

**CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road, Peterborough, NH, 03458-1197**

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Monday, June 2, 2008
7:00 P.M.
SAU Office

MINUTES

Attendees: Beverly Bacon, Bart Goodeve, Ray Cote, Marian Alese, Linda Potter, Mary Loftis, Tom Welden, Don Johnson, Sue Dell, Joseph Hayes

Beverly Bacon called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. Late Start for High School

Don Johnson began by explaining that Matt Fernald and Molly Channon had been to see him and Dr. Bergeron about the possibility of a later start to high school and it was agreed by them to bring it to the Education sub-committee. A collection of data (1) was presented. Sue Dell spoke about the leadership advisory at CVHS; a pilot to see if students could help in improvement school, climate, etc. and that Matt and Molly were part of these groups and have taken the initiative to bring this forward.

Matt and Molly spoke about the average start times in high schools and said that they would like ConVal to consider moving the start time back an hour (+/-) based on studies of teenagers and arcadian rhythm, the way a body works and that it's different for teenagers who tend to have more energy at nighttime and are prone to drowsiness in the morning.

In answer to the question of the most imposing challenges to this proposal, they said athletics was the big one as well as transportation. In answer to whether they'd spoken with Jon Hall, AD at CVHS, yes they had, and the main problem was travel time to events but that the state was looking at changing some of the competition to a more geographical competition, whereby schools would compete against other schools closer geographically than now.

It was also discussed whether the time change would have an impact on practice?

Don Johnson mentioned that some schools flip-flop high school times with elementary times to accommodate the transportation problem.

Bart Goodeve asked if this would affect lunch schedules. Sue Dell said that it would move it to more reasonable times than we currently have.

Sue mentioned this issue had been presented to the board in the past and issues at that time stopped the process; but perhaps it is worth another look. Bart Goodeve is concerned with the ripple effect of a change such as this and asked if this is a pressing educational issue? Matt mentioned students missing morning classes. Bart asked if this is the proper answer to that concern. Molly was more concerned with the performance of the students in class for early morning – with homework, after school activities and then rising so early, she felt students could possibly learn better if they were better rested. Bart asked about realigning the day so mornings are less intense? He said that he feels the proposal is a very complicated solution to a perhaps not so pressing problem. The transportation issue could create serious logistical problems.

Mary Loftis mentioned that it's a mistake not to consider just because it might be difficult.

Bart asked how to zero in to determine whether it's a good idea. Don Johnson said it's important to consider all towns, parents with regard to information sharing and communication. A change like this would need to be presented to the entire community.

Tom Welden asked if we have any course work that helps with time management. Are students tired because of poor choices rather than the need to be up late?

Joe Hayes responded that currently we have consumer ed, a pilot course and that other courses were being looked at.

Mary said time management is difficult to talk about because the average teenager is simply not tired at night. Joe said this is an issue for some students but not all; some will still be tired no matter what the schedule is; that all have choice as to how to spend their time.

Perhaps spreading the day out longer could be an option although the ramifications on teacher schedules, space issues, etc. might be an issue. He thinks it may be worth looking at. Different students have different needs. Bus costs would also be a primary concern.

Sue Dell mentioned we currently have late arrival for many students which offers an option for them and she has a concern with the sending schools that would also be affected a time start change.

Marian Alese mentioned that high schools often start earlier to be more helpful to younger siblings that arrive home and would be concerned having the youngest students at bus stops alone so early in the morning. Feels there is a host of reasons for the current design.

She asked if there is any idea of how many students would be impacted and if there was any hard data on how many students are impacted academically as well.

Matt countered that yes, there had been studies done where improvement was shown.

Bart asked if we know of any local area schools that HAD made this change and what their results were. He would like more information that so perhaps we could talk to those districts. Matt thought that most of the districts that had done this already were city schools. Bart thought that was perhaps due to the availability of public transportation. Matt mentioned that Wilton, CT had made this change. Ray said that Adina, MN had made this change as well, which is a small town.

Discussion continued on the overall impact – middle schools, elementary schools, transportation, morning bus stops, etc.

Bart asked if we want to study this. If so, how should we proceed with consideration about public hearings and who would do the transportation research?

Marian asked why not move the entire district forward, instead of a flip flop?

Bart asked if the bus company has any information that would be helpful how routes determined are. Marian thinks we should ask

them about it. Bart said can we combine this with our other requests to the bus company for redesigning bus routes. Marion will ask.

Bart expressed other concerns – job issues, teachers, sending schools.....asked Don Johnson about his concerns. Don replied that a later start to high school would lean towards a more positive impact on students. That said, the issues still remain. He doesn't think there is an easy answer.

Bart said this will surely use many resources to explore. He would like to look more at re-structuring the day, as Joe Hayes suggested.

Molly asked if block scheduling has an effect – the length of time in each block makes it difficult to stay focused. Do schools with more traditional schedules have the same issues?

Mary asked Sue how she feels. Sue is appreciative of Matt's and Molly's efforts. She does feel students would benefit by a later start but acknowledges it would present issues; are there resources for this type of intensive study? She referenced that Bedford HS, after a study, still elected to start high school earlier and middle school later. She feels that this may be too much to take on at the current time given other issues at hand. She would like to know more about the schools that do start later. Maybe look at again next year.

Discussion continued on waiting until more information was at hand. Don wants to be sure we don't just drop it but be sure to revisit it. Loves the idea of the study.

Marian would like to know what percentage of the population would be impacted. Is it worth it to turn the system upside down for possibly a small percentage of students that would be affected. For schools that have done this, what was the impact on other areas?

Beverly asked if Marian could, over next few months, look into transportation issues; and Joe look into possible schedule options. Sue dell suggested Molly have a conversation with staff as well.

Bart also suggested that the Matt and Molly dig deeper for more specific academic data.

Students were thanked for coming and presenting.

1. Extended Learning Opportunities

- Update on work done to date

Sue Dell is here to talk about ELO; passed out (2) to reference. Sue & Joe have taken the school board policy and made modifications. (Don Johnson offered background on this.) They worked off the original policy; with recommended changes in bold.

Page 4 was in the original policy, page 3, course criteria, has been added. It was clarified that pages 1,2 and 4 were from the original draft policy and page 3 is the added page. Joe Hayes explained that this is a merger of the original with the new to be a better “marriage” to one another. Handout (3) designated core courses and reference (4) designated courses currently offered.

Joe said he was presented with the NH School board model, was asked to also survey staff and merge the information. Spirit and intent of NHSBA is not unlike our own. He explained minor differences; i.e. in paragraph 3 – wants to add “under conditions set by a highly qualified teacher” and change “will” to “may” authorize the granting of credit. He is concerned that courses taken may have completely different content not currently taught at ConVal.

Marian asked how we will determine if a teacher is highly qualified in an ELO.

Joe responded that he is not in favor of involving teachers in every issue – in some instances the ELO coordinator would seek the credentials – in part so as not to create duplicative work for teachers. Believes that the NHSBA mistakenly limits themselves on this issue. Our policy would broaden opportunities.

Marian wants clarification on what we’re referencing ...IMBD, ILBAA, etc.

Joe responded that all are required polices with the new standards that will need to be addressed.

Sue suggested the more specific clarification – on page 2 - “including the cost of fees....etc.”

Joe explained the course criteria and the process for determining credit. He explained that for “core courses” there would have to be more involvement; a reason for going outside of the system as these are the courses staff felt would be best taught in an interactive classroom. Teacher input would be considered, to ensure all material is covered and if approved by a highly qualified teacher, the approval process would then go to the ELO coordinator and then to Sue Dell for final approval.

This is not intended to be hard nosed – willing to listen to any reasonable proposal by a student or parent.

Joe mentioned teacher concerns regarding identity of students and that materials students are using is worthy. There are concerns around the artificial environment created by the computer classroom, lack of spontaneous feedback, and ability of teachers to teach conversational discourse.

Regarding the department’s selection of core courses, Sue mentioned that i.e. in Foreign Language, the first two years of a language would not be considered core courses – teachers were more concerned with the levels 3-5 for language – for conversational learning. The Math department decided core courses would open up after Algebra 2.

Bart cautioned to be careful not to fixate on on-line courses only, that other options should be considered.

Marian asked why there were restrictions if students can pass competencies regardless of how met? Is the assessment tool the same?

Joe indicated that this was a separate issue and questioned if content is all we are teaching? What about personal interaction, respect for self and others. How do we respond to taxpayers if students are allowed to test out?

Don Johnson said core courses not being set up as a barrier, that competencies are important to monitor ELO opportunities as they progress rather than waiting until the end.

Joe agreed and cited a current example where a home schooled student was being requested to take the final for a course (s)he had taken. One of our highly qualified teachers graded the final, found the student lacking in some areas and recommended re-taking the course. Parent agreed but wants the student to receive credit for both courses; the home school course and the repeat course.

Bart asked about testing out - is that an option? This would need more clarification as to procedure and methodology – Sue doesn't think that should be part of this proposal. No objections to test out – if students are ready to move on. Discussion continued on the subject.

Linda Potter noted that we must be careful; classroom experience is important, but this is an incredible opportunity for so many – we have to trust the mentor program that they will provide the student with the ELO.

Joe said the ELO is just a vehicle for students to pursue an alternative education plan.

Bart said that given current pressures, we have trouble delivering now, so it is important to be looking to every opportunity including looking elsewhere. It frees up a lot – and is more efficient. Marion said the point is to get them through school. Mary agreed but said don't forget to focus on the quality.

Ray Cote said we still need to consider the importance of interaction globally. He talked about technology education vs. traditional education; how can we move forward to make better use of computers rather than the traditional business uses.

Marian expressed disagreement with the second paragraph of Core Courses (3). Discussions ensued and Sue noted that was just an explanation; not part of the proposal.

Joe said regulatory aspects can change with time.

Don suggested presenting this information to the policy committee with just the core courses listed. Joe suggested we should add a statement referencing regular review of same.....hopefully we can have this ready for the beginning of the school year.

Don said the policy committee meets next week, if it can get through then, then onto the next board meeting.

Bev suggested a meeting schedule of once a month. Next meeting to be 7/7 – first Monday of the month.

Beverly Bacon adjourned at 9:01pm. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Donaway

References:

- (1) Late Start Time For High School handout
- (2) Extended Learning Opportunities handout
- (3) Core Choices handout
- (4) ConVal High School Core Courses handout