



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type:	Special Session #3
Meeting Location:	Superintendent's Conference Room
Meeting Date:	Monday, May 16, 2011
Meeting Time:	6:00 P.M.

A special session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Carolyn Mebert on Monday, May 16, 2011, at 6:04 p.m. in Superintendent's Conference Room for the purpose of discussing the School Board Goals.

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

Also present were; Superintendent Jean Briggs Badger; Gilford Superintendent Paul DeMinico, Human Resources Coordinator Robin LaFleur, and Foster's Reporter, Roni Reino.

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

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM (LIMITED TO AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): No one addressed the Board.

D. SCHOOL BOARD GOALS:

Superintendent Jean Briggs Badger introduced Dr. Paul DeMinico, Superintendent of Schools in Gilford, NH who was acting as facilitator for this meeting to discuss goals of the School Board for the upcoming year. His purpose was also to discuss accomplishments, disappointments, and concerns from the past year, as well as assessing the effectiveness of the team and their role as a School Board.

Dr. DeMinico stated that Dover has been a district with some challenges, and would most likely continue to have challenges. His expectations will be to not get into anything that will affect the reputation of any individuals within the Dover School District. He would like to look at successes and disappointments from the past year and relationships they have as a Board. In order to accomplish goals, they need to have communication and a good relationship.

Ground rules set by Dr. DeMinico for this meeting included:

- Transparent in discussion
- Speak respectfully
- Refrain in lengthy philosophical discussions on how you got to this point

Dr. DeMinico asked the Board to note three or four significant accomplishments of past school year. These included:

- Settlement of various labor agreements-Beth
- Math Curriculum adoption-Beth
- Evaluation of superintendent-Beth
- Renovation of HSS and McConnell Center Media Center-Beth
- Math Curriculum adoption-Matt
- Teacher contract settlement-Matt
- Media Access Center-Matt
- Hiring of fully engaged and proactive superintendent-Matt
- Raising level of community support and involvement-Ken



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- Clarifying major needs of schools-Ken
- DMS achieving AYP for reading-Audra
- Elementary progress with reading program-Audra
- Pleasant budget process-Audra
- New curriculum director and superintendent-Audra
- Continued success for the CTC-Audra
- New curriculum director and superintendent-Carolyn
- Achievement of CHPS (high performance school) for HSS
- NECAP results for reading (due to change in curriculum)-Carolyn
- Budget process-Carolyn
- A different process-Doris
- Outreach for superintendent to give the budget to different constituencies-Robert
- Responsiveness of the Board during the budget process-Robert
- Settlement of two contracts-Jean
- Safety Plan-Jean
- Primex security audit-Jean
- Open and transparent process of budget-Jean
- Community involvement of Budget-Jean
- Administration is team-like-Jean
- Math curriculum-Jean
- McConnell Media Center-Jean
- HSS renovation-Jean
- 2 schools made AYP in reading-Jean

Dr. DeMinico asked the Board to consider areas of disappointment from last year. These included:

- Votes are rushed at the end of School Board meetings-Robert
- Feeling of peer/clock pressure-Robert
- Media reports about staff—Robert
- Too many decisions made through email-Doris
- Board doesn't show cohesiveness-Doris
- Negative body language from other Board members-Doris
- There is an outside perception that the Board is not working as a group-Doris
- There is too much attention to the clock-Doris
- Budget issues-Doris
- Lack of cohesiveness-Carolyn
- Summer issue where emails were sent to Fosters-Carolyn
- Great momentum with programs (CTC, Math), but lack of funds-Carolyn
- Division of members of School Board-Audra
- There are many technology needs, but prohibited by cost-Carolyn
- State budget uncertainty-Audra
- Delay of high school renovation-Audra
- Lack of state funding-Ken



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- External pressures-Ken
- CTC program lack of funding-Matt
- Too many meetings, lack of meeting consolidation, much better now though-Matt
- Lack of substantial forward progress, everything takes much longer in process-Matt
- Continued DINI status-Beth
- Poor high school results-Beth
- Lack of funding for necessary budget items-Beth
- 3rd contract failed-Jean
- Budget uncertainty, RIF's-Jean
- Short staffed in SAU office-Jean
- Not enough technology resources related to 21th century learning vision-Jean

Dr. DeMinico recommended a workshop for the School Board on roles and responsibilities that take place at a later date. He felt this would be a worthwhile exercise and has done many of these workshops for other districts.

Dr. DeMinico asked the Board what the most pressing challenges in the next 3-5 years.

- All funding-Matt
- Staff, board, and community's lack of understanding of the budget process in the City of Dover-Doris
 - Carolyn noted that there was a great deal of participation in this year's budget process by the communication. She also noted that the mayor mentioned several times throughout the process that city council only has bottom line authority.
 - Beth noted that once staff discovered where budget cuts would come from, students and parents also found out and became active in support for the budget. She was disappointed that staff discussed with students during class time instead of teaching.
 - Ken noted that emails he has received, don't show a realization of what is exactly happening with state and local funding.

Dr. DeMinico asked the Board what the community thinks is the most pressing challenges for the next 3-5 years.

- Taxes-Matt
- Education to be a priority-Beth
- Fire and police are priorities and then education-Doris
- The community is not coming out to support the budget, mostly school department supporters-Doris
- Parents would like reduced class size (primarily in early elementary classes)-Carolyn
- New math curriculum-Jean
- Last year, there was much discussion on band and chorus. This year the discussion is limited-Carolyn



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Dr. DeMinico asked what the most common concerns of teachers are.

- Diversity of needs of the students-Jean
- Limited resources-Jean
 - Dr. Deminico commented that the largest resource that is limited is time. There is not enough time in the school day or after school to get everything done.
- Union issues throughout the country-Audra
- Technology in the district, old equipment causing frustration-Carolyn
- Unhappy with amount of time and resources devoted to professional development-Ken
 - Audra commented that she had heard there were too many initiatives at one time
- Each person has his/her own agenda. Each teacher feels that something different is important-Doris

Dr. DeMinico asked what lessons were learned last year or should have been learned knowing what you know now.

- The enormous time commitment of being a school board member or of any high administrator position. Many times he has felt guilt over not being able to attend all meetings-Matt
- Narrow participation of the community. Of 30,000 people, only 1% participates and it is always the same people. He thought there would be more diverse opinions in the community-Matt
- Disappointed with the self preservation mode of people. Negotiators for contracts only seem to be interested in what affects them and not others who are not members of the committee-Matt
- Need to make an effort to be a more cooperative board, to listen to one another and accepts the viewpoints of others-Doris
- Opinions change-Doris
- Decisions should be given a proper amount of time before making them. Others should be listened to prior to making the decision-Doris
- Board members wear more than one hat-Doris
- Politics are an important part of obtaining what is needed-Doris
- There should be no texting at meetings-Doris
- Parliamentary rules should be used for a better meeting and a stronger group-Doris
- There should be caution and awareness regarding email-Audra
- There should be a distinction between micromanaging staff and supervisory role-Audra
 - Dr. DeMinico noted that the school board has one personnel role. They hire, support, and evaluate the superintendent only. They have no other personnel role by statute.
- Continue education of the public on the budget process-Audra
- Need to keep eyes on the prize (student achievement)-Jean
- Thanked the school board chairperson for her support during the first year-Jean
- City council members are partners in education. They should function as one body-Jean
- Realization that the community cares deeply about the children of the city-Jean



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- There is a huge time commitment for the position of superintendent and for the school board. People don't realize-Jean
- Board members individually bring so many different things to the table. Great benefit to the district, but get involved in many different levels. This leads to uncertainty as to what boundaries should be-Carolyn
- Doesn't feel that enough background and information to address issues is given at times. He is unsure how to predict things sometimes-Ken

Dr. DeMinico asked the Board to think about what they want to accomplish for the new school year. What would be the main focus for the next year?

- Evaluation of effectiveness of programs during times other than budget season-Audra
- Comprehensive data base on all students. Has been an ongoing goal for a few years-Carolyn
- Would like to forget "academic mumbo jumbo" statements. Would like to direct themselves to what they have and what they are accomplishing with what they have. What is the true direction of where the school board wants to go? Education is changing due to the economy-Doris
- Students are taken care of at the top and bottom. Sometimes kids in the middle are forgotten. They all need to be able and good citizens-Doris
 - Audra responded that this is differentiated instruction and that's part of what the Sped study did. Need better RTI.
 - Doris commented that \$5-\$6 million is spent on special education.
- Would like to have more effort placed in teaching students to read prior to high school. It seems students are identified too late for services to be provided-Carolyn
- Would like to see a shift in the school day. Middle and high students need more sleep and elementary students should go to school earlier. Realizes this is difficult due to work and athletic schedules. Also would like a longer academic year. The academic year was originally scheduled around the farming schedule-Matt
- Technology that works better-Beth
- Personalizing education for each student-Jean
- Revisit where money is being spent. There are still students who can't read or do math. We need to find out why students aren't succeeding after spending so much money.-Doris
- Studies should be conducted to determine if programs are working such as, "is the middle school way working?" "Should we go back to a junior high school method?", "Is block scheduling working?", and "What do we need to change?"-Doris
- The district could be coping with disaster in the next year. The district needs to find a way to keep that from happening, which could be very difficult-Ken

Dr. DeMinico stated that there are districts with which he has worked that have only one goal: How does the leadership team plan to increase student achievement in all areas? This goal is one that would be given to Jean and let her bring it to her leadership team.



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Dr. DeMinico asked the group what they can do as an individual to set the “norm” for a more effective board. How would the board increase effectiveness as a board?

- Need to be more patient. When he's not, people feel rushed, short changed-Matt
- Be prepared, read packet and obtain any needed background information-Audra
- Limit late votes so that they are not rushed and receive proper attention-Carolyn
- Be more patient, sometimes she has knowledge of the item and doesn't feel the need for extra discussion-Beth
- Would like to see everyone participate even though it takes longer and from everyone's opinions they can make a final vote-Doris
- Needs to learn to ask questions so that others don't feel that they are being attached-Robert
- There should be trust from the board. Would like to see the collective relationship develop as well as the individual relationships. Was hoping for a vote of 7/0 for the budget, although freedom of speech is a wonderful thing. Hopeful for a common vision-Jean

Dr. DeMinico stated that if they are honest in board interactions, public or private trust will come.

Last comments:

Doris made a copy of simple parliamentary procedures that she distributed to members of the board for their use.

Beth asked Dr. Deminico about process regarding motions during school board meetings. She explained the situation of the last meeting when Doris requested to make two additional motions under “School Board Matters of Interest”. Is it able to be added to the agenda if it is not posted? Dr. Deminico asked if any formal rules have been adopted regarding meetings. It was stated that Roberts Rules of Orders was adopted. He recommended that it be adopted with the chair having the ability to modify rules. Anyone can add anything to the agenda. If it is recognition of a student or teacher, it is fine. If it is discussing money, he urges the board to discuss it, but not take action on it. The public has not been warned that this will be on the agenda. Issues can be raised and added to the agenda, but if it is of greater importance, action should not be taken, so the community is warned of the item. The chair should be given flexibility of interpreting meeting rules.

Dr. Deminico made last remarks that the board wants to do the very best. He is heartened by the discussion, but only they can make it happen. There are good things going on and a solid superintendent in place. They have confidence in her ability and the support that is given to her will help the board accomplish what they would like to do.



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- E. **ADJOURNMENT:** Matt Mayberry moved, Audra Lurvey seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:15 P.M. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Setear, Secretary