

**Dedham Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
November 16, 2022**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Victor Hebert
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati (absent)
Christopher Polito (absent)
Cailen McCormick
Tracey White
Tara Duncan (absent)

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael J. Welch, Superintendent (absent)
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Matthew Wells, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance
Dr. Sara Stetson, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Meeting Location:
Avery Elementary

School Committee Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Open Meeting

Dr. Melissa Pearrow called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENTS

[NONE.]

**Superintendent's Update
November 16, 2022**

Please accept my apologies for missing tonight's meeting. As you may know, I tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday evening. I hope to be back in person in the district (with a mask) on Monday, Nov. 21.

Today was the 48th day of school for the 2022-23 school year. There are only 132 days left this year. Remember that there will be a half-day, early-release schedule at all schools next Wednesday, November 23 as we depart for the annual Thanksgiving break.

On Tuesday, November 8 (election day) all schools were closed due to election polling, but all faculty and staff participated in substantial professional development offerings. Dr. Kelly's office had a [very detailed set of experiences and trainings for all faculty and staff](#). Please take a moment to review the district's work. This was the third and final full Professional Development day for staff. There are additional half-days scheduled on December 8, January 31, March 2, and May 3.

As Committee members are well aware, this past Monday night was the annual Fall Town Meeting at Dedham High School. You may view the [Fall 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Book HERE](#). Town Meeting members voted in favor of Article 10 (page 17) on the Town warrant which recommended \$2,000,000 toward the replacement of the DHS football turf field surface and track. This had been supported by the Finance Committee by an 8-1 vote. The Town Meeting vote was 193 in favor, and 40 opposed. We now await the certification of this vote and then an approval of formal funding so that we may schedule this work to begin as soon as possible. We hope to be able to have the work completed prior to the start of the fall athletics season, but as these plans and schedules evolve we will keep the Committee informed about what to expect moving forward. We are very grateful to Town Meeting for their support of this critical project.

For those who may be interested, with the advent of electronic vote tallying at Town Meeting, overall and individual voting results for each article that utilized the electronic vote casting mechanism are available on the Town website [HERE](#).

I also learned that during the past two weeks over 970 parent-teacher conferences were scheduled and completed by our faculty at Dedham Middle School. There is an enormous amount of planning and scheduling that goes into this effort, and I know how valuable this is to our students and families. Kudos to all for this effort!

SBRC Chair John Tocci, Dedham Town Manager Leon Goodwin, SC Chair Melissa Pearrow and I participated in the [MSBA Designer Selection Panel](#) on Tuesday, 11/15/22. We were 3 of the 13 (originally 16, but 3 members were absent) voting members on the [designer selection panel process](#). I am sure there will be more about this session discussed in the Subcommittee portion of the meeting.

On Tuesday night this week I participated in PTO Meetings with Greenlodge (6:00 PM) and Riverdale (7:00 PM) parents regarding the Oakdale MSBA Project [OPM Compass/Vertex](#). There were more than 25 parents at each meeting and we discussed the scope and sequence of the pending MSBA Oakdale project and answered many questions from the group. [HERE](#) is a draft of the project "community update" flier that was distributed at the Mini Town Meeting. [HERE](#) is a copy of the presentation given at each PTO meeting.

Some Committee members are aware that just after our last School Committee meeting, school districts in MA received a [memo from the MSBA](#) indicating that they were “pausing” the school building Accelerated Repair Program. The Accelerating Repair Program provides annual funding for the repair or replacement of roofs, windows, and boilers in MA schools that are otherwise structurally, functionally, and educationally sound. This “pause” does not apply to the MSBA’s Core Program (of which the Oakdale Project is a part) on new school buildings. This pause is a result of recent huge escalations in construction and building costs. At this time, it does not appear that this ominous development will impact the Oakdale Project, but it certainly puts a damper on our thoughts of financially partnering with the state on a future high school window replacement project. I will keep the Committee posted as this plays out.

I recently learned from Performing Arts Department Chair Heather Kirby that Dedham elementary students are being invited to sing the National Anthem at an upcoming [Providence Bruins game](#) on Sunday, December 4.

This week the Dedham High School Performing Arts Company will be presenting Shakespeare’s [A Midsummer Night’s Dream](#) on Friday and Saturday night at 7:00 PM. Tickets are \$10 per person and available at the door.

10th Grade students at DHS will soon begin their [typical sophomore year nurse screenings](#) for hearing and vision as well as state mandated **SBIRT** screenings. These [SBIRT](#) (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment) screenings were mandated by law in Massachusetts in 2016 to evaluate all students once during middle school and once during high school for substance use. These short interviews by our trained school nurses are a vital early intervention to help support students who may be struggling with substance use/abuse.

As discussed at our last School Committee meeting, the Dedham High School Boys and Girls Soccer Teams have continued a fantastic winning run into the MIAA Tournament. CONGRATULATIONS to both teams who are now in the semi-finals and are competing tonight at Medway High School for a chance to play in the MIAA Division 3 Finals! This is an amazing accomplishment to have both boys and girls teams in the top 4 teams in the state!

Their tournament records so far are shown below. Click on the link below for a fully detailed tournament bracket.

[BOYS SOCCER](#)

11/6/22	Round of 32	- Defeated St. Mary’s	2-0
11/9/22	Round of 16	- Defeated North Reading	1-0 (OT)
11/13/22	Quarterfinals	- Defeated Dover-Sherborn	1-0
11/16/22	Semi-Finals	- vs. Belchertown @Medway HS	

GIRLS SOCCER

11/6/22 Round of 32 - Defeated Foxborough 2-1 (OT)
11/9/22 Round of 16 - Defeated Watertown 2-0
11/13/22 Quarterfinals - Defeated Medway 1-0 (PK)
11/16/22 Semi-Finals - vs. Stoneham @Medway HS

COVID-19 Update

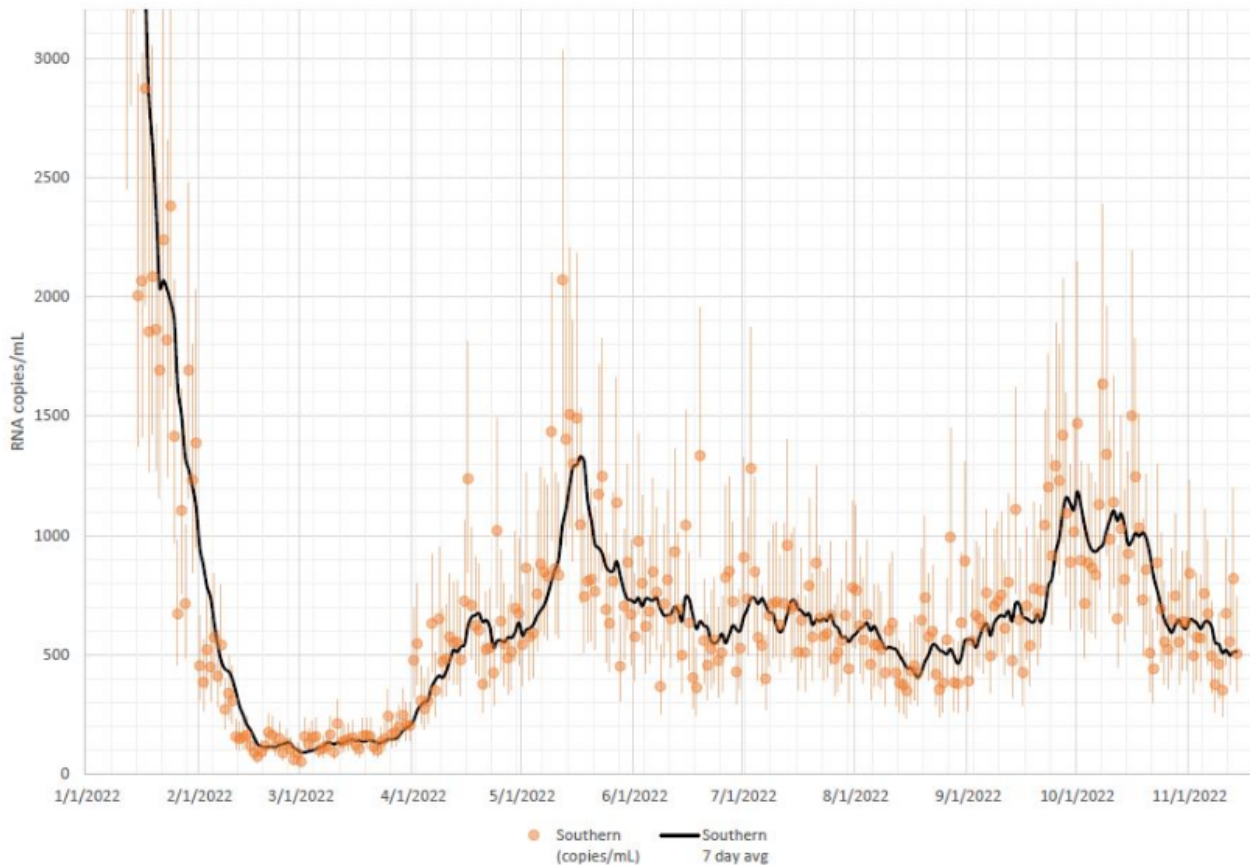
Information gathered over the summer as [COVID-19 data for Dedham](#) shows a very consistent decrease in cases registered in the town over the past 4 weeks. This trend evidently does not have a direct impact on Superintendents in Dedham, as I tested positive this past Sunday evening...

The [CDC has downgraded Norfolk County to the "LOW" community level category by their designation criteria.](#)

- The MWRA COVID-19 concentrations in wastewater over the past two weeks have continued a slightly more erratic decline over the past two weeks. Please take a look at the MWRA graph below to be aware of the most current trends in Dedham and surrounding areas. This information is updated every Thursday with the previous week's data. More comprehensive information may be obtained from the [MWRA COVID-19](#)

[wastewater surveillance website.](#)

Recent South System Viral RNA Signal by Date



The Dedham Public Schools has taken advantage of a [DESE COVID-19 Rapid Test Kit distribution offer](#) and will be receiving 5400 2-test kit boxes on Friday, November 18. We will be determining how to best distribute these kits next week. These test kits are intended to be used for individual staff for optional testing upon return from the November and December breaks and will be distributed prior to Thanksgiving.

COMMENTS

Ms. White asked if it is possible for families to opt out of the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment).

Ms. Briggs replied that parents can send an email to Marie DeAngelis to opt out of the SBIRT testing.

[Reports/Updates/Requests](#)

[Capital Budget Presentation – Facilities and Technology](#)

Assistant Superintendent of Business, Matthew Wells showed slides with updates to the capital budget. He noted that the significant increase in building supplies and costs since the start of the COVID pandemic affects capital budget decision making because projects are more expensive than originally estimated.

A summary of some of the requests in the capital budget are as follows:

Technology capital request

- Education technology (replacing desktops, chromebooks and ipads)
- Replacing 397 wifi units
- Connection to the town-wide fiber ring
- Middle School laser projector replacements

High School

- Roofing repairs over next few years
- Masonry
- New walk-in freezers
- Bathroom updates
- Elevator (additional funding)

Middle School

- Swipe card update
- Design for full replacement of roof
- Expansion of vestibule for more usability
- Security cameras

District

- PA system
- Phone system
- Mobile furniture

Greenlodge, Oakdale, Riverdale

- Installation of water bottle filling stations
- Swipe card addition in Oakdale in back of building for safety and security
- Redesigning and rebuilding walls of basement in Riverdale

Mr. Wells reported that the revised budget reflects a reduction of \$2.8M from the original budget. Projects were evaluated based on critical needs. Projects that required more research or were not deemed critical were removed from the budget. The revised capital budget is \$2.48M.

Mr. Wells also reported that the MSBA Accelerated Repair program has been suspended. This does not affect the Oakdale School project, but it affects other capital repairs. Previously discussed renovations to the High School may need to be delayed because Dedham will now have to pay full cost. Mr. Wells said that sources of funding for these renovations will need to be re-evaluated.

COMMENTS

Ms. Briggs asked about the Middle School roof. Mr. Wells said the roof is now 16 years old and it's important to be proactive and repair the roof before problems arise.

Ms. McCormack asked about the Middle School vestibule. Mr. Wells said there needs to be an additional wall so multiple visitors don't have to stand outside.

Mr. Wells confirmed that the Middle School roof warranty has expired.

Dr. Pearrow asked about how the reductions in budget were made? Mr. Wells said they met with each Principal and reviewed repairs based on their critical need. He said they are focusing on capital requests that will advance teaching and learning initiatives.

CIA Update

Adjustments to Teaching and Learning for 2022-2023; Continuous Improvement and Inclusivity

Dr. Kelly presented slides with updates on adjustments made this year in teaching and learning. He said there will be another presentation in late Spring and the adjustments are predominately to resources or practices, not content and framework.

Pre-School

- Received feedback from teachers about how progress is being tracked.
- They will be implementing a teaching strategies tool to track key preschool milestones. Reports will be produced by the end of year that will be shared with families.
- Evaluates social, emotional, cognitive and physical development with age specific skill expectations.

Elementary Word Study Pilot (Grades 3-5)

- Third graders lacked the foundations in phonics in Grade 1-2 due to COVID. This led to the development of a Word Study pilot program.
- Coaches, teachers and staff are collaborating with Dr. Smith to develop approaches that will help meet the needs for this age group.

History and Social Sciences (Grade 7)

- Received a grant for Grade 7 from DESE
- The grant includes training and the opportunity to partner with 32 schools
- Focus on Central/South and East Asia
- The program is open for revisions.

Mathematics (Grade 6-12)

Middle School

- Online adaptive program (ALEKS) for math enrichment.

High School

- Focus on more work time and less instruction to engage students in frequent practice of skills and review of their work.

Science (Grades 6-9)

- Program uses open source curriculum from DESE
- Inquiry-based experience which builds continuity in the K-5 program.

Human Growth (Grade 5)

- Broadening focus of the lesson on puberty to include brain/cognitive changes as well as physical development.

Dr. Kelly said he is working with Mark Carney, Ashley Dubé and Health Services staff to develop a more comprehensive human growth curriculum. This instruction is interdisciplinary and will be co-taught based on specialty. He hopes that it will promote understanding of differences among students. Students are not required to participate and parents will be informed in advance so they can opt out.

COMMENTS

Ms. White said she hopes that information about the curriculum will continue to be updated online, well in advance of its implementation.

Mr. Hebert asked how long the pilot program will run and the time frame for implementation. Mr. Kelly said implementation plans will be determined by the success of each program. Pilots are for one year, but we can adapt them to our needs and move them forward at our own pace.

Ms. Briggs is pleased that the teachers are advocating for further development to fill in gaps from COVID.

Dr. Pearrow said that the DHS health frameworks were developed in 1999 and alignment with the national health curriculum is important. She is glad that Dr. Stetson is joining us at the meetings now.

Dr. Kelly said that DPS does not need better teachers, we need better systems. He thanked the School Committee for supporting forward thinking administrators and feels that Dedham is in a good place to recover from COVID setbacks.

Ms. McCormack said she is appreciative of the feedback, the analysis of data and the follow up by Dedham School Administration.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Superintendent Search Subcommittee

- Ms. Briggs said the Search Subcommittee met last Tuesday. About 30 applications have been submitted to the screening committee. Deadline for applications is 5 pm.
- Ms. Briggs also announced that the Search Committee recommended Dr. Ian Kelly as interim Superintendent with a unanimous, full committee vote.

Motion was made to approve Dr. Ian Kelly as Interim Superintendent by a vote of 5-0 (Hebert, Briggs, Pearrow, McCormack, White). Donati and Polito were absent.

Budget Subcommittee

No update.

Curriculum Advisory Subcommittee

Dr. Kelly reported that Amy Hicks is scheduling meeting dates with the five elementary school PTO Boards about curriculum development. He invited the members of the Curriculum Advisory Committee to join him at those meetings.

Policy Subcommittee

- Policy ACAB – Sexual Harassment

Ms. McCormack reported that the Policy Subcommittee unanimously supported the referred policy after a third reading.

Dr. Kelly said the subcommittee voted to remove the procedure's language for reasons of flexibility. In order to make sure that the procedures reflect the district internal needs, an annual review by the district standing Health and Safety Committee was added.

Motion was made to approve the Sexual Harassment Policy ACAB as presented tonight by a vote of 5-0. (Hebert, Briggs, Pearrow, McCormack, White). Donati and Polito were absent.

School Building Rehabilitation Committee (SBRC) Subcommittee

Mr. Hebert said the SBRC has been meeting with the Dedham PTOs about the Oakdale Project and there has been a good turnout of people.

Dr. Pearrow said after presentations by two design companies, the MSBA Designer Selection Panel chose Jonathan Levi Architects for the Oakdale School Project.

Traffic Circulation Subcommittee

Ms. White reported that the Traffic Circulation Subcommittee will be meeting the week after Thanksgiving.

Negotiations Subcommittee

Ms. White said the Negotiations Subcommittee will be meeting next week and more information will be available after Thanksgiving.

Parks and Rec Subcommittee

Dr. Pearrow said that Ms. McCormack and Mr. Polito are members of the Parks and Rec Subcommittee and she will be adding that committee to the meeting agenda updates.

Donations Subcommittee

No updates.

Review and Approval Vote of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the November 2, 2022 School Committee meeting were approved by a vote of 5-0. (Hebert, Briggs, Pearrow, McCormack, White). Donati and Polito were absent.

Old/New Business

Dr. Pearrow announced that Dedham High School is performing A Summer's Night Dream this week.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Mr. Hebert thanked the community for a productive Town Meeting. He commended the Town for coming together to arrive at consensus.

Motion was made to adjourn the School Committee meeting and approved by a vote of 5-0. (Hebert, Briggs, Pearrow, McCormack, White). Donati and Polito were absent.

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary