

Waitsfield Elementary School
WAITSFIELD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
May 20, 2013, 7PM
Waitsfield Elementary School Library

ATTENDEES

Board Members Present: Eve Frankel, Todd White, Helen Kellogg, Allison Champlin

WES and WWSU Members: Kaiya Korb, Tom Young, Brigid Sheffert, Sheila Rivers.

Community Members: John Fisher --AEO, Michael Hock --AOE, Katie Hock, Jennifer Stella.

CALL TO ORDER

Todd White, serving as vice chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

MINUTES

Eve Frankel made a motion to approve the April 15 and May 6 minutes. Allison Champlin seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION

Audience and Written Communication:

- Kaiya noted positive responses from business owners on Bridge Street. Michael Hock agreed that the space on Bridge Street suited the event perfectly.

Common Core, Responses to Community Raised Questions:

- What are the standards?: English/Language Arts and Math. The stated end goal is 21st century skills/ college and career readiness. The core shifts, while in some cases subtle from our current approach, include:
 - English/language arts = building knowledge through complex texts and content-rich nonfiction.
 - Mathematics: focus, rigor, coherence across grades and link to major topics within grades

Michael Hock noted the value of having teachers across the country working to develop tools to teach to these standards and determine the relevance of any given reading material; there is an increased capacity for collaboration and sharing of rich materials.

Jennifer Stella inquired about the role of Achieve, a nonprofit. Michael Hock noted that they served as managers for the project, but the writing of the standards came from hundreds of people and an organization called Student Assessment. The standards are designed to assure that kids get the skills they need for careers or college, not to track kids in a particular field.

Amy Scharges inquired about a guarantee to maintain our freedom of choice after the state has accepted federal funding that may have strings attached. John Fisher noted places where the state of Vermont has recently declined federal funding with strings attached, such as the school improvement grants. There are no guarantees, but John noted that his experience has been that careful consideration is given whenever such decisions are made. Additionally, this is shared memorandum of understanding where either group can withdraw from the agreement.

- **SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium):** The NECAP is the assessment currently used to fulfill our commitment to standardized assessment administered throughout the state; the SBAC will meet the same requirement but is aligned to the CCSS and is a more robust assessment. Within SBAC, there are a variety of resources including interim assessments teachers can choose to use for their own purposes and administration, a teacher contributed banks of resources and then the NECAP-like broad assessment. This final assessment will be computer based and will allow the test to evolve to the competence of the student. We, Vermont, can choose not to participate in the long run, although we are committed to administering some consistent test throughout our state; if we opted out of SBAC we might revert to NECAP, or PARC (the other CCSS aligned assessment currently being developed) or create our own. Jennifer Stella noted concerns over agency directed efforts that are tax funded but not given legislative oversight. It was clarified that all decisions that the agency makes are overseen by the Board of Education.
- **Data Collection:** The Longitudinal Data System currently used by the state needs to be upgraded so that the data can be used more consistently and productively. There are no plans to change what's being collected, just to improve the system so that it is more efficient for those submitting data (schools) and those using the data (again schools or the department). The changes made nationally in FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) were, Michael Hock noted, to address biometric data, which previously hadn't been included and are now recognized as protected information and to allow sharing data across agencies – specifically to track from preschool through college. Jennifer Stella stressed concerns over where the data goes next, after it's been streamlined and aggregated for ease of use. Michael Hock assured that Vermont has some of the strongest protections in place regarding any sharing of this information.
- **Other relevant questions:** Eve Frankel raised concerns not yet discussed including a sense that our country is bankrupting public education and that the common core will help us shine a light on those states that are falling short for students.

Waitsfield Village Economic Planning Project Committee Appointment: The board discussed Helen, Todd and Rob's interest and recommended that Helen step forward on behalf of the school board to participate on this committee.

Technology audit report and recommendations: Closer examination of our technology system and supports by Craig Donnan, WWSU technology director,

showed that we could not sufficiently provide both tech support and tech integration with one staff member. As such, Waitsfield is moving forward to integrate library and tech integration into one staff role, and then allow for the creation for a role dedicated to tech support. This tech role will be shared with other schools to create close to a full time role. The position is posted now. This opportunity reflects progressive and collaborative thinking and should be well communicated so that there is no misunderstanding of this as a new central office role, but rather as several Valley schools working together to create something that we couldn't have done independently otherwise.

Action Planning work completion report: Kaiya recommends tabling this report until the June 10th meeting, at which point the climate survey data could be incorporated.

ACTION: Allison made a motion to move the June meeting from 3:30 to 4 pm on June 10th. Eve Frankel seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Financial Report: Kaiya anticipates the school to end in the black, despite more than \$35,000 in unexpected expenses, in large part due to some shifts in special education expenses.

Principal's Report: The artist residency allowed for more student choice, mixed age groups and off site programming than ever before, and for a lower cost than ever before. The program showed creativity and resourcefulness from parents, faculty and community members. The arts fair was a collaborative event and a way for kids to see themselves as part of the community and for true connection between the broader community and the school. It was deemed a huge success and will continue to evolve based on all feedback. Safe routes to school had the highest levels of participation with more than 25% of the school biking to school and more than 60% participating by bike or foot. The focus of the school staff includes preparation for next school year, including kindergarten preparedness and placement for all students. Next years' 5th and 6th grades will be roughly 25 kids each, which will challenge the capacity of the grade focused instruction on math, leaving one class worth of approximately 25 students with one teacher. The proposed solution is to ask Terry Hopper to support the math instruction at the 5th grade level. Terry knows these kids and this program well. To create the space for this additional instruction, Kaiya recommends converting the current computer lab into a multipurpose instructional space. The mobile lab and several smaller technology centers will help integrate technology beyond the traditional "computer lab".

Washington West Representative Report: Eve reported that goal setting for next year is a key focus, as well as policy and accountability measures. The committee is also focused on working closely with Brigid on the vision going forward.

Superintendent's report: Brigid's focus is currently on hiring with 25-26 new employees entering the district. There are not too many significant changes coming out of legislation this year. Most topics went to committee study. Focus was on Act 126 (centralized services) and our WWSU is applying for a waiver for the start in 2014, given we see little benefit for our district. SR7 is a hot topic as a resolution that speaks to the feedback and advocacy that school board members brought forward to ensure that

testimony and voices were heard in the final window of the legislative session. There will be a board training at Lake Morey and Brigid will bring home that learning.

POLICY READING:

G11-L: Animals in school. This reading focused primarily on the language removed from the existing policy. The point removed regarding medical care is addressed in the medical practice policy. Questions were raised around invasive species brought in to the classroom for instruction and posing a threat to the ecosystem if released locally. Kaiya will follow up on that note.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned was adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Kellogg
Clerk and Secretary