

Report of the **Dover School Committee**

Elizabeth Grossman, Chair
Goli Sepehr, Secretary
Jeff Cassidy
Martha Castle
Jessie Hole

The members of the Dover School Committee (DSC) are elected by Dover's residents. The Committee works with the Superintendent and school administration to oversee the operation and education program of Chickering School and works jointly with the Sherborn School Committee and the Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee (DSRSC) on matters impacting all three districts. The DSC is composed of five members elected on a rotating basis of one or two members each year for three-year terms.

Membership

In 2023, we welcomed new members Jessie Hole and Martha Castle to the DSC. Jessie and Martha were elected to three-year terms in May. We extend our sincere thanks to Colleen Burt and Sara Gutierrez Dunn who completed their terms on the DSC. Colleen Burt was elected to serve on the DSRSC.

District Leadership

In 2023, Superintendent Elizabeth McCoy and Assistant Superintendent Denton Conklin published findings relative to their yearlong entry process. As evidenced by data from multiple stakeholders, Dover continues to be valued for its commitment to academic excellence, focus on the whole child, and service to the community. We remain grateful for the continued leadership of Principal Deborah Reinemann and Assistant Principal James Carnes at Chickering Elementary School, as well as the dedication and commitment of our highly qualified and talented teachers and staff.

In September 2023, a Strategic Plan was launched in support of the District's vision and mission. Initiatives were outlined in five priority areas: Excellence and Innovation in Learning; Challenge and Support for All Students; Professional Learning and Growth; Family and Community Engagement; and Safe and Sustainable Spaces. By way of specific action steps over the next three to five years, the District aims to implement a shared vision for 21st-century education that inspires, challenges, and supports all students as they discover and pursue their full potential.

Retirements in the District in 2023 included Steven Harte and Kenneth Wadness. We wish both of these dedicated professionals all the best and thank them for their many years of service to our students and community.

Academics

Chickering Elementary School strives for academic excellence and continues to rank as a top-performing Massachusetts elementary school in the research publications of *U.S. News and*

World Report. At the same time, we value students' social and emotional needs and recognize the unique talents of each student. The DSC sets policies to achieve its defined goals and seeks to accomplish them in a fiscally prudent manner. This year, Chickering extended its curriculum pilot of the Reveal Math Program and Illustrative Mathematics Program. The school also continued implementation of the Columbia Teachers' College Reading Project as part of a structured literacy program across both Chickering and Pine Hill Elementary Schools.

Finance

The DSC works hard to deliver the highest quality education in the most efficient way possible by reviewing its operations and allocating resources to best serve student needs. Salaries are the biggest budget item. We continued to receive federal and state grants, including funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, given to help address academic needs resulting from the pandemic. Uses of these funds have included the implementation of a multitiered system of interventions for students.

In 2023, enrollment remained steady. We continue to match classroom sections to adhere to our long-standing classroom size policy of between 17 and 22 students. We will continue to monitor real estate trends and census data and adjust staffing levels to meet the community's changing needs.

The out-of-district Special Education Budget, which covers students aged 3 to 22 years who are enrolled in schools outside the Dover Public School system, is a significant part of the overall budget. However, the Town is reimbursed by the State of Massachusetts for a percentage of the tuition costs that exceeds a calculated base amount. This reimbursement, referred to as the "circuit breaker," offsets these costs.

Facilities

We continue to perform maintenance required to keep the school building in top condition. We rely on a long-range, 20-year Capital Needs Assessment, initially prepared by an outside consultant in 2012 and updated in 2017, to guide our annual Capital Budget requests. During 2023, we replaced portions of the school flooring and continued the upgrade of the EMS software in accordance with this plan.

Appreciation

The DSC is grateful for the many members of our community who have given tirelessly to support Chickering in maintaining its tradition of excellence. The DSC thanks Dover taxpayers, the Dover-Sherborn Education Fund (DSEF), the PTO, and the Alan Thayer Mudge Memorial Fund for their ongoing financial support. The annual DSEF grant awards allow Chickering faculty and staff members to explore state-of-the-art methods for curriculum delivery, while the PTO gifts allow us to make the learning environment the best it can be for both the staff and students.