

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 16, 2010

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

Also Present: Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent  
Dr. Deb Reinemann, Curriculum Coordinator  
Christine Tague, School Business Manager  
Cheryl Chase, Librarian  
Betsy Ryan, PTO  
Steven Bliss, Assistant Superintendent  
Dave Stapleton, Warrant Committee  
Dr. Denise O’Connell, Administrator of  
Special Education

**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 March 3, 2010 minutes.  
Ms. DaSilva moved, Ms. Ringel seconded.

*10-08 Vote: Unanimous*

- Mr. Springett requested a motion to accept the February 23, 2010 minutes.  
Ms. DaSilva moved, Ms. Ringel seconded.

*10-09 Vote: Unanimous*

- b) Mr. Springett noted the February 2, 2010 Dover Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes.
- c) Mr. Springett noted the February 11, 2010 Sherborn School Committee minutes.

**3. FY ’11 Dover Public Schools Budget Hearing – Mr. Springett, Ms. Spriggs, Ms. Tague**

Ms. Tague presented a revised budget proposal including \$62,131 reduction for the School Committee’s consideration.

- \$28,972 reduction to regular education transportation as a result of the bid, part is due to run rate, part is due to the fuel adjustment.
- \$10,180 reduction in salaries due to retirements, including the impact of a lesser salary and a .1 FTE reduction.
- Mr. Stuart asked if the FTE change from 2.1 to 2.0 will be a reduction in service, Mr. Downing responded that it will not, there was inefficiency in the schedule with two part time instead of one full time teacher.
- \$29,303 reduction to Guidance. Mr. Downing stated there are currently 3 positions (two guidance counselors at .8 and one school psychologist at .8) for a total of 2.4 FTE’s. Proposing one full time guidance position and one full time psychologist, resulting in a RIF of .4 FTE.
- Ms. Ringel spoke of the guidance counselors addressing short term needs and asked if the psychologist will be able to take that over. Mr. Downing reported that we won’t lose out on that ability. Ms. Spriggs spoke about the considerable conversations with Mr. Downing and Dr. O’Connell to ensure we have all the services needed.
- Increase of \$6,323 for the Language Based Program for students who need intense instruction. There will be a reduction to the inclusion facilitators and a teacher position will be hired. Dr. O’Connell spoke about this being a proactive strategy to serve the children in our district. Mr. Lert asked about what the program will look like. Dr. O’Connell’s vision will be intensive instruction in academic areas, including the use of technology, with a small class size and a specialized teacher. Mr. Lert asked if there is any value to coordinating this with Pine Hill. Ms. Spriggs spoke of meeting with the Special Education Directors to have the conversation and research to see how we can reach across the districts to serve the students. We have the space here at Chickering and we will continue to look at this opportunity. Mr. Stuart asked for the costs of this class. Ms. Tague reported that the two specialists cost \$110,000 and the new teacher would cost \$104,000. Mr. Stuart asked if the families are aware of this program, Dr. O’Connell responded that it has been discussed with the families, but stated that the students’ needs will drive the placement process.

Mr. Springett asked about how this fits with RTI. Mr. Downing spoke about the need to have something drastically different for these kids.

- Mr. Springett made a motion to reduce the FY '11 budget \$62,131 making the revised FY'11 budget \$8,094,116, a \$222,996 or 2.83% increase over the FY '10 budget as requested by the Superintendent and Business Manager. Mr. Lert motioned, Ms. DaSilva seconded. **10-10 Vote: Unanimous**

#### 4. Community Comments

- Ms. Ryan asked for an update on the working group. Ms. Spriggs reported she had not received any names yet, community members responded that they sent an e-mail this afternoon containing names of 4-5 interested parents. Ms. Ringel proposed using the April Interim meeting for the working group to meet.
- Ms. Menon spoke about seatbelts in our school buses. She spoke of the Superintendent having the authority to make all transportation decisions. After reviewing available research she can't find a reason why we do not have seatbelts on our busses. She has previously asked for a group to study the pros and cons and has received many e-mails from community members supporting the addition of seatbelts, she also feels that seatbelts would help eliminate some of the current behavior issues.

#### 5. Reports

##### a) PTO Report – Ms. Ryan

- The March PTO newsletter was distributed to the Committee.
- The Spring Fundraiser will take place on April 10<sup>th</sup> at Elm Bank. Items to bid on can be accessed online at [www.biddingforgood.com/chickering](http://www.biddingforgood.com/chickering)
- The speaker series has been very successful, this month's topic is healthy eating.
- The Bus Driver appreciation luncheon will take place in April.

##### b) Early Education Foreign Language Overview – Ms. DaSilva et al

Ms. DaSilva introduced the team assembled by SAC which includes Leslie Cutler, Ms. DaSilva, Amy Fielding, Tammy Goldfisher and Ginny Keniry. Ms. Goldfisher presented the program.

- The team researched different types of programs and interviewed schools that already have a program.
- Benefits of an early learning program: cognitive, academic achievement and cultural benefits.
- Programs reviewed: Immersion, International Baccalaureate and Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)—each program has a different goal and delivery method.
- Ms. Ringel asked what the tipping point where it makes a difference is. Ms. Cutler responded 25 minutes of instruction 3 times a week.
- Mr. Springett spoke about next steps including, speaking to Pine Hill, time and money would need to be addressed and answered, and the global child program needs to be included in the process of reviewing options.
- Mr. Stuart asked how we move forward. Ms. Spriggs spoke of how the team has been excellent about checking in with her, she has reached out to the middle and high school principals that this group will be contacting them. If we lay out a timeline we can continue the research and get the stakeholders together.
- Mr. Stuart talked about what will get displaced in the school day to accommodate the program. Ms. Goldfisher spoke of meeting with Brookline to talk about schedules and best practices.
- Mr. Lert spoke of Weston which has 2 schools with 2.5 FTE's for the FLES program. He is not so clear about the incremental cost for an immersion program, Ms. Cutler stated that 20% of Holliston is in the immersion program.
- Ms. Spriggs spoke of the team setting the timeline and benchmark, including what has not been successful.
- Mr. Stuart asked about of Phase 2 of the research, Ms. Cutler hopes to have it ready for presentation in May, including more specifics on time and money and, based on what is found, bringing a proposal forward.
- Ms. Ringel asked if we can ask another town as part of our research if kids are more likely to stay with the same language or switch in middle school. Ms. Cutler believes that if children go through a strong successful language program, they may switch.
- Mr. Springett asked about what program is most common. Ms. Cutler responded that Immersion is in Milton and Holliston, Cambridge has full bilingual. Ms. DaSilva stated that FLES is most common.

- Mr. Lert spoke of the conversation that needs to take place with parents, the Committee and Administration on what we are going to reduce academically to have the foreign language program. Mr. Downing spoke of the language committee not being the one to have that discussion and that it should be School Committee and Administration.
  - Next Step for the team: discussions with Pine Hill, PTO to talk to more parents, best practices, time and budget – planned to be completed in May.
  - Mr. Lert spoke of a study of what a good program would look like, including what a transition in over five years looks like, getting data on other districts, positive and negative experiences and what was risky in decisions and planning for the FLES program.
  - Mr. Downing spoke of the proposal Ms. Keniry has put together on time, cost and blocking.
- c) **Business Manager's Report** – Ms. Tague
- FY '10 Budget Update
    - The projected variance for SPED is being reduced approximately \$50,000 due to a potential out of district placement.
    - Ms. Tague responded to a question about a possible duplicate payment on the warrant, the payment was for work over and above the contract.
    - Ms. Tague responded to the question about why special education had varying amounts of surplus. For this fiscal year there were tuition and transportation increases projected at 3%. These increases were not approved which resulted in a \$51,000 variance. An additional \$115,000 variance was due to cases that did not occur.
  - Mr. Springett received a call from Capital Budget that they did not approve the trees and carpet. Mr. Springett stated if there are available funds left this year we should try to purchase the trees. Mr. Stuart asked if there was any way to get the carpet. Ms. Tague provided the photos requested but Mr. Kelly felt you couldn't see the damage in the pictures. Mr. Springett spoke of the need for Capital Budget to make cuts and that we would wait another year for carpet.
- d) **Principal's Report** – Mr. Downing
- Thank you to the Foreign Language Group, we would not have gotten to this level if they didn't take the time to do it.
  - Thank you to the Search Committee Group, Dr. Reinemann, Ms. Chase, Ms. Powers, Ms. Atkinson and Dr. O'Connell.
  - The posting is out for the literacy, position we are collecting applications all month. The goal is to hire by April 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - SAC meeting—discussed the Foreign Language presentation and the scope and design of School Improvement Plan.
  - Professional Development & Curriculum—Dr. Reinemann
    - Horizontal (grade level) and vertical (across grade levels) meetings have taken place for Readers' and Writers' workshop.
    - The Report Card Committee is working on redesign, tentatively planning to present by the end of the school year.
    - Looking at student data/MCAS results for Science for scope and sequence, expecting minor changes, not a major curriculum overhaul.
    - Curriculum coffees are completed—a survey has been sent out for feedback.
    - Mr. Springett asked if the curriculum standards for Math are similar to ELA, that common grade level assessments are still tied in. Dr. Reinemann responded that they are. Mr. Springett asked if when we talk about benchmarking that it's to our standards not MCAS. Dr. Reinemann responded that we are talking about our standards for benchmarking.
    - Mr. Bliss spoke of the Open Response Scoring Workshop, we have now taken what's learned to Chickering, Pine Hills and the Middle Schools. Mr. Bliss has contacted DESE and we hope to be a host site for the Math and Science workshop.
    - Mr. Bliss spoke about the meeting on curriculum development at the Middle School. More cross building communication going on. He also spoke about vertical teams between schools. Ms. Spriggs talked about last year when we opened up the communication; the

content and context of the conversations are getting into substance that will impact the children's academic advancement.

- Dr. Reinemann spoke of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers visiting 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, and the flow now being reversed for 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teachers to see how the Readers' and Writers' workshops are taught in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Ms. Spriggs spoke of the Technology camp for the elementary teachers and the middle school now wanting to be involved.

e) **Superintendent's Report** – Ms. Spriggs

- Strategic Planning Update—A meeting was held February 23rd. There are five goals and each team is recruiting team members. Looking for a June 1 date for action plans to be completed and brought to School Committees for review and approval with implementation in the fall. Ms. Spriggs to send an e-mail with the names of the team members to the Committee.
- Policy Manual Update—The Technology Section is being reviewed by the Technology Department, some policies are in place for some schools, but not all. Updates to be brought to the Joint Meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Principal Search Update—The search has included the Search Committee, and the faculty has provided additional input. Planning to have a final decision to the Search Committee and School Committee by March 18<sup>th</sup>. Thanks also to the parents for their comments and characteristics on each candidate.
- Technology Advisory Committee—Bill Stangel led a discussion on long-range planning of technology for the district, including how to use a business service model as a way to think about technology and where are we going and what needs we have in order to get to better decisions. Mr. Stuart spoke about the framework that Mr. Stangel uses, though used in business it can be applied to education.
- METCO Coordinator Update—Mr. Bliss reported that they are determining what they are looking for in the next coordinator and forming a Search Committee. Mr. Springett asked for the criteria, Mr. Bliss responded that they are looking for more growth and outreach, including heightened communication with the parents in the program, integration in all four school buildings and a METCO newsletter. Ms. Spriggs spoke of the program development and the opportunities. The ad for the position will be run this weekend. The criteria for the position will be determined when the Committee meets the week after next.
- Special Education Administrator—discussions have begun about the needs of special education students.
- Superintendent's Evaluation—Mr. Springett spoke of the group getting together for a training rubric as a way to help think about all the different elements of a performance evaluation—the exercise has been completed. Ms. Spriggs will review the rubric. Further discussion to take place at the March 23rd meeting.
- Email Blast Policy Update—Ms. Ringel updated the group on the discussion that took place since last month's meeting. She spoke of not creating a policy and having principals and headmasters continue to do the blast Ms. Ringel's recommendation is to go back to the Policy Committee with the recommendation not to develop a policy for Chickering. The School Committee discussed having guidelines for Chickering. Mr. Stuart stated that there should be something in the Policy Manual that says it will be delegated to the buildings. Ms. Spriggs spoke of all four principals having guidelines. Mr. Downing spoke of working with the PTO leadership to develop criteria. Ms. Spriggs asked that it be sent to her and shared with the other schools.

5) **Special Items**

- a) School Choice Program –Ms. Spriggs presented her recommendation on participation in the School Choice Program. The School Committee is required to vote annually on this program. Mr. Springett requested a motion to have the Dover Public Schools withdraw from the School Choice program for the 2010-2011 school year because of space limitations. Ms. DaSilva moved, Mr. Stuart seconded. Discussion: Ms. Spriggs gave an overview of the program to the Committee.  
*10-11 Vote: Unanimous*
- b) MASC Day on the Hill – Ms. Spriggs reported this event will be held March 30<sup>th</sup>, it has been a very popular activity for School Committee members to visit legislators. Committee members interested in attending should contact Ms. Spriggs to be registered.
- c) Cell Phone Policy – Ms. Ringel provided a copy of the language from Pine Hill, the Middle School and High School and asked if we should add to the Chickering Handbook. Mr. Downing reported there have

been no issues or concerns that would dictate needing a policy. The Committee agreed there was no need to develop a policy.

**6. Future Business**

- a) April Dover School Committee Agenda Items – Mr. Springett
  - Technology Presentation
- b) March 23, 2010 Joint Union School Committee Agenda Items – Mr. Springett
  - Superintendent Evaluation Rubric

**7. New Business**

- Mr. Stuart raised the topic of Seatbelts on School Buses. Mr. Springett spoke about when the question was raised last year and the research done by the Superintendent to ensure we meet the regulations. Mr. Stuart is concerned with the statement that a Committee would be convened to review the seatbelt issue and this was never done, this is more a procedure and commitment that wasn't followed through on. Ms. Spriggs feels that the research done and accumulated continued on, the parents that said they were going to send their research to Ms. Spriggs never did. She followed up looking for the information gathered. Ms. Spriggs feels that if she had gone forward with formulating the group of 4-5 parents, that the research wasn't there to substantiate installing seatbelts, so it would have been misleading to have formed the group based on this. Ms. Spriggs did meet with parents last summer, she appreciates how the concerns have been brought forward so civilly. There has been a tremendous amount of time spent on research, and she feels responsible to for the children's safety.
- Mr. Lert asked if the Committee customarily recognizes teacher retirements. Mr. Downing responded that the retirees are honored with an engraved lamp from the School Committee and Superintendent and a tree planting from the Dover PTO.

**8. Routine Business**

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

- 9. Adjournment--** Mr. Springett polled the committee to move to Executive Session. Meeting Adjourned at 9:26p.m. Not to return to open session.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deb Savastano