

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, August 22, 2005, at 7:17 p.m. in Council Chambers.

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

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Principals Chris George, Dover High School; Larry DeYoung, Dover Middle School, Barbara Szabunka, Horne Street School, and Anna Parrill, Garrison Elementary School; and Marcus Weisgerber, Fosters.

B. 2004/2005 SCHOOL PLAN SUMMARIES:

Anna Parrill explained that she and Anne Watson had worked collaboratively to create their plans and, since Ms. Watson was unable to attend this evening, she would be providing a comparison of each goal for both Garrison Elementary and Woodman Park School.

Ms. Parrill began her review with Goal #1: Literacy: To improve student literacy in all subject areas: Using the Garrison data to determine students' strengths and weaknesses, NWEA data was examined across all three grade levels and all three subject areas. The data was compiled under 4 categories: 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, and 76-100% of the students fell under the different categories. The goal is to have students who fall under 0-25% decrease from fall to spring and increase in the area of 76-100%. Looking at the Garrison data, that was accomplished. Ms. Parrill stated that the goal for improvement at Garrison would be to have 30% or less of the students perform from 0-50%.

When examining the data at Woodman Park School, they had the same performance from the fall to spring moving students up from the 0-25% range and increasing in the 76-100% range. Ms. Parrill stated that a realistic goal at Woodman Park would be to have 30-35% or less of the students perform from 0-50%.

Goal #2: Data Driven Decision Making: Ms. Parrill reported that teachers are "having a good experience" working with data. The NWEA, SWISS, DRA's, and PAL's scores are being reviewed and used to make decisions for improved instruction and both schools are working to improve "in ways to take a look at that data." Additionally, all three elementary principals will be meeting twice a month with the director of curriculum to review instruction and data.

Goal #3: Technology: Technology is integrated throughout the day. The plan includes a list of software used and implemented by the teachers; Special education teachers use technology to assist with implementation of IEP's and SWISS behavioral data is used to make changes in areas where needed.

Superintendent O'Connor noted that he would be presenting data to the Board at the September School Meeting on integration of technology in the classrooms and how effective we have been with our teaching staff. Additionally, information on the frequency in which children visit the labs will be presented.

Goal #4:: Safe Schools: To increase student resilience or create a positive school environment of trust, respect and open communication: Ms. Parrill noted that detailed information on PBIS

data collection had been provided in Board packets and stated that SWISS data collection from PBIS indicate Garrison has stayed somewhat consistent on the number of referrals while Woodman Park has shown a slight decrease in that number. She added that is an area in which she intends to focus at Garrison – increasing the number of teachers participating in PBIS; coordinating assemblies that directly tie into PBIS - and she looks forward to reviewing the data in 2005/2006. Ms. Parrill added that the PAT teams are very consistent at Garrison School and *Responsive Classroom* continues to be a positive program to help improve school climate.

Dorothea Hooper asked Ms. Parrill if these programs were addressing bullying. Ms. Parrill stated they are. Ms. Hooper noted that the Board does have an anti-bullying policy and wanted parents to know it has been in place and that the Board has been addressing this issue for some time.

Barbara Szabunka reviewed Horne Street School Improvement Plan outcomes for 2004/2005. She stated she found it interesting that teachers over the summer have been talking more and more about utilizing the NWEA data. She added her feeling that is a change in the culture that she believes is positive.

Ms. Szabunka reported that data indicates Horne Street Schools scores fluctuated. She noted they would like to see scores in the 51-76% and 76-100% increase. "In some instances they went up. In some instances they did not." Ms. Szabunka stated she and her staff would look at data reported in the third grade more closely to see if it might reflect a change in student population or students with ESOL issues.

Additionally, PAL's scores were reviewed at Horne Street School to see how many students reached the cut-off score of 70. The 13 students who fell below the cut-off will be monitored by the reading specialists and first grade teachers to ensure they make continued progress. Ms. Szabunka noted that Oral Fluency tests have been helpful to identify which students may need more remedial reading instruction. Additionally, teachers continue to use writing portfolios, and the successful picture and writing program will continue.

In the area of technology, Ms. Szabunka reported that teachers are using scan converters more often to teach whole-class lessons. She added that children at the 3rd & 4th grade level create Power Point presentations in the areas of nutrition and other science and social studies units. Ms. Szabunka reported she was pleased that the majority of the teachers have started to use EdLine to communicate with parents and that she is working to increase that number to 100% this upcoming school year.

Ms. Szabunka reported that the use of PBIS continues and that Horne Street School has found it useful to break down problem behavior by "major" and "minor." She noted that some of the major problem behaviors last year were involving just a few students.

Dorothea Hooper asked Ms. Szabunka to define what they would consider major and minor problem behaviors. Ms. Szabunka defined major problems as hitting, swearing, and running off. Some examples of minor behavior problems would include disagreements (verbally), tattling, minor bullying. She added that minor problems repeated by a student might make them move to a major problem. Ms. Hooper asked if Horne Street School would be continuing with Skippyjon Jones next year. Ms. Szabunka stated they would.

Larry DeYoung presented the 2004/2005 Outcomes for Dover Middle School. He noted that the outcomes of the fall to spring score comparison of NWEA testing indicate overall, the bottom quartile is between 20-25% in all categories. In the 76-100% quartile, many of the categories, are well above 40-45%.

Principal DeYoung also reported the Dover Middle School took a close look at at-risk students last year, reviewing data, test scores, and report cards. They came to the consensus that at-risk students needed to follow an action plan. Data was collected and Action Plan Data results analyzed. The criteria used to place a student on an action plan was at-risk students and students with D's and F's on report cards. These action plans included instructional strategy changes and motivational changes in students habits. The data review indicated quite a few students moved off the list (no D's and F's in the 3rd quarter). Principal DeYoung noted, however, as some students moved off, others were added. He then explained his feeling that the most important issue was that middle school staff are taking a close look at at-risk students and asking, "What can be done to make them succeed?" Mr. DeYoung added that, in the future, data reporting will be more disaggregated. Staff will be "taking a close look at bottom quartile kids, and asking, What are we doing with the data to improve those students?"

Principal DeYoung reported that PBIS/SWISS data for Dover Middle School indicates tardies are a problem. Although the attendance rate is good for a school of its size, tardies have escalated. He stated that would be something to work on. SWISS reports also indicate office referrals did go down a bit, but instances of abusive language increased and are a concern.

Superintendent O'Connor asked Principal DeYoung to share some of his ideas to address the tardy issue next year. Mr. DeYoung stated they currently have a 3 strike policy – a student who accumulates 3 tardies earns an after school detention. He noted that next year, along with that, they will "raise the expectations" and look at why the child is tardy – use it as an opportunity to have the child, along with parent, work to solve the problem.

Principal Chris George stated that, when thinking about accomplishments and goals, receiving the NH School of Excellence award for 2005 was a great accolade for Dover High School and he hoped to build on the successes he found through that process.

Dorothea Hooper commented that during a recent City Council meeting, in discussing the Children's Museum moving to Dover, one of the gentlemen talked about the fact that one of things so impressive with Dover were the Public Schools. "For a long time, we suffered with a reputation that was based on 20 years ago, and it took so long to get people to recognize how much, how far we've come in this town. It does make the quality of life in this city so much better. Congratulations once again to Horne Street which came out with Principal of the Year, and Teacher of the Year, and your school which came out with the top high school in the state. It does a lot for Dover and it does a lot for the economic, social, and geographic growth of this city."

Principal George stated the high school was fortunate enough to have two sets of test data, NWEA's and NHEIAP's, to look at this year. The NHEIAP goal had been to increase the 3-year weighted average for students achieving at the basic, proficient, or advanced levels, to go up by 3%. Students succeeded in the area of mathematics by increasing by 5%. Additionally, progress in English increased 1% from 72 to 73%.

NWEA's compared success of freshmen in the spring of 2004 to the spring of 2005. He stated his feeling that those successes are striking, and there were a number of factors that resulted in an 11% increase in reading, 5% increase in math, and the 16% increase in language arts. "We made a strong efforts to get the students to take the test more seriously; followed up with students who were not in attendance on the day of the test; we also believe that we have strong teams in the FA who only get stronger as they work together; we also have a tighter curriculum that are paying benefits as well."

Principal George reported there were decreases in the number of students expelled and the percentage of students being expelled from the program. "We believe that is a positive step and we've seen that progress over the last 5 or 6 years." "We know that there are no kids that are throw-away kids and we're looking to make sure that we offer programs for all kids that are appropriate and work at changing behavior and expanding opportunities for our kids."

Mr. George also reported there was progress in the area of attendance. The School Board created a policy over year ago and staff worked very hard at implementing the policy. Over 18 absences and the reasons for those absences were going to be looking very carefully. Staff met with parents and students, made phone calls, and scheduled meetings in January and February with students and their parents. An appeal process was developed which students with legitimate absences did not have to go through. Last year, there were over 27 appeal hearings. Some had appeals approved. Three students who experienced academic success but poor attendance were allowed to attend summer school to make up their attendance. Nine students did not appeal or their appeals were denied. Dover High School moved from 91.7% attendance in 2004 to 93.2% in 2005. There were also fewer tardies and fewer dismissals this past year.

There was a 6% increase in class cuts. When looking at that area, Principal George shared his belief that the School Board's approval to change the student handbook that allows for students with five or more cuts in a single quarter to be suspended until admin meets with parent will work to lower this number in the upcoming school year.

Superintendent O'Connor noted that Mr. George will come before the Board in September to provide a more detailed analysis on the attendance policy and what transpired last year. The community needs to know the district is taking daily attendance very seriously.

C: TRANSPORTATION: Superintendent O'Connor explained a letter was received in June from a parent concerned about her child's safety going to and from school because of the proximity of sexual offenders living in neighborhoods where students walk to school. His stated his recommendation to the Board at that time was to take no action and that he would communicate to the parents the district's concerns and "offer suggestions for forming neighborhood groups, a neighborhood watch, or a group of parents that might get together and either car pool or walk kids in that neighborhood. However, Board members felt it was important enough to have a public discussion on this and that's where we are this evening."

Heather Orion-Hindle stated she did not feel right about just saying no without addressing the issue. "The letter was from a parent whose child was from Horne Street School. I took the sex offender list and the walker list from Horne Street School and put it on a map and gave myself a visual where the walkers are coming from and going to Horne Street School and where exactly the offenders live in relationship with these walkers and how they will be traveling to school in the morning home in the evening, the afternoon. With the exception of two, most pretty much

steer clear but there is one area that I think that this parent lives in...There are two offender's residences right in the area where a couple of children walk and I can see the concern there. However, additional busing is a bit tough because if we offer it to them, then we have to offer it to everyone in the city and with over 300 walkers in the city of Dover, it's just not economically feasible to do such a thing. But, there are some routes you can go. You can walk alternatively. Instead of going straight from A to B, you can go around the streets. I wish I could be more specific but I really don't want to open us up to any sort of litigation by certain groups. Instead of going directly down the street to school, perhaps you take a left and make sort of a square and get to school that way. Also, just some other things: you can make sure your child feels comfortable coming to you if someone's acted inappropriately with them regardless of who the person is. Try to stay away from that whole 'stranger, danger' ideology because oftentimes that can be very confusing. Kids might describe a stranger as mean or ugly and the stranger might be there to help them as opposed to hurt them,. Also, sex offenders oftentimes know their victims as opposed to being someone straight out of the blue. Check the sex offenders list. It's available on the state website. However, there are only 22 sex offenders on the list and there are 28,000 people who live in Dover. So, statistically, there's a lot more than 22 sex offenders who live in our city. And, it's great that we've identified 22 of them, but it's the devil you don't know that you should really watch out for. Also, people move. Just because they're on the list, address 'A' doesn't mean they're going to stay there during the year or all year. They also go to places like malls, and take public transportation, and go to the library, and all sorts of other things. Also, there's no way that we would ever be able to stop every single incidence as much as we would like to. It's just not going to happen. Statistically, one of every five girls and one out of every seven boys by the age of 18 is sexually assaulted. And, if you look at the number of kids we have in our school district, that's a lot of them. All of the statistics I gave you and tips are available on rain.org or the US Justice Department. If you truly have a problem and you feel that your child's commute to and from school is very dangerous, you can certainly take that up with the Superintendent, have a special address of a grievance and see where we can go with that."

D: MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS TO FACILITIES OVER SUMMER: Laurie Verville, Business Manager, reported on major improvements made at Dover High School during the summer:

- Reseal and Re-stripe Track
- Resurface Tennis Courts
- Installation of Irrigation at Bellamy Field
- Installation and Repair of Water Fountains
- Installation of Cameras
- Beginning Installation of Donated Marquee

E. ADJOURNMENT: At 8:00 p.m., Kara Winton moved, Heather Orion-Hindle seconded, to adjourn the workshop session. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Audra Lurvey, Secretary
Dover School Board
AL/kgb

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