

Dedham Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
Dedham Town Hall
April 3, 2024

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

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

Naila Hernandez, student representative (absent)

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

Nan Murphy, Superintendent
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations and Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Sara Stetson, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Meeting held at the Town Hall at 7 pm.

Open Meeting (Public Meeting is recorded and can be accessed via Dedham Television)

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Meeting (Public Meeting is recorded and can be accessed via Dedham Television)

Recognitions

- Elementary Science Fair Special Honors Recipients

Grade 3-5 science fair honorees came up to the podium led by Supt. Murphy and describes each of their winning projects. Dr. Heather Smith awarded medals to recipients. She acknowledged the faculty and families who supported these important projects. Photo was taken with the School Committee and the student honorees.

Public Comment

Bob LaPorto, 148 Crane St. thanked the schools for a successful athletic season. He offered the services of Dedham Basketball Association to help with various repairs at DHS and Avery school. He said he will revisit this in June with an updated list of important repairs.

Student Representative Update

Naila Hernandez was absent.

Superintendent Update

- A Trade Expert Secondary Fair will be held on April 11th at DHS from 8:30 to 10:30 AM.
- Thirty Seniors attended a fair on early admission and the majority submitted early applications with successful outcomes.
- Dr. Flynn Gallant came to Avery School to talk about World Down's Syndrome Day. Dr. Flynn Gallant thanked Avery School for letting her visit. She highlighted the importance of diversity in learning styles.
- Solar Eclipse will happen on Monday. The schools are using this opportunity as a teaching opportunity across all levels and all schools. Postponing outside activities during the eclipse period for safety reasons.

Education Report

- Summer School Offerings – SPARKS Program and Summer Institute

Dr. Heather Smith came up to the podium to talk about Camp Spark. She talked about the development of the inclusive, fun-based program with FableVision Studios. Camp Spark will be held from July 8 to August 8, 2024. The program will have two tracks during the four week period. Track 1: campers will write their own newspaper stories, Track 2: campers will build their own board game. Another summer opportunity at ECEC will be "I am Stem, Stem I Am" for rising first graders. This summer program integrates science, math and literacy. Dr Stetson commented that these extended summer programs are geared to ESY and students with IUPs.

Dr. Smith said that the Summer Institute will be held at the high school this year. Its close enough to Avery so that students from Camp Spark can go over to that program in the afternoon. There are no registration costs for eligible students.

- Discussion & Vote on Superintendent's Evaluation

Mr. Hebert thanked the School Committee for their promptness with their ratings for the Superintendent Evaluation. HE reported that Supt. Murphy and he met on Monday and there were no edits to the evaluation.

Dr. Flynn Gallant compiled the evaluation for the other School Committee members. Dr. Flynn Gallant reported that the School Committee determined that Dr. Murphy's evaluation goals and standards were met with proficiency. Dr. Flynn Gallant read the statement from the School Committee that listed Dr. Murphy's accomplishments for her inaugural year. Highlights of her first year as superintendent included inclusive and collaborative leadership, improvements in communications, facilitation of community forums and forged consensus with staff, faculty and school committee members.

Some of the recommendations for the future was a focus on closing MCAS gaps at elementary level and reducing absenteeism at the high school. The goal is to become one of the higher performing districts in the state.

The School Committee thanked Dr. Flynn Gallant for her work on compiling the evaluation.

Motion was made to accept the evaluation of Superintendent Murphy as presented. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Business Report

- Discussion and Vote on Revised Educational Program for the Preferred Schematic Report Submission to MSBA

Mr. Hebert said the Educational Plan needed to be revised to reflect the changes in the Oakdale Project purview.

Dr. Kelly said he met with Principal Hermesch and Vertex last week about the revisions. He confirmed there were no substantive changes in the revised Plan. He said the School Committee members have the revised plan in their folders.

Motion was made to allow the revised Educational Program to be submitted to the MSBA as part of the PSR for the Oakdale Building Project. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

- Discussion and Vote on Feasibility Funding

Mr. Hebert explained that the School Committee needs to address the needs for increased funding for the Feasibility Study for the Oakdale Building Project. Dr. Kelly reported that the additional appropriation request for continuing the project is: \$263,553. The additional budgetary amount needs to be approved by Town Meeting. This additional appropriation is for vetting the new enrollment options and finishing the new design.

Motion was made to request an additional \$263,553 from Town Meeting under Warrant Article #17 to finish the feasibility work for the Oakdale Building Project. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Subcommittees Updates

- Budget

The Community Budget Forum will be held tomorrow night, April 4th at 6:30 at the Middle School.

- Curriculum Advisory

No updates.

- Facilities

Mr. Acosta said they took a tour of DHS that allowed Fin Com and Town Meeting members to see the extent of capital needs at the high school. Next facility tour is Riverdale.

- Negotiations

No updates.

- Policy

No updates.

- SBRC

Ms. Briggs said the SBRC met last Monday about the next submission process.

Donations

No donation.

Review and Approval Vote of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from March 20, 2024. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Old/New Business

Mr. Polito asked about Student Government Day activities. Dr. Kelly said he would update the group at the next meeting.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Dr. Flynn Gallant acknowledged that this is the last meeting for Ms. McCormick and Mr. Hebert on the School Committee.

Ms. McCormick spoke about how hard the members of the School Committee work to support the district. She said she is not running again in order to focus on family.

Mr. Hebert spoke about how he feels he was fated to participate in town government. He hopes he left the district in a better place than he found it. He thanked his colleagues for helping him be a better board member.

Mr. Polito applauded the School Committee members for staying student focused during difficult times.

Ms. Twomey thanked Mr. Hebert and Ms. McCormick for being available to answer her questions and for giving her a perspective that she can now share with other new members.

Mr. Acosta said that both Mr. Hebert and Ms. McCormick have been very receptive to his ideas.

Ms. Briggs said that both members will be missed and they have added their own unique perspectives to the committee.

Executive Session – Exemption 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining; Exemption 7 to comply with the provisions of Open Meeting Law, MGL C30A S22(f), (g). (Review/Vote Executive Session Minutes)

Motion was made to adjourn the public session and move to Executive Session. Motion was approved with a roll call vote of 7-0.

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary