

**KEENE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** September 8, 2009

**LOCATION:** Keene High School Large Group Instruction Area, 43 Arch Street, Keene, NH

**CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:31 p.m.

**TIME ADJOURNED:** 10:05 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair
- Mrs. Carol Brown
- Mrs. Kristin Blais
- Mr. Carter Chamberlin
- Mr. Chris Coates
- Mr. Neil Donegan
- Mr. Carl Panza
- Mr. Donald Parker
- Mrs. Amy Speas

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

- Mr. William Gurney, Co-Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Thomas Remillard, Director of Buildings and Grounds
- Mr. John Harper, Business Administrator
- Mr. Paul Cooper, Director of Human Services
- Ms. Catherine Reeves, Director of Special Education
- Ms. Meredith Cargill, Director of Curriculum

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

- Mrs. Dru Fox, Stenographer
- Ms. Sarah Palermo, Keene Sentinel Reporter
- Ms. Chris Weeks, Public Information Coordinator
- Members of Public - 2

**Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.**

**1. Public Input**

None

**2. Consent Agenda**

Approval of minutes, May 14, 2009 – June 9, 2009

Financial Report

Gifts

Budget Transfers

Mr. Neil Donegan asked to remove the third item from the Consent Agenda, pertaining to the request for \$2,500 to fund Phase 1 of the KMS Marketing Plan, for the purpose of further discussion during the Finance Committee report. Mr. Carter Chamberlin asked that the budget transfer of \$9,500 for the driveway at the Royal Avenue property, appearing on the Consent Agenda, be removed for further clarification.

*Mr. Donald Parker moved to amend the motion on page four of the May 14, 2009 minutes to read “Mr. Donald Parker made a motion to implement in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the Keene Middle School, beginning in the fall of 2009, one section of accelerated English and one section of accelerated Mathematics.” Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion to amend the minutes of May 14, 2009 passed by a vote of 8-0.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items as amended. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

**3. Approval of minutes**

Completed in above action.

**4. Report of student representatives**

No report

**5. Report of Board Chair**

Tutor Plan Update – Ms. Catherine Reeves spoke about the tutor action plan and baseline previously passed out at a Board Retreat and provided information on the analysis being prepared for the October meeting. She has prepared a staffing by building report with current paraprofessional and tutor counts. Discussion ensued pertaining to full time equivalents, duties and responsibilities of tutors, difference between tutors and paras, numbers of tutors at each building and number of TNT students.

Testing – Mr. William Gurney spoke to the Board about the schedule for all upcoming testing, gave a history of the fall and spring testing, talked about NECAP and explained the plan to meet with principals and analyze the data. There will be a full report to the Education Committee later in the year.

Schools in need of improvement – Plans were sent to the state on September 16<sup>th</sup> and there will be a report on September 29<sup>th</sup> to the Education Committee. Mr. Gurney talked about the 3 individual school reports and the overall district report. Discussion ensued pertaining to state testing.

Differentiated Learning – Ms. Kathleen O’Donnell introduced the concept of differentiated learning and Mr. William Gurney explained the study that was conducted by the New England League of Middle Schools and the recommendation for increased differentiated instruction for gifted and talented students. Mr. Gurney detailed the intense work that has gone into enacting that recommendation at our middle school. He spoke of a series of meetings, applying for a Junior Honor Society, enrichment programs, an upcoming conference in October and returning to the Education Committee in October with an update. Discussion ensued.

Principal Utilization – Mr. William Gurney said there would be a presentation to the Education Committee on November 17<sup>th</sup>. He spoke about what the charge is and what is currently being done in the area of compiling and analyzing data. Mr. Coates asked that we look at our schools with 300 students versus our schools with 150 students. Mr. Woolridge said they are doing their best to summarize the enrollment data, analyze trends and look ahead. Mrs. Carol Brown asked for a report and recommendation from the Co-Superintendents.

KMS Building Committee – Mr. Neil Donegan provided information on meetings of the committee, completion of drawings, a design for the SAU building and the wood chip plant. He commented on using a general contractor versus a construction manager and outlined the differences between the two. The Committee is searching for a way to continue with a general contractor or at least taking another look at the construction manager approach. He reported the project would be going out for bid in January with ground breaking scheduled for March or April. He addressed some of the positive changes being made to the original plans, such as a high school size gym and a state of the art cafeteria, which are possible due to the country's current economic situation. Discussion ensued.

KMS Marketing Committee – Mr. Neil Donegan talked about the 9 members of this committee having met and their decision on how to proceed. The first step would be to give local people and contractors 90 days to express interest and if there are no interested parties after 90 days a real estate firm would be hired.

Current Middle School – Mr. Tom Remillard updated the Board on work required by the fire department that has been completed at the Middle School. The new fire alarm system has been tested and is up and running. He commended Amer Electric on the wonderful job they did installing the new system in a timely and financially responsible manner. Mr. Remillard reports that even though they are doing everything possible to keep the current middle school students comfortable and their needs met, the intent is not to sink any large amount of money into the building. A question was brought up and discussion ensued pertaining to the auditorium.

Royal Ave Update – Mr. Tom Remillard reports things are going very well with the North Campus completion and plan to move in by the end of this month. The Life building is up and ready and just waiting for a Certificate of Occupancy from the city's building department. He states that things are closer to the finish than they seem, everything looks great and the facilities are very nice. Discussion took place around equipment at the site, electrical work being finished, move in date, and the item appearing on the consent agenda requesting a transfer of \$9,500 to widen and improve the driveway at Royal Ave.

34 West Street Lease – to be covered later in non-public session.

KAPS – to be covered later in non-public session.

Tutor negotiations – Mr. Chris Coates reports receiving a letter of intent and that he will be speaking to the issue later in non-public session.

## **6. Report of Co-Superintendent**

Mr. William Gurney reported on the successful beginning of the school year with preliminary number of 3,734 students currently enrolled in our schools. He touched on the late end to last year and the early start to this school year and described the number of inquiries he received pertaining to the calendar. These inquiries lead to a committee being formed over the summer to study a calendar that might work better for our district. There has since been a survey developed and it is anticipated that the committee will come back with a recommendation at the October meeting. He reports a steady progress being made on the Royal Avenue buildings, the Life Ed building has been cleared for occupancy and final work is being done on the north campus building with students expected to move in very soon and reported on the sale of Roosevelt School being

scheduled for mid October. Mr. Gurney commended the maintenance department on the completion of summer work and spoke in detail about the declining enrollment numbers and gave specific numbers and information.

Mr. Wayne Woolridge announced various SAU meeting dates and provided an update of the AREA Agreement.

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell asked about and Mr. Gurney provided a history of our preschool program, described the need for a better facility and touched on the conversations he has had with KSC about a partnership. Mr. Gurney hopes to come back to the Board with a recommendation by December.

Mr. William Gurney continued with a report on the Chinese Language program and its benefit to the district. He describes a wonderful start, provided information on developing the curriculum from a variety of resources and commented on the excitement Ms. Ling is bringing to the program. Mr. Gurney introduced Ms. Ling's extensive background and experience and provided the Board with a brief biography of her and her family. Discussion ensued around sustainability, recruitment of Chinese teachers, introduction of Chinese at the elementary level, budget implications and activities at the middle school.

Mr. William Gurney then introduced a proposal from Beth Corwin for a sabbatical to complete her wellness work, provided an update on H1N1 awareness and reported on moving CIRT and SWCS. Discussion ensued.

Ms. O'Donnell asked for an explanation of the surplus funds and Mr. John Harper responded that it was primarily from health insurance cost savings with small amounts from other areas and he emphasized the process of tight budgeting.

Mr. Chris Coates spoke passionately about a recent editorial appearing in the local newspaper and how it negatively portrayed the hard work and sincere efforts of the Keene School Board of Education. He talked about being disappointed with the author of the article and described how serious each Board member is about their responsibility and commitment to the community and to the taxpayers. Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell agreed with Mr. Coate's comments and expressed her dismay with the Keene Sentinel.

Mr. Wayne Woolridge commended Mr. Hal King for beginning the district's preschool program many years ago and then introduced Ms. Meredith Cargill who provided the following update pertaining to her transition into her new position and the curriculum work she is already involved in:

- implementation of the science partnership grant
- aligning K-12 art curriculum to include visual artifacts
- aligning social studies with the state curriculum
- providing a higher level of Spanish and French
- KHS NECAP testing
- professional development master plan
- updating curriculum and assessment
- mentor program
- new staff orientation
- schools in need of improvement and also the district piece

Mr. Donegan posed the issue of the size of the professional development budget and asked for proof that this works. Discussion ensued.

**7. Report of Secretary**

Mrs. Carol Brown reported receiving thank you notes regarding the teacher retirement event and from Fuller Bartlett recipients.

**8. Report of Standing Committees**

- a. Buildings and Facilities – covered previously
- b. Education Committee (from May Meeting)

Mrs. Carol Brown reports there are no action items, the first meeting is September 29<sup>th</sup> and they are awaiting presentations and finalization of school and district in need of improvement plans.

- c. Finance Committee

Mr. Neil Donegan questioned a gift of \$10,000 and Mr. John Harper explained the gift was designated for the KHS autism/asperger program from Thomas Haas of Portsmouth.

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to accept the gift of \$10,000 from Thomas Haas for the autism/asperger program at KHS. Mrs. Kristin Blais seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to authorize a budget of \$2,500 for Phase 1 of the Keene Middle School marketing plan. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve a budget transfer in the amount of \$9,500 for improvement of the driveway at the Royal Avenue property. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

- d. Personnel Committee

No report

- e. Communications Committee

Next meeting - Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

- f. Policy Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Neil Donegan stated that four of the seven policies (IL, ILBA, KF and JICA) appearing for approval would be returned to the committee for further review. Only three policies will be voted on this evening.

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve Keene School Board Policy JEB – Age of Entrance. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Discussion ensued. Vote taken, motion passes by a vote of 7-2 with Mrs. Amy Speas and Mrs. Kristin Blais opposing.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve Keene School Board Policy BCB – Conflicts of Interest. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve Keene School Board Policy KCD – Public Gifts/Donations. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

**9. Reports of Special Committees**

- a. NH SAU #29 School Board

Nothing further to report.

b. Cheshire Career Center Advisory

Mr. Carter Chamberlin reports being privy to feedback from the community praising the students who are completing this program. He assured everyone that this program is delivering results.

c. NH School Boards Association

No report.

d. Liaison Reports

Mr. Donald Parker reported attending the Jonathan Daniels cookout on August 24<sup>th</sup> and congratulated everyone for a great start to the new year. Mrs. Kristin Blais reported attending a Fuller School Association meeting, which was well attended by teachers and support staff, and she spoke about the environmental learning program at Fuller School.

**10. Old Business**

None

**11. New Business**

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell questioned and discussion ensued around reinstating the Superintendent's Advisory Council.

**12. Resignations**

None

**13. Nominations/Elections of Staff**

None

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to enter into Non-Public Session according to RSA 91:A3. Mrs. Carol Brown seconded. Roll call vote taken, Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell-yes, Mrs. Amy Speas-yes, Mr. Carl Panza-yes, Mrs. Carol Brown-yes, Mr. Neil Donegan-yes, Mr. Carter Chamberlin-yes, Mr. Chris Coates-yes, Mr. Donald Parker-yes and Mrs. Kristin Blais-yes. Motion to enter into Non-Public Session passes by a unanimous roll call vote at 8:35 p.m.*

Dru Fox  
Stenographer

William B. Gurney,  
Co-Superintendent of Schools

**Approved: By the Keene Board of Education**

**Date: October 13, 2009**