

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2015

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Jen Barsamian, Chair	Tom Ryan, Vice Chair	Joe Heisler
Kevin Coughlin	Mayanne Briggs	Susan Butler-Walko
Rachel McGregor		

MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Dr. Cynthia Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

Meeting started at 7:05 p.m.

Mrs. Barsamian stated that due to the SBRC not voting on Monday night, the School Committee will not be voting on the SBRC recommendation of an ECEC location and project update tonight. This was due the letter from the MSBA that was received last week. SBRC needs more information.

Superintendent Welch stated that he has a meeting planned with the Town Manager as to how we are to proceed as a result of the 14 page letter from MSBA. There has been no additional correspondence from MSBA. The Superintendent gave a brief summary of the letter that was received. Discussions followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Gorman - Jefferson St. - Shared some thoughts on how the community was splitting over the Greenlodge School project and asked that the sitting board members sit with the people who will be doing the work.

Mary Gilbert - Town Meeting Member - Knows how difficult this situation is. Struggling as a town meeting member, factoring in the money and loosing track of 110 little kids. She stated her concerns and hoping there will be a plan B. She suggested to the board to go back to the drawing board.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

SUPERINTENDENT'S MID CYCLE REVIEW

Mrs. Barsamian stated that the state is using the new evaluation tool. The Superintendent submitted his smart goals last September. This part of the evaluation will be verbal, then a sub assessment will be completed in June.

The Superintendent stated that he submitted his SMART goals at the beginning of year . The rubric is provided by the DESE and commended the committee for moving forward with this process. The implementation guide for Superintendent Evaluation can be found on the DESE website. The first one done is public. Within four different standards are indicators and within the indicators there are elements, each one is a rubric with 4 levels of performance. The Mid Cycle review is a report on how it's going, in public.

Superintendent's Goals Identified

Professional Practice Goal - Mr. Welch is participating in the new Superintendent Induction Program, a mentoring program for new Superintendents teaming up with veteran Superintendents to mentor them. Mr. Welch commended the Committee for this significant investment, as it has been fantastic to attend meetings once a month with 35 new Superintendents and talk about the issues going on. Mr. Welch has attended seven full day sessions with one more in May. Mr. Welch met with his mentor, Jim Marini today for a few hours, who is a veteran Superintendent . The second part of this goal is to develop a comprehensive entry plan. Mr. Welch developed, implemented and presented a comprehensive entry plan to the School Committee on January 21st. Mr. Welch has had conversations with the leadership team to create a strategic plan for the district, and concerned he may not make that goal.

- Mr. Coughlin rated proficient based on Mr. Welch's short tenure here, attending the Superintendent Induction Program, the leadership team and support of the administrators has been commendable.
- Mrs. McGregor stated that the entry plan has been on a steady pace. The instructional leadership, developing and implementing a comprehensive entry plan has been proficient. The leadership meetings, growing the administrative team, instructional rounds, all have been profound.
- Mr. Heisler stated Mr. Welch is exemplary- reaching out to everyone, engaging in a way, the key is communication. He stated Mr. Welch has great skills, he is off to a great start, reaching out on every level, as it doesn't happen often.
- Mr. Ryan agrees with Mr. Heisler, stating Mr. Welch has been exemplary.
- Mrs. Butler-Walko stated Mr. Welch is proficient, he has set a high standard for himself, setting a standard for higher teaching and learning for the district.
- Mrs. Briggs stated that for the past six months Mr. Welch has set quite a pace, he has shown proficiency attending all the meetings and seminars, starting with the stakeholders from the beginning.
- Mrs. Barsamian stated Mr. Welch has been proficient, and looking forward to the next few weeks, with the Strategic plan is crucial for us moving forward, excellent job on both.

Mr. Welch stated that he was advised at the Superintendent's meeting not to do the strategic plan the first year, but thinks it is so important to the district to move it along. Mrs. McGregor recommends in the goal of getting the strategic plan, hear from the public and stakeholders, there needs to be a firm ground. Look at other focus groups. Mrs. Butler-Walko stated a good foundation for the Strategic Plan, would be gathering the information from focus groups from before Mr. Welch was hired.

Student Learning Goal

Superintendent Welch stated he wants to really focus on SGP - Student Growth Percentile, especially in ELA results, particularly in writing (students struggling with Long Composition on the MCAS). Mr. Welch stated he is working hard with Cindy Kelly creating a Dedham Writes Committee, setting writing strategies providing feedback to teachers. Visited other schools to look at exemplary programs, communicating and analyzing our current practices, the district has had regular meetings, with communication throughout the district. During the Leadership meeting yesterday, Principals stated that as they walked around during MCAS last week, they have seen strategies being used during MCAS that have never been used before, based on the work we have been doing. The district is making good progress. Moved to a system the Dr. Kelly is overseeing, called the CAPD (Curriculum, Assessment, Professional Development) now disbursing that leadership using our aspiring leaders and Dept Chairs to Chair those committees and engaging other stakeholders in classroom area to really talk about our practices and look at better consistency. Mr. Welch is looking to make strong gains and growth in the high/needs area. Dr. Kelly has brought all the reading specialists together to make sure we are operating with consistency, we are seeing some progress. The district needs a data driven way to progress forward, and Dr. Kelly has done a great job bringing data back to the teachers.

- Mrs. Briggs commented on how the Superintendent has empowered a group of staff and administrators, to look at best practices in other schools that are similar to ours and figure out what we are doing differently and what we can do better to empower our students with the understanding of how to write and to be more successful with the MCAS.
- Mrs. Barsamian suggested looking at 1E1 - Data Decision Making
- Mrs. McGregor looking at 1E1 and 2, what other data sources are we looking at to monitor growth.
- Superintendent Welch stated that Dr. Kelly is doing a great job coming up with new assessment with the CAPD Assessment Committee. The assessment piece, looking at them to inform instruction. The teachers need to understand the assessments. What's working and what's not.
- Mr. Coughlin asked about the MCAS testing, was it delayed due to snow, Mr. Welch stated MCAS is still going on.
- Mrs. Butler- Walko agreed with Mrs. Briggs regarding the writing. She stated the weaknesses in grades 4, 7 and 10 over the years. She stated that Mr. Welch put together an action plan, brought the staff along with him, with principals and teachers together. Hoping to see higher MCAS scores and thanked Mr. Welch, rating proficient.
- Mr. Heisler agreed with Mrs. Butler Walko.
- Mr. Ryan echoed the comments of other committee members.
- Mrs. Barsamian rated Mr. Welch proficient, stating that clearly Mr. Welch has led the administrators.

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Mrs. Barsamian read District Improvement Goals:

- 1. Improve Recruitment For New School Personnel - So building leaders have a much more active role in the process. Establish a district presence at a minimum of three regional teacher recruitment fairs. Complete hiring process for all known open teacher positions by May 31, 2015.**

2. Improve relationship between School Administration and all collective bargaining units. Reduce filed grievances by 50% relative to 2013-2014, and settle all outstanding grievances and opened contracts by February 21, 2015

3. Complete at least one central office instructional rounds visit to each school by December 23, 2014. Complete at least one classroom observation of at least fifteen minutes duration in every single elementary classroom by December 23, 2014.

Mr. Welch updated the School Committee on each of his goals:

Goal 1: Mr. Welch stated that he has attended the Diversity Education Fair at Lesley University, with Human Resource Manager, Asha Marshall. The attendance was lower than he thought but he was able to get good contacts. Ron McCarthy, Debbie Gately and Asha Marshall are at the Bridgewater College State Recruitment Fair. Mr. Welch and Phil Banios attended the Boston College Recruitment Fair, receiving 30-40 resumes and in the process of interviewing candidates. Recently joined Talent Ed, to manage on-line applications, commonly known as School Spring. MERC Recruitment National Education Fair at Northeastern coming up. Empowering principals to attend these recruiting fairs, it will be a dramatic improvement on the district over time.

Goal 2: Mr. Welch stated that he has invited the DEA President to all the instructional rounds. He also has a meeting with the DEA President every other week, meeting on Friday afternoons to address issues before they create problems, working collaboratively together. There has been one grievance filed this current year, in the past years the district has had grievances in the double digits. Mr. Welch stated that the district has settled the custodian contract back in October - after 2 years. The Paraprofessional contract was settled in January, 2015. Currently in the midst of negotiations. The custodian contract expires in August. Along with the custodian's contract, the Unit A contract, the secretaries contract, and the paraprofessional contract, Unit B contract need to be settled, hoping by the summer.

Goal 3: Mr. Welch stated he has completed one central office instructional round visit to each school - accomplished that goal - and 2/3 the way on the second round of visits. Visits are with administration leaders, the union president descend on a school to visit classrooms, to see what a classroom should look like, with an identified focus from the Principal. Mr. Welch sends handwritten notes to each of the classroom teachers following visits. Mr. Welch has completed as of yesterday 146 classroom visits.

Mrs. Barsamian followed, asking the board to make one comment for all three goals just for tonight, to refer to 2B1 - Recruitment and hiring strategies indicator:

- Mrs. McGregor - re: Goal 1: commenting on how Mr. Welch has empowered the administrators on hiring people. The way it was organized with hiring committees, this is proficient and creeping into exemplary. Re: Goal 2 - working with the people and union, bringing everyone together, hands down this is exemplary.
- Mrs. Butler-Walko agreed with Mrs. McGregor. Also thanked Mr. Welch for identifying the district weakness and hiring the Human Resource Manager.
- Mr. Heisler - on Goal 2: the conflict in the past years between unions and committees, the mistrust that have resulted. a lot of ground to make up, and reducing grievances by over 50%. Mr. Welch has created a collaborative approach.

- Mr. Coughlin - asked how many staff has Mr. Welch hired?
- Mr. Welch stated the number is in excess of 125 people since July 1st.
- Mr. Coughlin - stated that Mr. Welch has done a wonderful job and rates Mr. Welch as proficient.
- Mrs. Briggs - Commented on the direction of recruitment being absolutely where we need to go as a district and stated that its wonderful. Quite a pace has been set, there have been a lot of distractions and it has been hard to keep on that pace.
- Mr. Ryan rated Mr. Welch's performance as exemplary, being very pleased with Mr. Welch's performance and what he has done and keep doing what he's doing with communication, to improve student learning and educational performance, very excited for the future and he has Mr. Welch's full support.
- Mrs. Barsamian - leaning on exemplary on 2 out of the 3 goals. Looking forward to meeting the next crop of teachers and hearing from the leadership team, hiring their own staff, has been a change. The list of visits to the teacher classrooms was so impressive. Excellent job!

Mr. Welch thanked the committee for allowing him to work in Dedham, as he loves working here every day and eager to hear additional critique that will be constructive. He will continue to work with people who will do well in leadership positions.

Mr. Coughlin thanked Superintendent for the communication that the parents received over the horrific winter, keeping parents at ease.

Mrs. Barsamian stated that the summative will be a lot easier with this Mid Year Review in place.

MINUTES

Mr. Heisler motioned to accept the March 18, 2015 School Committee minutes, Mrs. McGregor seconded, voted unanimous.

Mrs. Briggs motioned to accept the April 1, 2015 School Committee minutes, with proposed amendments - Mrs. McGregor seconded, voted unanimous, Mr. Ryan abstained.

- Addendum to page 4 - the request for more information.
- Change first name to last name
- Page 2 - first sentence change to Superintendent Welch
- Page 4 - change to Heather Power
- End of page 5 Mr. Coughlin requested from KBA an overlay of the existing Greenlodge School, for the proposed combined school.

Mrs. Barsamian thanked Mr. Heisler, as tonight is his final School Committee meeting as a member of the committee for the past 6 years and stated her appreciation for everything he has done for the community. All School Committee members showed their appreciation and thanked Mr. Heisler for his hard work, and presented Mr. Heisler with a gift.

Mrs. Barsamian stated the need to enter into executive session under exemption 3 to discuss bargaining, Mr. Heisler motioned, Mrs. Briggs seconded the motion, roll call vote taken:

Tom Ryan-Yes, Joe Heisler-Yes, Mrs. McGregor-Yes, Kevin Coughlin-Yes, Mayanne Briggs-Yes, Susan Butler-Walko-Yes, Mrs. Barsamian-Yes

Meeting ended at 8:50 p.m.