

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—May 27, 2009
Town Hall, Lower Conference Room

PRESENT

Dave Roberts, Chair
Margaret Connolly, Vice Chair
Thomas Ryan
Tracy Driscoll
John Healy
Kevin Coughlin
Joe Heisler

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager

Convened: 7:26 PM

Adjourned: 9:35 PM

Congratulations to the top scorers in the New England Math League Contest.

Middle School: Joseph VonShoppe, Jamie McNamara, Sean Kineavy, Connor Dolan, Meghan Simone, Joseph DeVirgilio, Alexandra Perez, John Moran, Matthew Naddaff, Worth Walrod, Chloe Seibert, Robert Curran, Nicholas Romig, Joseph Ryan, Elias Elias, Corey McNaughton, Karine Keyrouz, Erik Bruder-Moore, Kimberly Flatley, Scott McNeil, Ryan Alijondi, Laura DiRaffaele, Jackson Lawlor, Angel Morales, Jodie Munchbach, Zachary Perez, Mark Turner.

Avery: Tylor Craffey, Brendan Hart, Vitaliy Andrusyshyn, Sabrina Ciampa, John Carter, Stephen Acosta, Ashley Palmieri, Lee Nelson, Daniel McKiernan, Brendan St. Clair.

Greenlodge: Emmanuelle Fried, Alyssa Bednar, Frankie Amendola, Grey Gettleman, Olivia Corrado, Declan Downey, William Padgett, Jakob Farnham, Marykate McNeil, Amelia McDonough, Robert Lau, Marco Feeney, Emily Martin, Connor Quinn.

Oakdale: Jake Tighe, Nate Reynolds, Kyle Mcgahan, Emma Tolley, Matt Wilcox, Sarah Stapleton, Michelle Carty, Matthew Maloney, Sarah Perno, Bea Edmonds, Molly McKenna, Kevin Clifford, Jillian Mercer, Noah Littman, Jack Powers.

Riverdale: James Duncan, Oscar Littmarck, Katharine Cabot, Alex Heilmann, Robert Chiozzi, Kaiser Leung, Bailery Turner, John Dowling, Ned Cramer, Sam Rowley, Perry Letourneau, Michael Shpits.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

HS Superintendent's Academic Recognition Dinner was held on May 26th for the top 30 students in HS 2009 graduating class. The event was held at MIT Endicott House. The students are: Nadine Abouhamad, Rani Aljandi, Melissa Caissy, Jennifer Anne Canaday, Sara Caplan, Michael Carilli, Milo Carpenter, Brian Chin, Caitlin Driscoll, Kelsie Driscoll, Caitlin fahy, Katrina Fahy, Matthew Fay, Andrea Hage, Melissa Hallisey, Gabriella Iarrobino, Lindsey Kelly, Jamie Lionetto, Stephanie Lloyd, Lindsay MacDonald, Jessica MacLean, Rory O'Hanlon, Jeffrey Pezzone, Kaylinnette Pinet, Allison Polansky, Jessica Robinson, Nicole Savi, Daniel Sullivan, Michelle Totino, Nicholas Valentino, Richard Widmaier.

Elementary School Update – all MCAS tests will be complete and sent back on or before May 29, 2009.

ECEC: Informational night was held on May 26th. Parents will visit the elementary schools on June 10th and the children will visit on June 9th.

Avery: Student Council is sponsoring Spirit Week this week. Yesterday was pajama day, today was crazy hair or hat day. First grade students are learning about the life cycle of chickens. They are proud to announce the birth (hatching) of two baby chicks. Family Fun Night will be held on Friday, May 29.

Greenlodge: The “Walking Wednesdays Program” is growing in popularity. 214 students walked or rode bikes to school last week. Sharing Assembly will take place this Friday at 2p.m. Welcome to Greenlodge receptions for incoming principal Kathy Kiewlicz are being planned.

Oakdale: Grade one participated in “Savings Make Cents” put on by the Dedham Institute for Savings. The first graders are proud parents of new butterflies which they hatched from the egg stage watching the metamorphosis. Field trips are planned for the Roger Williams Park Zoo, Arnold Arboretum, and New England Aquarium. The annual Spring Concert will be held on Friday June 5.

Riverdale: Riverdale PTO donated \$4500.00 for a new Smart Board. The high school students came to watch a unique play of famous nursery rhyme characters. Volunteer Tea will be held on June 1st. Pen Pal night will be held on June 2nd where the fourth grade students get to meet their Pen Pals. Grade 2 will be going to the Franklin Park Zoo on June 3rd.

CHAIR’S UPDATE

Letter from Principal Santamaria extending an invitation to the SC to attend underclassmen awards Monday evening, June 8th. Selectmen will be having a presentation by the SBRC on June 4th on plans for the new Avery School. District Chairs are going to be invited. We would like to extend our best wishes to the HS softball team tomorrow playing in the state tournament in Fairhaven. On a personal note – it’s great to be back and would like to thank everyone for the phone calls. The Chair passed out a sample of the kinds of questions 5th graders had to answer on MCAS recently. “Are you smarter than a fifth grader?” Thanks to Mrs. Connolly for stepping in during his down time and keeping him in the loop.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

none

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

none

REPORTS

PE/Health:

The Committee asked for further explanation on the Physical education schedule at the High School next year. Department Chair – Ms. Bohan discussed the details of those changes. For the 2009-2010 school year, Grades 9 and 10 will return to the previously used Health and PE schedule. They will all be scheduled into a block (for example Period 5) and would meet 5 times over the seven day cycle – 3 health periods and 2 PE periods and flip flop the following week. For grades 11 and 12, we are using the delayed opening MCAS time. The 11th graders will be scheduled in for a PE block. This is the fourth year scheduling Grade 12 for CPR certification. Thanks to Fallon Ambulance for coming in and running this program.

Alternative Waiver – based on State requirements, there is a very limited opportunity. For example if a student participated in a structured, supervised program for the entire year (martial arts, dance, gymnastics) they could get pre-approval with certain requirements to be met. They have to complete a minimum of two 60-minute class periods a week per semester. Grade is based on a pass/fail. Discussion: Extra-curricular sports (practice time) are not considered supervised, structured learning time. Dedham District has been audited and therefore has to comply with new regulations.

Mrs. Kelly announced the Coordinated Program Review has been finalized and approved. Progress reports have been approved. PE was one of the areas that came under review.

Update on goals of the Strategic Plan – Superintendent Doe

Progress that has been achieved this year and areas we are proud of.

Academic Excellence:

Professional Development was directed in four core subject areas on common assessments in Grades 6-12. Completion of assessments will continue in 2009.

MCAS Review and Remedial Programs

Before and after school programs are in place in all elementary schools. At the Middle School introduced software programs: Plato and My Access writing program, YPP, and My Skills Tutor. New elementary math program – FASTT Math for grades 2-5. Great for practicing math facts for better recall. Very positive feedback from the program. New math program Everyday Math for grades K-1, piloted in grade 2 and as of September of 2009 students K-4th grades will have the program in place. Dr. LaFlamme worked with 4th grade teachers on developing Rubrics for writing and writing standards. The program will continue next year. Grade level curriculum meetings continue in each elementary school. District level to assess Everyday Math and writing Rubrics. Gates McGinitie assessment was administered at the Middle School. New HS Technology course is being introduced this fall called Personal Finance and Business Math. HS Science put in a 5 hour intensive after school prep. Increased offerings for courses for AP Biology, Chemistry and Honors English. Expanded Special Education summer programs in elementary and middle school. Revised the criteria for entry into the alternative team model at the high school.

Positive Learning Environment and Respect:

“I am Dirt” was a very positive learning program at the High School. Developmental Designs curriculum is now used in the advisory program at the MS. All elementary schools are using the Responsive Classroom. The Hero Art program on diversity was provided to all elementary students. Student Councils have been placed in all elementary schools and after-school enrichment programs have expanded.

Communication:

DPS Website continues to be improved and rapidly updated. Expand use of ConnectEd. Regularly schedule meetings are held with Selectmen, Town Manager and Town Departments.

HS Accomplishments: Mr. Santamaria

Freshmen Academy and Common Assessments, the MMSI Award and implementation, the new daily schedule implementation, the revised student handbook, mid-term exam implementation, new grading system implementation the open house program are some of the things we are most proud of this year. We are working on a “Saturday School” which is an option to out of school suspensions. Two teachers will be on duty every other Saturday from 8am – 12pm that is structured for 1 hour of service around the building, 1 hour of class work. This does not take the place of suspensions for serious offenses.

Ms. Connolly suggested going beyond the students and reach out to the parents on the additional AP course offerings. Mr. Ryan fully supports the idea of Saturday School, great idea.

Oakdale: Ms. Armstrong

The After School enrichment program is part of our school improvement plan that was implemented in 2007. Each session proves to be more popular than the previous session. The cost of the program is very low. We do offer scholarships as well – our goal is to allow any student to participate who wants to. Another program is called “Senior Buddies” which once a month a buddy session is scheduled. The students invite a grandparent, elderly neighbor and an activity is scheduled to do together. This program fosters inter-generational learning.

Riverdale: Ms. Claypool

Math Hall of Fame – to focus on basic math functions. The students have 5 minutes to score 90% or better. “How does your engine run?” was started this year. This program targets our very high energy population to help focus that energy. We implemented “Going Green” where the oldest child brings home the notices and web based information to save paper. Project Based Learning

program is a learning method for a comprehensive approach to instruction. The approach is to teach 21st century skills. Our Student Council is another accomplishment this year. They invented ways to raise \$1000 for shirts for field day.

Avery: Ms. Sullivan

The entire elementary staff has been trained in Everyday Math program – teachers are raving about it. Responsive classroom program – all teachers are trained, specialists trained. They are seeing a difference in classroom and on the playground. Lucy Calkins has been implemented from kindergarten to the fifth grade - programs are working well after a couple of years.

The development of after our after school enrichment program – extend school year. Focused on week long workshops; chess club, cake decorating, science club. We are very happy with the level of participation. Avery Summer Institute is open to all elementary schools. Related to Student Leadership, we are always trying to get students to take responsibility and helping friends. Student council has reached out to the community. The Student Job program provides services within the building.

ECEC: Ms. Sullivan for Ms. Dineen

Preschool and childcare is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Program meets the ten standards of excellence required for accreditation. Everyday Mathematics has been implemented.

School council – outreach to parents to offer parents ways to connect with the school.

Greenlodge: Mr. Dziergowski

Responsive Classroom - has been embraced the techniques and strategies but there is still much to be done. Each class begins their day with a morning meeting. Before departing in June he will share with incoming new principal Ms. Kiewlicz some of the major challenges – continue development of writing process, everyday math, continued growth of responsive classroom.

Mr. Ryan would like to extend the School Committee's thanks to Mr. Dziergowski for his outstanding work at the Greenlodge School.

School Choice Vote: Superintendent Doe states this is an annual vote the District takes and her recommendation to the School Committee is to continue policy that Dedham School District has had over the past many years not to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law (MGL 76:12). Recommendation is to vote to not participate in School Choice for the 2009-2010 school year.

Motion to support the Superintendent's recommendation made by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. Connolly. Discussion - none; Approved: Unanimous

Academy Team Update presented by Superintendent Doe

31 students participated in the Academy Team this year. Received feedback from the team teachers from their perspective. Team model and team planning time has been very positive. Allowed HS staff to do inter-disciplinary teaching opportunities. Example: History and English teachers combined and required students to write a historically based short story during second term. They studied the short story in English and then it was evaluated for historical accuracy. The English teacher corrected for organization, sentence fluency and word choice. Then, this writing assignment developed into a visual project with the assistance of the Technology teacher. Team has recommended incorporating more inter-disciplinary units of study for next year. Plan to foster more independent learning for the students. One of the greatest difficulties the students faced was "the meaning of a grade", very accustomed to getting A's. Team feels they have made progress with this. There was also an adjustment with work load which was accomplished by year end. Students were recognizing their strengths as a learner and how to maximize their potential. All students participated in the extracurricular activity and PSAT requirements. We have received positive feedback on the curriculum of the Academy team from the AP grant. There are 41 students entering the Academy team for next year.

Discussion: Exit data from the 8th grade class - 4 students have announced plans to leave for private/parochial schools next year. They have had a significant #'s returning to HS – numerous calls requesting shadow days. Mr. Coughlin asked whether Academy students have been surveyed. The plan is to do it at the end of the year or the first term sophomore year. 8th and 9th grade teachers met for follow up and adjustments into the 8th grade curriculum. Concerns being voiced in the community involve students just below the tier. What are we doing to accommodate those students? Honors classes are available to all students.

Mr Heiser how are students picked or is it by invitation? Looking for demonstrated performance but use criteria to identify students such as cumulative grades, teacher recommendations, interviews. It is important to mention we will track cohort data as they move through high school – after freshman year they are no longer a team. We would like to expand our resources but unfortunately we cannot. We are trying our best to maintain. There is no additional cost to run the Academy unless we were going to try to team the entire 9th grade. New grading system – feedback where students are falling out in performance with academy and the rest of the 9th grade student body. What counts is the rigor of courses taken not the grade.

MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Ryan to approve the May 13, 2009 minutes: Approved majority with one abstention..

DONATIONS

MS received a donation from Verizon Foundation in the amount of \$750.00, from Mr. James Mahar. Will be used to purchase athletic equipment for the after school program.

MS received a donation of \$750.00 from the Dedham Exchange from Ms. Karen Guinan. This donation will be used to expand the non-fiction collection in the library.

Donation of field hockey sticks to the Athletic department from Mr. Dan Shipiro.

Motion made to accept the donations by Mr. Ryan with grateful appreciation and seconded by Ms. Driscoll with grateful appreciation. Approved: Unanimous

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Lease agreements with TEC and VNA Care Network signatures – Mr. La Francesca said both groups are still reviewing the leases. – tabled

Reminder of Class Night on June 1st and Graduation on June 3rd.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Bring in Student Councils and recognize them – 4 elementary, MS and HS

Mr. Arria –let us know how the weekend walk went and update on new athletic policy

Review of the plan for facility maintenance, school buildings and driveways looking rough.

Review summer work plan.

Last meeting in June – guidance overview on how the new implementations went. GPA – any adjustments needed if it didn't work out. Feedback on dealing with College/University Admissions departments? Talk about class ranking being changed to the end of the year, Junior year to last semester Senior year.

Motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Coughlin. Approved:Unanimous