

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—September 12, 2007
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, Asst. Principal
John Murray, Asst. Principal
Andrew Boles, Asst. Principal

Convened: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 8:30 PM

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

The principals introduced their new staff to the committee. Mr. Winrow began the introductions with the High School staff. He stated that Diane Duke, Science Teacher, Alison Reilley, a Foreign Language Teacher who transferred from the Middle School, and Millie Skinner, Social Studies Teacher, were not able to attend this evening. He then introduced the new staff present.

- Thomas Arria, Athletic Director,
- Beth-Ann Brunstrum, Special Education Teacher
- Tammy Buckley, Special Education Teacher,
- Kathryn Curie Special education Teacher
- Erika Eisenhut, Math Teacher
- John Gould, Social Studies Chair
- William Hayes, Math Teacher
- Sarah Kane, English Teacher
- Joanne McCormick, Guidance Chair
- John Murray, Asst. Principal
- Joseph Regonlinski, Alt. Education Teacher
- Patricia Rocha, Academic Center Specialist
- Kathleen Spies, Math Teacher

New Middle School Principal, Timothy Ruggere, introduced his new staff. He stated that Foreign Language Teacher, Jenny Lizardo, Thomas McLeish, a Health/P.E. Teacher who transferred from the High School, Susan Carter, Secretary, Christine Farrell, a Foreign Language Teacher who taught in Dedham several years ago, and Liz Hegarty, an English Teacher who is returning after a career leave of absence were not present this evening. He then introduced his new staff who were present at the meeting.

- Dan King, Social Studies Teacher
- Ghazala Mehmood, Science Teacher
- Maria Miguel, Foreign Language Teacher
- Meg Wolchko, Reading Teacher
- Andy Boles, Asst. Principal
- Sarah Nitsche, Math Teacher

Ms. Cummings introduced the staff new to the Greenlodge School.

- Mandy Ciarletta, Physical Education Teacher, Greenlodge and Riverdale Schools
- Rebecca Goncalves, Speech & Language Pathologist
- Nora Sotomayor, ESOL Teacher

Ms. Claypool thanked the committee for adding the first grade teacher position to the budget, which allowed her to hire back Aubrey Cochrane. She then introduced her new staff.

- Andrew Podolski, Grade 5 Teacher
- Sara Robillard, Title One Teacher
- Kristin Souza, .5 Special Education Teacher

Ms. Sullivan introduced the new staff at the Avery School.

- Marie Madden, Avery and Oakdale School and the ECEC
- Allyn Phelps, Music, Avery & Greenlodge Schools

Ms. Dineen introduced her new ECEC staff. Neither was able to attend this evening.

- Emily Buchbinder, Full Day Kindergarten Teacher
- Donna Benites, Preschool Teacher

Ms. Armstrong introduced her new Oakdale staff member.

- David Carey, Physical Education, Oakdale and Avery Schools

Ms. Doe thanked the department chairs for their efforts in bringing talented new staff to Dedham.

Ms. Driscoll welcomed the new staff on behalf of the board.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Ms. Doe announced that the central administration has relocated from the Dexter School to the High School. She encouraged the community to stop by for a visit. She stated that TEC has expanded into the vacated space at Dexter.

Ms. Doe announced that the High School will hold its first PTO meeting on Monday, September 17. A Welcome Back Dance, sponsored by the Senior Class, would be held on September 15. The first Parents' Night at the High School is a mock schedule and would be held on October 1.

Ms. Doe recognized the students that participated in the Neponset Valley Leadership Institute over the summer. They were Ryan Murray, Katelin Timmins, Rory O'Hanlon, and Victoria Flagg-Durkin.

Ms. Doe recognized the winners of the National Moose Lodge Kids Talk Program contest. She stated that Dedham students consistently place nationally. Sheila Quinn won first place and Melissa Hallisey won second. Other Dedham High School students in the top ten were: Lindsey Kelly, Andrea Hage, Kerrin Otto and Megan Healey. Ms. Doe stated that the program has reached more than 5,000 elementary students. She offered special thanks to Jim Boles and Dick Finn for piloting the program.

Ms. Doe announced that the girls' tennis team will host a car wash at the Middle School on September 29. She stated that Mr. Santamaria came up with the idea of holding car washes at this location and helped to coordinate this event.

Ms. Doe stated that those interested in joining the High School's School Council should contact the main office.

Ms. Doe reported on the opening of school. She said the community should be pleased that the buildings were in excellent condition, and she commended the custodians for their hard work. She also thanked the administrators, teacher and support staff for their preparation. She said the teachers were ready to teach when school opened and students were working right away. She said it was a pleasure to see everyone back.

Coordinated Program Review

Mr. Campbell reported that Dedham would be participating in a Coordinated Program Review this year. He said it is conducted by the Department of Education's Office of Program Quality Assurance, which monitors regulated programs relative to special education, English learner education, civil rights, Title IX, Section 504, Title II (ADA), No Child Left Behind, MGL c. 71A and other federal and state laws. He said this office also manages complaints and provides ongoing technical assistance for regulated program areas.

Mr. Campbell discussed the Coordinated Program Review elements. He stated that every school district is reviewed every six years and is subject to a mid-cycle special education follow up visit three years following the review. He said it is a very extensive process and the meetings with the DOE would begin as early as October. Information for the public will be disseminated and community members would be invited to participate. He said the process culminates with a final report with an executive summary, which is distributed to the community.

Mr. Campbell said this important process is helpful to the district. He said the review has already begun in the sense that the administration is working to prepare for the site visit. He said documentation would be presented to the DOE by December. An overview of the areas the DOE is looking at include student assessment, special education programming, parent and community involvement, support services, staff, facilities, program planning and evaluation, and record keeping.

Ms. Matthews asked for a general time frame for the review. Mr. Campbell said their documents would be submitted in December. The DOE will conduct an eight week review and then do a site visit, which will last approximately five days. Following that, the DOE will furnish them with a preliminary report. The draft will be reviewed by the district and they will have one month to respond. He said the final report would be issued a few weeks following that.

Mr. Campbell said he was an auditor with the DOE last year for Norwell's review. He said it was informative to observe the process. He said he also participate din Dedham's Coordinated Review six years ago. Ms. Matthews asked when the review would be completed. Mr. Campbell replied it would be early spring. Mr. Campbell said the special education page on the DOE website will provide a link to Dedham's report.

Ms. Flatley asked if there would be administrators from other towns participating in Dedham's review. Mr. Campbell said that would not be known until late fall. He stated the DOE does open it to special education administrators interested in observing the process.

Ms. Kelly reminded the committee of the district's strategic planning initiative, which is underway. She stated the community is invited to attend the September 24 input meeting, and letters of invitation have been sent. She stated that consultant Dr. Ladd is working with them, and she and Mr. Campbell will chair the steering committee.

AYP

Ms. Kelly stated that the district received news from the DOE that the Middle School did not make adequate yearly progress in ELA in the special education and low income subgroups. She noted that one is typically a subset of the other. She stated that Middle School parents were notified last Friday. She said the district will be required to develop an improvement plan for the subgroups. She said administrators have begun meeting to discuss this and devise a plan. She said they would be looking at their service delivery model and may be making adjustments to schedules. She said they also did not make AYP in math for a first year. She said if that happens next year, they will be put on improvement status.

Ms. Kelly reported that in response to this situation several administrators reviewed the Plato learning program this week. She said that Mr. Boles is familiar with it. Mr. Boles stated that they had significant success with it in Taunton in both the low income and special education subgroups. He said they would like to use different models to make similar adjustments to maximize school facilities to support learning in the Middle School.

Mr. Roberts asked what they could expect for updates on this. Ms. Kelly said that they have three months to develop a plan. She said the DOE is supposed to have a press conference tomorrow to announce those districts listed on improvement up to corrective action. She said she would keep the committee apprised of the plan to assist the students' mastery of the curriculum. Mr. Roberts said it is important to keep the School Committee and parents up to date on the progress. Mr. Campbell said he has suggested to all schools that they look at MCAS data and objective studies to make sure they are addressing the IEP's. He said they are also looking at the coordination between regular and special education teachers to ensure they are providing the support the special educations students need.

Ms. Flatley asked about individual scores. Ms. Doe said that when MCAS scores are released all parents will receive notification of their children's scores. Ms. Kelly reviewed how the calculation is made to determine AYP. She said the target was 85.4 and Dedham was 73.6 in special education and 84.5 in low income.

Ms. Kelly noted that by 2014 all districts must be at the 100% proficiency level. Ms. Matthews commented that one would expect more and more schools being added to the improvement list as

the years progress; AYP will be more difficult to attain over time. She underscored the possible lack of realism in accomplishing 100% proficiency.

A parent mentioned that 19 special education students in a small group class seemed large. Mr. Ruggere said that six students were moved out of this class and it is now 13 in number. He said they are considering bringing in a speech and language pathologist into the class of six supported by a paraprofessional. The parent asked if the class of 13 would be reduced. Mr. Boles said it is not 13 to 1; a paraprofessional is there to support the carrying out of the IEP's. He remarked that Dedham has done a great job with its special education program. The parent agreed. She said her daughter went from a small group setting to regular education. Mr. Boles said they use an inclusion model and the objective is to mainstream to regular education.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

There was none.

Taken out of order.

DONATIONS

Ms. Doe reported that the Alex family very generously donated \$10,000 to the Dedham Middle School to support its athletic program.

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

VOTED: to accept the donation.

Ms. Doe stated that the Dedham Educational Partnership donated \$3,000 to the Dedham Public Schools. The funds are to be used for the purchase of library books. The High and Middle Schools will receive \$500 each, and the elementary schools will receive \$400 each.

Mr. Healy moved, with grateful appreciation, seconded by Mr. Roberts, with grateful appreciation, and it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the donation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 16, 2007

Ms. Connolly pointed out that on page 2, line 51, the term should be lease date, not "least date".

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

VOTED: to approve the August 16, 2007 minutes as amended. Mr. Healy abstained from this vote due to his absence from the August 16 meeting.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Butler recommended that Dedham consider moving towards a longer school day and longer school year. She said there should be more vacation time during the school year and less during the summer. She said that many students are tired by the time the MCAS test is administered and the change in the vacation schedule would help to alleviate this. She also recommended Dedham move to an all day kindergarten program, and offer keyboarding and foreign language instruction for children beginning in grade one. Ms. Driscoll said they would take that under advisement in the strategic planning. Ms. Doe asked Ms. Butler for a copy of her statement. Ms. Matthews

asked Ms. Butler if she would be at the September 24 meeting. Ms. Butler said she would not but her husband would be.

Ms. Sullivan thanked Clair Honda, Dunkin Donuts and Roche Bros. for their donations to the June DEP fundraiser. She also thanked Ms. Doe, Ms. Kelly and the other administrators that attended the event. She thanked School Committee members John Healy and David Roberts, Selectman MacDonald, and Representative McMurtry. She stated the combined Middle and High School jazz band gave a wonderful performance. She also thanked Mr. Ryan for volunteering to sit in the dunk tank, as well as Mr. DelloIocono, Ms. Armstrong, two Middle School teachers and a few students.

SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS

Ms. Driscoll said that this is the third review of the goals.

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

VOTED: to accept the Superintendent's goals.

RE-ORGANIZATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES & LIAISON DESIGNATIONS

Ms. Driscoll assigned the committee members to the various subcommittee and school councils as follows.

Budget Subcommittee: Ms. Flatley, Ms. Connolly and Mr. Ryan

Policy Subcommittee: Mr. Roberts, Ms. Matthews and Mr. Healy

School Councils:

Avery – Ms. Flatley

Greenlodge – Mr. Ryan

Oakdale – Ms. Matthews

Riverdale – Mr. Healy

Middle – Mr. Roberts

High – Ms. Connolly

ECEC – Ms. Driscoll

Ms. Driscoll stated that the other designations will remain as they currently are. She recommended the Policy Subcommittee meet soon to discuss some pending items.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Ms. Driscoll postponed this item.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOALS

Ms. Driscoll said that the draft goals were distributed by Ms. Flatley this evening. Mr. Roberts suggested the committee discuss them at the next meeting.

PRELIMINARY UPDATE ON MCAS SCORES

Ms. Kelly reviewed this under the Superintendent's Update.

COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW

Mr. Campbell discussed the Coordinated Program Review under the Superintendent's Update.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Driscoll noted there was a change in the fall meeting schedule. She said the School Committee would be meeting on October 24 instead of October 17.

Ms. Matthews asked about a preliminary MCAS presentation. Ms. Doe said that a very preliminary report could be presented on October 24.

Ms. Driscoll said that Dr. Ladd has offered to meet with the board to discuss the strategic planning process. Ms. Doe recommended the committee meet with him prior to the community meeting on September 24.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Driscoll stated the next meeting date would be September 26. It would include a summer reading update and an update from the department chairs on their initiatives for the year, which would include a discussion on common assessments at the request of the committee.

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

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

The committee would not be coming out of executive session to adjourn.