

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—May 14, 2008**  
**Lower Conference Room, Town Hall**

**PRESENT**

**Tracy Driscoll, Chair**  
**Margaret Matthews, Vice Chair**  
**David Roberts**  
**Thomas Ryan** (7:25 PM)  
**Joanne Flatley**  
**John Healy**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**June M. Doe, Superintendent**  
**Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent**  
**Christopher Campbell, Asst. Superintendent**  
**Michael La Francesca, Business Manager**  
**Timothy Ruggere, Principal**  
**Jacob Santamaria, Assistant Principal**  
**Andrew Boles, Assistant Principal**

**Convened: 7:00 PM**

**Adjourned: 8:55 PM**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Ms. Doe requested a moment of silence to recognize Jim Police, a former physical education teacher at Dedham High School, who passed away after a lengthy illness.

Ms. Doe announced that tonight is the third annual film festival and Scully Awards at Dedham High School.

Ms. Doe announced that Spring Cleanup Day, which was postponed last week, would be held on Saturday, May 16, from 9 AM to 2 PM. She stated the Boosters Club will provide lunch.

Ms. Doe reviewed the High School MCAS schedule for the next two weeks. She stated the Junior/Senior prom would be held on Friday, May 23 at Luciano's in Wrentham. Senior class evening would be June 2 and graduation would be June 4.

Ms. Doe addressed the recent attention YCN transportation has received and stated that administration has had a serious discussion with the company about it. She stated the driver involved in Brookline has never driven for Dedham. She said the School Department has requested current CORIs to ensure all of YCN's drivers are cleared to drive children. She stated concerned parents could call her office.

Ms. Doe announced that May 17, from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Dedham Middle School would host a car wash to benefit its athletic program. She stated that the community's support would be appreciated.

Ms. Doe congratulated Principal Alan Winrow who has been offered an administrative position at Mashpee High School. She asked parents, community members, and teachers to provide input on what they would value in the next principal and goals they have for the High School. She asked that comments be forwarded to her assistant. She stated the administrative team would also be seeking input from students at the High School.

**CHAIR'S UPDATE**

Ms. Driscoll shared the thank you notes from the students that participated in Student Government Day with the committee.

Ms. Driscoll said the committee has been attending PTO meetings to explain the budget and staffing concerns parents have. Members have visited Avery and Oakdale and would be addressing Greenlodge and the Middle School tomorrow. She stated the Avery PTO meeting is the 20<sup>th</sup>, which also happens to be the evening the National Honor Society induction is being held.

#### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S UPDATE**

Miss Chen was absent.

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Driscoll read a letter from Ms. Cecilia Butler at Ms. Butler's request. The letter addressed Ms. Butler's disapproval of the proposed library/media specialist cuts. She said this is a huge step backwards for the district and is worried that students will fall behind in state technology standards as a result of the cuts. She asked the committee to please reconsider this decision.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS**

There was none.

#### **PLATO DATA RESULTS**

Mr. Boles introduced Gary Kaplan and Ryan Camare, representing JFY Networks. Mr. Kaplan began with a brief overview of JFY Networks. He stated that JFY is a non profit based in Boston that has been in business since 1976. He said the organization offers computerized academic support and is currently supporting 38 high and middle schools around the Commonwealth. He said they work with a few community agencies as well. He stated that they would have 10,000 children in the program this year. He said that JFY is supported by a state grant which allows them to offer the program at 15% of its cost.

Mr. Kaplan said that with the Plato software program they can closely track the progress of a student, adapt to individual learning, and provide instant feedback. He said the core of the program is the human resources support, which in this case is provided to the schools by Ryan Camare. Mr. Kaplan said the software is great, but if it is not used properly it will not have the intended result. He said Mr. Camare works with teachers to help them utilize the software and to incorporate it into their curriculum. He said the program results are consistent and students participating in this program show marked improvement. He said some schools use the program to support remedial students and some use it to support their advanced students. He said it does not replace teachers; it is a support for them.

Mr. Boles said that they have identified students with needs and are using Plato to offer remediation with the time they have available. He explained how Plato corresponds with the frameworks and can be tailored to address weaknesses through individual student item analysis. He reviewed an example of framework based instruction and what JFY Networks offers the student for the standard and strand through the Plato program. He said Plato is aligned to MCAS and shows the standard, strand, and modules student will encounter.

Mr. Boles said they begin by first assessing the student's knowledge and the benchmark for mastery is 80%. He stated the program offers a self paced tutorial. The students listen to the lesson on headphones and progress to the mastery level test and either pass or receive further instruction on the topic. He provided the committee with an illustration of a question a student might be presented to solve. He said the question appears as it would on an MCAS test. Mr. Ruggere added that some of these are used by teachers in their classroom instruction.

Mr. Ryan arrived at 7:25 PM.

Mr. Boles presented a condensed Plato report for the 244 students that have used the program. He noted it shows the activities, tries, time on task, tasks completed and topics mastered. He said the data allows them to address areas of weakness. Ms. Matthews asked for clarification of mastery versus completion. Mr. Camare said tutorials can be completed but they do not require mastery; there are separate mastery tests. Mr. Boles said a student cannot move on without mastering the topic.

Mr. Boles showed an individualized student report with item analysis and comparison with the state average. He said the information is utilized to direct learning. Ms. Doe stated that this information can be used by the teacher to augment lessons.

Mr. Boles showed an example of what a student has done throughout the year using this program. The report showed every activity the student has done, times tried, time on task, completion date, mastery date, and current score. He noted there is also an ELA component. He pointed out that the test shows how much time in total has been spent on the program by the student. He stated the sample student has completed 83 tasks, mastered 76, and is doing well.

Mr. Healy asked if the time dedicated to Plato is in addition to regular instruction. Mr. Boles said this is additional time on task over the regular curriculum. He stated they are identifying those most in need and working with them. He said students on the honors track have also been exposed to prepare them for high school curriculum. Mr. Camare said JFY likes to have a strong base of teachers knowledgeable with the program and students using it to its capacity, which is why it is not yet being used by everyone.

Ms. Flatley asked how many honors students use it. Mr. Boles said there is a fair number that do. She asked if all three grades are using it. Mr. Boles said it is being used in grades 6 through 8. Ms. Doe said the students on ISSPs are using this program.

Mr. Roberts asked if staff and administrators share the information. Mr. Boles said they do. Mr. Roberts asked if it is shared with parents. Mr. Boles said that parents can and have asked for information and reports are sent home. He asked if the parents are aware of the tool. Mr. Boles answered that letters were sent home to parents in advance of instituting it.

Mr. Kaplan said that looking at the data and hearing about what the program does sounds tedious and boring, but the students see something completely different. He said they have fun with it and really get into the tutorials. Ms. Kelly agreed that the concepts are brought alive by the program.

Ms. Matthews asked if Plato is used outside of the classroom only. Mr. Boles said the teachers do use it in the classroom and there are also support classes in the morning before school. Mr. Camare said the teachers can align the program to their texts.

Ms. Matthews asked if teachers actively look at trends and can shift the focus to address weak areas. Mr. Boles said they do use item analysis graphs for both individual students and classes to address the issues. He mentioned that students take advantage of the program during school hours and after school as well.

Ms. Matthews asked how long before the program is fully implemented. Mr. Boles said they intend to keep working towards that.

Ms. Matthews asked if they plan to utilize the program beyond the 37% they have now. Mr. Boles said the goal is to reach all students, but it is important to do in manageable steps. Mr. Camare said positive word of mouth by teachers helps to expand the program in a meaningful way.

Ms. Flatley asked what the next targeted group is. Mr. Boles answered next year regular math and science teachers, additional administrators, and paraprofessionals. He said Mr. Camare will be able to work with staff on a weekly basis to get them trained.

Ms. Matthews asked when the grant runs out. Mr. Boles said they are applying for the grant next year.

Ms. Doe asked Mr. Camare about teacher feedback. Mr. Camare responded that the teachers love the program. He said they knew their students' weaknesses leading into MCAS and have directed their students' lessons to strengthen these areas. Ms. Driscoll asked if they would survey the teachers. Mr. Camare stated they would survey teachers and students.

Mr. Ryan asked if they could use this in 8<sup>th</sup> grade next year with the new curriculum. Ms. Doe said there is the potential to put this in place. Mr. Ruggere said this and other pieces could enhance the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Mr. Camare said he would be able to support that initiative.

Ms. Doe reiterated that the program is valuable because Mr. Camare is helping them utilize the data and understand what the program offers to students.

#### **ACADEMIC REPORTING**

Ms. Driscoll stated that Ms. Connolly has asked to postpone this agenda item until May 28. Ms. Driscoll asked the committee to look at the issue and try to address questions about the recommendation ahead of time with the guidance department.

Ms. Driscoll asked for an idea of what the transcript would look like. Ms. Doe said they might be able to have a sample of what this would look like.

Ms. Matthews stated the committee has been offered two options. She said the presentation of the recommended changes was two meetings ago and this presentation is an attempt to answer those questions. She said the committee would be voting on this matter at the next meeting.

Ms. Driscoll asked if a student could really get into another class at the add/drop deadline. Ms. Doe said that was possible and they typically try to substitute it with something of equal value. She asked if the course would be listed on the transcript as WP or WF. Ms. Doe said it would be listed on the transcript but would not be counted towards the GPA.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION**

Ms. Driscoll stated that she and Ms. Matthews have reviewed Superintendent Doe's evaluation with her prior to this meeting. She stated she would review each item in the evaluation. She began with the Superintendent's achievement of goals. She said there were four. The first was a facilities and operations goal. She received a 4 for the central administrative offices relocation to the High School and an N/A for addressing prospective usage/changes to Avery, Capen and Dexter Schools in the Master Plan. She reviewed some of the committee's comments including those on her leadership of the Avery project.

Ms. Driscoll stated goal number two related to teaching and learning. Ms. Doe was to initiate the drafting of a new strategic plan and district improvement plan, continue oversight of Math Curriculum Committee to address curriculum, instruction, assessment and improvement, initiate a Science Curriculum Committee, implement direct communication to all ESOL parents and collaborate with administrative council for common assessments in kindergarten to grade 12. She received a 3 for this goal. The Superintendent was complimented on her impressive initiatives, including the Academy Team and the Academic Recognition Dinner. She said they would like to have more information about the status of the curriculum committees and the ESOL goal. She said Ms. Doe will institute office hours for this purpose.

The third goal related to school communication. Ms. Doe received a 4. The committee noted she had a good working relationship with the members, but they would like more communication with parents.

The fourth goal related to professional development. Ms. Driscoll stated that Ms. Doe received a 3. Ms. Doe's focus on professional development was cited as a strength. Ms. Driscoll said the committee would like more information about how the professional development corresponds with district goals. It was also noted that Ms. Doe and her administrative team have a constant and heightened attendance at school functions and events in the community.

On her relationship with the School Committee, Supt. Doe received a 4 for communication, a 3+ for professional, proactive recommendations, and a 3+ for her professional relationship. Ms. Driscoll stated Ms. Doe received a 3 for her communication and community relations. For promotion of effective communication and interpersonal relationships within the School Department, she received a 3. For her effective communication among the schools and community, she received a 3. For her relations with unions on district-wide issues, she received a 4.

Under human resources management, the Superintendent received a 3 for School Committee notification of personnel changes as provided by law and policy. She received a 3+ for her recruiting and hiring. She received an N/A for her administrator oversight of personnel supervision, a 3 for being aware and responsive to employee morale, and a 3 for maintaining high standards for employee performance and retention. On policy and governance, Ms. Doe received a 3+ for encouraging participation in planning, procedures and policy interpretation. She received a 3+ for assisting in the formulation of district policy for external and internal programs.

In Business and Finance, Supt. Doe received a 4 for meeting regularly with administrative staff, a 3 for meeting regularly with the business manager, a 3 for providing timely information to the School Committee on ongoing construction projects and future infrastructure needs, and a 3 for providing timely information to the committee on the budget comparing budget to actual expenditures.

Ms. Driscoll stated the Superintendent is moving the district forward in the way they wanted to see and thanked her for her efforts. Mr. Ryan said the entire administrative team has worked well together over the past year. Ms. Matthews said it is clear that Ms. Doe is goal driven and she has a committed staff.

Ms. Driscoll stated that the committee would be postponing discussion of a salary increase because there is no money for general salary increases.

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL CHOICE**

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Ms. Flatley, and it was

**VOTED:** to open the public hearing on the question of school choice.

Ms. Driscoll stated the School Committee has to vote on whether the district will participate in school choice on an annual basis. Ms. Doe said Dedham historically has chosen not to participate in school choice due to limited space and the loss of money to the receiving district. She said she would recommend that the committee vote to decline to participate for the 2008-2009 school year.

There were no community members present to speak on this issue.

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Ms. Flatley, and it was

**VOTED:** to close the public hearing on school choice.

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Ms. Flatley, and it was

**VOTED:** by roll call to decline to participate in the school choice program for the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Roberts – yes, Mr. Healy – yes, Ms. Flatley – yes, Mr. Ryan – yes, Ms. Flatley – yes, and Ms. Driscoll – yes.

## **VNA AND TEC LEASES**

Mr. La Francesca stated that the VNA has a signed contract with Board of Selectmen for a one year extension. He said the only changes to the contract include a 10% cost increase due to utility increases and \$2,500 for snow removal. He stated the Town does not plow the property now that the School Department is no longer there. He said the School Committee needs to sign the lease extension.

Mr. La Francesca stated TEC would like the same terms as the VNA lease extension, but for a two year period. He said that he would not recommend the committee agree to more than one year. Ms. Driscoll asked if TEC would be willing to sign a contract for just one year. Mr. La Francesca said he thinks they would.

Mr. Ryan stated that the restrictions for leases at Dexter should be defined. Mr. La Francesca stated that only non-profits could utilize this space. He stated the organization would have to be directed towards an educational, religious or medical use.

Ms. Flatley asked how much the total lease is. Mr. La Francesca said he does not know the exact figure. He said TEC occupies the original space as well as the space vacated by the School Department.

Ms. Matthews said she understood the sensitivity of TEC's position, but the School Committee has to safeguard its rights and the potential use of the space for kindergarten.

Ms. Flatley said that it did not make sense to sign a one year lease with one organization and a two year with the other. Mr. La Francesca stated that the three year lease allows for a two year extension one year at a time. Ms. Doe said it is in the best interest of the district to work in yearly increments.

Ms. Matthews asked Mr. La Francesca what he thought about further increases. Mr. La Francesca replied that a 32% increase in utilities this year was unexpected and it would be impossible to say how much they might fluctuate in the coming year.

Mr. Roberts asked about VNA option number one. Mr. La Francesca said the second option is the VNA and TEC could take care of their own snow removal. He said they preferred to pay School Department to handle this service.

Mr. La Francesca said he would compose a letter that states the committee did not support a two year extension.

Mr. Healy said he would not sign VNA lease due to a conflict of interest.

Ms. Doe informed the committee that TEC has approached her for a special education program at the High School. Ms. Flatley asked if they have the room for it. Ms. Doe said they do.

#### **MINUTES**

Mr. Ryan moved, seconded by Ms. Flatley, and it was

**VOTED:** to accept the April 28, 2008 minutes.

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

**VOTED:** to accept the April 30, 2008 minutes.

#### **DONATIONS**

There were none.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Doe stated that next week is very first district wide art extravaganza featuring the work of kindergarten to grade 12 students. She said the community, all agencies in town government and other groups have been invited to come next Thursday evening. Ms. Doe said there would be refreshments and musical entertainment as well. She said the art staff has put significant work into this special project and commended them for their willingness to work with the administration to produce this. She particularly thanked Arlene Tracey and Jane Downey. She also thanked Don Heald for lending his professional talents to support this evening.

Ms. Doe stated the program is opening on Tuesday and residents are welcome to stop by during the school day to view it. She commended the current and former school committees that have understood the importance of art and music to education and maintained these programs through the years. She said it is a credit to the Town and the leadership of the School Department that the district has consistently valued the importance of art and music education throughout the years. Mr. Roberts said he would contact Mr. Wofford about the art show because he championed these programs.

Ms. Doe announced that May 27 is the second annual Academic Dinner for the top 30 graduating seniors. She said these students and their parents are invited to dinner at the MIT Endicott House. She said the board of directors has supported the dinner and it is a lovely venue at which to celebrate their achievements.

Ms. Doe announced that the School to Careers Partnership is offering the Neponset Valley Leadership Institute and the Bio-Engineering Symposium this summer. She said Dedham High School students Lindsay MacDonald, Justin Chen, Caitlin Driscoll and Matthew Fay were selected to participate in the institute. Students Dale Armstrong, Sara Noe, Vivian Daly and Vincent Rautinaitis were selected for the symposium.

Ms. Doe announced that music teacher Heather Kirby was recognized for her participation in the Northeastern District General Music Festival. President Leigh Rogers found her enthusiasm and professionalism to be a testament to her commitment to the students and her profession.

Ms. Matthews said this is the first year she has not been able to attend Scully Awards due to this meeting. She requested the winners be invited to a meeting to be recognized for their achievements and so the committee could get a taste of what they have done. Ms. Matthews said Ms. Scully has done a great job.

Ms. Kelly reported on the results of the New England Math League. She stated with Ms. Clement's help, they administered the test for grades 4 through 8. She announced the high scorers.

For the March 2008/40 points – 30 minutes – 40 problems results:

- Grade 6: Owen Tuite, Margaret O'Connor, Paul Fulmore, Sammy Gordon, Chloe Seibert, Elizabeth Masalsky.
- Grade 7: Jamie Carty, Katie Nosky, Ryan Aljondi, Mark Turner, Bryan Simone, Jackson Lawlor, Kim Flatley, Nick Ray.
- Grade 8: Nick Hayes, Paige Keefe, Chris Berry, Austin White, Andrew Hickey, Sarah Warjas. Grade 8 Algebra: Kelly Emery, Melissa Burke, Benjamin Reynolds, James Tuite, Elizabeth Dellea, Molly Downing, John Hickey, Michael Joyce, James Lawless, Courtney Nolan, and Michael Wigmore.

For the March 2008/30 minutes – 30 minutes – 30 problems results:

- Avery School Grade 4: Stephen Acosta, Bo Devine, Genevieve Rose, Brendan St. Clair, Nova Burke; Grade 5: Joseph Von Shoppe, Alexzander Kalshnek, Matthew Suprilus, Colin Sargent, JoAnn Devine.
- Greenlodge School Grade 4: Jakob Farnam, Lydia Baker, Bobby Lau, Amelia McDonough, Sean Flaherty; Grade 5 Alexi Tsolirides, Brendan Finnegan, Ryan Banks, Megan Corrado, Natalie Philips, Courtney Sullivan.
- Oakdale School Grade 4: Sachi Smith, Brett Hunt, Matthew Jenest, Austin Walrod, Michael Cariofiles; Grade 5: Joseph DeVirgilio, Connor Dolan, Landon Carlson, Sean Kineavy, Gregory Mowles.
- Riverdale School Grade 4: John Dowling, Ned Cramer, Gerry Mulvey, DeAndre' Scurti, Cindy Wang; Grade 5 Stewart Alexandre, Ian Zylstra, Jamie McNamara, Glenn Price, David O'Dea, and Kameel Rachmani.

It was suggested the students be recognized at the June 11 meeting.

#### **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Ms. Driscoll said the next agenda would include a redistricting discussion about the new residential development. She noted that the administration has a recommendation, the neighborhood school for this development is Oakdale and that school is at capacity.



Ms. Doe said she does have a recommendation, which she came to after research, reflection and lengthy conversation with legal counsel. She said the district is looking for equitable and reasonable accommodation for these potential students at the development currently known as Fairfield. Ms. Matthews said it would be known as Station 250. Ms. Doe said she is sensitive to the Oakdale enrollment and looking ahead to the new development's opening she would recommend Greenlodge as the designated neighborhood school. She said it is the most equitable choice distance wise and in educational services. She said she does not feel it is reasonable to expect Oakdale to accommodate children from an additional development.

Mr. Ryan wondered why Greenlodge would get the students from the new development when the school has larger class sizes. Ms. Doe said she could address that. Ms. Driscoll disagreed the class size was larger. She stated that the decision on this matter would be made on June 11. She said it would be important to know about space availability for these students at each of the schools. The School Committee suggested the notice of this discussion be widely publicized. Ms. Doe said they would eventually need a parent group to look at district lines with the potential of a new Avery School.

Mr. Roberts asked when Station 250 is opening. Ms. Matthews said it is opening in nine phases with July being phase one. She said that they will open six to eight weeks apart.

Ms. Matthews asked if there would be redistricting information presented along with this. Ms. Doe said that would be discussed following Dore and Whittier's completion of the updated Master Plan, which is being done through the School Building Rehabilitation Committee. She said they have finished the first phase and the capital plans are articulated in this portion. Ms. Doe stated that a new school is three to four years out at this time. She said the committee would have a recommendation of a potential plan but that would be modified as development occurs and enrollments are affected.

Ms. Driscoll asked how long it would be before the preliminary Master Plan report. Ms. Doe said she could have information on that portion and NESDEC projected enrollments for them in the near future.

The agenda would also include a recommendation and vote on academic reporting, this year's statistics for incident reports, results of peer mediation at the Middle School and any other initiatives to address student safety.

Ms. Flatley said they need to address the Superintendent's goals. Ms. Driscoll requested a draft. Ms. Doe asked if there will be a discussion with her about these. Ms. Flatley said yes.

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

**VOTED:** to adjourn.