

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, February 28, 2005, at 7:03 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2006 budget.

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

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Director of Curriculum, Murray Ingraham; Dean of Students, Dover Middle School, Kim Lyndes; Principal, Dover High School, Christopher George; Director of Federal Projects, Jean Briggs; Principal, Garrison Elementary School, Dennis Bentley; Principal, Horne Street School, Barbara Szabunka; Director of Special Education, Jaclyn Adams; Principal, Woodman Park School, Anne Watson; and teachers of mathematics from throughout the district.

B. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Superintendent O'Connor and Business Manager, Laurie Verville, reviewed the following list of proposed additions to the budget with the Board:

Priority Level: 1=Most, 7=Least

Comments	Priority	ADD-IN	DELETE	Account Number
English Teacher (3/5 to FTE-DHS)	1	\$21,564.00		1000-30-1100-110-120-00
Math Specialist (Gr. 6 -DMS)	1	\$67,653.34		1000-20-1100-110-120-00
Computer Teacher (DMS)	1	\$65,153.34		1000-20-1100-110-120-00
Wellness/PE/Health	1	\$67,653.34		1000-30-1100-110-120-00
Guidance Counselor (4/5 to FTE)	1	\$ 8,050.61		1000-12-2122-110-120-00
Maintenance Worker	1	\$51,422.63		1000-XX-2620-110-152-00
Prof. Dev. (per 7/1/05 DEOP Agrmt)	1	\$ 3,000.00		1000-00-2213-240-130-00
Braille Textbooks	2	\$28,000.00		1000-30-1210-640-000-00
DMS Summer School	3	\$20,000.00		1000-20-1100-110-128-00
1 st Year Lease for Facilities Truck	4	\$10,000.00		1000-33-2630-735-000-00
GES Instructional Supplies	5	\$ 2,093.00		1000-11-1100-610-000-00
HSS Instructional Supplies	5	\$ 2,069.00		1000-12-1100-610-000-00
WPS Instructional Supplies	5	\$ 1,971.00		1000-14-1100-610-000-00
DMS Instructional Supplies	5	\$ 6,895.00		1000-20-1100-610-000-00
DHS Instructional Supplies	5	\$11,746.00		1000-30-1100-610-000-00
Career/Tech Supplies	5	\$ 848.00		1000-30-1300-610-000-00
Athletic Supplies	5	\$ 8,817.00		1000-XX-1420-610-000-XX
Pupil Services – SPED OT	6	\$18,255.00		1000-10-2152-323-000-00
Replacement Texts – All Schools	7	\$13,956.00		1000-XX-1100-640-000-00
Health Reimbursement	---		\$(1,600.00)	1000-50-2321-111-130-00
Baseball Coach	---		\$(2,128.24)	1000-30-1420-110-171-54
Skiing Coach	---		\$(2,379.07)	1000-30-1420-110-171-63
Softball Coach	---		\$(2,128.24)	1000-30-1420-110-171-64
Sub Total:		\$409,147.26	\$(8,235.55)	Sub Total:
Net:		\$400,911.71		

Superintendent O'Connor then provided information relative to the proposal:

Two positions are adjustments:

- (Part time to FTE for an English Teacher at DHS and Guidance at HSS)

New Positions include:

- A full time math specialist at grade 6 would allow the district to reinstate a program that was in place one year ago. This position is working with students who are struggling in math and will help to make a dramatic change in state testing scores.
- A full time computer teacher for grade 7/8 at Dover Middle School would reinstate a position that was eliminated two years ago. Technology is a high priority of the School Board.
- A full time maintenance worker who would work throughout the district would also be available to provide coverage for absent custodians in the district.
- The DEOP Agreement, effective July 1, 2005, includes an increase of \$3,000 in professional development.
- The state will no longer subsidize the purchase of Braille textbooks for our visually impaired students. \$28,000 is required to fund these purchases.
- The 21st Century Grant that funded Dover Middle School summer school over the past 4 years has expired. \$20,000 is required to continue this important program.
- Increases to supply accounts for all schools, including athletics and the Career Technical Center, would restore these line items to their original requests.
- Pupil Services for Occupational Therapy were erroneously omitted from the SPED budget. The cost to fund this service is \$18,255.00.
- Replacement textbook accounts were cut dramatically for all schools. An increase of \$13,956.00 is requested to partially restore these accounts.
- Additionally, a total of \$8,235.55 has been cut from the proposal based upon items that should be eliminated from the budget.

Dorothea Hooper stated that she understood the rationale for the entire list, noting that supply accounts have been drastically reduced over the years and teachers end up purchasing a lot of supplies out of their own pockets for their classrooms. She then asked what total amount would be needed to fund priority 1 and priority 2 items only. Laurie Verville stated the total would be approximately \$309,000. Ms. Hooper then asked if the Superintendent's earlier proposal for students to pay for lost textbooks would eliminate the need for the increase of \$13,956.00 for replacement textbooks. Superintendent O'Connor stated that textbook accounting systems were being created in all of the schools and administrators would do their best to recover money from students for lost texts. He noted, however, that money for every replacement text would probably not be collected and that money would not cover all replacement necessary texts. This amount would partially restore money to all of the schools for this purpose.

Doris Grady asked what figure was being used as the average salary of the new positions being requested. Laurie Verville explained that she was budgeting a mid-salary range of \$42,400 and that the balance of the amounts shown was to cover benefits. Ms. Grady then noted the Superintendent was requesting \$65,000 for a computer teacher when the district does not have a curriculum guide for computer instruction. The Superintendent stated that there is an "unofficial" course of study, or lesson plans, that were used 2 years ago when a computer teacher position was in the middle school.

Ms. Grady then asked the Superintendent to refer to page A5 of the budget proposal and asked what position was covered under Function 1391, Career Technical Guidance. Superintendent O'Connor and Ms. Verville explained this guidance position was partially grant funded for 3 years. The district paid for 40% of the position last year, in the 3rd year of the grant. Mr. Latchaw advised the funding has been extended for one additional year, and the amount in the budget

represents funding for 60% of the position. Ms. Grady asked if the extension of the grant had been provided to the district in writing. Superintendent O'Connor indicated that Mr. Latchaw did have that in writing. Ms. Grady then questioned an increase of nearly \$35,000 in guidance position salaries shown on page A.7. The Superintendent explained that this increase was for all guidance positions across the district and was not a new position.

Heather Orion-Hindle questioned whether the district had ever used a formula to calculate supply budgets for schools on a per pupil basis. Her concern was to find a way to more uniformly allot supplies to the schools. Superintendent O'Connor asked Mr. Bently if he could recall that having happened in the past. Mr. Bently said that it had – a dollar amount had been identified approximately 5 or 6 years ago. Superintendent O'Connor stated he would attempt to resurrect the information during the Tuesday Administrator's Meeting and advise the Board.

Ms. Grady asked what would be the percentage increase in the FY06 budget if the Board were to approve the \$409,000 in additional items. Ms. Verville explained that revenues had also changed from the previous budget submission – Building Aid increased by approximately \$58,000 – representing a \$400,912 “overall” increase since the last budget submission. That would be an 8.42% increase over last fiscal year's budget. She added that including debt service would mean an 8.26% increase, or 49 cents increase on the current tax rate.

Ms. Grady asked whether the amount of adequacy aid that the district would receive was definite. The Superintendent stated that the figure being used in the budget, \$6.6 million, was the amount published by the state and the figure the state advised districts should use. He also noted that there were multiple pieces of legislature pending that could affect the ultimate formula used to determine adequacy aid for the next fiscal year. Ms. Grady noted her concern in committing to spend an additional \$400,000 when the adequacy figure could change to a lower amount and stated her opinion that the board should go with the budget “as is and when the money is received from the state, it could be decided where to spend it.” The Superintendent agreed that he could withdraw all recommendations and, at the next meeting, submit a budget with a 7.7% increase and what that impact would be on the tax rate. He added that we could hold off on the recommendations and inform City Council that we were holding off on those recommendations pending the final figures from the state. Ms. Grady ended by noting that she had some interest in using money to fund additional computer teachers at the elementary schools.

Ms. Hooper noted her concern that the Board had just implemented a new math curriculum at the middle school and now might not add the Superintendent's request for a math specialist. She added that new courses were approved for Dover High School in Health/Wellness/PE and it was explained to the Board at that time that those additions would require additional staffing. She added she did not want to affect programs by cutting and not filling these positions.

Heather Orion-Hindle noted that she had looked at the Superintendent's recommendations as a “wish list” and believed that all necessary positions were already contained in the budget. The Superintendent acknowledged that was true but added that because of increases in contractual obligations, administrators were forced to submit a “bare bones” budget. It did not include reinstatement of programs previously cut. “We've made some adjustments to the budget and freed up some money. Revenues are up in some areas and we came back with some requests for programs that we feel will help.” Doris Grady noted that there was already one math specialist at the middle school and stated she would rather see another math teacher instead of

two math “specialists” because that would reduce class sizes. Superintendent O’Connor noted that the math specialist positions were, in fact, math teachers. Ms. Grady asked the Superintendent to “scratch out specialist.”

Ms. Orion-Hindle asked the Superintendent when he would know the status of teachers and the 4 paraeducators that were hired for Horne Street School last year due to high enrollments. The Superintendent explained that kindergarten registrations would be held in March and added that enrollments continue to change through June, July, and August.

Doris Grady questioned an increase in the Computer Repair line item for approximately \$30,000.00. Superintendent O’Connor explained that increase would fund upgrades to the operating systems across the district, necessary to have all computers operating on the same platform. Ms. Grady asked for an explanation for an increase of \$25,169.72 in technology salaries. Laurie Verville stated that this was an adjustment to the budget that moved summer technicians out of instructional function 1100. Ms. Verville added that the 1100 function reflected a corresponding decrease of approximately \$25,000.00. Ms. Grady asked why the computer supply account was showing such a large increase. Ms. Verville stated that a big part of the increase was for upgrades to MMS, Grade Quick, and the URL filtering software.

Chairperson Fisher asked whether the budget included a new computer lab. The Superintendent stated that was included in the budget. Ms. Fisher asked what would happen if the lab were not added this coming school year. The Superintendent stated it might impact class sign-ups for added technology courses that would not be able to run. Students signed up for those courses would have to make alternate choices. Ms. Fisher asked if the Superintendent knew how many students had signed up for those courses. Dr. O’Connor stated that sign-ups were currently taking place and that information would be available in a few weeks.

Ms. Fisher asked if the professional development budget could be reduced since staff development money would be coming from the state because of Dover’s failing district designation. Superintendent O’Connor explained that those monies would be earmarked for mathematics professional development only. He added that monies were also needed to train new staff members hired over the past three years in other programs including Scholastic. Ms. Fisher asked if the money budgeted for math professional development could be “shifted” to fund something else. Superintendent O’Connor cautioned that the \$1 million earmarked for professional development for failing districts would be split over 18 districts using a tiered formula. He stated that we have no idea what we will receive and what provisions will have to be made to the state. Ms. Fisher stated she would like to level fund professional development at the same amount as last year.

Doris Grady reiterated her desire to go with the budget “as is” and when money is received from the state, decide where to spend it.

Heather Orion-Hindle added her opinion that there is money in the budget that could be used to fund items on the Superintendent’s list. “If we have to reprioritize, we have to reprioritize. Take something out of here and put it in here.” She cited as an example that the four paraeducators hired for Horne Street School due to class sizes this past school year could be deleted to pay for Braille textbooks. Ms. Szabunka requested the Board wait to see what the enrollment numbers would be at Horne Street School since there are currently 6 first grades with 100 students moving into 4 second grades, and 26 students in each of 4 second grade classroom

moving on to third grade. She cautioned that the final enrollment numbers might necessitate keeping the additional staff at the school and moving some of the current positions from first grade to third grade.

Dorothea Hooper recollected there was a year she was on the Board when they had to go back noted stated her concern that she did not want to see the Board “cut ourselves so short” in case that money doesn’t come back. Marjorie Fisher stated she agreed with Ms. Grady, the Board should accept the Superintendent’s budget without making any additions. She added her belief that prioritizing budget items is up to the administrators, not the School Board. Once recommendations are made, the Board could agree or disagree with those priorities.

Superintendent O’Connor stated he would like to clarify the direction in which he understood the Board wanted him to go with the budget:

At the next meeting, he would present, essentially, the Budget Revision 3 requests without the \$400,000 in additional items. Those proposed additions would be retained for separate consideration when adequacy funds are received. It will also be for further consideration if it is decided adjustments be made to the approved budget.

Ms. Grady stated that was what happened last July when the District added \$200,000 in new positions. She added that she had trouble going out to the public and saying, “...we want \$600,000 worth of new positions and it doesn’t sound right. But I think that we can indicate that these are specific needs and if the money comes in, we will have to prioritize and use it to the best needs of the kids. But we’ve already written in here \$200,000 worth of teachers since July. Now we want another \$400,000. That’s \$600,000 worth of staff and I just have trouble with it now until we know what we have the money.” “We’re not only going to hear from academia, we are going to hear from the taxpayers and the people that we represent. And they’re going to say, ‘\$600,000 worth of new staff, what are you going to do with them?’

Dorothea Hooper added that the problem was far beyond the Board. She stated, “I appeared before the Zoning Board the other night to discuss the new building that’s going on down off Mast Road Extension. More multi-dwellings are coming in and they’re asking for waivers on the amount of land that they are going to need; doubling the amount of units they are going to have. This is a problem that is beyond us. It’s overpopulation, it’s rapid growth in Dover, and the schools are being impacted. I can understand why we are asking for more money- because we’re getting more kids and we have to service those kids so we do have to hire more teachers. And as long as that continues, it’s out of our hands.” Ms. Grady asked the Superintendent if the enrollment numbers were up or down right now. “I know high school was down 141.” The Superintendent stated that enrollment numbers overall this year are down, particularly at the elementary levels over the last few years. He noted high school enrollment should increase slightly over the next two and three years, and then should level off.

Ms. Hooper added a final concern: “Some of us are sitting here of a generation that did not grow up with computers and we’re making judgments on computer labs – it doesn’t seem important to us. I just finished an online computer course. That’s obviously the thing that’s going to happen now. More and more of our education, both secondary and at the college level, is going to be done online. We do owe it to our kids to provide them with computer labs and computer services. So, we need to think about that before we start cutting these things that do not appear to be ‘significant’.” Ms. Orion-Hindle shared her opinion that should occur at the lower grades.

“By the time they get to the high school, they should know that stuff already.” Ms. Hooper stated, “They obviously don’t, though.”

C: ADJOURNMENT: Heather Orion-Hindle moved, Doris Grady seconded, to adjourn Budget Workshop #4 at 8:00 p.m. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

AUDRA LURVEY, Secretary
Dover School Board
AL/kgb
March 1, 2005