

Education Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 27, 2010

EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
of the Keene Board of Education

LGIA  
Keene High School  
43 Arch Street, Keene, NH

**Tuesday, Apr. 27, 2010 6:30 p.m. Cheshire Career Center Conference Room**

**Committee Members Present:**

Amy K. Speas, Chair  
Carter Chamberlin  
Mark R. Nugent  
Kristin Blais

**Administrators Present:**

Paul Cooper, Dir. of Human Resources  
William B. Gurney, Co-Supt.  
Wayne Woolridge, Co-Supt.  
Meredith Cargill, Director of Curriculum  
& Assessment

**Board Members Present:**

Carl A. Panza  
Neil Donegan  
Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair

**Other Guests Present:**

Alan Chmiel, KHS Principal  
Christy Garner, Citizen  
Gina Gitchell, Westmoreland  
Judy Idelkope, Chesterfield  
John McMahan, Keene Middle School

Chair Amy Speas called the meeting to order at 6:38 P.M.

**1. Public Input**

Christy Garner, a middle school parent, asked about programming at the school. Her children were in a rigorous program in Texas and she feels they aren't being challenged enough in 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. She stated that there is a lack of homework and everything is too easy her children earning constant 100's.

**2. Approval of Minutes of March 23, 2010**

**MOTION: Kristin Blais moved that the minutes of the Education Committee of March 23, 2010 be approved as presented. Carter Chamberlin seconded the motion. The committee voted and approved the minutes unanimously, 3-0.**

**3. Keene Middle School Gifted and Talented Update – William Gurney**

William Gurney spoke on behalf of Dorothy Frazier. The contract on differentiated instruction has been extended. The first Jr. Honors Society dinner for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be at Papagallos Restaurant on Thursday. Ms. Frazier has suggested holding a forum of parents. Teachers will be convening to shape future programs. A survey for staff and parents on instructional practices will go out soon. Discussion ensued about the survey. Ms. Speas mentioned that Franklin Pierce College has a forum on May 20, 2010 called *High Ability Children: Seeking Balance at Home and*

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*at School.* Kathleen O'Donnell requested that either Mr. Gurney or Ms. Cargill email the information to the Board and other appropriate people.

**4. Keene Middle School Parent Survey – Carl Panza**

A new committee has been started for the KMS Parent Survey. To save time, the Finance Committee has already approved \$5,000.00 for the costs of the survey to be done by UNH who has done similar surveys at Exeter, Oyster River, etc. They have many survey questions available in a template form which can be tailored to our needs. Mr. Gurney stated that we could cycle surveys across grade spans as the cost is only \$2,000 per year for a computerized study that can link our data points to drive improvement plans.

Ms. Speas suggested polling more than just the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents. Mr. Gurney stated that the costs are by the number of questions, not the number of people surveyed, so that is possible. It will mainly be web-based, but there will also be paper copies for those without computer access. Parents and teachers will have different surveys; additional data points could be achieved by also surveying the elementary and high schools. Results will probably be reported out late summer to present an early fall.

**5. Academy Fund Proposals – Alan Chmiel**

Mr. Chmiel handed out the Academy Fund Proposals for 2010-2011 funded by Perkins. There had been a meeting with faculty to discuss why previous proposals had been passed or turned down in October. In January, proposals were reviewed by Dept. Heads, and then went to Administration, now the Education Committee, then the finance committee and then the full Board of Education.

Mr. Chmiel reviewed some of what was in the handout:

- Library funds
- Speakers Series
- One Book One School
- Peers Helping Peers
- Artists in the Classroom

Everything was prioritized, and juried using a rubric. This year's requests were \$42,000 compared to last year's \$62,000. The Education Committee juries if the requests are educational or not.

For instance, monies were raised for the Renaissance program last year to allow all students who wanted to go to participate. Students are now doing 100% of the Freshman Orientation. Mr. Chmiel stated that the Speakers' Fund would connect with the book proposal, *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult. The book deals with relevant themes to help high school students such as *cyberbullying* and *abusive relationships*. Student assistants are now helping and handling many student conflicts under *Peers Helping Peers*. It's working better than anticipated. Mr. Hyde is presenting a program of *Artists in the Classroom*. Irwin Foundation has funded a lot of the computers.

**MOTION: Carter Chamberlin made a motion to approve the Academy Fund proposals as presented and take it to the Finance Committee for a vote. Kristin Blais seconded the motion. A vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously, 3-0.**

**6. SB 180 Update – Meredith Cargill**

Senate Bill 180 is legislation regarding adequate education. The NHDOE has been charged with monitoring if students receive an adequate. Ten percent of schools will be audited annually, beginning in 2012. This year the NHDOE piloted focused monitoring visits by selecting a high school and then reviewing feeder schools within the organization. On March 25, 2010 the visiting team audited Keene High School. There were interviews with the principal and department chairs. Other visits included Keene Middle School, Fuller, Marlow, Chesterfield, and Winchester Elementary schools. A report will be received by the end of the year. Copies will be sent to the Superintendents from each SAU feeding into Keene High School. Ms. Cargill was told the site visit was the most organized visit the team had experienced to date and she expressed praise for the hard work that had been done by building level principals in preparing their staff for this event. SB 180 also currently covers the school and district report cards located on the NHDOE website. The data represented is populated from statistics that are harvested or set up through our statewide data systems. In the future, SB 180 may be including principal narratives about their school to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the school.

**7. Professional Development Updates – Meredith Cargill**

Mrs. Cargill spoke about the Professional Development Master Plan (PDMP) that provides structure for teacher recertification. In the past, teachers solely collected clock hours and had to meet a requisite number of hours in three years to be eligible for recertification. The new model, based on guidance from the NHDOE (who approves this plan) allows teachers to engage in action research as one of three options for recertification. Another option is to continue to collect clock hours which are now replaced with continuing education units (1 clock hour = 1 CEU). The last option provides a hybrid of CEUs and Action Research. Mrs. Cargill distributed a background report on this.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Cargill stated that at the high school, students do not currently take the NWEA MAP tests in both the fall and spring and that there is not a standard system to identify students who are behind (department or grade-wide) before they take the NECAP test. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Cargill explained new models of providing professional development to teachers that are tailored our specific curriculum needs. Rather than attending a conference that might be aligned with some of our curriculum, professional development is more grade-and content-specific. Teacher leaders and community agencies, such as Stonewall Farm, are creating opportunities for teachers (by grade-level). Discussion ensued about available monies and Mrs. Cargill commented that the majority of these discretionary funds were cut from the 2010-2011 budget during the budget cycle. Some grant funding may become available, and Mrs. Cargill will get back to the Committee with

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more exact figures. Questions arose from the committee about supervision and evaluation of staff. Mr. Gurney and Mrs. Cargill explained the review cycle requirements. Mrs. Cargill credited the extraordinary efforts of the SAU 29 Professional Development Committee in helping usher in more awareness about professional learning communities and action research. The committee is just at the start of helping structure professional development for these best practices and their leadership should be recognized.

**8. Foreign Exchange Students for 2010-2011 – *William Gurney***

We usually have up to four foreign exchange students per year; there are three requests for the 2010-2011 school year. Discussion ensued about how students are placed and what local agencies help intake foreign exchange students in this region. Recently it has become more difficult finding host homes. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of having host families who were not located in Keene. Tuitions might be involved, but waivers could be done. Discussion ensued about age criteria when accepting exchange students, as two students are 15. Discussion ensued about the current policy regarding exchange students and there is nothing about where students live in the policy.

**Carter Chamberlin made a motion to approve up to four slots for foreign exchange students for the year of 2010-2011 and take it to the Full Board for a vote. Kristin Blais seconded the motion. A vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously, 3-0.**

**9. International Field Trip Proposal from Keene High School – *Alan Chmiel***

A proposal regarding a foreign exchange with students in Spain was reviewed. Students would come from Spain in September, and ours would go over to Spain from February 15-26, 2011 with Marilyn McMaster.

**Kristin Blais made a motion to approve a trip to Spain for Marilyn McMaster and take it to the Full Board for a vote. Mark Nugent seconded the motion. A vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously, 3-0.**

**10. Chinese Language Initiatives – *William Gurney***

Mr. Gurney discussed the Chinese Program, citing the phenomenal growth of the program, going from serving 29 students this year to serving 84 students for the 2010-2011 school year. The Chinese guest teacher, Zhou Ling, should be commended for progressing the program this quickly. Mr. Gurney described the acquisition of free textbooks, the curriculum that Zhou Ling has articulated, and her creation of a co-curricular experience at Keene Middle School. Zhou Ling will be returning as the guest teacher during the 2011-2012 school year and will expand to offer both Mandarin I and Mandarin II.

**11. Chinese Cultural Initiatives – *William Gurney***

Mr. Gurney stated that Zhou Ling has referred several of her students to a great cultural opportunity during this summer's Chinese Summer Camp. If students are

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accepted they would travel to China. During April vacation, Mr. Gurney, Zhou Ling, Mrs. O'Donnell, Mrs. Cargill, and Mr. Woolridge attended the National Chinese Language Conference where information was exchanged on cultural ideas and experiences.

Mr. Gurney would like to apply for status as a Confucius Classroom; there is a \$10,000 grant available for speakers and free textbooks. Zhou Ling has helped Mr. Gurney initiate talks about establishing a sister school with the Yali School. The founders were graduates of Yale. Mr. Gurney distributed a handout on the school and requested the committee's permission to move forward in discussions with Yali, which is top-ranked in China. Many students are fluent in English. They have more emphasis on arts and sports than other Chinese schools. The Yali principal feels it would be suitable and there is a New Hampshire connection because St. Paul's now does exchanges.

Discussions ensued on curriculum, rigor, exchanges, flexibility of short-term visits, costs (none), talking and exploring further, inviting the Chinese to visit, formalizing a Memorandum of Understanding, challenges and difficulties, whether there is too much on the school district's plate with the new school, and other related themes.

It was decided that no motion was needed and the Committee supports the Superintendent in his moving forward.

**12. KMS Program Planning for Maple Avenue Site – *William Gurney***

Mr. Gurney outlined the comprehensive program planning that is now underway, including but not limited to the Physical Plant, Curriculum, Construction, Technology, and Classroom Planning

Professional Development will be available through the Southwest Center at Keene State College. Mr. Gurney detailed plans for mobile labs, and shared about the possibility of more distance learning through the VLA online offerings located out of a charter school in Exeter.

In addition to curriculum planning for all core content areas and extensions, there will be a Paleo-Indian curriculum. The opportunities for integration are numerous, including health and wellness connections with access to the bike trails and building of the new YMCA. Ms. Cargill stated that she will detail more summer curriculum work at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued on new technology, PCs vs. Macs, costs, centralized location and server costs, adding distance learning to thin client units. Costs are covered in the bond issue. Mr. Gurney will get back to the committee about additional costs for moving the new computer lab. There will be a technology presentation next month.

Staffing issues were also discussed. Paraprofessionals are driven by the IEPs, but additional staff may be needed for taking care of two auditoriums, another groundskeeper for the KMS/SAU and perhaps additional afternoon supervision.

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Ms. Speas asked about the virtual high school as a component for KMS. The Exeter Charter School has everything from remedial to advanced offerings for New Hampshire students. Virtual High School requires that high school students be given first priority in available seats (which are limited) due to scheduling concerns. Mr. Chmiel stated that there are 5 bonus seats next year and he will make sure people are aware.

**13. Other**

Kathleen O'Donnell asked about Symonds. Mr. Gurney stated that it ongoing with written statements of teachers and tutors being reviewed. It is expected that a report will be completed soon.

Ms. O'Donnell asked about the Special Education Elementary Report status, as at the preliminary report out, Mr. Ayres and Ms. Bergeron had suggested it would be finalized in April. Mr. Gurney stated that a final report is being written. Mrs. Cargill stated that she had recently been told that it would be completed by the end of the first week of May.

Ms. O'Donnell asked about the Strategic Planning for the District. Mr. Gurney stated that he will send an email out.

Ms O'Donnell went on to suggest that the film entitled *2 Million Minutes* (about American, Chinese, and Indian high schools) be shown again as it is thought provoking.

Mr. Gurney stated that Bill Preble of Henniker is developing a forum on bullying and will talk to parents from elementary through high school. Bullying is a high priority of the Board.

Ms. Speas asked about mandatory in-service for staff. Mr. Woolridge said that will happen next school year when the bill goes into effect.

**14. Adjournment**

**Mark Nugent made a motion to adjourn. Kristin Blais seconded the motion. A vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously, 3-0.**

The Education Committee was adjourned at 9:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda McCracken, Stenographer