

BROOKLINE-NEWFANE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, October 21, 2010
6:30 PM ~ *NewBrook Elementary School*

Draft Minutes

Present: Dan Seiden, April Wellman, Brookline; Kim Colligan, Kim Friedman, Ken McFadden, Newfane (Board members); Bruce Garrow, NewBrook Principal; Steven John, WCSU Superintendent; Amy Jo Cable, recorder

- I. **Call to order, introductions & agenda review (including consent agenda):** Kim Friedman called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM. It was decided to move “truancy policies” from item iii. and place it under “Consent Agenda” on the agenda. No objections to the content of the revised *Consent Agenda* were stated.
- II. **Community Input (members of the public & faculty/staff):** No members of the public/staff were present.
- III. **Discussion of Class Size Policy G14:** Ken McFadden advised that Class Size Policy G14 was considered model language by the state of Vermont’s *Board of Education*. Ken pointed out that item number six on the policy (“Under no circumstances can the Superintendent move children between individual school districts without approval of the local school boards involved.”) was added by our *WCSU Policy Committee*. Ken also explained that the state of Vermont requires the board to adopt a class size policy this policy was unanimously recommended to the boards of the SU by the *WCSU Policy Committee*. Kim Friedman asked board members, Steven John and Bruce Garrow for any thoughts or recommendations about the policy. A discussion followed about the policy. Ken McFadden moved to warn the class size policy 14G as is. Kim Colligan gave her second. No further discussion. All were in favor. Policy G14 was warned without any changes.

TASKS

- **Steven John will post the warning of the policy at the SU offices.**
- **Bruce Garrow will post the warning at the *NewBrook Elementary School*.**
- **Ken McFadden and April Wellman will post the warning at their respective town offices.**

TICKLER: Officially adopt *Class Size Policy G14* as part of the *Consent Agenda* at the Board’s November meeting.

Steven John briefly discussed Class Size Policy administrative procedure and discussed the two model policies and charts the *Vermont Department of Education* had provided. Kim Friedman thanked Ken McFadden for representing our board on the WCSU policy committee.

IV. **Begin conceptual discussion of FY12 budget**

- A. Parameters for Superintendent & CFO in development of Brookline-Newfane joint budget, guided by student outcomes agreed upon at retreat: Kim Friedman asked Board members for their general thoughts for FY12 budget development.
1. Specific considerations (from retreat & other discussions)
 - a. *Challenges for Change* targeted reductions: A discussion which included thoughts about the budget cuts that were already taken last year by the Board followed. The Board agreed that they would not start off the budget discussion assuming a 2% reduction per *Challenges for Change*.
 - b. Our goal of providing quality education in a fiscally responsible manner: All agreed.
 - c. Student outcomes identified at retreat/items that require funding such as staff training needs and policy governance training for Board:
 - (1) All agreed with Kim Friedman's proposal that one parameter to be considered for the FY12 budget would be additional costs over last year's budget associated with activities that would help to meet student outcomes. Examples: staff training, policy governance training for Board members and the costs associated with developing a template for each grade level team's reporting system.
 - (2) No objections were stated when Dan Seiden asked that more dedicated space for music and art be considered in the FY12 budget.
 - d. Per pupil admin costs: Steven John pointed out that the *NewBrook Elementary School's* current FY11 student/teacher ratio is 11.8, which is slightly above the state's student/teacher ratio. Bruce Garrow advised their student/teacher ratio is one of the most effective student/teacher ratios in the district.
 - e. Student/staff ratios: Steven John distributed and briefly discussed charts pertaining to student/staff ratios and how those ratios could possibly effect the FY12 budget. It was agreed that cutting staff was not, at this time, a consideration for the FY12 budget.

TASKS

- **Ken McFadden will advise the Board at our November meeting of any changes in the Newfane zoning laws that may take place due to a meeting being held at the NewBrook Fire station next week.**
- **The Board requested Bruce Garrow to consult with his staff regarding teaching load effectiveness**

and general needs.

f. % low-income students:

- (1) Steven John and Bruce Garrow advised that the administration would plan on continuing the breakfast/lunch program which began this year at the *NewBrook Elementary School*.
- (2) Steven John also pointed out that due to the economy there may be even more children at the poverty level.

g. Other unique circumstances:

- (1) Steven John reminded the Board that the topic of salary negotiations is a large consideration for next year's budget.
- (2) Bruce Garrow pointed out that quality child care before and after school also presents a problem for parents and the Board may want to consider child care as a parameter for the FY12 budget plan.
- (3) Bruce also briefly discussed the condition of the school's roof and the upcoming insulation that will be installed using funds from an energy grant. Bruce advised that he believed that the school building's roof may not need any repair for the next two years, but the cost of a new roof may need to be considered in the school's FY13's budget plan.
- (4) Kim Friedman asked April Wellman if there were any unique circumstances which needed to be considered for the FY12 budget due to the Brookline students move to the *NewBrook Elementary School*. April advised there were no budget considerations she could think of.
- (5) Kim Colligan asked Bruce Garrow , in terms of the hot lunch program, if he had everything he needed or did he need the Board to budget some things for that. Bruce advised that if they need a worker, then that would cost more money, but right now he did not know what additional funding the program would need. Bruce also pointed out that they are serving between 80 to 100 hot lunches a day. Bruce explained that they are serving 30-40 breakfasts a day, but due to the way the program is set up, they are being charged for 50 breakfasts a day. Bruce did say that now that they have a stove at the school, he wants to start serving hot breakfasts, which may help bring the breakfast count up. Bruce advised that he

also hoped to obtain grants to pay for some of the costs of the hot lunch program.

- h. Act 62: Can we/do we want to count more children? Steven John advised that Frank Rucker, WCSU Chief Financial Officer, had determined that method 4, of the 5 methods that could be used to calculate the cap, yielded the most number of students that could be counted under Act 62 (19 students from the two towns, as opposed to the current 12 students being counted). Steven also pointed out that he has asked Bettyann Runge, the former *Brookline Elementary School* principal, to serve as a consultant on early education partnerships for WCSU. Kim Friedman expressed that she would like to see the cap reflected in the preliminary budget that the Board looks at in November. Kim also pointed out that while she realizes that it may be financially impossible, she would like to at least see what the result of putting the 19 students into the formula would be, if any, on the tax rate. Kim further explained that if we (the *NewBrook Elementary School*) have more students that can be counted and we can afford to count them, she would love to include them in the budget. It was agreed to put 19 students into the draft FY12 budget for now to see if it makes sense fiscally.

B. Any direction to Steven on parameters for WCSU budget?

1. Steven John discussed upcoming changes in the laws that will increase the responsibilities of the SU. He also advised that it is not possible for him to know, due to all the changes that will be taking place, if he will need more resources in the office or less. Kim Friedman asked Steven if there were specific areas in which feedback from the Board would be useful to Steven. Steven asked if there were some general indications on the Board's part of lack of service, or frustration or not getting information needed from the SU, then that's important for him to know since it probably means he needs to increase the resources.
2. Kim Friedman asked Steven is there was enough money built in the upcoming WCSU budget to do the kind of curriculum coordination that is so badly needed and that she feels Steven has jump-started in his tenure. Steven discussed the budget cuts that the SU will be experiencing in the next two years (approximately 300 thousand dollars) and with the limited resources the SU has to work with, he would lean towards investing those limited resources towards the future (i.e. technology) rather than a full time curriculum coordinator.

V. **How Are We Doing? (tracking progress towards outcomes)**

- Discussion w/ Superintendent: Questions/comments re. Superintendent's report:

- Steven John distributed a chart entitled, *School District Budget Timeline FY2012*. Ken McFadden pointed out that since we are one joint school board we require less time and service from the supervisory union staff, therefore, the Newfane/Brookline assessment should be reduced. A discussion followed with everyone in agreement due to the efficiencies which have been achieved as a result of combining the Brookline and Newfane elementary schools.
- The Board is interested in pursuing with the *Windham Central Supervisory Union Executive Committee* the possibility of decreasing the Newfane/Brookline assessment due to consolidation of schools.

TASK: April Wellman will call Emily Long to request that this be added to the agenda for the Windham Central Supervisory Union Executive Committee meeting on Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

- Steven John briefly discussed the *School District Budget Timeline FY2012* chart which indicated the public school district meeting with the budget vote for the *Brookline/Newfane Joint Board* will occur on February 15, 2011.

TASK: Kim Friedman will amend and send out the joint contract and set the date of the joint school board meeting for the second Saturday in February (February 12, 2011) at 10 AM (see April 15th minutes).

- Steven John advised the Board that their subscription for the *American School Board Association* is due to expire on December 31, 2010 and the cost of the subscription is \$235.00 a year. Ken McFadden moved that the Board not renew its *American School Board Association* subscription. Kim Colligan gave her second. No further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.
- A handout entitled *Title I School Wide Allocations for FY11 – WCSU member districts* was distributed by Steven John, which he advised he obtained from a website that the federal government has that shows how much Title I money school districts received in 2010 based on the 2000 census and are currently spending. (Steven advised he has been going to all the boards with this information, but not all the boards have as yet received this information.) Steven reminded the Board that Title I allocations are based statistically on the number of children in a school district that are living in families of poverty. Steven pointed out that according to the chart on the handout, Brookline and Newfane school districts were not due to receive Title I funds from the federal government, but the state of Vermont gives superintendents the responsibility of determining how their Title I

funding is allocated throughout their districts. Steven explained that he made his decisions regarding allocations of the Title I money according to need, since the state of Vermont has indicated that the statistical method that the federal government has of allocating resources does not reflect accurately on the numbers of children in poverty in small towns...therefore the superintendent is to invest Title I money in a way that best meets the needs of the students for improving reading and math scores throughout the supervisory union. (Steven John allocated \$35,000 of Title I money to the *NewBrook Elementary School* to use this year.) Steven pointed out that Title I money is not granted by the federal government to the individual towns. Rather, it's granted by the federal government to the state and the state allocates it to superintendents. This has been the procedure for the past ten years, but the procedure for distributing the money, where the superintendent decides how much each school district receives, was not advertised to the general public. Steven advised that he allocated the Title I funds as an administrative team among the principals with proposals for programs to improve student learning, which Steven stated he would continue to advocate for, since it's his responsibility to invest the money in a way that is most effective for the most students. Bruce Garrow advised the Board that if that money would go away tomorrow, the *NewBrook Elementary School* would not have the reading and math support that they have now. According to a chart included on Steven's handout, the WCSU received \$244,166 Title I money for FY11. Also according to the chart, Jamaica, Marlboro and Windham school districts were also not due to receive Title I funds from the federal government, but were allocated \$20,000, \$18,000, and \$9,700 respectively. Also, according to the chart, several of our school districts received less Title I money than they were due to receive from the federal government which included:

- Dover (\$113,351. Allocated by the federal government; received \$24,000.)
- Leland & Gray Union High School (\$72,994. Allocated by the federal government; received \$58,466.)
- Townshend (\$37,957. Allocated by the federal government; received \$28,500.)
- Wardsboro (\$32,117. Allocated by the federal government; received \$24,000.)

Kim Friedman thanked Steven John for his report and all the thought and preparation that went into it.

b. Discussion w/ Principal: Questions/comments re. Principal's report

- Kim Friedman asked Bruce if he was able to assure consistency from classroom to classroom within grades in terms of curriculum, especially given that the *NewBrook Elementary School* is blending staffs this year from two

different schools (the former *Brookline Elementary School* and the former *Newfane Elementary School*). Bruce advised he would be addressing Kim's question when he discussed his request for in-service days coming up later in the meeting.

- Ken McFadden asked Bruce why he was turning over his truancy officer position. Bruce explained that with the recent changes in the law a principal is mandated to turn students in to authorities after 13 days of being absent from school and it seemed a conflict of interest when he is mandated to report a student and also serve as the truant officer. A discussion followed regarding the position of truancy officer. Ken McFadden made a motion to accept Bruce Garrow's resignation as the *NewBrook Elementary School's* truant officer. April Wellman gave her second. A brief discussion regarding a truant officer's duties took place. Steven John suggested that the Board request the *Windham County Sheriff's Department* to serve the school's need for a truancy officer. No further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed. Dan Seiden made a motion to legally appoint the *Windham County Sherriff* as the *NewBrook Elementary School's* truant officer. Ken McFadden gave his second. No further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

- In-service request: Bruce Garrow distributed two handouts, one showing a general two day outline of the two in-service days being requested and one handout explaining how the two in-service days will help achieve outcomes as requested by Kim Friedman. Bruce requested that both Thursday, November 11, 2010 (Veteran's Day) and Tuesday, November 23, 2010 be designated as in-service days this year only. Bruce explained that his staff has expressed a strong desire for more time to do some fundamental work to increase the ability to work together as a team, which included ensuring consistency between classroom to classroom as Kim Friedman had mentioned (see above item i.)
 - Bruce discussed both handouts which included plans to work with Matt Martin in developing a template for each grade level team's reporting system, time to create a two-year loop in Science and Social Studies with supporting curriculum direction and other supporting data and developing a specific school wide discipline process and plan.
 - Kim Friedman asked if there was anything the Board should be doing as a school to support working families, since another day off can sometimes be a real burden to parents finding quality daycare for their children. Steven John advised that he supported Bruce's proposal for the two in-service days. Steven also suggested to Bruce that in the communications regarding the proposed two in-service days, that Bruce encourage parents to call the school should they have some concern about daycare for their children for those two days. Steven suggested that perhaps something could be arranged here at the school on those two days so that children would not be home alone. Kim Friedman moved to approve the

proposal for the two in-service days on Thursday, November 11, 2010, and Tuesday, November 23, 2010. Ken McFadden gave his second. No further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

- VI. Review Joint Board's draft annual calendar :** Kim Friedman asked if there were any items for the calendar that she had forgotten to add or any corrections that she needed to make. Corrections and additions to the calendar were made.

TASKS

- **Kim Friedman will make needed changes to the calendar and send out.**
- **Kim Friedman will add setting the date for the information meeting to next month's agenda.**

TICKLER: Reserve the *NewBrook Fire Hall* for the upcoming information meeting and the joint district meeting in February.

Kim Friedman expressed her gratitude that board members, along with Steven John and Bruce Garrow, were all moving forward as a team with a shared vision of how they want to function and she acknowledged all the work and changes that the Board, Steven John and Bruce Garrow have made since June of this year.

VII. Information-Sharing

a. Updates

- *Brookline Building Committee:* Dan Seiden advised that his committee has no recommendations to make to the Board at this time. Dan said that the members of the public who attended a meeting regarding the future use of the former *Brookline Elementary School* building which took place just prior to this meeting here at the *NewBrook Elementary School*, were wonderful and they all volunteered to be part of the committee. Dan said that there were terrific ideas presented at the meeting for the use of the building, including using it as a community center. Dan also said that Bettyann Runge had suggested that the building could possibly be used to do developmental assessments or leased for early education programs, daycare or elder care. Dan advised that the next meeting of the committee will be at 5:30 PM, on Thursday, November 18, 2010, here at the *NewBrook Elementary School* just prior to the joint board meeting. Ken McFadden expressed that he had legal concerns and Dan assured him that any legal concerns would be addressed as necessary. Kim Friedman thanked Dan on behalf of the Board for taking this ball and running with it.
- *Monthly school newsletter piece:* Kim Friedman advised that Kim Colligan and Brandy Pickering have been working on a newsletter

piece which was delayed due to e-mail problems. Kim Colligan noted that it should come out next week in the school's newsletter. Kim Friedman asked for a volunteer to write a piece for the school's newsletter coming out in November and suggested a piece about the progress of the *Brookline Building Committee* would be good. Kim Colligan suggested that information regarding the budget regarding what the Board has control over vs. what the Board does not have control over, would also be beneficial information in November's newsletter. Dan Seiden volunteered to write the article and to cover both points and requested that someone e-mail him the details of the assignment (what it is and when it is due).

TASK: Kim Colligan is going to e-mail Dan Seiden with the above task of writing the piece for the newsletter and will include the five factors that affect the budget.

- b. Correspondence: None presented.
- c. Alternate to WCSU meetings (as needed): Kim Friedman will not be able to attend the WCSU Executive meeting next Wednesday, and Brandy Pickering is unable to serve that night as Kim's alternate.

TASK: Kim Friedman will notify Emily Long.

TICKLER: Elect a new Vice Chair of the Newfane School Board who is available to attend WCSU meetings.

VIII. Consent agenda

- Approve September minutes
- Approve Truancy policy (warned at Sept. mtng.)

Kim Friedman made a motion to approve the September minutes and the Truancy Policy which was warned at the Board's last meeting. Ken McFadden gave his second. All were in favor. Motion passed.

IX. Next Meeting: Potential Agenda Items (which is not included on the Board's newly adopted annual calendar)

No potential agenda items added for the November meeting, which will take place at the *NewBrook Elementary School* on Thursday, November 18, 2010 beginning at 6:30 PM.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:21 PM and left Executive Session at 9:30 PM.

Dan Seiden moved to adjourn at 9:30 PM. Ken seconded. All in favor.