



## **DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes**

**DATE:** August 22, 2011

**LOCATION:** Harmony Hall

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mrs. Bonita Elie, Chairman  
Mr. Michael Miles, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Ronald Mercier  
Dr. Michael McNamara

**ABSENT:**

Mr. Matthew Sheehan, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson

**SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:**

Dr. Stacy Scott, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Thomas Rose, School Business Administrator  
Attorney Edward Morris  
Cynthia Curtis, Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Regular Session Meeting of the School Committee was called to order by Chairperson Bonita Elie at Harmony Hall at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of entering into Executive Session.

Chairperson Elie read into the record the purpose for entering into Executive Session was for an update on negotiations that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect and to discuss Safety and Security Issues.

1. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Dr. McNamara to enter into Executive Session for the reasons stated.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

The regular session meeting was recessed at 6:00 p.m.

The regular session meeting was reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

**ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:**

Attorney Kevin Murphy

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

Chairperson Elie called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for Phil Tully, brother of Sharon Tully, retired school administrator/teacher.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the August 8, 2011 School Committee Meeting minutes.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

3. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the August 8, 2011 Executive Session Meeting minutes.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

Attorney Murphy indicated that no items are to be released at this time.

4. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the May 17, 2011 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting minutes.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:**

Bills and Payrolls were signed as follows:

Warrant 2012003 by Mr. Mercier, Mr. Miles and Dr. McNamara

Warrant 2012004 by Mr. Mercier, Mr. Miles and Dr. McNamara

**COMMUNITY INPUT:**

Kim Tyler, 88 Sesame Street, was present to obtain an update about increased class size at the Campbell Elementary School, specifically the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class size. Ms. Tyler was also present at the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Tyler is requesting information on all classes and about possible redistricting that was mentioned at the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Larry Pizette, 37 Kelly Road, was present to express his concern about class size at the Campbell School and interested in knowing the plan to help reduce class size.

Discussion was held regarding class size. Dr. Scott indicated that he was not ready to report on this topic as he is still reviewing the district enrollment. School Business Administrator, Mr. Rose, will be assisting in reviewing the demographics of the district that could help reduce class size throughout the district. When this report is ready it will be presented to the Committee.

Discussion continued regarding the number of students in the classrooms at Campbell School. It was indicated that some classrooms have an average of 24 to 25 students and some may have up to 27 to 28 students. Dr. McNamara clarified the discussion that was held at a previous meeting. Redistricting would be an option to help the district since funding is low. Families would not be separated which is similar to how the district takes into consideration students moving from Parker to Brookside. Discussion was also held regarding the availability of Paraprofessionals to help with teacher: student ratio.

Dr. Scott will be working on a communication for parents that will be available on the school website. Mrs. Elie and the Committee thanked the parents for attending the meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

***Policy Sub-Committee:***

Mr. Mercier indicated that the Policy Sub-Committee met on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> to review the proposal from Ms. Janet Barry, Executive Director of Student Services, and her recommendation to update the Parent Observation Policy in order to bring the policy in line with state regulations. The Policy Sub-Committee is making a recommendation that the full Board approve the recommended changes to the Observation Policy.

The proposed changes would allow parents to observe their child’s classroom while their CORI is being processed as long as a school department employee is present with the parent. This would allow parents to have timely access to observe a classroom in event the CORI is not returned by the state.

Discussion was held regarding the length of time a CORI is processed. Mrs. Curtis indicated that we have no control over the process once the CORI information is sent to the state. The CORI process could take a day, week or longer depending on how busy the state is in processing requests.

Legal Counsel was asked if they had approved of this proposed change. Attorney Murphy indicated that he would like this document tabled until the next meeting to allow him time to review.

Dr. McNamara referenced that the Committee begin the process of reviewing the entire policy manual for the district.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

- September 1<sup>st</sup> General Teachers Meeting
- September 2<sup>nd</sup> Professional Development
- September 5<sup>th</sup> Labor Day
- September 6<sup>th</sup> First Day of School grades 1-12
- September 7<sup>th</sup> Kindergarten Orientation
- September 8<sup>th</sup> Kindergarten Classes Begin
- September 12<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting

**SUPERINTENDENT’S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

***Staffing Announcements:***

Dr. Scott indicated that with the increasing student population there is a need for a full time Science Teacher at Dracut High School in order to meet student needs. Funding for this position will come from the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant.

- 5. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to approve the creation of a full time Science teacher with funding from the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant.

**Roll Call Vote:**

- Mr. Mercier                    Yes
- Dr. McNamara                Yes
- Mr. Miles                      Yes
- Mrs. Elie                        Yes

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

Dr. Scott indicated that with new student enrollment and to meet state mandates that additional Special Education Paraprofessionals are needed at Dracut High School and the Campbell Elementary School. Funding for these positions will come out of the regular budget.

6. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the creation of additional 2.4 Paraprofessionals with funding from the regular budget.

Discussion was held regarding the number of Paraprofessionals in the district. Dr. McNamara asked for a list of Paraprofessionals that have been added over the last year. Dr. Scott will work on a careful plan to review the efficiency of paraprofessionals throughout the district.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

Dr. Scott indicated that due to the expansion of the Kindergarten program throughout the district, it is necessary to increase 2 part time Paraprofessionals from .4 to 1.0 and to hire one additional full-time paraprofessional.

7. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to increase 2 part time Paraprofessional from .4 to 1.0 and to hire an additional paraprofessional for the kindergarten program with funding from the regular budget.

Dr. McNamara suggested utilizing parent volunteers in the classrooms. Mr. Miles agreed with Dr. McNamara as this would save some money in the district; however, there needs to be commitment and training. Mr. Mercier suggested utilizing students that are training and studying to be teachers. Dr. Scott indicated that he liked the suggestions and he will be looking into the intern programs.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

**Other:**

Under staffing announcements, Mr. Mercier indicated that he had received calls from various school employees including secretaries and vice principals about involuntary transfers. Mr. Mercier asked for clarification of these moves.

Dr. Scott responded that transfers are being done throughout the district under a restructuring plan from the Superintendent. Dr. Scott noted that this is not punishment and these transfers are being made where personnel are most needed and effective and these transfers were not done to create negativity but done in the best interest of the students and district.

Mr. Mercier indicated that these staff members feel they are being punished and some have been in their positions for almost twenty years. These personnel also expressed concern that they are being transferred to jobs they have not been trained in and their concerns are not being heard. Dr. Scott responded that no one will be doing a job they are not familiar with and training will be provided if necessary.

Mr. Mercier reminded Dr. Scott that any new positions created must go before the Committee. Dr. Scott responded that these are not new positions only transfers into current positions in the district. Discussion was held regarding job descriptions for these positions. Dr. Scott noted that the secretarial position is general secretarial duties done throughout the district. Dr. Scott will continue to review the positions of the staff throughout the district.

Mr. Mercier would like an overview of changes and would like Dr. Scott to bring these changes back to the Committee to see if the School Committee is required to vote on any changes. Dr. Scott noted that changes are best for the district with new building leaders.

Dr. Scott indicated that he will be coming back to the Board with a request for new positions. At the junior high school there is a need for additional music teacher with the transfer of a teacher to the high school. There may also be a need for grant writers and OCR monitors. Dr. Scott referenced the change of positions at Parker Avenue School. The Title I position will be combined with the Teaching Principal at Parker Avenue.

***Table of Organization:***

Dr. Scott provided the Committee with a draft of a revised organizational chart asking the Committee for any comments or suggestions. Changes were made around the leadership of the district.

Mr. Mercier noted that Legal Counsel is hired by the Committee and should report directly to the Committee.

Mr. Miles asked that the Table of Organization be tabled until a future meeting.

Discussion continued regarding suggestions and concerns around the table of organization. Dr. McNamara would like to see numbers associated with the positions. Concern and suggestions were made regarding, but not limited to, the athletic director position, technology department, Title I and the level of district administrators.

Dr. Scott noted that the goal was to have the Committee review and comment with any suggestions or recommendations.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

***Brookside PTO Contest***

Mrs. Elie provided the link to vote for Brookside PTO promotion Avery Gives Back to schools. Mrs. Elie indicated that you can vote more than once but only once a day. The top five schools will win \$10,000 worth of Avery supplies, box top coupons and gift cards. The link for this promotion is: <http://givebacktoschools.avery.com/schools/index>

***MASBO Transportation Operations Review:***

Dr. McNamara would like to see the district start to review and implement the recommendations made from MASBO regarding transportation.

***Other:***

Dr. McNamara inquired as to where the funding will come from for the MASC conference. Dr. Scott noted that the funding has not been identified. Mr. Miles noted that he will be attending the conference and will pay his own way.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Contract Signing: Cafeteria Association***

8. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara to allow the Chair to sign the Cafeteria Association contract on behalf of the Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

***Contract Signing: Administrators Association***

9. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Miles to allow the Chair to sign the Administrators Association contract on behalf of the Committee.

Dr. McNamara asked that an outline be given on the contracts that are being signed. Attorney Murphy suggested that the Committee first vote to allow the Chair to sign and suggested that anyone that would like a copy of the document could obtain a copy from central office.

Mr. Mercier wanted it noted that he is not voting yes for the signing of the Administrators contract as he voted no in Executive Session. Attorney Murphy asked that any comments regarding Executive Session be held until after the release of those minutes.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	No
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

**Vote: Motions passes 3-1**

***Report Requests:***

Mr. Mercier asked for a report from the Superintendent indicating how many positions have been created and how many have been eliminated or lost due to reduction in force or budgetary constraints. Mr. Mercier would like a comparison on these positions for the second meeting in September.

***Other:***

Dr. McNamara asked that the Board consider sending a letter to DESE that the Dracut School Committee does not support a waiver for Massachusetts under the new NCLB provisions. Dracut has worked hard since the implementation of NCLB by upgrading curriculum and testing. Dr. McNamara would like to see the progress continue. Dr. McNamara would like a letter sent from the Superintendent on behalf of the Committee.

Dr. Scott indicated that he will provide an overview provided by the Commissioner's Office to get a sense of the DESE rationale. A review will be provided to the Committee and a decision can be made based on the recommendations of the overview.

***End of Year Report:***

Dr. McNamara inquired when the End of the Year report is due and would like the Board to receive a copy. Mr. Rose noted that the report is due September 30<sup>th</sup>.

***Out of Country Trip:***

Dr. Scott announced that a Freshman Orientation will be held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at Dracut High School.

Dr. Scott announced that he would like to enter into contract with Hanban and the Chinese district to begin the process of teaching Chinese in Dracut. This would be a fact finding trip to China and Dr. Scott is putting together a delegation to attend. Dr. Scott will look into outside funding for the trip so that it will not affect the budget.

Mrs. Elie noted that she contacted St. John's Prep and Philips Academy and they both teach Chinese at their schools; however, these two schools are not public schools.

Mr. Mercier asked Attorney Murphy if soliciting funds was allowed through the policy of the school department. Attorney Murphy suggested having this on the agenda for the next school committee meeting.

Dr. Scott indicated that the delegation would include two administrators, two teachers and one school board member.

Mr. Mercier wanted it noted that he is not interested in attending. Dr. McNamara asked for more information on costs and an outline of the program. Dr. McNamara inquired about schools in the Merrimack Valley and how many schools offer Chinese. Dr. McNamara indicated that he cannot agree with spending any of Dracut's money to help fund this trip.

Mrs. Elie announced that she received notification from Ms. Rebecca Duda that students from abroad are seeking host families in Dracut. Mrs. Elie asked that information be placed on the school website.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

10. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Dr. McNamara to adjourn the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

The Regular Session Meeting of the Dracut School Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Curtis  
Recording Secretary

**List of documents and exhibits:**

1. School Committee agenda packet