

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING— February 11, 2009  
Town Hall, Lower Conference Room**

**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: 8:40 PM**

Chairperson Driscoll opened the meeting stating a need to go into Executive Session under exemption three for the purposes of contract negotiations. Motion made by Ms. Matthews and it was voted by roll call: Mr. Roberts – yes, Mr Ryan – yes, Mr. Healy – yes, Ms. Connolly – yes, Ms. Flatley – yes, Ms. Matthews – yes, Ms. Driscoll – yes.

Open meeting re-convened at 7:14p.m.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Elementary School Update:

MCAS morning and afternoon programs are well underway.

Avery School students celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school. Collected 100 items and set up 100th museum in the gym. Cans of different types of food were collected. A total of 471 packages were collected. These will be delivered to the food pantry. Thank you to Mrs. Cheryl Biggar for coordinating this effort. Students in grades 4 & 5 are participating in a lunch basketball game to encourage team work. Student council members visited O'Neill Drive and played Valentine bingo. Before school MCAS program is ongoing for the next 6 weeks.

Greenlodge School, MCAS in grades 4 & 5. There has been extremely good participation.

“No Name Calling” has officially come to an end, but continue to practice this skill.

Rehearsals are underway for the annual Greenlodge Variety Show. Sharing Assembly will focus on friendship, random acts of kindness and Black History month. Fox 25 meteorologist, Cindy Fitzgibbons conducted a presentation for fifth graders.

Riverdale School – the Red Carpet Event sponsored by the PTO – this is their Oscar night.

Riverdale came in second for the America Recycles Day competition. Barbara O'Connor, a well known author came to Riverdale on February 2<sup>nd</sup> with a very clear message: Read, Read, Read and Show not Tell when you write.

Oakdale School students participated in the Walk for Diabetes raising over \$4500.00. Students would walk while listening to fun music during their PE classes. Student Council is hosting “Lollies for Life”. Proceeds will buy Stop & Shop gift cards to go to families in need.

At the Curran Center, the full day lottery has taken place. PTO is planning a fundraiser.

High School, following a highly competitive application process, we have been notified that we have been chosen for the Math and Science Initiative Grant for advanced placement training and incentive program. Awaiting paperwork, we received verbal notification. Ms. Doe would like to publicly acknowledge the work of Principal Santamaria, Mr. Murray, Mr. Rivera and Director of Guidance, Joanne McCormick, the AP teachers who worked on the paperwork. It is a very competitive grant. Good for children and good for staff and we would not be in a position to fund these ourselves. A presentation from MASS Insight we be scheduled in the near future. Out of 60 schools that applied Dedham is one out of four schools in the state who was awarded this grant. The Boosters Club is hosting an event this evening for our Band students at the Italian American Club. They are also hosting an Italian Night at the Italian American Club on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The following students have placed in the Boston Globe Scholastic Arts Award: Tanya

Touchette – Gold Key and an Honorable Mention, Marianna Walton – Silver Key and an Honorable Mention, Noor Sadeghi-Ray, Kayla Matta, Melissa Vo – Honorable Mention. The Silver and Gold Key art works are on display at the State Transportation Building in Park Square, Boston. Mrs. Jenny Kerns does a lot of work to get the students into the competition. Congratulations to these students. The athletic department at the High School will be holding a fundraising event. Mr. Arria will be collecting prom dresses. Dresses will be sold for \$50.00 of which half of the proceeds will go to the school and half back to the donor. Late this afternoon, we were notified the Tri-Valley League has voted to extend an invitation to Dedham to join. They are aware and very respectful of the discussions being held at the town level regarding this decision. April 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for us to accept the invitation. Dedham Adult Evening courses – eleven different courses are running this session (winter/spring). 88 residents are participating in this program. It is gaining good community support and the feedback has been very positive.

### **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

**none**

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

**none**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS**

**none**

### **REPORTS**

Presentation on the Foreign Language Elementary After School Program

Ms. Christine Farrell and Ms. Nancy Bradley

Last Spring we ran a pilot program for 10 weeks. In the fall we ran another program for another 10 weeks. Ms. Farrell has been involved in both sessions. The Fall program was run with 5 weeks of French and 5 weeks of Spanish. The cost was \$100 for 10 week session. Grades 1-5 were eligible to participate and 50 students were in the program. Snacks and drinks were provided. Topics that were covered help with the transition to the Middle School program. Start with a warm up song, colors, days of the week. Repetition is a great way to learn especially through song. The program fosters a sense of confidence as 6<sup>th</sup> graders coming into the Middle School. Mascot is used, a little puppet whose name is Pedro or Pierre, and he helps to go into geography with the students. It's a fun way to bring language to life. Thanks to the community the DEP and the elementary principals for supporting this program. There is a great program in place at the Middle School. We have 14 students who are leaving on Friday for nine days to Peru. Ms. Allison Reilly and Ms. Christine Gamel will be reporting back after the trip.

Presentation of High School Schedule (proposed) by Mr. Santamaria and Mr. Murray:

Many people were involved creating this new scheduling program. It is a work in progress and we plan on running it as a pilot program toward the end of the year.

Goals:

1. To address two -day drop
2. Create flexibility
3. Minimize impact on teacher working conditions
4. Implement with no financial impact on district

Current schedule was not flexible. The rotation of classes will be 3 on 1 off, 2 on 1 off. The directed study block specifically targets these types of issues for students who need to take care of other issues during the school day. This block will meet for 40 minutes on days 5 and 6. This is a multipurpose period designed to improve academic achievement.

Enhance our advisory initiative – 30 minutes out of long block currently. We need to develop the management of this block as we move forward. Advisory will fall every other week in the study block.

Comments from Maysa Santos-Moraes (Student Representative): The two-day drop was hard to get back into the class. She likes the idea of the directed study. The State Dept. requirements on Physical Education for next year will be reviewed. Freshmen and sophomores will be scheduled for physical education. Waivers students belong to club, an outside activity – not an athletic sport during the school day. They will be taking health and physical education unless they have documentation on the requirements. All juniors and seniors will be required to have 4 years of physical education. Scheduling will be creative.

Mr. Roberts asked Student Representative, Maysa her feedback on the 3 lunch periods. She replied that it actually gives the student time to sit down and eat and have a conversation with your friends. Some complaints from students are separated from their friends. Noise level is lower with less students eating at once. Need time to get used to it. Ms. Matthews asked about potential semesters vs. quarters. How quickly will that be implemented? It is still on the drawing board. Ms. Connolly asked about the elimination of homeroom. Homeroom is held every Wednesday and Friday for 10 minutes. Feels it contributes to tardiness and wastes teaching time. Maysa asked the question: What is the point of advisory? It's a question she gets all the time. Mr. Rivera replied that research has shown that kids do better if they have an individual connection with a teacher in the building. It provides the opportunity to go over topics like bullying, harassment issues and are important to the school culture. Its hard for the seniors because it is brand new – hard for seniors to adjust. Freshmen will have a much different experience over 4 years. There will be relationships built.

Motion to approve the new HS schedule for the 2009-2010 school year made by Ms. Matthews and seconded by Ms. Connolly. Approved: Unanimous

### **MINUTES**

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Mr. Healy, to approve the January 14, 2009 minutes. Approved  
Mr. Ryan moved, seconded by Mr. Roberts, to approve the January 28, 2009 minutes. Approved

### **DONATIONS**

Ellen Burns, Elaine Mellon – Dedham Jr. Women's club – MS Classics only and acknowledge with book plates and notify us what classics were purchased. \$1000.00

Also, they donated an additional \$1000.00. They were pleased to be able to use the MS for annual craft show – thank you for the privilege.

Motion made by Ms. Matthews and seconded by Ms. Connolly to approve donations with grateful appreciation. Approved: Unanimous

Mr. La Francesca commented on letter received from Michael J. Connolly Bus Company stating they would be issuing a credit in the amount of \$2248.14 for charging us tax on the gas escalation charges last year.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

**none**

### **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Formal presentation of Budget and Public Hearing  
Responsive Classroom initiatives

Ms. Driscoll made a statement concerning our meeting placement tonight. Apologized that the meeting was not broadcast, but the room placement was not in our control.

Motion made by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Ms. Flatley to adjourn. Approved: Unanimous