

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—January 28, 2009**  
**Lower Conference Room – Town Hall**  
**26 Bryant Street**

**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: 6:30 PM**

**Adjourned: 8:30 PM**

**Budget Presentation:**

Mr. La Francesca gave an informal presentation of the FY2010 budget. Formal presentation and public hearing will be held at the next school committee meeting on February 11, 2009. Assumptions made in preparing this budget were cuts in local aid and increases in Special Education. Highlighted in the budget are Special Education obligations such as out of district tuitions projection of \$4,460,622.00. Take away what we are expected to get from Circuit Breaker, which is a decrease from this year of \$839,062.00. Requesting \$3,621,560. This represents an increase from FY09 of about \$762,420. There is also an increase in Special Education transportation by about 3% for next year. We are requesting an \$89,533 increase from this year's budget. We are also requesting for the first time funding for the Middle School athletic program of \$10,000. It has existed to date solely on fundraising and contributions from the community. Personnel reductions will be taken in FTE's of 19.6 positions. That represents \$986,368.39 in cuts. Our budget request for FY2010 is \$23,948,256 for a total budget increase of \$96,720. Non-personnel budget reductions amount to \$39,021. Mandated increases amount to \$852,955.49. Utilities will see an increase of \$235.00; Transportation will increase by \$8000.00 under contractual obligations. Non-personnel budget is \$871,190. Total increase request for FY10 \$928,898.58. Also provided in the budget this year is a breakout of FTE's from FY03 to the projections for FY10.

Mr. Ryan raised a question on spreadsheet - paraprofessionals are not included in FTE's. They are a fluid group and depend on needs of students.

Ms. Flatley stated a formal presentation would be done at the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. And public hearing and vote on budget will be taken at the next meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Congratulations to Jillian Moses who scored her 1000 career point at the basketball game against Ursuline Academy, she played very well and we are proud of her accomplishment. The Girls Varsity won. A lottery was held for full day kindergarten at the ECEC. There is a shorter waiting list this year and hope all will be accommodated by the end of this year. SBRC met Monday evening and the committee approved the RFS for the Architect and will be going out on Tuesday 2/3/09. The Town Manager generated letters to our Representatives in Congress to support initiatives in amount of money with projects in Dedham ready to go should federal money

become available. Our response to the 2008 Title 1 Desk Audit was approved by the DESE. Nine areas to respond to and provide documentation for and each response was accepted.

Academy Update: 33 students are in the pilot program and Term 2 just ended. Reviewing the performance with teachers there is a general consensus – students are doing well. It has been challenging for the students to manage 5 honors level courses and took some time adjusting. I am very proud of them and truly appreciate their hard work. The team teachers meet 3 times in each cycle for team time. There have been some very positive results. Dr Laflamme has recognized we are in a position to introduce a new English course for grade 10 students. This is not limited to Academy team students. This has the benefit to help department chairs realign standards. AP biology and AP chemistry will be offered next year. We are able to manage our resources to offer both. Guidance, we are looking at a cohort of students, to do a longitudinal study to gather data and profile how they are progressing academically. Incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade – 38 students received a letter – they were identified as possessing a strong, consistent academic performance. They have been invited to enter the team. Another affect is that it is causing our department chairs to look at 8<sup>th</sup> grade. To better prepare them for expectations of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers.

#### High School Schedule Update:

The Administration at the high school has been examining other schedules and has input from staff and belief they are at a point to address one pressing issue, which is the two-day drop. This is not a building year due to the fact that the budget is precluding us from introducing additional options. We have a plan to improve the existing schedule. Mr. Santamaria elaborated: Mr. Murray and Mr. Wolfson co-chaired the committee. We visited schools and looked at over 50 different schedules. We had three concerns:

1. 2-day drop
2. flexibility in school day
3. schedule change – bargaining issue without impacting working conditions

We have come up with a plan that has been presented to department chairs and a lot of discussion is going on. We will be presenting it to the staff. We do feel we have a nice schedule to put forward. We re-sequenced the days to address the two-day drop. We are maintaining 3 lunches on a pilot basis this year. It has been very successful. On two days in the cycle we are including a 40 minute directed study block. Students will be able to work in the study block, students can get passes from teachers to get extra help, NHS, library, math lab, writing lab. In addition, assemblies, class elections and things that take away from instructional time can be held during this block. This schedule will build in flexibility to take care of these things. 55 minutes and 73 minute long block. This schedule will help not to take away from classroom instruction for assemblies, etc. Many schools are adopting this schedule. Committee members expressed their enthusiasm in the creativity of this approach. There will be a lot of flexibility for the students.

#### **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

**None**

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

**None**

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

**None**

#### Athletic League Statements:

Ms. Driscoll allowed time for individuals to make statements regarding the ongoing process of possibly of Dedham Public Schools changing athletic leagues. She did state that this would not a debate; the Committee would not participate in any discussions. There have been no decisions made and if or when they were notified, a public hearing would take place. Ms. Driscoll presented an overview of the process to date:

At a School Committee meeting in October, we were asked to look into options for athletic teams. An open meeting was scheduled at the high school on October 14<sup>th</sup>. We submitted an application to the Tri-Valley League with a letter in interest. Members of the school department along with Mr. Ryan attended an interview/presentation with the Tri-Valley League Board on January 13<sup>th</sup>. They will be announcing their decision whether to expand their league or not before February 20, 2009.

Mr. Seager objected to previous statements that we are “putting our kids in harms way”. Dedham has been a member of the Bay State League since 1951. It is the best-run conference in the state. Mr. Mucciaccio, president of the Booster Club. The past 25 years the Booster Club has provided support in the amount of \$1.5M. Give out \$25K a year in scholarships, and run many sports banquets during the year. There are less than 200 students out of 750 that are participating in sports. It doesn't matter what league we belong to without increased enrollments. Transportation is a huge expense that needs to be considered. With the current economic conditions, you can't depend on money from the Boosters Club any longer. Mr. Crisp, member of the Alumni Association and Boosters Club. They did take a formal vote at the Alumni Association and support staying in the Bay State League. Their traditions are second to none in the State even at the college level. Personally he is concerned about the numbers. Is the user fee an issue? We need to concentrate on getting the students to participate. Mr. Maloney – graduate 1982. We are not competitive; it is time for a change and a new tradition. Doing nothing is unacceptable. Mr. Walker, has been at the HS for 38 years and coached for 20 years. He is speaking for some coaches that couldn't be here tonight, but he is personally opposed to moving the league. Regarding indoor track, there would be no gain going to the Tri-Valley League. Girls sports especially would suffer, softball, hockey and track. Mr. Marr, class of 1979. He participated in sports during the “glory years”. Commented that the hard work done in academics has made a 180 turnaround, he would like to see the same effort and hard decisions made for the betterment of our children. Mr. Clifford, Class of 1979. All concerns other than the Booster Club's were addressed at the public meeting. We need to focus on the core issues – enrollment and participation. Without these changes, we are mismatched in the Bay State League. Lets not miss the opportunity. Mike Tavaris, class of 1984. Personally he was dead set against changing. We want the kids to compete with like schools. Kids in sports stay out of courts. He believes if we are more competitive, more kids would come out. There are issues with girls sports, there needs to be a home for everyone.

Ms. Driscoll thanked everyone for their input and there would be more information to follow.

The School Committee approved the Superintendent's contract, finalizing the details last week. The contract will be in effect for the next three years. A motion was made to accept the Superintendent's contract July 2009-June 30, 2012 by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Healy. Motion was approved: Unanimous

The School Committee approved the ratification of the Secretary and Clerk Contract. An agreement was made two weeks ago and the results were discussed in the last executive session. A memorandum of agreement was approved by vote of the Secretary and Clerk Union. A motion was made to accept the Secretary and Clerk Contract July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2011 by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Healy. Motion was Approved: Unanimous

## **MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Matthews and seconded by Ms. Connolly to approve the minutes of Executive Session held on 1/14/2009. Motion was Approved: Unanimous

### **DONATIONS**

**none**

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

**none**

### **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

**Budget/public hearing**

**Educational model**

**HS schedule presentation**

Ms. Driscoll announced a need for an Executive Session for the purposes of contract negotiations. A motion was made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Healy and was voted by roll call: Ms. Connolly – yes, Mr. Roberts – yes, Mr. Ryan – yes, Mr. Healy – yes, Ms. Flatley – yes, Ms. Matthews – Yes, Ms. Driscoll – yes.

**VOTED:** to adjourn. 8:30 p.m.