

School Administrative Unit #101
Wakefield School Board
September 17, 2019
Paul School Library
Minutes – Approved

Present: Bob Ouellette, Chair, Tracey Kolb, Vice Chair, Jen McCawley, Sandy Johnson, Relf Fogg; Administration: Superintendent Jerry Gregoire, Principal Jim Lampron, Business Administrator Marie D’Agostino, Student Services Director Anne Kebler, Facilities Manager Joe Williams, Transportation Director Brennan Peaslee, Admin. Asst. Larissa Mulkern; Public: Jim Miller, Ted Taylor, and Debra Taylor of Clearview TV, Mary Wing Soares; Steve Brown, Carlene Stewart; Staff Members: Jackie Jakubec, Meghan Libby, Jean Buck, Julie Crowley; and a Wakefield Police Officer (for a portion of the meeting)

Call to Order & Pledge: Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda: Mrs. Johnson made a motion to approve the consent agenda (AP & Payroll manifests and monthly finance report), seconded by Mrs. Kolb. Members voted all in favor, 5-0.

Minutes:

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the public minutes of September 3, with amendments offered, seconded by Mrs. Kolb. Members voted all in favor, 5-0. Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the nonpublic minutes, with amendments offered. He asked to include in the nonpublic minutes the statement by Mr. Ouellette to stop the personal attacks, and that when Mr. Ouellette asked Mr. Fogg if he wanted to be a part of the negotiations committee team, Mr. Fogg replied yes. Members agreed, Mrs. Kolb seconded the motion, and the board voted all in favor to approve the nonpublic minutes as amended, 5-0.

Reports:

Student Services Director: Mrs. Kebler provided a report with updated enrollment numbers. The Little Paws program, moved to the Paul School, is off to a great start. The new pre-school teacher is doing a great job and the Partners Program is also doing well. The Partner Program helped avoid an out-of-district placement. Currently, the three students enrolled in out-of-district placements have been budgeted for (two high school and one elementary school.)

Principal’s Report: Mr. Lampron reviewed his report, with an overview of the staff field trip kick-off, the updated Staff Reference Binder, and an update and demonstration of the morning Advisory sessions new this year. Of note, the school has 32 new students this year not including Kindergarten students. Upcoming dates include an open house on Sept. 19, two fire drills in September and a lock down drill on Oct. 4. Community Day is Friday, Sept. 27. Mr. Lampron reviewed results of the Elementary Student Survey, Middle School Student Survey, Family Survey, and School Personnel Survey. The Paul School Staff Reference Binder was also reviewed and discussed.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the **Staff Reference Binder**, seconded by Mrs. Kolb. Members voted all in favor, 5-0. In the future, the Principal’s Report will be called the “School Administration Report.” In other business, permission was requested for two teachers to attend an out-of-state workshop sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Mrs. Kolb made the motion to approve seconded by Mrs. Johnson. Members voted all in favor 5-0.

Transportation Director’s Report: Mrs. Peaslee reviewed her report. School bus inspections have been completed; the new minivan and new 77-passenger bus arrived and are running routes; new digital radios

have been installed; four buses still have analog radios. Cameras from the old buses were reinstalled in the new van and the Impala. Improvements were made related to Kindergarten dismissal. There is room for improvement for the high school bus routes. Overall, the start of the school year has gone well.

Facilities Report: Mr. Williams said only one bid was received for Winter, Summer Grounds and Roof Maintenance; Mr. Ouellette opened the sealed bid and shared it with the board. The bid was from Howe Two Lawncare & Landscaping LLC for a maximum price of \$27,100 per year for a three contract.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to accept the bid from Howe Two, seconded by Mrs. Kolb; Mr. Fogg added that perhaps the company can be asked to consider what the price would be to snowplow the school parking lot in the event the town is no longer able to plow. Members voted all in favor 5-0.

Water Test Results: Mr. Williams had filters installed on one of the sinks that had previously tested high for lead; it worked great and the lead level was lowered so more filters will be installed on the other sinks that tested high. The filters are \$130 installed, and he will learn how to do the install himself next time. The filters last six months to a year.

Learning Centers/Partner Program: Mrs. Johnson asked if the cost of the learning centers have exceeded the \$26,000 allotted; Mr. Williams said he and the Business Administrator will have a financial report ready by next school board meeting. In other tasks, painting is nearly completed, and tree removal is in progress; three trees abutting the parking lot will cost \$750 to remove. The installation of the sound system in the gym will be completed on Saturday (Sept. 21).

Old Business:

CIP Update: Mrs. Kolb reviewed an updated spreadsheet.

Illegal Vote: Mr. Fogg said the board should not have discussed and voted on the appointment to the negotiations committee in nonpublic session; members now have experience and should know better. When discussing board members, the discussion needs to be public. Mr. Gregoire agreed, adding that the topic did not belong in public, either, but as a nonmeeting when discussions related to negotiations take place, according to our attorney's advice. Mr. Gregoire did some research and found that the board has discussed negotiations in nonpublic sessions for many years. Mr. Fogg said his point was the appointment discussed at last nonpublic had nothing to do with negotiations; subcommittee members are voted in public session. Mr. Gregoire said when there is discussion about who is on the committee, when and why, that discussion is considered strategy and is exempt.

New Business:

NH Standards: Mrs. Kolb presented a set of charts, The Nation's Report Card, with details of 2017 test scores in mathematics and reading for grade 4 and grade 8 in New Hampshire; the results were higher than the national average. It's the Board's responsibility to make sure parents and residents know that Wakefield School District curriculum is not aligned with the NH State Assessments; the assessments of your state are aligned with standards; not being aligned with standards of New Hampshire means our students are not aligned with the testing hence the scores are reflecting the lack of continuity. We're on a Massachusetts standard that has been discontinued and archived. Wakefield students do not have the tools that they need to improve the scores at the Paul School. All the other districts in the state are on the New Hampshire Standard – so our students, if they have to move somewhere else, are not on the same level. Mr. Gregoire added our standards in Math are nowhere near each other in the lower grades; as they get closer, 6th, 7th, 8th grade they become more aligned which is indicative of how well we do in Math in those grades and how we're not doing as well in the lower grades. A large part of that is misalignment of our standards and while we're required by law to take the New Hampshire State Assessment we're not required by law to follow the New Hampshire State Standards. Our students are not on the same level playing field. Several years ago, he promoted the idea of bringing Athletics back to the school – we wanted to have our students participate in Athletics much like their counterparts were doing at Kingswood and in Rochester, and the School Board agreed we had to do that.

Additionally, Band and Chorus returned to the school because we wanted our students to be on the same level playing field as Rochester and Kingswood; he asked the board to do the same thing with academics so when students get to high school, they can compete and be recognized for their academic success.

Extensive discussion continued regarding Common Core, and alignment with New Hampshire Standards. Mr. Gregoire provided some background on Common Core, which is a set of standards of what students are expected to know at the end of each grade level. It does not mandate how to teach or teaching materials. Mrs. McCawley said as a former foster parent she can attest to the problems children face when moved from schools from town to town. She said our teachers need to teach them the material on which they will be assessed. Mr. Fogg said there are two policies that command the school board review and approve the curriculum and education; another policy is on our State Constitution -- why haven't we embraced [the fourth Article to the State of New Hampshire Constitution and used it for the foundation of our education here at Paul School. ... you have the right to your conscience; the right to wake up and choose what direction to go in to try to better yourself and better your community. What he is seeing in education is that it is losing sight of independence and of foundational educational skills that should be shared. Mrs. McCawley said there must be some rules and schedules in place if teaching more than one child; its great --they'd love for you to come in and teach about the Fourth Amendment, volunteer some time -- but there must be goals and standards. Mrs. Kolb wanted to make clear that we are on standards that must be met; there are expectations here.

Mrs. Johnson asked Mr. Fogg what he meant by 'foundational skills.' He responded trustworthiness, loyalty, courtesy, Scout-like values.

Mr. Fogg said when the district rejected Common Core in 2014 the whole idea was to be innovative and create a better environment here at Paul School. The withdrawal from Milton happened because they insisted on sticking with Common Core and Wakefield was heading in a better direction, without the New Hampshire Standards.

Mrs. Johnson said she was in the audience, before she became a school board member, during discussions of Common Core. She said it was referred to as a 'government conspiracy.' It was not a conspiracy, it was Governors of the states that came up with Common Core -- Republicans, Democrats, Independents -- coming together. She said we are a mobile society now; Common Core sets basic standards for the end of the year. er you're moving from across the country or wherever, your kids are not going to be ahead or beyond, but right on target. It wasn't imposing on how to teach, what to use to teach, just the basics that had to be done. It wasn't preventing anyone from going beyond those basics just that certain things had to be covered.

Mrs. Kolb said currently the teachers don't have the freedom to teach whatever they want, they don't pick and choose what they want. We are teaching to a standard. We should be proud of New Hampshire. They took the best of both worlds and created this (New Hampshire Standards) for our students.

Mr. Gregoire added we have standards we are following that are reinforced by our curriculum that is supported by the program. There is consistency between grades and that doesn't change; what would change is a set of standards that is aligned to the assessment so when our students are taking that assessment (test) they are being judged on a level playing field. When he hears from our community that we need to improve our scores, the way we're going to do that is match our standards, our curriculum and our assessments together.

Mr. Ouellette suggesting holding a community forum on this topic. Mrs. Kolb asked if there was consensus. Mr. Ouellette responded it was too early for that. By consensus the board opened the meeting to hear from the teachers in the audience.

Ms. Crowley read a letter from 7th Grade Science Teacher Gavin Kearns, who was unable to attend the meeting in person; excerpted here: “I am writing this letter to you as I am unable to attend the meeting tonight and voice my support for the adoption of the New Hampshire College and Career Ready-Science Standards. While no one change made by the Wakefield School Board can bring about the academic achievement that the students, teachers, administrators, school members and community are looking for, it is my professional opinion that adopting these standards will allow our school to move forward in a positive direction to teach science to a higher degree. I am aware the changes include in adopting the new standards. I believe that there is a belief that students are being taught “by the book” and not allowed to be creative thinkers. That is the reason I am excited by the prospect of switching to the NH College and Career Ready – Science Standards. Much of the content remains the same; students still learn about chemistry, physics, astronomy, biology, etc. In my experience with the new standards, the major change is both in the depth of the standards and in the way the standards are taught... A change in standards is not an easy undertaking by anyone, however, I look forward to helping the school adopt and teach the new standards. The adoption will allow students to be challenged more rigorously and have better understanding of the content for both state assessments and as they move on and graduate from Paul School.”

In other comments, First Grade Teacher Jackie Jakubec says the standards allow students to dig deeper and provide different ways to approach a problem.

Mrs. Wing Soares added that she works with sixth, seventh and eighth grade students at a school that has the New Hampshire Standard and in sixth grade she experienced the difference in Science -- what they had before the Standards were adopted and what they have now where children who are well beyond the sixth grade in Science are able to go beyond that in sixth grade because they complete the Standard and move forward. When they are in seventh they can continue up through eighth or ninth grade standards; the standards are there to allow us to assess the students at that level. She encouraged the board to adopt the NH Standards and said the school is constrained when you have a set of standards that are outdated. This [New Hampshire Standard] gives you much more freedom and much more ability across the curriculums.

Mr. Ouellette suggested tabling this, hold a community forum to get everybody’s input. Mr. Fogg said he would second that. Mrs. Johnson suggested imposing a timeframe. Mrs. Kolb asked if possible, for board members to remain civil on social media. There is not one board member who is doing something inappropriate or underhanded. She said we’re trying to improve the education of students at Paul School.

Mrs. Johnson suggested that by the second meeting of October, have a consensus of what the staff considers for the standards and hopefully have input from the public by then. Mr. Gregoire asked if they would like to hold a public hearing on the subject at the next meeting [Oct. 1] and members agreed.

Motion: Mrs. McCawley made a motion for the meeting to continue beyond 8 p.m. seconded by Mrs. Kolb; members voted 4-1 with Mr. Fogg opposed.

Medicaid Emergency Rule

Mr. Gregoire explained that the district determines anticipated revenues for the budget based on Medicaid reimbursement; the rule has run out. New Hampshire instituted emergency rules that go into effect until February 2020. Basically, they are looking at who can prescribe services for students who receive Medicaid. He added that currently we have students who receive speech/language, vision, OT, PT, nursing and counseling services and we bill and are reimbursed by for that service by Medicaid. We’ve been doing in like this for decades. Currently we have an Emergency Rule because they’re not sure who can prescribe it. In a hospital the only group that can prescribe services that are billable to Medicaid are nurses, doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants; they’re not quite sure how this is going to go, and this could have a

significant impact on our Medicaid reimbursement. Right now, the number we anticipated is \$80,000 and we're not sure how much we're going to get back through Medicaid to Schools. This could have a negative impact.

Mrs. Kebler said the current practice is, when they do the annual IEP meeting, they use a form for ordering services for Medicaid billing, referred to as the ORF. In the past, speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, vision therapist, nurse, or counselor could make that prescription through the ORF. Once the form is filled out, our re-habilitation assistants and related services could submit billing and the district would get reimbursed. She said that because we don't know really what they're going to do, we and most districts are having providers – MSB is the company the district uses – submit their hours so once when we find out what the rule is, we can sign off. She added that if we will be required to have a nurse practitioner or a PA sign off on all of those services, it may significantly impact our Medicaid revenue.

Mr. Gregoire has a meeting with the Strafford Learning Center on Thursday, a provider of most of our contracted services, to talk about Medicaid and how we can address this through the venue of Strafford Learning Center. Not sure what their plan is but will bring that back to you.

School Board Committee Meeting Schedule Draft

The schedule lists committee and board meetings through December 17, 2019. Mrs. Kolb noted a change to the Capital Improvement Committee schedule as the work has been completed; the committee could meet 'as needed.' Mr. Fogg said a committee was set up to review health insurance plans, but he didn't see it on the schedule – is it a non-meeting? Mr. Gregoire said negotiations are a non-meeting and health care does fall under negotiations. Members are notified of those meetings via email. A date has not yet been set for a meeting to summarize the health care committee findings.

Policies

DAF – Mrs. Kolb read the reminder of the DAF – Administration of Federal Grant Funds Policy, parts 5 through 10 covering the topics of: Conflict of Interest; Inventory Management; Travel Reimbursement; Accountability and Certifications; Time and Effort Reporting; and Grant Budget Reconciliation, completing the first reading.

Mrs. Kebler noted this booklet of policies is new and based on requirements following a Federal Audit of the NH Department of Education; the policy is effective with the 2019-2020 school year, and every policy will need a procedure. The DAF was developed in spring 2019 by the New Hampshire School Board Association.

Other Business

Kindergarten enrollment and staffing: Mr. Gregoire reported that 20 more students have registered for Kindergarten after the registration held last spring, when we had 43 students; bringing the total number of students up from 13, 14 students per class last year to 20 students per class this year (in three classes); when we put in a regular education aide years ago the intention was that you'd have a para in each classroom because the teacher needs someone to help – when you have little ones who are just starting school, getting the kids dressed and redressed for recess during winter, with one person is challenging. Some kids are not happy to be in Kindergarten and they are taking off, hiding in bathrooms. They need someone to help in the classroom. He suggested hiring two regular education paraprofessionals, otherwise you have safety and liability issues; crowded classes also create an educational environment where the students are not going to get what they need and when they land in first grade they are going to be a detriment next year.

Mr. Fogg asked how many staff members were there when the school had 620 pupils. Are we able to find that out?

Mr. Gregoire added this is a regular education and not a special education issue – if it was special education the school would be mandated to hire. He is compelled to come to the board and request to hire two paraprofessionals. Mrs. Johnson asked where in the Regular Education function can we find this money? Mr. Gregoire said they are going to have to find it. This was an area we were concerned with at the start of the school year and budget process. He is finding things in our budget that are essential but were not budgeted properly...these are in his ‘discrepancy book’, and in some areas, essentials were eliminated from the budget, or not budgeted properly. Estimated costs would be \$40,000 salary/benefits per para; members asked if they can hire part-time paras without benefits or pull other paras from other classes. Mrs. McCawley added that having one person (teacher) for 20, five-year-olds is undesirable and this situation takes priority in this bare bone budget. Mrs. D’Agostino reminded the board that it is early in the budget cycle. At this point we must put the students first then look at where we are; we’ll have more of an idea at the next school board meeting.

Motion: Mrs. McCawley made a motion to hire two regular education paraprofessionals for the Kindergarten level; Mrs. Kolb seconded the motion. The motion was amended to hire two regular ed paraprofessionals to fill the positions, part-time if possible, full time if needed. Mrs. Kolb seconded the amendment. Members voted 3-2 in favor, with Mrs. Kolb, Mr. Ouellette and Mrs. McCawley in favor and Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Fogg opposed.

Upcoming Dates: Mr. Gregoire said the Rochester School District has suggested the meeting date for the Fall 2019 AREA Joint Agreement meeting for Monday, Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. at Spaulding High School. Tuesday, November 12, is being considered as the date on which the School Board will present to the Town’s Budget Committee.

Website/MoxDog proposal: Mrs. Kolb brought up the MoxDog proposal from 2018; she would like to discuss the proposal at the next school board meeting. She thought the initial outlay would be \$3,000 with a \$99 monthly fee. Mr. Fogg asked if the project should go out via competitive bid.

RSA 91-A (Right to Know Law) requests: Mr. Gregoire noted two more requests came in, one from Mr. Fogg that took about two hours and another from Mrs. Colbath that took 20 minutes.

Public Comments: Kindergarten Teacher Jean Buck thanked the board for supporting hiring more paras for the classroom; she said the situation has been very difficult. Steve Brown said the last time curriculum was changed it took nine months and now you want it in five minutes. The process should be spread out.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed with a vote of 5-0 at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Larissa Mulhern
Administrative Assistant