

Education Committee Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2010

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
of the Keene Board of Education

Cheshire Career Center
Keene High School
43 Arch Street, Keene, NH

Tuesday, May 18, 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:

William B. Gurney, Co-Superintendent
Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendent
Meredith Cargill, Director of Curriculum
& Assessment

Board Members Present:

Carl A. Panza
Christopher C. Coates

Other Guests Present:

Annie MacDonald, Franklin Counselor
Bill Harris, Franklin Principal
Judy Idelkope, Chesterfield School Board
Misty Matrinez-Bohannon, Citizen

Chair Amy Speas called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

1. Public Input

Judy Idelkope requested that minutes get posted on the website within 72 hours. Mr. Gurney stated that minutes do not get posted until approved, but people can request a copy of the draft minutes if needed before then. Ms. Idelkope stated that she had wanted the minutes to discuss at a previous Chesterfield School Board meeting. She again requested that the draft copy be posted and Mr. Gurney stated that if requested, she could have copies of the stenographer's draft minutes to hand out. Carter Chamberlin suggested that this is a broader question for all committees. The decision was to forward the suggestion to the Communications Committee for review.

2. Approval of Minutes of April 27, 2010

Amy Speas stated that *Raising the Bar in Education* should be changed to *High Ability Children: Seeking Balance at Home and at School* on page 2 of 6 of the April 27, 2010 minutes

MOTION: Carter Chamberlin moved that the minutes of the Education Committee of April 27, 2010 be approved as amended. Mark Nugent seconded the motion. The committee voted and approved the minutes unanimously, 4-0.

3. Mini-Sabbatical Request – Annie MacDonald

Annie MacDonald, counselor at Franklin Elementary, requested 24 professional leave days over the next two years to study grief, loss and healing (15 days in 2010-2011 and 9 days in

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2011-2012). Ms. MacDonald submitted a handout and described how she became interested in grief and loss plus how her studies will affect her work in the school district. Discussion ensued about a mini-sabbatical format, the students/adults to be impacted from Ms. MacDonald's learning, recent examples of grief in the schools, substitute coverage, costs (covered by Ms. MacDonald) and curriculum. It was requested that copies of her books go into the school libraries. The Finance Committee and the full board are not needed. Mr. Harris supported this sabbatical. Mr. Gurney stated that he thought this was a great opportunity for a staff member to follow her passion while helping the guidance curriculum and students of the Keene School District at the same time.

MOTION: Kristin Blais moved that the mini-sabbatical for Annie MacDonald be approved. Carter Chamberlin seconded the motion. The committee voted and approved the minutes unanimously, 4-0.

4. Update: Senate Bill 180 [SB 180] Report Summary – Meredith Cargill

Meredith Cargill handed out a summary from the *May 11, 2010 NHDOE Site Visit Report*. SB 180 is the bill monitoring whether students receive an adequate education. The Keene School District was part of a pilot audit as it is the most complex organization in the state. There is no mandated corrective action needed at this time as all standards are being met. However, the report cited recommendations for improvements. All building principals of schools audited, as well as superintendents of sending SAUs received a copy of the full report. For easier readability, Ms. Cargill reported out on the findings from the SAU overview, Keene High School, Keene Middle School, and a copy of the Fuller School report. Commendations and recommendations included:

At the SAU-level:

- World Language Program is particularly strong.
- Establishing the Dir. of Curriculum helps with coordinating curriculum.
- A full-time Director of Technology is suggested.
- The North Campus is the one of only four high performance school buildings in the state. Students can now access high school programs while receiving alternative services.
- Strong communication with parents via the web, newsletters, etc.
- Math and English delivery exceed minimum standards. The reports from Social Studies and Science have not been sent from the NHDOE yet.
- The audit reveals that student performance data could be used more. Ms. Cargill will be asking for a motion to formally have a report out of the percentage of students coming into each semester below grade level for better intervention.
- Feeder schools can get together to ensure that students have mastered the same curricula.
- Block scheduling may limit accessibility to certain classes and may have gaps.

Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of block scheduling, how it affects NECAP and SAT scores, especially for math and foreign languages, and limits on elective opportunities with 87 minute blocks. Modifications were mentioned (math, english language arts & world languages) along with benefits and lecture vs. small group work. Mr. Woolridge can provide benchmarks from 1990's which were different than in 2009-2010. Mrs. Cargill stated that conversations

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about the various models of high school scheduling are taking place and the KHS instructional council are researching these models. Mrs. Cargill shared the caveat that any schedule changes cannot be done quickly and the resulting recommendations of the instructional council and decision of administration must follow a thorough action plan if change is to take place. It's difficult as the 4 blocks are now part of collective bargaining. Goffstown is the *Class-L* high school that has had the most successful NECAP scores. A team was sent to review what has worked there and they found that the blocks alternate everyone other day all year long (A/B days). Administration is taking the cautious, but hopeful approach as change will require a culture shift. In 1997 the Education Committee wanted 75% approval rate with a year of study, then a year to implement. Any such changes would need community support as well.

- Suggest professional training for paraprofessionals. Mrs. Cargill stated that this is a piece which will happen in the future.
- The Keene Middle School has the most complex transitions in the state, but should be commended.
- The KMS principal reports out to all sending schools and parents are notified when a student gets a C or below.
- The Social Studies staff was complimented as well as World Languages.
- Resources and costs are affected due to 20% of students who are on IEPs, much higher than most schools.
- Collaboratives within Keene Middle School help to reduce costs.
- The report stated the need for consistent professional days with all schools.

Discussion ensued about other schools and how they deal with high ability students (ie. math club in Chesterfield). Each school has its own culture. Personal Learning Plans, Renzulli, Lexile-based reading programs, increasing building-level leadership skills, and individual student talents were discussed. Keene Middle School is planning the forum to address rigor on June 10.

- Fuller School report was attached. The format provided from the state was not consistent with the other school reports. It stated that the technology lab is fully equipped, but Mr. Chamberlin disagreed.

Mrs. Cargill stated that this report is about *minimum standards* accountability, but not performance. Performance monitoring is still several years out. This June, principals will be training to provide a narrative report on their school's state profile (report card). The state has created a template to help aid in this.

**5. Report: *Where We are with Curriculum and the Common Core Standards Initiative* –
Meredith Cargill**

Ms. Cargill stated that she was new to the position as of July 1st and has spent much time auditing the strengths and deficiencies in SAU 29 curriculum and collecting data on programs and instructional time provided by school, grade-level, and content area. In english language arts and math there has been no aligned model since 2005. She gave an overview of standardized education and how there is variability amongst the states. The National Governors Association and Council of Chief School State Officers commissioned a National Common Core Standards Initiative. Mrs. Cargill explained the national standards timeline and that a public release will occur on June 2nd. The state will most likely adopt national standards as adoption is

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required to access Race to the Top grant funds. Mrs. Cargill explained how this will inform summer curriculum work.

There isn't a huge discrepancy between state and Common Core standards. Rather than continuing with a model that had one representative from each school, she will truncate the duration of the work by building 2-day summits, engaging many more teachers in working with the curriculum. It will help all students (from special education to high-achieving students) as well-articulated regular education curricula is the launching point for differentiation and collaboration within schools.

Mrs. Cargill explained that in addition to her audits, there are several other data points detailing the need for guaranteed and viable curriculum. The Elementary Ad Hoc Committee can look at some of these issues. There will be a Special Education Report finalized that speaks to some degree about the state of curriculum. Common Core Standards are located on their website <http://www.corestandards.org/Standards/K12>. In reviewing these during the feedback period in March, Mrs. Cargill supports the NHDOE in looking for fewer, clearer and higher expectations that align with Best Practice. It's still in the draft stage now. Prioritization of standards that provide the most enduring and leveraged knowledge, skills, and understandings will also help get our curricula to a more focused state.

6. Summer Professional Development Offerings – Meredith Cargill

- Teachers will be working on an Art Curriculum for 2 days to complete work that was started last summer and addressed again at periods during the school year.
- Health and PE will meet for 8 days this summer to revise, finalize, and publish work that was done in the summer of 2007.
- Social Studies may reconvene for a day or two. Mrs. Cargill explained that she is crafting a survey to administer to teachers to gather information on the piloted social studies curriculum that was in draft format for this year.

Discussion ensued about the omission of continents at grade school level. Mrs. Cargill explained the wide variety of interpretation of how to teach continents (such as culture vs. music/drumming vs. geography) and the committee could either dictate uniformity or omit the continent until a later grade. Due to an emphasis on reading, mathematics, and socialization in Kindergarten, the new curricula is build on the academically- and developmentally-appropriate practices of each grade with an increased load at higher levels. The committee designed required curricula to be less time consuming at the younger grades to ensure that what was required was implemented with fidelity. Mrs. Cargill recognizes the immense efforts and dedication many teachers have put into designing units around the continents in years past. Discussion ensued about the lack of requiring students to memorize capitals. Mrs. Cargill stated that it will take a back seat to understanding and the emphasis is not on rigor and critical skills (ie. knowing that each state has a state capital and its purpose). Mr. Harris stated that students still receive world studies integrated through other content areas and events at the elementary grades such as geographical information is attained via assemblies, Google Earth and Pennies for Earth.

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Ms. Blais asked about when curriculum implementation occurs. Mrs. Cargill explained that summer work typically creates a draft is rolled out in the fall so teachers can try it and make suggestions during the school year. Building principals then mandate and monitor the consistent implementation of all curricular areas through teacher evaluation, lesson plans, etc.

- 1 teacher champions ideas in each building while working during the summer summits.
- Previously, changes in Science curriculum were well received. Principals now monitor and require teachers to follow the SAU science curriculum. Social Studies had more concerns at the beginning of the school year - the least amount of negative feedback came from Wheelock as they had the most representatives (three Keene elementary schools had no representation during this past summer). More people have provided positive feedback as the year has progressed and as they've aligned their classroom units to meet the new curriculum.
- . The more people that have ownership, the better, as Common Core is non-negotiable.

Discussions ensued on differentiated learning and how over the next 3 years establishing strong benchmarks at all levels will help monitor curriculum implementation.

7. Other

Who will be on the Franklin Pierce Forum? Some Keene building principals, teachers, (including dept. reps) and some Chesterfield people will attend.

Discussion occurred about forms and how parents will be notified. At Symonds everyone got it, at other places no one did. One person was notified three times, but it wasn't district-wide. The organization holding the event did not submit this to the superintendents office for distribution to students. Mrs. Cargill forwarded the PDF flyer to all principals to share with their staffs.

KMS Forum: June 10th at 6:30 or 7 PM (still to be decided)

The intended purpose is to discuss rigor. A one hour meeting with questions will be similar to an Ad Hoc Committee meeting. People will break into small groups. More information will come to support the "Save the Date" information put in the middle school newsletter . This will be the first of forums to get parent feedback. Funding is needed for mailing, but Mrs. Cargill is managing the marketing of this and an e-mail blast and ad will occur from Chris Week's on June 1st. Mr. Chamberlin suggested a project plan.

8. Adjournment

Mark Nugent made a motion to adjourn. Kristin Blais seconded the motion. A vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously, 4-0.

The Education Committee was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,
Linda McCracken, Stenographer