

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 15, 2011

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

Also Present:	Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent	Dr. Deb Reinemann, Assistant Principal
	Steven Bliss, Assistant Superintendent	Cheryl Chase, Librarian
	Christine Tague, School Business Manager	Bob Cocks, Warrant Committee
	Dr. Theresa Nugent, Principal	James Stuart, Warrant Committee

1. Call to order

Ms. Ringel called the meeting to order at 7:06pm in the Chickering School Library.

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Dover School Committee:

- Ms. Ringel requested a motion to accept the October 17, 2011 minutes. Mr. Johnson motioned, Mr. Caffrey seconded. Correction: ~~Ms. Mr.~~ Caffrey. **Vote 11-28: Unanimous**
- b) Ms. Ringel noted the Dover Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes of October 4, 2011.
- c) Ms. Ringel noted the Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes of October 13, 2011.

3. Community Comments – Full Day Kindergarten

- Community Member Ms. Dennison stated that the most important thing for a five year old is play time. She is very concerned about the creep of new items that would be added in. Ms. Dennison hopes that with the addition of nine hours that an hour per day of play would be added for things like blocks, creative play, and social skills. She hopes that the Administration would protect this time.
- Community Member Ms. Moden stated that she is in favor of increasing the time in school, but noted that going from two to five long days is a jump; she would be in favor of bridging that gap.

4. Reports

a) PTO Report – Missy Gramer, Gina Doyle

- The teacher luncheon has been rescheduled to November 16th. The 4th grade is hosting a soup and salad bar.
- PTO has started communicating through icontact and has received great feedback.
- The grant process has started; applications have been distributed and are due at the end of the month. PTO has already approved the purchase of drums for the Leon Mobley visit.
- A meeting has been held to determine how PTO can support Leon Mobley's visit.
- The lobby furniture has been delivered.
- The PTO hosted a METCO breakfast for the children in the program, many of the teacher mentors also attended. The next event will be a December holiday event.

b) Principal's Report – Dr. Nugent

- A lot of time and energy has been put into the curriculum plan by the staff. It is very teacher driven.
- Ms. Harper's presentation was moved up on the agenda, please see the minutes below in section 5a.
- Half Day/Full Day Structure for Kindergarten—Ms. Spriggs
 - Ms. Spriggs stated that this topic was brought up at the last meeting after Ms. Delaney's presentation.
 - One of the things that has been so startling to Ms. Spriggs is that the K and pre-K curriculum is so different than even five years ago, she has reviewed the standards and they are much deeper. Less than ten years ago the curriculum guide didn't start until Grade 1.
 - We are very competitive in the nation and globally. The kids that are coming in that need depth are getting that opportunity. Ms. Spriggs stated that her feelings about five full days are exactly tuned into the play issue. We are raising the leaders of tomorrow, and one area she is concerned about is stress. Putting life skills into place starts in Kindergarten, they need time to play, socialize and build relationships. We need to determine what we are going to do to ensure they have the finest skills to get through their public education and on to college. She believes the children are well prepared at the end of Kindergarten to go to 1st grade.

- There are children that want to learn fast, and those who are reflective learners; the diversity in the instruction requires additional time. Ms. Spriggs does not recommend adding to the curriculum, as it is already heavy now.
- Ms. Spriggs noted that by the end of Kindergarten there are 35 Math standards to master. As they leave Kindergarten they are expected to master a total of 83 standards. It is much deeper than letter recognition, the children need to learn and think, not just memorize.
- Ms. Spriggs recommendation to School Committee is that we go to full day Kindergarten. We also need to look at the cost of full day. The teachers are currently at .8 FTE, the difference in moving them to a full FTE would be about \$58,311, the aides currently work 26 hours and would need to move to 31.25 hours, costing \$13,239, for a total of \$71,550. In addition, the bus company contract would need to be evaluated. Pine Hill also looking at full day K, which may also impact the bus costs. Ms. Spriggs has asked the team and curriculum leaders their thoughts and received unanimous support from them for full day Kindergarten.
- Ms. Ringel asked if there would be contract issues. Ms. Spriggs stated that they would work with the Association.
- Mr. Caffrey referred to the \$1,800 Westwood charges and asked if we are going to charge tuition. Ms. Spriggs stated that Westwood considers it a donation.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that if we have a decline in enrollment and we have to make adjustments she would want to look at the funding being applied to full day Kindergarten. Mr. Johnson stated that he wasn't sure we could decide how to use those funds.
- Ms. Ringel stated that because there are so many academic skills that social/play time gets squeezed out, she hopes that would be a reason for having full day Kindergarten. Ms. Ringel asked if there is a point of diminishing returns by Thursday or Friday. Ms. Delaney responded that it would be her job to structure the day to get the most out of the kids, though the later part of the day can still be interesting and creative while working on social skills, problem solving and dramatic play. Currently she has Writers Workshop and Open Circle in the afternoon. If you plan and schedule well, you can get the students excited about the next thing that is coming.
- Mr. Johnson asked what we will use the additional nine hours for, is it a straight line spread of what we currently work on? What does the old vs. new day look like? What performance measures can we look at over time? On the cost side, he would like to understand the bus savings assumptions. Do we need to have the aides for the full additional time? Ms. Spriggs spoke of the aides in Kindergarten having a different scenario and that they would be needed full time. Ms. Delaney spoke of her vision of having the opportunity to work with small groups of children that need more instruction to work on the skills that others that have already mastered. She has kids that come in that can't recognize their name, numbers or letters and some that can read at 2nd or 3rd grade level and comprehension. This would allow her to narrow the gap between the two groups.
- Mr. Johnson asked how Foreign Language will impact Kindergarten in a year or so when it is in place. Ms. Spriggs stated that she would need to assess that further down the road.
- Mr. Johnson asked how we would use the extra time and what we want to achieve, we should have a plan in place for what we are doing with the extra time and money. Are there other communities we can model? Is there an optimal day plan they have that we can use as a case study to implement our plan?
- Ms. Fattore arrived at 8:14pm
- Ms. Ringel stated that we already have two full days, so the teachers already have the experience of planning full days. What currently happens on Tuesday & Thursday would likely be an example of what we would do on all the full days. Ms. Ringel doesn't think we would need to create a new plan or the way Kindergarten is taught, we would just add what we do on the long days to the short days.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that she has full confidence in the team that they know how to plan the additional time. The benchmark piece is trickier; we could look at entry and exit levels that an investment in time should show a pay off.
- Mr. Johnson asked if the information is qualitative or from assessments. Ms. Spriggs responded that the information is obtained by listening to the Kindergarten team as the experts. She knows the curriculum is a heavy load and that is where she makes the recommendation from.
- Mr. Caffrey spoke of the difficulty obtaining scores for Kindergarten. Dr. Nugent spoke of the discussions with the Kindergarten team that 24% of students walking in this year had no pre-K experience. The Kindergarten team has an idea and extensive data to put a program in place. Today they discussed the kids coming in that are already at risk that did not score to our standards and how we will catch them up. Children progress at different rates, we have the data, and we discuss student achievement at every team meeting.
- Ms. Ringel spoke of the 1st grade DRA's, and stated that you would expect to have scores that are closer together, what's hard is you can't get the data till after you implement the program.

- Mr. Johnson asked how we will monitor progress after the decision is made, hearing the 24% statistic is good information.
- Ms. Ringel asked if the Committee should entertain a motion or if more information is needed. Mr. Johnson, Mr. Caffrey and Ms. Doherty requested more information; Ms. Fattore is prepared to move forward. Ms. Doherty asked about including key standards and how wide the gaps are so we have a starting point to compare to going forward.
- Mr. Caffrey asked if we can charge \$75 per student. Ms. Ringel stated that her understanding is that if you charge it becomes an optional program. Mr. Caffrey asked about a voluntary donation. Ms. Spriggs offered to check on that information. Ms. Ringel's understanding is that if it is optional you can't really teach during that time, so she would have a different feeling about having the program if that was the case.
- At the next meeting the Committee will discuss the data and vote. Ms. Spriggs offered to summarize her notes, meet with Dr. Nugent and send the information to DSC.
- A community member asked when we are looking to implement this. Ms. Ringel stated that it would be for the next school year. A community member asked if the Committee votes, then the Town votes. Mr. Johnson stated it would be bundled in the total budget that is voted on.

c) Subcommittee Reports – None

5. Strategic Direction Goals

a) Goal 1 – Academic Excellence

Language Arts and Reading – Ms. Harper's presentation is attached. Highlights of the discussion follow:

- Ms. Ringel asked about Words Their Way, Foundations and G.U.M. and how much synthesis there is with all the different programs, is there an order they go in or are they taught in discrete units? Ms. Grady stated that the skills that are developed in G.U.M. carry over to Words Their Way. Ms. Harper stated that the curriculum spirals, they work to have it be orderly and sequential. Ms. Hart stated that they dipstick at the beginning of the year and teach to what the need is and they don't move ahead till all are on the same page.
- Mr. Johnson asked that the upcoming reviews by grade level show the work product that matches each program. Ms. Spriggs spoke of the last meeting she had with Dr. Nugent and the curriculum leaders and that she has shared his previous requests so that they can plan that into their presentations.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that we are fortunate to have Sheila Harper at Chickering; many schools don't have a literacy specialist. Her expertise enriches the teachers and children.

MCAS

- Ms. Spriggs spoke of Mr. Bliss being the shepard of the data analysis and his work with the central office, DSC and Dr. Reinemann. She thanked Mr. Bliss and Dr. Reinemann for the work they have done.
- Dr. Reinemann referred the Committee and community to the document that is posted on the website.
- At the March Curriculum Coffee Dr. Reinemann shows the parents what MCAS looks like to the children and how to look at the results.
- Teachers receive a report for incoming and matriculated students.
- A pilot for Title 1 tutoring for first graders for Math has been added.
- All grade levels have an improvement goal for Math, not just for MCAS.
- We are a small school, which has advantages and disadvantages. The movement of two or three students within a bar of MCAS may look a bit earth shattering, for example, on page 4, Grade 3 ELA, Special Education cohort, 70% are in NI, which is 7 kids of 10. If we had 9 students it wouldn't have been reported by the data warehouse.
- Page 5, Grade 4, Special Education, the composition strand scored 75% last year, 69% this year which represents 1.2 kids that changed their status.
- ASPEN is a better way to access student data, IEP's and student success plans (SST process).
- Page 6, Grade 5 ELA, Student growth percentage (SGP) is 70 which is a great number—it shows where we expect them to grow—anyone outside the 40-60 needs to be looked at. Ms. Ringel asked how useful that number is. Dr. Reinemann stated that they look at where they move within the block and, for example, are they a low performer, low growth or high performer, low growth.
- For Math Title 1 is an option as an intervention.
- The last section of the packet is data from School Digger, not data we produced.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that the variables are great among the schools and that they may be using different programs. OOD kids are embedded in test results, we can only monitor against their IEP.
- Ms. Ringel asked if we will get the student answers for open response. Dr. Reinemann responded we will not.
- Mr. Caffrey asked if the data is broken out to track by teacher over a couple years. Ms. Spriggs stated that if there is an indication of a pattern that needs to be addressed that she and the Principal look at it. Mr. Caffrey

stated that it looks like the 5th grade improvement was a typical pattern and asked if it because that is when it clicks. Dr. Reinemann responded that every cohort is different and the test changes each year.

- Mr. Bliss stated that AYP is the measure of the school making progress to be proficient in ELA and Math by 2014 for NCLB. Our 2011 report card has us meeting ELA in the aggregate and Special Education subgroup and meeting in Math in aggregate but not the Special Education subgroup. The administrative team and staff are reinventing the Title 1 program to meet the needs of those students in that subgroup. Ms. Spriggs stated that it is very important when you look at the district to know that it includes OOD placement. AYP doesn't look at growth data, it looks at student performance including the percent that participate in MCAS, attendance and meeting a state or building target. If you don't meet the target you don't make AYP. We still have an affirmative status because they assume we had a blip that is not expected to occur over multiple years.

Enrollment Trends

- Ms. Ringel asked if we have any sense of the enrollment. Ms. Spriggs stated that it is still too early in the year to determine the enrollment for the incoming Kindergarten class.
- Mr. Johnson asked when budgets are due; Ms. Spriggs responded they are due 12/31. Ms. Spriggs spoke of preliminary discussions to determine how to put the budgets together.
- Ms. Tague stated that we could submit the budget at the high mark and then reduce it if the enrollment changes.
- Ms. Spriggs spoke about the Warrant Committee guideline and that we should make a notation for the budget. Ms. Spriggs stated that the budget is usually final in March.

b) Goal 2 – Outstanding Teachers—No update

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

- FY '12 Budget Update:
 - Ms. Tague reported that salaries have been encumbered resulting in a positive variance of \$27,000. Last year there was a \$285K variance.
 - There are 22 students currently OOD.
 - Due to the increase in the circuit breaker reimbursement rate an additional \$179,000 was received which will fund any unexpected placements or be returned to the Town budget.
- Emergency Response Generator
 - Capital Budget and Warrant Committees stated that they feel that using Town Hall and the Caryl Building meets the Town's needs. If the school wants a generator the decision rests with the school.
 - Mr. Kelley received an estimate of \$75,000 for the wiring, he needs to know if the generator would be for the whole building or specific areas, then a sizing study would need to be done to determine the actual cost of the generator. Ms. Doherty asked if Pine Hill, the Middle and High Schools have generators. Ms. Spriggs stated that they do. Ms. Doherty asked what would happen if they could have school and we couldn't. Ms. Spriggs stated that there would be additional costs that would be incurred outside the contract. Ms. Fattore asked if their generators run the entire building. Ms. Spriggs believes they cover the Café, Refrigeration and Administration offices only.
 - Ms. Spriggs referred to the current scenario that some schools in Connecticut are in as a result of the October storm, they are already looking at the options to make up time. Ms. Doherty asked if the decision would be made by district, Ms. Spriggs stated that she makes the decision and the Committee votes on the calendar by district. If we were looking at an extended period of time, we would look at options such as online instruction or using alternative sites such as local churches.
 - Ms. Tague stated that Mr. Kelley wants to know if we should move forward and work with the Superintendent to identify what areas of the building should be powered. Mr. Johnson stated that he feels the entire building should be powered. Ms. Ringel asked if we could only do certain sections. Mr. Johnson asked if the \$75K is just for the wiring or does it include the pad to put the generator on. If for \$75,000 we could have the wiring, pad and know that we could get a generator to power the building within six hours it would be better than spending \$250,000.
 - Ms. Fattore stated that she is not comfortable with having power here and not in the rest of the community.
 - Ms. Spriggs stated that getting the children to and from school safely also needs to be taken into consideration.
 - Mr. Johnson asked if in the last two storms if Chickering had power back before the roads were passable. Ms. Ringel responded that it depended on the neighborhood or street.
 - Ms. Ringel stated that we should have Mr. Kelley find out the cost to have a sizing report done.

d) Goal 4 -Technology

- Technology Plan – First Read—Ms. Spriggs asked the Committee read the plan and send comments to her so she can review and send to Jean Conkey.
- Mr. Johnson stated that 80% of the plan seems Region related. He would like to know what the Chickering specific initiatives and plan are. Ms. Spriggs stated that this is the overview; she believes the action plan will show the site specific plan.

e) Goal 5 – Diversity—No update

6. Special Items

FY '13 Budget Assumptions

- Level service budget and Full Day Kindergarten assumed.
- A separate public meeting will be held in December to discuss the budget.

Dover Town Report FY'11

- Ms. Ringel stated that she will write the Town Report.

7. New Business

- Ms. Spriggs stated that she appreciates the work from Chief McGowan and the rest of the Police Department. They did an incredible job contacting NStar, locating tree blockages, watching the power at the schools and did a great job communicating as well. Thank you to Town Administrator Dave Ramsey, the day we had school and lost electricity he worked with NStar to get a clear direction on how quickly they could get here and restore the power.

Emergency Response

- Busing – Ms. Ringel brought up the proposal from Mr. Johnson that we should communicate to the bus drivers that they need to stop at every stop. Mr. Johnson stated that even though we are using reverse 911 it doesn't mean that everyone has gotten the message, he asked what happens to a kid if a parent is not there. Ms. Ringel stated that her understanding is that if a parent doesn't come out to get the kids they are returned to Chickering. Dr. Nugent reported that this happened with one child, and that there are plans in place if we get a call from a parent that they need to go home on a different bus to a different house that we honor that request. Mr. Johnson spoke of not necessarily getting the message because of meetings, and not being able to get an alternate plan in place. Dr. Nugent reported that she or the staff stays here. Ms. Spriggs also receives a call when all students have been delivered home. Ms. Ringel spoke about communicating to parents that bus changes are okay. Dr. Nugent will ensure it is clarified in the handbook.
- Communication— Ms. Spriggs stated that the loss of power has been a new and challenging experience, we continue to use reverse 911, radio, TV and the school website. Ms. Doherty wants to know how Administration and DSC communicate. Ms. Spriggs stated that she usually calls the chairs who then call the SC members, or she may call all SC members. Mr. Caffrey asked about the ability to update the website for the community. Ms. Spriggs stated that because we had no power at the Region a notification could not be put on the website. Mr. Johnson suggested having a school Facebook page that everyone "likes" so they can get the feed. Mr. Caffrey suggested putting it on the Town website as well. Ms. Ringel stated that even if we don't know the status of school for the next day, it might be helpful to put that message out.
- Lost Hours—Ms. Ringel stated that we were able to stay till 11am so it counted as a full day. Ms. Spriggs spoke about not being able to get verification that the power could be stabilized and that time was needed to find the bus drivers, in addition the lack of power for the plumbing would have been a health hazard. Ms. Ringel asked if since we lost from 11:00-3:00, would it make sense to turn a half day Wednesday into a long day two weeks in a row to make up the time. Ms. Grady stated that as teachers and professionals we accommodate and make changes to the plan to make up the time. Dr. Nugent stated that we didn't lose that full amount of time as part of it was lunch, and that she agrees with Ms. Grady. Ms. Fattore stated that it may be more disruptive to change the schedule.

8. Future Business

December Dover School Committee Agenda Items

- Full day K
- Grade 1 Report
- Special Education—Dr. O'Connell

9. Routine Business

a) Enrollments as of November 1, 2011—reports included in packet.

10. Adjournment—Ms. Ringel requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Caffrey motioned, Ms. Doherty seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deb Savastano