

**Dedham Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
June 7, 2023**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Victor Hebert
Stephen Acosta
Mayanne Briggs
Dr. Leah Flynn Gallant
Cailen McCormick
Christopher Polito
Tara Duncan (absent)

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Ian Kelly, Interim Superintendent
Matthew Wells, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance
Dr. Sara Stetson, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
Dr. Heather Smith, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum (absent)

Meeting Location:

Dedham Middle School Auditorium

School Committee Meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

Executive Session – Exemption 3 – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation

Motion was made to move to Executive Session and return to public session after Executive Session. Motion was approved by a roll call vote of 5-0. (Ms. McCormick was absent from vote.)

Return to Regular Session (7:00 p.m.)

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Meeting

Mr. Victor Hebert, Chair, called the meeting to order.

RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Linda Kobierski, PK-8 STEM Curriculum Coordinator came to the podium to introduce the winners of the Science Fair and the New England Math League (NEML) awards.

Awards were grouped as follows:

Science Fair awards Grades 3-5

NEML High Scorer awards Grades 4-5

NEML High Scorer awards Grades 6-8.

- Science Fair Award Winners

The Elementary Science Fair included 118 students sharing 60 exhibits that were presented in the Greenlodge gym. Each project was judged using scientific discovery parameters. Judges were chosen from university and industry leaders.

Dr. Kobierski displayed slides with the names and titles of the 2023 Science Fair award winners. Names of the winners were called from each grade (3-5) and grouped by • All Star Scientist • High Honors • Special Recognitions. Each student lined up on stage as their name was called.

- New England Math League High Scorers (Grades 4-8)

Dr. Kobierski explained that each year students participate in the NE Math League (NEML) nationwide problem-solving competition. The students are asked questions that reflect different levels of math expertise.

This year, 213 students from grades 4-8 participated in the NEML and 84 students qualified as high scorers. The competition included eight different counties.

DPS Grade 6-8 rankings:

- Grade 6 ranged 11th across 41 schools,
- Grade 7 ranked 14th out of 47 schools.
- Grade 8 ranked 17th out of 48 schools.
- Grades 6 and Grade 7 ranked 3rd and 4th in the region out of 8 surrounding districts.

Grade 4-5 rankings will be reported at the next School Committee meeting.

NEML Elementary High Scorers (Grades 4-5)

Names of the winners of the competition from Grades 4-5 were announced. Awardees lined up on the stage as their names were called.

NEML Middle School High Scorers (Grade 6-8)

Names of the winners of the competition from Grades 6-8 were announced. Awardees lined up on the stage as their names were called.

- ECEC Retirement Recognitions

Principal Taylor from ECEC came to podium to recognize four long term employees who are retiring this year

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- Cheryl Scarsciotti
- Janice O'Connor
- Laurie McGuire
- Sharon Harrington

Ms. Briggs expressed her gratitude to the retirees for working with the youngest learners for so long.

Mr. Hebert expressed how difficult it will be to replace their knowledge and expertise.

Dr. Kelly said that the results we see tonight with our 4th to 8th grades are a tribute to the education experienced by our youngest learners.

- Christine Stec Rockstar Award & Spring Grants – Dedham Education Foundation

April Wilmar, President of the Dedham Education Foundation came to the podium to announce their Spring annual grant recipients. Ms. Wilmar explained that the Dedham Education Foundation raises funds that are converted to grants for specific projects.

Teachers submit grants to the Foundation, applications are reviewed by a board and then candidates are chosen based on the merit of their application.

The Spring grants cycle included the following five grants:

1. Avery School SEL
2. Avery/High School lunch group
3. High School STEM
4. ECEC STEM
5. Oakdale and Avery STEM

Ms. Wilmar reported that over \$38K was distributed for DPS funding this 2023-24 year.

April Wilmar reported that this year a new grant was created to honor Christine Stec. Ms. Stec was an Oakdale 4th grade teacher who passed away recently from cancer. This grant will allow her legacy to live on.

Ms. Wilmar announced that the winner of the inaugural Christine Stec Rockstar Award is Brianna Campo. Ms. Campo was chosen out of 40 nominees. Brianna was part of the 4th grade team who worked closely with Christine Stec. Ms. Wilmar read quotes from the nominations about Ms. Campo's merits and accomplishments. Ms. Campo came to the podium to express her thanks to everyone for their support. Ms. Wilmar said the final group of nominees will receive certificates that will include quotes from their nomination letters.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ryan O'Toole Lincoln St. asked if the School Committee could ensure that the community receives more specifics on the impact the new building will have on neighbors so decisions can be made with community input.

Dedham Public Schools Interim Superintendent's Update

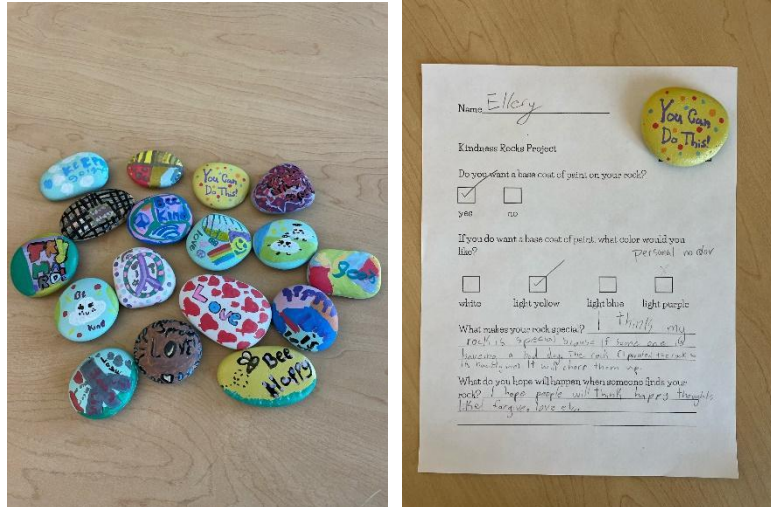
Teaching and Learning



Superintendent's Academic Dinner. On Monday May 22nd we held the District's annual Superintendent's Academic Top 30 Dinner. This was a wonderful opportunity to honor members of the class of 2023 who have demonstrated the very highest levels of academic achievement over their time at DHS.

Class of 2023 Commencement. This Saturday we celebrated the 170 members of the graduating class of 2023 at our annual commencement ceremony. While it was chilly and a little damp, the morning was full of the honor and celebration that our graduates have earned over many years of hard work. Congratulations again to the class of 2023.

Inquiry Journeys Update (Elementary History/Social Sciences). This year's Inquiry Journeys pilot is wrapping up. Feedback from families, students, and teachers has been outstanding and, as a result, implementation of Inquiry Journeys will continue and expand into next school year. 29 teachers have requested to participate! Featured below are a few "kindness rocks" from Ms. Fay's students in 2F. The inquiry question that guided the particular unit that Ms. Kieffner and Ms. Fay taught was: "How do people work together to help their communities?" After learning a great deal about needs and wants, students identified a need in the community and developed an action plan to address the need. As a class, they decided to create "kindness rocks" to spread joy and kindness throughout the school. Students created prototypes on paper before painting their rocks and completed a planning and reflection sheet.



Grade 8 Trip to Washington, D.C. Last Wednesday-Friday, 138 eighth grade students and 16 chaperones traveled to Washington, D.C. This marked a great return for this important field trip after a 3 year hiatus due to COVID. In addition, this is the first year that students were able to see civics in action while also having a year of civics education within the history department. On the trip, students visited all of the important DC highlights: multiple Smithsonian Museums including American History, Natural History, the recently renovated Air and Space, and the Museum of African American History and Culture. In addition, students learned about and visited the various memorials including the Lincoln, Jefferson, FDR, Korean War and Vietnam War. One of the annual highlights is the dinner and dance boat cruise down the Potomac River during sunset! At our visit to Arlington National Cemetery, Dedham had the honor of performing a [wreath laying](#) at the site of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. At the Capitol, Senator Ed Markey took time out of his schedule to meet our students and discuss their educational opportunities here in Massachusetts. And we also had an impromptu meeting with Throughout the trip, DMS students embodied our "3 R's" - being respectful, responsible, and resilient. In fact, multiple fellow travelers and our bus drivers commented on how respectful our students were throughout the trip. And while the travel home may have been challenging due to weather, our students exemplified resilience at the airport and were even happy for the delays

as it extended the trip! We look forward to continuing this tradition for DMS 8th graders.



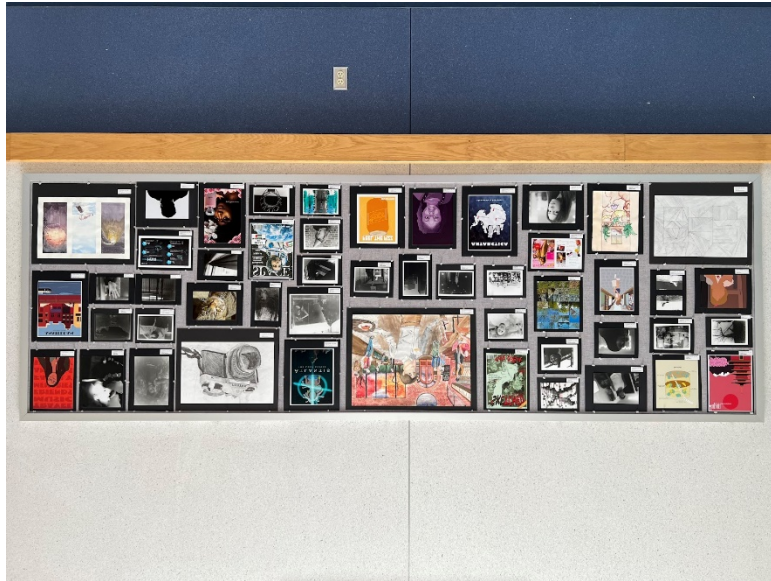
Visual and Performing Arts



William B. Gould Memorial Dedication. Several DHS band students along with seven 5th graders performed the National Anthem at the William B. Gould Statue Unveiling Ceremony, Sunday, May 29, under the direction of Heather Kirby.

Spring Concerts at DHS and DMS. DHS and DMS presented their Spring Concerts on May 16 and 23, respectively. Each concert featured chorus, concert band, and jazz band. The high school also featured a string ensemble, in partnership with the Dedham School of Music. Choral directors were Andrew Wray (DMS) and Heather Kirby (DHS), band directors were Kevin Martins (DMS) and Heather Kirby (DHS), jazz band director was Joseph Borsellino, III (DMS & DHS) and string ensemble director was Zoe Chau. Nearly 200 musicians performed in all!

DPS Art Show. On May 25, 2023 that DPS PK- Grade 12 Art show was hosted at the Dedham Middle School. This was by far one of the most well attended art shows in recent memory. There were over 1,000 pieces of student works on display. Thank you to the visual art teachers: Kristin Prata, Sarah Altone, Sarah Olivieri, Bridget O’Leary, Courtney Sousa, Joanna Mears, Amy Vega and Miranda Jang.



Athletics

Track. Senior Catherine Sargent won the MIAA Division 5 Shot Put State Title with a school record throw of 42 feet. In the discus she won the MIAA Division 5 State Title & was the MIAA Meet of Champions Winner. She was named the Tri Valley League Girls Track MVP

MIAA Tournaments:

Softball won a MIAA Div 3 First Round game vs Bishop Stang and are still awaiting their next opponent.

Boys Tennis won a MIAA Div 3 First Round Match vs Hanover before falling to Bedford.

Baseball won a MIAA Div 3 Prelim Game vs Essex North Shore before falling to Weston.

Girls Lacrosse fell to Swampscott in a MIAA Div 3 First Round game.

Girls Tennis Fell to Belchertown in a MIAA Div 3 First Round Match.

Community Engagement

Unified Game Day at ECEC. The ECEC held its first, of hopefully many, Special Olympics Unified Game Days on Thursday, May 25th. The unified athletes have been working with their staff coaches during this school year to learn many skills such as throwing, batting, running, jumping, and most importantly, teamwork!! The students had an opportunity to showcase all they have learned at the Game Day with their classmates, families, staff members, and members of the DHS Unified Basketball Team cheering them on. They ran, they galloped, they threw, and they completed an obstacle course that morning, and all athletes received a medal in a very special ceremony at the conclusion of the games. A huge shout out to Lauren Lydon, ECEC Physical Therapist and Marie Madden, ECEC PE/Wellness teacher for their enthusiasm in organizing and



facilitating such a wonderful event.

Visit to ECEC. On Tuesday, May 30th, the ECEC hosted a visiting team of educators from the Boston Renaissance Charter School. They contacted us with the hopes of learning about our inclusion practices in preschool and kindergarten as they seek to shift their practices in early childhood special education service delivery. The group had a chance to talk to members of our teams and observe 5 of our classrooms.

Management and Operations

DHS Turf Field Replacement. The procurement for the turf field installation firm was completed in May. The firm Field Turf supplied the lowest responsible and responsive bid for completion of the project. Work will begin this week with project staff onsite for a project kick-off meeting, and to provide a project schedule and to start work in removing the old field turf carpet. A more detailed schedule will be available in the weeks ahead. Please note that parking along Recreation Road and at the top of the track/football field will be used for storage of materials for this project.

Summer Capital Projects. A number of capital projects are currently in process for work over the summer. The high school kitchen freezer replacement project has the freezer boxes

ordered, and the assessment of the current electrical systems for possible upgrade is underway. The middle school safety vestibule bid came in near the most recent projection. The initial projected schedule has the vestibule work on site starting in late June with projected completion in mid October. The replacement of the Greenlodge fire panel has received updated quotes and the replacement work is scheduled to begin in early July. The district has more projects that will be discussed after a new Director of Facilities is hired.

COMMENTS on Interim Superintendent's Update

Mr. Polito noted the Art Show that was held last week. He also asked for an update about the interactive exhibit about the Roman Trials. It was reported that the exhibit will be held next week at Town Hall and added to the calendar.

Dr. Flynn Gallant commented on the success of the unified games held at the ECEC. It's special to have High School students supporting the younger kids. She commended Kim Taylor and her teams.

Ms. McCormick asked about the impact of the Turf Field replacement on the summer programming. Dr. Kelly said it will only affect parking and transportation issues. He feels that the functioning of programs will not be affected, but he said they will discuss any issues with the construction contractor.

Mr. Acosta commended the graduation speaker at high school commencement.

Reports/Updates/Requests

- School Improvement Plan Discussion & Vote

Mr. Hebert asked for comments on the School Improvement Plan. He noted that discussion about the plan occurred at the last School Committee meeting.

Motion was made to approve the 2023-25 School Improvement Plan. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

- Discussion & Possible Vote of Enrollment Configuration for New Elementary Building

[Mr. Polito recused himself from the discussion about the Oakdale project due to conflict of interest.]

Dr. Kelly said the School Committee requested him to state his opinion on enrollment. He said his recommendation includes the site choice along with the enrollment recommendation because they are intrinsically linked.

Dr. Kelly's recommendation is for a 550 student enrollment with Oakdale/Greenlodge combination located at the Capen site.

Benefits of the Oakdale/Greenlodge combination:

- Will not disrupt education and preserve outdoor space.
- Larger schools give better chances for flexible groupings. Teachers can be better matched with students.
- Curriculum consistency and continuity because fewer buildings to coordinate across.

- Better preparation for Middle School student adjustment because students will have exposure to department structure.
- Maximizes the number of students who will be able to benefit from new facility
- More professionals under one roof, helps to preserve institutional knowledge and provide more expertise.

Equity Considerations

- Majority of economically disadvantaged students in Dedham are currently located at Riverdale and Avery.
- The combination of Oakdale/Greenlodge allows us to build more equitability.
- Maps were displayed that showed the concentrations of economically disadvantaged areas and the distribution of ELL students.
- The creation of three zones instead of four zones will redistribute equity needs.
- A slide showed the number of students who would be re-zoned. The numbers equal 25% of the overall student population but it is an impact that cannot be avoided in the pursuit of the overall goal of more equitable distribution of ELL and economically disadvantaged students.
- Fiscal considerations slide was shown with MSBA eligible costs vs. Town costs for each site/plan option. Dr. Kelly feels that the recommended plan makes fiscal sense because it maximizes the MSBA reimbursement and energy conservation savings.

Educational top priorities reflected in Community Survey

1. Maintain current class size
2. Access to modern facility
3. Preparation for Middle School
4. Professional learning and collaboration.

Fiscal top priorities reflected in Community Survey:

1. Maximization state funding
2. Sustainable design
3. Understanding potential costs.

Dr. Kelly noted that Option 4 – Oakdale/Greenlodge combination with 550 enrollment, maximizes costs.

Enrollment configuration priorities from Community Survey

- The 550 enrollment choice was preferred
- The 235 enrollment choice was the least favorable.

Site preferences from survey:

- Oakdale #1
- Greenlodge #2
- Capen #3.

Dr. Kelly commented that he feels that the Capen site is best educationally for our students. He showed a table created from survey data that reported ratings by neighborhood.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMENTS about site and enrollment recommendation.

Ms. McCormick commended the SBRC on the community outreach. She asked why it is advantageous to expose EL students to different linguistic populations and experiences.

Dr. Stetson replied that it is important for children to be exposed to different communities and experiences to ensure equal opportunity. It encourages the building of background knowledge and discourse with peers.

Dr. Kelly replied that it's important that the schools reflect the same composition as our community.

Dr. Flynn Gallant commented that there are clear divides in our community. She hopes that the redistricting will help to stimulate equity within the greater community.

Ms. Briggs asked about walkability and transportation.

Dr. Kelly affirmed that this issue has been considered, but more discussion is needed on the subject. One data point was provided that included the current door to door average distance for all individuals is .82 miles. Option 4 increases that average by 1/4 of a mile. Mr. Wells said that the impact on transportation costs is not really fully known yet.

Dr. Kelly confirmed that tonight's discussion is about enrollment, but it's difficult to separate site from enrollment. The enrollment is the purview of the School Committee/Administration and the site decision is the purview of the SBRC.

Ms. McCormick reiterated the magnitude of the decision and said she appreciated the incorporation of the survey results into the final decision.

Mr. Acosta said he is in support of the 550 enrollment plan. The plan allows the most students to take advantage of the newest resources. MSBA funding needs to be optimized now because it may not continue in the future.

Ms. Briggs said when the Town Meeting re-voted the budget, it was clear that they wanted us to find ways to cut costs and carefully evaluate our fiscal choices moving forward. The School Committee needs to continue to make decisions informed by the community.

Mr. Hebert said that the School Committee works in conjunction with the SBRC. He implored the public to reach out to the SBRC or School Committee with questions going forward about the Oakdale Project.

Motion was made to accept the 550 student enrollment plan as recommended tonight by the Interim Superintendent. Motion was approved by a vote of 5-0. (Mr. Polito abstained from the vote due to conflict of interest.)

Subcommittee Assignments – Discussion & Vote

Mr. Acosta asked for clarification on the number of members that were assigned to the Park and Rec and Fields Subcommittees. Ms. Briggs said that it was agreed that one of the designees from the Parks and Rec working group would be chosen to attend the Fields Subcommittee.

Motion was made to approve the subcommittee assignments as presented. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

- Subcommittee Updates

- o Budget

Mr. Polito asked about fee increases that were approved to offset the budget. Mr. Wells confirmed that they will be recommending an increase to bus fees and to High School and Middle School technology and sports fees. Also recommending a 10% across the board increase for building rental fees. There have been no increases to building rental fees since 2007. Mr. Wells said the new fee structure will be added to the website and is also available in the folder.

- o Communications

This Subcommittee was dissolved.

- o Curriculum Advisory

Ms. McCormick said the Curriculum Advisory Subcommittee met last night for the final meeting of the year. She said there are vacancies to fill next year. She also reported that the members got a preview of the new DPS website from Sarah Erickson. The new website will be rolled out in August 2023.

- o Policy

No updates

- o SBRC

Update provided earlier in the meeting.

- o Traffic Circulation

This Subcommittee was dissolved.

- o Negotiations

No updates.

- o Parks & Recreation

No updates

- o Financial Policy

Mr. Polito reported that the Financial Policy subcommittee met with the Select Board and Finance Department and the goal is to have a report from the School Committee by October 2023 for approval.

- Donation

Mr. Wells announced that the Endicott Greenhouse donated \$500 to each elementary school grade in Dedham to support agricultural initiatives.

Motion was made to accept the Endicott Greenhouse donation of \$500 to the DPS. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

- Review and Approval Vote of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve the May 3, 2023 School Committee minutes as amended by Mr. Polito. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Motion was made to approve the May 10, 2023 School Committee minutes as presented. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Motion was made to approve the May 17, 2023 School Committee minutes as presented. Motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Old/New Business

Mr. Acosta asked about the plan to replace the student representative. Ms. Briggs said that Principal Forrest usually recommends students. Mr. Hebert said he would follow up with Principal Forrest on this matter.

Mr. Polito asked for updates to the appointment process for the School Committee vacancy. Mr. Hebert reported that the process is still in the posting phase and he said he would announce the date for the joint meeting with the Select Board once it has been determined.

Mr. Polito also asked for updates in the response by the Administration to the Metro West survey that reflected a degree of student unhappiness with the schools. Ms. Briggs reminded Mr. Polito that an update was provided at a recent School Committee Meeting on this subject by Dr. Stetson. Mr. Polito replied that he wanted to ensure that continuing updates would be on the agenda.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. Briggs acknowledged the value of Tara Duncan's role as the student representative to the School Committee. Tara took an active role as the student representative and went beyond expectations by her attendance at outside meetings like Town Meeting and Finance and Warrant. She was also instrumental in maintaining the momentum of the turf replacement project.

Motion was made to adjourn and approved by a vote of 6-0.

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary