

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, November 28, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

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

Also present were Brandon Foye, Ward 2 Member-Elect; Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Principals Chris George, Dover High School; Larry DeYoung, Dover Middle School, Barbara Szabunka, Horne Street School, Anna Parrill, Garrison Elementary School, and Anne Watson, Woodman Park School; Bailey Rigg, Network Manager; Joanne Eaton, Facilities Manager; Andrea Elliot, DHS Dean; Jackie Adams, Special Education Director; Martin Castle, Cindy Schram, Sally Thorn, Jennifer Dion, Mary Calhoun, Bette Chamberlain, Donna Frank, Helen Phoenix, Sue Daignault, Lisa Spurling, and Cori White, Intervention Specialists/Guidance Personnel; and Marcus Weisgerber, Fosters.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Carolyn Mebert led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C: CITIZENS' FORUM: No one addressed the Board.

D: BEHAVIOR SPECIALISTS' DUTIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Dr. O'Connor reviewed the Dover School District Vision Statement and Strategic Goals for 2005 through 2009, emphasizing Goal #4, "The Dover School District will promote a healthy and safe school climate." The Superintendent then introduced Jackie Adams, Director of Special Education, who explained that Behavior Specialists have taken the lead in helping the schools to achieve this goal. Through "immediate response", these specialists saved 358 hours of instructional time (53 days) in all three elementary schools by decreasing referrals from the '03-'04 to the '04-'05 school year. Ms. Adams then introduced Donna Frank-Berchulski, Behavior Specialist, who spoke about the procedures and successes they have experienced at Dover High and Middle Schools.

Some of the Behavior Specialists duties include Classroom Observations and meetings with teachers to work on strategies to manage challenging student behaviors in the classroom. Ms. Frank-Berchulski profiled a student who was sent to the intervention room 74 times during his freshman year. After working with the Behavior Specialist, he reduced his trips to 18 in his Sophomore year. By his junior year, he was in the intervention room only 6 times and made honor role for the first time in his life. Now in his senior year, he has not gone to the intervention room once. He seeks out the Behavior Specialists, sometimes as many as 2-3 times a day, to help him manage his behavior and provide him with the tools he needs to make necessary changes.

Many students are faced with incredible challenges beyond their academics. Ms. Frank-Berchulski stated her belief that it is important to find their strengths, build on them, share them with their teachers, and give teachers strategies to utilize that will encourage positive behavior from difficult students and ways to deescalate the negative behaviors once they are triggered and to get the student the help they need.

Throughout the past 4 years, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) have been helpful in developing strategies to decrease behavioral referrals and return more instructional time back to the teachers, students, and administrators. MS. Frank-Berchulski reviewed year

end statistics for the past 2 years and noted some areas increased while others decreased; However, the overall behavior referrals dropped last year by 316 at the high school and 106 at the middle school, even though both populations have increased. Ms. Frank-Berchulski then reviewed with the Board a “typical day” for the Behavior Specialist at Dover High School. They must take time for students that need to be seen on a regular basis, handle harassment and bullying situations, meet with various students, administrators, parents, and oftentimes, police officials, to resolve these issues. Additionally, they conduct legally mandated Functional Behavior Assessments.

The goals of the intervention specialists are to always find, and help others find, “the human that is behind the behavior.; Help students get beyond the behavior difficulties, give them the tools necessary to reach inside for their strengths, and build on them for success in their present and their future; Work with students, teachers, parents, and community resources to assist students in becoming respectful and responsible citizens; and keeping our students socially and emotionally healthy will assist in their academic success as well as bring them success beyond high school. Ms. Frank-Berchulski then introduced Horne Street School Behavior Specialist, Cori White.

Ms. White provided Board members with an overview of the elementary positive behavior support system, Skippyjon Jones. She noted that the primary goal of PBIS and behavior specialists is to create more instructional time, increase student on-task behavior, and teach appropriate behavior skills. She stated the behavior program at the elementary level incorporates all support systems, PBIS, Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA), classroom management, and crisis intervention. “In order for any school behavior system to work and be successful, there must be a buy-in for the system on all levels: administration, staff, parents, and children. It must be something that everyone can understand and identify with. It must be implemented on a consistent basis, and it should be exciting, fun, and produce desired results.” Ms. White then spoke about the elementary mascot, Skippyjon Jones, and how this children’s book character was incorporated into the PBIS at Horne Street School last school year. “Skippy is a character from a children’s book who has great adventures and very often has to stop, plan, and think about his actions. He is the driver in a district and elementary school-wide system that focuses on positive interventions to help students learn to make appropriate behavioral choices. All interventions are the passengers on the Skippyjon train. Teachers need to spend less time with disruptions and students need to be taught to manage their own behavior. Consequences are given, but the main goal is to teach new behaviors that can be universally used.”

Ms. White went on to explain that Skippyjon is being introduced at Woodman Park and Garrison Schools and now all K-4 graders will work with this mascot, reading books, writing songs, and making posters. She noted that the continuity of the Skippyjon Jones program in all aspects makes using him as the mascot a strong, positively based, proactive behavioral management system. It develops a common language for intervention in K-4th grade that will keep students on track when the students move on to the middle school. “This model can be used to implement plans that maintain appropriate staff behaviors and encourage growth in students and staff.”

Ms. White ended her presentation by noting that the behavior specialists guide the PBIS program and staff, community members, and students can see the effects of the program in the schools and feel the positive school climates.

Special Education Director, Jackie Adams, wrapped up the presentation by stating, "Their services are very cost effective. We've reduced the one-on-one aides. We continue to have no out-of-district placements at our elementary schools, other than court placements, which is unheard of, I think in this whole state, and, a lot of their services are Medicaid reimbursable."

Ms. Fisher asked for someone to explain the difference between Guidance Counselors and Behavior Specialists and why both are necessary in our elementary schools. Ms. Adams explained that Intervention Specialists attend to an approximate 5% of the student population acting out extreme behaviors (i.e. bullying, harassment) while Guidance Counselors perform more whole-group interventions, as well as presenting a full curriculum in the classrooms. "It is the type of student and the level of intervention versus the whole classroom."

Dorothea Hooper related her experience with students coming forward during expulsion hearings, and asked if they have been to see their Guidance Counselor, the answer is often no. She asked if these students worked with Behavior Specialists instead. Ms. Adams noted that those students work with BOTH, extensively, before being brought to expulsion hearings. She then asked how we can get those students to come into the counseling facility to use those "helps." Ms. Adams stated she was not convinced the information given by students during hearings "is accurate some of the time." She suggested that might be data that counselors should begin to collect.

E. DOVER HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAM: Andrea Elliot, Dover High School Dean of Instruction, introduced Sally Thorn, Guidance Director at Dover High School. Ms. Thorn then asked the entire Dover High School Guidance Department members to introduce themselves: Sally Thorn, Sue Daignault; Jennifer Dion, Martin Castle, Bette Chamberlain, and Cindy Schram.

Ms. Thorn described major activities performed by the high school Guidance Counselors. She explained that students are assigned to the same counselor for 4 years (or transfer to the career tech counselor for their junior and senior years). Each counselor works with approximately 275 students. Services are delivered in four different ways: Individual planning, responsive services to students in crisis, system support in consultation with faculty and administrators, and through guidance curriculum.

Ms. Thorn then gave a brief overview of year-long activities Guidance Counselors perform for students by grade: Freshmen are assisted with 9th grade transition programs. Counselors meet with all freshmen to develop 4-year plans. They also conduct small group counseling, conduct classroom presentations on depression and suicide, partner with New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) on presentation about planning to achieve goals, and meet with all 9th graders to plan for the next year's courses.

Sophomore Guidance Counselors partner with NHHEAF on presentations on academic and career planning, present the Bridges program's presentation about exploration of interests, skills, and goals, and meet with all 10th graders to plan for the next year's courses.

Junior Guidance Counselors prepare classroom presentations about the PSAT and SAT, produce an evening's presentation titled, "Life After School," and meet with all 11th graders to plan for the next year's courses with a focus on post-high school plans.

During students' senior year, Guidance Counselors make classroom presentations about post-high school plans (college, military, work), hold individual meetings with all seniors to assist with college applications or job searches, Present Financial Aid Night and host the Spring College Fair.

In addition, Ms. Thorn highlighted some of the Guidance Department's more recent initiatives and works in progress including: Expanding involvement in classroom curriculum (completed outline of American School Counseling Association standards, identified goals and task examples) and currently developing lesson plans; Communicate with parents and the community via Edline and through newsletters; Use technology creating PowerPoint presentations using data collection and analysis; Formulating department policies, procedures, and goals; Hold monthly case review meetings; Exploring ways to expand partnerships (Dover Coalition for Youth, NHHEAF, Junior Achievement); Looking at new ways to assess effectiveness of programs; and Reviewing all aspects of post-secondary planning to ensure that students are encouraged to pursue all educational options, creating a culture of reaching higher. Ms. Thorn then introduced Mr. Martin Castle who provided a brief overview of Edline, a resource for parents and the community to access a variety of important information including, career and self-assessment information, college information, school calendars, and school news.

Ms. Fisher asked whether parents had been provided with sufficient information to know how to access Edline. Technology Manager, Bailey Rigg, explained that this is the introductory year for Edline. He added that 80% of all teachers currently use Edline and over 1,500 parents have signed up this year alone.

Ms. Grady asked Ms. Thorn, "At what point in your program do you start checking students who may not have the necessary credits to graduate? We've had instances where a youngster gets to the senior year and he's missing an important credit – ½ credit of PE or he may not have understood the English credit and cannot graduate that particular year. When in the four years do you start tracking that student, or all of the students, so that doesn't happen to them or to the parent?" Ms. Thorn explained the four-year plan is reviewed and revised every year. In the spring of the junior year, a graduation requirement checklist is performed, and that is updated again in the fall of senior year. Ms. Grady asked Guidance to keep close tabs on all students to ensure they don't find themselves in this situation. She added that Board members had received a number of emails from irate parents asking, "Why is it now that we just understand that they're not going to graduate?" Ms. Thorn stated that is a goal they intend to work on. Andrea Elliot reminded Board members that counselors come into the high school every summer to review the student records and report cards. They look at the failures and then contact parents regarding summer school. Some parents "selectively" remember that they did not allow their student to attend summer school because they have other plans. Some students do not come back to redeem the credit during the summer, putting it off "until the next year." Ms. Elliot noted that when students are allowed to redeem credit outside of school for PE, it will be helpful. Ms. Thorn added that the PLATO recovery program is another way for students to recover credit.

Superintendent O'Connor requested the Chair call a two-minute break at 8:02. There was no objection. The meeting resumed at 8:05.

F: DRAFT ADMINISTRATORS' EVALUATION: Superintendent O'Connor introduced Principal Larry DeYoung to explain proposed changes to the Administrative Evaluation Form. A copy of

the previous year's form, approved by the Board on September 13, 2004, was provided to each member so they could compare the two documents.

Mr. DeYoung referenced some of the major changes being proposed by a review committee comprised of principals, deans, and administrators, for the 2005-06 evaluation tool: Defined four new rubrics to be used for rating (not meeting standards, meets standards, proficient, and distinguished); added a column for self-evaluation (in addition to the supervisor's evaluation); Proposed 2005-06 form will be used to evaluate deans; Condensed last year's form that included 10 dimensions to a new form that has 5 better-defined components; Additionally, a timeline has been added to the document.

Ms. Fisher asked the Superintendent to identify "who evaluates who" in the schools for administrators, excluding teachers. Dr. O'Connor stated that the form will be used to evaluate the entire administrative staff, including the Directors, Coordinators, Deans., and Assistant Principals. "At the high school, for example, I provide the evaluation for the Principal. I collaborate with the Principal on the Athletic Director. Mr. George's remaining staff, he uses this instrument with his Deans and Assistant Principals." Ms. Fisher then asked what would be used to evaluate the Special Education Department. Dr. O'Connor explained that he evaluates Ms. Adams using this instrument, but Ms. Adams would not use this document on any other staff member because they are not administrative. Instead, she would use a narrative more like the teacher evaluations for her staff.

Superintendent O'Connor reminded them that the draft Administrators' Evaluation Form will be on the December 12, 2005 regular meeting agenda for approval and that Mr. DeYoung will be available to answer any further questions at that time.

G. 2006/2007 BUDGET DISCUSSION: Superintendent O'Connor asked Board members to provide him with some guidelines for the development of the Superintendent's fiscal year 2006 budget. After some discussion, the consensus from the Board was that Superintendent O'Connor prepare three separate presentations for the Board:

1. Budget including Contractual Obligations only (as well as health care and utilities and the growth we are expecting)
2. Budget including Contractual Obligations and what Administrators feel they "MUST have" only
3. Budget including Contractual Obligations, Administrators' "MUST haves", and "What Administrators Would Really Like"

Dr. Mebert asked how contractual obligations would be displayed since the district is currently in negotiations with multiple unions. "The contractual obligations part of it would have to be in a couple of different forms?" The Superintendent indicated that was correct. There would be a starting point and an end point and several different scenarios will be developed. Dr. Mebert added, "We're also looking at trying to contain costs in health care...we're looking into different health care options so that would have to be figured into this as well." The Superintendent and Business Manager stated an RFP was issued and Wednesday is the deadline for providers to advise whether they will be responding to the RFP and December 21st is the deadline to submit their figures and proposals. Cost information will be available at that time.

Ms. Hooper asked whether the Superintendent knew exactly how much money the district would be getting from the state. Dr. O'Connor responded, "We know that we are looking at approximately \$5.1 million dollars which is identical adequacy funds that we received for this school year."

H ADJOURNMENT: At 8:28 p.m., Carolyn Mebert moved, Doris Grady seconded, to adjourn the workshop session. An oral **VOTE PASSED 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Audra Lurvey, Secretary
Dover School Board
AL/kgb
11/28/05