

Dover School Committee Minutes
February 4, 2009

Members present: Jennifer DaSilva, Kirk Downing, Claire Jackson, Deb Reinemann, James Stuart and Bob Springett

Meeting was called to order @ 11:30am.

Dr. Jackson suggested that we create high internal standards beyond state requirements at a major task level and work backwards to discrete tasks. For example, in order to enhance academic rigor in ELA, we could require each student by the end of third grade to be able to write a cohesive paragraph. As a result, throughout the year, teachers would be mindful of this and work towards this goal as they teach writing skills. This type of internal standard would apply across the grades and across the disciplines.

For next year's school initiatives we discussed:

1. Program for accelerated learners
2. Exploring the options for foreign language
3. Exploring the impact/interest in full day kindergarten
4. Process of assessing ongoing academic needs

What is the goal?

The long-term goal is to for each student to be well prepared enough to thrive in any middle school, high school and eventually reach their top goals for college placement. Our benchmarks must be high achieving public school districts nationwide as well as independent schools.

What about creating a private component at Chickering for a fee?

There is a large appetite in the community for educational excellence and enrichment. The public school simply does not have time or money to provide all things. Perhaps, a community service and a nice revenue source would be to create high quality programs that parents are paying for elsewhere and house them at Chickering during the after-school hours.

Currently, parents pay hefty fees and transport their children (in many cases to other towns) to the following programs:

Foreign language
Music lessons
Advanced science programs
Advanced math programs
Children's theatre

We also discussed time to learn:

1. Is there enough time to learn to teach the current curriculum well?
2. Is there enough time to teach the “dream curriculum”?
3. Do teachers have enough time to instruct, collaborate and assess?
4. Do students have enough time to learn?

For teachers next year, they will be focusing on documenting individual plans, particularly with a focus on at-risk students and will implement strategies and plans for those students.

Bob Springett will make a presentation on the budget to the Warrant Committee on February 11. He will show concrete examples of academic achievement as a direct benefit of money invested in order to demonstrate return on investment and gain town and community support for Chickering.

School Committee goals for the next years will include:

1. Benchmarking to the highest level (beyond Dover, Sherborn and the state of MA)
2. Accelerate learning

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Bancroft DaSilva
Dover School Committee