

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Joint SBRC/School Committee Meeting
June 21, 2023

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Victor Hebert
Stephen Acosta
Mayanne Briggs
Dr. Leah Flynn Gallant
Cailen McCormick
Christopher Polito

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 (absent)
Dr. Heather Smith, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum

MEMBERS of SBRC

John Tocci
Stephen Bilafer
Phillip Gonzalez
Josh Donati
John Heffernan

VERTEX

Stephen Theran
Annisa Ellis

JONATHAN LEVI ARCHITECTS

Jonathan Levi
Carol Harris

Meeting Location:
Oakdale School Gym

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 the vote.)

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Meeting

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

Performance by Oakdale School Grade 4 & 5 Students – “It’s a Good Day to Have a Good Day.”

RECOGNITIONS

- Avery Students who performed at the MA All State Treble Chorus Festival

Heather Kirby and Sara Santos and the students came to the podium. Ms. Santos announced that 17 4th and 5th graders from Dedham auditioned for the MA all State chorus. Out of the 17 students, five were chosen. She talked about the dedication they showed to practice and perform at such a high level.

- MIAA Division 5 Track & Field State Champion – Catherine Sargent

Coach Frank Barbuto, presented an award to Catherine Sargent.

Mr. Barbuto talked about her status as an athlete. This year she has the record for the best female shot put distance thrower in the state. Catherine was also selected as the Tri Valley league track and field athlete of the year and she was selected as Boston Herald All-Scholastic. Catherine will be attending Northeastern in the fall where she will continue her track and field endeavors.

- 2022-2023 Retirement Recognitions

Sarah Merritt -- Principal Paris talked about Sarah Merritt, who taught for thirty years at Avery as a third grade teacher. Mr. Paris read excerpts about what colleagues and students said about Ms. Merritt.

Judith Byrne – Previous Health Service Director talked about Riverdale School Nurse Judy Byrne. Judy was the only full -time nurse at Riverdale. She has supported the community in difficult times.

Betty MacDonald -- Jeanne Johnson, DPS Nutrition Service Director, talked about Betty, who has worked at Dedham High School Nutrition Department for over 20 years. She said she was a model employee.

Dr. Kelly thanked the retirees for everything they did to help our students get to where they are today.

Mr. Acosta pointed out that he was lucky enough to have Ms. Merritt in third grade. Her love of learning was infectious.

JOINT SBRC/SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPENS

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

• Project Update/Timeline

Mr. Tocci said that the Oakdale Project has been a long process. They have been meeting for a year. The School Committee selected the 550 enrollment option. The SBRC agrees that this is the best choice. Now we need to pick from three different sites: Oakdale, Greenlodge and Sprague St./Capen campuses.

Steve Theran from Vertex reviewed the timeline for the project. He showed the schedule from present up to the start of construction. Final site decision has to be made by June 26, 2023. After that decision is made, the rest of summer will be spent working on the layout and configuration of the building. The Preferred Schematic Report will be submitted by the end of the summer. Cost estimates will be determined with the Schematic Design process. Town Meeting will vote on the project proposal and costs and then the design process will take place and will allow a Spring 2025 construction start date.

Site considerations, public comment regarding three remaining sites under consideration

Jon Levi, Architect and owner of Jonathan Levi Architects and Carol Harris, Project Manager displayed slides to describe preconceptual studies that illustrate the potential for each site.

He invited people to come up and see the 3D physical models of the sites on display.

Oakdale site

Three scenarios for Oakdale:

1. Historic part of the building built in 1902 will remain in place. Placement of the new building will allow the old building to remain in operation during construction. Courtyard in the middle with two entrances, one for older and one for younger students. There will be a good amount of permanent space, even if the 1902 building is retained.
2. More linear building with cafeteria and media center in front of building. This option has the most permanent open space. Entrance off of Cedar.

3. Don't renovate the 50s and 60s portion of the building, but renovate the historical building. New wing would be built first and inhabited, while the historical building is renovated. Historical wing would be flanked by new wings.

Greenlodge site

This site is encumbered by ledge which will be expensive and hilly. This would use the Courtyard model and the new building would be built on playing fields. Permanent open space smaller than Oakdale.

Capen site

Major benefit of this site is that it is currently not in use by the school department. This is an advantage because construction would not interfere with existing schools. Downside is a steep slope from street to playfield. Permanent open space is limited.

Three scenarios for Capen:

1. Put the building at the bottom of the site on the playfield.
2. Building would be built into the slope. Limited permanent open space. Can increase space by manipulating parking. Less permanent space after construction than Oakdale.
3. Hillside approach which places the building on a slope. Increases playspace and can use slope for parking or playing. Available permanent space on par with Oakdale.

Mr. Levi summarized the site election highlights and explained the advantages of each site scenario.

Probable Cost

Mr. Theran, Project Manager from Vertex displayed a slide that showed the Oakdale, Capen and Greenlodge key options breaking down the costs to Town and reimbursable costs by MSBA. Reimbursement costs are estimated at about 30% of the total project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tocci asked for people to come to the podium with questions. He said that there are also people on Zoom who will be allowed to ask questions as well.

Neil McDonough, Boulevard Rd. said that if we focus on price, Oakdale is least expensive. He doesn't think it is important to retain the historical part of the building at Oakdale. Capen and Greenlodge would be difficult to access and traffic would be challenging. We need to think about pick up and drop off.

Andy Hayes, Oakdale Ave. said he agrees that retaining the historical building at Oakdale increases costs and is not necessary. He noted that the Community Survey was clear that the community prefers Oakdale by 2-1. Usable permanent space at Capen is smaller. Doesn't make sense to downsize usable outside space. Oakdale redistricting makes the new school closer to families served according to statistical survey and Oakdale site would produce a higher number of walkable families. He feels we can get MSBA money to pay for renovation of the 1902 building.

Noah Stockman, Fairview St. said after listening to the options, it seems that Oakdale is the correct site. Whether the old building is incorporated or not, it's centrally located and it's the best option for our kids. It's the least costly, has the most square footage, it's central to the town, and traffic flow would be smoother. He thinks entry on Madison or Cedar is fine.

Ann Mercer, 750 East St. said she has been following the presentations and she wished she had voiced her opinion earlier. She is a Town Meeting member and she is partial to Oakdale. She thinks the Oakdale site is most central to the Town. She is happy that renovation is a possibility. The Capen option appeals to her the least. She shares the concern of others worried about pick up and drop off viability. She feels the Greenlodge site would create significant redistricting.

Tom Moore, Oakdale father, said that he supports the Oakdale site, new or rebuilt. Everything seemed to point towards Oakdale and he became concerned when Capen became a serious consideration. He doesn't think Capen is viable because outdoor space is limited and drop off and pick up is difficult. He asked what process is in place to limit disruption.

Mr. Theran from Vertex replied that the sketches show how they will separate students from construction areas. He talked about unexpected problems. There is no chance to completely eliminate noise, but all attempts at mitigation will be undertaken. Demolition plans will make safety paramount.

Pete Monvelli (**sp?**), Lilly Lane, feels that Oakdale makes the most sense. The Capen area seems super busy. Oakdale seems to have the most usable open space. He feels it is the best option because of its central location and neighborhood feel. The ledge at Capen is a problem and the area is traversed by a busy road and provides the least open space.

Nancy (**?**) asked about mandated open space requirements. Mr. Levi said there are requirements on the permanent open space, but he is not aware of the exact requirements. He said he would provide that information as soon as possible, but he said all the options far exceed those requirements.

Kate O'Connor, Sanderson St. said she has two small children. The huge attraction for her moving to this area was the neighborhood school. She would love to see the restoration option. Capen site could be used for alternate services.

Liz Buttermore Jefferson St. said she feels the usable open space at Oakdale would provide the best use.

Danielle DeLuca, Tarbox St. said she came here today thinking that Capen was the best site. She heard about the issues with traffic at Capen when it was the old ECEC and she now feels that Oakdale will be the best site. She works with Safe Routes to School and she wants to stress that pick up and drop off issues need to be carefully considered with the new school.

Kelly Finnerty, Jefferson St. talked about walkability. She has been impressed by the process. She would prefer Greenlodge and Oakdale due to walkability.

Carolyn Miller, Dale St. said she works in the Boston Schools and she feels privileged to live in Dedham. She prefers the Oakdale site because she feels it is central to the pulse of Dedham.

Annisa Ellis from Vertex read questions from Zoom viewers.

Alicia O'Brien asked about parking. Mr. Levi said they will be getting into more detail about parking after discussion with consultants. Parking layouts are not final. They assumed 104 spaces at each site.

Justin Humphries thanked the consultants and SBRC. He feels that the cost to the Town is similar in all options so that leaves the most important considerations are the disruption during construction and

potential benefits to the community in the two sites not chosen. He feels that makes the Oakdale with new wings or the Capen built into the site.

Mr. Tocci noted that the estimates for the MSBA reimbursement are based on our experiences with the ECEC.

Peter Reynolds, Mt. Vernon St. said that his first choice is Oakdale. He likes the combination of the old and new. The original building is so historic and he would like to see this building retained.

Kendra Grimes, Greenlodge parent, said that Oakdale and Capen are the best options. Leaning towards Capen to reduce burden on students and staff, but traffic patterns and open space make Oakdale preferable.

Kirby Henry (**sp?**) asked where kids will play while construction is underway? Mr. Levi replied that all diagrams displayed the temporary open space during construction.

Mr. Tocci said the playfield will be on the Lincoln side for Oakdale site. He said construction will take 18 months to 2 years.

Amelia Sadah (**sp?**) is a teacher who is concerned that construction noise may exacerbate post pandemic learning issues.

Marie D'Angelis prefers building the new school at Oakdale because costs would be lower than other sites.

Joanne Keveaney prefers Oakdale for 1st choice and Greenlodge for 2nd choice.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Briggs thanked everyone for coming and sharing their opinions. She said drop off concerns that were previously a problem would be addressed at Capen and she noted that Capen would provide more walkability for a good number of students. She asked that the square footage for non tree areas and tree areas be treated equally when determining usable space. She reminded people that Dedham school projects have always come in on time and fiscally on target. She cautioned that there are going to be unknowns at every site. Redistricting has to be part of the vote and Dr. Kelly's previous report detailed redistricting numbers for Capen, but she would like to see a more detailed report for Oakdale for comparison purposes.

Dr. Kelly talked about the equitability of the new three-vertical zone scenario. He said, no matter the location, redistricting will be done to achieve balance for equity reasons. Even families in Oakdale may not be able to continue to attend the Oakdale school. He checked with Wanda Wood, Transportation Director, about transportation and she affirmed that no additional transportation costs would be necessary due to redistricting.

Mr. Hebert is pleased to see the number of people coming out to participate and he asked that people stay involved. He hopes that people don't talk about the Capen site being near Hyde Park as a negative aspect.

Dr. Flynn Gallant thanked everyone for coming out. She would like clarification about traffic issues. She said there are walkable neighborhoods near Capen. She thinks we need to consider all neighborhoods as central to Dedham.

Mr. Acosta asked about the timeline on the demolition. Mr. Theran said there is not a clear answer yet about the timeline for demolition. Mr. Acosta also commented about the impact on residents who live near the construction. Mr. Theran said that there has to be a 25 feet setback for residences near school. Mr. Acosta said that Capen is still his first choice. Communities will hopefully all change for the better especially if communication stays open and community participation continues.

Ms. McCormick said Dr. Kelly's presentation highlighted Capen as the best site. Regardless of what we choose it will be a tough decision and there will be people who are not satisfied. Redistricting is going to happen no matter what site is chosen. She stressed the importance of adopting a big picture view.

[Victor Hebert had to leave the meeting early. Mayanne Briggs took over as Chair of the School Committee.]

SBRC Comments

Josh Donati talked about walkability and reviewed some data points. He did some research using Google maps about distances and he found that Oakdale is not that far away from Greenlodge or Capen neighborhoods. However, he also thinks that the open space in Oakdale cannot be overlooked and that Oakdale was the first choice for a large number of Avery and Greenlodge parents. More people chose Oakdale than the Capen site from the Greenlodge community.

John Heffernan commented that the group visited two sites that were built into slopes and these schools were impressive schools. If we move ahead with Oakdale, he has concerns about renovation costs. He is prepared to say that Greenlodge is the least attractive site.

Mr. Tocci agreed that renovations are expensive. We paid twice as much as we thought we would pay for renovation for Town Hall and Ames School. He said if we build at Oakdale it will be difficult to achieve the optimal usable space unless we demolish the whole building. He believes that Greenlodge is the last choice.

Mr. Donati asked Dr. Kelly if he could talk to his long term considerations for recommending Capen. Dr. Kelly replied that his choice was based on Capen being the least disruptive to learning.

Mr. Gonzalez appreciates the commentary and he would like to hear more voices. He is still weighing the pluses and negatives of Oakdale and Greenlodge and he hopes people attend the Monday meeting to help sort out the benefits for each site so the optimal decision can be made.

Steve Bilafer said there are a lot of arguments to be made for Capen and Oakdale, but he feels we should offer a motion to take the Greenlodge site off the table.

Motion was made by the SBRC to remove Greenlodge from the site options. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of both committee members present.

Mr. Tocci announced that the next meeting is on Monday at Town Hall O'Brien Room at 7 pm and will be available by Zoom.

Steve Bilafer said he is still undecided about Oakdale site because he is concerned about the cost of the project not coming in on budget if the building project is phased in rather than the full school demolished.

Ms. Briggs said the design switched a bit from last time. She would like more info about how a third floor might impact light for residences at the narrow end of the field. Mr. Levi said he would show the impact to residents at the next SBRC meeting.

Mr. Tocci reminded people that they are still taking comments. The Oakdale Construction Project website has a place for you to register comments.

Motion was made by SBRC to adjourn and approved by a vote of 5-0.

[A brief recess was called by Vice Chair Mayanne Briggs.]

The meeting was commenced by Vice-Chair Mayanne Briggs at 9:25 pm.

**Dedham Public Schools
Interim Superintendent's Update
June 21, 2023**

Teaching and Learning



Grade 3 Trip to the Dedham Historical Society. Recently, third graders visited the Dedham Historical Society to learn about local history. In this photo, students interact with and learn how to use rotary phones. It's part of a sequence connecting today's cell phones with what came before. They start with a candlestick phone and needing operators, then the rotary phones in the photograph, then to cell phones---then jump to early photography and we work up to, again, today's cell phones and talk about how they are combined with cameras. The convenience of quick calls and photographs compared to the past and the relationship among the various means. And how important patience was --- things weren't instant and instantaneous as they are expected to be in today's world. It's one of several walks through history with hands-on. Students visited the archive which includes historic photos of their

schools, yearbooks to see teachers and parents pictured, etc.---and a tour of the museum as the third block.

Visual and Performing Arts

Elementary Spring Concerts. Oakdale, Riverdale, Greenlodge and the ECEC presented their Spring Concerts with every child, Kindergarten thru 5th grade, participating (Avery's concert was June 2) under the direction of elementary music teachers Chris Molinaro, Jen O'Shea, Sara Santos and Michael Williams.

Flag Day. The Dedham Middle School Band and the Dedham High School Band each marched in the Flag Day Parade under the direction of band directors, Kevin Martins and Heather Kirby.

Professional Development

LEAP Academic Support Programs. We're getting ready for a week of professional learning to launch our new integrated ESY/LEAP academic support programs for students. During the week of June 26th, Dr. Garand, Ms. Dineen-Serpis, Dr. Smith, Dr. Kobierski, and our instructional coaching team will train and orient educators to our summer support programs. The [staff training site](#) can be found here. At the elementary level, educators will utilize Ready to Rise (a tier-2 Foundations intervention), along with Amplify Intervention, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and Lexia to support students in literacy. And in math, students will have access to Reflex, ALEKS, Maneuvering Math, and Bridges.

Community Engagement

Fox Zip Trip Participation - July 7th. Dedham Public Schools will participate in an upcoming Town-wide media opportunity. On Friday, July 7th Fox News will visit Dedham for the morning to kick off their summer "Zip Trip" series. In addition to Town participation, DPS will be featured in several interview segments including: An interview with new Superintendent Nan Murphy; A performance by Oakdale students and interview with music teacher Chris Molinaro and Dept head Heather Kirby; An interview with the DHS Best Buddies group; and, an interview with Erin MacDonald who is our Varsity Field Hockey Coach, Varsity Girls Lacrosse Coach, Assistant Girls Basketball Coach, Physical Education Teacher and a DHS Graduate, joined by athletes.

Panorama Family Surveys. Panorama family surveys are live and will be in inboxes shortly if they are not already. We kindly ask families to take a few minutes to complete the survey (one per child). The information that we gather through this process is incredibly valuable as we review our practice and plan for the future.

Avery	22500526 93	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/2250052693/surveys
DHS	75661398 03	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/7566139803/surveys
DMS	38837100 14	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/3883710014/surveys
ECEC	88350693 05	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/8835069305/surveys
Greenlodge	25181784 51	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/2518178451/surveys
Oakdale	36169367 94	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/3616936794/surveys
Riverdale	14478849 42	https://surveys.panoramaed.com/dedham/1447884942/surveys

Management and Operations

DHS Turf Field. The turf field project is charging forward. The old turf has been removed from the work site, and the new turf carpet is currently being laid out and sewn together. Shipments of sand and crumb rubber have arrived on location and are staged to be installed.



Security and Safety. We will be meeting next week to discuss the timeline for the summer installation of building access hardware at the schools. These electronic points of entry allow additional building access using the issued swipe cards to allow better security and safety for classes and recess held outside the building. In addition we will be discussing new security cameras to be installed as part of the overall safety and security upgrades.

DMS Safety Vestibule. The kick off meeting for the safety vestibule at the middle school is being scheduled for next week. We anticipate this project lasting into the new school year, with the majority of the heavy installation occurring over the summer.

Director of Facilities. The district has completed the interview process for the next Director of Facilities, and we are excited to welcome Matthew Haffner into the position. Matt has held a similar role for the town of Norfolk for the past seven years, where he has managed the town and school facilities with great success. Matt will be working on a transition plan over the summer that allows him to start working for Dedham while successfully handing off his duties in Norfolk.

COMMENTS on Interim Superintendent's Update

Ms. McCormick said her 3rd grader went on the field trip and she is pleased that students could connect across schools. The Panorama surveys did get out. It's important for families to fill this survey out.

Mr. Acosta is happy to see the turf project underway.

Dr. Flynn Gallant commented about the importance of the ESY summer programs.

Mr. Polito commented that this is the final superintendent update that Dr. Kelly will deliver. He commended Dr. Kelly for the achievements made as interim superintendent over the past six months. Dr. Kelly confirmed that this is his final Superintendent update. He is grateful to continue to serve in this role until the new Superintendent takes over.

Ms. Briggs asked how many ESY programs are running at Oakdale. Administration reported that no ESY programs are running at Oakdale.

- 4th Quarter Budget Report

Mr. Wells reported that the 2023 budget is balanced. Facilities budget is balanced. No surplus this year. Received money from Covid reimbursements and using to offset salaries. Mr. Polito commended Wells and his staff for doing so well with an inherited budget. Mr. Wells commended his team.

Reports/Updates/Requests

- Subcommittee Updates

- o Budget

Mr. Wells said that the School Committee needs to approve the increase of fees that he outlined at the last School Committee meeting. This is part of the budgetary process.

Mr. Polito said the fee increase vote was omitted from the agenda tonight. He said that a quick supplementary meeting needs to take place to vote on the fee increases. Ms. Briggs said this vote will be scheduled for either June 28th or July 12th.

Mr. Acosta asked how the Dedham Tri Valley fees compare with other districts. Mr. Wells said we are about average in costs. Mr. Acosta asked if the fee increase poses an issue to students who cannot afford the increase. Mr. Wells said all students will be able to participate despite their financial situation.

- o Curriculum Advisory

No updates.

- o Policy

No updates.

- o SBRC

Update provided earlier in the meeting.

o Negotiations

Mr. Polito said that all the current union settlements have been completed until FY2024. Every employee has a contract until the next school year. This fall we will be back at the table. He thanked the unions.

Ms. Briggs congratulated Mr. Wells and his team for also making sure all employees get their retro pay before the end of the school year.

o Parks & Recreation

No updates

o Financial Policy

No updates.

o Human Rights Commission

Ms. McCormick said this week the Human Rights Commission met with Citizens for Juvenile Justice related to legislation on 18-20 years old being removed from the adult system. There is a newly appointed member from the Council on Aging. The Human Rights Commission co-hosted the first Juneteenth celebration and there was a good turnout. The Commission is currently working on the second Community Cultural Event on August 23rd

Donations

No donations.

Review and Approval Vote of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve the School Committee June 7th minutes as presented. Motion was approved by a vote of 5-0. (Mr. Hebert left the meeting early.)

Old/New Business

Mr. Acosta said the final decision for SBRC is June 26th. This is the final day for comments to be made on the site. He said he enjoyed having students here tonight and he would like to see that happen more often next year. He thinks it increases the audience participation and keeps us close to the student body.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Mr. Polito commented about the success of Roman Trials that were held at Town Hall. He said he was privileged to be a judge. Students participated in two trials and played different roles.

Ms. Briggs said she wanted to acknowledge Heather Kirby for all the help she has given them during meetings this year.

Motion was made to adjourn and approved by a vote of 5-0. (Mr. Hebert left the meeting early.)

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary