



DOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS!

SUPERINTENDENT MESSAGE – FEBRUARY 2019

THE CHALLENGES of PARENTHOOD

Dear Dover School Community,

My wife and I are blessed with two adult daughters who, each in their own way, have found their pathways that have established their course to family and professional success and fulfillment. The oldest daughter is a teacher and married to a commercial airline pilot, and the youngest is a developmental pediatrician married to an emergency pediatrician. Between the two daughters, there are five grandchildren ranging in ages from 1 to 11 years old, each with their unique personalities and sets of talents.

Initially, this sounds very positive, but throughout their childhood, teenage years, and young adulthood we were confronted with a variety of challenges that required us to maintain a focus on our family expectations and responsibilities, as well as a good measure of unconditional love and acceptance. I must admit there were times that the two daughters tried my understanding and patience.

As they continue to follow their pathways, there are still those times that my wife and I still have our concerns and worries, but we are reassured knowing they have a strong foundation that will guide them through the difficult times and challenges and to further help them to develop strong character, perseverance and resilience in our grandchildren.

My wife and I both understand the hard work associated with rearing children in today's world. Today, I believe parenting and the rearing of children is much more challenging. Parents must navigate many more demands and challenges presented by today's society and media culture. Yet in this environment, I still strongly believe that parents and family can have a strong impact on developing the essential foundation for their children to succeed in today's complex society by helping their children build a strong foundation of character, perseverance, and resilience. As you continue this journey with your children, I present the following for your consideration adapted from Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*:

- **Habit 1: Be Proactive.** Covey defined proactive as meaning *exercising your power of choice between the stimulus you receive from the world and your response*. Through this, Covey introduced the "circle of control" to represent all we care about. It is understood that we can only influence a portion of what we care about, and that should be our focus. Focusing on what we cannot control is a waste of time and energy. The more we focus on the things we can control, the more your abilities and skills improve, which further enlarges your circle of influence. Consider how you can be proactive with your family, and particularly your children, to have a lasting and positive impact as they prepare for their participation in the adult world.
- **Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind.** Beginning with the end in mind is being clear about who you want to be and where you want to go. Covey states, "If you are not clear about the mental creation of where you want to be, you are at the mercy of randomness and circumstance." It is important to establish a clear vision of the family you want to create and develop to prepare your children for their future. Knowing your end can strengthen the impact that a family can have on a child.

- **Habit 3: Put First Things First.** Make your family the most important priority on your schedule. The time you invest in your family will have benefits that will last your child a lifetime. Make time together as a family your highest priority. Many times, we let other commitments take a higher priority than our families. Simply having a meal together can have a powerful impact. I learned a great deal by the simple act of listening to our daughters talk during our family meals.

- **Habit 4: Think Win/Win.** Covey states, “Win/Win is a character based approach to human interaction. It encompasses the following character traits: (1) Integrity – sticking with who you are; (2) Maturity – expressing your ideas and feelings with a balance of courage and consideration; and (3) Abundance mentality – life is no zero sum, there’s plenty for all. If our families adopted a Win/Win philosophy and each observed it being practiced by the adults in their lives, would our children approach others with a higher degree of respect, acceptance, love, care, and empathy?”

- **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood.** This requires empathic listening that removes your own frame of reference as much as possible and putting yourself in the other person’s shoes feeling what they’re feeling. Before people can move to solutions they need to feel you understand them. Make time to listen to your children without lecturing or confronting. Take time to be in the moment with your child and listen to understand their perspective and needs. If a child knows they will be heard and understood, they will seek you out on those most difficult and challenging times.

- **Habit 6: Synergize.** The idea of synergizing is that the whole of a well-functioning family is greater than the mere sum of the parts. The key to synergize is valuing the differences among us. It is important to embrace the differences within our families. Learning to embrace differences can lead to a strength. Furthermore, synergy entails “flow” and perfect automation as if the group was functioning as one.

- **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw.** It is important as individuals and families that we take time to “sharpen the saw” – renew. The body, mind, and spirit call for renewal. Developing habits of exercise, nutrition, and; meaningful human connection; acquiring new knowledge; and time in nature, meditation, prayer and service. What a powerful and meaningful gift we can give to our children.

It is my hope that you will continue to make your family and your children your highest priority. You and your family are the most impactful education your child will receive. The Dover School District is committed to working with your family to build upon the foundation you are developing with your children. By working together, we will have stronger individuals, families, and community. I encourage you to make your family your highest priority.

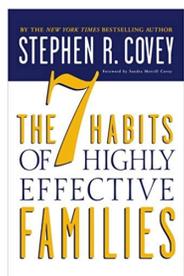
Bill

William R. Harbron, Ed.D.
Superintendent

The following sources for more information on the 7 Habits:

- The 7 Habits of Happy Kids: <https://youtu.be/ksM61HyB0o4>
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens Summary: <https://youtu.be/bBsKoZny0oc>
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families Part 1: <https://youtu.be/q3ozkMuuDo4>
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families Part 2: <https://youtu.be/9MsCWSQH7R0>

BOOK FOR OUR CONSIDERATION



In his first major work since *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey presents a practical and philosophical guide to solving the problems—large and small, mundane and extraordinary—that confront all families and strong communities. By offering revealing anecdotes about ordinary people as well as helpful suggestions about changing everyday behavior, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* shows how and why to have family meetings, the importance of keeping promises, how to balance individual and family needs, and how to move from dependence to interdependence. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* is an invaluable guidebook to the welfare of families everywhere.

Schools Updates



Workshop: Facing Race, Racism, and Stereotypes

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16th – 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wentworth Douglass Hospital Auditorium C & D – Registration Opens at 8:30 a.m. – Lunch Provided

Do you wish you had more opportunities to think and learn about race and the impact of racism? What if you could increase your capacity to improve relationships and insure a more fair and inclusive community? The meaning of race in the United States has had an impact on everything we do and everyone who lives here. During this workshop, we will learn more about race and racism and how it continues to impact how we engage one another in the United States, New Hampshire, and in Dover. We will develop strategies to adequately address concerns from the past to build a stronger and more connected community. This workshop is designed for community members who are interested in fostering belonging and increasing equity. Everyone is welcome, but space is limited.

Advanced registration required: <https://conta.cc/2UjXTHY> . \$25 fee requested to cover expenses but waived for students and those with financial need. Hosted by NH Listens. Thank you!

DMS – FACE-2-FACE Unplugged Conversations

TUESDAY, APRIL 2nd - 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Dover Middle School

The facilitators are excited about the next unplugged conversation. We invite parents and other adult community members to join the unplugged conversations.

These conversations can serve to enhance your relationship with your child and open the lines of communication during the early adolescent years, when open communication is critical. The topic of the April 2nd session is **Listening**.

BUDGET SEASON

Budget season for Fiscal Year 2020 has started for the Dover School District. The following is the timeline established by the Board for the development of the budget:



- February 11 – School Board back up date to adopt Budget
- February 15 – School Budget due to the City Manager – Tentative Date
- April 3 – Superintendent to present Budget to the City Council – Tentative Date
- April 17 – School Budget Public Hearing – Tentative Date
- May – TBD – City Budget (including School Budget) Adoption

The budget sessions scheduled January through February are critical sessions as the final budget to be presented to the City Council is developed and finalized by the Board. The Board invites and encourages community members to attend the scheduled sessions so you may be informed for the financial needs of the Dover School District.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS NEEDED

Dover School District needs substitute teachers. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, contact Evonne Kill-Kish at 516-6241 or e.kill.kish@dover.k12.nh.us.



DOVER SCHOOL'S FACEBOOK

Check-out the Dover School Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/DoverNHSchoolDistrict. It is a way to stay informed of the current events of the Dover School District. There are many good happenings occurring in your Dover School District.



DOVER SCHOOL'S WEBPAGE

The District is engaged with **Edlio** in the design and development of a new Dover School District Webpage. In November, the website went live. During the next several months, the website will continue to evolve. If you have feedback you wish to share, please send email to v.kuzmitski@dover.k12.nh.us.

The new website also contains professional videos pertaining to ten topics related to **digital citizenship** to assist parents/guardians in helping their children to become responsible digital citizens.



FEBRUARY 2019 SIGNIFICANT DATES

WDH Event - February 16, 9:00 – 3:00
DMS Unplugged - April 2nd, 5:30-7:00

Dover Schools Strategic Plan

GOAL 1: The Dover School District will improve educational outcomes for students by effectively engaging with the broader community.

GOAL 2: The Dover School District will develop and sustain a culture that is characterized by optimizing social, emotional, civic, physical, and rigorous academic learning.

GOAL 3: The Dover School District is committed to continue investments in infrastructure to support student learning inclusive of facilities, technology, and safety-security.

GOAL 4: The Dover School District will recruit, hire, develop and retain effective and caring educators and support them in their growth as strong community members.

The following objectives have been selected for emphasis during the 2018-2019 school year:

OBJECTIVE 1.1 – STUDENT VOICE: We will enhance student voice by creating a student-driven environment that allows students to have meaningful input and choice into their learning program.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 – STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLNESS: We will enhance the support and wellness of all students through purposeful engagement in school and community-based activities.

OBJECTIVE 1.5 - COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION: We will provide opportunities for diverse community stakeholders to engage with the Dover schools in shared problem solving and decision making.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 – SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL: We will promote and support the overall health and well-being of all students and staff.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING: We will maximize each student's engagement in learning.

OBJECTIVE 2.4 – COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION: We will optimize student learning and achievement by developing and implementing a competency-based education model.

The goals will be the focal point of the District’s work with the aim to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the



Dover School District.

SOMETHINGS TO THINK ABOUT –



The following is from Proust and the Squid by Maryanne Wolf: *I imagine the following scene: A small child sits in rapt attention on the lap of a beloved adult, listening to the words that move like water, words that tell of fairies, dragons, and giants in faraway places never before imagined. The young child’s brain prepares to read far earlier than one might ever suspect and makes use of almost all the raw material of early childhood, every perception, concept, and word. It does so by learning how to use all the important structures that will make up the brain’s universal reading system. Along the way, the child incorporates many of the insights into written language that our species learned breakthrough, by breakthrough, during more than 2,000 years of history. It all begins under the crook of an arm in the comfort of a loved one’s lap.*

Decade after decade of research shows that the amount of time a child spends listening to parents or other loved ones read is a good predictor of the level of reading attained years later. Why? Consider more carefully the scene just described: a very young child is sitting, looking at colorful pictures, listening to ancient tales and new stories, learning gradually that the lines on the page make letters, letters make words, words make stories, and stories can be read over and over again. This early scene contains most of the precursors crucial to the child’s development of reading.

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO ESTABLISH READING TO YOUR CHILD AS A PRIORITY.

- Why We Should All Be Reading Aloud to Our Child – Rebecca Bellingham – TEDxYouth@ Beacon Street - <https://youtu.be/ZBuT2wdYtpM>
- Why We All Need to Start Reading Aloud to Our Kids – Keisha Siriboe – TEDxWanChai - <https://youtu.be/VsAtwkHRorY>