

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—March 19, 2008
Distance Learning Lab, Middle School

PRESENT

Tracy Driscoll, Chair
Margaret Matthews, Vice Chair
David Roberts
Thomas Ryan
Margaret Connolly
Joanne Flatley
John Healy

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Christopher Campbell, Asst. Superintendent

Convened: 6:00 PM

Adjourned: 8:40 PM

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

VOTED: by roll call to go into executive session under exemption three. Mr. Roberts – aye, Mr. Healy – aye, Ms. Flatley – aye, Ms. Connolly – aye, and Ms. Driscoll aye.

The committee returned to open session at 7:00 PM.

SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE

Ms. Doe announced the 15th annual Dedham Education Foundation spelling bee would be held at the Middle School on March 28 at 6:30 PM. She said it is always a popular event and she looks forward to a large turnout again this year.

Ms. Doe stated that the winter sports banquet, sponsored by the Boosters Club, was held last night. She said Principal Winrow prepared academic statistics for the athletes and the girls’ basketball team had the highest percentage on honor roll at 78%. She said all teams were well represented with honor roll numbers. She said the team average was 37% and the term 2 grade point average was 2.97. She said she is pleased the student athletes are keeping up their grades.

Ms. Doe congratulated Marie Madden, David Carey and Mandy Ciarletta, elementary physical education teachers, for coordinating the very successful Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser during the week of February 11. She thanked the elementary students for participating and the parents and community members for their contributions. She said the schools raised \$10,736.39 for the American Heart Association.

CHAIR’S UPDATE

Ms. Driscoll reminded the committee that Student Town Government Day is Wednesday, April 30. She asked committee members interested in participating to notify her.

Ms. Driscoll stated that tomorrow is the Superintendent’s breakfast for first and second year teachers. Ms. Doe said it would be held at the Endicott Estate beginning at 7:30 AM. She said she would like to give the committee the opportunity to hear the thoughts and impressions of the district’s new teachers.

Ms. Driscoll invited the committee to visit Mrs. MacLean's first grade class at the Avery school to observe their morning exercise. She said the children love to have parents and committee members watch them. Ms. Matthews said she and Ms. Connolly attended last year and it is outstanding.

Mr. Ryan commented on the senior play, *Copacabana*. He said he and most of his fellow committee members attended it this past weekend. He commended the seniors, Mr. Brogan and the High School and Middle School music teachers for an outstanding performance.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

There was none.

RATIFICATION – PARAPROFESSIONALS' CONTRACT

Ms. Flatley said it was reported at the last meeting that the paraprofessionals accepted this contract. She said the goals for this contract were to protect the services offered to the students by these employees, to bring starting salaries within a more competitive range, to create a feeder pool for teaching staff, and to make some progress toward the 80/20 health insurance split. She pointed out that this is the first contract with these employees, progress has been made on the health insurance adjustment, which will be 85/15 at the end of the third year, and the School Committee has been taken out of the grievance procedure. She remarked that on a whole this contract is fair to the employee, the taxpayers and students. She and Ms. Matthews would recommend the School Committee ratify the contract.

Ms. Driscoll thanked Ms. Flatley, Ms. Matthews, Ms. Doe, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. La Francesca for their efforts in these negotiations. She said it is a thorough contract and the language is helpful. She thanked the aides as well.

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

VOTED: to approve the agreement between the Dedham School Committee and the Dedham Education Association Paraprofessionals for the contract beginning September 1, 2007, through August 31, 2010.

FY 09 OPERATING BUDGET

Ms. Driscoll stated Mr. La Francesca was not able to attend the meeting this evening. She stated that last week the Capital Expenditures Committee met to discuss the \$300,000 request for the Avery feasibility study, which is part of MSBA protocol for reimbursement for the project. She said the CEC also discussed the removal of the request for parking spaces and a bus loop at the High School.

Ms. Flatley reported that the School Committee presented its budget to the Finance Committee. She said the School Committee's request is 7% over last year's budget. She said they still remain \$600,000 short of full funding.

Mr. Healy pointed out that the warrant article for the \$300,000 is eligible for reimbursement. Ms. Driscoll said 47.8% of the project's cost is reimbursable by the state and is reimbursed as the funds are spent.

Ms. Driscoll reported the Town received state aid money in the form of Chapter 70 and additional lottery money. She noted that once the Town meets the schools' foundation budget it is not obligated to provide the Chapter 70 money to the School Department. She said the committee is not necessarily getting all of that money and they must advocate for it.

Ms. Doe updated the committee on the introduction of the Academy Team for grade 9. She said this team model is designed to offer selected students five honors level courses. The team would be taught by a team of teachers and would also be assigned a guidance counselor. She said the students were selected based on test data, grades, and teacher input. She stated that students on the Academy Team must also participate in an extracurricular activity.

Ms. Doe said the administration would like to provide this talented group of students with high standards and encourage them to reach their potential. She said the first team would have Dr. Laflamme as the English teacher, Mr. Gould as the social studies teacher, Ms. McFarland as the science teacher and Ms. Eisenhut as the math teacher. She said they would be prepared to put a second team in place, if necessary. She added they have had a meaningful response from parents and there is at least one team in place already.

Ms. Doe announced another initiative at the High School. She said they would be establishing an advisory team, similar to the Middle School's model. She said this is another way to support students. She explained that a small group of students would be assigned to a teacher and would meet at designated to discuss topics relevant to this age group. She said this format would encourage a network of close, supportive connections.

Ms. Doe said that she and Ms. Kelly had an initial meeting with the Academy Team students today. She said she would be having a meeting with parents soon and conducting individual student interviews.

Ms. Doe announced a program for grade 7 parents to introduce to them to the High School. She said this would be similar to the eighth grade program. She thanked Mr. Ryan for making the suggestion to have this orientation for grade 7.

Ms. Matthews asked if Ms. Doe has speculated about how grades 10 through 12 would react to the new Academy Team next year. Ms. Doe replied all students have the opportunity to take honors level classes; the difference is the team model and five honors classes. She said she believes the reaction of upper classmen would be to think it is a good idea. She said they would like to continue this program through grade 12.

Ms. Connolly asked about the Academy Team's foreign language teacher. Ms. Doe said most students take Spanish and a handful takes French. Ms. Driscoll asked if the French class would be mixed. Ms. Doe said it would be a full class for Spanish, but the Academy Team students taking French might be mixed with other ninth graders.

Ms. Flatley asked how many would be assigned to the team. Ms. Doe answered 23.

Mr. Healy said the Academy Team is a great idea and he hopes that parents recognize this as a starting point. He and Ms. Driscoll agreed the upper classmen would probably think it is a good thing. He remarked that the college prep I and II courses would support the goal of high achievement as well.

Ms. Driscoll asked how often the advisory team would meet. Ms. Doe answered probably once in every seven day cycle. Ms. Driscoll asked if they would address course selection as a topic. Ms. Doe answered that all topics would be targeted for High School students.

2008-2009 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Ms. Matthews asked that January 2 be noted as part of the holiday vacation.

Ms. Flatley asked how the full day in-service is chosen. Ms. Doe said it was chosen this year to coincide with the Presidential Election. Ms. Flatley asked if they considered a Monday to extend a weekend or holiday. Ms. Doe said mid-week professional development encourages staff attendance.

Ms. Flatley moved, seconded by Ms. Connolly, and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the 2008-2009 school calendar.

MINUTES

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

VOTED: to accept the March 5, 2008 minutes.

DONATIONS

There were none.

Ms. Doe mentioned that Michelle Canty, a teacher at the Avery School, and Paula Marini, of the technology department, received a grant from Best Buy for \$2,000. The funds, in the form of a gift card, are to be used for the benefit of the Avery School. Ms. Driscoll said the committee was grateful for Ms. Canty's and Ms. Marini's initiative.

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION

Ms. Driscoll said she emailed the Superintendent's evaluation instrument to the committee. She said Ms. Doe has provided a summary of accomplishments to the committee. She stated that the evaluation should be completed prior to April 9 and asked the committee to return their individual evaluations by April 2.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Roberts asked whether Mr. Lawlor has been appointed to the School Building Rehabilitation Committee. Ms. Driscoll said Mr. Wofford would like to resign, but the committee is scheduled to restructure following the Annual Town Meeting. She said Mr. Wofford would then be replaced by Mr. Lawlor.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Driscoll said the next agenda would include the Superintendent's evaluation and a report from the Guidance Director. Mr. Roberts asked to have the new Athletic Director address the committee. Ms. Doe said the Middle School Improvement Plan would be on the April 16 agenda. Ms. Matthews asked for new coaches to be invited as well.

The open session concluded at 7:45 PM. The committee resumed its executive session.