



DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Workshop #2
Meeting Location: Room 305 McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, March 23, 2015**
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Amanda Russell on Monday, March 23, 2015, at 6:01 p.m. in Room 305 of the McConnell Center for the purpose of meeting with NH State legislators.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Amanda Russell, Sarah Greenshields, Kathy Morrison, Doris Grady, Carole Soule McCammon and Michelle Muffett-Lipinski. Betsey Andrews Parker was excused.

Also present were Superintendent Elaine Arbour, Business Administrator Karen Taylor, Catherine Cheney, Jim Verschueren, Len DiSesa, Tom Southworth, David Watters, Peter Bixby, Bill Baber. Mary Hebbard was present also.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Sarah Greenshields led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

D. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION THAT COULD IMPACT DOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Members of the School Board and State Legislators introduced themselves. Ms. Russell explained the purpose of the meeting stating that this was part of Dr. Arbour's goals and it would help her to get to know Dover better.

Rep. DiSesa stated that he has a background in criminal justice and is involved in Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. He has been employed in the field of law enforcement in Dover and Portsmouth.

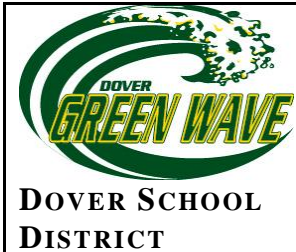
Rep. Southworth is a member of the Ways and Means Committee and is a former reading teacher and school counselor. He feels it will be a challenging time for education in the House and Senate. There is a currently a strong leaning toward school choice. He is optimistic there will be some adjustment for adequacy funding.

Dr. Arbour asked if there has been conversation regarding charter schools and shifting of money away from public schools to charter schools.

Rep. Southworth responded that there has been conversation. A bill passed the House which would give more money to charter schools. There are some charter schools that receive money but do not need it. He felt that money should have been allocated to adequacy instead.

Mrs. Grady noted that if students were not in charter schools, they would be in local districts which would end up costing the districts more money. Mr. Southworth agreed, but stated that if there are just a few students, there would not be a savings since the number of teachers would not be reduced and other operating costs would still be needed. Mrs. Grady agreed that School Choice is a big issue for parents.

Rep. DiSesa commented that representatives are being inundated with Common Core emails and they are expecting to deal with that in the near future.



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Mrs. Grady stated that Common Core is confusing and should have been laid out for administrators first.

Rep. Verschueren introduced himself and stated that he is on the Education Committee. Broad issues for school districts include Common Core and Smarter Based, student privacy, parental rights, length of teacher probationary period, adequacy and charter schools.

Rep. Cheney is on the Municipal and County Government Committee and hasn't dealt as much with education, but has been a co-sponsor of a bill with Senator Watters. She noted that an Opt-out for privacy has passed the House. Smarter Balance has been a hot topic as well.

Senator Watters noted that the Governor's budget is very tight, balanced and has good priorities. Governor Hassan has tried to increase education funding, including STEM. From the Senate side, any vote for the House, will be a vote against Dover and education. They will know more in late May. Senator Watters expressed his disappointment over attacks on the Senate by the House.

Senator Watters sponsored the Senate bill for adequacy and there is also a House bill for adequacy. They are different in that the Senate bill raises the adequacy cap in the first year and removes it in the second year. Wealthier communities will not receive stabilization. The second year could also see funding for full day kindergarten which means that students would count as a full student in the ADM. Dover could see an increase of approximately \$350,000-\$400,000 in the first year. Senator Watters worked hard with the Governor to do something in the budget with adequacy. She accepted the plan by Senator Watters, but not in total for kindergarten. Instead, she put more funding in charter schools.

Senator Watters is optimistic about adequacy funding, but it may take another budget cycle.

Other bills discussed by Senator Watters were SB190 which revises the Career Technical Education system and SB69 which looks at social innovation bonding as a process for funding early childhood education. He has also heard attacks on Common Core and testing.

Rep. Bixby stated that he is on the Environment and Agriculture Committee and therefore, doesn't see many bills on education in his committee. He also supports HB562 for adequacy and commented on the disparity that is created by stabilization grants throughout the state. He also supported bills that try to make building aid more accessible. He believes that there is still a significant problem with building aid.

Rep. Bixby stated that Smarter Balanced can be applied to the Common Core. He added that there was a bill voted on that allows the education department to apply for a waiver on testing so that they can move into a program called C-Pace which is being piloted in 4 communities in the state. This would reduce mandatory testing to one test in each of the elementary and middle levels and possibly replacing the assessments at the high school level with the SAT or the ACT.



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Rep. Bixby voted against stand-alone bill for funding charter schools since he felt it belonged in the entire finance process for school funding overall. He is not against charter schools and believes there is a place for them but doesn't want to see funding get in the way of funding public schools.

Rep. Baber works on the Science, Energy and Technology Committee and doesn't work much with education bills. He and others have a real appreciation for a well-educated workforce in the State of NH. There are voices advocating for school districts. The majority of legislators want to reduce taxes and fees and don't care where it comes from which is one of the reasons he didn't vote for additional money for charter schools.

Rep. Bixby commented that the reduction of social service funds is unfortunate for schools. Schools will see more students with reduced resources which makes it difficult to learn effectively due to a disturbed home life.

Rep. Baber commented that he would like to be a resource regarding energy efficiency in a new or renovated high when the time comes to discuss it. Ms. Greenshields stated that she would be contacting him.

Rep. Cheney stated the revenue estimate for health and human services are being finalized in the next day or so. She is hopeful there will be 2% for growth and revenue.

Ms. Russell stated that the Dover School District was able to increase services in next year's proposed budget. There are increased services to students which will have a ripple effect on families, but are directed toward students. The reductions from the state will impact adults which will, in turn, affect the students. This creates a greater burden on schools.

Rep. Southworth added there are bills that will significantly reduce revenue as well.

Rep. Baber expressed his shock from the increased use of heroin in the city and inquired if the schools are seeing the impact as well. Dr. Arbour responded that the schools are starting to see an impact. In the western part of the state, there are large groups from the same family involved in production and sales which affects their children. This trend will start to come toward the eastern part of the state. In addition, when there are large drug busts and parents are no longer in the home, students are left without caregivers.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski noted that the School Board fought hard to retain the LADC (Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor) in the schools due to the growing abuse issues.

Mrs. Grady asked if full day kindergarten students are going to be considered part of the full day count to which Senator Watters responded in the affirmative.

Mrs. Grady asked if there is an anticipated time when Dover could see additional adequacy funding. Senator Watters responded that it could be seen in the FY17 budget. Ms. Taylor added



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that if the governor's budget passes at 115%, Dover could see some additional funding in the FY16 budget.

Senator Watters added that there is a possibility that homeschooled students could be counted in the ADM. It has passed the Senate, but he is unsure where it stands with the House.

Mrs. Grady asked about the process of registering a homeschool student. In the past, there was a plan with certain goals required with testing and other requirements. She noted that it has been changed so that there no longer needs to be a report to the school. It is a much looser process.

Dr. Arbour added that the law has changed in the past few years and Mrs. Grady is correct. The only requirement at this time is a letter of intent from the parents stating their child will be homeschooled. The Dover School District provides the technical advisory from the state and the RSA. Families are still required to do an annual evaluation and keep a portfolio, but schools can't ask for them. It is very difficult to monitor students and make sure they are receiving an appropriate education. She also believes there are sometimes other home issues when students are registered for home education. Students are not required to participate in testing, but they are allowed to participate. They have access to school district resources. Dr. Arbour believes that the law changed due to the lobbying for privacy rights.

Rep. DiSesa stated that he was shocked to find out that some schools receive adequacy and do not have students.

Ms. Greenshields commented that Dover has ranked 88, 94 and 100 out of 100 by a national ranking system. She believes the numbers are artificial and asked how the representatives are advocating for schools in Dover. She feels Dover's reputation is suffering due to rankings such as this.

Ms. Russell stated that these surveys are partially based on parent comments and she has been a parent with a child in the schools for 13 years and has never been contacted leading her to believe this is a flawed survey.

Rep. Cheney stated that she has heard the opposite. She believes that families are being drawn to Dover because of the school systems. Ms. Greenshields noted that Dover is well below the cost per pupil. Rep. DiSesa agreed that families come to Dover for the safety and for the schools. He is questioning the data base of the survey.

Senator Watters added that he believes the schools are doing a good job and the per pupil cost are due to the devastating effects on reduced adequacy. The state is saying the students in Dover are worth less than students elsewhere. He continued to say that a successful renovation or construction of the high school and technical center will be important also. It will be a great boost for the school district. It is the legislator's job to get more resources for the schools from the state.



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Rep. Bixby added that an effect of low per pupil cost is the increase of class size.

Rep. Verschueren noted that the school system is good, but the high school is old and needs work. The school system is the Achilles Heel of the city since enough money is not being spent. The push for Dover will not be sustained if the school system is not addressed.

Rep. Baber asked if networking with the Chamber of Commerce had been established. Ms. Greenshields responded that there is an education committee in the Chamber and the JBC will start communicating heavily with community leaders and part of the bigger conversation.

Mrs. Grady stated the change in class size has brought about the need for change in the buildings. The total number of students in Dover remains in the vicinity of 4000. Class size has been reduced which has increased the need for space. In the past, teachers taught without support. Now, there are paraprofessionals in classrooms and smaller class size and people like to come to Dover for these reasons. She continued to say that the number of students hasn't changed and the numbers even out. Staff numbers increase and enrollment remains consistent.

Ms. Russell thanked the legislators for attending the meeting. She commented that in the most recent two budgets, services to students have been increased. This could help to increase Dover's rankings in surveys. Dover is making gains in spite of being underfunded. Students do well after receiving an education in Dover and this should be celebrated in Dover.

Rep. DiSesa said that the bills that are seen that deal that involve Dover, show that Dover is a leader and it is often remarked that Dover is leading the way in many social issues which can only reflect positively for Dover.

Ms. Russell highlighted recent awarded earned by Dover students including Robotics Team, Ice Hockey and Cheering.

E. OTHER: None

F. ADJOURNMENT: Michelle Muffett-Lipinski moved, Sarah Greenshields seconded, to adjourn at 7:10p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 6/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

ROBIN LAFLEUR, Recording Secretary
Dover School Board