

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—November 7, 2007**  
**Auditorium, 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, Asst. Principal**  
**John Murray, Asst. Principal**  
**Andrew Boles, Asst. Principal**

**Convened: 7:00 PM**

**Adjourned: 10:05 PM**

**STUDENT RECOGNITION**

The School Committee recognized the Middle School's peer mediators. Mr. Boles said the students were selected for this training because they exemplify what the Middle School expects of all its students. He said the faculty would be depending on them to help with social problems that arise among their peers. He stated that Mr. Geary and Ms. Fritz are the advisors.

The grade 6 mediators are Jake McCarthy, Maggie O'Connor, Matt Nash, Maddie McLaughlin, Emily Pike and Matt McMillan. Grade 7 mediators are David St. Cyr, Annelise Mahoney, Kayla Costa, Sally Mansour, Alex Kyriakis, Anthony Del Monaco and Kayla Sharpe. Grade 8 mediators are John Hickey and Mashaunda McBarnett.

Ms. Doe congratulated the parents and the students.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Ms. Doe reported that the girls' soccer team won today and will play in the Division II south section semifinals on Friday in Brockton. The opposing team has yet to be announced.

Ms. Doe announced that the district has been notified of its John and Abigail Adams scholarship recipients. She said they were received this week and will be announced to the press tomorrow.

Ms. Doe announced that the High School Boosters Club is sponsoring the Fitness Center dedication, in memory John Kenney, on November 24, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS**

There was none.

## MCAS

Ms. Doe began the presentation of the district results of the spring 2007 MCAS. She said they are encouraged by improvements in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10. She stated the most problematic area is grade 8 math and science. She said measures are in place this year to address this achievement gap. She stated it is noteworthy that grade 10 continues to make dramatic gains in the scores, which she said was due largely to good teachers. She said that as a district team they are not satisfied with the current performance. They believe Dedham can do better on this test and the team is working to make this happen. She said it is important to recognize that Dedham has talented, professional, highly qualified teachers.

Asst. Superintendent Christopher Campbell presented the elementary district results. He emphasized the district's focused review of the math curriculum, which began last year. He said these efforts helped to raise the scores this year. He said they still have considerable work to do in science and need to see growth in the advanced/proficient category in grade 5 English language arts (ELA).

Ms. Kelly presented grades 6 and 7 scores. She said grade 6 scores were above state results in the advanced and proficient categories. She said the weekly use of Yearly Progress Pro (YPP) in grade 6 has helped to increase scores. She reported that grade 7 is on par with the state, but was a gain for the district over last year. She said they are down a little in grade 7 ELA. She said they would be looking closely at the strands to see where curriculum and instruction modifications need to be made.

Ms. Doe presented the grade 8 scores. She stated that 21% advanced/proficient in science and technology was unacceptable. She said 24% advanced/proficient in math was also unacceptable. She stated that 79% scored advanced/proficient in ELA, which indicates the students have the ability to test well. She said she expects different results next year. She reported that grade 10 scored 81% advanced/proficient in math. She said this is a sustained increase from last year. She stated that 75% scored advanced/proficient in ELA. She said they will be working to further improve upon these scores.

### *Elementary*

Principal Sullivan presented the Avery School's results. She began with the grade 3 reading results. Seven percent scored above proficient, 33% proficient, 50% needs improvement and 11% warning. She said these scores were down from 2006. She said the students' strengths were formal and informal English and poetry. Areas of focus are answering open response questions and nonfiction.

Ms. Sullivan stated that grade 3 math scores were 22% advanced, 24% proficient, 44% needs improvement and 10% warning. She said the strengths are data analysis, number sense and representing fractions. Areas of focus are answering open response questions and locating fractions.

Principal Sullivan reported that grade 4 ELA scores were 8% in the advanced category, 45% proficient, 39% needs improvement and 8% warning. Strengths were writing conventions, English structure, style and language. Areas of focus are open response questions and fiction. Ms. Sullivan reviewed the distribution of results by scaled score interval. She said they would be looking to bring those students in the top level of one category into the next category.

Ms. Sullivan reviewed grade 4 math scores. Twenty-two percent scored advanced, 24% proficient, 44% needs improvement and 10% warning. She said the strengths were base 10, understanding, modeling and adding and subtracting fractions. Areas of focus are answering open response questions, geometry and measurement. The scaled score interval result distribution were shown to illustrate the students they would be focusing on to bring to the next level.

Ms. Sullivan presented the grade 5 ELA results. Thirteen percent scored in the advanced category, 39% proficient, 46% in needs improvement and 2% warning. The strengths were different genres and style and language. The areas of focus are answering open response questions, nonfiction and myths. The scaled score interval was reviewed.

Grade 5 math scores were 13% advanced, 22% proficient, 48% needs improvement and 17% warning. The strengths were powers of ten, place value and extending patterns. Areas of focus are answering open response questions, geometry and measurement. The distribution of results on the standard test by scaled score interval was shown. Ms. Sullivan said that the scores have been passed on to the Middle School.

Ms. Sullivan reviewed the grade 5 science and technology/engineering results. Four percent scored in advanced, 31% proficient, 50% needs improvement and 15% warning. She said all areas need improvement.

Ms. Sullivan said the Avery improvement plan will entail providing individual student summary sheets to classroom teachers and specialists to differentiate instruction, increasing emphasis on writing across curriculum focusing on key vocabulary, increased practice on open response questions in class and as homework at least once per week, increased reinforcement of test-taking strategies, and introduction of fractions and decimals earlier in the curriculum with increased use of hands-on manipulatives. She said there would be homework clubs in grades 4 and 5 to provide additional assistance. She said there will also be after school assistance for ELL students to aid in vocabulary development and assist on homework, continuation of the principal's challenge, introduction of math fact mastering recognition and consultation with the math consultant relative to open response questions.

Ms. Cummings presented the Greenlodge School's MCAS results. She reminded the committee that in 2006 the students did extremely well in grade 3 reading with 96% scoring in the advance/proficient range. She reported that this year, grade 3 reading scores were 27% above proficient, 45% proficient, 23% needs improvement and 4% in the warning category. She said strengths were high accuracy rates, nonfiction, fiction and high scores on open response questions. The area of focus will be a continuation of work on open response questions.

Ms. Cummings reported that in grade 3 math 19% scored above proficient, 52% proficient, 23% needs improvement, and 6% warning. Strengths were high accuracy rates, number sense, patterns, relations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data, statistics and probability. She said areas of focus are estimation and fractions.

The grade 4 ELA scores were 4% advanced, 71% proficient, 22% needs improvement, and 2% warning. Ms. Cummings said that accuracy, literature and vocabulary were strengths. Topic development, conventions and answering open response questions are areas of focus going forward. The distribution of results by scaled score interval was reviewed to show the students they would be looking to bring up to the next level.

Ms. Cummings reported that grade 4 math scores were 12% advanced, 47% proficient, 39% needs improvement and 2% warning. She said strengths were accuracy, number sense and answering open response questions. An area of focus will be measurement.

Ms. Cummings reported that grade 5 ELA scores were 15% advanced, 57% proficient, 26% needs improvement and 2% warning. She said the strengths are accuracy, understanding text, and nonfiction. The area of focus will be answering open response questions.

Ms. Cummings stated that grade 5 math scores were 18% advanced, 35% proficient, 37% needs improvement and 10% warning. She said that accuracy, number sense, data, statistics, probability and answering open response questions were areas of strength. Decimals, percents and mixed numbers were areas of weakness.

Ms. Cummings stated the grade 5 science and technology/engineering scores were 6% advanced, 38% proficient, 51% needs improvement and 5% warning. She said strengths were accuracy, technology, engineering and physical science. Areas of focus will be earth science and life science. She said they were disappointed with the scores in this subject area.

Ms. Cummings said the Greenlodge improvement plan will focus on required nightly reading and study of math facts, continuing to put MCAS questions on the back of *Happenings*, vocabulary, MCAS item analysis, and TestWiz utilization by teachers.

Ms. Claypool reviewed the Riverdale School's scores. Grade 3 scored 13% above proficient, 46% proficient, 41% needs improvement and none in the warning category. She said strengths were different genres, myths, and formal and informal English. The area of focus will be on answering open response questions. She said they would be looking at the scaled distribution chart to identify students they could bring up to the next category.

Ms. Claypool reported the grade 3 math results. Twenty-nine percent scored in the above proficient category, 42% proficient, 21% needs improvement and 8% warning. She said strengths were addition and subtraction of common fractions and data analysis. Areas of focus will be on locating and comparing fractions on a number line.

Grade 4 ELA results were 8% advanced, 49% proficient, 44% needs improvement and none in warning. Ms. Claypool said strengths were style, language, vocabulary and myths. Areas of focus are answering open response questions and topic development. The distribution of the results by scaled score interval was illustrated to show the students they would be working to move up to the next level.

Grade 4 math results were 18% advanced, 36% proficient, 44% needs improvement and 3% warning. Strengths were base ten whole numbers and understanding fractions. Areas of focus will be division with three numbers and measurement.

Ms. Claypool reported grade 5 ELA results were 14% advanced, 61% proficient, 24% needs improvement and none in warning. The students' strengths were understanding text, poetry and nonfiction. Areas of focus will be on answering open response questions.

Ms. Claypool stated grade 5 math results were 19% advanced, 36% proficient, 42% needs improvement and 3% warning. She said strengths are use of parentheses, place value and extending patterns. The area of focus is measurement. The distribution of results was reviewed to show the students they would like to bring up to the next level.

Grade 5 science and technology/engineering scores were 25% advanced, 28% proficient, and 47% needs improvement. She reported that there were no warnings. Strengths were technology and engineering and areas of focus are the earth and physical sciences and answering open response questions. She said they were looking to improve science across the district.

Ms. Claypool stated the improvement plan for the Riverdale School will entail weekly homework on open response questions, vocabulary logs, the encouragement of reading at home, expanded writing in grade 3, individual objective summary reports in math for grade 5 teachers for the purpose of differentiating instruction, targeted math practice in basic operations, and vocabulary notebooks targeting science specific vocabulary.

Holli Armstrong reviewed the Oakdale School's scores. She said they are pleased to see improvement in every grade and subject area. She said grade 3 reading areas of strength were myths and formal and informal English. Areas of focus are answering open response questions, fiction and adding more details in writing.

Ms. Armstrong stated that grade 3 math results are 18% above proficient, 53% proficient, 25% needs improvement and 4% warning. Strengths were patterns, relations, algebra, and data analysis. Areas of focus are rounding and regrouping numbers and fractions.

Oakdale's grade 4 ELA scores are 9% advanced, 45% proficient, 41% needs improvement, and 6% warning. Ms. Armstrong said these scores are unacceptable and they would continue to work on improving them. She said the students' strengths were myths and style and language. Areas of focus will be topic development and answering open response questions. The grade's scaled score distribution was reviewed for potential student movement into higher categories.

Ms. Armstrong reported that grade 4 math results were 22% advanced, 32% proficient, 35% needs improvement and 12% warning. The strengths are data analysis and short answer responses. The areas of focus are geometry and measurement.

Ms. Armstrong reported grade 5 ELA scores were 31% advanced, 52% proficient, 17% needs improvement and none in the warning category. Strengths were style and language and understanding text. Areas of focus are nonfiction, myths, and adding details to writing.

Ms. Armstrong reported grade 5 math results were 19% in the advanced category, 48% in the proficient category, 26% in needs improvement and 6% in warning. Strengths were data analysis and place value. Areas of focus are number sense and measurement.

Grade 5 science and technology/engineering scores were 22% advanced, 51% proficient, 27% needs improvement and none in warning. Ms. Armstrong stated the strength was physical science and the areas of focus will be earth and space science and answering open response questions.

Ms. Armstrong stated that Oakdale's improvement plan includes after school math enrichment groups, before and after school MCAS support groups, focus on test taking strategies, mock MCAS tests, supplementary small group reading instruction, the "Worry Tamers" program, and math consultant work on open response and short answer questions.

Ms. Claypool reviewed the district's ELA improvement plan. She said they would be identifying weak areas through assessments at all grade levels and focusing professional development to assure a consistent writing program across all elementary schools. She said the professional

development entails training in Lucy Calkins units of study for primary writing, specifically for grade 3, and six traits for grades 4 and 5. She said there would also be reading incentive programs and morning and afternoon MCAS preparation.

Ms. Armstrong presented the elementary math district improvement plan. She said the focus would be on the utilization of Yearly Progress Pro as an assessment tool to plan instruction, as well as for grade 5 homework exercises, and the use of eInstruction for MCAS preparation. She said the practice of math facts at home will be strongly encouraged. Smart MCAS® will be available for targeted test score improvement. There will also be a parent volunteer math enrichment morning program, TestWiz item analysis, and before and after school MCAS preparation.

Ms. Cummings presented the district improvement plan for elementary science. She stated a science curriculum team visited Burlington's science center last year and subsequently modeled Dedham's center after it. She said the focus is on the science center and kits, item analysis for teachers to determine strengths and weaknesses, assembling review kits for grades 3 and 4, and adding MCAS vocabulary materials to the kits.

Ms. Sullivan presented district level elementary improvement plan. She stated they would focus on varied, frequent assessment with immediate feedback to students, vocabulary instruction across the curricula, and summer professional development focused on developing pacing guides and common assessments.

### *Secondary*

Principal Ruggere presented the grade 6 ELA scores. He said they are going in the right direction, but could be doing better. He said 9% scored in the advanced category, 65% proficient, 22% needs improvement and 4% warning. He said students scoring in advanced and proficient increased by 7% to 74%.

Dr. Laflamme, English Dept. Chair, stated that areas of concern are the open response questions, vocabulary, poetry and topic development in writing. He stated that to improve ELA scores, new software to support the students and the teachers will be used. There will be a focus on writing across the curriculum and use activators consisting of more open response question. The staff will address issues through professional development.

Mr. Ruggere reviewed the grade 6 math scores. He stated 26% scored advanced, 35% proficient, 30% needs improvement, and 9% warning. He stated the advanced and proficient category increased by 10% over 2006.

Math Department Chair Ed Hickey said the areas of concern are the number of students in the needs improvement category, the incomplete responses to short answer and open response questions, and the mastery of fundamental math facts. He stated that the improvement plan for grade 6 math will entail analyzing and linking data from previous MCAS and Stanford-9 tests to classroom instruction through TestWiz; implementing Plato® software, continuing extended learning programs to maximize student performance, providing students with teacher feedback on open response questions, continuing with the YPP program, implementing common assessments, and providing ongoing professional development.

Mr. Ruggere stated the grade 7 ELA scores were not acceptable and they will work to raise scores, with a strong focus on the students in the needs improvement category. He reported 5%

scored advanced, 64% proficient, 27% needs improvement and 4% warning. Mr. Ruggere stated that 69% of students were advanced or proficient.

Dr. Laflamme said concerns in grade 7 ELA were weak topic development and the quality of open response answers. He stated that the improvement plan would include implementing “Go My Access” writing software and Plato® ELA, continued writing across the curriculum, analyzing and linking test data to classroom instruction through TestWiz, analyzing writing prompts and providing professional development.

Mr. Ruggere reviewed the grade 7 math results. Fourteen percent scored advanced, 33% proficient, 35% needs improvement and 17% warning. He reported that the number of students in the advanced/proficient category increased by 19%. He stated that all students in the needs improvement and warning categories are on individualized improvement plans.

Mr. Hickey stated the concerns in grade 7 math were weak answers to open response questions, mastery of number sense concepts and mastery of math vocabulary. The improvement plan would focus on decreasing the number of students in the needs improvement and warning categories. He said to achieve this they would link test data analysis to classroom instruction, implement the Plato® program, utilize YPP, provide after-school programs, consult with grade 6 math teachers on students’ strengths and weaknesses and provide ongoing professional development.

Mr. Ruggere reported that grade 8 ELA scores were 10% advanced, 70% proficient, 17% needs improvement and 3% warning. He noted that 80% of the students scored in the advance/proficient category.

Dr. Laflamme stated that concerns were vocabulary and connotation and weak answers to open response questions, specifically, failure to cite evidence from text. He stated that the improvement plan for grade 8 ELA is to increase the number of students in the advanced/proficient category. He said to achieve this they would target professional development for teachers, implement new software, continue writing across the curriculum, analyze and link test data to classroom instruction and provided individualized, specific feedback on writing prompts.

Mr. Ruggere presented the grade 8 math scores. Ten percent scored advanced, 17% proficient, 39% needs improvement and 35% warning. He said the scores are not acceptable. Mr. Ruggere also reviewed the scores of students that entered the district in 2005 or later. He noted their scores were not on par with those that came up through the district’s schools and it would be necessary to differentiate instruction for them to maximize their MCAS performance.

Mr. Hickey stated that the grade 8 math concerns were data analysis, open response, number sense and new students in need of remediation. He outlined the improvement plan this grade. He said the bottom-line interest is in increasing the number of students in the advanced and proficient categories. He stated grade 8 has a new textbook with on-line support materials this year. They are creating individualized student success plans, analyzing and linking test data to classroom instruction, implementing Plato®, utilizing YPP, providing after-school remedial and enrichment programs, consulting with teachers about students’ strengths and weaknesses, using common assessments to monitor performance and drive instruction, and providing ongoing professional development on new instructional materials, software and assessment programs. Mr. Ruggere stated that the Plato® program is available for all students.

Mr. Ruggere reported that grade 8 scores in science and technology were 22% proficient, 52% needs improvement, and 26% warning. Don Ross, Science Department Chair, stated that one of the biggest concerns is that the test covers three years of curriculum and requires a breadth of knowledge to achieve proficiency. He said other areas of concern were technology, both manufacturing and industrial science, open response questions, and key terms and vocabulary related to science.

Mr. Ross stated the improvement plan for science will increase the number of students in the advanced and proficient categories. He said that MCAS vocabulary would be stressed in all lessons, the bi-weekly vocabulary lessons would continue, open response questions would be used as daily warm-up or class ending exercises and practice MCAS questions would be completed in class and for homework. He added that the grade 9 teachers at the High School are reviewing the 8<sup>th</sup> grade tests to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses.

Mr. Ross stated that the MCAS student handbook and practice science tests are posted on Blackboard this year. He said that the science handbook contains vocabulary, tips on studying vocabulary and strategies for answering open response and multiple choice questions. He said the practice tests contain questions sorted by subject content areas that can be used as practice unit tests, sample MCAS tests, or for review for the final exam.

Mr. Winrow thanked the faculty for their efforts with the MCAS test. He said this is the test that counts in terms of graduation. He stated that the 2008 and 2009 graduating classes must pass ELA and math to graduate. The 2010 and 2011 classes must pass ELA, math and science. The 2012 class must pass ELA, math, science, and social studies. He stated the High School initiatives include writing across the curriculum, administering the mock MCAS, demonstrating a strong work ethic, providing targeted professional development to support content area mastery, requiring curricular rigor, re-establishing the Academic Center (Sept. 2007), emphasizing core values of respect, responsibility, commitment and performance, utilizing common assessments to guide instruction and improve student performance, continuing to analyze test data and continuing with curricula adjustments.

Mr. Winrow stated that the proficiency index for the biology test was 73%, which was significantly higher than the state average. He also reported the grade 8 2005 cohort science scores, which have moved in a positive direction. Mr. Winrow stated that the proficiency index for chemistry was 71%. He said that Dedham's scores were significantly higher than the state average in this test as well. He stated that only thirty-five students took the test, so it would not be fair to generalize the scores, but they were encouraging nonetheless. He stated that the school's strengths, in addition to the biology and chemistry results, were the alignment of the curriculum with state standards, instructional expertise, and improved performance on the open response questions.

Mr. Ross stated that concerns in the area of science were continued improvement on the open response questions, continued improvement in human anatomy and physiology, genetics, stoichiometry, and the continuation of the vocabulary program. He said the improvement plan would entail the use of the MCAS student handbook and MCAS practice tests on Blackboard.

Mr. Winrow reviewed the ELA and math results. He reported that 95% of the students passed both the ELA and math tests compared to the state average of 85%. He stated 4% passed only the English test and no students had passed only the math test. He said 1% had not yet passed either test.



Mr. Winrow reported a 76% proficiency index for grade 10 ELA. He compared the results with the state average and with prior years. He stated that the grade 10 cohort showed continued improvement from grade 4 in 2001 to now.

Dr. Laflamme stated that ELA strengths were fiction, sentence fluency, vocabulary, and poetry comprehension. Areas of concern are non-fiction, theme, main idea, punctuation, multiple meaning and connotations in the area of vocabulary, and interpretation of poetry. The improvement plan would target nonfiction structure, continuation of the vocabulary program, emphasis of student responsibility for assigned work, precise teacher feedback, and incorporating best practices in grammar instruction.

Mr. Winrow reported the grade 10 math results, which show an 85% proficiency index. He compared the results to the state average and to prior years' results. He also showed the cohort, which had a significant improvement since testing in grades 4 and 7.

Mr. Winrow stated that the math strengths were a sustained improvement in the "advanced" category. Mr. Hickey added that they will continue to push the students to excel. He reported that the teachers have met to adjust the algebra and geometry curricula. He said areas of focus would be targeting students for an MCAS course, vocabulary, curricular adjustments, course sequencing, problem-solving skills for open response questions and supporting students transitioning to the High School.

Mr. Hickey said the improvement plan for math would entail continuing analysis of student placement and performance data, continuation of the MCAS course, accelerated placement in the grade 9 algebra course, continued development and use of common assessments, and identifying key concepts and problems from previous MCAS tests.

The presentation was concluded and the committee called for a five minute break at 8:50 PM.

Following the break, the School Committee opened the floor for questions from the audience. Susan Richberg had several questions. She asked if the MCAS passing score was being changed from 220 to 240. Mr. Winrow the Department of Education has said it is not changing the passing score. He cautioned that students not scoring 240, however, would be monitored. He said it is a gray area and no changes have been made as of yet.

Ms. Richberg asked if the before and after school programs were open to everyone and if they were fee based. Mr. Campbell answered they were not fee based and the students were selected based on teacher recommendation and MCAS performance.

Ms. Richberg asked which students would be placed on individualized student success plans (ISSP). Mr. Ruggere said that this is for all students scoring in the warning and needs improvement categories. She asked who is in charge of the ISSP. Mr. Ruggere replied that the guidance counselors are responsible for ensuring the plans are implemented. Ms. Doe said the ISSP's are not new, they are just expanding the use of this tool to students in the needs improvement category.

Ms. Richberg asked if the High School had dropped the two year algebra I course. Mr. Winrow said that right now grade 8 students go from algebra 1 to algebra 1 advanced if they are not prepared for algebra II. He said they are looking at other ways of completing the algebra I coursework in less time.

Ms. Richberg asked how the assessments translated into what is being taught. Mr. Campbell answered that TestWiz is used to analyze test data. He said the other assessments are formative assessments, which means it helps to guide instruction. Ms. Doe added that the standards are the curriculum and the software programs being utilized support the standards. Ms. Richberg asked how often the teachers are using this data. Mr. Boles said there is not a lot of time involved for teachers to obtain the data to evaluate it.

Veronica Collins praised Mr. Winrow's illustration of the progression of the students over time. She said it would be helpful to have that information for all levels. She thanked everyone for their support of the students. She said her daughter passed her tenth grade MCAS, after not having passed the test before this year. She said she is concerned about the Middle School and asked about the ISSPs. Ms. Doe said the DOE requires ISSP's for students that fail MCAS. She stated that Dedham's remediation program has always been after school. She stated that these students' parents receive a letter regarding the remediation program and they can choose whether their child would be participating. Ms. Collins said the remediation works. She asked if they expected the low math scores to impact ELA scores. Ms. Doe said the administration does not anticipate this.

Ms. Collins asked about access to MCAS support technology at home. Mr. Boles reviewed access to the Vantage® program, YPP, and Plato®. She then asked about Blackboard access. Mr. Langenhorst said having an observer login was the district's intention, but the district's version of Blackboard does not allow for this. He said they have asked students to share their password with their parents. He said overall it has not been a problem.

Ms. Collins asked about the professional development in place. Ms. Kelly reviewed the offerings. She said grades 1 and 2 are completing English language learner (ELL) training. Grade 3 is covering Lucy Calkins, which is a writing program, and grades 4 and 5 are learning about six traits writing. She said that writing was being covered at the secondary level as well.

Ms. Driscoll asked about the ISSP's. Mr. Ruggere said these plans are sent home and parents must sign off on them.

Ms. Butler asked whose job it was to work on the grade 8 math issues. Mr. Murray said he and Mr. Hickey would be offering the after school program to the freshmen students in need of remediation. He said they would compare scores with term 1 grades to identify students at risk for poor performance. He said these students would do small group work to catch up to grade level. Ms. Doe said Ms. McCormick will be working with them to provide the services they need. Mr. Winrow said each student will be looked at individually.

Ms. Butler asked about the parents who will be teaching in the elementary math enrichment program. Ms. Doe said this program is modeled after a successful program in Concord. She said these parents either use math in their job or have a background in it.

Ms. Butler worried about the loss of professional development days in recent years. Ms. Doe said professional development days have not been reduced. She stated there are five half days of professional development and one full day. Ms. Kelly said they have worked up to 20 hour long meetings in addition to the aforementioned professional development time.

Ms. Butler asked how they could access this MCAS presentation. Mr. Langenhorst said it should be on-line later this evening.

Ms. Collins asked if they would be phasing in new textbooks. Ms. Doe said they added grade 8 textbooks this year. She said the majority of grade 8 students did not have textbooks prior to this. She added that the district does need textbook money and hopes it will be approved in this year's budget. In prior years this budget item has been eliminated or greatly reduced.

Ms. Mullins asked how teachers found the time to fulfill their students' ISSP's. Ms. Doe answered that it is asking a lot to do this, but the whole state assessment plan asks a lot of districts. She said the data is precise, which helps.

Ms. Walko said that the curriculum is assumed to be aligned with the standards and that the district has good teachers, leaders, and energy. She said, however, that the parents are not sure what is being taught. Ms. Doe said the standards are in place. She said that the Middle School students did well in ELA. There was targeted improvement in 6<sup>th</sup> grade as well as in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math. She said math and science in grade 8 are weaknesses and there would be specific remediation built into the school day. She said grade 8 did not have appropriate materials in the past. She stated that they are taking a look at the science materials and sequencing. Ms. Kelly said administrators and supervisors expect the teachers to recognize the standards in their lessons. Ms. Walko asked how many times teachers are being observed. Mr. Ruggere said the administrators reserve a portion of the day to visit classrooms.

Ms. Connolly asked, on behalf of a parent, whether they compare scores against the teacher the students had. Ms. Doe said that the teachers receive the students' scores. Mr. Ross said this allows the teachers to discuss best practices to improve instruction. Ms. Flatley asked when those discussions would happen. Mr. Ross said the hour long meetings are dedicated to common assessments, so this type of analysis would take place then. Ms. Sullivan said the teachers do this evaluation at the elementary level as well.

Ms. Flatley asked if the teachers that have the student the following year would also have access to the scores. Ms. Sullivan said both teachers would see that data. Ms. Doe reiterated that significant analysis takes place. She reminded them of the grade level meetings that are held to discuss strengths and weaknesses. Ms. Connolly asked how often they meet for this reason. Ms. Doe said last year they used all meetings to address this. This year they are using a portion of the meetings to address this.

Ms. Connolly asked how students' grades compare with their MCAS scores. Dr. Laflamme said that last year he looked at students in the needs improvement and warning categories to compare with their grades. He provided teachers with lists of the students and asked for information about them as well as for justification for any variation in the scores and their grades. He said they are continuing those discussions this year. Mr. Ross said the comparison was done in science last year and a grade 8 teacher offered to do this again this year. Ms. Connolly commented that there has been some disconnect. Ms. Collins asked that they bear in mind the whole student when grading, not just MCAS performance.

Ms. Matthews asked if the open response component is a pervasive problem in other communities. Ms. Doe said that Greenlodge had good results in open response and the district has a focus on this. She said they focus on this because it provides them with the best shot to improve scores. Ms. Doe said this year open response was not maximized. Dr. Laflamme said the needs improvement students did not perform well in this area. He said he hopes Vantage Learning will help these students. Mr. Campbell said that the open response component is a worthy focus regardless, as it is an essential skill to have.

Mr. Ryan suggested that elementary students should be doing homework on open response questions. He said they should continue to encourage reading and math computation as well.

Ms. Driscoll stated the School Committee takes the scores seriously and review this matter quarterly. She requested an analysis of SAT and A/P performance be presented at a future meeting. She thanked the teachers and staff that have worked hard to support the effort to improve MCAS scores.

Ms. Driscoll stated the next School Committee meeting is Tuesday, November 27. She said the committee would ask its MCAS questions then.

### **MINUTES**

***October 17, 2007***

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

**VOTED:** to approve the October 17, 2007 minutes.

### **DONATIONS**

Ms. Doe stated that the Mah's, owners of the Tahiti Restaurant, donated \$1,000 to Dedham High School. She stated the donation was in recognition of their 40<sup>th</sup> year of business in Dedham.

Ms. Matthews moved, with grateful appreciation, seconded by Mr. Healy, also with grateful appreciation, and it was

**VOTED:** to accept the donation.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Flatley reported that the Budget Subcommittee met today. She said the subcommittee would review the capital budget prior to full committee vote.

Ms. Matthews said the Policy Subcommittee is discussing when it could hold its next meeting.

Ms. Driscoll stated the School committee would have a meeting at 6:30 PM prior to the Special Town Meeting on November 13.

Ms. Driscoll appointed Mr. Ryan to serve on the Master Plan Committee.

### **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Ms. Driscoll stated the November 27 agenda would include MCAS follow-up, an update on the Strategic Plan, and an executive session at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Doe stated she would be inviting the John and Abigail Adams scholarship recipients to a future meeting.

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

**VOTED:** to adjourn.