



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type:	Budget Workshop Session #2
Meeting Location:	McConnell Center Media Access Room
Meeting Date:	Monday, February 6, 2012
Meeting Time:	6:30 pm

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Rocky D’Andrea on Monday, January 23, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. in the McConnell Center Media Access Room for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent’s proposed fiscal year 2013 budget.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Rocky D’Andrea, Betsey Andrews Parker, Amanda Russell, Doris Grady, Kathy Baker, Ken Appel, and Paul Butler.

Also present were Jean Briggs Badger, Superintendent; Michael Limanni, Business Administrator; Gary Tirone, CIA Director; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Sandi Crosson, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Michael McKenney and Kimberly Lyndes, Co-Principals, DMS; Christine Boston, Principal DHS; Malcolm Forsman, Principal HSS; Dustin Gray, Principal GES, Jim Amara, CTC Director, Deanna Strand, DALC Executive Director, Cmdr. Bill Tower, DMS School Counselor Fran Meffen, parents and citizens of Dover.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Paul Butler led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN’S FORUM: Fran Meffen, 16 Benjamin Way, spoke in support of meeting needs of all learners. As a school counselor, she has seen an increase in the number of students considering options of attending other high schools.

Kathryn Forbes, 115 Longhill Rd, spoke in support of Dover Adult Learning Center.

Tyler Anderson, 61 Park Street, spoke in support of Dover Adult Learning Center.

Suknah Ma, 7 Meadow Dr, spoke in support of Dover Adult Learning Center.

Kelly Lo, 10 Country Club Dr, spoke in support of Dover Adult Learning Center.

Dorothy Holmes, Morningside Dr, spoke in support of Dover Adult Learning Center.

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Mrs. Grady questioned the agenda that was distributed stating that citizen’s forum can only be on agenda items. The agenda that is posted on the city website is a different version. Ms. Briggs Badger responded by saying that the citizen’s forum is on the entire budget. The amended agenda listed specific items related to the budget so that administrators would be prepared to make clarifications on those items if necessary. The consensus of the School Board was that the budget discussion should be question and answer format.

Ms. Russell began the discussion with enrollment of the elementary and middle schools. She is concerned with the high enrollment figures for HSS for 3rd and 4th grades. She would like to see two additional teachers for those grades.

Mr. D’Andrea noted that standards say that grades K-2 should have no more than 25 students and grades 3-8 should have no more than 30 students.



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Ms. Russell asked the DMS Principals how reduced number of teachers would affect their schedule. Ms. Lyndes responded that there would be limited science experiments and woodshop activities, along with large class size. They are already working with fewer tutors and lost a reading specialist last year during the budget process. The reduction of teachers could lead to a loss of the team structure.

Ms. Russell also asked if Family Consumer Science is required in the middle school curriculum. State standards show that it should be part of a middle school curriculum. Ms. Lyndes responded that it was discussed very little when the position was eliminated in 2010, but curriculum has been embedded into science and health curriculum. Ms. Russell commented students should still be instructed on cooking, sewing and other life skill tasks that FCS teaches.

Mrs. Grady commented that she has heard that some middle school teacher's instructional period ends after lunch. Ms. Lyndes stated that there are some teachers who have a prep period after lunch and intervention duties, but this isn't true for everyone.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated that most of her email correspondence comments have been on class size. Parents would like to keep lower class size.

Mrs. Grady commented that class size is not usually known until October 1. If there are more than 500 students in a building, the state will usually give a waiver for an additional administrator. The numbers that are being reviewed now are not what they will be next year.

Ms. Briggs Badger stated that she believes that 60 students have been added this year to Dover's enrollment. She also commented that in the past, administrators have preferred to have a behavior specialist over an assistant principal.

Ms. Russell stated that she feels strongly that additional teachers are needed for grades 3 and 4 at Horne Street School. The numbers are too high a number to transition to Dover Middle School. She doesn't feel she can make a decision on budget cuts for the middle school without knowing how the cuts will affect the school.

Mr. D'Andrea stated that he could see eliminated a few positions at the middle school, but he would not want to see class size about 26. A class size of 29 or 30 would not be something that he would support.

Ms. Briggs Badger commented that the enrollment numbers were just given to Board members for information purposes. All current budget proposals maintain class size. The administration is not recommending increasing class size.

Dr. Butler asked what if it is known how class size affects students. Dr. Forsman stated that for the most part, quality of the teacher is the most important factor. Programs in the school district are also important.



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Dr. Appel stated that the lowest items on his priority list are debt service for the auditorium project and the social studies adoption.

Mrs. Grady stated that there have been many changes made and programs started. In the past, teachers had no aides in the classroom and high class numbers. She questioned if the district is doing any better now. She advocated for re-evaluating what the district provides and wondered if the district is doing better with the students than in previous years before all of the programs were started.

Ms. Andrews Parker commented that times were different years ago. There has been the addition of programs including No Child Left Behind, family integration was different, and special education services were not what they are today.

Mr. D'Andrea stated that some programs that have been added were mandated.

Mr. D'Andrea suggested they begin the process of going through recommended budget cuts.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked if students can pay COAST bus directly. She commented that if 400 students paid \$1.67 per day for 180 days, the district could receive \$120,000 to go toward the cost of bussing. This could be implemented as a bus pass type of system.

Dr. Butler stated that his feeling is that students should walk or ride bikes to school. Other than a financial benefit, this would also provide a health benefit. He would prefer that there be no bussing for high school. It would also provide a learning tool for students. They would need to be able to figure out travel routes and encourage them to think.

Ms. Russell opposed this view and is in support of bussing since many students live many miles away and there are multiple dangerous intersections and students would need to leave home before daybreak. It would be a safety issue for her.

Mr. Limanni added that next year the district is bringing back a bus that was missing this year. The only real savings would be about \$7,000 in fuel. The original amount listed for First Student was only an estimate. A new contract with First Student will need to be negotiated soon and might make a difference also.

Most of the savings from bussing would come from the elimination of the COAST bus.

Mrs. Grady commented that she is opposed to removing high school bussing.

Ms. Andrews Parker questioned if students could pay COAST directly and the district could keep First Student. Mr. Limanni responded that he would look into this option in more detail.



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Mrs. Grady asked if reservation of seats for students would be a possibility. Mr. Limanni responded that some of the elementary busses do this already. They are already experiencing overcrowding.

Ms. Baker asked if it would be possible to increase the radius of the walker area. Ms. Briggs Badger responded that she would look into the expansion of a "walker" area.

Dr. Appel asked if there is a fee system on the COAST, wouldn't there be a strong reaction. Mr. Limanni stated that there would be a fee across the board.

Dr. Butler asked about the status of seatbelts on school busses. Ms. Briggs Badger responded that there are seatbelts on them. Ms. Russell commented that her daughter was instructed by her bus driver not to wear seatbelts because it would be detrimental if there were an accident and the bus overturned.

The conversation changed to full day kindergarten. Ms. Russell is in favor of keeping full day kindergarten because she feels there too much curriculum for half day kindergarten.

Dr. Butler is in favor of ½ day kindergarten so that children will have time to play in the afternoon. He feels they would be able to catch up quickly in the early grades.

Ms. Andrews Parker agreed with Ms. Russell, adding that full day kindergarten provides more opportunity especially for at-risk students. It's a safe place for all children to be. She is also an advocate of job sharing among teachers so that there may be a possibility for students to attend either full day or ½ day kindergarten.

Mr. D'Andrea stated that he is also in agreement with keeping full day kindergarten. There is too much of a burden on parents already. This will be a hot topic with the community.

Ms. Russell stated that she doesn't believe that the district should go backwards, but if it did return to ½ day kindergarten, bussing would need to be provided.

Ms. Baker is in favor of full day kindergarten also and realizes there is a day care need for parents. She stated that the district has made progress in early reading and would hate to see it go backwards.

The discussion shifted to Freshman Academy needs. DHS Principal Christine Boston explained Freshman Academy. She stated it is a transition process for 8th grade students to high school. They try to replicate the middle school teaming approach. Teachers have common team time and a freshman seminar is integrated into classes. A reduction of one teacher would cost approximately \$55,000.

Mr. D'Andrea asked if losing one teacher would be the end of the program. Ms. Boston stated that the program could still exist.



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Mrs. Grady asked if the success over the past 10 years is able to be measured. Ms. Boston responded that there has not been a way to measure the success, since the existence of the academy has not been consistent over the 10 year period. She also noted that typically freshmen have higher disciplinary referrals. Mrs. Grady also asked if it is worth keeping. Ms. Boston stated there are a lot of good things that come out of the academy.

Ms. Andrews Parker and Ms. Baker agreed that they would be voting to eliminate this position.

Ms. Baker stated that she is opposed to anything that will jeopardize Dover Adult Learning Center continuing in Dover. She would be open to looking at alternative funding ways.

Mr. D'Andrea agreed stating that most of his communications from citizens are in favor of this program. He spoke with the Mayor who thought the city may be able to help with the funding of this program and advised Ms. Briggs Badger to speak with the City Manager.

Dr. Butler and Mrs. Grady both were opposed to cutting this program also.

Mrs. Grady reminded that Board that for every \$1 paid, the district receives \$6. She added that nothing else has been as successful in educating at-risk high school students.

Mr. Limanni stated that the district receives \$19,000 for administering the program and would not propose eliminating the use of district payroll or testing services.

Mrs. Grady added that the memorandum of understanding was signed in good faith and should be honored.

Mr. Limanni responded that the MOU could terminate with 90 days notice.

Mr. D'Andrea stated that the Board would try to find other ways to fund DALC funding.

Ms. Strand stated that of the \$214,000 in the general budget for DALC, \$39,000 is GED Options Education and \$17,000 is administrative costs, so the actually cost to the district is approximately \$135,000.

Special Education was the next topic of discussion.

Dr. Appel asked how much of the Special education has been increased. Ms. Crosson replied that very little discretionary spending is done in special education.

Dr. Appel clarified that he would like to know what changes had occurred over the years.

Ms. Crosson responded that ARRA was an extra program that allowed for purchase of technology, professional development, and extra staff for the short-term. Unfortunately, the staff was reduced at the end of the grant. There are many costs associated with IEP



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implementation. There has been an increase in the number of students with IEPs. There are more eligible students for more services and we can increase Medicaid revenue. The budget has been increased also because of an increase in students with more severe disabilities and out of district costs. All students have different needs and require different and more individualized services.

Mrs. Grady asked what the degree of disability for identified students is. Ms. Crosson responded that there is a wide range within all categories

Mrs. Grady asked what has been implemented by the Special Education department related to the recommendations from the two studies done last year that cost \$50,000. Ms. Crosson stated that she would be presenting information at the next School Board meeting on this subject. Ms. Crosson responded that many items have been addressed from the studies done. She now has a better idea of the Special Education budget.

Mrs. Grady questioned the increase of \$619,000 in next year's budget. Ms. Crosson commented that special education costs are approximately 16% of the budget which is well within the range for most comparable districts.

Ms. Crosson added that special education is a great program and is mandated until a student is 21 years old or until the student earns a high school diploma.

Ms. Andrews Parker commented that the value to the program is keeping the students local as much as possible. She asked Ms. Crosson to include in her next presentation how a student enters the system.

Mr. D'Andrea noted that questions will come from the public since special education costs are increasing and other costs are decreasing.

Ms. Briggs Badger clarified that the report that was presented on sped services from AEG was paid for out of the district in need of improvement funding and showed that the district is very lean in services.

Ms. Crosson added that even though a student earns a GED, they still are entitled to Special Education services because they didn't earn a regular diploma.

Mr. Limanni commended Ms. Crosson for budgeting as realistically as possible.

Ms. Baker recommended eliminating the NJROTC program from the budget. Even though this program has helped many students tremendously, it hasn't reached the standard of success put into place by the navy and now a second instructor needs to be added due to the addition of students from Portsmouth.

Ms. Andrews Parker agreed with Ms. Baker.



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Mrs. Grady stated that they have been talking with Barrington and Nottingham and the last Board voted to have two more years of the program. She noted that there had been a problem since guidance was instructing students not to register for NJROTC.

She continued to say that Somersworth High School is seeking access to Marshwood's higher level classes in exchange for sending CTC students to another school. Dover could lose students to Sanford because the cost is less to send there as opposed to sending to Dover.

CTC Director Jim Amara spoke on behalf of ROTC. Last fall he was asked to come up with a way to increase enrollment in the program. The solution that he came up with was a partnership with Portsmouth. He believes they will meet or exceed the 100 student requirement by next fall. There are currently 81 students enrolled in the program. In exchange for allowing Portsmouth students to participate in Dover's NJROTC program, Portsmouth will allow Dover students to attend some of their programs that Dover doesn't have including welding and TV production. Mr. Amara stated the navy will not pull the plug on NJROTC next year.

Ms. Baker asked how many students from Portsmouth currently are enrolled in Dover's NJROTC program. Mr. Amara responded that there are currently 15 students participating. Portsmouth students are happy to be enrolled in the program and enthusiastic about the opportunity. She also asked if there is a limit to the number of slots for Dover students in Portsmouth classes. Mr. Amara responded that Dover students can attend Portsmouth classes based on availability.

Mrs. Grady stated there are 19 Barrington student and 3 Nottingham students who are involved in NJROTC program. She is concerned that Dover may lose these students and their tuition if NJROTC is eliminated.

Ms. Russell is concerned that Dover is taking on a bigger financial burden than Portsmouth. She continued to say that it is not as important as bussing, DALC or kindergarten. "We are giving up too much to another community, and not getting enough in return". Ms. Russell continues to say that, "she would not find 4200 people who would give \$476 each to be able to keep everything on the list".

Mr. D'Andrea stated he is impressed with the outside the box thinking and that is the kind of thinking is needed in the district. He continued to say that the cost is high for the number of students who participate in the program.

Mrs. Grady determined the cost to be 1/10th of the cost of an AP course. An AP cost will be more than \$1,000.

The School Board polled each of the recommended cuts so that the superintendent would have direction for additional budget cuts to be made.



DOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Ms. Briggs Badger stressed that the budget is very lean and uncertain as to where cuts will be made, but administrators will do their best to made additional cuts to replace ones rejected by the Board.

The items listed below are unofficial cuts:

1. High School Transportation/180 day schedule	\$233,000	6/1 to keep
2. Full day kindergarten to ½ day	\$550,000	6/1 to keep
3. Freshman Academy-1 teacher	\$55,000	0/7 to keep
4. DALC and GED Options	\$214,486	7/0 to keep
5. DHS Extra curriculars	\$26,152	6/1 to keep
6. Literacy Interventionists	\$80,000	4/3 to keep
7. Curriculum Adoption	\$369,000	0/7 to keep
8. DMS library aide and DHS A/V aide	\$53,418	3/4 to keep
9. ROTC	\$107,156	2/5 to keep
10. DMS/DHS Athletic Transportation	\$40,000	4/3 to keep
11. Culinary Aide-DHS	\$16,000	1/6 to keep
12. ESOL Teacher	\$40,000	0/7 to keep
13. Intramurals	\$9,806	3/4 to keep
14. Debt Service-Auditorium	\$185,250	0/7 to keep
15. PD-Elem Schools	\$12,000	2/5 to keep
16. Library Supplies	\$15,000	0/7 to keep
17. DHS Gifted and Talented	\$5,000	1/6 to keep
18. CTC supplies, equip, software field trips	\$60,000	1/6 to keep
19. 3 classrooms of furniture for elem schools	\$24,000	0/7 to keep

Mr. Limanni tabulated the potential cut which totaled \$951,630, which left \$1,143,638 left to cut. Administrators were directed to see if additional cuts could be found within the budget to make up the difference.

Mrs. Grady commented that citizens are always welcome to speak on behalf of a program at citizen’s forum. Items can be re-visited since this is just a straw vote.

Ms. Russell asked the DMS Co-Principals to see if they could come up with a scenario that showed what the middle school would look like if there were 10 teachers in grades 7 and 8.

Mrs. Grady stated that last year a team in 7th and 8th grade was proposed to be cut, but federal funds helped to bring the teams back. She recommended that the middle school might want to look at this again.

F. ADJOURNMENT: Betsey Andrews Parker moved, Kathy Baker seconded, to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**



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Respectfully submitted,

BETSEY ANDREWS PARKER, Secretary
Dover School Board
BAP/ral