



**DOVER SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

## DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type:	Budget Workshop
Meeting Location:	City Council Chambers
Meeting Date:	<b>Monday, February 23, 2009</b>
Meeting Time:	<b>6:30 pm</b>

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, February 23, 2009, at 6:35 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's fiscal year 2010 budget.

**A. ROLL CALL:** Members present were Britt Ulinski Schuman, Dorothea Hooper, Carolyn Mebert, Audra Lurvey, Marjorie Fisher, Beth Setear, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor, Jean Briggs-Badger, CIA Director; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Dustin Gray, Principal GES; Larry DeYoung, Principal DMS; Deborah Migneault, Principal DHS; Malcolm Forsman, Principal HSS; Sandra Crosson, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Dave Tromba, Teacher; and Citizens.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Beth Setear led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**D. BUDGET DISCUSSION:** Dr. O'Connor advised there were areas of the budget he is monitoring closely. The first was Adequacy Aid. Originally, the District was told to expect to receive current funding levels (\$5.2M) for FY-2010. One and one-half weeks ago, the Governor's included \$6M in adequacy money for Dover in his budget. He cautioned there continues to be discussion in Concord and the final figures are still not clear.

The Superintendent also advised that, during a conference with NH Mayors held last Friday, Governor Lynch advised that the adequacy money could be diverted to cities and towns for municipal budgets.

Last week, Carol Shea Porters office met with a dozen Superintendents regarding stimulus money. Currently, it appears that Dover will receive an increase in Title I and IDEA Funds of \$1,632,000. The Superintendent noted that the stimulus money may come with strings attached. He added that also comes with "restrictions" and asked Jean Briggs-Badger to elaborate.

Ms. Briggs-Badger stated the additional stimulus funds (\$757,000 in Title I and \$875,000 in IDEA) is to be used to "supplement" not "supplant." All the rules in force for Title Programs and IDEA are still in place. Some of the uses being considered are professional development and intervention materials. Because the funds are guaranteed for only one year, they have decided to use the funds to sustain existing programs rather than hire staff for one-year only positions.

Ms. Grady asked the time frame in which the funds would be required to be spent. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated it is usually 15 months (by the end of June) but noted there is a movement afoot to extend the deadline to December 2010.



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Ms. Grady asked what would happen in January 2010 to the end of the year in June 2010 when the funds were expended. “Is that something the district is going to have to pay or will all of those positions be dropped at that point?” Ms. Briggs-Badger reiterated there were not plans to hire a lot of additional staff whose positions would expire with the end of the grant. They are looking at sustainability.

Dr. Mebert stated she had been looking at literacy software for little kids, suggested that having some of the literacy software and computer purchases would be “fabulous.” Sandra Crosson agreed and stated she is looking to replace computers for support students with disabilities and to purchase additional software using IDEA funds.

Ms. Crosson added that intervention programs are also being examined – literacy, math, social skills – for purchase using IDEA funds. She added that the District is allowed, by law, to use up to 15% of IDEA money for “coordinating early intervening services” – that would allow the District to put money into prevention efforts. That will be about \$150,000 of the IDEA money that we can use to support drug and alcohol counseling and mental health services, among other things. Ms. Crosson asked Board members to let them know what ideas they may have for using the money. They are looking at investments in people, skills, and materials, that will last beyond the grant. Dr. Mebert added there are a lot of software packages that support intervention in math, reading, and science. She noted there is also software for physical fitness (like Wii) that might be good choices.

The Superintendent then asked, “Where are we going?” He noted the Board will vote on the final budget on March 9<sup>th</sup>. He then recapped the following information for the community and the Board:

The 2008/2009 School Year Adopted Budget was \$42,978,335. The Superintendent’s 2009/2010 Proposed Budget was for \$44,633,221. A 2% increase under the tax cap equals \$833,769. That means the proposed budget of \$44,633,221, an increase of \$1,654,886 would need to be reduced by \$821,117 to meet the 2% tax cap formula.

Next, the Superintendent again provided three lists, Priority A, B, and C, of items the Board could consider cutting from the budget (with A cut first, B second, and C third). Dr. O’Connor reiterated that neither the Superintendent, School Board, nor a single administrator in the District recommends ANY of the changes listed.

Priority A – List One: (These positions are being moved from the General Fund to Title Funds, thus reducing the proposed general budget by \$154,545. That leaves \$679,224 remaining to be cut.)

- Classroom Reduction Teacher – GES \$50,765
  - Classroom Reduction Teacher – HSS \$51,890
  - Classroom Reduction Teacher – WPS \$51,890
- Total: \$154,545

Priority A – List Two:



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- Project MORE - \$8,690
  - Grade 5 Teacher- \$52,000 (Increase class sizes to approximately 24)
  - Grade 6 Teacher - \$52,000 (Increase class sizes to approximately 26)
  - Garrison Teacher – 1 FTE \$52,000 (Increase 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class to approx. 21)
  - Horne Teacher – 1 FTE \$52,000 (Increase 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class to approx. 21.2)
- Total: \$216,690

Priority A – List Three:

- Instrumental Music - \$85,647  
Elementary – 1 FTE
- DMS Band & Chorus - \$50,512
- DHS Marching Band \$2,460

Total: \$138,619

Priority A – List Four:

- DMS Soccer - \$6,035
- Paraprofessionals – 2 FTE \$36,000
- Teachers - \$208,000  
District Wide – 4 FTE
- Tuition Private Schools - \$50,000
- Salary Reduction - \$12,000  
Non-Union Personnel

Total: \$312,035

Priority -: List Five:

- NJROTC - \$58,993

Priority B - List One:

- Full-Day Kindergarten Paraprofessionals - \$42,275
- Full-Day Kindergarten Teachers - \$134,914
- Full-Day Related Arts \$46,213

Total: \$223,402

Priority B - List Two:

- Freshman Sports (All) - \$26,185
- Paraprofessionals – 10 FTE \$200,000
- High School Transportation \$243,986

Total: \$470,171

Priority C – List One:

- Advanced Placement Program - 1 FTE \$52,000
- Middle School \$213,125



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### Team Reduction – 4 Teachers

- ESOL Teacher \$76,687
  - Office Staff – 2 FTE \$85,332
- Total: \$427,144

Superintendent O'Connor then stated he was looking for input from the Board to reduce the budget by \$400K to \$500K this evening. He noted this would give the community time to hear what the Board plans to cut, if necessary, and allow them to voice their opinions and concerns. Dr. O'Connor asked the Board to consider the list of items presented and provide a straw vote to move the budget closer to the \$400K range.

Ms. Grady noted that during the last budget workshop, the Superintendent advised there would be an additional \$800,000 in adequacy money coming to the District. She noted that adequacy money is computed and distributed by law. "If something is in law, what's happened over the last week that Concord's saying we might not get it? Did or has the legislature passed a law that's changed the allotment in money in one week's time? Before we think that's not a possibility, I want someone to show me a signed paper that says 'Dover, NH is not going to get that million dollars'. As far as I'm concerned, if you go to the computer and it's saying we have it. Who took it away? How did we lose it and where did it go? I want somebody to tell me that."

Ms. Grady continued, in order to keep the budget at 2%, administrators developed the lists of cuts, by priority, with A being the first items to cut. He asked the Board to "leave the question of the additional \$800,000 adequacy money "in the air," and look at the lists provided.

Ms. Grady continued, stating that cutting the following items from the budget and picking and choosing other items to cut would reduce the budget by approximately \$785,000.

- \$154,545 – moving class reduction teachers to the federal payroll
- \$104,000 – eliminate a 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher
- \$104,000 – eliminate 2 FTE teachers - 1 at Garrison and 1 at Horne Street
- \$213,125 – Team Reduction (4 Teachers) at middle school

She added, "In doing that, a big possibility unless that \$800 floated out into the air somewhere, in pulling back the people we are looking at eliminating now - you get that adequacy money and there's that \$800K to pull them right back.. In that case music doesn't get hurt, busing doesn't get hurt, parents don't get charged extra money, and we leave the students alone and the children get the benefit of it in the end. So it could automatically become a swap which, as I looked at it, made sense."

Ms. Grady made a point to note she contacted the SAU and found that NJROTC will cost \$19,198.61 less this year than in last year's budget. Ms. Grady also stated she did not want to touch music, band, or sports. However, she reiterated her desire to consider



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the cuts as a possibility to be considered at the next budget meeting when questions about adequacy funds may be answered. Once again, she stated, because this is governed by law, "I want someone to show me a signed paper saying we won't get it."

Dr. O'Connor stated, "I have no idea how and why the Governor is looking at diverting adequacy money." The Superintendent then stated he had contacted NHSAA and asked Mark Joyce to contact Concord to get clarification of what is happening. Mr. Joyce will get back to the Superintendent on Tuesday or Wednesday and he will let the Board know what he says.

Dr. O'Connor asked the Board to look at items under Priority A and he recommended they consider cutting the following items:

- \$154,545 – moving class reduction teachers to the federal payroll
- \$216,690 – Delete Project MORE, Grade 5 & Grade 6 Teacher, One Garrison Teacher, and One Horne Teacher
- \$50,000 – Tuition Private Schools
- \$12,000 – Salary Reductions (Non-Union Personnel)

This would equal a savings of \$433,235. Ms. Fisher asked if Project MORE was the last summer reading program in the district. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated that was correct – it is a reading program for students moving from first to second grade.

Dorothea Hooper stated she did not want to "nickel and dime" the budget to make reductions. Realistically, she added, that will mean losing teachers. Ms. Hooper went on to say she is not willing to do away with arts programs, but she did favor charging a fee for full-day kindergarten since full-day is not required by law. Ms. Hooper also asked, why the District should not charge a reasonable fee to transport kids if it is not required by law.

Ms. Hooper stated she had heard it said that the Board did not support NJROTC and wanted the public to know that the District spent \$240,160.55 from 2006 through 2009. She added that she felt that was very expensive for the number of students the program served. She added that she could agree with class reduction teachers being moved to federal funds and eliminating two elementary school teachers due to lower enrollments if they should occur. However, she stated she was not willing to see music and band cut.

Audra Lurvey asked the Superintendent how he could cut \$50,000 from Private School Tuitions when the District is obliged to provide an education for all students. Dr. O'Connor noted the total budget for private school tuitions is \$1M and it was felt "we could live with" a \$50,000 cut.

Britt Unliski Schuman restated her concern about reducing the numbers of teachers in classrooms while putting more money into the Career Technical Center. Another



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concern was with the Biotechnology program –for a student actually taking this course in college, the cost would be just a little over \$1000 per credit. She questioned the wisdom of running the program for 10 students at the cost of almost \$40,000. She added, “Even if we had 16 students next year, we’re still spending twice the amount for those credits. I’m not sure that’s the best use of our money.” She also noted that she understood Somersworth is getting a biotech program there. She wondered why the District is spending this money if the students can go to Somersworth to take the same course.

Ms. Fisher asked the Superintendent how the course could be started in Somersworth if it was already being offered in Dover when Tri-City Agreement forbids two schools from offering the same program. Dr. O’Connor stated he was surprised to hear this, but noted it is possible the Somersworth course may have a different focus. Dr. O’Connor stated it will be interesting to see what the enrollments actually are when courses with less than 11 students ask for waivers. He cautioned that start-up costs will be high until the program is established.

Dorothea Hooper asked the Superintendent if he was requesting the Board come to a consensus this evening, He stated that was correct. Ms. Hooper then recommended a poll of the Board on agreement for three class reduction teachers being moved from local to federal funds in the amount of \$154,545. A straw vote indicated the Board was in favor by 5/2 (Mebert and Ulinski-Schuman opposed).

Ms. Grady once again questioned why the Board was entertaining these cuts without an answer about the additional \$800,000 in adequacy aid. Dr. O’Connor stated his concern that once an answer is received, there will be limited time to adjust the budget prior to the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Making these decisions now will help the Board if the adequacy money is not received. However, if the funds are received, these items can always be put back in to the budget.

Dorothea Hooper recommended a poll of the Board to cut Grade 5 & Grade 6 Teacher, One Garrison Teacher, and One Horne Teacher for a savings of \$208,000. A straw vote indicated the Board was in favor by 6/1 (Mebert opposed).

Dorothea Hooper recommended a poll of the Board to cut \$50,000 in Private Tuition and \$12,000 in non-union personnel salaries. A straw vote indicated the Board was in favor by 7/0.

Dorothea Hooper recommended a poll of the Board to cut NJROTC from the budget for \$58,993. A straw vote indicated the Board would not support this cut by 3/4 (Grady, Lurvey, Fisher, Setear opposed).

Ms. Fisher asked the Superintendent, if the Board stopped now, what would be the percentage increase in the budget. Dr. O’Connor stated it would be approximately 3%.



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Dr. Mebert recommended the Board charge fees for all-day kindergarten (\$500) and high school transportation (\$100). Dr. O'Connor stated he had been approached by citizens asking how the District could charge for "public" education and he is researching an answer to this question. Board members noted it would be a fee for full-day only when only half-day kindergarten is mandatory. Ms. Fisher added she was not ready to add fees tonight. Ms. Lurvey added she would consider charging a fee for transportation.

Ms. Grady asked for the total amount of cuts in which the Board indicated agreement so far. Laurie Verville stated the total amount of cuts the Board indicated they would support was \$424,545.

Ms. Fisher then asked Board members to indicate if they are interested in charging a fee for high school transportation. A straw vote indicated the Board would not support transportation fees by 3/4 (Grady, Fisher, Lurvey, Setear opposed).

Ms. Fisher then asked Board members to indicate if they are interested in charging a fee for full-day kindergarten. A straw vote indicated the Board would support kindergarten fees by 4/3 (Grady, Fisher, Setear opposed).

Ms. Grady stated she did not want to go any further with recommending cuts until "we hear from somebody in the state, a written paper, signed telling us we're not going to get the \$800,000."

(Dr. Mebert clarified that charging a \$500 full-day kindergarten fee would equate to \$2.78 per day for one student.)

Ms. Hooper noted the Board had only started a process that is necessary. These were only straw votes and these cuts may not be made. "Nothing is laid in stone here." She added she does not like to see teaching positions remain unfilled and for class sizes to grow, but the reality of dealing with the tax cap may mean larger class sizes.

Dr. Mebert added, "That would be shooting ourselves in the foot because we know the evidence up to third grade shows that larger class sizes are detrimental to the growth and development of the students that we're here to serve."

Beth Setear noted a dilemma in that stimulus money cannot be used to hire personnel. The Superintendent added, or to fund current personnel, and Ms. Fisher added, or new programs.

Ms. Ulinski Shuman cautioned everyone to remember, even if the District received the \$800K additional in adequacy money, there are still two contracts under negotiation in the District for which any cost increases have not been added into the budget.



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**F: ADJOURNMENT:** Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

BETH SETEAR, Secretary  
Dover School Board  
BS/kgb  
February 17, 2008