

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library

Business Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2006 Approved June 7, 2006

PRESENT:

Ms Cindy Barrett, Secretary
Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Paul Funch
Ms Karen Lofgren
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Chair
Mr. Frank O'Connell, Vice-Chair
Mr. Alan Vervaeke

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent
Mr. Craig Young, Business Administrator (left at 8:32 p.m.)
Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development
Ms Joan Endicott, Director of Pupil Services

STUDENT ADVISOR:

Kara Cover

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: J. Kulesz, Groton Herald; K. Icenogle, Dunstable News; J. Dillon, L. Zimmaro, K. Flanagan, K. Stone, M. Rasmussen, C. Rasmussen, K. McKenzie, B. Lefebvre, M. Youngs

CALL TO ORDER FOR THE PURPOSE OF REORGANIZATION:

The GDRSC meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Dr. Genovese. He congratulated Chuck McKinney, Berta Erickson, Frank O'Connell and Paul Funch for their recent elections and appreciates their support of public education and their interest in spending so much time on behalf of the kids.

Dr. Genovese called for a nomination for chairperson.

A. VERVAEKE NOMINATED CHUCK MCKINNEY FOR CHAIRPERSON.

SECONDED BY BERTA ERICKSON

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, F. O'Connell, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: C. McKinney

C. McKinney stated he appreciates the Committee's support and will work to earn their trust over the next year.

Dr. Genovese called for a nomination for vice-chairperson.

KAREN LOFGREN NOMINATED FRANK O'CONNELL FOR VICE-CHAIRPERSON.

SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: F. O'Connell

Dr. Genovese called for a nomination for secretary.

A. VERVAEKE NOMINATED CINDY BARRETT AS SECRETARY.

SECONDED BY KAREN LOFGREN

In Favor: F. O'Connell, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: C. Barrett

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPOINT SUSAN SMITH AS SCHOOL COMMITTEE SECRETARY FOR THE COMING YEAR. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Authorize the Superintendent to appoint Treasurer to serve from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007.

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO APPOINT FRED APONTE AS TREASURER OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO SERVE FROM JULY 1, 2006 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2007.

SECONDED BY C. BARRETT

B. Erickson stated she is uncomfortable voting since she has never met Mr. Aponte.

C. McKinney stated he has the recommendation of Mr. Young. While she respects

Mr. Young's reference, she stated she would like to meet him. Dr. Genovese said Mr. Aponte is in the office on Friday. It was agreed Mr. Aponte will come to a June meeting to meet the new members. It was noted Dr. Genovese also recommends this appointment.

In Favor: F. O'Connell, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, C. Barrett, P. Funch

Abstention: B. Erickson

Authorize the Superintendent to borrow from time to time as needed.

Dr. Genovese stated the purpose of this authorization is if there is a need to do temporary borrowing to meet payroll or other expenses when there is a cash flow situation. He will be speaking with the auditors to ask what their recommendation would be. This would only be done in agreement with acceptable practices and it would only be done if it was not timely.

P. Funch asked if there is a reason why a borrowing limit is not specified and Dr. Genovese said there could be a limit but he would only be borrowing what is needed for a specific purpose. He has no objection to postponing this vote until more research is done and members agreed to wait.

Set day, time and place for regular meetings

A. VERVAEKE MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE GENERALLY MEET ON THE FIRST AND THIRD WEDNESDAYS OF EVERY MONTH IN THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, COMMENCING AT 7:00 P.M. FOR GENERAL SESSION, AS MUCH AS TWELVE MONTHS OUT OF THE YEAR OR REDUCED AS NECESSARY.

SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Authorize the Chairperson to appoint any subcommittees

A. VERVAEKE MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRPERSON TO APPOINT, OR CREATE AS NECESSARY, SUBCOMMITTEES ACCORDING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

C. McKinney called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m. He announced the GDRSC meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. and the Committee voted to adjourn to executive session and returned to open session at 7:04 p.m., with no plans to return to executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members read the prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

K. Lofgren announced the schedule of upcoming art concerts.

Dr. Rubel announced the district received a \$5700 grant from the Deluxe Corporation Foundation. The Committee will be asked to vote to accept these funds later in the meeting. The grant will partially fund the Reading Is For Life grant and will be used to train their reading specialists to become literacy coaches.

F. O'Connell announced the Special Olympics were held in Leominster and many of the middle school athletes were there and had a great time. They won many gold, silver and bronze medals.

A. Vervaeke announced he, Mr. McKenzie, Ms Lofgren and Ms Erickson will be attending the MASC Regional Meeting in Marlboro tomorrow night to present their Resolution which was attached to the invitation. K. Lofgren asked for time on a future agenda to discuss and vote on the Resolution as it needs to be received by the MASC by July 1st to be considered for the Delegate Assembly. This will be put on the June 7th agenda.

Dr. Genovese invited members to attend graduation on June 2nd and asked they contact himself or Barbara within the next couple of days if they can attend.

Dr. Genovese announced Middle School Assistant Principal Rosemary Vickery has tendered her resignation as she has accepted a position in Natick. He noted she made many positive contributions to the district.

Dr. Genovese requested the Action Items be moved up so Mr. Young could leave early.

C. McKinney announced the Council on Aging is holding a benefit Mystery Dinner Theater at the Bull Run on June 10th. Tickets are \$25 and many Groton officials, past and present, as well as himself, will be appearing.

Presentation of GDEF Grants

K. Flanagan announced they received thirty-nine grant applications, totaling over \$106,000, for their spring 2006 cycle. Given the overwhelming amount of grant dollars requested, they initiated a collaboration with the Commissioners of the Groton Trust Funds to review the applications and determine what might be funded through their funding mechanism. Over \$15,000 of the submitted grant applications was funded by the Groton Trust Funds. The GDEF voted to award just over \$26,000 in funds to nineteen grants, which touch students in all schools and across many disciplines. These include Alive in 75, a Walk Through History Day for the fifth grade; the Guided Reading Program, an education resource library focusing on inclusion and differentiated education and Second Step training, a social competency based curriculum. Since its inception in July 2003, and with the completion of this grant cycle, the GDEF has funded over \$133,000 of grants and they hope the communities will continue to support the foundation's work as they continue their mission of enhancing their publicly funded schools.

K. Stone read a letter composed by the GDEF Directors. She stated they are pleased to continue their partnership with the GDRSD in support of the district's Promise to Excel. The GDEF is seeing a particular trend, with increasing requests for classroom materials, programs and technology and equipment which should be supported by a school budget. She noted they had to spread \$26,000 of funding among \$90,000 worth of grant requests.

The GDEF would like to remind the communities that their mission is funding programs that provide an added boost to their children's education and not to buy items that should be supported by a school budget. They challenge the School Committee to listen carefully to parents, teachers, students, curriculum leaders and administrators, assess their needs and balance them with a stable operational and

financial plan. The GDEF will continue to support unique programs that enhance existing curricula and inspire growth and development on various levels. She thanked everyone, particularly Dr. Rubel, who worked so hard to help them.

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE THE ACTION ITEMS.
SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

ACTION ITEMS

VOTE: Acceptance of GDEF Grants

K. LOFGREN MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCEPT THE GIFT OF \$26,037 FROM THE GDEF. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLLCALL

VOTE: Acceptance of gift from Deluxe Corporation Foundation

K. LOFGREN MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCEPT THE GRANT FROM DELUXE CORPORATION FOUNDATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5700.
SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLLCALL

VOTE: Sale of Revenue Anticipation Notes

C. Young stated the sale of a revenue anticipation note is usually requested when the cash flow of a district is such that they need to borrow money to fund the operations while they wait for revenue, generally from the state. It typically occurs at the end of the fiscal year and is needed to fund the last payroll. He noted the last payment from Chapter 70 funds generally comes on the last day of the fiscal year. This is short term borrowing for thirty days. A cash flow projection is submitted to their financial advisor and Bond Counsel also reviews the request.

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SALE OF \$1,300,000.00 OF REVENUE ANTICIPATION NOTES TO EASTERN BANK AT THE INTEREST RATE OF 4% AND THAT THIS APPROVAL IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MOTION PROVIDED BY OUR BOND COUNSEL, ROPES AND GRAY, COPY ATTACHED TO THE MINUTES. SECONDED BY C. BARRETT

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: F. O'Connell

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Budget and Finance - F. O'Connell reported their meeting was cancelled due to the Groton elections.

They will be meeting on June 20th. C. Young has distributed encouraging year-end forecast information. C. Young said they are projecting they will stay within their approved budget and because they postponed their bonding from November, there will be a surplus of about \$370,00 in their debt account.

C. Young stated they should be able to reserve this to apply toward debt for next year. He feels they will have a balance of around \$69,000 (about .2% of the budget). SPED tuitions are moving as projected and the increased Circuit Breaker has offset some of the anticipated increases from the beginning of the year. C. Young stated the legislature has agreed to fund Circuit Breaker to 75% and this will mean an additional \$24,000 for the district. He noted legal costs are higher than anticipated as are energy costs, although these are not as high as they could have been. The principals are doing a good job of monitoring their budgets. The projection that revenues will be about \$90,000 more than budgeted seems to be holding true. They will be under budget somewhere around \$430,000, with \$370,000 reserved for next year's debt.

Building Committee - No report

Policy - K. Lofgren reported a meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at Tarbell. They should be putting the finishing touches on the Advertising/Partnerships Policy and they are still working on the executive session minutes policy. C. McKinney requested the Policy Committee review Policy BCC for ambiguity. B. Erickson asked if there is an update on the high school dress code. Dr. Genovese requested this be put in writing and he will bring it to Principal Dillon's attention. K. Lofgren reminded members to bring their policy books in so they may be updated.

Naming Committee - B. Erickson reported they are in the process of coordinating their findings and they will be taken up at the June 21st School Committee meeting.

Report of the Chair - C. McKinney welcomed Mr. Funch to the School Committee and looks forward to his contributions. He thanked Paul Fitzgerald for his service and noted he will be invited back to be recognized for the work he has done. He would like subcommittee positions filled by the end of the school year and requested members let him know which ones they would like to be considered for.

C. McKinney reported they will be appointing the school physician and School Committee attorney at a future meeting.

Report of the Business Administrator - C. Young reminded members the Building Committee Chair Steve Prendergast will present their final report on June 7th and there will likely be a recommendation to dissolve the committee.

He distributed copies of the adjusted FY07 budget. The state revenues have still not been set. The Senate recommendation is more than the Governor's budget for Chapter 70 by \$133,074 but less than the House approved budget by \$56,927. The House has approved fully funding transportation. If things come together, they should be close to filling the \$330,000 in undefined revenue.

With respect to the use of the high school fields, C. Young stated they are being used by non-school personnel (community individuals) and are causing a disturbance for the neighbors. The owners of the former Spooner house, Mr. and Mrs. Rasmussen, have spoken with him and Mr. Byrne about their concerns. He said they could put up signs to allow the police to take action or there may be other avenues to pursue.

M. Rasmussen said they purchased the Spooner home in 2003 and asked the Building Committee a lot of questions before buying. He said they are happy to be neighbors but they, and other abutters, are concerned about the use of the fields closest to their homes. Issues include people flying model airplanes, baseballs hitting the fence and coming over the fence and the fence being used as a backstop by the Rec League teams. He said it would be helpful if authorization was given first to use the fields closer to the schools rather than the fields closer to the houses.

M. Rasmussen suggested signs be posted.

C. Young said it would take some effort to police the use of the fields and put an approval process in place. He would like to meet with the neighbors and come up with some suggestions and ideas and find out which hours, days of the week and activities are disturbing them. He feels an administrative regulation could be drawn up for community use. A. Vervaeke stated the Building Committee was committed to not disturbing the neighbors. He feels Mr. Rasmussen's suggestions seem reasonable and supports Mr. Young talking with the neighbors. B. Erickson agrees and asked what type of field is behind his house. It is a baseball diamond about fifteen feet behind their house that seems to be the field of choice. B. Erickson asked if the wear and tear on the fields by these activities is a concern and C. Young does not think so. Dr. Genovese noted the posting of signs can be tricky. The meeting date will be e-mailed to members.

P. Funch thanked Mr. Rasmussen for being so reasonable to the people using the fields. He asked if there are any issues with ATV's and Mr. Rasmussen said there is an occasional dirt bike and there were some cars on the field last year. He said it is not only the airplanes that are the issue but also the non-school games. He feels the order the fields are used would solve the majority of the problems.

Report of the Superintendent - Dr. Genovese announced the eighth grade graduation is the evening of June 20th. A. Vervaeke said this should be reflected on the middle school calendar.

Dr. Genovese stated he enjoyed working with Paul Fitzgerald and appreciates his contributions and what he brought to the table.

MINUTES

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 26, 2006 AND

MAY 3, 2006. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, F. O'Connell

Abstention: P. Funch

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2006.

SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, F. O'Connell

Abstention: P. Funch

A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF APRIL 26, 2006.

SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: C. Barrett, A. Vervaeke, K. Lofgren, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, F. O'Connell

Abstention: P. Funch

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

K. McKenzie, School Committee representative to Nashoba Valley Technical High School, thanked the administration and the Committee for giving him the opportunity to work collaboratively with them on the Resolution for PreK-12 Adequate Funding for Public Education. He stated transportation and late busses are a priority for parents. While collecting signatures, he noted residents wanted more time to study the Resolution and he recommended people study it and write letters to their representatives. He hopes they can continue to work together. K. Lofgren thanked Mr. McKenzie for all the time he spent getting signatures and helping with this.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

Review of High School Improvement Plan

Members had been provided with a summary of their goals, objectives and accomplishments and where they go from here. Principal Joe Dillon recognized members of the School Council. He stated they worked to align their goals with the NEASC recommendations, curriculum goals, both district wide and school wide, and the initiatives of the Leadership Team. He noted many of the initiatives of the School Council became part of the Theme Teams and the Council felt they were drifting a bit. A lot of time was spent on the new budget process.

Two of their three goals are ongoing:

To improve methods of communication among all members of the school community, to include parents, students, staff and community members. They feel the communication goal will always be a part of their School Council as they do not get a better forum. They have initiated areas of communication where results indicate it has been more effective. The advisory program allows them to communicate issues with the student body in an efficient way. They reshaped the program to look at seniors differently than grades 9-11. The newsletter is also efficient and practical and the website is an ongoing process. The videography program and the GD News have been great ways to announce their accomplishments and achievements as well as the importance of community service.

While not a stated objective, J. Dillon stated they worked closely with the middle school administration, guidance, 8th grade team and 8th grade parents to communicate the high school scheduling process more clearly and comprehensively. The high school Curriculum Night included an 8th grade parent segment. An 8th grade parent and student special education night was also held to explain the high school program. They will continue to focus on how they can strengthen communication. He stated the student activities and leadership team have “exploded” and they need to place these in a structure so everyone understands the difference between a Leadership Team and student activities committee as the roles and responsibilities are somewhat cloudy. They also need to more effectively communicate the vocabulary specific to the high school.

To increase students’ capacity to have a meaningful voice in determining school policy, promoting a positive school climate, and in shaping the future at GDRHS. J. Dillon stated they have had this goal for five years and they have seen the Leadership Team grow. This is a collaborative effort among the students, staff and administrators. This year they took hold of four specific areas, one being the surveillance policy. Students’ questions and assumptions were answered in a thoughtful discussion and students toured where the cameras are located.

They have looked at reviewing the Renaissance Program which is a recognized national reward program and has been effective in urban communities because it is usually tied to businesses within the community. With few businesses in Groton and Dunstable, the same people were being tapped on a regular basis so they are looking at providing some other incentives. They are also looking at grade inflation and are reviewing and revising the Mission Statement. He stated they have completed the pilot advisory program and taken it off their plate as they feel it is now part of the school’s culture. The sub-committee of the Advisory Dream Team will remain and continue to review the program.

The newest goal is a technology goal and will remain for some time. J. Dillon stated they moved into a technology rich school but the ability of the staff to function in that type of environment did not necessarily come with it. Cindy Larsen has worked with the staff for the last two years and he noted the Technology Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) has provided them with some focus. They will focus on identifying every core assignment, which is the connection they have with the curriculum, and it will have a technology component to it.

The Council looks forward to meeting in the early fall to review the accomplishments of the past two years and to look at the direction they would like to go. They would also like to come back to the School Committee in September.

F. O’Connell asked how often the Council meets and how they move things forward. J. Dillon said they meet once a month for ninety minutes and two of the meetings, one typically in November and one in April or May, last 4 to 6 hours. These are working sessions and followed the format of the School Committee presentations. They will have a longer session in September as they felt November was a little too late as

they were very involved in the budget process.

C. Barrett asked if those that piloted the iPass and iTeacher Rankbook liked it and if everyone will be using it next year. J. Dillon said those that piloted it, liked it. About fourteen teachers used the Rankbook and the majority liked it but there are some quirks to it that violated their way of grading as it is not as flexible as they would like. He sees them continuing to use it as an enhancement to iPass.

With respect to bridging the gap between the middle school and high school, C. McKinney said it is not too early to consider an outreach to graduating seventh graders since there are several things they need to decide to do going into eighth grade. He noted their performance as eighth graders establishes where they are going to go in math and by the time a transition meeting happens in the spring, everything else has all ready been set in place. He understands the work that has been done to make sure the math curriculum is aligned. He would like to see an information meeting happen either at the end of the seventh grade year or very early in the fall of their eighth grade year. J. Dillon said they could have a parent information night in October.

C. Barrett said the middle school SIP talked a lot about math and when you start the different math pathways going. She suggested an article could be put in the middle school newsletter. K. Cover said her general observation has been that your high school math career is determined by your sixth grade performance. Dr. Rubel stated the middle school SIP does have a math goal and they will talk about how they are in the process of implementing a new math program. The math coordinators and the eighth and ninth grade teachers work closely together.

As the parent of an incoming ninth grader, K. Lofgren said she appreciated getting the information in "spurts" rather than as one big packet. Orientation night was also fun.

B. Erickson is happy to see them working on grade inflation and asked if they weigh grades. J. Dillon said they have a dual-weighted system that applies only to college transcripts, meaning honors level courses are given a higher weight than non-honors level courses and this could translate into a higher GPA and is stated as a weighted GPA. She noticed there was no mention of block scheduling and asked if that is because it is entrenched in their procedures and they are happy with the way it is going. J. Dillon would not say "entrenched". A presentation was given to the School Committee last October and they had an open forum a year ago October. An extensive survey was done of staff, students and parents and scheduling, whether traditional or block, is always looked at. A public forum on block scheduling will be held on June 8th.

C. Barrett asked when the technology competencies will be finalized and J. Dillon feels they are close to no longer being in the draft stage. Dr. Genovese said competency skills are being looked at to see where and when they are best connected to content areas. Staff is providing input. He noted technology by itself does not do it.

C. McKinney asked if a statement can be placed in the student handbook regarding a student turning eighteen while in high school and what those implications are. J. Dillon would defer to Council and said the last recommendation was that it would be a simple statement - eighteen year olds are adults and therefore can make any decisions regarding education and otherwise. A. Vervaeke said they have a policy and Dr. Genovese said he was surprised that it was voted. This may be one that needs to be revisited as well.

Review of Florence Roche School Improvement Plan

Principal Launa Zimmaro stated the **Boston Globe** listed teachers who made their Honor Roll and third and fourth grade multi-age teacher Alisa Barton was nominated by Greg Mahan and she made it on the list. She thanked the GDEF for their hard work and stated Florence Roche received a partial grant for a major proposal they submitted as well as a full grant for another submission.

L. Zimmaro recognized members of the Council and noted all but two are new from those involved with the development of the SIP. She noted the staff was also directly involved with the development of the SIP and acknowledged their hard work in moving them toward achieving these goals.

Goal 1: To provide optimal conditions for fostering the development of respectful, responsible students. L. Zimmaro stated they have had this goal in one form or another for quite some time. Their focus has been on the emotional sense of safety and members had received a copy of the school-wide behavior plan as well a copy of the Behavioral Expectations Agreement. Florence Roche was the early adopter of Open Circle and this is now being done district-wide. They also initiated bullying and teasing efforts to supplement the Open Circle program and she feels they show results.

They had a review/reunion with everyone who was piloting and participating in the bullying and teasing initiatives to look at the program, share stories and experiences and strengthen the effort. Videos were purchased to supplement the program and are used with paraprofessional staff as well. At the request of the content specialist teachers, informal sessions were held with the guidance counselors to discuss behavior issues in their setting.

Students got very involved with suggesting playground rules. They had a representative from each classroom and the rules are now being categorized. Three half days have been scheduled for paraprofessionals and content specialists to train around Open Circle before students come back next year. L. Zimmaro said they are working to be proactive rather than reactive.

Goal 2: To use student achievement data to improve student learning.

MCAS results and math program assessments are annually analyzed and professional development and collaborative planning time have been provided for staff to work together to understand what those results mean and the implications for instruction. Consultation, coaching opportunities and demonstration lessons are ways of moving beyond the discussion phase to action in the classroom. In the spring, with the help of the district's K-8 Math Teacher on Assignment, two classrooms were designated as demonstration classrooms. The teachers worked with the Math TOA in the classroom and after a few lessons, focused on differentiated instruction to meet the full range of learners in the classroom. Other third grade teachers were invited to observe a lesson in session. They want to expand this model next year. Supplemental instructional materials were purchased in consultation with the K-8 Math TOA. L. Zimmaro reviewed the performance targets and noted they exceeded their benchmark scores in two years but experienced a dip in 2005, as did the entire state at the elementary level, in MCAS last year. They did achieve Adequate Yearly Progress.

L. Zimmaro said they took advantage of the district offerings of math professional development and as a school, they focused on ELA. Because of the dip, they will continue to look at ELA but have added math at a more specific site based level. She explained the collaborative effort that is in place involves grade level meetings but in two different formats - vertical teaming (K-4 teams) and a third grade level team meeting to discuss an issue. At a vertical teaming meeting they talk about what a benchmark or expectation looks like from the fourth grade down and the instruction and materials appropriate for each grade level.

They set a benchmark of 98% to 100% of their students reading at a district-wide grade level benchmark and as a district, reading assessments are done in the fall and spring. At Florence Roche, mid-year assessments (in January and March) are done of children who do not meet the benchmark in the fall so their progress can be monitored. A planning team looks at all the performance results and makes a determination of what their focus is going to be for the coming year. The reading assessment data was reviewed. She noted the tools and performance standards have changed since 2003 and performing at an independent level is a higher standard of performance. The attachment showing student performance at different grade levels in the fall and spring of 2003 through 2005 was reviewed. They are diligently working to meet their benchmark of 100%.

L. Zimmaro stated the inclusion model was piloted in a third grade classroom last year. This involves having a classroom teacher, a SPED teacher and the reading specialist working simultaneously for three to five days a week, thirty to sixty minutes a session. They find it incredibly supportive working together and having a weekly collaborative meeting. No teacher owns any group of students; they share responsibility for all the children and they all work with all the children. She stated it has been a great way for bridging the gap between special education, remedial education and the regular classroom as well as enhancing professional development. The model is very flexible and is put where the need is and this year it was at the third grade level. The MCAS results were the only objective measure they had and they saw a percentage increase in the number of third grade students in the Proficient category and for the first time in four years, they did not have a single student in the Warning category.

The Council did an on-line family survey and received a 51% response rate. A summary report will be distributed to parents soon. Focus areas for 2007 include the implementation of the Health and Wellness Policy, integration of technology to support classroom instructional programs, strengthening the collaborative model, focusing on strengthening student mathematical thinking and continuing to use the DRA to strengthen their instructional efforts.

K. Lofgren stated her children would like to see the trolley come back to the playground.

L. Zimmaro said it has a metal part on it that is dangerous. Stating that her son is part of the regular classroom, she complimented Ms Zimmaro on the inclusion class and noted he is thriving. She noted there was no mention of the multi-age classroom which is also a great model. L. Zimmaro said this is a fixture at Florence Roche and information is available on their website.

F. O'Connell asked who creates the benchmarks. L. Zimmaro said they were designated at the district level and there was some information from the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment). The benchmark number was introduced to give them some sense of whether or not the students are moving along and whether or not they are on track.

C. Barrett feels the data that was provided helps them to see the progress. She asked when the consultation and demonstration will be in all the classrooms. L. Zimmaro said their approach is to try things out in a couple of classrooms and see how it takes hold. She said it is really a matter of whether they have the capacity to have it occur in every single classroom. They are trying to build the capacity of classroom teachers so they are less reliant on outside specialists.

C. Barrett said the changes in the math program dovetail nicely with the new middle school program.

L. Zimmaro said this has to do with the K-8 Math TOA.

P. Funch said the quantification of data is great and while realizing it cannot all be presented here, he would like to see a lot more. He said he finds the numbers confusing and does not see the trends. He would like to see if there are changes in specific populations. He would also like to see information about how close students got to the benchmark. Dr. Ruble stated the DRA is for teachers to use to inform their instruction. It gives them clear data around each individual child and where they go next with that child in terms of instruction. They are looking to systemically implement a different type of benchmark using

running records. She said they can only do so much at a time, especially with elementary staff, since they are teaching all content areas. They are trying to slowly, meaningfully and sensibly implement to them while also getting information that can be examined to show where the gaps and strengths are. They do have individual data.

L. Zimmaro said she was giving a sample of what they try to do and how they try to use it. The individual student data is the substance of the conversations teachers are having around reading instruction. She noted there is no perfect assessment tool. Dr. Genovese stated the Council is focusing on elevating student achievement and are looking at support systems to do that.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

K. Cover announced this is her last meeting with the Committee since she will be graduating on June 2nd. She thanked members for giving students the opportunity to participate and experience local government. She stated she will be talking with members of the Leadership Team and Student Council to see who might be interested in doing this next year. Personally, she found this to be a very worthwhile experience as a student and child of a taxpayer.

C. Barrett announced the agenda items for their June 7th meeting: MS School Improvement Plan, High School handbook revision presentation, ECC presentation, a presentation from the Robotics Team, discussion and vote on the Resolution, a presentation on the PTYC, a presentation from GDAY, a final report from the Building Committee, a policy reading and the superintendent's public evaluation. It was stated some of these topics may be moved to the June 21st meeting.

A. Vervaeke reminded members they have a Litany of Good News at their last Committee meeting.

Dr. Genovese advised P. Funch that the Peace Plant that is traditionally given to new Committee members is in his office. The plant represents what School Committee members do and if taken care of, it will flourish.

ADJOURNMENT

**A. VERVAEKE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 10:08 P.M. SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachments