

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—September 23, 2009
Town Hall, Lower Conference Room

PRESENT

Dave Roberts, Chair
Margaret Connolly, Vice Chair
Thomas Ryan
Tracy Driscoll
John Healy
Kevin Coughlin
Joe Heisler

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager

Convened: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 8:20 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

High School students received their log-in to the Power School grade portal. Access codes have been mailed home to the parents. A special thanks to the Araby family for the newly installed message board at the front of the high school. This was a very generous donation from the Araby family. Special recognition to four high school teachers: Rachel Dudley, Amy Lydon, Kevin Lydon, Dierdre Meloski, members of the Social Studies department. They have been chosen for the second year to participate in a federally funded teaching American History Grant. This was awarded to TEC. Principal Gately sent home a packet from the Middle School. There is a lot of information contained in the packet. One safety issue highlighted is the drop off procedure for middle school students. Cars should enter in the rear of the building, drop off the students, and exit onto Mt. Vernon Street. Cars are not allowed to stop on Whiting Avenue for drop offs. Two high schools students have taken on the task of working on the Middle School website. Friday, September 25th is Dedham Pride Day at the Middle School. The first early release day is Thursday, October 1st. The computer labs are open to students at 7:45 to 8:05 every day. They are supervised by two of the computer teachers. Dedham Adult Evening Courses Fall schedule will be mailed shortly. The program is expanding and complements to Cathy Orevetz for all her hard work. The ECEC open house is scheduled for September 30 at 7:00 p.m. Staff is working on their re-accreditation process. Registration for 2010-11 school year will begin in November. Riverdale School's 2nd grade class hosted an ice cream social for the 1st grade classes. Back to School picnic was held on September 17. On September 22 they held their open house. MCAS scores were sent home to all parents. Principal Claypool is very proud and acknowledged the students who obtained perfect scores. Greenlodge School opening went very smoothly. The summer reading program had a 75% participation rate. Avery School held their open house on September 22. Second grade students welcomed the first graders with an ice cream social on September 17th. A new program at the elementary schools began. Mr. Brogan and members of the Dedham community are providing musical instrument lessons. Thirty seven (37) fifth grade students have signed up for music lessons. Oakdale held their first grade new "family mingle" on September 24 with an open house afterwards. Their after school enrichment program will begin October 19th. Greenlodge and Avery are offering the same kind of enrichment after school. Student Council elections were held last Friday.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

On Friday, this week will be the first night football game. It's an important game. Access codes were mailed out – this is the second year, hopefully we'll get more use out of it this year. Classes are going well. Mr. Roberts asked if there was any feedback on x-block her answer was personally, she finds it helpful.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

Ms. Connolly mentioned the assembly for the AP Grant (kickoff). This is a giant step forward in increasing student access to AP programs. We are partnering with Randolph HS. Ms. Connolly left the kickoff feeling that Dedham High School is soaring. Our school was selected because of the consistent improvement seen in the scores. There were twenty one (21) AP Scholars last year. Ms. Connolly read a prepared statement. She is proud to be a member of the SC at this great time. For clarification, an AP Scholar is a student who scores 3 or higher on 4 AP exams. These tests are standardized across the country. Mr. Roberts also wanted to

remind everyone of the Friday night football game at 7:30 against Braintree. Also, the Dedham Education Foundation is hosting a fundraiser (Dedham Squares) Friday night.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Keaney – resident from Precinct 1. Discussed a letter he received from the Chair denying his request to be placed on the agenda for tonight’s meeting. He asked the Chair what is the problem with second guessing administration decisions? Mr. Roberts read a statement: General Public Comment is just that – it is not a question and answer period. Mr. Keaney commented he’s the only one not allowed to ask questions during this time. Again, Mr. Roberts stated this is not a question and answer period and what Mr. Keaney has been trying to do, repeatedly is to delve into the areas of student and parental confidentiality and this board will not do it. Mr. Keaney has sent repeated requests (referenced 3” binder filled with correspondence). Mr. Roberts read from the letter he sent Mr. Keaney “your inquiries and questions have been addressed within the limits of confidentiality. The committee quite simply is not going to give you a platform for which you continue to seek attention.” Mr. Keaney strongly disagrees that his questions have been answered. He attempted to ask a few more questions and was cut off by the Chair. He was asked to sit down if he continued with the same line of questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

None

REPORTS

Bay State League Update – Principal Santamaria

Minutes were passed out to SC members from the May 13th meeting of the Bay State League Conference. He met with the sub-committee made up of members from Dedham, Braintree, Norwood, and Brookline. There is a meeting of District C Athletic Directors on September 29th. Items on the agenda will be re-districting, Mass State Football Coach Association. On October 1, there will be a meeting of joint Principals/Athletic Directors meeting. The most sensible proposal is the one where sports play twice around with an eleven team league schedule. League games set up throughout the season. Any changes voted on will change the by-laws of the Bay State Conference. They will have to look at gender matching issues vs. transportation costs. We should have a better direction after next two meetings. Discussion continued with questions from the committee members. There is league jumping happening in some other leagues. Working within the confines of the Conference is the way to go to avoid involving the MIAA. Clarification was made that this change would take place by the fall of next year. Every school will keep their natural rival. At the meeting on October 1, would the league or conference come out in support of the football realignment? Mr. Santamaria commented there is tremendous support but some of the schools have a huge issue with it. The MIAA has taken a hands-off approach to leagues and will not get involved with any alignment.

Supt. Doe recognized members of the Oakdale 5th grade teachers and the school nurse: Elizabeth Tavalone, Mary Ann Beakes, Patricia Denoble and Sue Healy. They formed a team in the 5th grade when enrollment expanded a few years ago (similar to the MS concept). In addition Ruth Dorsey, who has an interest in science, took an expansive look at the science kits along with some other teachers this summer. Mrs. Dorsey was recently featured in the Transcript and the Ms. Doe acknowledged her passion for her work. Principal Armstrong spoke about the team and how the students excelled. The model has been fine tuned to ensure all their students are successful. She highlighted the fifth grade MCAS scores for last year:

ELA 81% scored proficient or advanced – 146 out of 896 schools in the state.

Math 73% score proficient or advanced - 155 out of 897 in the state.

Science 52% scored advanced and 36% scored proficient – 16 out of 897 in the state.

HS Class Size – Principal Santamaria

Enrollment is 801 as of today. 40 new students have been enrolled. The scheduling process is difficult and time consuming. The process starts in March and continues until school begins. Schedules were not sent out in June. Mr. Santamaria explained the reason they waited until August was because of all the changes that happen. The revised course directory helped a lot this year. The main concern is in Health and Physical

Education class sizes. We focused on CP2 classes and most are smaller in size. Discussion held on NEASC evaluation process. It is held every 10 years for accreditation for the next 10 years.

MINUTES

Ms. Driscoll moved, seconded by Ms. Connolly, to approve the August 26, 2009 minutes. Approved: Majority with 1 abstention

Mr. Healy moved, seconded by Ms. Driscoll, to approve the September 9, 2009 minutes. Approved: Unanimous

DONATIONS

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Driscoll spoke for the Octoberfest Committee. They would like to thank the HS students for volunteering their time and community service. Thanks to the members who came out and supported the day.

There is a need for another member on School Committee Goals – Mr. Healy volunteered.

Policy Sub-Committee: Mr. Healy, Ms. Connolly, and Mr. Coughlin. They will coordinate and organize a meeting in the near future.

Mr. Coughlin asked what would be updated on the MS Website. Ms. Gately replied that student handbooks as well as everything will be updated.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Budget sub – prior to next SC meeting

MCAS presentation

Future: Officer Ron Pucci

Fire and Police Chiefs and Safety Committee

Superintendent Doe mentioned that Officer Pucci has been helpful in performing early morning home visits for residency verifications.

The Chair announced the need to enter into Executive Session under Exemption 3 for the purpose of collective bargaining:

Motion made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Healy : Vote conducted by roll call: Mr. Ryan-yes, Mr. Coughlin-yes, Mr. Heisler-yes, Ms. Driscoll-yes, Mr. Healy-yes, Ms. Connolly-yes, Mr. Roberts-yes.