

Education Committee Meeting Minutes  
September 29, 2009

EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
of the Keene Board of Education

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

**Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009 5:30 p.m. Cheshire Career Center Conference Room**

**Committee Members Present:**

Carol Brown, Chair  
Kristin Blais  
Donald Parker  
Amy K. Speas

**Committee Members Absent:**

**Board Members Present:**

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

**Administrators Present:**

William B. Gurney, Co-Supt.  
Wayne Woolridge, Co-Supt.  
Meredith Cargill,  
Dir. of Curriculum and Assessment

**Other Guests Present:**

Patty Yoerger, Principal Jonathan  
Daniels School  
Richard Cate, Principal, Symonds  
Deb Clemente, Chesterfield  
Dorothy Frazier, Principal, KMS  
Alan Gross, Symonds  
Brenda Haenchen, Symonds  
Judy Idelkope, Chesterfield  
Marcia Kayser, Stoddard  
James Logan, Dir. of CCC  
Rebecca Matte, Symonds  
Linda McCracken, Stenographer  
John McMahan, KMS  
Maureen Meyer, KEA Co-Pres.  
Sarah Palermo, *Keene Sentinel*  
Gerri Rubin, Symonds & KMS  
James Scholfield, Symonds  
Mikki Stitham, Symonds  
Amy Strong, Symonds  
Galen Trinkle, KHS  
Christine Weeks, Public Information  
Coordinator

Chair Carol Brown called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.

**1. Public Input – Mikki Stitham, Susan Fratus**

- a) Mikki Stitham read a shortened version of a letter submitted to the Education Committee challenging NECAP testing as too narrow and looking at the whole student.
- b) Susan Fratus could not appear and submitted a letter about SINI and AYP perhaps affecting Symonds students negatively.
- c) Carol Brown stated that the schools have to respond to state and federal levels and changes are glacially slow. Neil Donegan stated that any recommendations will be considered by the Committee. Ms. Stitham suggested writing to the state asking

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them to move in a different direction. Ms. Brown suggested that the Communications Committee look at this further.

- d) William Gurney stated that the state could intervene if the Keene School District does not meet AYP standards. Wayne Woolridge explained that the Growth Model is still several years away. Mr. Gurney said that by 2014 the percentage levels off at 100%. Ms. Stitham urged alternative testing for emotionally disabled which is currently not allowed.

**2. Approval of Minutes of May 19, 2009**

There were no minutes to approve.

**3. Welcome Director of Curriculum and Assessment – Meredith Cargill**

Mr. Gurney introduced Meredith Cargill with her qualifications.

**4. School Profiles (Enrollments/Trends) – William Gurney**

Trying to find trends is difficult due to people moving out of town, losing jobs looking for less expensive homes or moving to town to find rentals. There has been a slow decline in enrollments in the elementary schools with a slight increase in the past 3 years, although the number of births show there should be an increase in Kindergarten. Keene Middle School continues to show a slight decline. Keene High School is consistent with a slight increase. Ms. Brown stated that the percentage of Special Educ. Children keeps creeping up. Carl Panza suggested that Mr. Gurney check out a new state website for births [www.sos.nh.gov/vitalrecords](http://www.sos.nh.gov/vitalrecords). Another concern are home-schooled children. The district knows of 31, but they can report in other ways. Private and charter schools also affect enrollments.

**5. Calendar Committee Update – Meredith Cargill**

The committee met and devised a parent survey. The final push will be at the Open Houses coming up and it will close Oct. 5, 2009. Parents may do computerized or paper version and Principals are responsible for parent communication. The Board should already have the results of the teachers' survey. A report will be given on Oct. 27, 2009.

**6. H1N1 School Program Continuation – William Gurney**

The Department of Public Health met 2 weeks ago with Superintendents and saw a PowerPoint presentation. Schools are now reporting student and teacher absences to get a baseline in case of an epidemic and there may be participation at state level. Paul Cooper posts changes to the website and all schools get the same information. Phone trees that do not break down as in the ice storm are being developed. Ideas like Channel 8 TV are being considered. Administrators at home may use Google Doc. FEMA may help out so all costs are being tracked for supplies. The Dept. of Crisis Management feels we're well-prepared. This also helps with Crisis Management Plans.

**7. SINI/DINI Presentations – Ms. Cargill, Mr. Cate, Mrs. Frazier and Mr. Chmiel**

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- a) Meredith Cargill presented a Background Report called *District in Need of Improvement* with a Powerpoint presentation which will be posted on the Internet. Mr. Donegan asked if we could reset the numbers if we miss. Ms. Cargill explained that AYP needs to be reached 2 years in a row in the same content area and sub-group. Safe Harbor is a bit of a cushion due to growth. Economically Disadvantaged are those who get free & reduced lunches. Mr. Woolridge explained that there will be additional funding this year, \$5000 instead of \$3500. Educationally Disadvantaged are those on IEPs. Mr. Gurney stated that a child could be counted 3 times if in the whole school count plus economic and educationally disadvantaged sub-groups. Ms. Brown stated that it's statistically invalid. Discussion followed on assessments, sending towns, DINI Plan, root causes, progress reports, future school studies, testing environments, breakfasts on test days, MAPS on the computer vs. pencil and paper tests and test preparations.
- b) Alan Chmiel spoke about self assessment and whether students had the proper classes and credits to take the NECAP exam. Some didn't and we can test them when they are ready. Regular and Special Education teachers need a closer working relationship. He also spoke about varied preparations from sending towns, professional learning communities, best practices, lesson delivery, developed common assessments, "Skinny" scheduling for sub-groups, SAU program, an additional math teacher, extra math credit, practice tests, NECAP film to help with the format, online scheduling, using the computer lab to help students, summer academy, evening and KSC tutorials plus reviewing class size.
- c) Dorothy Frazier used the New Hampshire Department of Education protocols for a holistic approach for self assessment and divides assessments into three categories: those that are strong, those that need continual progress and those that are just evolving. She also discussed root causes where gains were made, but AYP failed. Reorganizing Focus Study Groups, helping parents understand the importance of NECAP, changing the testing environment, collaborating with math and Special Ed. Teachers, using higher achieving peer models, identifying student needs, providing math remediation, RTI (Math), test taking strategy, setting student goals (NWEA), open response training, mentoring programs and going by grade levels as students are tested each year. MathScapes is new. Each team has a Special Education teacher. A math specialist would be helpful. It is hard to locate specialized math materials for the disadvantaged. Mrs. Frazier also discussed how gifted students had a Socratic reading circle, online math courses for the future, and developing research skills. Everything needs flexibility.
- d) Richard Cate discussed Symonds and SINI. Root causes were identified, and a plan developed, but the state did not approve it. The current school schedule is a concern, outdated special education materials, need data analysis, and have limited Title I support. The goals are for uninterrupted blocks of time, after school help, and implementation of *Everyday Mathematics*. It should not be changed now as it's been under review for a long time and it needs time to work. More will be discussed at the Open House tomorrow. Grade 6 students are charged back to Symonds so their data is included. Ideas include using test preparation materials, incorporating Grade 2 testing strategies in the Spring, developing a Title I budget for new special education materials and programs. Mr. Cate felt that most

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concerns were district wide and narrowing the stats does not help. Math specialists would help. Teachers are not happy with current scheduling so other strategies may be tried. According to Mr. Cate, No Child Left Behind narrows the curriculum to reading and math while Symonds teaches 13 curriculum areas. The law focuses on 22 students when 300 are doing fine and we don't want to sacrifice their education. It makes it challenging.

- e) Ms. Cargill summed up that plans are vetted through her. Resources, sub-groups, best practices all need to be checked, but it's not an overnight fix. The teachers need support.
- f) Mr. Donegan suggested that Symonds look at scheduling, remediation, professional development and getting a program fast for those 22 students! The Board will support the school. Ms. Cargill stated that she will keep the committee aware of budget concerns.
- g) Donald Parker asked if there was a specific number that is being worked towards on the growth model so everyone will know if the goal is achieved. It was his understanding that the goal of the improvement plans was to reach the required AYP level next year, and he urged Mr. Gurney and Ms. Cargill to give the plans one more review to help achieve this objective.
- h) Mr. Gurney stated that 53% of the schools passed AYP, but that does not help us. The state Commissioner is interested in a Growth Model, but not the Secretary of Education who is more concerned with accountability.

**8. Tour of Cheshire Career Center Television Studio – James Logan**

The Committee visited the new Television Studio and Galen Trinkle spoke about installations and hoping to have a live broadcast by Christmas. Mr. Chmiel is very pleased with the wide range of students and their excitement. Mr. Logan stated that this is a win-win for KHS and the community as the students may do community news. It involves IT, English, set design, producing, directing, using the camera, etc. Fall Mountain and Monadnock students can also participate.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 P.M. The next scheduled meeting is October 27, 2009 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda McCracken, Stenographer