

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2010

Members Present: Bob Springett, Chairperson
Jennifer DaSilva
Carolyn Ringel
James Stuart

Also Present: Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent
Dr. Deb Reinemann, Curriculum Coordinator
Kirk Downing, Principal
Christine Tague, School Business Manager
Cheryl Chase, Librarian
Betsy Ryan, PTO
Steve Bliss, Assistant Superintendent
Steve Kinder, Warrant Committee

1. Call to order – Mr. Springett

Mr. Springett called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Chickering School Library.

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Dover School Committee minutes:

- Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the December 15, 2009 minutes. Ms. DaSilva moved, Ms. Ringel seconded. The Committee accepted the minutes with the following amendments:
Page 2, #5, first bullet: correct the spelling of Ms. Dawn Pittori to Ms. Dawn Fattore.
Page 2, #6, 5th bullet: ... how things get done is often ~~more~~ as important as ~~than~~ getting things done.
Page 2, #7a: the report was presented by Ms. Ryan (not Ms. Malone)
Page 3, #7b, 4rd bullet: ~~A parent in the audience~~ Ms. Gladstone asked....
Page 4, #7e, 1st bullet: ... who believe in ~~stepping forward and supporting the responsibility~~ passionately in public education and accept the responsibilities of their position so willingly.
10-01- Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the January 6, 2010 interim minutes. Mr. Stuart moved, Ms. DaSilva seconded. The Committee accepted the minutes with the following amendments:
Page 1, #4: Mr. Stapleton and Mr. Kinder stated that the ~~Chickering~~ Dover piece of the budget has gone up approximately \$300K/year.
10-02- Vote: Unanimous

b) Mr. Springett noted the December 1 and 8, 2009 Dover Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes.

c) Mr. Springett noted the November 19, 2009 Sherborn School Committee minutes.

3. Community Comments

- None

4. Reports

a) **PTO Report** – Ms. Ryan

- Ms. Ryan distributed the January PTO newsletter to the Committee.
- The PTO is meeting at 9am on January 20th. Mr. Springett and Ms. Spriggs will be attending, topics to include the principal search.
- Chickering Rock-a-Palooza will take place on April 10th at Elm Bank.
- Family Game night tentatively planned for Thursday, March 18th.
- Teacher hospitality luncheons are continuing to be sponsored by the PTO.

b) **Business Manager's Report** – Ms. Tague

- FY '10 Budget Update—The salary encumbrance analysis is completed, Ms. Tague expects a \$94,000 positive variance after two leaves that have currently been identified are filled with a long-term substitute and a teacher at a lower salary. Out of district tuition is expected to have a \$189,000 positive variance.

- Utility Report--December temperature readings included in packet. A humidity sensor was added to the existing system at a cost of \$1,800. We received an oil delivery of 6,003 gallons, at the new contract rate of \$1.95 we saved approximately \$7,000 over last year. Ms. Tague cautioned the Committee that for the FY '11 Budget we are seeing an upward trend in utilities.
 - FY '11 Draft Budget – tentatively plan to have the transportation bid opened on February 12th, with a recommendation to the Joint School Committee on March 23rd.
 - The House Budget for FY '11 is scheduled for release on January 27th.
 - Mr. Springett requested that regular transportation and special education transportation be broken out separately in the budget report instead of being included in one line item.
 - Mr. Stuart asked if Classroom and Special Technologies is the only line item without a positive variance, Ms. Tague responded that the salary encumbrance that has been projected out is not expected to change.
 - Mr. Springett asked about the \$814,000 positive variance for FY '10, Ms. Tague reported that not all expenses have been encumbered. Oil has been encumbered, but Electricity has not due to the variable rate, Ms. Tague expects a better number next month for this line item. The \$814,000 is only an estimate of what the variance would be if the books were closed today for all salary encumbrances and purchase orders to date. Ms. Spriggs cautioned the Committee about unanticipated expenses.
 - ⇒ Mr. Springett requested a projection of where the budget is projected to be at year-end.
 - Special Education--No significant changes since last month's report. Still projecting an \$189,000 favorable variance.
 - Ms. Tague distributed a revised FY '11 budget.
 - The initial FY '10 Approved Budget was \$7,871,120. The Proposed FY '11 Budget is \$8,228,198 which is an increase of \$357,000 or 4.54% over FY '10. Based on the budget book Round 1 changes we reduced \$11,500 from the requested amount, primarily for textbooks, bringing the request to \$8,216,698 representing a 4.39% increase. Another meeting was held with the School Committee where an additional \$60,451 in reductions were recommended as a result of looking at the actuals vs. the budgets. Ms. Spriggs also noted that the further reductions were a part of the walk-through conversation with School Committee and the Town.
 - Originally a 30% increase in transportation was budgeted, now that we have the special education costs we can reduce the request by \$56,000 due to changes in status and the Accept Collaborative, bringing the new request to \$326,269.
 - When Ms. Tague met with the Town they were using \$2.76/gallon for oil in their budget, as a result she adjusted the schools oil budget to be in line with the town, resulting in a reduction of \$6,935.
 - Mr. Kinder spoke of the request for a level service budget, he asked if the Technology Software budget request represents upgrades, Ms. Tague reported that the request was for renewals, not adding new elements.
 - SPED Equipment—Mr. Downing spoke of a certain student needing special equipment.
 - ⇒ Ms. Tague plans to further research this budget request.
 - The revised FY '11 Proposed Budget is \$8,156,247 representing a \$285,127 or 3.62% increase over FY '10.
 - Ms. Tague confirmed the Telephone line item is for PBX costs, not phone calls.
 - Ms. Spriggs asked for School Committee approval of the FY '11 Budget, with two items still pending resolution (SPED equipment and another issue) that will potentially reduce the budget request further. Ms. DaSilva asked if the Website Upgrade was included in the Budget, Ms. Tague confirmed it was. Mr. Springett requested a motion to approve the FY '11 Budget for Chickering of \$8,156,247. Mr. Stuart moved, Ms. DaSilva second. **10-03 Vote: Unanimous**
 - Ms. Tague reported that two new copiers are coming to Chickering. They will handle increased volume, printing and scanning. The copiers were acquired as part of the state bid contract, a three year no cost maintenance contract is included. Mr. Stuart asked about the costs of individual laser cartridge recycling/recharging.
 - ⇒ Ms. Tague to assess the costs of laser cartridge recycling/recharging costs.
- e) **Principals Report** – Mr. Downing
- Mr. Downing reported that last week we had the first system-wide choral concert at Mudge Auditorium. Our kids “knocked the doors down”. It was a great celebration for our kids and families.

- Fit and Lit—The program has begun, it aims to teach the kids about the importance of daily literacy and daily fitness.
- Professional Development
 - On January 7th, grades K-1 met to continue planning the Reading Academy. They have organized students into like groupings across the learning continuum, Kindergarten students receive two days a week of reading instruction in addition to what takes place in the classroom, and 1st grade receives three days a week. There are four more meetings scheduled.
 - Students across the school are taking DIBBLES. We are assessing October vs. today and making adjustments to groupings. DIBBLES Mass Standards were used previously for K-3, benchmarks have been redone based on Dover norms since we typically score above the State Standards, so this screening is better able to identify the students with needs.
 - In Grades 2-5, a deep item analysis was conducted to identify what trends we are seeing in MCAS. Vocabulary is a strength, Open Response Writing needs improvement. We have ten weeks prior to Literacy MCAS and sixteen weeks prior to Math MCAS. Curriculum changes are being made so the kids can have more opportunities to be prepared at MCAS time. Also looking at individual student data by class and organizing by concern, then laying down performance data and matching up perceptions to raw data. We are identifying what changes and shifts need to be made in instruction based on this information. About 10% of the kids will get an extra dose of literacy to help make the adjustments.
- Dr. Reinemann—Balance Literacy—The literacy consultant met with Grades 3-5, we are looking at vertical alignment. Ms. Ringel asked about differentiated instruction and if there are any designated times for teachers to check-in and talk about strategies that work/don't work. Dr. Reinemann stated that meetings take place every six weeks for grades K-1. For grades 2-5 they have time during units of study meetings, for example the 5th grade meets once a week, for Math the classes are all within a lesson or two of each other, they share the feedback about what works/doesn't work for each lesson. Grade 3-5 teachers are looking to improve their writing instruction (writing about our reading).
- Mr. Springett spoke about having the Balanced Literacy writing workshop last year, and its full implementation this year and how we look at students and their needs and build the trajectories and lessons to get there. Parts of traditional writing have been changed or dropped. Now we are looking at what we are doing and what we are missing. Dr. Reinemann spoke about getting back to "Hamburger Writing".
- On February 3rd in Millis the DESE is having a workshop where they will give a short open response question to the kids, the DESE will review the response vs. the rubric and see how they would score.
- Mr. Springett spoke of not wanting to be MCAS centered. We have set curriculum standards and what we expect kids to know, internal standards that we teach to that have been developed by the faculty, and MCAS as a cross-check. The question is, are our standards good enough and do our children need to be challenged more? MCAS is a 3rd party look at how we are doing given their standard of assessment. Ms. Spriggs spoke of looking at data sources and making it work for the students and the School. When there has been further data to explore, we also need to look at what we have picked up and what we have left behind. Compliments to the faculty and the administration on the work that has been done.
- A Community member asked how we make the statement that MCAS is an independent verification of our performance. Mr. Stuart spoke about looking inside the box and the mystery around open response question scoring. Ms. Spriggs spoke about how there are curriculums that represent the state standards and MCAS standards and their alignment. We design the curriculum that we think is best for students based around the Massachusetts standards. A second Community member spoke and felt that the curriculum is directly linked to MCAS.
- Student Advisory Council (SAC) minutes
 - Title 1—The SAC is the council to Title 1, the handbook was presented to the Council for feedback.
 - SAC discussed the differentiated instruction model, Goal 2 on SIP.
 - Discussed MCAS Open Response.
 - Discussed MCAS growth model—Mr. Downing presented what the model is to the Council. When you have two years of data to compare you get an SGI. The SGI % is based on all the students in the state last year and where they break down on the following year, if the curve/mean goes up it actually doesn't represent as much growth. Each individual student gets an

SGI as well as the school. On the pilot we were at or above the mean. More to come as the State gives us more information. Ms. Spriggs stated that this data will be supplemental to MCAS.

- NCLB data—Mr. Bliss did yeoman's work to review the data and appeal the errors; as a result our needs improvement status has been retracted.

f) Superintendent's Report – Ms. Spriggs

- Strategic Planning Update – A meeting will take place on Thursday evening at the Middle School Library to review the vision, mission and goals. The group will edit the subgroup work in an effort to take to the Joint School Committee meeting on January 26th for approval. Looking to implement next fall.
- Policy Manual Update—The Public Notices policy has been given to the Policy Subcommittee. Looking to develop a consistent policy for all schools. A number of sections will be brought to the Joint Meeting for review/approval.
- Acceptance of Gift to the Special Education Department – An anonymous gift has been given to the Special Education Department. Mr. Stuart asked what it will be used for, Mr. Bliss stated that it would be used to purchase iPod touches with special education applications, this would not need to be funded on an ongoing basis. Ms. DaSilva asked what last year's anonymous gift was spent on. Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the gift from the anonymous donor for \$2,000 and a match of \$2,000. Mr. Stuart motioned, Ms. DaSilva seconded. **10-04 Vote: Unanimous**
⇒ Mr. Bliss to confirm what last year's donation was spent on.
- Principal Search Update –Ms. Spriggs spoke of looking at a cross-section of salaries and how they varied greatly, as a result our range has been increased. A number of resumes and applications have been received. Mr. Stuart asked when the Search Committee would be in place, Ms. Spriggs reported that she is nearly done establishing the members of the Committee. We are using some of our professional organizations, but not consultants, to reach out to access qualified candidates. There is an application deadline of the end of January. Mr. Stuart and Ms. Ringel will be the DSC representatives to the Search Committee.
- Superintendent Goals—The four goals areas identified are: Strategic Planning, Teaching and Learning with Technology, Teacher Academy and Central Office Efficiencies.
- Race to the Top—Ms. Spriggs thanked the Committee for signing the application. We will have a 90-day window, if the money is awarded to us, to determine our participation.
- Conflict of Interest Law—Ms. Spriggs reminded DSC members to complete the online training module to comply with the changes in MGL chapter 268A.
- Tri-County Superintendent's Meeting—At the January 13th meeting the speaker was Nancy Walser. Ms. Spriggs distributed a copy of her article from the Harvard Review: *Secrets of High-Functioning School Boards*.
- A community member asked for further information about the change to the Salary Range for the Principal's position. Ms. Spriggs responded that at the January DSC interim meeting that she asked the Committee to review the current salary vs. the neighboring communities who are also looking for principals, as a result the Committee increased the salary range.

5) Special Items

- School Committee Vacancy – Mr. Springett--Peter Lert and Dawn Fattore have filed for the position. Mr. Springett will go back and look at the process from last time and plans to invite them to a future DSC meeting.
- School Committee's Roles and Responsibilities – Mr. Springett has confirmed that Glen Koocher can attend the March 3rd DSC interim meeting.
- February 1st Warrant Committee meeting –Mr. Kinder asked when the report would be prepared and submitted to the town accountant. Ms. Spriggs responded that it is ready to go and the cover letter needs to be completed.
- Mr. Springett asked if Ms. Tague had further updates about the frost heaves repairs and tree planting.
⇒ Ms. Spriggs to obtain an update from Ms. Tague.
- Mr. Springett asked for an update on the spreadsheet for technology and facilities, Ms. Spriggs reported it is being worked on.
- DSC Roles and Responsibilities— A community member wanted to further discuss this issue, she spoke about the last meeting and the request to create a subcommittee. Mr. Springett spoke of having Mr.

Koocher come in. The community member asked about having a working group. Mr. Springett spoke about needing the roles and responsibilities clarified first before we determine if we need to create a subcommittee. Mr. Springett will provide an update at the February 23rd DSC meeting. Ms. Spriggs spoke of having everyone in the same place and focus and that having Glen Koocher involved is the next move as a starting place, as well as a wonderful opportunity for the Committee. For Ms. Spriggs, going through this during the candidate search speaks clearly to candidates about the community commitment to growth and improvement. A community member asked for community and administration participation in that meeting with Mr. Koocher, Mr. Springett stated that it will be an open meeting.

- A community member spoke about notices of public meetings being sent via e-mail. Ms. Spriggs said that we definitely could send the agenda and that she thought it was happening as it was at the region level and it will be taken care of tomorrow. Ms. Ringel stated that we do want the agendas communicated to the community, but that the DSC does not send out the information. Ms. Spriggs took responsibility for it being generated at the central office.
⇒ Ms. Spriggs will confirm with the Central Office that the DSC agendas will be sent out by e-mail.
- Mr. Springett spoke about getting the feedback from Mr. Koocher on how to structure the meetings to create opportunities for discussion.

6. Future Business

- a) February Dover School Committee Agenda Items -- Mr. Springett
 - Budget

7. New Business – none

8. Routine Business

- a) Enrollments as of January 1, 2010—reports distributed.

9. Adjournment-- Mr. Springett requested a motion to adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deb Savastano