

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, January 31, 2005, at 7:02 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2006 budget.

**A. ROLL CALL:** Members present were Heather Orion-Hindle, Carolyn Mebert, Dorothea Hooper, Audra Lurvey, Marjorie Fisher, Kara Winton, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Garrison School Principal, Dennis Bentley; Dover High School Principal, Christopher George; Dover Middle School Principal, Larry DeYoung; Horne Street School Principal, Barbara Szabunka; Curriculum Director, Dr. Murray Ingraham; Director of Special Education, Jackie Adams; Network Manager, Bailey Rigg; Joanne Eaton, Facilities and Operations Manager; and Damian Troise, *Foster's*.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Kara Winton led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. CITIZEN'S FORUM:** No one addressed the Board.

**D. BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

Superintendent O'Connor thanked Board members for allowing him to present his proposed budget at the previous workshop. He then explained that he would "walk through" the process followed in preparing the budget: In October, administrators were asked to review the current budget and update it to reflect reasonable requests for the upcoming fiscal year. When those requests were received in the Superintendent's office, the Business Manager, Benefits Manager, Human Resource Coordinator, and Superintendent were involved in incorporating those requests into the next fiscal year's proposed budget. While reviewing the Superintendent's proposed budget, it became apparent that there had been a breakdown in communications during preparation of the previous fiscal year's budget and corrections needed to be made. Dr. O'Connor stated that he has developed protocols to ensure this does not happen in future budget preparations.

Dr. O'Connor then spoke about how funding was determined for different programs, basing it on what was actually spent in the previous year. This caused some items to look as if they were drastically cut and others, drastically increased. As an example, he noted that an item that increased from \$10 in last year's budget to \$20 in the current budget would show a 100% increase for the small amount of money. He then reviewed some of the budget corrections that had been made:

- Page 15: The Behavioral Specialist for Garrison Elementary School line item reflects a 100% increase. This is not a new position. Last year's budget contained funds for this position, but they were included in the Garrison Elementary School general salary line item. Page 16 shows Horne Street and Woodman Park School's Behavior Specialists as separate line items. In order to be consistent, the Garrison School position was removed from the general salary account and listed as a separate line item in the fiscal year 2005-2006 budget. Chairperson Fisher asked whether benefits for this position were also moved to the new line item. The Superintendent stated that they were.
- Page 91: Salaries for Principal and Assistant Principal at Dover Middle School reflect a 19.9% decrease for next fiscal year. Superintendent O'Connor explained that the Dean of Instruction's hours were reduced last year, but not all of the monies associated with

the reduction were deleted from the budget. Additionally, new lower-paid personnel were hired at the middle school. Correcting next year's budget to reflect those changes displays as an almost 20% decrease in this line item.

- Page 92: Student Capacity Stipends for Dover Middle and Dover High Schools reflect a 100% reduction between last and next fiscal years. The Superintendent explained that administrators negotiated a new contract last year and that this stipend was negotiated out of the contract. Deleting these stipends from the fiscal year 2005-2006 budget shows as a negative.

Board members requested more detailed information for the following items:

Carolyn Mebert asked for an explanation for an increase of 719.80% in new positions shown on Page 1. Superintendent O'Connor clarified that the budget proposal does not contain any new positions. This line item represents those positions approved by the Board, in last fiscal year's budget, subsequent to July 1, 2004. Those added positions included ROTC instructors and additional kindergarten and chemistry teachers. Dr. Mebert questioned why, when positions were cut from last year's budget, \$249,986 in new positions were added. Superintendent O'Connor stated that was exactly what had happened. He went on to say that for the first year of ROTC instruction, the District received a waiver from the government to employ only one instructor. However, the government contract stipulates that a second instructor must be hired for next year. Chairperson Fisher asked the Superintendent for the number of students currently enrolled in ROTC. Dr. O'Connor indicated that enrollments were holding at 50 students. Ms. Fisher then asked if sign ups for ROTC decreased to 40 in the next school year whether a second instructor would be added. The Superintendent responded that by government contract, the answer to that question was "yes." He added that one of the second instructor's primary goals will be to increase student participation in the program.

Doris Grady asked the Superintendent if the 719.80% increase in positions (\$249,986) could be displayed in their appropriate budget line items. The Superintendent stated that Revision 3 to the budget, to be distributed to Board members by the next budget workshop, would display all positions "where they belong" and the line item for \$249,986 will "go away."

Ms. Grady then asked the Superintendent to explain why the budget shows a 19.6% increase in salaries at Horne Street School. (Garrison Schools shows a 6.68% increase, Woodman Park a 9.67% increase, and Dover High School 2.0%.) Dr. O'Connor explained that changes were made in the assignment and funding of Horne Street personnel last year that were not correctly reflected in the budget. This was another "correction" to display what was actually happening at Horne Street School. Ms. Grady noted that she had concerns with that response. Superintendent O'Connor reminded Board members that budget preparation is a fluid process. "It's going to ebb and flow over the next month and a half as we make changes."

Heather Orion-Hindle asked the Superintendent when the Board would know whether it would be necessary to retain staff that was added last year due to higher than expected enrollments. The Superintendent advised that class sign-ups were currently underway at the high school and that kindergarten registrations would be starting in early March. Once those two sets of numbers have been tallied, they usually come before the Board in late February and March. Ms. Orion-Hindle then asked whether the additional aides hired for second grade this school year for Horne Street School would be included in next year's budget. Dr. O'Connor stated that those positions were still in the budget, going forward with the third grade students. Ms. Fisher asked

if Horne Street first grade enrollments were less than anticipated whether a first grade teacher could be moved to third grade and the aide positions eliminated. The Superintendent agreed that would be a possibility.

Heather Orion-Hindle asked why Gifted and Talented line items had been so heavily reduced. The Superintendent explained that while \$885 had been budgeted for supplies last year, only \$99 had been spent, and of \$2,105 budget for dues and fees, only \$70 was spent. Because of this, administrators felt these line items could be reduced. Marjorie Fisher asked the Superintendent to provide Board members with a list of what gifted and talented programs were being offered in the schools. The Superintendent stated that he would provide that information in the upcoming week.

Dorothea Hooper, referring to Chart a), questioned a 375% increase in Professional Services in next year's budget. Laurie Verville explained this would be a one-time increase to cover the cost associated with the Dover High School accreditation program. Ms. Hooper then questioned a 29.83% increase in travel costs. Ms. Verville stated the increase was to cover actual transportation costs for the Dover Middle School Island Program. The last item Ms. Hooper questioned was an increase of approximately 20% in the substitute teacher line item. Superintendent O'Connor stated the line item was increased to provide for substitute teachers to cover staff participating in professional development activities.

Doris Grady noted that the Dover Schools enrollment has been decreasing (down 143 students from the previous year's official enrollment figures). Superintendent O'Connor agreed, adding that projections indicate district enrollments will continue to drop over the next five years.

Dorothea Hooper questioned whether the payment of adequacy funds for students attending the charter school had been built into the budget. Dr. O'Connor stated that it was not, adding that the district would issue a promissory note prior to the receipt of adequacy funds from the state. He indicated there was current legislation pending regarding the calculation of adequacy funding. He stated that there were also problems to be resolved concerning home schooled students and students from private schools transferring to a charter school but for whom the district never received adequacy funding. Dr. O'Connor stated that until these issues are resolved, no funding would be budgeted.

Doris Grady noted that books and reference line items were down 69% and questioned why that was. Superintendent O'Connor explained the significant drop was because he drastically reduced replacement text funds and tasked administrators to develop guidelines to keep track of student books. "If a student loses a book, they pay for it and those funds will be used to purchase replacement texts."

Doris Grady asked if that meant there was no money in the budget for textbooks for grade 5 & 6 Math Adoption. Superintendent O'Connor explained that the textbooks, software, and supplies to implement math curriculum changes were budgeted under Curriculum Development on pages 75 and 76 of the proposed budget. He added that the amounts budgeted were based upon Dr. Murray Ingraham's research and discussions with vendors.

Dorothea Hooper noted that last year, emergencies "came up" in the areas of second grade enrollments and transportation. She shared her concern that the proposed budget might be "too tight", allowing no "wiggle room" for these kinds of emergencies. Dr. O'Connor stated that

administrators had made an effort to convey to the Board what they were actually spending and agreed, there was not a lot of “wobble room.” Doris Grady noted that possible increases in receipts of projected revenues and the eligibility for staff development monies from the state being made available for schools designated as “failing” might cushion the tight budget. The Superintendent agreed those were possibilities.

Board members asked the Superintendent to address the following items contained in the proposed fiscal year 2006 budget:

Page 28 – 504 Aides: Ms. Fisher noted that there was only one 504 aide listed under Woodman Park School and asked whether this was only one 504 aide in the district. Superintendent O’Connor stated that was “true at this time.” Ms. Fisher then asked for an explanation of the duties of the 504 Aide. Special Education Director, Ms. Adams, explained that 504 Aides were always one-on-one assignments with students for extreme medical reasons.

Page 26 – ESOL Salary: Ms. Fisher asked why this item was showing a 100% increase. Laurie Verville explained that reflected an approved Board increase from 3 to 4 days per week in working hours for one position. Ms. Fisher questioned whether one additional day would equal a 100% increase. Superintendent O’Connor stated that his office would research this and bring an answer to the next budget meeting.

Page 52 – Project MORE: Ms. Fisher asked why there was a 13.18% increase for Project MORE and questioned whether this was actually being funded by Federal Grant monies. Ms. Verville stated that this was locally funded hourly position and an adjustment was made to fund the program through the summer months.

Page 23 – Pre-School Supplies: Ms. Fisher asked why this item was showing a 100% increase and questioned how supplies were purchased the previous fiscal year. Ms. Verville stated that this was a correction because monies were omitted in the current year’s budget. \$2400 was expended from general supply accounts during the 2003-2004 fiscal year. This correction was made to restore the budget to display accurate accounting.

Page 23 – Private Tuition: Ms. Grady asked for an explanation of this line item. The Superintendent explained that this money was used to pay tuition for court placed Dover students attending out-of-district schools.

Page 7 – Island Program Travel: Ms. Fisher asked why this item was showing a 300% increase. Superintendent O’Connor explained that since the program’s inception four years ago, the middle school principal has had to find monies in other funded areas to cover transportation for this program. Past expenditures have been in the vicinity of \$2,000 per year and this item was added to the budget to accurately reflect transportation costs associated with the program.

Page 56 – Horne Street School Guidance: Ms. Fisher asked why the Horne Street School guidance position was showing an increase of 40.9% Ms. Verville explained that the Board voted to increase the position by one day last year but that no money had been budgeted. This was a correction made to show that increase.

Page 61 – Salaries Health Subs Horne Street School: Ms. Fisher asked why this item was showing a 138.24% increase. Superintendent O’Connor explained that in previous years,

substitutes for this position were paid from general salary accounts. Adjustments were made to all substitute accounts to more accurately reflect what is actually occurring.

Page 65 – Medical Insurance Speech: Ms. Fisher asked why this Horne Street School line item was up 146%. Ms. Verville explained this was probably due to the person experiencing a qualifying event that allowed a change in insurance coverage from the previous year. The Superintendent stated that his office would research this and bring an answer to the next budget meeting.

Page 72 – Salaries Sub Staff Development: Ms. Fisher asked why this Dover High School line item reflected a 100% increase. Superintendent O'Connor stated that, in previous years, substitutes for staff development at the high school were paid from general salary accounts. Adjustments were made to all substitute accounts to more accurately reflect what is actually occurring.

Doris Grady reminded the Superintendent that the Board had created a policy limiting the number of days a teacher could be absent from their classrooms. She questioned whether the increase in this substitute account reflected an increase in the number of days teachers spent out of their classroom. Superintendent O'Connor stated that the Board policy was being followed. Classroom teachers were only being allowed 2 district mandated professional development days and 3 contractual professional development days. Any requests beyond these 5 days require Board approval.

Carolyn Mebert asked why the line item for ROTC Instructors reflected \$0 for salaries. Superintendent O'Connor explained that ROTC salaries were included in the \$249,986 shown on page 1 under "New Positions after 7/1/04." He noted that all positions added after 7/1/04 will be moved to their actual line items in the next revision (#3) of the budget with a note included to indicate why the adjustment has been made.

Doris Grady asked the Superintendent to provide a list of the positions funded by the \$249,986. Dr. O'Connor reminded Board members that he had provided that list at the previous budget workshop.

Page 2 – Salaries Teacher Aides at Dover High School: Audra Lurvey questioned why this line item reflected a 29.19% decrease. Ms. Verville explained that this was due to an adjustment made to remove salaries for summer computer technicians. Those positions are now listed accurately on page 122 under Salaries Tech Summer Staff.

Page 25 – Pupil Service Contract: Ms. Fisher asked what was covered under this line item. Ms. Adams explained these are contracts for occupational and physical therapist consultants who work with Dover students and who also perform out-of-district evaluations for students in placement.

Page 77 – Professional Development Consultants District Wide: Ms. Fisher asked for an explanation for what these funds would be used. Superintendent O'Connor stated that Dover has been identified as a district in need of improvement under No Child Left Behind. He added his belief that, in addition to mathematics, the district also needs to provide professional development in the areas of Language Arts and Reading. "We cannot maintain the status quo or we'll fall behind in Language Arts and Reading". Kara Winton expressed concerns that the

Board should not be restricting out of classroom time for professional development, but should support teachers in their endeavors for staff development.

Page 97 – Telephone – Dover Middle School: Chairperson Fisher asked why this line item reflected a 240% increase. Ms. Verville explained that the middle school's phone system had been upgraded and tied into the BayRing system.

Superintendent O'Connor then provided Board members with a list of New Staff Requests and Rationales prepared by administrators for fiscal year 2005-2006. He also included his prioritized new staff request list containing only six positions and asked Board members to review the information to discuss at the upcoming Budget workshop.

1. Dover High School – English Teacher
2. Dover Middle School Math Specialist (grade 6)
3. Dover Middle School Computer Teacher
4. Dover High School Wellness/PE/Health
5. Elementary School Guidance Counselor (4/5 to FTE)
6. Facilities & Grounds – Maintenance Worker

**E: ADJOURNMENT:** Kara Winton moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to adjourn to non-public session at 8:30 p.m. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

AUDRA LURVEY, Secretary  
Dover School Board  
AL/kgb  
2/1/05