

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—October 22, 2008
Selectmen’s Chambers, Town Hall, 26 Bryant Street

PRESENT

Tracy Driscoll, Chair
Margaret Matthews, Vice Chair
David Roberts
John Healy
Joanne Flatley
Tom Ryan
Margaret Connolly

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Michael LaFrancesca

Convened: 7:00 pm

Adjourned: 9:40 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE

Superintendent Doe reports that the high school will be holding its first open house on November 2, 2008 from 10am – 1pm and encourages everyone to stop by. Also, under the direction of Mr. Murray and Ms. McCormick the high school held PSAT’s during the school day. Over 400 students took the exams. Bugaboo Creek Day will be featured on Thursday October 23rd in the cafeteria. Under the direction of Susan Pepin, a Computer Education class was held for senior citizens and taught by high school students who are members of the Computer Club. There are three more classes to be held during the year. Ms. Doe was delighted by the parent response to the foreign language program at the elementary level. There are 88 students participating under the direction of Ms. Farrell, a MS foreign language teacher. There was an open forum held concerning our continued participation in the Bay State League. The majority in attendance expressed a strong interest in exploring options to exit the league. Mr. Santamaria and Mr. Arria will take over the discussion on the progress to date. Mr. Santamaria thanked everyone for coming out and there was a great discussion and he encourages continued participation. He is proposing a letter of interest to look at the possibility of joining the Tri-Valley League. He would like the approval of the SC to send the letter. This letter is non-binding and there is a December 1st deadline to apply. Mr. Santamaria stated that there are 4 criteria considered during the interview process: Academia, what sports will be included, Dedham school philosophy and facilities.

Some discussion was held on competitiveness and participation rates. Would girls’ sports be affected? Mr. Arria is to attend the SE Conference on November 6th and will report back to the Committee.

Motion to approve Mr. Santamaria and Mr. Arria sending a letter of interest to the Tri-Valley League made by M. Matthews and seconded by M. Connolly, Motion Approved - Unanimous

Mr. Santamaria introduced Milo Carpenter who will be joining Maysa Santos as our Student Representative to the School Committee. Milo Carpenter is a tremendous student and athlete. He participates in 3 varsity sports. He is the founder of the Amnesty International Club, a film club started this year. President of SADD and a Riverdale graduate.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

Ms. Driscoll read a prepared statement from the members of the School Committee to the residents of Dedham supporting the SC's decision to oppose Question 1 on the November 4th ballot.

Motion moved by D. Roberts, seconded by J. Healy, discussion – none: Motion Approved - Unanimous

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident, Mr. Clifford thanked everyone for the October 15th meeting. Asked about simultaneously submitting of letter of intent to leave the Bay State League.

Ms. Doe responded that Mr. Arria will be attending the SE Conference and a discussion will be initiated at that meeting. Administration feels it is a gesture of professional courtesy to have a personal discussion instead of sending a letter.

Mr. Ryan requested as a follow-up to have Mr. Arria on the agenda for the November 19th meeting to present an update.

Mr. Heisler spoke in support of the swim team and would hope that there would be an opportunity for a boys swim team. He hopes this effort doesn't lose momentum.

DEA and MS Parent Group:

Ms. Sullivan introduced Adam Korngold from Waves Car Wash, 1680 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury. A fundraiser was held and they are here to present a check for \$ 431.00 to go towards Classic Edge Novels.

MS Parents Group also presented checks for \$500.00 to MS Library and \$1000.00 toward Classic Edge Novels. Ms. Sullivan also reminded everyone of Dancing with the Stars on November 14th at 7:00 p.m. There is standing room only for the event being held at Mosley's on the Charles.

DEP wants to recognize its substantial partnership with Prime Motors (formerly Clair) in providing for the translation of school documents – Nancy Bradley, Department Head for Foreign Language says the schools could not afford to have it done to meet the demands of DOE. Report cards Spanish, French, and Arabic. This is mandated by the State but is not funded by the State.

M. Connolly expressed SC's gratitude to the DEP for doing that, stating "Thank you very much."

HS Ski Trip:

A letter of request from Mr. Doug Simon and Ms. Barbara Smith to host a HS ski trip was submitted to the SC for approval. Mr. Simon presented the request for approval to plan a ski trip for the day . The trip is tentatively scheduled for the last Sunday in January with approx. 30-35 students participating in the trip. Mr. Ryan thanked Mr. Simon for taking 40 kids on a day ski trip. Milo Carpenter commented that this ski trip really makes a difference for students who normally wouldn't be able to ski due to the costs.

Motion made by M. Matthews and seconded by M. Connolly and Approved: Unanimous

MCAS Report – Elementary Schools

Presented by the elementary school principals: Clare Sullivan, Holli Armstrong, Doris Claypool and Ron Dziergowski (Acting Principal as of December 1 at Greenlodge, filling in for Betty Cummings).

Handout presented to SC

Avery: improvement in open response questions

Understanding text (non fiction)

Working on fractions – new math program is fabulous

Science scores are lower than should be

Improvement Plan includes increased emphasis in writing across the curriculum. Practice open response questions each week. Homework clubs, after school assistance program, math fact masters incentive program.

Oakdale:

Improvement Plan includes before and during MCAS enrichment groups, focus on test taking strategies, holding mock MCAS tests. Worry-tamers program for grades 3-5. Before and after school MCAS enrichment groups. Mr. Roberts asked to explain how this works – Ms.

Armstrong said teachers come in early 3 days a week prior to MCAS to review with students, it's a confidence builder. The parents sign off on the program and attendance is very good.

Greenlodge:

Improvement plan includes nightly reading and studying math facts. MCAS questions. Focus on vocabulary in reading, math and science. Review Test Wiz. Ms. Matthews commented on grade 4 marks – possible explanation is the huge transition from grade 3 to grade 4. There is more of a written component so grade 4 students are experiencing this for the first time.

Riverdale:

Improvement Plan includes weekly open response questions beginning in October – test grades. Vocabulary notebooks for grades 3-5 in content areas. Encourage parents to read focusing on non-fiction at home. Project based learning 8-10 week endeavor. Writing 3+ paragraphs using Lucy Calkins approach.

ELA:

Improvement plan includes identifying weaknesses and providing more professional development. Dr. Laflamme will be visiting all elementary schools starting 4-5 grades next week. This will help to link elementary to secondary. Reading incentive programs and morning & afternoon MCAS preps. Increasing vocabulary skills beginning with grade 3.

Math.

Everyday math implementation. Embedded professional development with Nancy Clements. Yearly Progress Pro (YPP). Homework grade 5 using YPP 30 minutes/night. E-Instruction – used for MCAS preparation. Practice math facts at home, using Smart MCAS. Parent volunteer math enrichment morning program. Test Wiz item analysis

Science:

Improvement plan includes District wide science curriculum committee K-12. Science Center has been moved to the HS. New teacher Assistant is working on refurbishing kits.

Grade 5 Science fair – district wide – Crisley Wood is trying to get that going. Continued collaboration with HS teachers and students. Increase number of science related field trips

Grade level team meeting across the district. Science topics at monthly staff meetings.

Budget Calendar:

Mr. La Francesca, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Finance presented the Budget Calendar for approval.

Ms. Matthews suggests forming a Capital Expenditures Committee and they would need to know about Capital Budget meetings so members can go.

Motion made by D. Roberts to accept FY10 Budget Calendar, seconded by J. Flatley. Motion Approved, unanimous.

Mr. La Francesca then informed the School Committee on the upcoming decision to freeze the FY09 budget as of November 1st.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

REPORTS

ACTION ITEMS:

MINUTES

Motion by J. Flatley to accept September 24, 2008 minutes, seconded by M. Matthews, Approved - Unanimous

Motion by D. Roberts to accept October 7, 2008 minutes, seconded by M. Matthews, Approved – majority with M. Connolly abstaining

DONATIONS

Motion to accept with grateful appreciation donations from Waves Car Wash, MS Parents Group and the DEP made by M. Matthews and seconded by T. Driscoll – Passed - unanimous

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

School Building Rehab Committee has prepared – Request for Service for Project Manager – advertised in the Central Register and Daily News Transcript. December 9th is the deadline and the Project Manager will be chosen to go before MSBA.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Mr. Walters from Dore and Whittier to present the Master Plan update
Student Award Winners
Capital Budget

OTHER, IF ANY

Executive Session, If Necessary

The open session concluded. The Committee made a motion to go into Executive Session under exemption 3 for the purpose of discussions relative to contract negotiations.

VOTED: by roll call to go into executive session. Ms. Flatley – yes,, Mr. Roberts – yes, Ms. Driscoll – yes, Mr. Ryan – yes, Mr. Healy – yes, Ms. Matthews – yes, Ms. Connolly – yes.