

Dover School Committee Interim Meeting

December 2, 2009

Chickering School

Present: Darin Correll, Jennifer DaSilva, Carolyn Ringel, Bob Springett, James Stuart

Also Present: Valerie Spriggs, Ginny Keniry, Deb Reinemann, Wendy Darragh, Dawn Fattore, Meg Field, Betsy Ryan, Dana White

Called to order: 0930

- I. Capital Budget meeting was 12/1/09. Mr. Springett, Ms. Spriggs and Jean Conkey attended. Request made for \$94,850 that covers both technology requests as well as facilities maintenance. A full long-term technology plan is intended to be in place by June 2010. Questions and issues that arose at the Capital Budget meeting were:
 1. What metrics are to be used to measure the impact of technology on learning?
 2. What is the proposed increase in teacher professional development time?
 3. What is the true utility of Smart Boards?
 4. Capital Budget committee asked that alternative resources in the town be looked at for the frost heave repair and proposed tree planting. Also asked to ensure, through proper research and planning, that the trees remain viable.School committee asks that it receives updates going forward on the long-term technology plan.
- II. How to better publicize the SC meetings discussed. Ms. Ringel will forward the next meeting's agenda items to appropriate persons to include in the email blast the week before the next scheduled meeting. Items to include will be determined at the end of the prior meeting.
- III. Foreign Language Task Force has been formed; Ms. DaSilva represents the SC on the team. Meetings are being set up to talk with other schools to gain information, including Brookline, Weston, Milton and Holliston.
- IV. Members of the audience expressed concern over a recent Dover Library event not being allowed to be included in the Chickering email blast. It was proposed that a Policy may need to be developed regarding what information is allowed to be sent by various community groups. The present Policy Sub-committee is working through the Policy Manual but is not generating new policy that is not required by law. Policies regarding such issues are not "required" and according to the MASC there are no template policies for this issue. However, there seems to be confusion at present as to which organizations/activities are allowed to "advertise" for fund-raising purposes and other community-based

endeavors. Ms. Spriggs will put together a recommendation for a policy and give it to the SC at the January main meeting.

- V. Ms. Spriggs has not meet with the group of parents who wanted to form a task force to further evaluate seat belts on the buses as was discussed at the main meeting in November. Ms. Spriggs states that information does continue to be gathered on the topic, that she will meet with the group and bring forward a report, but that she feels the data, as she has it at present, is not convincing enough for her to come forward to the committee with a request for installing seat belts and thus the issue is closed. In addition, Ms. Spriggs relates that the position of the state of MA is also that seat belts are not required on school buses. It was stated that we need to remember that the bus contracts will be discussed in January. Mr. Springett raised the point that the entire discussion is not simply an analysis of the existing data for and against seat belts but it is just as much, if not more, a matter of risk mitigation. Ms. DaSilva asked if there is any chance for liability to the SC or district/school if an unfortunate incident were to occur on a bus now that information about the issue has been brought forward but no action has been taken. Ms. Spriggs will investigate this point and report back.
- VI. Open items resolution discussed. A decision must be made as to how to come to an agreement that action items are considered actually closed. A suggestion was made to have three categories for items: open, closed and closed-for-now. The latter category would be for items that are presently being worked on or need follow-up to ensure the solution was adequate.

Members of the audience raised concern that the SC is attempting to “micro-manage” the administration and school with the recent changes to the bus schedules as a stated example. Mr. Stuart stated that he felt the SC was not “micro-managing” but rather was frustrated that certain items were told to the SC that they were solved/closed only to discover that in fact the issue was not resolved. The example of the bus schedules was used in that the SC was informed the issue of students sitting on busses in the morning waiting to disembark was fixed, however it is still occurring. Suggestion made to determine if “we” feel it is acceptable to have students sitting on busses for several minutes in the morning was acceptable or not and then proceed to come up with an appropriate solution if one is needed.

The SC stated that we raise issues with the administration because we are often approached by members of the community with problems that they feel are not being adequately addressed. Ms. Ryan suggested that we should not concern ourselves with these people as they are “squeaky wheels” and she said that if they continue to express concerns that we “give them a brochure for a private school”. Mr. Springett commented that the school certainly cannot “please” everyone on every issue, but we must be able to come to a collaborative decision as to what is an acceptable resolution.

- VII. Accelerated Learners and MCAS discussed. Despite the fact that there are system-wide responses in place for Accelerated Learners it is not communicated well to the parent community on an individual basis.

Ms. Fattore stated that she felt the school was much better than it was when her older child was at Chickering using the metric that her present child is much happier. Some in the audience expressed concern that too much weight is placed on MCAS and we should not “teach to the test”. Mr. Springett stated that we must remember that the MCAS tests the state standards that we must meet and that our ranking in the state at present is not where we would like to be. Ms. Fields stated that she has received several emails from parents expressing concern over the latest MCAS rankings. Ms. Keniry stated that the administration agrees that we are not at the level we need to be as a school in terms of present standards, including MCAS performance.

Ms. Keniry and Dr. Reinemann expressed concern that the present reporting system that the SC asks for is very time consuming for the administration. It was suggested that a workshop be set up to discuss how best to have the SC get reports. Ms. Ringel and Mr. Correll will begin an email discussion of possible dates for this workshop.

Dr. Reinemann also expressed concern that it difficult for some people to offer comments and suggestions at meetings because of the way meetings are conducted including excessive speaking by a limited number of people. Ms. Spriggs stated that she and Mr. Springett possibly take too much of the floor time at meetings.

- VIII. The prior student activities account has been closed and a new one has been opened.
- IX. The automated workbook printing is being evaluated within the present contract negotiations for copiers and printers.
- X. Town Report draft discussed. Dr. Reinemann asked that the comment about other schools looking into full-day kindergarten be removed so as not to cause confusion and to reword the comment about school ranking according to MCAS scores as the MA DoE does not actually rank schools based on the test's scores.

Adjourned: 1150

Respectfully submitted,

Darin J. Correll, MD
DSC secretary