

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—March 5, 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
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager
Alan Winrow, Principal
Timothy Ruggere, Principal
Clare Sullivan, Principal
Elizabeth Cummings, Principal
Holli Armstrong, Principal
Doris Claypool, Principal
Heidi Dineen, Principal
Jacob Santamaria, Assistant Principal
John Murray, Assistant Principal

Convened: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 10:10 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Ms. Doe reported that Middle School band students had the opportunity to participate in a Master Class this past Saturday. She said it was a well attended event and provided student musicians with the opportunity to interact with professional musicians to build on their skills.

Mr. Brogan stated that Mr. Heald received a grant from the Dedham Cultural Council to sponsor this event. He said that even the parents enjoyed it and appreciate what Mr. Heald has brought to the Middle School's program.

Ms. Doe noted that the High School would be hosting a third open house on March 11 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. She said parents have been calling to schedule individual appointments with teachers.

Ms. Doe also noted that third term progress reports have been issued. She said all students received two copies, one of which should be signed by the parent and returned by the student.

Ms. Doe announced the delayed openings for the High School for MCAS testing this month. She said the schedule would also be posted on the district's website.

Ms. Doe announced the senior class would be presenting Barry Manilow's musical Copacabana next week. She said the Middle School students would have the opportunity to see it next Thursday and the public could attend either on Friday, March 14, or Saturday, March 15. She said tickets are \$10 and could be purchased at the door.

Ms. Doe announced that the Community Resource Officer and Dedham Middle School Parents Group, in cooperation with District Attorney Keating, would be sponsoring a presentation on March 12 from 7 to 9 PM on what every parent needs to know about media violence. She said there were be a dinner for attendees beforehand at 6 PM sponsored by Vinny T's.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

Ms. Driscoll deferred her update.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S UPDATE

Miss Chen reported that the National Honor Society is preparing to add to its membership. She said the Student Council is getting ready for the Walk for Hunger. She said this Saturday a group of students would be cleaning up a sanctuary. She reported that journalism students were assembling the annual "Cracked Mirror". She stated the junior class English field trip to the Crucible was canceled. She announced Dan Driscoll won the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award. She stated the Odd Fellows would be hosting a model UN. She said that Mr. Gould, Ms. Kenney, and Ms. Spiro would be conducting student town government day on April 30. She said voting takes place on April 7. She reported that on April 24, Ms. Spiro would present a Holocaust survivor event. Lastly, the Science Olympiad would hold its state meet on March 15.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

There was none.

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL ONE AND TWO COURSES

Mr. Winrow said this presentation would include discussion of level one and two courses as they exist as well as proposed changes. He said, as an overview, most public high schools practice leveling in some form, which allows schools to support the students' progress. He said they want to raise the ceiling and the floor at the same time and work towards leveling the gap. He said there can be significant differences in the coursework. However, the goal is to have all students high performing. He noted that students need support to accomplish this, and parents have an important role in helping their students to move forward. He added that a work ethic is important as well.

Mr. Winrow stated that the High School used to offer Advanced Placement (AP), honors, level one, two, and three, and unleveled courses until seven years ago. He said the level three courses were generally remedial and some of the unleveled courses gave support to students with particular needs. He said that recommended revisions to the levels were presented to the Curriculum Committee, which approved the changes. He said they abolished level three and drastically limited the unleveled courses. The High School now has AP, honors, level one – demanding, rigorous college preparatory courses, and level 2 – also college preparatory and demanding, but at a different pace.

Mr. Winrow said they do have recommendations for changes next year, which would retain the core of the leveling system, but move the system forward. He said the focus tonight is on level one and two.

Mr. Winrow stated that a question has been raised concerning the passing grade on MCAS. He said the DOE has not changed the passing grade from 220 to 240. He said, however, this year's sophomores must score a 240 in English and Math to achieve proficiency. Students scoring a 220-239 will be in the needs improvement category, which is still passing, but they would be put on an EPP (educational proficiency plan). He directed parents to the DOE website for further information about MCAS changes.

Ms. McCormick, Guidance Director, stated she tried to answer some of the questions that parents and the School Committee have had in this presentation. She said she would move quickly through the slides. She said one of the requests she received was to see MCAS scores by level, which she showed on a chart for honors, level one, and level two. She said the scores represent the mean for each group. She reported that honors students received a mean score 257 on the ELA MCAS and 264 in math. Level one scored 244 in ELA and 250 in math and level two scored 233 in ELA and 234 in math. She said it is important to remember that that, given the average scores, all have fallen into the passing category. She said it is also important to note that in all of the information being presented, not all students fit into just one level. She said some students take courses in multiple levels.

Ms. McCormick presented the distribution of SAT scores by level. She showed the range by decile. She said there were 172 students in last year's graduating class. She reported the top decile, which represents 17 students, scored from 480-700 in critical reading, 560-730 in math, and 520-710 in writing. She noted that class rank sometimes is not necessarily a true representation of rank if new students transfer into the school from another community.

Ms. McCormick listed the number of seats in each course level. She said the honors level has 1,102 seats, level one has 2,228, and level two has 1,455. She said there are 2,165 seats in the unlevleed courses. She then presented the college acceptances for level one students and then for level two.

Ms. McCormick spoke about the ways the district aims to build the best student beginning with school/home communication. She said this communication is accomplished in various ways, including opening up Power School to parents and guardians, Email communication, quarterly newsletters from the guidance office, website updates with information posted regularly on the guidance website and consistent messaging from home and school in regard to student achievement and work ethic.

Ms. McCormick said the department also provides a developmental guidance program. This involves counselor visits to the classrooms to deliver a developmental curriculum at each grade level throughout the year and an advisory program with the goal of developing more meaningful, one-on-one relationships between students and staff. She said they would also begin promoting conversations about college in Middle School.

Ms. McCormick discussed department's approach to college admissions. She said they are encouraging students to let their personal voices be heard rather than focusing on polishing the college essay. They encourage students to show passion and commitment for something. She said well rounded does not mean being a jack of all trades. She said they also encourage students to take on leadership roles. She provided a sampling of activities and leadership opportunities for Dedham High School students.

Ms. McCormick reviewed the Academic Reporting Steering Committee recommendations. They are: Dedham High School will retain class rank; the present system of cumulative quality points will be replaced with a weighted grade point average; all students will have both an unweighted GPA and a weighted GPA; Advanced Placement courses will be assigned more weight than honors courses; grade designations in the A range will change. An A- will be 90-92, an A will be 93-96, and an A+ will be 97-100. Ms. McCormick said currently there is no A+. Continuing with the recommendations, she said all students enrolled in AP courses will be required to take the AP exams and level one and level two designations will be replaced with college prep I (CP I)

and college prep II (CP II). Descriptions of the levels are also being revised in the course directory.

Ms. McCormick said the recommendations they continue to work on are determining how class rank will be portrayed; establishing which courses will be included in determining the weighted GPA; and generating a formula for calculating GPA. She said the proposed actions regarding leveling are to create an AP level, honors would remain honors, level one would become CP I and level two would become CP II.

Ms. McCormick discussed the three-pronged rationale behind the level name change, which is philosophical, symbolic and logistical. She said philosophically, it encourages college as a post secondary option. Symbolically, it instills confidence in students and raises expectations for positive post secondary outcomes. Logistically, it clarifies that the courses are college preparatory which facilitates the college admission process.

Ms. McCormick provided an overview of level descriptions. She stated that in order to meet the individual needs of a wide range of students, they offer three different college preparatory levels; honors, college prep I, and college prep II, which differ in coverage and intensity to meet the ability, achievement, and needs of the student. She said each represents different requirements in a subject area and although much of the subject matter in different levels is similar, courses differ in the depth of content and the pace of presentation. She said that AP and honors courses are designed for students who have clearly demonstrated significant high achievement in previous courses within the same discipline. She said some course have combined levels. The objectives of the leveling system are to enable as many students as possible to attain a sense of mastery, maximize success, and minimize failure.

Mr. Ed Hickey presented the committee with an example of the difference between levels in the math department. He used geometry to illustrate the variations in expectations. He read the geometry course description for each level for further clarification.

Mr. Jim Walker demonstrated the differences in English course levels. Ms. Doe interposed to thank him for standing in for Dr. Laflamme. Mr. Walker distributed a document that contained the habits of mind and critical thinking expectations for each of the department's course levels. He said the difference in levels is primarily in the amount of material covered and amount of work that must be produced. He discussed an essay sample prompt from second term which he gave to both his level two students and honors level students noting the differences in the amount of time they spent on the play, the amount of writing completed and the time allotted to this activity. He noted that freshmen placement comes largely from teacher recommendations. He stated that the reading rate, comprehension, daily persistence and proficiency in writing determine level.

Don Ross presented the leveling of science courses. He said all courses are based on the state frameworks. He said AP has its own curriculum and lab requirements and all three levels set high expectations for where the students are and where they need to be. He said the lower level requires more learning and practicing of skills. He said the honors level requires a lot of independent work. He said all levels require independent reading and a research project, and all levels do laboratory activities. He said all must practice problem solving skills, collect and measure data, make quantitative and qualitative observations. He also stated that all levels are prepared for MCAS.

He then illustrated the differences in level with several slides that showed chemistry course expectations for both college prep one (CPI) and honors level. He said there can be two levels within a class, but there would be a different set of requirements for the students. He reviewed Earth-Environmental Science and an Anatomy and Physiology course split with honors and CPI students as examples.

Mr. Gould reviewed leveling in social studies. He said the subject generally requires taking an abstract idea and teaching it to all levels. He used a lesson on the Emancipation Proclamation to show the differences in expectations for college prep II, college prep I and honors classes. He noted the differences involved the amount of reading and expectations for writing assignments.

Ms. Bradley discussed leveling in foreign language. She reviewed the four skills typically measured in this subject: listening, speaking, reading and writing. She said level 2 students are expected to use scripted words and phrases, and ask and respond to questions. She stated that level one students would answer those same questions but offer clarifying information. She stated honors might answer the same question as well, but would present personal information and provide a lengthier response. She covered both speaking and reading. She stated level one has two independent readings and must be able to talk about them based on the teacher eliciting discussion. She said honors has four outside readings. The discussion is in French and the teacher begins the discussion but students take over from there.

Mr. Dellot reviewed leveling in the Occupational Education Department courses. He said most of their programs are multi-leveled. He said changes were made toward multi-leveling in 1995 after going through the Curriculum Committee. The objective was to make the courses available to all interested students. He said the department has honors programs in drafting, TV production and film studies. He reviewed the expectations, which are primarily project based and involve significant outside work.

Mr. Brogan reviewed course levels for music and arts. He said there is only one AP course, studio art. He said all other courses are CPI and the curriculum and expectations are based on the assumption the student would continue to pursue the subject at the college level. He said the same standard exists for all CP courses. He said art is project based and constantly on display. The classes reflect state core concepts. He said the goal is to communicate effectively in the fine arts discipline and both imagination and rational thinking are expected of the students.

Director of Technology Don Langenhorst said he also espoused the project based learning approach and demonstrated this by showing the district's website, which is created and maintained by his students. He said levels in the technology department vary by degree of rigor, depth of coverage, required organizational skills, and mastery of standards. He said a level two computer applications course is step by step approach to build the students' skills and abilities. He said level one would increase depth of coverage in enrichment and level two would have more of a personal focus. He said the level one computer business course addresses many real world business issues.

Ms. Bohan said that as the Health and Physical Education Director she represents unlevelled classes. She said her department comprises about 800 of the 2000 seats in unlevelled courses.

Ms. Matthews complimented the staff on an excellent presentation and the demonstration of the differences in course levels. She said it would be helpful to have the differences clearly stated in the handbook and to put examples on the website to give parents an understanding of the expectations.

Ms. Matthews asked if the district develops the curriculum for an AP course or if it is imposed by the College Board. Ms. McCormick said the curriculum is imposed upon them. She said teachers attend workshops and receive training on teaching an AP course and they must create a syllabus based on the curriculum. She said the College Board reviews the syllabus and makes recommendations, if necessary, prior to approving it.

Ms. Matthews asked if there would be AP courses for every subject given that AP has more weight in determining GPA. Ms. McCormick said that AP classes are offered based on the number of students at that level and scheduling. She said all core courses do have an AP course. Ms. Matthews asked if they cover the standards for MCAS. Mr. Gould answered he would argue yes because it is a rigorous course and covers a substantial amount of material.

Mr. Roberts asked if the weighted GPA was a recommendation of the steering committee. Ms. McCormick said it was. She said they are still working on what classes are included in the calculation of the GPA. He asked if that would negatively affect the calculation of GPA by college admissions offices. Ms. McCormick said the detrimental effect of the calculations is happening now and they anticipate the weighted GPA will correct this. She said they have done extensive research in terms of talking to various high schools and colleges about how their calculations are done. She said the complicating factor was there is not much consistency. She said they continue to seek input on this.

Mr. Roberts asked what happens with the steering committee's recommendations. Ms. McCormick said the committee, made up of parents, students, teachers, and other interested individuals, met several times and broke into subcommittees to research specific topics. She said they reconvened as a large group to discuss and then presented the recommendations to the administration. She said together they agreed on the final recommendations. She said they touched upon it this evening because it ties into this presentation and the School Committee should be aware of the recommendations. Ms. Driscoll said they would be receiving a presentation on the recommendations at another meeting.

Ms. Flatley asked when the EPP process begins. Mr. Winrow said it would begin this year and be implemented next year. He said they will not have the MCAS results until late summer. She remarked it was evident how much work went into this presentation and she said she thinks they are heading in the right direction.

Ms. Connolly asked what the criteria are for an honors computer course. Mr. Langenhorst said there are only two, the computer science course which leads into the AP course. He said that selection is based on past performance in advanced math courses. She mentioned there were students that took a computer course that did not count as credit towards graduation. Ms. McCormick said this will be addressed in the new course directory. Mr. Langenhorst referred Ms. Connolly to the page in the directory that stated which courses meet the computer requirement.

Ms. Connolly asked how a student is eligible for an AP course. Ms. McCormick said the requirements are clearly established. She said another initiative the department is undertaking is for students recommended for an AP class. She said they intend to host an AP orientation for students and parents so they can understand the course expectations. She said students and parents would sign a document stating that they understand the requirements.

Ms. McCormick said they held a presentation at the High School for parents of eighth graders to increase communication with parents as well as to make them aware of expectations for high school and college. She said they hope to target seventh grade parents as well.

Mr. Healy asked about the DOE raising bar to 240. Mr. Winrow said the scoring is the same, but they are now requiring a higher score to attain proficiency level. Mr. Healy also asked if there is ever a situation where a student qualifies for more than one AP course but cannot fit it into the schedule. Mr. Winrow said there can be scheduling conflicts. He said the majority get 100% of their choices. He said weighting is not so heavy that a student missing out on an AP level course will lose rank to another student. Mr. Healy also commented on Mr. Winrow's analogy of closing gap on the ceiling and floor. He appreciates what the school is trying to achieve.

A parent asked how the MCAS remediation assigned in a student's EEP will fit into their schedule. Mr. Winrow said it is incumbent on the school to ensure they have a plan that will work for the student. He said the plan may be done over a two year period. Ms. McCormick said that sometimes a course could be taken in place of an elective.

This same parent mentioned that scheduling begins in the spring but MCAS scores do not come in until October. Mr. Winrow said the DOE promised to provide MCAS scores earlier, which will allow them to identify the students that might require schedule adjustments.

This parent also asked whether students get tracked into a particular level. Mr. Winrow said if a student did well in a course in level II they could be moved to level I. He said students are not trapped in a level, but they generally do follow a sequence. Mr. Hickey said they have students which move in either direction.

Ms. Driscoll thanked them for the presentation. She said it helps parents understand the distinctions.

The committee took a five minute break.

YOUTH RISK SURVEY RESULTS

Nurse Supervisor Gail Kelley and Marge Bohan, Health and Physical Education Director, presented the *Communities That Care Survey* results. Ms. Bohan stated that the coordinated health program utilizes the results to look at trends in order to better meet student needs. She said it also address a requirement of the Safe and Drug Free Schools grant. She said a survey was last done in 2003 for grades 7, 8 and 10. The survey being presented this evening was conducted in November 2007 for grades 6-12.

Ms. Bohan stated the district's goal is to foster healthy behaviors in all children. She noted that the test had a built in validity assessment which led them to throw out four surveys at the Middle School level and fifteen at the High School level. Ms. Kelley added that this is a national survey, but the results are compared to Massachusetts communities.

Ms. Bohan discussed the protective factors assessed. She explained that the norm is 50, and anything above 50 is good. She provided the three highest protective factors at the High School level: school opportunities for pro-social development; belief in the moral order; and school rewards for pro-social involvement. The three lowest protective factors were: religiosity; social skills; and family opportunities for pro-social involvement. At the Middle School level, the three highest protective factors were: belief in the moral order; community opportunities for pro-social involvement; and family rewards for pro-social involvement. The three lowest protective factors

were: religiosity; community rewards for pro-social involvement; and family opportunities for pro-social involvement.

Ms. Bohan reviewed the risk factors, which measured 23 items. At the High School level, the three lowest risk factors were: perceived availability of handguns; sensation seeking; and laws and norms favorable to handguns. The four highest risk factors were: community disorganization and peer rewards for antisocial behavior (tied for first); parental attitudes favorable toward antisocial behavior; and poor academic performance. The four lowest risk factors for the Middle School are early initiation of drug use; rebelliousness; sensation seeking; and favorable attitudes toward alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. The three highest risk factors were transitions and mobility; poor academic performance; and lack of commitment to school. Ms. Matthews clarified that there were several questions asked on the survey to determine each risk factor.

Ms. Bohan discussed the next segment of the survey which addressed drug use. She said they would be dealing with percentages rather than norms for this portion. She showed the usage by grade for lifetime use and the last thirty days for alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and inhalants. She also showed the comparisons with national results.

Ms. Bohan reviewed the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey results from 1995 to 2005 for the high school level for tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use. She then discussed the overall prevalence of antisocial behaviors by grade level. She highlighted four areas: attacking with intent to harm, being drunk or high at school, being arrested, and selling drugs.

Ms. Bohan said Dedham was able to ask an additional question on their survey, and they chose to ask if students had seriously considered attempting suicide in the last twelve months. She said compared with prior youth risk survey results, Dedham was in line with the Massachusetts figures.

Ms. Bohan reviewed the conclusions drawn from the survey results. She began with the positives. She said that the protective factors in place in Dedham are school opportunities for pro-social involvement, belief in the moral order and school rewards for pro-social behavior at the high school level. At the middle school level the strongest protective factors were belief in the moral order, community opportunities for pro-social involvement, and family rewards for pro-social involvement. The risk factors beginning with the High School were community disorganization, peer rewards for antisocial behavior, parental attitudes favorable toward antisocial behavior, and poor academic performance. At the Middle School the risk factors were transitions and mobility, poor academic performance, and lack of commitment to the school. Ms. Connolly said she was surprised to see that community disorganization was high on the list.

Ms. Bohan reviewed the survey results of the antisocial behaviors beginning with the High School, followed by the Middle School. She noted that this is the students' perception of a risk of harm for participating in these behaviors. She also reviewed the results for personal disapproval of use for alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana and other illicit drugs.

Ms. Connolly commented asked if the reported suspensions at the Middle School were confirmed. She thought this would then confirm the validity of the overall survey results. Ms. Doe answered the numbers are reasonable.

Ms. Connolly said the district appears to have done a good job at educating students about risks at the Middle School level.

Ms. Bohan stated that High School students do feel connected to the school. She said, however, there is concern about antisocial behaviors and alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by some of the students. She stated that at the Middle School the positive has been a report by the students of lower levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use than the national average. On the negative side, there is concern about the antisocial behaviors (fighting) and risk factors, such as poor academic performance and lack of commitment to school.

Ms. Connolly said there were high numbers reported for being drunk or high at school. She asked if there have been reports of this and what is being done to educate the faculty to spot it. Ms. Kelley said that an outside trainer, Marilyn Belmonte, came last year to speak to the parent group. She said she is coming to the High School to train staff next week. She added that the protocol is that staff points out suspected substance abuse to an administrator and the administrator brings the student to the nurse who is able to make that determination. Ms. Bohan reiterated the schools are one part of the component. She said community, parents and peer groups have a role as well.

Ms. Bohan talked about the suicide concern in 2003. She said the district brought in training and education to give students' the opportunity to seek help. She said they want to build on positives and see what they can do about the negatives.

Ms. Kelley said this survey is a snap shot. She said the elementary level has had a lot of experience through their health program and the responsive classroom. She added that the district can monitor their progress through the secondary level to see if this is having an impact.

Ms. Connolly asked if there were survey questions about sexual activity. Ms. Bohan said there were. Ms. Connolly said she would like to see that information.

Ms. Flatley asked who has seen these results. Ms. Bohan said the results have been shared with the High School staff, the Middle School staff, and the Safety Committee. She said it would be posted as well. Ms. Flatley said they need to respond to this in a comprehensive way. Ms. Connolly thinks there should be community awareness about the results.

Mr. Ryan said that they could include this information in an overall school report similar to the one Needham produces. He said that is a next step for Dedham. He commented that this data is a reflection of what the community at large is doing.

Ms. Matthews asked if the results would impact the health curriculum and suggested bringing in outside resources to supplement the curriculum. Ms. Kelley said it is important to get the information out first. Ms. Bohan said absolutely this would influence the curriculum. She noted they have utilized the District Attorney's office for various programs.

Ms. Doe emphasized the familial influence on the values the students hold.

FY 09 OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. La Francesca said the administration has made \$1.1 million in cuts to the original budget. He said the new budget request is a 7% increase over last year's budget. Ms. Doe stated this is the budget they are recommending for approval.

Ms. Driscoll said that before the committee votes on the budget they would like to clarify some of the specifics at a later time. She said the committee would vote the bottom line this evening. She said the budget request reflects a budget increase of \$2,094,628.50.

Ms. Flatley moved, seconded by Mr. Roberts for the purpose of discussion, and, following the discussion, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the bottom line budget as proposed with the stipulation that the line items would be addressed later.

Mr. Roberts had asked when the budget needed to be presented to the Town. Mr. La Francesca replied that it had to be given to the Town Administrator on March 7 and would be presented to the Finance Committee on March 12.

MINUTES

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

VOTED: to accept the February 13, 2008 minutes.

DONATIONS

There were none.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Doe stated that there has been a change to the recommendation for the School Department's capital requests. She said that phase two of the relocation of the administration to the High School was the addition of parking spaces and a bus loop at west end of building. She said the School Department worked closely with the Town's engineering department to develop plan and cost for this project, but it has been determined that the bus loop is not feasible to develop at this site and was cost prohibitive. She said she is recommending postponing this request until FY 10. She said the adjusted capital request figure is \$741,394.80.

Mr. Roberts asked how the requests were being prioritized. Ms. Doe said the priorities are: the communication and security system at the High School, which includes the replacement of the doors; the education technology program in the amount of \$275,000 for infrastructure; the Middle and High Schools' library update; masonry repairs at all elementary schools; and a generator at the High School. She said the requests are being presented to the Capital Expenditures Committee on Tuesday evening.

Ms. Driscoll said they will also be presenting a \$300,000 request for a feasibility study for the Avery School project. Ms. Doe said this is a separate request from the other capital items. Ms. Driscoll said this is a separate warrant article that requests \$300,000 for the study with the knowledge that Dedham will be reimbursed 50%. Mr. Roberts asked if that would be taken up at the same time as the presentation of the budget.

Ms. Driscoll said Mr. Fred Wofford would be resigning from the School Building and Rehabilitation Committee at its next meeting. She said the committee would be re-organizing. Mr. Roberts would be re-appointed and Mr. Andy Lawlor would be appointed in Mr. Wofford's place.

Ms. Driscoll mentioned that their April 9 meeting conflicts with the Middle School play. The committee decided to move forward with its meeting.

Ms. Doe stated the administration would be hosting a breakfast for first and second year teachers on March 20 at the Endicott Estate from 7:30 to 9:00 AM. She invited the committee to attend. She said they would have a roundtable discussion with the teachers.

Ms. Doe announced the process for selecting the head varsity football coach was completed. The new Marauder program will be led by Keith Comeau. She thanked the screening committee for participating in the process. Mr. Roberts said Mr. Comeau would do a fine job for Dedham.

Ms. Doe congratulated Mr. Winrow and his wife on their son's graduation from ranger school. She said he would be stationed in Afghanistan.

Ms. Connolly asked when the committee would hear the Academic Reporting Steering Committee recommendations. She also asked about upcoming School Improvement Plans. Ms. Doe said the Middle School will be presenting theirs once it is finalized.

Ms. Matthews asked about the status of the strategic plan. Ms. Kelly said the steering committee would like to invite the School Committee to a meeting to share the results. She said following that the steering committee would like to have a community meeting. Then the administrators will work on a district improvement plan.

Ms. Driscoll said it appears there is a new contract for the paraprofessionals, which the School Committee will vote at the next meeting. Ms. Flatley reviewed some of the terms of the contract. She said they had identified early on that starting salaries were not in line with neighboring communities and that has been corrected. She said they have made progress toward meeting the mandate from the Town on the health insurance split. She said there is a differentiation between certified and non certified rates to lend to the district's teaching population. She reported that the paraprofessionals will receive a retroactive raise of 2% for the 2006-2007 school year and the health insurance contributions will move toward an 85/15 split. She said they also increased some other benefits to be similar to other communities. She reported that the union ratified the contract this afternoon.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Driscoll said the next agenda would include a vote on the contract.

Mr. Ryan thanked Ms. Flatley and Ms. Matthews for their efforts in the contract negotiations. He also thanked Mr. Campbell, Mr. La Francesca and Ms. Doe for their leadership.

Ms. McCormick was asked to present at the meeting on March 19 or on April 9. Ms. Driscoll said the budget would need to be on the agenda as well.

Ms. Connolly moved, seconded by Ms. Matthews, and it was

VOTED: to adjourn.