

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 13, 2012

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

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

1. Call to order

Ms. Ringel called the meeting to order at 6:36pm in the Chickering School Library.

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Dover School Committee:

- Ms. Ringel requested a motion to accept the January 17, 2012 minutes. Ms. Fattore motioned, Mr. Caffrey seconded. Corrections:
- Page 2, FY '12 Budget, 4th bullet: Ms. Ringel responded that *any Special Education or regular surplus from any line item is brought ~~any part of the remaining budget would be lumped in~~* together at the end of the year.
- Page 3, FY '12 Budget, continuation of 4th bullet: Ms. Doherty asked ~~if we~~ *to confirm that the budget is gross and assume the circuit breaker is assumed to be \$0.* Ms. Ringel responded that ~~the circuit breaker goes directly to the Town, which is not how most towns do it; we don't bank on that money and fund it entirely we fund Special Education directly~~ in our budget. ***Vote 12-02: Unanimous***

b) Ms. Ringel noted the Dover Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes of January 10 and 19, 2012.

c) Ms. Ringel noted the Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes of January 12, 2012.

3. Community Comments –

- Page Kolligian, Chair SEPAC, stated that as a SEPAC member she is supportive of the proposed reorganization because a student can be followed K-12. It will also eliminate paperwork and support better organization.

4. Reports

a) PTO Report – Missy Gramer, Gina Doyle

- Leon Mobley's performance was a great success.
- Books from the Heart--329 books have been purchased for the Library.
- The Fourth Grade food drive was held in January, 250 items were donated.
- February Curriculum Enrichment: 5th grade--meteorologist Jeremy Reiner, 2nd grade--author Brian Lies, 4th grade--creative writing author Allen Kurzwell. Audubon walk for 1st graders was held in January.
- Auction planning continues.

5. Strategic Direction Goals

a) Goal 1 – Academic Excellence

Principal's Report:

- Dr. Nugent referred to her written report to the Committee. No questions were identified.

Grade 3 Report—Rose Harte, Renee Grady

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes. The discussion by the Committee follows.

- Ms. Fattore asked if students see their grades on the 6+1 Trait Writing Model. Ms. Grady responded that they do.
- Ms Fattore asked when the program began. Ms. Grady responded that Ms. Harper started it last year and that they are using it even more this year.
- Ms. Doherty asked if the kids read age appropriate literature as examples of best practices, Ms. Grady responded that they use exemplars and mentor readings.

- Ms. Ringel asked if the issues identified are consistent throughout the different writing styles, or if they are different on each piece they are writing. Ms. Grady responded that it seems to be more trait specific and that they have been working to match the traits to the genre. Ms. Harper responded that most kids that have voice will have it throughout their writing.

Special Education Conversation

A copy of the handout is attached to the minutes. The discussion by the Committee follows.

- Ms. Spriggs introduced Dr. O'Connell, Linda Gross, Interim Director Region, Audrey Moran, OOD Coordinator, and Therese Green, Pine Hill.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that this is an introduction of where we are now and to see if we should continue, if so, we would work on it further to bring back in the spring for approval.
- The focus has been on the administration and isolated groups, how we can enhance services currently being delivered and the most efficient way to deliver the programs.
- Ms. Ringel asked how this would change what services are available to the child. Ms. Gross responded that the Administrator has access to different groups of services, not just special education. Ms. Ringel asked if you have a child at Chickering and a child at Pine Hill with the same needs would you put them together. Ms. Spriggs responded that they are working on this; if we provide one service at one location and a sister service at another location the sense of belonging also has to be further explored.
- Ms. Fattore asked how Guidance falls into the plan and also stated that she thinks the Guidance Advisory Group needs to hear this presentation.
- Ms. Ringel asked if there is a reason why the services listed on slide 9 wouldn't go under the current Special Education umbrella. If the benefit of this proposal is more coordination, the Student Services job could be the same as the Special Education Director now.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that Guidance has different practices at each school, in some buildings the Director responds to the Principal, at the middle and high schools the Guidance Director reported to the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent. We need to determine what model works best to get the direct services to the students. It is not always the place a student can go for counseling which should be the top priority.
- Ms. Fattore asked how this would impact how Guidance would be set up. Ms. Spriggs spoke of having a year of piloting to see how it works and what we can continue to improve.
- Mr. Caffrey stated that it would be easier to share these resources and have logical efficiencies.
- Mr. Bliss spoke about some of the items on slide 9 being in two different offices, this would enable us to be more K-12 based.
- Ms. Doherty stated that she is in favor of moving ahead. Ms. Fattore stated that she also is in favor, but wants to see the Guidance impact.
- Ms. Spriggs spoke of not changing the services to the students, but having more contact with the students. There are different variables they have to deal with, and there is a lot of work that needs to be done.
- Mr. Caffrey stated that we have a significantly higher OOD line item than Sherborn. Ms. Spriggs stated that you can't predict that, it may change year to year. Ms. Tague responded that Sherborn uses the circuit breaker funds and we do not.
- Ms. Ringel stated that it would be better to have a Guidance Department like a private school, she would not want to do anything do detract from what DS High School offers. Ms. Gross stated that the college application function and general education services are a big part of what happens. In the interactions with students on IEPs, 504 plans, etc., there is a lot of coordination that needs to happen, when there is special education or student services need there is duplication. A Student Services Director could do a smoother job to problem solve.
- Dr. O'Connell stated that looking at the K-12 students, this is the best for the students, there is no falling through the cracks, it is more fragmented in the present state.

Acceptance of Gift—

- Ms. Spriggs asked for acceptance of the anonymous gift of \$2,000 which is being matched with an additional \$2,000. Ms. Ringel requested a motion. Ms. Fattore motioned, Mr. Caffrey seconded. ***Vote 12-03: Unanimous.***

b) Goal 4 – Technology

Cognite Pilot

- Mr. Bliss stated that the parent company of Aspen has acquired Cognite and they are looking to have a module to tie into Aspen (grading/report cards) and teacher websites (Wiki, etc.) which would interweave a content management system with Aspen to post assignments, video lectures, etc. We are exploring this with a pilot group of eight teachers from the region. Looking to see if we want to explore the entire system for parents and teachers

to be able to access all types of information. We will be meeting with the engineers to give them feedback to customize the package.

Reorganization Update

- The survey has been administered, compiling results to determine efficacy of reorganization and professional development needs.
- c) Goal 3 – K-12 Effective and Efficient Districts

Policy Recommendation on Classroom Aide Ratios

- The Committee reviewed the Per Student Cost Composition Compared to Enrollment prepared by Mr. Johnson and the Chickering Enrollment and Staffing History prepared by Dr. Reinemann.
- Ms. Ringel stated that the chart is more a part of the cost discussion. Special Education aides reduced by 2, the other 28 teachers get x %, she would like to see the incremental costs on one of the charts. Mr. Caffrey stated that it would also be helpful to look at average class size.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that as we are trying to keep students in the school vs. OOD, that this is another variable that may impact classroom size.
- Ms. Ringel stated that for aides it looks like the general trend is 1:2 classrooms, except for Kindergarten. Going from 5 to 4 classrooms we will have a .5 aide reduction. Ms. Spriggs stated that is what we have been working with; the formula seems to be working well for Chickering.
- Ms. Doherty asked if we could document this in a memo or a policy. Ms. Ringel asked if there is a reason not to make it a policy if it's what we feel we need. Mr. Caffrey stated that it may tie your hands in certain situations. Ms. Fattore stated that she was looking at it from a budget perspective; we get great value from these positions. Ms. Ringel stated that she feels a policy would protect what we need. Ms. Spriggs stated that the aides also provide substitute coverage; the instruction is able to continue with someone the students are familiar with. Ms. Ringel spoke of there being no interruption to the teaching in terms of making sure the days are valuable.
- Ms. Spriggs will draft a policy and bring back to the next meeting.

OOD

- Ms. Tague spoke about the OOD budget process with Audrey Moran that starts in November. Ms. Moran stated that they start by taking what they know in October. In February/March she gets information about potential OOD placements, though some evaluations are not complete yet but are identified as potential cases.
- Ms. Tague spoke of the five potential cases identified for OOD in the FY '13 budget.
- Ms. Tague stated that in the past two years circuit breaker has increased from 40 to 65% reimbursement. We have been turning back \$250,000; maybe we should be more conservative and rely on the circuit breaker.
- Currently we are identifying two incremental for Dover (one definite). Ms. Moran stated that because we have a surplus it may not be because they didn't start receiving services in September, they may have moved out of town.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that the initial work that has been done due to School Committee and Town feedback will continue to evolve.
- Ms. Moran stated that yearly IEP meeting decisions can be made that change a placement or services.
- Mr. Caffrey asked if you look state or countywide is there a % that schools similar to ours have OOD like 3-4%.
- Mr. Caffrey asked if there is a reason the funding has increased from 40 to 65%, Ms. Tague responded that it is a result of lobbying efforts which results in \$140,000 more back to the Town.
- Ms. Doherty asked about the population number of ten this year and eight next year and asked if it is a result of the shift to the Middle School, Ms. Tague stated that it was.

Extra Compensatory Requests

- Ms. Spriggs stated that there is room for a representative from Dover to join the Advisory Council. Proposals are submitted by November 1 and reviewed by the Council.
- 1 point = \$1,163, last year's ratio was 1.5 for Chickering Chorus; the new request is a 3.5 ratio. The recommendation by the Advisory Council was not to increase the ratio.
- Ms. Doherty asked about the High and Middle School activity and sports fees, and if the fees offset the cost of extra compensatory. Ms. Spriggs responded that they have a separate line within the salaries for extra compensatory, but that they don't balance it out with the fees.
- Ms. Doherty asked if the amount as presented does not sufficiently compensate is there room to find money somewhere else to fund it. Ms. Tague stated that each district budgets their own extra compensatory, Chickering recently got the curriculum leaders and it was funded by the elimination of the director's position.

- Ms. Ringel stated that if it is something that we expect the teacher to do on an ongoing basis we should increase the salary and make it part of the job description instead of figuring out how to value it each year.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that another thing to consider is that there are a number of teachers who do after school activities for the benefit of students and she would like to do that research because if we are going to recognize this particular effort we should be looking at other areas and if it is being done on a consistent basis.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that there are different programs that take place at Pine Hill that teachers are not compensated for.
- Ms. Doherty stated that there is an art program, but it is done through Park and Rec. Ms. Spriggs stated there are programs being channeled through Community Education.
- Ms. Doherty stated that she feels it is important to support this for the growth going to the Middle and High Schools; she asked if it could be done with an activity fee. Ms. Doherty stated that we value what this brings to the whole student.
- Ms. Pappas spoke about the curriculum and that an ensemble does not belong there, the ensemble chorus was brought into the morning program and opened up to a larger group of students. Ms. Spriggs would like to look at the schedule to see if we could adjust the position to start and end earlier.
- Ms. Doherty asked if the choral program conflicts with other curriculum across the upper grades. Can we look at a dedicated block for the arts? Ms. Pappas stated that this is the only program of 100 students being staffed by one person.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that the size of the instrument program at Chickering vs. Pine Hill is very different. Ms. Grady asked if activity fees can be used for salary, Ms. Spriggs responded they cannot.
- Ms. Doherty asked if we could amend the increase. Recognizing the budget climate we are in, and in an effort to reward the success of the program she suggests we amend the ratio.
- Ms. Ringel recognized that there are people working on programs without additional compensation, she feels we should recognize it when it is asked for. Ms. Spriggs stated that the requests may grow.
- Ms. Ringel stated that we should look at before school programs and if they should be self sustaining. Mr. Bliss spoke about programs that are an extension of the curriculum.
- Mr. Caffrey asked if the 2.0 ratio would be in perpetuity, Ms. Tague responded that it would be.
- Ms. Doherty motioned to raise the ratio by .5 to 2.0, Mr. Caffrey seconded. **Vote 12-02: 2-0-2**
Ms. Doherty—yes, Mrs. Caffrey—yes, Ms Ringel abstained, Ms. Fattore abstained.
- Ms. Spriggs offered to do further research. The Committee agreed to revisit at the next meeting.

FY '13 Budget Update:

- Ms. Tague reviewed the appropriation adjustments as of February 13th.
- Kindergarten teacher salaries, Kindergarten classroom aides and Transportation have all been adjusted for full day Kindergarten. Classroom teacher salaries adjusted for previous RIF. Out of District has been adjusted to take four potential cases out of the mix. Total reductions are \$59,886, representing a 1.3% budget decrease.
- Ms. Ringel stated that the final budget meeting is Thursday, March 1st to have an in depth discussion of the budget and review the full day K data and recommendation and vote on the final budget.

FY '12 Budget Update:

- The previous salary variance of \$123,000 is now \$162,000 due to the federal stimulus job screen program grant. The projected operating variance is \$59,000 due to variances in School Committee Contracted, Special Education Contracted Service, Sped equipment, Regular education transportation, and Utilities.
- Ms. Tague will ask Dr. Nugent and Mr. Kelley to prepare lists of items for funding for the next DSC meeting; there are currently three items that were not previously funded.

6. Future Business

March Dover School Committee Agenda Items: 4th grade presentation, extra compensatory, list of items to fund, Classroom Aide policy.

7. Routine Business

a) Enrollments as of February 1, 2012—reports included in packet.

8. Adjournment—Ms. Ringel polled the Committee to move to Executive Session not to return to open session. Ms. Ringel—yes, Ms. Fattore—yes, Ms. Doherty—yes, Mr. Caffrey—yes. The meeting adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deb Savastano