

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 14, 2009

Members Present: Bob Springett, Chairperson  
Darin Correll  
Jennifer DaSilva  
Susan Hackney  
James Stuart (arrived 7:39 p.m.)

Also Present:

Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent	Jen Hardiman
Kirk Downing, Principal	Nancy Powers
Dr. Deb Reinemann, Curriculum Coordinator	Andrea Martin
Wendy Darragh, PTO	Judy Cronin
Richard Mathieu, School Business Manager	Sue Turner
Jean Conkey, IT	
Trisha Nugent, Technology	
Carol Chase, Librarian	

**1. Call to order** – Mr. Springett called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Chickering School Library.

Mr. Springett thanked Ms. Hackney for her five years of service to the DSC; she has made tremendous contributions to the community through the school committee.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**a)** Dover School Committee minutes of March 5, March 17, and April 1, 2009.

Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the March 5th minutes. Ms. DaSilva moved, Mr. Correll seconded.

**09-10 Vote: Unanimous**

Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the March 17th minutes with the following corrections:

Page 2, Principals Report, SAC, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, enough/sufficient time *to meet all of our needs*.

Page 2, Principals Report, SAC, 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, Need *to identify*

Page 2, Principals Report, SAC, 8<sup>th</sup> bullet, how to *measure* the success

Page 2, Curriculum, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet, how it ties back ~~and forth~~ to Chickering

Ms. DaSilva moved, Mr. Correll seconded.

**09-11 Vote: Unanimous**

Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the April 1st minutes. Ms. DaSilva moved, Mr. Correll seconded.

**09-12 Vote: Unanimous**

**b)** The minutes were noted of the Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee for March 5 and March 10, 2009.

**c)** The minutes were noted of the Sherborn School Committee for February 12 and March 12, 2009.

**3. Community Comments -- None**

**4. Reports**

**a) PTO Report** – Ms. Darragh

- Family Fun night was held two weeks ago. Great participation.
- The Symphony series was held last Saturday.
- The PTO is looking for members for next year.
- The check writing campaign has raised over \$38,000.

**b) Instructional Aides** – Grade One Teachers and Aides: Jen Hardiman, Nancy Powers (lead presenter), Andrea Martin, Judy Cronin, Sue Turner

- The impact of having aides is highly noticeable for the teachers and the children.
- Typically a whole class is introduced to a new concept, then they break into small groups working with partners at a table, independently or with an aide or instructional specialist.
- Aides can work with a small group for a specific purpose.
- Small group isn't one size fits all. By working with children in smaller groups you can really zero on where they need to be. The rotation of groups/kids is constantly changing.
- Students may be pulled from any of the three first grade classrooms to have "like learners" in a small group.
- Mr. Springett asked about the change in having aides in this years 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes vs. last year. Ms. Powers stated that having more adults interacting with the children has been positive.
- In using the approach of sharing students/teachers/aides across the classrooms, when a team member is out (as currently is the case) the rest of the team already knows the children well. In addition, Michelle Worthy works in all the rooms so she is a common thread.
- Ms. Turner spoke of pulling the children into small groups or working with them 1:1, she really enjoys that part of the day, she takes her lead from the teachers on what she needs to work on.
- Ms. Hardiman spoke of how the aides are very much a part of the classroom teaching. They confer with the teachers regularly. She loves the small groups and 1:1 and feels you really make a difference.
- Ms. Powers stated that having the aides allows teaching to start right at 8:15 with group time.
- Ms. Martin spoke about how the aides know exactly where to go and what is needed when they join the classroom.
- Ms. Hardiman gave an example of how she worked on small group math by going into the classroom and pulling out the four kids she needed to work with and helping them work independently to complete their two pages.
- Mr. Springett asked about the impact aides have on covering the curriculum. Ms. Powers responded that the kids are able to go deeper into the curriculum. By having additional people in the room, you get a better understanding of what the kids are thinking and who doesn't get it.
- Ms. Hackey asked about when we had fewer aides vs. now—are the kids moving further along through the curriculum as a result? Ms. Powers stated that it was hard to tell due to the curriculum changes this year. Next year they will know better.
- Mr. Downing spoke about the spectacular job the teachers and aides have done implementing this model.

**c) Technology Report** – Ms. Conkey

- District wide initiatives
  - Online Professional Development Calendar for faculty
  - Emergency Notification System via ConnectEd—work has been done to negotiate a \$1.25 per student fee (not per family) and \$500 annual maintenance per year.
  - Web-based Community Calendar coming in September 2009—this will enable parents to see what events are happening in our schools after hours across all the schools/districts. This will be implemented using the FirstClass system.
  - Sophos Antivirus—working to reduce the current costs of Norton Antivirus. Put out to public bid via Accept Collaborative. Looking at a 4-year agreement costing \$3 per computer.
  - Moodle Server—Open Source content management server for teachers to be able to publish/post their materials. Looking to have up and running beginning of next year.
  - ENO Interactive White Boards by Polyvision—In comparing this board to the Smart boards we currently use, the Polyvision boards have a forever warranty, are magnetic, uses a stylus instead of touch, are wireless via Bluetooth and cost \$300 more (\$1299 vs. \$1599). There is an issue of the stylus being lost, replacements cost \$150 each. Ms. Nugent stated that EasyTeach can be run on this board.
- Human Resources automation
  - Automating employee forms to collect data for the staff roster file and employee record (license/certifications). Planning to use Adobe Acrobat to fill out the forms.
  - Staff attendance records in Aspen—staff members will be able to log-in to see their information
- Aspen progress update—
  - Utilize a single database to pull from for all districts

- Web Ex Training conducted with Aspen for scheduling, attendance and reporting. From January-March there was dedicated time for these WebEx Training sessions.
  - There were problems last summer with Aspen building the high school schedule. The schedule rotates and is difficult to build. We had taken the knowledge we had from Winschool to build the schedule and applied it to Aspen and it didn't work. In the process of building this years schedule on a flat schedule instead of a rotation. After the students' course requests are made, we will need to identify how many sections are needed and the staff to support it. First round of build will be complete in May. Ms. Spriggs has met with Lowell School District, they are sending information on their process. Ms. Conkey noted that many other schools rotate in blocks, but not in the way we do.
  - Evaluating Health Module to see if we can move to Aspen to save fees vs. using the current HealthOffice program. The nurses have reviewed the program, we know based on their feedback that Aspen isn't what we need. We've taken their feedback to Aspen in a feature request, and will look at it again next year. A feature Aspen does have is an alert for allergies that can be sent to teachers.
  - Evaluating a Family Portal – will enable parents to log-in to Aspen for attendance records, scheduling and possibly progress reports. Need to take data from a flat file and move into family groups. More to come on this next year.
- Website face lift
    - Looking at a couple different options. One option is Open Source via Accept Collaborative, discussions are ongoing. A second option is to use in house technology administrators/ instructors and students.
    - We need to develop a website that is template based with easy uploads, etc. without having to know Front Page or HTML programming.
    - Using an outside vendor we expect \$13-15K initial fee, then \$1-\$2K based on the size of the faculty.
    - Ms. Conkey noted a few issues: we don't have an in-house Webmaster; Share Point is an option but not viable for the IT department; we aren't in the open window of E rate reimbursement.
    - Mr. Springett asked how we will meet the requirements of all the buildings.
    - Ms. Conkey would like to look further into School Fusion or Edline instead of keeping in house.
    - Need to get the right people together to determine if an outside company is the right direction to go. Mr. Springett asked who the right group to get together is.
    - Ms. Conkey will obtain a copy of the report that was done three years ago to review information and previous recommendations.
- d) Business Manager's Report – Mr. Mathieu**
- FY'09 Budget Update— End of year projections for regular and SPED budgets look good. Mr. Mathieu will have a more accurate year-end projection in May. Additional oil will be bought if needed. Mr. Mathieu has been in touch with Petroleum Traders to work with them to reduce the 42,000 gallon minimum volume commitment, Mr. Mathieu expects feedback tomorrow and will forward it to DSC for review. DSC had previously authorized Mr. Mathieu to lock in at a rate of \$2.17 or below.
  - SPED report— in packets. Local under budget, regional over, together even.
  - Utility Report—electricity consistently creeping up, more electronics such as the Smartboards and new lobby TV are contributing to the increase in usage.
  - Temperature Reports – distributed
  - FY10 Budget—Current budget proposal for FY10 is \$7,871,120. Budget to be reviewed at Town Meeting 5/4.
- e) Principals Report – Mr. Downing**
- SAC
    - SAC will begin work on the 2009-20010 school improvement plan. Also looking at progress on current goals.
    - Time on Learning—Mr. Downing spoke of the primary role of the group to advise the principal in the development of school improvement plan and to drill down and investigate the foreign language program.
    - The committee discussed the role of SAC in Time on Learning and the need to optimize the instruction put in place and where we want to be down the road.
      - Need to ensure that teachers have the time to do what they need within and outside the classroom.
      - Do we have enough time in the school day/year for each child to master the expected curriculum?

- If we're going to do anything with the question of time and change the workday it has to be resolved before contract negotiations in 1 ½ years. Need to understand the time demand to meet the educational expectations.
  - Ms. Spriggs spoke about SAC being charged with the school improvement plan and bringing forward the budget to school committee, though SAC is advisory in nature.
  - Mr. Springett spoke of the need to have a place/group where time to learn is addressed--is there enough time to learn and how to get the time to learn. Need questions that have been identified answered by a specific date. Need to agree to specific deliverables.
  - DSC will use the May meeting to set initiatives for 09-10 year.
  - We are adding instructional hours this coming school year without increasing the curriculum and have made great strides with the scheduling.
  - What are we trying to achieve? We've addressed the tactical issues such as recapturing hours and pullouts. Now we need to look at where we think we might want to go with full day K and the foreign language program and do teachers have enough time.
  - We need to know what time we will need going forward.
  - At the May interim meeting we will put some parameters around these questions.
- Curriculum Update—Dr. Reinemann
    - MCAS
      - How much time do we spend on MCAS test prep? No formal time allotted, normal instruction relates to the standards.
      - How much time does MCAS take? Though the test is untimed, each test is estimated at 2 hours per day, except long comp for 4 hours. A total of 26 hours is estimated across 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.
      - Is the test taking considered instructional time for state reporting? Assessment time is not differentiated.
    - “Learning Walks” to take place which will allow teachers to observe a class that is a grade up or down to see what's going on. Ms. Spriggs wants to have Dr. Reinemann look into a debriefing after the walks.
    - Curriculum Coffees—Planning parent events about readers' workshop K-2, 3-5 and Math 3-5 curriculum at Chickering. Dr. Reinemann has visited with Westwood to see their approach.
    - Looking for funding to renew DIBBLES interactive database and Galileo memberships.
    - Dr. Reinemann and Mr. Downing will be visiting the Town of Reading to attend a Blue Ribbon School of National Excellence Conference to find out more about the process and criteria for certification.
- f) Superintendent's Report – Ms. Spriggs**
- Strategic Plan Update—Mr. Stuart and Ms. DaSilva attended a meeting representing DSC. Ms. DaSilva spoke about the upcoming strategic planning conference this fall which will produce a report to recommend to the school committees a strategic plan for our schools.
  - Policy Sub-Committee Update—Two meetings have been held. Recommended changes and policies to insert have been identified. Edits will be made together for each section with a cover sheet.
  - ARRA/SPED—information distributed to the committee—we don't qualify for much in ARRA. We do get money from SPED. Our Title 1 funding isn't significant. Ms. Spriggs has additional information available for SC review. 50% of AARA funding can be used to replace SPED reductions.
  - Acceptance of Gift—Ms. Spriggs has received a contribution from a neighboring company of a home sound entertainment system for each school. Ms. Spriggs requested acceptance of this gift from DSC. Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the anonymous gift of the sound system valued at approximately \$1,500. Ms. DaSilva motioned, Mr. Correll seconded.
- Vote 09-13: Unanimous**
- Congratulations to Sally Winslow and her staff for receiving Level #1 ranking (meets requirements) for the Special Education federal accountability requirements.
  - A food service audit was conducted by the state, a couple minor items were cited and have been corrected.
  - Ms. Spriggs sent a letter to the governor from all SC members re: the METCO program decreases. Ms. Spriggs asked the Dover PTO for their support as well.
  - *Looking Abroad* article distributed about what's happening around the world in education.

**5. Special Items**

- School Time Change – Mr. Downing has recommended adjusting the school day to begin and end five minutes later than currently scheduled to enable children to arrive to school on time in the morning and have buses arrive on time in the afternoon. Committee discussed the increase in enrollment expected in the Middle and High Schools and the potential impact on busing. Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the recommendation from Mr. Downing to change the school start/end time by 5 min. Mr. Stuart motioned, Ms. DaSilva seconded.

*Vote 09-14: Unanimous*

**6. Future Business**

- a) May School Committee Agenda Items
  - RTI
  - Reorganization of Committees

**7. New Business -- None**

**8. Routine Business**

- a) Enrollments as of April 1, 2009—reports distributed.

**9. Adjournment--** Mr. Springett requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. DaSilva moved, Mr. Stuart seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deb Savastano