



DOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop
 Meeting Location: City Council Chambers
 Meeting Date: **Tuesday, February 2, 2010**
 Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Carolyn Mebert on Tuesday, February 2, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2011 budget.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Carolyn Mebert, Audra Lurvey, Beth Setear, Doris Grady, Kenneth Appel, Matt Mayberry, and Robert McCrory.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor, Laurie Verville, Business Administrator; Jean Briggs, CIA Director; Christopher Roberge, Technical Support Services Manager; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Sandi Crosson, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Christine Boston and Kimberly Lyndes, Co-Principals DMS; Deborah Migneault, Principal DHS; Malcolm Forsman, Principal HSS; Dustin Gray, GES Principal; Debra Hackett, DTU President; and Leslie Modica, *Foster's*

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Robert McCrory led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Dr. O'Connor provided a brief summary of the last meeting. The tax cap budget is dependent upon two items. First is net appropriations from last year were \$44,283,221. The tax cap is allowing the District budget to grow \$180,900. That brings the budget up to \$44,464,121.

The budget submitted last week was for \$45,540,693. If the District is to achieve a tax cap funded budget, the Board needs to reduce approximately \$1,100,000 from the budget the Superintendent presented last week. In addition, the District is still in the process of negotiating with three labor unions. Any dollar that is attributed to a salary increase for 2011 will need to be added to the \$1,100,000.

Last week, the Superintendent and Administrators presented a list of a number of potential cuts that would equate to approximately \$1.4 million. That list was provided as a starting point; something for the Board to think about.

The Superintendent then reviewed the cuts he had made prior to presenting the budget to the Board. He explained the items were up for discussion. If a Board member wished to reinstate any of them they could; it would just add to the \$1.1 million deficit for a corresponding value.

	<u>Amount</u>
Travel - Island program	\$400.00
Travel - ELL	\$500.00
Gifted and Talented Program - High School	\$6,070.00
Replace Athletic Sports Equipment	\$27,600.00

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Project MORE Program – 2 nd grade summer enrichment and remedial program	\$12,072.15
Supplies Health	\$264.00
Professional Development Training – a fee for SEC to run a workshop at UNH	\$15,000.00
Supplies Library	\$200.00
Reference Books Library	\$1,500.00
Electronic Media Supplies	\$1,000.00
Magazines Library Horne	\$336.00
Magazines Library High School	\$1,055.00
Supplies Audio Visual - All Schools	\$1,785.00
Replace Audio Equipment - High	\$600.00
Legal Fees (added to budget to cover fees associated with negotiating two union contracts)	(\$19,300.00)
Staff Development - SAU	\$2,000.00
Rental Unit - Horne	\$750.00
Printing - Horne	\$382.00
Technology PCs, Wireless, Routers, Services	\$64,000.00
Total Reductions Made by Superintendent	\$116,214.15

Dr. O'Connor then reviewed a list of items proposed by administrators as possible cuts. Dr. O'Connor stated he and his administrators prioritized the list as a priority 1, 2, or 3.

Legend: Priority 1 = first items to cut, Priority 2 = items they would like to keep, and Priority 3 = items for which administrators had a strong desire to retain.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Busing	\$ 250,000	High school level	1
Athletic Programs	\$ 100,000	Transportation and supplies	1
Curriculum Adoption	\$ 200,000	Partial reduction	2
DHS Summer School	\$ 17,000		1
Instrumental Music K-12	\$ 150,000	(2 positions)	2
Kindergarten Paraprofessionals	\$ 100,000	(7.5 positions)	3
Elementary Teacher	\$ 75,000	(1 position)	3
Career Technical Center	\$ 50,000	Biotech program	2

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DMS Family & Consumer Science	\$	20,000 (.5 position)	2
Special Education Placements	\$	75,000 Tuition	3
(Tuition for students who attend specialized schools. Overall elementary, middle and high school runs just above \$1,000,000. Ms. Crosson is hoping the total can be reduced by approx. one placement (\$75,000) but understanding that a family could move into the District at any time who may need this service.)			
DMS Team Reduction	\$	150,000 (2 positions)	2
DHS Teacher	\$	150,000 (2 positions)	3
Facility Improvements	\$	25,000	1
Facilities Management	\$	20,000 (Full time to year round)	1
Supplies	\$	28,000 General academic reduction (all levels)	1
Amount Required to Cut:	\$	1,410,000	

The items rated as 1 (first to cut) are items that are not “legally obligated.” They are not central to the District’s core mission. As an example, the Superintendent noted we are not required by law to offer high school transportation, nor are we required by law to offer an athletic program. We do so because both of these items are in the best interest of students. But, if it means cutting staff and personnel, the Superintendent is of the opinion the Board should seriously take a look at the items that are not required by law.

The Superintendent noted it is important for members of the community to watch the Board meetings and once decisions are being made for what to eliminate, he encourages parents to come out then to advocate for their kids. He then asked the Board to open for discussion.

Dr. Mebert asked about the \$64,000 cut shown by the Superintendent in technology. She noted the budget on page 81 shows \$71,664 for that item. Ms. Verville explained the figure on page 81 is the aggregate for the entire technology department. The \$64,000 is what the Superintendent was recommending to cut – that did not include benefits. (RECORD NOTE; \$64,000 includes cuts in New/Additional Desktop Tech equipment - \$50,000; New/Additional Tech Equipment, Wireless - \$2,000; Replace Tech Opts/Servers/Routers - \$2,000; and Information Management Services - \$10,000 listed on page 81 of the budget)

Matt Mayberry provided Board members with an alternative list of possible cuts to the budget. He noted that, although not legally obligated to provide certain items, he believes there are moral obligations. He suggested that removing busing would hurt the lower income students;



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Line 2222-110-140 DMS library aide (\$21,375)
 Line 2223-110-140 DHS A/V aide (\$30,568)
 Line 734-000-25 Desktop Equipment Adjust from \$100,000 to \$50,000

Total savings: \$ 1,251,980

After reviewing each item, Mr. Mayberry acknowledged he might learn that some of the items are contractually obligated and he asked for feedback. He also noted he would like to advocate strongly for the Firefighter/EMT Program because he feels it is important for our students, our community, and our future. Mr. Mayberry stated his job was trying to save as many positions as possible and not impact our students. He noted that some items would need to be diverted for just one year and stated, "If we all go along, we can all save some jobs."

Mr. Mayberry then asked the Superintendent to explain what equipment was covered by the \$40,000 for New/Additional RCTC (Regional Career Technical Center) Equipment and an additional \$5,000 for RCTC Software on page 26 of the budget. Mr. Amana explained the money would upgrade obsolete equipment. He gave examples: Auto Mechanics Program is very close to not being certified because they do not have the standard equipment that is now required (tire rotation and balancing equipment, garage door replacement, lifts that need to be repaired or replaced); Auto Body Shop Program upgrades in welding equipment and tools; construction technology area needs tools and upgrading of equipment such as saws and power tools; Woodworking power tools. These areas have been deficient for the past two to three years. Computer technology and interactive technology need upgrades as well.

Mr. Mayberry asked the Superintendent how many guidance were required at each school and if there was a state mandate or just an "operational guideline." Dr. O'Connor stated there is a state requirement for 1 to 500 at the elementary level; 1 to 400 at the middle school level; and 1 to 300 at the high school.

Mr. Mayberry asked the Superintendent to explain the duties of the Curriculum Task Force. Dr. O'Connor stated they work at identifying the District's core curriculum. Three different curriculums are under review/revision each year. One in the planning stage (to get ready for the curriculum), one at the design stage (actually working on redefining the curriculum and looking at resources to support the curriculum) and then, the implementation stage where each year we are generally implementing two major curriculums. Mr. Mayberry asked if an administrator would normally handle those duties and whether this person was a teacher or an administrator. Dr. O'Connor explained the task force is a group made up of teachers in the District led by an administrator (the Curriculum Coordinator). The Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Coordinator works with team leaders and teachers at all levels in looking at the curriculum. Mr. Mayberry noted that page 50 of the budget includes an item for a curriculum task force coordinator (page 50) costing \$18,000 and noted when benefits are added in, it will be up towards \$20,000. Dr. O'Connor explained this does not represent an individual; rather, it is the



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stipend paid to the up to 20 or more teachers who participate on the curriculum task force and are involved in curriculum development.

Mr. Mayberry referenced page 47 of the budget – the last three items, salaries for academic coordinators (AC's) in music, art, and at Dover Middle and High School, totals \$48,700. Dr. O'Connor stated these positions are contractually obligated. These are stipends paid in addition to the teacher salaries in accordance with their contract.

Mr. Mayberry asked how many librarians were in each school. Dr. O'Connor stated there was one in each school. There are also two aides, one at DMS and one at DHS. Mr. Mayberry asked whether it had been considered to get volunteers to work with the librarians as aides. Dr. O'Connor indicated while that was very viable at the elementary school level. There is a high level of parent volunteers but, that level of interest wanes as you move up to middle and high school. By that time, there are fewer volunteers. The problem with volunteers in any situation like this is consistency. They need someone there every day. This becomes a management challenge for the librarians. Mr. Mayberry noted that two of the librarians make \$65,000 a year. Dr. O'Connor stated that was actually less than other school districts in the area. "Our salaries are about at the mid-range for the majority of our teachers in the District." Dr. Mebert asked how long our librarians had been working in the District. Dr. O'Connor stated there is one new librarian (2 or 3 years) but the other four have been with us for many years and are at the top end of the pay scale. Mr. Mayberry stated his belief that in today's economy, their salary was "pretty good, especially when we're looking at, in my opinion, the biotech program at the CTC or two library aides." Dr. O'Connor reminded Mr. Amara was not eliminating all funds for the biotech program. Rather, he offered a reduction because he thought he could cover the program in other ways.

Mr. Mayberry asked to look at page 67 of the budget, and questioned noontime supervisors – the cost is \$50,000 a year to watch children in the playground. Dr. O'Connor noted that was correct. They are paid \$10/hour to watch children on the playground. "You cannot send 300 students out to play without adult supervision; you have contracts that provide duty-free lunch for your professional staff. We need people out there to help supervise."

Mr. Mayberry reiterated, "In my cuts, I guess I'm speaking to educators and parents – we have a choice – either cut personnel or we defer some programs. I've offered you a plan B, at \$1.3 million, that keeps busing, that keeps sports; it keeps a lot of things we like. It's not and/or; it's just part of the discussion. I won't tell kids they have to hitchhike to school. It's not going to happen. We do have an alternative. So the headlines we saw last week, there is a plan B that is viable. So I hope the unions take heed, because we're trying. You all better be prepared to try, too.

Robert McCrory asked what line item he could reference to zero in on the \$64,000 reduction in technology made by the Superintendent. Ms. Verville referred to page 81 of the budget and



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explained that the \$64,000 includes reductions in New/Additional Desktop Tech equipment - \$50,000; New/Additional Tech Equipment, Wireless - \$2,000; Replace Tech Opts/Servers/Routers - \$2,000; and Information Management Services - \$10,000.

Robert McCrory moved to accept the Superintendent's proposed reduction and deferring technology by \$64,000 in those budget line item numbers on page 81, seconded for discussion by Audra Lurvey.

Dr. Mebert asked what the \$64,000 would provide the District in technology or, what we would not get by eliminating the \$64,000. Dr. O'Connor stated the technology budget, overall, is approximately \$614,000. That does not include \$175,000 in the curriculum adoption which is separate. Of that \$614,000, approximately \$400,000 is attributed to salaries and benefits for the tech staff. Basically, the operating budget is approximately \$215,000. Dr. O'Connor then referred the question to Chris Roberge, Technical Support Services Manager.

Mr. Roberge stated his directive when he came to the District was to make the District's technology "go faster." He proceeded to provide an overview many of the upgrades made in the technology infrastructure over the past three years and how those upgrades have increased the District's access and capacity. He expressed his concerns that deeper cuts in the technology budget will mean fewer computers to replace obsolete systems in the schools, the inability to upgrade network servers and infrastructure, and will just delay the inevitable. His belief is that it should be a "constantly evolving thing."

Ms. Lurvey asked how a reduction in technology funds might influence curriculum adoptions. Dr. O'Connor noted the budget contains a \$175,000 request for technology to support our language arts program. There have been some, not all, curriculum adoptions that contained a technology component. Some of the technology, however, is so old that it does not work on the upgraded computers and noted, "We're constantly playing catch-up with technology." Mr. Roberge added, "The PC's get faster, the software has to move with it...there will come a time when the system is not working at all anymore. The original impetus behind the budget increase in the first place (in last year's budget) was to prevent that from happening. Now it feels like it's going back to running the risk of letting that happen."

Dr. Mebert asked Mr. Roberge the status of the middle school lab. She noted she participated in a training program in which she had participated that was not successful. "We were trying to connect to the internet, it wasn't happening, it was happening with some of the computers and not all of the computers, and it was very frustrating." Mr. Roberge explained that was a "content filter issue where we did not know ahead of time they were coming, that they were going to need to get to this certain web site. Our content filters, which have to be there, were blocking the site. The labs at the middle school, there are two of them, are running fine and have been running fine all year."



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Kenneth Appel voiced his opinion on a tax cap budget: “I will say that since law requires that we approve a tax cap budget, I will vote the tax cap budget. On the other hand, I consider the budget that I will be voting for as the tax cap budget plus appropriate supplements to run the schools. My feeling is, if we as the citizenry cannot persuade the City Council to override the tax cap, we will be doing irrevocable damage. I will try to explain that in a little more detail.”

“I understand both the sincerity of the Superintendent and Matt’s sincerity in making a tax cap budget. There’s no question that we are required by law to make one. I want to detail what I consider absolute destructiveness of a tax cap budget. Matt’s point is that, yes, we can get through another year by deferring things. If I don’t live to be 78, I could be perfectly happy seeing that. But a year from now, we are going to have deferred items, greater expenses because most of our expenses go up from year to year, and more losses of the type of faculty members who decide, ‘This is not a school system I can survive in. Exeter will pay me \$5,000 a year in increased salary to go there.’ “

“So what are we going to be getting? We’re going to be getting a school system to which our citizens, if they have the option, will not send their children. So who are we going to be educating? We will be educating only those people who can’t afford to leave the system and those are clearly the most expensive people to educate, and we will be in disaster(ous) circumstance.”

Mr. Appel then cited an example of our school’s failure in the mathematics program: “We have a dysfunctional interchange between fourth and fifth grades. There is now an attempt to provide an eights grade curriculum. Going from the mathematics program in the first four grades to the mathematics program in the fifth grade, is basically throwing out all the innovation in the first four grades and going to a different system in the fifth grade. I have been attending the meetings of the committee that’s been trying to address this problem. There is no way we can provide decent education mathematically for our students without getting a consistent system through twelve grades.”

Dr. Mebert stated she had been on the Curriculum Council when a new math curriculum was adopted that was “allegedly” going to address that issue. Mr. Appel explained, “In the first four grades a new curriculum was put in. That curriculum was the kind of curriculum that was meant to lead into a different middle school curriculum. You put in, what I personally consider, a rather good curriculum, in the first four grades with no change in the middle school. That really hurts students’ progress through the middle school because all of a sudden, the things that they’ve been taught in the first four grades are not the way we do things in the middle school.”

“The problem that I think is trying to be addressed is how to bring children from first grade through high school with some sort of consistency. I will be the last in the world to defend text book publishers...But, if we don’t do something, we are not fulfilling our responsibilities for our students. I think that what’s happening nationally says that if you don’t do something for kids in



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the first few years of their education, then they may be just permanently educationally crippled. Every time we put something off, some kids may go for another year or two with a dysfunctional system. Some of them are being permanently damaged, so I think that every one of the cuts that everybody proposed is well meaning; an attempt to solve an insolvable problem of dealing with a tax cap that is unreasonable and unrealistic. So, yes, I will vote for such a budget because I want to look at what I consider the real budget, which I think the citizens have got to inform the City Council that they've got to pass by overriding the tax cap. I'm not going to debate which of these ridiculous cuts we should make. I think that all the things in the budget that I can see are necessary. I think the addition being proposed in terms of the firefighter's curriculum...are fine. There is no way that we can educate our children at a level that I would consider anywhere near acceptable without these things. While I don't query any sincerity, we're in a useless game which we've got to play by law, but I don't want anybody, especially the people on the City Council, to think that the budget that we submit for the tax cap is a budget we have any confidence will do anything to keep our schools functioning." Dr. Mebert thanked Mr. Appel and added, "I think we said the same last year when we were doing the budget, when we actually had a little more 'wiggle room,' but at one point it was, "Dr. O'Connor, do what you have to do, and you have a final figure, let's go with that."

Beth Setear asked a clarifying question. In the three sheets passed out this evening, in the page of reductions that the Superintendent made prior to his presentation, it says that the Superintendent's budget is \$46,823,244. In the presentation of the Superintendent's budget last week was \$45,540,693. Dr. O'Connor stated that the \$45 million budget is the correct figure. Ms. Setear then stated, "Which means we actually have to reduce your presentation budget by \$1,076,000 instead of a \$1,400,000." Dr. O'Connor agreed – "I mentioned \$1,400,000 as an example if you were to add salary increases to any of the unions, then we would be looking at increases of \$155,000 on up."

Doris Grady noted: "I'm not sure if everybody is aware that even whatever we come up with for the budget, we do not have the final say. We can come in with a budget above the spending cap, or we can come in with a budget below the spending cap. It goes to the Council and they're going to have the final say. I've been on the Board for many years when they've sent it back and told us to cut \$1,000,000 off it or with they've sent it back and said to cut another \$500,000. To me, tonight, I just kind of felt that it was important that everybody read it, come in with their questions and get answers from Dr. O'Connor. But I feel like there's a missing link. We're having a meeting a week from tomorrow night with the Joint Fiscal Committee with the City Council. For us developing this budget, that is the most important fact. We need to know the true fiscal standing of this City. We're assuming what the fiscal standing is, but I think the finance director has to present that to us at that joint meeting. This will then allow us to know where we stand in addressing the spending cap. The City Manager and the Council have to make it known if they're going to override the spending cap and by approximately what percentage. That's happened before, I believe last year...we stayed within that, but they overrode it. If this is the case, I think at the meeting a week from tomorrow night, they need to



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give us that same privilege and allow us to increase over the spending cap. Actually, tonight we can talk about and discuss figures, but without the above information, we can accomplish very little.” She added that information could be provided and items discussed this evening so the Board can be aware of their choices to cut but she felt the first meeting night is difficult.

“Personally, I’m going to sit here, and I am not going to vote for things that are going to affect the kids. If there are other places in the budget we can cut, that’s where my votes will be ‘yes,’ and if it affects kids, I will say ‘no.’” Ms. Grady recommended Board members take the information home with them, get information from the fiscal committee, and then make decisions.

Dr. Mebert recognized there was a motion on the floor and called for a vote (Mr. McCrory’s motion to accept the Superintendent’s proposed reduction and deferring technology by \$64,000 in those budget line item numbers on page 81, seconded for discussion by Audra Lurvey.) Dr. O’Connor clarified, that cut was one of many he had cut from the budget prior to his presentation so it is already not in the budget. Mr. McCrory withdrew his motion. There was no objection.

Mr. McCrory moved to add back into the budget the funds for Gifted and Talented Programs and Project MORE. Audra Lurvey seconded for discussion.

Mr. Mayberry suggested that Board members “reflect on these cuts” and ideas and then make decisions. Dr. Mebert stated it would be helpful to know what these two programs are so members know what they would be voting on. Dr. O’Connor asked Ms. Briggs Badger to provide a brief explanation of Project MORE. Ms. Briggs-Badger explained that Project MORE has been locally funded by the District for at least the past twenty-five years. This is a five-week summer program for students entering second grade. Students are selected by need. Usually 30 to 40 students participate from all three elementary schools and they attend four mornings for remediation in reading. The purpose of the program is to help those students who did not get their reading skills “shored up” It is felt that this is a very critical time for an intervention.

Ms. Briggs-Badger also noted there is a federally funded summer program. Only one elementary school has students who are eligible for the Title I funds, Woodman Park. Cutting Project MORE would mean students at Garrison and Horne Street would not be eligible for a remedial reading program during the summer.

Beth Setear asked if Project MORE student were identified as special education. Ms Briggs-Badger stated students who participate are both identified and not identified. Ms. Setear asked if there was any data available to show this program was making a difference for those students in the second grade. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated that students are given the PAL’s test and she felt these students definitely benefitted from the program – even for maintenance of skills so they enter the second grade more secure in their skills. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated they do see steady gains and NECAP scores indicate the District is going in an upward motion in reading



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skills. “We are feeling that what we are doing through language arts, what we’re doing in the District, through professional development, through summer programs” is helping our students.

Ms. Briggs-Badger then addressed \$18,000 in the budget for the Curriculum Task Force. She stated it is not to pay the task force. Rather it is money to be used for curriculum work over the summer, outside the teacher contract. She stated that the work done outside of the contract for the school year is critical for the content and the quality of what we do with our children.

Matt Mayberry asked, “You said the \$18,000 is to pay teachers to further their own education within their own jobs, correct?” Ms. Briggs-Badger clarified it is money for curriculum work, not to further the teachers own education. The work is done for the District or because of state mandates that we have high quality curriculum to meet their standards. We need teachers with specialists to review those Grade Level Expectations and “...flesh them out into their curriculum that they’re going to be teaching and making sure we give our students the best education possible; getting ready for the NECAP, getting ready for college, get them for the advanced placement.” Teachers are compensated for their time to acknowledge the hundreds of hours they put in – by contract they get \$23.50 an hour doing curriculum work. This work is done during the summer or outside their contract day. Mr. Mayberry noted the teachers are being paid to remain current in their job and within state mandates. He added that he is required to take a number of credit hours each year to maintain current in his job for which he is not compensated. He understood that was part of his job when he “...took it on. I don’t understand why we’re paying \$18,000 when it’s for educators to remain current with state mandates. It’s part of their job.”

Ms. Briggs-Badger clarified that when teachers are asked to take professional development to be current in their jobs, they are paid at a training rate to participate in the trainings to keep their certification. Those teachers being trained receive \$13.00 an hour. If teachers are creating curriculum, doing standards based work, the rate is \$23.50 per hour.

Audra Lurvey asked what would happen if the \$18,000 was eliminated for the curriculum work. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated that she was not sure because this has been a long-standing practice. By getting teachers involved in the creation of curriculum has many benefits including enriching their content, bringing them together strengthens their collegiality and vests them in the program.

Beth Setear thanked Matt Mayberry for preparing his list of proposed cuts to the budget for the Board to consider. She then asked what would be the result if all new curriculum was deferred for one year. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated the Superintendent’s budget contained a 50% cut in curriculum implementation. Dr. O’Connor asked ms. Briggs-Badger to address both a 50% cut and Mr. Mayberry’s suggestion of deferring all implementation for one year. Ms. Briggs-Badger explained, “If you want high quality content, you need to be able to provide it through the curriculum...We have a lot of ground to make-up in Dover...Curriculum comes in a seven-year



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cycle and we have the task force that oversees curriculum adoption. Last year, we had an enormous event occur in Dover when DGR (Dover's Growing Readers) was implemented. That was three years in the preparation and making...When that was done, reading and writing had been split. The writing curriculum came down on its own and as a part of that, the high school had a small, token piece of curriculum with the writing five years ago. It was senior English electives only. Other than that, the high school missed out on DGR. It was a K-8 adoption. When we made the request, we looked at bringing the English Department, 9 through 12, on and I have been working with the AC...to look at the tests, look at the materials, and get them up to the state standards and up to the competency work they worked so hard in creating. Now the curriculum needs to match that vision that they had, and it doesn't. That request was \$75,000." She stated the request also included \$40,000 to expand and refine intervention programs with a concentration on secondary education; \$18,000 for Benchmark Assessment Kits that is an informal reading assessment that is used in tandem with DGR; \$10,000 for guided reading resources, leveled-readers, to provide differentiated reading in the classrooms; \$12,000 for writing materials to support the 6-traits; science program materials which need to be replenished; and math consumables for K-4 Everyday Math. The last item in the request is for technology. \$175,000 is for smart boards, computers, and laptops to start integrating technology into the reading and writing curriculums.

Mr. McCrory asked what percentage of the curriculum development budget was for elementary and high school. Ms. Briggs-Badger indicated about 33% of the money was for the high school level.

Ms. Grady asked, "I don't mean to be insulting. I just keep hearing the word 'intervention...What is wrong? Right here in the City of Dover, over the past years we put all kinds of money into new, innovative programs. We had the regular class size, we cut the class size back to think that would help the students. Then we started giving the teachers what we call 'aides in the classroom.' ...Then, we started with part time kindergarten thinking that would develop the program better for kids. Then we spent more money and went to kindergarten full time. We've increased our preschool program from originally 4 students to about 70 students. We've done professional development with Tufts, Leslie, and with all the different reading programs. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and, five years, we can't get out of 'needs improvement.' ...How much money can you keep spending and still have to intervene? If you go to the state NECAPS, it's not only here. K through 4 seems to hold their own. Then you'll notice that the percentages drop from 4 to 12...The question is, we talk about spending money. But in spending the money, I think we also need to figure out how to get the results. I just wondered if time spent on eliminating what's not working and use that money to look at what will work...it blows my mind that we keep trying and trying and we can't get out of it."

Ms. Briggs-Badger stated there is no easy answer. The reason we are a District in Need of Improvement is based on one sub-group, special education students. That is not unlike other cities across the country. Ms. Crosson is looking very closely through the Focused Monitoring



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process to find out what is working and why as well as what is not working and why. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated much professional development has taken place and this year the implementation year for the interventions.

Mr. Appel noted that many science teachers had left the District last year. Because new teachers need professional development, Mr. Appel asked how much it cost the District to “get new teachers up to the level of the teachers” who left. Ms. Briggs-Badger estimated the summer trainings Title II money is between \$30,000 and \$40,000. She noted, however, that was the cost to train all teachers, not only new teachers. She added that there is also a teacher induction program to mentor new teachers. This is year two of the program and outside personnel are paid through a grant to meet with teachers monthly and to visit classrooms one day a week.

Dr. Mebert noted the designation of a District in Need of Improvement is largely a result of the performance of the special education children on the NECAP and asked if the interventions being put into place to help those identified students were paid by federal or local money. Ms. Briggs-Badger stated it was a combination of both funding sources.

Matt Mayberry stated he would rather keep a teacher in the classroom than have the newest technology in their hands. “I think it’s the personal intervention that counts more than curriculum that we could, in my opinion, defer for one year.” Ms. Briggs-Badger noted, “If a teacher’s hands are tied, however, in the classroom, even though the student is bused there and you have an aide to help you, if you don’t have the high quality resources at your disposal, I think it limits the effectiveness of what they can provide.” Mr. Mayberry asked Dr. O’Connor where his cuts in administrative personnel were.

Dr. O’Connor reiterated that the list of proposed cuts is only being provided for Board members to have a discussion and make a decision. He then advised that in the past 7 to 8 years, 5 or 6 administrative positions have been cut from the District. He added the cuts have been made to the point that there is no school district of our size running with “as lean an administrative staff in the state of New Hampshire. So, there have been cuts made administratively. We’re still functioning; we’re still doing a reasonably good job, but we are stretched as well. You referenced earlier the amount of money we’re putting in to teachers doing the curriculum. We had full-time administrators doing that work at one time. Those have been eliminated. That’s where the cuts have come. That’s why we put money into bringing teachers in to support (curriculum). We don’t have the staff administratively to accomplish many of the things that good school districts are doing today.”

Mr. Mayberry recognized the Superintendent stating, “That’s a credit to your management style, that you’re able to do this. But we need to make those decisions. Is it children or is it things? You do an excellent job, but...I have been working two or three jobs trying to get my bills paid. My income dropped 75% so I know how hard it is. I lost my housing because of this. I know



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there are difficult decisions. And I do what I need to make it work, to get to a better economic time. The School District and your administrators and the teachers, and the unions have to make some hard decisions also. What do we need to do as a team to move forward to some, hopefully, better economic times? We're going to be meaner and leaner, and the children will be the last ones I will try to cut. No one is in here to hurt children, no one."

Mr. Appel added, "Our job is to turn out students; who have the capability to earn a good living. If we turn out students who can't convince employers they can read and write; that they can do those things that have to be done, we are violating our ethics as School Board members. After hearing all this, what I have to say is, even though I consider things like athletics as extremely good for students, both in terms of getting physical exercise and having the morale to go to school, if we had to make a cut, I think we have to look at what we would do to keep students viable employees. If we let their education go, we're violating the moral position that we need to be in as School Board members. I can't recommend a single one of these cuts. But, if we cut education, we're doing something that...let's say, the strongest and the financially best equipped of our students can overcome. But those students who don't have the money and don't have the background, that didn't get read to when they were 3 and 4 years old, are going to be down the tubes and I can't deal with that prospect. I can deal with people hating my guts for cutting the athletic program, I can deal with people hating my guts for cutting busing and maybe providing it only for those students who clearly can't afford to get to school. I can't see doing any of this. I can't see how 400 votes in an election, cast by people who didn't understand what they were getting into, can't be reversed by the City. We will be doing in the least able to overcome these difficulties and I can not see that as something moral to do. I can see obeying the law and basically giving the Council a phony budget which will conform to the tax cap; but our job is to convince the community that that would be a disaster."

Robert McCrory stated the athletic program, music, and the busing would be a false choice. He added, if the Board were only looking at the limited list, he felt some things were missing. He noted he would rather see staff development and the remainder of the curriculum development cut, because he felt might not pose additional burdens to students and their families, unlike eliminating busing. He referenced the social and morale they get from after school activities including athletics. He added his belief these programs are also beneficial in reducing the drop out rate. "I don't think we even need to get to that level if we expanded our horizons and focused in on some staff development." He referenced page 50, \$98,447 and below that, the curriculum development portion that is text books, \$115,000 and technology, \$175,000. "Instead of spending \$20,000 here and maybe getting into a few categories to get a lot of attention like music K through 12 on the list and busing, I'd like to spend some time there if we might." Dr. O'Connor stated the \$98,447 included a number of other things as well. "Turn to page 49 and you'll see staff development for the secretaries \$0, staff development substitutes, \$0. There is some tuition reimbursement – those are contractual obligations for our secretaries, para, and teachers. Then you have five staff development items that run three at \$1,000,



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\$11,000 at the high school and \$3,000 at them idle school. In terms of just staff development, you're looking at about \$18,000.

Mr. McCrory asked about filling vacant positions, specifically Dean of Curriculum at Dover Middle School for \$102,000. Dr. O'Connor stated that is not in the budget. Mr. McCrory stated he would like to put Project MORE and the late bus for homework help at Dover Middle School. Dr. Mebert asked if he wished to include Gifted and Talented as originally stated in his motion. Dr. O'Connor explained both items for Gifted and Talented students are high school related – Supplies, \$1,450 and Dues and Fees \$4,620. These items were recommended for deletion by the Superintendent. He asked Ms. Migneault to explain what that money would be spent on.

Ms. Migneault explained the monies were used to fund tuition for Project Search at UNH. Students travel to the university once a week or once a month for enrichment. The remaining money is used to transport those students to the university.

Dr. O'Connor reminded Mr. McCrory that his motion was to retain Project MORE and Gifted and Talented funds. If he wanted to amend the motion, that was his option. Mr. McCrory stated he would like to amend his motion to fund three items Project MORE, Gifted and Talented at the High School, and the Late Bus for estimated cost of \$14,000. He stated all three items affect students and they were not for much money. He felt much better sources to cut would possible be the big ticket items like technology or curriculum development.

Dr. O'Connor asked for a second to Mr. McCrory's motion to retain Project MORE in the budget. Audra Lurvey seconded for discussion. Beth Setear stated she would not support Project MORE because she has confidence that the new Dover Growing Readers (DGR) Program, adding, "That good tier one instruction is going to cause fewer and fewer students to require additional intervention. In my mind, that's what's been missing in Dover – that good classroom instruction – and with the new reading program, we'll get that. I think a greater percentage of our children will be on-target at the end of first grade and the need for Project MORE is going to diminish as children are working with the DGR program." Dr. Mebert called for a vote for all in favor of putting Project MORE back into the budget. An oral **VOTE FAILED 2/5** (Grady, Mayberry, Lurvey, Setear, Mebert opposed).

Mr. McCrory reiterated his motion to add Gifted and Talented funds back into the budget for Dover High School. Audra Lurvey seconded for discussion. Mr. McCrory explained he does not like the idea of only focusing on the students who need extra help. He would like to offer programs for people who are excited, already identified as talented, and cultivate that. Ms. Lurvey stated her belief that with all the changes that have been made in the last couple of years (Project Running Start) and other initiatives through the CTC, there are many more options for students to gain college credit and expand their horizons during their high school career. Dr. Mebert called for a vote to add Gifted and Talented Funds back into the budget. An oral **VOTE FAILED 1/6** (Appel, Mayberry, Grady, Lurvey, Mebert, and Setear opposed).



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Mr. McCrory moved that funds be added to the budget to fund a late bus at Dover Middle School to enable more students to have the opportunity to avail themselves to the many afternoon programs being offered. He added that he and Ken Appel had asked Laurie Verville to estimate the cost for a late bus and she advised it would be around \$14,000 per bus. Dr. O'Connor noted the late bus had been cut two years ago. Dr. Mebert questioned whether COAST, currently transporting students from Dover Middle School to the Teen Center, might be an option for students who wished to stay late. Dr. O'Connor indicated

Ms. Setear asked if a bus was made available, would there be a homework club for them to attend. Dr. O'Connor explained there were many reasons students might want to stay after school. Individual teacher assistance, sports, band, and chorus were a few of the reasons he gave. Additionally, homework help and after school interventions are being offered this year. However, those students are expected to provide their own transportation.

Mr. Appel added that this was another instance where enrichment is provided for those students who can afford to get home and not providing it for those people who cannot afford to get home. He added he did not think that was reasonable. Dr. O'Connor recommended the Board provide 2 late buses if they decided to offer any. He explained a single bus taking 30 students across the entire City of Dover would mean a very long time on the bus. That would mean the Board would be looking at approximately \$30,000 to provide two buses for the full year.

Mr. Mayberry made a motion to amend the original motion to increase the amount to \$30,000 for two buses. Mr. McCrory stated he would remove his motion.

Beth Setear asked if it would be possible to table this item to have some time to think about it since it wasn't in the budget or in any of the staff recommendations to be added to the budget. "It might be helpful for some of us to have the opportunity to think about that."

Kenneth Appel moved, Matt Mayberry seconded, to table this item. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0**.

Dr. Mebert asked if there might be an opportunity for students to take Wildcat to downtown and then COAST either North or South. Dr. O'Connor explained COAST travels primarily down the main arteries of the City. Students living in areas like County Farm Road would have to get off the bus probably at Week's Crossing and walk the remainder of the way. To expect middle added the only other option would be, if we m\new there would be a number of students accessing a bus on a regular basis, COAST might develop a route, but the Superintendent did not think they would do so to travel down the side streets for a few students each day. Dr. O'Connor added, "I think the motion for two is very legitimate; I think it's warranted, it's real, but it will add \$30,000 to this number." Ms. Lurvey asked the Superintendent to speak with Ms.



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Meffen at the middle school to provide attendance data because she provides an afterschool enrichment program also.

Dr. O'Connor suggested the Board consider his suggestion to take the list of the recommend cuts and decide if they want to keep it on the list for further discussion or if they want to take it off the list completely. "This will enable us to look at the remaining dollar value. Then I can work with my administrative staff to come up with some other ideas, also considering the ones that you have spoken to this evening – including Mr. Mayberry's list – to put together from this another where we may be able to come up with that \$1.1 million dollars in cuts."

Dr. Mebert asked why on page 77, the special education out-of-district transportation was showing a 178% increase and why the CTC transportation line item was showing a 118% increase. She also noted contracted service/other building maintenance on page 76 for \$23,000 was a 71.8% increase and asked for an explanation. Lastly, Dr. Mebert asked about items on page 71 – "This I really don't understand. Water increase 68%, over \$11,000 and for Dover High School sewer, 33% increase for a mere \$3,278. I have spoken with Dr. O'Connor earlier about how given that we have to hold to a 0% increase under the tax cap, any City services that we are dealing with should be held to a 0% increase as well... Our increased rent at the McConnell Center, something we never asked for, should be held at 0% as well. One last item is computer maintenance at the SAU for \$9,800 increase on page 61." Dr. O'Connor stated Ms. Verville will collect the information to explain those items and bring it to the meeting on Monday.

Ms. Verville indicated she could speak to the increase in Special Education out-of-district transportation. It is based upon Ms. Crosson's estimate for student's who are currently in placement and where they will attend school next year. There is an increase in elementary transportation, but there is a decline in the middle and high schools for an overall decline.

Dr. O'Connor asked Board members if they would review the administrator's list of proposed cuts and discuss them at the next meeting on February 8th. Mr. Mayberry asked the Board to consider incorporating items from the list he had provided to create a more comprehensive list for review at the next meeting. Dr. Mebert added that Board members should also review the entire budget.

Mr. Appel stated he would appreciate it if a distinction was made between those things they are transferring to a supplementary budget and those things they are eliminating entirely. He stated his belief that the Board should be preparing a supplementary budget at the same time as a tax cap budget for submission to the City Council. Dr. O'Connor stated, "I think everything should go into the supplemental budget." Dr. Mebert stated that was pretty much how it had been done in the past and that made sense.

Audra Lurvey would prefer not to combine Matt's list so she has an opportunity to review it separately. This would give her time to review the entire budget and see from where his



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suggestions came. Dr. O'Connor indicated he would have administrators continue with their list of proposed cut and will also review Mr. Mayberry's list in preparation for Monday's meeting.

Ms. Lurvey moved, Beth Setear seconded, to keep the lists separate until Monday when they can review them as a group. An oral **VOTE PASSED 4/3** (Mayberry, McCrory, and Grady opposed).

Ms. Grady asked the Superintendent to bring a prioritized list of cuts to the Board on Monday. Dr. O'Connor indicated he had provided a prioritized list at the beginning of this evening's meeting.

E: ADJOURNMENT: Audra Lurvey moved, Beth Setear seconded, to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0**.

Respectfully submitted,

BETH SETEAR, Secretary
Dover School Board
BS/kgb