

DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Harmony Hall

March 22, 2010

PRESENT: Mr. Mathew Sheehan, Chairman; Mr. Michael Miles; Dr. Michael McNamara; Mr. Ronald Mercier; Mrs. Bonita Elie; Mrs. Elaine Espindle, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Thomas Rose, School Business Administrator; Attorney Kevin Murphy; Cynthia Curtis, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

The Regular Session Meeting of the School Committee was called to order by Chairman Matthew Sheehan at Harmony Hall at 7:00 p.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Chairman Sheehan called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for Ms. Irene Wasylak, former employee of the Dracut Public Schools and mother Carol Kane, teacher at Dracut High School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2010 School Committee Meeting.

Under discussion, Chairman Sheehan asked that under the approval of bills and payrolls if the second person that signed the bills could be listed.

Minutes of March 8, 2010 were tabled and will be resubmitted at the next meeting.

2. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2010 Executive Session Meeting.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

3. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to accept the minutes of the February 3, 2010 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

4. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to accept the minutes of the February 17, 2010 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

The bills and payrolls were signed by Chairman Sheehan and Mr. Miles.

PRESENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH REPRESENTATIVE, JENNIFER CYR:

Ms. Jennifer Cyr gave a presentation of the events at the senior high school. Ms. Cyr updated on the MCAS testing, trip to MCI Shirley, April 8th third quarter grades are due, April 15th report cards will be distributed, the spring musical West Side Story will be held on 4/8, 4/9, and 4/10, spring sports season began on March 15th.

Recognition of Athletic Coaches/Students:

Chairman Sheehan indicated that he would like to take several items out of order. He asked that Mr. Woods introduce the coaches and student athlete. Mr. Woods wanted to first mention that the ice hockey team qualified for the tournament, the cheerleader squad made it to the states, the indoor track team had several boys and girls qualify for the state level.

Recognition of Girls' Basketball Coach:

Mr. Woods introduced Ms. Lisa Golobski-Twomey, Girls' Varsity Basketball Coach. This year the team had the most successful season in the last decade finishing 13-9 in the regular season. Ms. Twomey was named the Merrimack Valley Coach of the Year and will be named the Lowell Sun Coach of the Year. Chairman Sheehan presented Ms. Twomey with a letter from the School Committee and Superintendent of Schools congratulating her on being named MVC Division II Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year.

Recognition of Boys' Basketball Coach:

Mr. Woods introduced Mr. Michael Paquette, Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach. This is Mr. Paquette's thirteenth year. This year the team captured the Merrimack Valley Conference Division II Championship, the first time since 1955. The team finished the season with a record of 15-6, they were 10-3 in the Merrimack Valley Conference. Mr. Paquette was named the Merrimack Valley Coach of the Year and will be named the Lowell Sun Coach of the Year. Chairman Sheehan presented Mr. Paquette with a letter from the School Committee and Superintendent of Schools congratulating him on being named MVC Division II Boys' Basketball Coach of the Year and for the team obtaining MVC Conference Championship.

Recognition of Wrestling Athlete, Matthew Dehney

Mr. Woods introduced Mr. Michael Riley, Varsity Wrestling Coach, and Mr. Matthew Dehney. Matthew Dehney was undefeated in the regular season, had a record of 47-1, MIAA Division II State Champion, at the All-States he was runner up, and became the New England Wrestling Champion, In addition he was Lowell Holiday Champion, MVC Wrestler, Wilmington Sons of Italy Tournament Champion, he was named the Boston Globe All Scholastic Wrestler, Boston Herald All Scholastic Wrestler, and Lowell Sun All Scholastic Wrestler. Chairman Sheehan presented Matthew Dehney with a certificate recognizing his outstanding contributions and achievements as a wrestler at Dracut High.

Recognition of DECA Competition Students

Mrs. Espindle introduced Mr. Charles Mone, teacher at Dracut High School and advisor of the Distributive Education Club of America (DECA). A state competition was held for DECA in Boston and several of our high school students qualified for the competition.

Casey Cipriano was recognized for receiving 1st place medallion for test 3 and trophy for 2nd place overall. Casey qualifies for the International Career Development Conference being held in Kentucky and will attend the Nationals with her family. A certificate was presented to Casey for her accomplishments.

Mrs. Espindle introduced Christopher Ghaban and George Murphy who received a finalist plaque and 5th place overall for their 30 page International Business Plan. A display of their works was available for review at the conclusion of the meeting. A certificate was presented to both students for their accomplishments.

Mrs. Espindle introduced Mr. Matthew Ferri who received a Certificate of Competence, scoring in the top 70% and third place medallion for test 1. A certificate was presented to Matthew Ferri for his accomplishment.

COMMUNITY INPUT:

No one signed up for Community Input

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

No Committee Reports

SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- Mrs. Espindle congratulated the Dracut Scholarship Foundation for their continued success. With the help of the community, they were able to raise over \$112,126 that will go towards scholarships for graduating seniors.
- On March 18th, Dr. Michael McNamara, Bonnie Elie, and DTA President Joyce Desjardins joined the Superintendent at a Race to the Top Summit. This meeting was open to all participating Local Educational Agencies (LEA's). A meeting will be held to share ideas if Massachusetts should win the Race to the Top nationally.
- A Health and Wellness Steering Committee has been initiated. Members of this steering committee will include administrators, principals and faculty members. The first meeting will be held in early April. As per the Dracut Public School's Health and Wellness policy, the Steering Committee will establish priorities for the District annually.
- On April 15th and April 16th, six UMASS Lowell Nursing students will be holding presentations at Dracut High School regarding skin cancer awareness.
- On March 10th through March 12th sixteen members of the Dracut High School Student Council attended the Annual Massachusetts Association of Student Councils Conference in Hyannis. Three students, Jennifer Cyr, Sean Geehan and Jacquelyn Zaccardi were recipients of the Commonwealth Award.

These students will be at the next School Committee Meeting so they can be congratulated.

- Ms. Rebecca Duda, Lakeview Junior High Teacher, has been awarded a \$6,000 grant from *Beyond Questions* to help with the purchase of wireless technology to assist Lakeview's teaching staff with formative assessment. This grant, with additional monetary assistance of \$2,400 from the Lakeview Junior High PTO, has allowed the school to purchase student remotes and teacher receivers.
- On Friday, March 26th five members of the Lakeview Junior High Honor Society will attend the Anti-Defamation League's *A World of Difference Institute* 16th Annual New England Youth Congress.
- Grade 7 student, Meghan Messer, won second place in this year's Middlesex Country Fire Prevention Poster Contest that was held for students in grades 6 through 8. Meghan will receive a plaque and a \$100 prize at the award ceremony that is scheduled for June 3rd.
- At the Englesby Intermediate School, a representative from the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Institute visited with Ms. Joyce Desjardins' classroom.
- The Kindergarten Accreditation process is underway. Brookside, Parker and Greenmont Avenue have completed a year and a half of preparation for site visits from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Campbell School has maintained a fourth year in the present term of accreditation and is beginning their third entry into the five year process for a third term of accreditation.
- The Dracut Public Schools are continuing their efforts to address the issue of bullying. Mr. Eric Gorby has taken on the task of training our classroom teachers and has held parent information nights. Teachers at Englesby and Lakeview Junior High have also been trained so they can now train teachers within their school building. The next goal is to implement a program at the high school level. Vice Principal, Mr. William Vogel will be contacting District Attorney Gerald Leone's Office to see if we can get a speaker to come out to speak with staff and students, as well as contacting Bridgewater State College.

The PTOs from the Englesby Intermediate School and Lakeview Junior High School are trying to arrange an evening presentation for Dracut parents and staff on the issue of Cyber Bullying. This presentation will be conducted by a representative from Project Alliance.

- Brookside Principal, Paul Galello, has started an effort to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles for students in grades 3 and 4 at Brookside. A Walking Club has been established that will take place on Monday afternoons.
- Channel 7 Meteorologist, Jeremy Reiner, will be visiting the Brookside Elementary School on Wednesday, March 24th.
- The four-year graduation rate was released from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The percentage of graduating students in Dracut is 82.2%, which is above the state level at 81.5%.
- The Performing Arts Boosters will be holding their annual Spring Craft Fair on March 27th.

Mr. Miles indicated that getting the District Attorney's Office involved regarding bullying is a great idea. Mr. Miles also indicated that two Lowell Police Officers, Timothy Crowley and Frank Rouine came and spoke with the athletes in the fall about bullying, domestic violence and substance abuse and would like to continue with this.

Mrs. Elie asked that a letter be sent to the Lakeview Junior High PTO for their contribution to technology at that school.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Chairman Sheehan read items from the April calendar of events.

- April 1st – PreSchool registration
- April 3rd - Good Friday – no school
- April 6th – Dracut Scholarship Foundation Meeting
- April 7th – Junior High Science Fair
- April 8th through April 10th – DHS Spring Musical
- April 9th – Englesby Activity Night
- April 12th – School Committee Meeting

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Sheehan thanked Mr. Miles, Mr. Mercier, Mr. Graham and Mr. Woods regarding the Ryan Sayer Baseball Field dedication. The dedication will be held on April 15th and the ceremony will begin at 3:30 p.m.

Transportation Review:

Attorney Murphy indicated that a previous vote was made to extend the S.P.& R. contract for three years. Under the contract agreement, it can only be extended for two years. Attorney Murphy asked that a vote be taken to amend the original vote taken on February 8, 2010 and to extend the contract to 2011-2012 at the same rate of \$454,400 for each year.

5. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Mercier to amend the vote taken on February 8, 2010 and extend S.P.& R. contract for a period of two years until 2011-2012 at the same rate at \$454,500 for each year.

Roll Call Vote: Dr. McNamara – yes, Mrs. Elie – yes, Mr. Mercier, yes, Mr. Miles – yes,
Mr. Sheehan - yes

NEW BUSINESS:

Trip Request for Brookside Elementary School.

6. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to accept the trip request for the Brookside Elementary School to go to the Seacoast Science Center in Rye, NH.

Under discussion, Dr. McNamara asked if Principal Paul Galello would like to add any information. Mr. Galello addressed the Committee and indicated that the 4th grade team decided to visit and set up this program so the children can learn about the various science habitats. Attorney Murphy asked that he review the insurance information prior to the trip.

Dr. McNamara asked if this would interfere with MCAS. Mr. Galello indicated it would not.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

2010-2011 Junior High School Improvement Plan Presentation:

Principal, Theresa Rogers reviewed the goals of the School Improvement Plan.

- Increase student performance in topic development as demonstrated by an increase in the mean score on open response questions in English Language Arts in grades 7 and 8.
- Increase average score earned on questions from poetry strand in ELA.
- Improve rate of accurate student responses in Mathematics on questions from geometry and measurement strands.
- Provide safe, healthy and nurturing environment for students. An educational program will be created and put into use for repeat offenders of bullying.

Mr. Mercier asked Mrs. Rogers to update the Committee as to what actions have been taken regarding recent incidents at the Junior High. Mrs. Rogers addressed some recent issues and consequences of those students. Mrs. Rogers indicated that assemblies were held at the school, a connect-ed message would be sent out.

Mr. Miles asked if we could look into the possibility of assistance from a School Resource Officer. Mrs. Rogers stated that she has spoken with the District Attorney's Office about facebook and enlisting the help of parents and having parent support at presentations.

Dr. McNamara asked about having mandatory parent workshops to raise the awareness to parents.

Dr. McNamara referred to prior parent meetings that may have been held prior to prom season. Parents need to be made aware of the seriousness of social networking. Perhaps Jerry Leone could be contacted to visit the schools.

Mr. Mercier asked Mrs. Rogers about amending the student handbook for next year. Mrs. Rogers indicated that cyber bullying is happening outside of the school environment. Mrs. Espindle indicated that we will receive information from the state to discipline students regarding cyber bullying outside of the school. This information, once received, will be in the student handbooks.

Dr. McNamara asked about the MCAS Data. Is there an opportunity to analyze gender data and if there are any differences? Mrs. Rogers stated that girls usually do better with open response. In using the John Collins writing program this year they are hoping this will make a difference in the classroom.

7. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Mercier to accept the 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan for Lakeview Junior High School.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

North Reading Transportation Review:

Mr. Rose updated the Committee on transportation. A meeting was held with North Reading Transportation to see about addressing the deficit. No changes will be made at this time regarding the walk zone for students. The school department will continue to monitor transportation closely and perhaps make a recommendation to the Finance Sub-Committee about a fee increase. The bus head counts will also continue to be monitored.

Mr. Mercier stated that he would like to avoid raising the bus fee. If it is absolutely needed, he asked that it be done in a timely manner. Chairman Sheehan agreed with Mrs. Mercier and would like to keep this as an open discussion. Mr. Miles asked about the \$100,000 deficit. Mrs. Espindle has been working on the deficit and has brought it down to about \$20,000 at this point and will continue to work on this issue and will keep the Committee updated.

Chairman Sheehan announced that at the recent Scholarship Telethon that the School Committee did not beat the senior students; however, the Committee is *Smarter than the Dracut Selectmen*. Chairman Sheehan congratulated his colleagues. The Dracut Scholarship Foundation was congratulated by all and recognized for all their work that they do in helping our students.

Chairman Sheehan thanked Cynthia Curtis for filling in at the meeting this evening. Mrs. Elie thanked Mrs. Espindle for coming back as Interim Superintendent.

8. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mr. Mercier to adjourn the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee.

Roll Call Vote: Dr. McNamara – yes, Mrs. Elie – yes, Mr. Mercier, yes, Mr. Miles – yes,
Mr. Sheehan - yes

Chairman Sheehan adjourned the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia L. Curtis