

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING – APRIL 12, 2010

The Dover Girls Swim Team and coaches were honored as state champions.

Citizens Forum: Parents expressed the feeling that moving the band/chorus to afterschool at the middle school would kill the program. They pointed out the connection between the arts and higher test scores. Other parents and students expressed regret that the Family Consumer Science program was going to be cut.

Superintendent, Dr. O'Connor, noted in his report that students at the middle school had petitioned the board to save both the FCS program and the library aide in their school. He outlined the schedule for presenting the budget to the City Council, the public hearing, and the final approval date. Principal reports, always a part of the Superintendent's report, focused on activities of note. The high school discussed trips, honors, and upcoming concerts, the middle school discussed their restructuring plan to get out of their designation as a school in need of improvement and the transition activities involved, while the elementary schools announced visiting authors, Earth Day, PTA/PTO news, enrichment programs, book fairs, kindergarten screening, healthy snacks program and varied contests and concerts.

Committee reports included one by the student representative who had concerns about the wellness policy and its impact on fund raising. The Professional Development report discussed both the teacher workshop day held March 19th and the Early Release Day held March 13th. School Board member Ken Appel discussed the district concern over student obesity and bullying being addressed by staff. Mrs. Grady and Laurie Verville reported on the progress and finances of the Horne Street JBC (see Councilor Weston's report for details).

Policy discussions revolved around busing (should 1 ½ miles be changed to 1 mile?) and the purchase of energy saving equipment as well as a revised Wellness Policy (all passed).

The School Board appointed Audra Lurvey, Aviva Grasso, and Sarah Fuller to the newly formed JBC for the development of a media center at the McConnell building.

A district committee had been formed to develop a 5 year action plan for "mission and vision" that was to establish priorities for the years 2010 to 2015. Sub-committees will be working on more specific goals dealing with curriculum instruction, environment, and technology. It was noted that there would be budget constraints on these goals.

In May, the board will be looking at the reauthorization of safe streets. Mr. Boodey, Woodman Park Principal, identified "walking buses" (a parent walks a group of children to and from school) as an alternative to actual busing.

The board voted to approve a contract with the Dover Office Educators Association. There would be no raise for 09-10, a 3% raise in 10-11 (involving \$24,000 new money) and a 3% raise in 11-12 (involving \$25,000 new money).

Special Education Director, Sandy Crosson, reported on a Special Education Parent Survey that identified areas that the department handles well and areas where there could be some improvement. Parents felt they did well at IEP meetings but suggested improved communication about their child's progress. Members of the Special Ed/Title I committee working on this explained activities that are geared to reaching out to parents (targeting pre-school as well) to get them more involved. They even plan follow up home visits to help parents use activities with their children.

The Dover Kids Cabinet, focusing on how to get general information to parents, is asking to have certain information put on the district website (ex. after school programs, mental health/crisis support). This would be constantly updated.

The board was presented with a waiver list to run certain low enrolled classes under the board limit. The high school also identified changes in math and reading that would help identified students get closer to grade level.

The handbooks for the high school, alternative school, and adult education were approved. The middle school handbook was tabled until the next meeting. The DMS homework policy was questioned.

There will be an executive board meeting Thursday night to decide on participants on a search committee to select a new superintendent of schools. At this meeting, the board will also decide on the short list of candidates to present to this committee.

Superintendent O'Connor announced the need for a Redistricting Committee for 2010-2011 as students will need to be moved due to school renovations.

The last part of the meeting concerned bids and bills.