



DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes

DATE: October 25, 2010

LOCATION: Harmony Hall

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Matthew Sheehan, Chairman
Dr. Michael McNamara, 2nd Vice Chairperson
Mr. Ronald Mercier
Mrs. Bonita Elie, 1st Vice Chairperson
Mr. Michael Miles

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 Chairman Matthew Sheehan at Harmony Hall at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of entering into Executive Session.

Chairman Sheehan read into the record the purpose for entering into Executive Session was to conduct collective bargaining sessions with the following:

- Administrators Association
- Office Personnel Association
- Custodians Association
- Maintenance Association
- Paraprofessionals
- Cafeteria Association, and
- Litigation Update

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

The regular session meeting was recessed at 6:02 p.m.
The regular session meeting was reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Attorney Kevin Murphy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Chairman Sheehan called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for Charles Voyer, father of Charlene Voyer, former teacher at the Greenmont Elementary School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

2. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the regular session minutes of September 27, 2010.

Vote: Unanimously approved

3. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to approve the executive session minutes of September 27, 2010.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Chairman Sheehan asked legal counsel if any items could be released. Attorney Murphy stated that no items are to be released at this time.

4. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mrs. Elie to accept the Finance Sub-Committee minutes of September 10, 2010.

Vote: Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

Bills and Payrolls were signed by Mr. Miles and Mr. Mercier

PRESENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Jasmine Abreu gave an update on the opening of school and the upcoming events at Dracut High including an update on athletics.

COMMUNITY INPUT

No Community Input

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MASC Resolutions

Dr. McNamara gave a brief explanation of the following MASC Resolutions that will be presented at the upcoming MASC conference:

Resolution 1: SPECIAL EDUCATION CIRCUIT BREAKER EXTENSION

Advocates that MASC file legislation to modify the Special Education Circuit Breaker law to assist and encourage school districts to create programs to keep students in district. The modification shall be that the state be required to pay for 75% of any expense exceeding twice the average student cost for all students attending a collaborative program, and 75% of the expenses exceeding the average student cost for students housed in an in-district or substantially separate program. This change would enable more districts to create or expand their in-district and collaborative offerings, thus keeping more students in district, improving educational opportunities while saving communities and the state funds.

Mr. Rose stated that this does not directly impact our foundation budget. It may have an impact on the town itself. Dr. McNamara asked for the authority to listen to the arguments at the delegate assembly and vote on the best interest of the school district.

9. Substitute motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to get a sense on how this will impact Dracut and to allow Dr. McNamara to vote in the best interest of the school district.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

Resolution 5: DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION, RESTRUCTURING AND EXPANDED REGIONALIZATION

Advocates that the local school governance and district structure shall remain with the discretion of cities, towns, and of their citizens acting through the ballot or their delegated representatives on city councils, school committees, town councils and town meetings. Additionally, MASC advocates to prevent granting authority to any appointed state official, appointed board or receiver to coerce the restructuring of any school district and its governance without the expressed approval of the school committee, city council, town meeting, town council and voters of each affected community.

10. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Dr. McNamara to support Resolution 5 as it relates to district consolidation, restructuring and expanded regionalization

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

Resolution 6: MID-YEAR RETIREMENTS

Advocates that the legislature act in such a way to end the practice of educator retirements during the school year in that such practice is not in the best interests of the students.

11. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara to support Resolution 9 as it relates to mid-year retirements

Discussion was held on this resolution. Mr. Miles indicated that mid-year retirements are disruptive to the students however there could be mitigating circumstances. Dr. McNamara indicated that mid-year retirements to happen and retirement usually revolves around birthdates and there can be a disadvantage to a school district. Mr. Mercier indicated that in his opinion this is one more item that the government controls over retirement benefits. Mr. Mercier is not in support of this resolution. Mrs. Elie indicated that she is an advocate for the children and will support this resolution for the best interest of the students.

Vote: Motion passes 4-1
Mrs. Elie Yes
Dr. McNamara Yes
Mr. Mercier No
Mr. Miles Yes
Mr. Sheehan Yes

Resolution 7: MID-YEAR BUDGET CUTS

Advocates that the legislature continue to maintain the requirement that all changes to the Chapter 70 local aid appropriation be approved by the General Court. Additionally, the legislature should further prohibit changes to the appropriations for public schools without the consent of the

5. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to support Resolution 1 as it relates to Special Education circuit breaker extension.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Resolution 2: CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION

Advocates support of changes in the way Charter Schools are authorized and funded in Massachusetts and provides four ways that Charter Schools may be created:

1. Approval of a Horace Mann Charter School by the local School Committee
2. Approval of a Charter School application by the district or regional School Committee
3. Approval of a Charter School application by the voters of a School District(s) or region(s) at a general election or Town Meeting
4. Approval of a Charter School application by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education without approval of either the School Committee or the voters of the district or region.

Charter Schools authorized under #'s 1, 2 or 3 above would result in no change in the present funding formula. Charter Schools authorized under #4 above will provide funding through the budget of the DESE without using Chapter 70 funds or any other local funds.

6. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Mercier to support Resolution 2 as it relates to Charter School authorization

Vote: Unanimously approved

Resolution 3: MCAS SCORES AND 766 APPROVED SCHOOLS

Advocates the support of DESE requiring 766 approved schools, including non-public institutions that serve Massachusetts students to publicly report their aggregate MCAS scores and Student Growth information while protecting the confidentiality of individual student records. The resolution would provide more data to increase the level of accountability for private special education providers for disclosing their aggregate MCAS scores to the public and allow districts to better determine appropriate out-of-district options for students based on performance as one measure.

7. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Miles to support Resolution 3 as it relates to MCAS scores and 766 approved schools

Vote: Unanimously approved

Resolution 4: CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

Advocates that MASC file legislation that requires the legislature to change the funding formula for charter schools basing said funding in the Base Rate Components of student enrollment from the sending district.

Attorney Murphy asked before the Committee vote if Dracut would benefit. The resolution was submitted by Everett which is an inner city school district.

8. Motion by Mrs. Elie not to support Resolution 4 as it relates to Charter School Funding Formula.

Motion fails due to lack of a second.

General Court, and further that the Governor and legislature be urged not to enact mid-fiscal year budget reductions including so called "9C" cuts to appropriations for public schools during FY 11.

12. Motion by Ms. Elie seconded by Mr. Mercier to support Resolution number 7 as it relates to mid- year budget cuts.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

NEW BUSINESS:

Junior High History Club Trip Request:

Rebecca Duda, Junior High Teacher, asked the Committee for approval for students to attend a trip to Gettysburg during the Memorial Day weekend.

13. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mrs. Elie to approve the trip request for the Junior High History Club.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

Chairman Sheehan congratulated Mrs. Duda for her recent award from the Community Teamwork Local Heroes.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

October 29th Junior High Harvest Ball at the Council on Aging
November 1st Town Meeting
November 1st School Committee Meeting
November 2nd Scholarship Foundation meeting
November 2nd State elections
November 8th School Committee Meeting and Executive Session

SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Dr. Scott noted the attendance profile for the month of September at 97.1%.

Dr. Scott noted the staff announcements as indicated in the agenda including a new school psychologist, Sonia Diaz as a .6 Elementary Curriculum Coordinator and Ed Orenstein as the Interim Special Education Director.

Dr. Scott also noted proposed changes in the position of Out-of-District Chairperson and the new title of this position to Assistant Director of Special Education. The high school IEP Team Chairperson position will be posted thereafter. Dr. Scott announced the retirement of Sharon Tully from her position as Secondary Curriculum Coordinator. Dr. Scott indicated that Race to the Top Funds will be used for the realignment of curriculum by moving the 9-12 coordinators to 7-12 coordinators. Dr. Scott would also like to create a K-6 coordinator for mathematics. Dr. Scott indicated that these positions will have a negative impact on the budget by using race to the Top Funds. Dr. McNamara asked if all these new staff are appropriately licensed in the area where they are assigned. Dr. Scott indicated we will be constantly vigilant in this regard to stay at the highly qualified status. For those still pursuing licensure we would apply for waivers.

Discussion prevailed regarding the approval of new positions that must have School Committee approval as per policy. Dr. McNamara indicated that any newly created position must have school Committee approval. This includes moving someone to a position and changing that title.

Attorney Murphy indicated that changing the salary of a position including creation of a job requires School Committee approval; however, making minor job description changes does not need approval. Dr. McNamara stated that adding a position to the table of organization does require School Committee approval.

Dr. Scott asked that the new Assistant Director of Special Education position be approved by the Committee including a proposed salary change.

14. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to allow the Superintendent of Schools to make salary and title change to the current Out-of-District Chairperson position by creating an Assistant Director of Special Education.

Chairman Sheehan stated that if there are any other requests that Dr. Scott needs in this regard that he should come before the Committee at the next meeting. Dr. McNamara indicated that the current policy be followed in regard to creating new positions. Mrs. Elie agreed that we should follow policy and if Dr. Scott does need approval he should come before Committee. Attorney Murphy reiterated that newly created positions different from what is in the budget must come before the Committee.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Discussion prevailed regarding the stipend positions at the K-12 level. Dr. Scott indicated that these positions are not currently part of the table of organization and would like permission to move forward.

Attorney Murphy stated that these should go before the Finance Sub-Committee for approval and the Finance Sub-Committee can make a recommendation to the full committee. Dr. Scott indicated that it has been brought before the sub-committee. Dr. McNamara said there had been discussion on the positions but no discussion was held on the financial impact. Dr. Scott indicated that this will have a financial impact of \$21,000 and funds to be taken out of Race to the Top.

15. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mrs. Elie to have the stipend positions upgraded and funded by the Race to the Top funds.

Roll Call Vote:

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

John and Abigail Adams Scholarship:

Dr. Scott noted that there are seventy-nine (79) students from the class of 2011 eligible for the John and Abigail Adams scholarship which entitles students to free tuition at a Massachusetts state college or university for four years.

Chairman Sheehan asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to each student from the Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

Dr. McNamara asked that an update on MCAS and NEASC be available at the November 8th meeting.

Dr. McNamara asked about the SPED Pac and if it was still active. Dr. Scott indicated that this was still active but no meetings have been scheduled as of this date.

Mr. Miles asked Dr. Scott if question 3 passes does the Superintendent have a contingency plan. Dr. Scott stated that as we prepare for next year's budget a few contingency plans will be in place by using current grant funding.

Mr. Miles asked about the Alternative Education program at the high school. Dr. Scott stated that he will review the program and will report back to the Committee at the second meeting in November.

Mr. Miles asked that the policy sub-committee look in to the bylaws pertaining to people standing in front of the schools holding signs.

16. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to have Attorney Murphy review the bylaws and report back to the Committee.

Chairman Sheehan also asked that Attorney Murphy also review the by-law for people on school property in front of school events.

Dr. McNamara asked that when creating the school calendar of next school year that we have professional development for teachers on election days, specifically for major elections.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

Chairman Sheehan read a letter from the Board of Health regarding Michael Maguire and his work in keeping the school cafeterias in a clean and sanitary manner. Mr. Mercier wanted to thank the custodial staff also.

Chairman Sheehan asked Dr. Scott to review the policy on when DCF comes to visit the schools. Dr. Scott will research this and will report back to the Committee.

Chairman Sheehan sent congratulations to Athletic Director Timothy Woods on Dracut being recognized on ESPN.com as #23 in the state.

ADJOURNMENT:

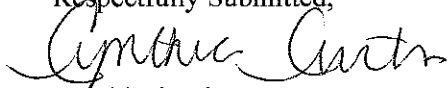
17. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Dr. McNamara to adjourn the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cynthia Curtis
Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits:

1. School Committee agenda packet