

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2011

Members Present: Carolyn Ringel, Chairperson
Tim Caffrey
Lauren Doherty
Dawn Fattore
Karl Johnson

Also Present: Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent
Steven Bliss, Assistant Superintendent
Christine Tague, School Business Manager
Dr. Theresa Nugent, Principal
Dr. Deb Reinemann, Assistant Principal
Dr. Denise O’Connell, Director of Special Education
Cheryl Chase, Librarian
Cheryl Baressi, School Psychologist

1. **Call to order**

Ms. Ringel called the meeting to order at 6:34pm in the Chickering School Library.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

a) Dover School Committee:

- Ms. Ringel requested a motion to accept the June 14, 2011 minutes. Ms. Fattore motioned, Mr. Johnson seconded. Correction: Page 1, 4.b) 7th bullet: Ms. Ringel asked if we have thought about taking kids from ~~out~~ *of other districts back* in. **Vote 11-24: Unanimous**

3. **Community Comments** – None

4. **Reports**

a) PTO Report – Missy Gramer, Gina Doyle

- The tag line for this year is “Get Connected”. PTO is working on a new website; the primary goal for the website is a volunteer sign-up section.
- PTO is trying paperless communication this year and is setting up a constant contact system to e-mail parents directly to help get people connected to the school.
- DSC meetings will be added to the web calendar.
- The back to school picnic was held the first day of school.
- A new line of apparel has debuted; approximately \$2,000 of merchandise has been sold.
- The room parent selection process is complete. Parents are meeting with teachers to identify classroom needs.
- The School Directory will be printed and distributed within a few weeks.
- Furniture for the lobby has been ordered.

b) Principal’s Report – Dr. Nugent

- Dr. Nugent thanked Ms. Toohey for her work this year. Ms. Toohey has worked with an instructional aide to help the morning program have more structure. Also new this year is having an adult mentor program in the building.
- Dr. Nugent thanked the PTO for the dinner last week. We had a wonderful back to school night, all DSC members showed up.
- Ms. Spriggs reported that the teachers were hosted at the high school while the power was out. The teachers also came here and worked in the dark to make sure everything was ready for the children. The faculty was flexible; there was not one complaint from the staff.
- Curriculum Leaders has been instituted this year. Dr. Nugent spoke about the links from the strategic plan to the school improvement goals.
- Safety procedures have been changed, the building is now locked every day. We are still working on the parking lot issues and early drop off.
- The SAC will be meeting on Wednesday.

c) Subcommittee Reports – None

5. **Strategic Direction Goals**

a) Goal 5 – Diversity

METCO Report – Ms. Toohey (This discussion took place following the PTO Report)

- Ms. Toohey distributed a pamphlet which can be found on the METCO website.
- All 40 seats in the METCO program are filled.
- We had a six week summer tutoring program focused on MCAS prep for next year. Eight students were able to participate. Kids showed huge results when measured on pre- and post-tests. We will track these students through the school year to see how they progress.
- The statewide results for Boston METCO students show they are outperforming their peers in the Boston Public Schools.
- We have a host family program which matches up students and families. All Boston students that want to participate have been matched.
- The METCO office has been moved to the regional campus, this has increased the ability to see the students during the day.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that this was a program that wasn't working to capacity. Ms. Toohey has added high academic standards and expectations, and consistency in following through with students, teachers, visiting parents and DS parents. She has fulfilled her to do list and surpassed expectations. When we didn't have adequate funding she worked with the school community to generate the funds to cover the shortfall. Ms. Spriggs thanked Ms. Toohey for her work.
- Ms. Spriggs announced that Ms. DaSilva has agreed to substitute for Ms. Toohey during her leave.

b) Goal 1 – Academic Excellence

Executive Functioning – Dr. O'Connell, Ms. Baressi

- Dr. O'Connell thanked Ms. Baressi for implementing the school wide model.
- Executive Functioning describes issues related to learning and attention.
- We have established a school wide learning committee, and we are looking at best practice techniques. The work is tied to the school improvement and strategic plans.
- High quality professional development is being planned.
- Targeted direct instruction is provided to students who have been identified.
- The work has been funded through a special education entitlement grant from the DESE.
- Ms. Ringel asked if this will be implemented for all children, not just those who issues have been identified, Dr. O'Connell responded yes. Ms. Baressi reported the program will be implemented over two years; this year is focused on common language and mindset. There are three strategies: increasing awareness of their environment; time robbers—what robs them of their time to get things done; and, job talk—making a job out of the goal you would like the student to do. A fourth goal is to create an optimal learning environment for students to build executive skills. The long term goal is that executive function is strategy based instruction to problem solving.
- Ms. Ringel asked if it will be rolled out equally for all grades or if it is targeted to older students. Ms. Baressi responded that her group targets grades 3, 4 and 5.
- Mr. Caffrey asked how much of Dr. O'Connell's time is spent on this initiative. Dr. O'Connell responded that she does not directly instruct, she coordinates, consults, and does the grant writing.
- Ms. Doherty asked if the middle school is aware of this initiative. Ms. Spriggs responded that the special education administrators share what they are doing, ideas, and resources at the monthly meetings. We are piloting this here before we expand to other schools.

Foreign Language—

- Updates have been scheduled for Sherborn, Dover and the Region.
- The membership of the committee has expanded to add Middle and High School representation.
- The committee has been invited to Brookline and Holliston to see their programs.

Professional Development—

- Ms. Spriggs spoke of the tremendous leap in professional development from three years ago to now; Mr. Bliss has implemented the paperless tracking process and we have a full year view of the alignment with the goals.
- Mr. Bliss spoke about the early release schedule and how it evolved from a list of dates to a plan for the three districts throughout the year, the work is increasingly vertical. Through the Professional Development schedule you can look across the buildings to see what is going on. On November 28th, Dr. Goldstein will be presenting Executive Function. Mr. Bliss invited the committee to participate; sign up can be done through his office.

c) Goal 2 – Outstanding Teachers

- Mr. Bliss spoke about the Skillful Teacher course offered by RBT which uses expert teachers and administrators in the area. About twenty five teachers will be participating from our four buildings across the three districts; both new and experienced teachers will be participating. Dr. Elizabeth Imende has been contracted to teach this course. Ms. Spriggs spoke of the overall importance of this work to the strategic plan. RBT constantly updates their courses and materials, all the instructors are brought up to date on the current research and impacts and how to embed it into current courses. Ms. Spriggs stated that this is not just a stand and deliver program, Dr. Imende will be visiting the classroom, observing and giving feedback.

d) Goal 3 – K-12 Effective and Efficient Districts

Finance – Ms. Tague

- The Operating Surplus for FY '11 was \$585,612, when reduced for the Circuit Breaker of \$287,858, the surplus is \$297,754.
- The Special Education budget will continue to be volatile, though we came within \$41,000 of budget vs. \$250,000 at the end of last year.
- Ms. Tague reviewed the list of transfers to balance out the FY '11 budget.
- Of the \$27,500 approved for FY '11 Facilities Capital, \$22,797 was spent and \$4,703 was turned back to the Town. Of the \$42,500 approved for FY '11 Technology Capital \$42,399 was spent.
- Mr. Caffrey asked how many special education students are in non-public schools right now. Ms. Tague believes it is five. Ms. Doherty asked if we can add this to the enrollment report. Ms. Spriggs stated that due to confidentiality and the small number of students we can only provide a certain amount of data. Ms. Spriggs will check with Dr. O'Connell to see what else can be provided. Ms. Ringel stated that it is difficult to understand the costs when we are not given a number of students. Mr. Caffrey spoke of the students we are responsible for till they age out. Ms. Spriggs spoke of the sensitivity in the past by parents about the tuition cost of one school vs. another. Ms. Spriggs asked for feedback so they can build what is needed into the quarterly reports. Ms. Fattore spoke of a previous report from about four years ago from Sally Winslow that contained requirements, age group, IEPs and how we build the special education budget that would be useful as we go into the budget process. Ms. Ringel stated that tuition to non-public schools was 25% less and that the collaborative was higher and asked if it was the same student. Ms. Tague spoke of meeting with Audrey Moran to fine tune the FY12 numbers vs. the original assumptions of services needed for that child on a month basis; she is also preparing the FY13 budget. Ms. Moran uses what she knows today, not projections of who may move in or out. Ms. Spriggs spoke of families moving in from out of state, they often let us know they are looking at us and what needs they have. Mr. Caffrey asked if transportation services are the bus and special education transportation or for out of district students. Ms. Tague reported that line is regular and special education combined. Ms. Tague reported that ACCEPT notified us of a 4% increase after we had budgeted a 1% increase.
- FY 2013 Capital Budget Requests—Ms. Spriggs asked Mr. Stuart if DSC could submit the request after the next DSC meeting. Ms. Tague will provide the information at the October meeting.

e) Goal 4 -Technology

- Ms. Spriggs reported that we lost a member of the regional technology team to another district. A Dover-Sherborn alumnus, Sam Twinney, has been hired and is doing a marvelous job. Another member of the team has been approached by another district as well, but is staying with us. A re-organization will be presented at the Joint Meeting, and we will also be discussing how we can make the salaries more competitive.

f) Superintendent's Update

- Ms. Spriggs thanked the faculty once again for their endurance during Hurricane Irene. The main reason for not opening was that we had live wires still down in town, so we could not ensure safety. The decision was made in collaboration with law enforcement and NSTAR.
- Congratulations on the Chickering Open House. We do appreciate the feedback and e-mails.
- Ms. Spriggs spoke of the letter she received from the Massachusetts Reading Association recognizing the work that Shelia Harper has done.
- Following Dover's lead, the Region and Sherborn have also agreed to working with the five strategic goals.
- White Glove Inspection—The custodians had Chickering gorgeous. They have a friendly competition, but they help each other get everything done.
- Open Meeting Laws—
 - Chickering SAC Notes follow the Principals report and are embedded in the school report. Ms. Spriggs has been in touch with the Town Clerk and will be sending it there for posting.
 - Executive Session—DSC will record a poll vote with individual names to move to Executive Session.

6. Special Items - None**7. New Business –*****Approve Dover School Committee's 2011-12 Goals***

- Ms. Fattore asked if we are developing a new set of goals and asked what the other schools did. Ms. Ringel suggested that each member discuss their changes.
- Ms. Doherty recommended the following additions:
 - Maintain high functioning “best” practices as a governing board by adopting a code of conduct, measuring success with self and administrative evaluation, speaking with one voice and maintaining trust and respect.
 - Engage parents and community members in the education process by establishing communication channels that are accessible and understandable (i.e. web-based portal of all school committee documentation) and marketing that unites all taxpayers around the belief that high quality public education is a community’s most valuable asset.
 - Monitor and evaluate state and federal regulations that impact school policies, educational strategies, or business operations.
- Ms. Ringel spoke of the five original goals being for Chickering and the three proposed by Ms. Doherty being for DSC. She sees the goals as goals for Chickering, and wouldn’t see adding DSC goals there.
- Ms. Fattore stated that she thought we should adopt the goals as stated. Ms. Spriggs stated that she likes the three bullets, but would like to see the strategic direction stand separate. Mr. Caffrey stated that they could be core beliefs that stand on their own merits. Ms. Ringel stated that it would be great to have a page on the website about the School Committee, its role and functions, and core beliefs.
- Mr. Johnson would like a tangible adaptation of the Superintendent’s goals and the impact to Chickering. We would adopt the Superintendent’s goals verbatim, and then have a Chickering specific drill down. Ms. Spriggs stated she will send the measurables out to the Committee.
- Mr. Johnson stated that the deliverables are there for the administration to implement, he would like to see what role DSC has to support or enable so they can hit the mark. Ms. Spriggs stated that as different issues come up, there is a more collaborative nature between DSC and the Superintendent, the reports and timelines that have been built are reporting out on the particular school goals, it is an active shared role. Ms. Spriggs stated that she will provide a bullet as to what the DSC role is in the process of each goal.
- Mr. Caffrey motioned to adopt the Strategic Goals as written, Ms. Fattore seconded. ***Vote 11-25: Unanimous***

Web Based Communication

- Ms. Ringel asked that anything pertaining to DSC be linked on the Chickering Home Page, including the agenda, minutes, attachments, and presentations. Dr. Nugent stated that they could put it in the yellow section of the Home Page. Ms. Fattore suggested that we add more information on DSC to the weekly blast.

8. Future Business

- a) October Dover School Committee Agenda Items –
 - How we address Underperforming Teachers
 - Quotes for Wiring and/or Generators for an Emergency Shelter at Chickering--Ms. Spriggs reported that the Region has a generator for an emergency site at the High School
 - Grade Level Curriculum Overview including resources, evaluation, adjustments--Dr. Nugent and Ms. Spriggs to discuss timing offline
 - Is ½ day /Full day structure for Kindergarten still adequate for the current curriculum (November).
 - Revisit the Class Size Policy including teacher/aide ratios--Ms. Spriggs stated that the law states that an aide does not count in the student/teacher ratio.

9. Routine Business

- a) Enrollments as of September 1, 2011—reports distributed.

- 10. Adjournment**—Ms. Ringel requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Johnson motioned, Mr. Fattore seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deb Savastano