

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Communications Sub-Committee

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

SAU Office

7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendees: Stewart Brock, Mary Allen, Mary Loftis, Lauren Kirkpatrick

Stewart Brock called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. Stewart welcomed Lauren Kirkpatrick to the committee membership.

1. AYP Test Score Communication Plan

Stewart said that a plan on communicating what the test is and why it is important should be developed. The overall objective should be tasked. We should be able to communicate information about it while not taking a position on it.

Mary Allen asked if each school would conduct their own form of communication or would the SAU communicate. Stewart said that it would be a primer.

Mary Loftis said that there was an opinion piece in the paper about standardized testing.

Mary Allen cited Bennington as an example of a school that is in their second year of “in need of improvement”. Parents can get alarmed. Communication allows parents to get their arms around what all of this means.

Mary Allen referenced the information that Don Johnson brought to a meeting about how math progress is taking place. She said that it was extremely helpful.

2. General Business

Discussion took place about additional items to discuss in the future. Mary Allen said that discussion about responses to crisis should be added. She said that she was unsure if this topic should fall under this committee or the Board. She felt that a “response approach” should be developed for future crisis. A “point person” should be designated for media purposes. Mary Loftis said that she is sure that there is an emergency response plan in place. Discussion took place about the dog search and bomb threats.

Stewart said that we are talking about a building administrator or SAU response.

Mary Loftis said that we want to give people as much information as possible without going over the line.

Stewart asked if we were now managing the communication of the SAU.

Mary Allen said that she did not want to manage the SAU at all. She wants to set policy. We want a crisis plan developed. We know we have to be proactive. As a subcommittee, if the administration wants to tap into us then that is fine.

Mary Allen said that we can't violate the accused or the accuser. We don't want to give the impression that we are withholding information either.

3. Mid-Year Report

Mary Allen referenced information that Craig Hicks had shared with the Board that Keene put out from their Board. It was a supplement that was possibly sent direct.

Mary Allen said that she called different publication companies to get pricing on inserts and direct mailings. They never got back to her with pricing. One question was if the information would be camera ready. She said that we have Kerry MacDonald as a free lance writer. Mary cited the AES "Reverence of Place" publication recently done in the Monadnock Ledger Transcript.

Stewart clarified that he was talking about a quarterly update. He cited possibilities for inclusion in such publications as examples only.

Lauren asked if it could be a column published in the newspaper. Stewart said that it was one option.

Stewart was asking if the Board was missing communication opportunities.

Mary Allen said that she thought that the people who are plugged into their towns and schools have probably been up to date on a lot of the information. She said that she felt that people would read feature stories about what the students are doing. We could break out human interest stories that would be great.

Stewart said that we need the support of the people. He cited the recent conversation about "advertising" in the district. We want to both gather support and uncover lack of support.

Mary Allen said that we could ask the Ledger for space on a regular basis. We could also look at getting information mailed individually. Mary said that she would look into pricing information further and find out how the towns deliver their information. It would be information from the Board. Mary also referenced the Keene Sentinel's "Scanning the Schools" feature. Feasibility would have to be determined.

Stewart summed up that some level of communication was desired, whether it was monthly or quarterly.

4. Meet and Greets

Stewart explained what meet and greets were. He said that Board members met with townspeople quarterly to push information out. He meets in his town four times a year for three hours to be made available to hear what people in his community have to say. The intent is not to take notes. It is not a public meeting; it is an exchange of information. The Board members would report back to the full Board.

Stewart wants to discuss if this should continue to take place. Stewart said that he advertised through email distribution, flyers in the library, post office, and town office. Flexible times were set to accommodate the different populations.

Mary Allen asked if flyers could be sent home with students. Stewart said that it needed to be approved by the Superintendent. He asked if those present felt that it was something that was viable and should continue. Mary Loftis said that she felt that it was. Mary Allen said that she has visited with Antrim Selectmen to provide information that she felt they should know.

Stewart said that very often people are passionate about certain topics. Things can spiral out of control. He recommended meeting with PTO's. He added that they are a great resource.

5. GBS/AES Update

Stewart said that the Board should put an update out or have the Superintendent put information out about the status of GBS/AES.

Mary Allen said that it is the public's impression that parents will pick the next Principal of AES. In the past, seven people made up the committees including one parent. Mary Allen got the impression that a focus group will be assembled. Lauren said that it will have to be done soon. Mary Allen said that parents are talking about forming letter writing groups in protest of the cuts made at AES.

Stewart said that an update on the plan and an update on the hiring process were needed.

Stewart Brock called the meeting to a close at 8:42 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok