

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 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 a three-year term 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 Regional School Committee.

District Leadership

In 2023, Superintendent Elizabeth McCoy and Assistant Superintendent Denton Conklin published findings relative to their year-long 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. All are grateful for the continued leadership of Chickering Principal Deborah Reinemann and Assistant Principal James Carnes as well as its many highly qualified and talented teachers and staff.

In September 2023, a new strategic plan was launched in support of the district's vision and mission. Initiatives were outlined including five priority areas: Excellence and Innovation in Learning, Challenge and Support 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 exemplify a shared vision for 21st century education that serves to inspire, challenge and support 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, ranked as a top Massachusetts elementary school by *U.S. News and World Report*. At the same time, we value students' social and emotional needs and recognize the unique talents of each and every 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 and Illustrative Math programs and continued implementation of the 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 continue to receive federal and state grants, including the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund used to address academic needs resulting from the pandemic through the implementation of a multi-tiered 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, portions of the school flooring were replaced and an upgrade of EMS software was also undertaken 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.