

Please retain general headings (Introduction, etc.), when possible. Thank you! --DTRC

Report of the

Chickering Elementary School

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Introduction

The 2022–23 school year resumed with normal classroom routines and structures, school assemblies, curriculum enrichment programs, and our “mask optional” stance honoring individual choice for masks. In the current 2023–24 school year, we continue to provide all students, PreK–5, with an enriched academic learning experience, coupled with a comprehensive fine arts program. Our FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) serves as a model program across the state.

Enrollment and Staffing

As of October 1, 2023, total enrollment stayed nearly steady with 498 students, compared to 510 students in the previous year. We have four sections each at kindergarten and grades 1, 3, and 5; five sections each for grades 2 and 4; and two PreK classes. We appreciate the generous support of the Dover School Committee, which allows our class sizes to remain within the policy range of 17–22 pupils per class section. Looking ahead to fall 2024, we anticipate that enrollment and classroom numbers will remain steady.

With retirement and maternity leaves as the school year began, we were fortunate to have complete regular and special education teacher staffing.

Curriculum and Professional Development

Our School Improvement Plan includes three areas: MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support), communication, and curriculum.

Our MTSS program continues to mature as we develop strong Tier 1 supports within each classroom, based on student needs. At Tier 2, a greater level of support, students are identified by common assessments and teacher recommendation. We provide reading, math, and social/emotional interventions in small groups across all grade levels. This school year we included pilot curricula in both math and SEL (Social Emotional Learning).

Our goal for communicating with members of our school community is to be clear, consistent, relevant, and accessible. The District has launched a new website wherein families can find all information about the school, including registration, family newsletters, and policies.

As a school, we seek to maintain the academic excellence and rigor of our curriculum while pursuing continuous improvement through curricular research and exploration. We support the District’s Strategic Plan and have deepened our commitment to “create, foster, and implement culturally responsive practices to inform, educate, and improve our school community.” Teachers are trained to bring culture and inclusion into the curriculum, and the school and classroom libraries offer literature representing a broad range of people. Professional development continues in this vein as we interpret and implement the recommendations from the district-wide equity audit.

Special Education

The Special Education Department works with students, families, and staff to provide a broad range of services that allow children access to the curriculum through modified instruction and materials, and in a supportive environment that meets students' needs. Special education and general education teachers collaborate to achieve the most effective planning and programming for students with complex needs, so that the school can better serve all children and maintain an inclusive environment.

We provide the following services and programs: assessment for Dover children younger than age five; programming options in the integrated preschool; counseling for social/emotional well-being; behavioral supports; speech and language therapy; occupational therapy; and physical therapy. These services are further supported by a state and federally mandated Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), a parent-volunteer organization that works with all the schools in the Dover-Sherborn system.

School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council (SAC) is a state-mandated committee of teachers, parents, and a community representative. It assists the school with the development of the School Improvement Plan and serves in an advisory capacity to the Principal. The SAC works collaboratively to identify the educational needs of school and to facilitate communication between the school and community.

During the 2023–24 school year, the SAC will continue reviewing our communication strategies and MTSS system to understand and support the process.

PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is made up of parents/guardians, with co-chairs, and a board that oversees fundraising, spending, and program development. We also have a teacher liaison to the organization. The PTO alternates its yearly fundraising efforts between an auction and a check-writing campaign, with funds primarily supporting curriculum enrichment. We are grateful for the generous support of the Dover community, which enables us to provide teacher grants and a richer educational environment for our students.

Conclusion

Education remains a top priority in Dover. Our students are a part of a thoughtful and engaged learning community that offers an exceptional “whole child” educational experience for them, delivered by highly skilled and dedicated staff. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive, foster curiosity, and create a lifelong love of learning. We hold steadfast to our commitment to continual growth and improvement, and to making a difference in the lives of children.