

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—March 25, 2009**  
**Dedham 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**  
**Michael La Francesca, Business Manager**

**Convened: 7:00 PM**

**Adjourned: 8:57 PM**

Committee Chair Driscoll opened the meeting stating they would be voting on the Athletic League change. She wanted to thank everyone involved for their contributions. The administration and committee members spent countless hours over the past several weeks listening to everyone's viewpoints and studying the facts. She stated the public debate on the issue has been concluded. She invited Principal Santamaria to speak. Mr. Santamaria summarized the process for everyone. He read a letter from Mr. George Usevich, president of the Bay State Conference Principals. His letter stated there is discussion beginning to realign the league and expand from 12 to 15 teams with three divisions – small, medium and large. Positive discussions are being held. Mr. Santamaria urges the school committee members to vote to remain in the Bay State League for the benefit of the student athletes.

Superintendent Doe read the following:

*Good evening parents, students, faculty, coaches, and community members:*

Five months of public discussion, significant data gathering, analysis of that data, a survey of high school students, and very deliberate reflection on the comments of those in favor of a league change weighed carefully in contrast to those who support remaining in the Bay State Conference have resulted in what constitutes a rigorous self-study of the athletic programs in the district.

My administrators, teachers, coaches, and school committee members have engaged with me in analyzing the identified issues raised publicly. Dedham High School enrollment, student participation in athletics, motivation, opportunity, coaching methods and philosophy, and the lack of school-community collaboration in youth sports have framed for me the deficiencies I see in our current athletic programs - regardless of league membership.

I will outline the immediate changes we are implementing in order to address many of these identified needs. Principal Santamaria and Athletic Director Arria will revise the job descriptions for coaching positions and the appointment letters for all positions to reflect the following expectations:

- The philosophy of our Athletic Department at the middle and high school level will be enthusiastically supported and modeled by each coach.
- Coaches will follow an equitable plan of playing time for each participant in the middle school traveling teams, freshman and junior varsity teams.
- Coaches will advocate for and support student athletes to be three season participants.
- Head coaches will organize a Parent Group for each sport.
- The coach and the parent group will work together to support the goals of DHS athletics and the MIAA for each student athlete.
- The Parent Group will work with the coach to support the team and advocate for needs specific to that team.

- The coach and the Parent Group will work with the high school administration to publicly communicate and build recognition for each student athlete.
- Coaches will be required to establish direct communication with the directors of the corresponding youth leagues and organize clinics for the benefit of the youth programs.
- There is a clear expectation that Dedham High School coaches will know the participants in youth sports and support their participation.
- The school department will open each neighborhood school to the directors of youth sports to facilitate registrations for parents in each neighborhood.

To increase student participation, the Guidance Department and the administration will activate a system of interviews to promote the participation of every student either in athletics or a school activity. Guidance, administration, and coaching staff will collaborate on recruiting students.

All students entering Dedham High School will be personally interviewed, introduced to coaches, and encouraged to participate. The Director of Athletics will coordinate and schedule meetings for all middle school and high school coaches.

A recommendation to waive the fee in the third season for any student athlete will be made to the Budget Sub Committee.

As you are aware the administration is communicating directly and assertively with the Bay State Conference to address the issues of enrollment changes within the Conference. Meetings are taking place at the present time with Athletic Directors and BSC Principals on proposals that Dedham will support:

- The proposed football concept sponsored by Eastern MA Football coaches, currently before MIAA
- Dedham is and will continue to advocate for the Bay State Conference to pursue expansion of the Conference
- Dedham will advocate within the Bay State Conference for a “strength of schedule” to be factored into the Conference

At Dedham High School and Dedham Middle School we will commit to establishing intramural programs for the next school year. The administration will study the efficacy of reducing the athletic fees for all participants from \$125 per season to \$75 and report the results of that study to the Budget Sub-Committee with a recommendation.

These steps are effective immediately. Clearly, this amount of time and investigation has revealed several areas in need of improvement which we can control. There are other steps where we will have to work within the Bay State Conference to bring forward positive changes. It is reasonable that we continue to evaluate the district’s progress as we attend to the needed changes. Over the next two to three years, we will have definitive data on improvements over time.

As the Superintendent, I believe it is important for all stakeholders to acknowledge the outstanding work being accomplished in our schools by teachers, coaches and administrators which was clearly evidenced in the voices of the Dedham High School students who spoke on this issue two weeks ago. The clarity of thought and the superbly articulated logic delivered by our student athletes should reassure the community on the strength and value of public education in Dedham.

**My recommendation to the School Committee is that Dedham High School REMAIN a member of the Bay State Conference.**

*June M. Doe  
Superintendent*

A motion was made by Mr. Roberts to vote on the Superintendent's recommendation to remain in the Bay State Conference and seconded by Ms. Connolly.

The Chair announced there would be a roll call vote after Mr. Ryan makes a short presentation. Mr. Ryan said this choice has created a great deal of debate in the town and resulted in a new found focus on athletics in the community. His vote tonight is for the Tri-Valley League and would like to explain why. I respect Superintendent Doe and Principal Santamaria and they have my full support regardless of the outcome of tonight's vote. Each of the other members made brief statements supporting their own individual vote.

Vote by Roll Call: Mr. Roberts-Bay State; Mr. Healey-Tri-Valley; Ms. Connolly-Bay State; Mr. Ryan-Tri-Valley, Ms. Flatley-Bay State, Ms. Matthews-Bay State, Ms. Driscoll-Bay State  
5 in favor, 2 opposed to accepting the Superintendent's recommendation and all action items.  
Superintendent's recommendation is approved, majority

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

High School: Senior John O'Connell was selected as the "Old Spice Red Zone Player of the Year." ELA grade 10 MCAS delayed openings on Tuesday March 31, and April 1<sup>st</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup> – announcements will be made. There will be no additional transportation – buses will run at regular times. Students of the month for February and March are Julio Tejada, Ursannana Doubleday-Juktae, Theresa Collins, and Fitzgerald Arnoux.

Greenlodge: Morning MCAS review program for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in ELL concluded last week. Thirty students participated. Before school MCAS review in math began on Tuesday. A DEF grant allowed "Birds of Prey" to visit 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. PTO brought the Youth Audiences Performance of "Mythmasters" and taught students about Greek mythology. A school wide sharing assembly focused on "March is Music Month" connecting state standards to the curriculum. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders will be learning about immigration on a field trip to the Lowell Textile Museum.

Riverdale: Senator Jorge Robledo from Columbia met with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. He is a professor at the National University and was visiting the U.S. lecturing on fair trade policies in this country. Students participated in Kids for Kids Concert last Friday. Thirty-four students participated in entertaining the audience with their various talents. Thanks to the PTO and the DEF for bringing Youth Audiences the Mythmasters. Progress reports went home on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Completed the MEPA testing for ELL on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Begin MCAS testing on Monday. All are looking forward to the DEF Spelling Bee on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

Avery: Wild about Reading Incentive Program ended on Monday with an assembly entitled Asia Fantasia (folktales and myths from Asia) thanks to a DEF grant. Over the past 9 weeks students have read a total of 387,480 minutes. The Dedham Junior Women's Club donated the weekly prizes. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade is holding another bottle and can drive on Saturday. The fifth grade visited the Paul Revere House and the Freedom Trail. The morning ELA MCAS prep classes have ended. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades took part in class and grade level spelling bees to choose the team for the DEF Spelling Bee. Members of the SBRC met with the MSBS this morning to choose an architect for the new Avery School. By unanimous vote, Dore and Whittier were chosen to design the new school.

Oakdale: Kicked off the spring reading incentive program featuring celebrity readers. The Health Department visited first grade classes to teach students how to time washing their hands for 20 seconds by singing "happy birthday". This was tested with "Glo-Germ" a lotion based germ simulation and tested under a blue florescent lamp to see how well they scrubbed their hands. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade visited the high school to complete a squid dissection experiment. The winter "after school enrichment program" is coming to an end. The brochure for spring will be coming out soon.

ECEC: Dr. Seuss celebrations were rescheduled to Tuesday, due to the last snowstorm. The children sang happy birthday and took the reader's oath. During the month of February, students wrote "mini book reports" that consisted of writing a sentence about why they liked the book they

chose to read. ECEC Olympics will be held on May 19 and 20. Students will complete an obstacle course and earn a medal.

Superintendent Doe would like to remind everyone about two special events:

The All Town Choral Concert will be held on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The Coast Guard Academy Chorus will be performing as well.

The Town-wide Art Exhibit will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup> at the Middle School.

### **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

Student Representative, Milo Carpenter update: Events coming up: Friday night is the sophomore semi-formal dance from 7:00-11:00. May 21<sup>st</sup> is the last day for seniors, only 36 more days. College acceptances are coming in. The Blood Drive is tomorrow with over 100 students signed up. Junior/Senior prom is on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Westin Hotel. Senior Class officers are meeting with Advisory to try to get a senior class trip to Six Flags.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Parent wanted a clear update on budget cuts and their impact. What do we know that will be cut? Art, Music, Library, PE are not being cut. The budget represents a 2.9% increase over this year's budget. In order to get there – we have 19.6 reduction in staff. Town Manager has indicated the budget he is recommending is 1.65% increase. This has not been finalized yet. Increases based on reductions in staff. Increases in class sizes will happen across the district in elementary schools. Our priority is to restore to those elementary classes. Nothing is finalized. Federal stimulus money is fluid at this point we are waiting on federal guidelines. We watch enrollments very carefully – School Committee is responsive when we see class sizes increasing dramatically. No programs are being cut. Instituted a new math program this year and are expanding it into the next two grades for next year. This math program has been grant funded for portion of it.

Football Camp proposal: Coach Keith Comeau has made arrangements for the football team to travel off campus for the pre-season football camp. This camp will take place during the normal period reserved for double sessions before the startup of the football season. Fundraising events will occur. Camp Cobossee, located in Winthrop, Maine. The camp will be open to all varsity and junior varsity team members. Friday August 28<sup>th</sup> to Monday August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Ryan thinks this is a great idea, a step in the right direction.

Ms. Connolly asked if the camp was accredited. Yes

Motion to approve football camp made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Healy – Approved – unanimous

Educational Model: Adopted in May 2002.

Expanding our current model because what was voted on at the time was to adopt this model and we need to make some adjustments – SBRC want to make it more flexible. Back in 2002 these were parameters set up so SBRC could do their work. Professional Development Center? Nobody on the committee can recall what this item referred to. Community responsive pre-school – try to respond to needs of special education identified students to expand the preschool to service more children. Ask Superintendent to look over and make a recommendation for changes.

DESE:

Received from DESE a progress report on corrective action plan. Mrs. Kelly was responsible for submitting plan to DOE and Mrs. Gaudreau was responsible for recommendations for special education. They have accepted our report in all areas except one which is a partial acceptance and will be addressed by April 10<sup>th</sup>. There is a lot of work that goes into preparation of this report and follow up. Thanks to both for all their hard work.

Ms. Matthews wanted to comment for the record – this task involves a lot of unseen work that few people see or appreciate the time that goes into it. We are running a tight ship and doing what we're supposed to be doing. Just wanted to thank everybody

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS**

Renewable Energy Advisory Committee: Mrs. O'Connor and Mr. DeIolacano  
May 16<sup>th</sup> event the committee will be hosting a Green Fair – educate the community and enrichment. They would like to host it at the Middle School and get the School Committee involved. Will be sending information to the Committee. Earth Day is on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. They are planning an all day event – working with TV turn off week and plant trees around the community. Looking for permission to plant trees at the same time during school vacation week. Call Michael La Francesca to coordinate the event and Joe Flannigan, DPW. The day will end with a showing of the movie “Earth” at the Community Theatre.

## **MINUTES**

Motion to approve the minutes from March 4, 2009 and March 11, 2009 made by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Ms. Flatley. Approved, Unanimous

## **DONATIONS**

Principal Ruggere received a donation of \$1000.00 from Emerson College through Dr. Youn for participation in her research project about how teens interact with their parent regarding Internet use.

DEP – presented to Ms. Lydia Davies - Library at HS – \$5000.00 to library purchase of books. Mr. Ryan made a motion to approve the above referenced donations with grateful appreciation, seconded by Ms. Connolly, also with grateful appreciation, and it was **VOTED:** to accept the donations.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Thinking of moving ECEC to Dexter sooner rather than later. State funding for full day kindergarten will be significantly delayed.

## **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Mass Insight Grant

Facilities at the High School – discussion. Could we have Brian Lynch talk about the facilities. What's been done and what's on the wish list. Update to the Master Plan.

Updates to Master Plan get copies.

Get the support for the facilities updates

Feasibility study - revisit

Ms. Matthews made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Ryan and it was approved – unanimous.