

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING— January 14, 2009
Board of Selectman’s Office, Town Hall 26 Bryant St.

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: 8:41 PM

SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE

We were notified of additional recipients of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Award. The recipients are: Dale Armstrong, Allison Polansky, Jessica Deleconio, Vivian Daly, David Bloom and Ryan Birchall. Congratulations to all recipients.

Congratulations to Jenny Kerns, art teacher at the High School who applied for and received a grant from “Picturing America”. Also, we are congratulating high school senior, Dale Armstrong – Eagle Scout. He worked on a project of rebuilding the boardwalk spanning over 100 yards of deep water at Wilson Mountain. A reminder of program “Ads for Grads” the deadline has been extended to January 16. Please mail your ads to the attention of Mr. Steve Dewar at the High School. Yesterday we visited with the athletic directors of the Tri-Valley League. Attending the meeting were Mr. Santamaria, Mr. Arria, Mr. Ryan and myself. Dedham was given the opportunity to do their presentation for the Tri-Valley Athletic Directors. It was a nice presentation; Mr. Santamaria began with a video displaying Dedham High School, their students, academic programs, extra curricular activities, and our facilities. Mr. Santamaria and Mr. Arria answered questions from the board and we also had the opportunity to pose many of our own questions to the board. Mr. Ryan commended Principal Santamaria and Mr. Arria for an excellent job presenting case. Efforts on presentation well received. There is a lot to consider regarding expansion of Tri-Valley League. Mr. Santamaria felt we all had the chance to discuss many issues. Timeline – recommendation after finishing interviews – anticipate making a decision possibly by February vacation. They also clarified for us the procedure being followed is the Principals of the Tri-Valley schools voted to allow the athletic directors to explore the concept of expansion and will be making a recommendation to the principals. Mr. Santamaria also attended a meeting with the Bay State Conference principals and athletic directors on January 8th. We will be held to a two-year commitment in the Bay State Conference. We would also like to officially welcome Principal Ron Dziergowski to his position. It has been a smooth transition after Christmas break. He is adapting very quickly and has joined the administrative team. Process for selecting a new principal – we have advertised, the deadline is January 16th and we’ve had approximately 13 applicants to date. Will complete paper screening and identify team of interviewers by the end of the month and the screening committee will be in place. We have had the Boston Ballet II come to the Riverdale and Avery, Oakdale and Greenlodge. Younger performers in the company come in and introduce our students to the physical skill necessary to become a dancer. They performed a range of short ballet works. This was made possible through a grant from the Dedham Cultural Arts

Council. We are always very appreciative of their support. We are also appreciative of Mr. Langenhorst and Mr. Dellot for their hard work to allow all of our students to view the inauguration on January 20th. This is our first time district wide using our own technology to bring to all students K-12 the opportunity to view the broadcast. Preparations for MCAS are underway. Students have been working on open response questions. MCAS prep courses at elementary are offered before and after school. Avery, Riverdale, and Oakdale – after school enrichment activities are beginning. Oakdale Student Council participated in “Caroling for Coins” going from room to room singing holiday favorites and raised \$550.00 Dedham School Pantry. Avery 5th grade students started on their Footsteps through American History program. It began with a field trip today to the Museum of Fine Arts. Greenlodge students will be treated to “Toying with Science” assembly. This was organized by the Greenlodge PTO. The lottery for ECEC is January 27th. The PTO ran another Polar Express. The Southwick Zoo recently visited w/live animals. A parent orientation will be held on January 20th for new parents. If parents have any questions there will be a panel of teachers available. We are continuing our course on Supervision and Evaluation Course, conducted by Dr. William Ribas. Principals, Directors, Department Chairs, Central Office Administrators are participating.

We have received a progress report from DOE on our responses to their evaluation during the coordinated program review. Very pleased that the most recent report indicates Dedham has responded well and they’re accepting many of the initiatives we have put forward. Asst. Superintendent Kelly said we responded to 26 different criteria, special education, civil rights, and English language education. 11 were approved and 13 we will continue to report on to the DOE.

REPORTS:

Mr. Russ Poole and Joanna Hamlin presented a report on Renewable Energy. Met with Mrs. Kelly as part of a conservation program – renewable energy committee, set up by the Board of Selectmen with Education being a goal of the committee. Mr. Poole spoke at length with Mrs. Kelly about what is being done in the schools with respect to “green”. Ms. Crisly Wood has put together packets for the elementary schools. Program very well put together.

Proposals

1. Have a student from the high school be on the committee. Would like to have preferably a HS junior to submit a letter of interest.
2. Have a student design a logo (and come up with a different name that is different other than Ad Hock Renewable Energy Committee). Student would be credited with their original work.
3. School curriculum items. Partner with the schools to provide resources, documents to share with teachers and students. Would like to provide a source to help teachers “teach green”. One meeting coming up will be specifically on education. Would like to hold at DLL in conjunction with a tour of the Kiosk, high tech boiler, storm water management system, irrigation, gray water, photovoltaic cells.

Mr. Roberts asked what vehicle would be used to reach out to students for the committee seat and logo design. Ms. Hamlin replied that they would use contacts through the school. Mr. Roberts thought it could be used to fill a community service for a student.

Hope to start application process in February. Ms. Matthews wanted Ms. Hamlin to know about some of the programs currently in place– recycling initiatives. Paper recycling that will be a pilot program at the Middle and High schools. Also, the Music Association coordinates electronic recycling as a fundraiser, and the Athletic department has a container for clothing recycling at the Dedham Plaza.

School Building Rehabilitation Committee: Andy Lawlor introduced some of the other members present, Rob Nassar, Mike Butler, Motherbrook Neighborhood Association. Update: Hired a project manager CMS – unanimous decision. We are currently in the process of putting out a Request for Services for designer/architect. Explored Dore & Whittier relationship – MSBA is concerned we may face a protest if awarded to them. Selection of the architect is not in our control. There is a 15-member designer selection panel – we have 3 seats.

Discussion held to validate some presumptions as we embark on preliminary designs. Make sure we're all on the same page.

Five issues:

1. Size of building –looking to house 310 students – 14 classrooms, 3 classes per grade. 3 self contained Special Ed classrooms. We would recommend on educational model we would have more flexibility down the road to increase the self-contained rooms to the 1000 sq.ft. specification. (150 sq.ft. over minimum guidelines).
2. Location – 3 potential sites. Pottery Lane survives screening criteria. Current Avery site is 3.5 acres w/38K sq.ft. New school 55K sq.ft. Parking, egress, and play space won't fit on the current Avery site. Condon Park has 4.5 acres. Elimination due to Mother Brook and the School Dept. doesn't own it. There was a massive mill on the site. Had problems digging at the park – the mill was toppled and covered over. Excavation would be a nightmare.
3. East Dedham presumption – will help to position the school on the parcel.
4. Twelve site plans put together – difficult to think about the Avery site without looking at athletic complex. Suggest a mandate to price out field in conjunction with Avery and doing it separately.
5. What to do with old Avery site. Excess property – inform town meeting and identify the use for the school if in fact we are going to preserve the school. Determining use is not a short term decision.

Discussion was held regarding uses of old Avery site. Consider expanding HS campus where space is limited in East Dedham. Not able to utilize it as a “school”. Questions were raised regarding location of new school and its impact on high school fields. There is concern that we have one of the smallest campuses in the Bay State League and the impact of encroaching on the HS expansion or use. It is not within the scope of the SBRC to decide what to do with the old site/building. School Committee needs to enter into discussion with Town. Plan a meeting in February to look at possible uses for the Avery School.

Motion made to give SBRC the authority to include looking at athletic fields in conjunction with the Avery design – so moved by Mr. Roberts, seconded by Mr. Healy and motion was approved.

Policy Sub Update by Mr. Roberts

The sub-committee met on December 16th on three matters:

1. English Language Fluency and Literacy Policy for Teachers as required by the Dept. of Education.
2. A proposal from the Superintendent concerning Elementary School Attendance – no existing guidelines. This policy will be included in handbooks. Vote on policy when updating handbook.
3. Flyers discussion.

Motion: to accept English Language Fluency and Literacy Policy for Teachers made by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. Matthews. Approved - unanimous

Discussion on flyer distribution in schools and the massive amount of information asked to disseminate via backpacks. Work in progress to develop a policy and we are looking at as requests come in – post them electronically on website. It has to be a benefit to the students and not in competition with something the school is doing. Sub-committee got a sense of appreciation as to the volume that comes across the Superintendent’s desk for approval.

Budget Sub-Committee Update: Ms. Flatley

The committee has met to review the capital plan and to review the FY10 operating budget. First priority on the FY10 projects is the Education Technology Program for \$375,000. Second priority is the roof replacement at the Dexter School. Third priority is the boiler replacement at the Oakdale and Dexter schools. Fourth priority is the auditorium steps at the high school. Fifth priority is the high school cafeteria \$155,000. Middle and High School library book acquisition \$7254.80. Total capital request for FY10 is \$1,150,264.80.

Motion made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Ms. Connolly to approve the capital budget for FY10. Approved: unanimous

Update FY10 Budget – public hearing is February 11th where it will be voted at that time.

Vote on School Calendar:

Mr. Ryan did receive calls from parents who were upset about going back to school prior to Labor Day.

Motion to accept the 2009-2010 school calendar was made by Mr. Roberts, and seconded by Ms. Connolly. Approved: unanimous

CHAIR’S UPDATE

None

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

None

MINUTES

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Ms. Matthews, to approve the December 10, 2008 minutes and it was **VOTED:** to accept with Ms. Flatley abstaining from voting.

DONATIONS

Ms. Doe noted the following donations:

It's really a pleasure to share that Mr. and Mrs. John Lennon have again contributed a substantial donation of \$100,000 for the 2nd year in a row to the John and Kathleen Lennon Scholarship Fund. They are both graduates of Dedham High School. Through their good fortune in life they are able to provide this assistance. It is an amazing gift they have bestowed on Dedham High School and we are very grateful.

Motion to accept this donation with grateful appreciation made by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Ryan. Approved: Unanimous

Mr. Ryan would like to send letter signed by all members of school committee in special recognition even though we are grateful for all donations, this is extraordinary.

General Manager of Bob's Discount Furniture made a donation of \$450.00 gift card for the wrestling team which was used to purchase a leather love seat which will be used to raffle off Super Fan Seats at all home games. Winner of raffle will have VIP seating, pizza delivery – all proceeds to local charity.

Dedham Firefighters Association donated \$200.00 for the Dedham HS Girls Basketball Holiday Tournament.

Donation of \$750.00 gift was received from Verizon Wireless to Dedham Middle School to be used towards the Vantage software program. Thanks to Mr. James Marr, father of Andrew Marr.

Donation from Dedham Middle School Parents Group - \$1000.00 for Middle School Library and the \$500.00 is for the purchase of English novels.

Donation of \$50.00 to Dedham Athletics and a matched gift from Laura Monaghan and Reebok Foundation

Motion to accept all donations with grateful appreciation made by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Ryan. Approved: Unanimous

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

None

Next Agenda:

Update – HS Honors Academy

Discussion and vote on Education Model K-1

Budget Discussion

Nancy Bradley and Christine Farrell

There is a need for Executive Session. Motion made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Ms. Connolly and vote taken by roll call: Ms. Connolly – yes, Mr. Roberts – yes, Mr. Healy – yes, Mr. Ryan – Yes, Ms. Flatley – yes, Ms. Matthews – yes, Ms. Driscoll – yes. **VOTED:** to adjourn.