

October 28, 2011

Minutes of Special School Board Meeting
193 Maple Avenue, Conference Room 100
12:30 p.m.

Present:

Kelly French, School Board Chair
Allison Aldrich, School Board Member
Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendent of Schools
Sheila Vara, Principal

1. Call to Order

Ms. French called the Board meeting to order at 12:48 p.m.

Ms. French spoke to the Board's charge from the 2011 Spring Forum to look at the following:

- Charter School Law
- Voucher Legislation
- Choice Options

The Board concluded that they want to be active, watchful and waiting regarding future options.

The Board decided to hold a public forum follow-up meeting at the school from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday, December 3, 2011.

The Board agreed that the four committees would be the following:

- Charter School
- Tracking Voucher School Discussion
- Marketing to Nelson and Committee for discussion with Sullivan regarding the potential tuitioning in of Sullivan students.

Becky, Cindy, Amelia, Kristin, Sheila, Allison, Kelly and Wayne met to tour the middle school at 1:10 p.m. Dotty Frazier, KMS Principal led the tour.

The Board and staff reconvened at 2:45 p.m. in the conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wayne E. Woolridge
Co-Superintendent

Nelson School Board Retreat
Friday, October 28, 2011 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. with the following members present:
Wayne Woolridge, Kelly French, Allison Aldrich, Kristin Roach, Emilia Whippie, Cindy Benner, Jennifer Kiernan, and Sheila Vara

Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendent of the Towns, opened the meeting by addressing SAU 29's three overarching goals for the year.

- Increase Student Learning – Response to Intervention (the establishment of and implementation of a three Tier System of student learning)
- Efficiency (use of resources from energy to personnel)
- Advocacy of public education (reaching out to secure the support we need)

Kelly French, the Chairman of the Nelson School Board, expressed her thankfulness for our ability to come together to set goals. She further stated that the Board's goals are to support the staff and involve the community. She also wanted the group to know that we can arrange to gather at any time that we would like.

Allison Aldrich, member of the Nelson School Board, shared that on Saturday, December 3rd, from 9-11 a.m. there would be a follow-up to the Community Forum. Instead of "watchful waiting" the Board will be establishing four committees on which interested community members may serve. These committees are: Charter School (researching the process and feasibility of becoming a charter school), Voucher System, Marketing (how do we market Nelson School to families), and the Sullivan School Liaison Committee. All of these committees will work to explore avenues through which Nelson School will remain open. A decision was made not to pursue "added value" which would include using the building during or after the school day for pre-school, adult and elderly care, and/or flu clinics which would help to generate additional revenue.

Sheila Vara, Principal Nelson School, spoke to last year's School Board Retreat which focused upon the Community Forum and the absence of school goals to address. Sheila noticed that included in previous year's goal "Real World Learning Opportunities" were often mentioned. Sheila asked Cindy Benner to address how our work with bullying and its language was real world learning. It was noted that a former Nelson School sixth grader used these skills at the Middle School to aid a classmate who was being bullied.

Sheila then asked each member of the team to identify what they considered the school's strengths. Jennifer Keirnan, special education teacher, has been impressed with the sense of community, individualized education and attention, small class size, and fantastic teachers. She

compared Nelson School to that of a high quality private education and would have considered purchasing property here if she had known about this school.

Emilia Whippie, 5/6 classroom teacher, shared that one of Nelson School's strengths is its ability to adapt to and meet the differing needs of students. She also mentioned that students are excited about learning and are successful because of this excitement. She values the school's mindset that encourages outside learning opportunities (hikes and field trips) as well as the sense of community that exists within the school.

Allison Aldrich, likes the positive, cohesive attitude of the staff which spills into classrooms and ultimately "touches" the children.

Wayne Woolridge sees the collegiality of the staff, as well as their ability to communicate with one another as the school's strengths. Wayne shared that he does not receive phone calls from disgruntled parents or staff members because the staff works together as a team.

Cindy Benner, K-2 classroom teacher, views the school as a family with community as its heart. She believes we are able to accomplish what we do because of our size, philosophy, and the bedrock of our foundation. She mentioned that each staff member is viewed as the teacher of each child. Cindy would like to have exiting parents interviewed to share their experiences at Nelson School which could be used for marketing.

Kristin Mullins, 3/4 classroom teacher, believes Nelson School's strength lies in the staff's collective desire to continually better ourselves. This desire to become better is modeled to our students who also strive to become the best they can be.

The following were a result of brainstorming possible goals:

- Are our students prepared for science and technology? Are we behind in science?
- We need to become familiar with and implement the Common Core.
- Should we group students by skills or age? We are doing some of this now. Should we do it on a larger scale? Do we want to create a different model?
- We are moving toward an RTI, inclusion, and differentiated instruction model.
Visitations to Keene Middle School to make the transition between Nelson School and Keene Middle School seamless
- How can we involve community in our school?
- Pursue the acquisition of a green house (real world learning). This would be a great science component that also involves wellness.
- Port-a-potty for spring and summer months for community members who use school grounds.

From the above list, the group agreed that academics and community involvement would be the two goals for the year. The ideas that were brainstormed all fit into each of these two categories.

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sheila Vara, Teaching Principal

Nelson School

APPROVED: 11/17/11