26
27 **VOTED:** to accept the May 14, 2008 minutes.

28 29 **DONATIONS**

30 There were none.

31 32 **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

33 Ms. Driscoll said the next agenda would include committee discussion on Station 250 and a final
34 vote on academic reporting.

35
36 Ms. Flatley asked to hear from the adjustment counselors at some point.

37
38 Ms. Doe said there would be student recognition for their participation in the math league and a
39 report by the Math Curriculum Committee.

40
41 Ms. Driscoll stated the Superintendent's goals were passed out to the committee. It is a draft. She
42 asked that questions be directed to Mr. Healy and Ms. Flatley and they will discuss them with the
43 Superintendent and vote them at the next meeting. Mr. Healy stated that the goals were
44 developed with the input of the Superintendent.

45
46 Mr. Healy moved, seconded by Mr. Roberts, and it was

47
48 **VOTED:** to adjourn.