

MONT VERNON SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2007
MONT VERNON VILLAGE SCHOOL LIBRARY

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Leo White called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Mont Vernon School Board: Howard Brown, Jayson Darula, Bruce Schmidt, and Leo White.

Administrative Team: Nicole Heimarck, Dr. Mary Jennings, Meredith Nadeau, and Elizabeth Shankel

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

Leo White welcomed new board member, Bruce Schmidt as well as returning school board members.

**WELCOME NEW AND
RETURNING SCHOOL BOARD
MEMBERS**

Bruce Schmidt and Howard Brown will be attending an Orientation for School Board Members on May 3, 2007.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Jennings provided board members with a copy of a letter dated April 12, 2007, which was addressed to the School Board regarding the Health Benefits for Paraprofessionals. Nancy Curry, Dawn Schnitzer, Debra Bowden, Mary Anne Kauffman, Adelle Desrosier, Adam Baddeley, Olivia Kibbie, and Mary Anne Eusebio signed the letter.

Dr. Jennings said the Amherst School Board elected a liaison to the Mont Vernon Board for the purpose of discussing the tuition agreement. The Mont Vernon Board will take action at the next meeting.

Board members received a copy of the Principals Report dated 4/12/07.

Meredith said the Kindergarten play would be held on April 13, 2007, at 6 p.m.

Howard Brown asked Meredith if the church has a set of equipment in case there is an emergency and the students are evacuated to the church.

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Meredith said no, they do not, but the school has an extra set of equipment they would take to the church should an emergency arise. Meredith said the church also has some excess supplies they would make available to the school if needed.

Leo White told board members he received a letter from the Amherst Board of Selectmen inviting members of the Mont Vernon School Board to a meeting on Monday, April 30, 2007, at 6:00 p.m. in the Amherst Town Hall to meet with legislators, town officials, and local school boards.

Leo White invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC TIME

A motion was made by Jayson Darula and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following items: A. Treasurer's Report – February 2007; B. Manifest – February 2007; C. Minutes 1. February 15, 2007 (Budget Hearing) 2. February 15, 2007 (Regular Meeting) D. Acceptance of Donations; E. Personnel 1. Retirement and 2. Nomination of Professional Staff.

CONSENT AGENDA

All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the Consent Agenda passed. Bruce Schmidt abstained from the C. Minutes 1. February 15, 2007 (Budget Hearing) 2. February 15, 2007 (Regular Meeting).

A. Language Arts Curriculum Part II – Ann Forest Allwarden provided board members with a document entitled Writing Assessment Presentation, School Board Meeting, April 12, 2007.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Ann explained there are two categories of Assessments:

- 1) Assessment of Learning – it takes place at the end of learning. Ann provided assessment examples of NECAP and NWEA.

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- 2) Assessment for Learning – the assessment is done as a process during learning. The example given was 6 + 1 Traits of Writing.

Ann provided the Roles in Assessment for Learning:

- Teachers Role – change standards into clear “learning targets”, inform and involve students.
- Students Role – Strive to reach the targets, use the results learned to do better next time.

Ann explained the 6 + 1 Traits utilizing student work samples.

Each example utilized one of the six traits. The six traits include: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, and Sentence Fluency.

Ann explained ongoing work involved with the Language Arts Curriculum:

- Refine their ability to give accurate, descriptive feedback to developing writers, so they have the strategies needed to improve the students writing.
- Provide students with multiple and varied writing opportunities and instruction across the curriculum.
- Analyze school wide writing prompts for patterns of strength and weakness within and across grade levels.
- Analyze school wide writing prompts to identify and measure growth in individual writers.

Bruce Schmidt asked how is consistency amongst grades being coordinated when scoring students writing assignments.

Ann said this an on-going process however, everyone has been trained. Teachers have scored a project together to help them all become more consistent at

grading writing projects.

Dr. Jennings asked since the teachers are working with rubrics to score student writing assignments, are students familiar with the rubric being used to score their work.

Ann said she can't speak for the lower grades but for the higher grades, the rubric is working and students are aware of how their assignments are being scored.

Meredith said the rubric is being utilized at the end of Grade 3 through Grade 6.

Dr. Jennings explained there are different expectations at different grade levels. There is a K-2 version and a Grade 3-6 version.

Meredith said one of the roles of the new Literacy Coach will be to work with the individual teachers in the classroom on individual practices.

Nicole said it is very important for students to receive feedback on their writing assignments in a timely manner so the context is still there.

Everyone thanked Ann for an excellent presentation.

B. Science Curriculum – Nicole Heimarck provided board members with a handout detailing the Science Curriculum for the SAU 39 – Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan.

Nicole explained all states need a state assessment in Science.

Nicole said the new frameworks introduced in June 2006 emphasize how students perceive and interact with the world around them. Teachers must emphasize hands-on exploration and direct student experience within the natural world.

Nicole said the frameworks for science literacy have

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been written as Grade Span Expectations. Each span identifies proficiencies, which define what all students should know and be able to do by the end of the grade span. The spans include K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12.

Nicole explained Science is divided into 3 content domains: Earth Space Science, Life Science, and Physical Science. Nicole said all grade levels touch upon each of the domains. There is now a greater emphasis on skill. This is accounted for in skill domain, Science Process Skills.

The addition of science process skills reflects the need the need for elementary schools to develop skill sets that will help students become more successful in the scientific process.

Nicole said this May, the NECAP exam will pilot the Science targets. The targets represent minimum standards. The minimum standards are the state assessed minimum standards. The test is administered in grades 4, 8, and 11. The results for the NECAP Science exam will be available next Spring.

Nicole said the SAU 39 has been revising the Science Curriculum since June 2006 and they continue to do so.

Nicole presented a timeline of what have they accomplished to the present.

Nicole said during the summer, she along with the Science Curriculum Coordinators for K-12 will be hosting a Summer Curriculum Revision Institute 2007. Nicole said it will be a two to three day event and she believes when they isolate some time specifically for curriculum revision, they are most successful.

Nicole provided board members with a copy of the New Hampshire Curriculum Framework for Science dated June 2006. Nicole explained the document is 123 pages long, but she pulled some of the important information for board members to review at their leisure.

Nicole also provided a portion of the New Hampshire Curriculum Framework for Science in the Grade Spans. The information was dated June 2006.

Nicole also provided some examples of the Science Process Skills for Grades 2-4, Grades 5-8, and Earth Science for K-4.

C. Recommendation – Staffing – Board members received a copy of the Interoffice Memorandum addressed to Dr. Mary Jennings from Meredith Nadeau. The subject of the Memorandum was Staffing for 2007-2008 and it was dated 4/12/2007.

Meredith's memorandum suggested in light of Mrs. Sandahl's retirement, she thinks they should maintain the current number of classroom teachers as their overall enrollment is projected to increase slightly.

Meredith also suggested consolidating the current 4th grade classes into one 5th grade class. Meredith said Mrs. Sandahl's replacement would provide support to the 2nd, 4th and 5th grades in language arts and/or mathematics on a part-time basis and provide math/literacy support to all grades for the remainder of his/her time.

Jayson Darula said he couldn't justify thirteen students per class so combining the two 4th grades into one 5th grade would most likely be the best option, however one class would have 26 students.

Dr. Jennings said combining the students into one class is probably not the most ideal but with the additional support Meredith is suggesting, it will be okay.

Board members asked if three additional 5th graders move in over the summer, what will happen then.

Dr. Jennings said they would end up with 29 students in the 5th grade class and the supporting teacher would most likely end up offering support for 2 hours per day as opposed to the little time originally thought.

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Howard Brown asked how the administration would handle field trips with just one teacher.

Dr. Jennings said adjustments would certainly be made to accommodate for the number of students on a field trip versus the one teacher.

Bruce Schmidt asked if the administration had a plan as to how the replacement's time would be managed between the 2nd, 4th, and 5th grades.

Dr. Jennings said they would not make a decision as to how the replacement's time would be managed at tonight's board meeting however, they could make it an action item on the next agenda.

Jayson Darula said he supports the administrations recommendation this year but thinks it may be a tough sell next year.

Leo White said they should almost go one year without the position to show what the students went without during the year.

Bruce Schmidt said he would like to know what the supporting teacher would really be doing, as he doesn't have a good feel for what he/she will be responsible for doing. Bruce said he would like a more detailed description of the supporting teachers responsibilities.

ACTION ITEMS

A. School Board Committee Assignments – Board members assignments are as follows for 2007-2008:

- School Budget Committee Representative – Jayson Darula
- Town Budget Representative – Jayson Darula
- Policy – Howard Brown
- Publicity/Communication – Leo White
- Manifest (2 Positions) – Howard Brown and Bruce Schmidt

Liaison to Amherst School Board – John Schwope

B. Adoption of 2007-2008 School Year Calendar – Board members received a copy of the proposed 2007-2008 School Year Calendar for Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan Cooperative Schools.

Dr. Jennings explained there is one change to the proposed school year calendar. Dr. Jennings said a gray line was added highlighting June 16th through June 20th, 2008, showing if all snow days are used June 20th will be the last day of school. Dr. Jennings said that is the only difference in the calendar as compared to the last version.

A motion was made by Howard Brown and seconded by Jayson Darula to accept the 2007-2008 School Year Calendar as presented.

Bruce Schmidt asked if the school calendar meets the state requirement for the number of hours students are required to be in school. Dr. Jennings said for grades K-8 students must be in school a total of 945 hours. Dr. Jennings said our students exceed this requirement by about 20 hours.

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- C. Dissolution of Technology Trust Fund – Betty Shankel explained to members of the board in 1997 an Expendable Trust Fund was created at a regularly scheduled board meeting, therefore the fund really doesn't exist. Betty said she asked legal counsel what to do and they said we should vote to discontinue the fund and request the funds from the Trustee of the Trust Funds, Eileen Naber. Betty said Eileen was in agreement with this process.

A motion was made by Howard Brown and seconded by Jayson Darula to dissolve the Technology Trust Fund. The board requests the remaining funds totaling \$1,201.60 in the Computer Technology Expendable Trust be transferred to the general fund in order to dissolve the trust. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

- A. Review of Crisis Response - Leo White wanted to recognize Mary Jennings, Meredith Nadeau, and Porter Dodge for an outstanding job in response to the loss of a Mont Vernon resident and former Village School student, McKayla Geisinger. Leo said he wanted the Administration as well as members of the board to discuss any lessons they learned and whether or not they could have done anything differently.

Leo White said he heard nothing but praise all around. Leo said he was pleased and proud of the way everyone was able to respond.

Peter King said the communication that went home to parents was well written, and a great asset to everyone.

Dr. Jennings said it was wonderful to see everyone pull together and work so well together in a very difficult time.

Leo White asked if members of the board thought it would be appropriate to send letters of recognition to the Guidance Counselors and the Administration.

Jayson Darula thought it was appropriate. Meredith will send the information to Leo White.

Leo asked if any lessons were learned and he said from where he sat, he believed everyone acted to the best of their ability.

- B. Review of District Meeting – Board members were asked to review the District Meeting.

Leo White said they had a small turnout however, he thought the meeting went well.

Howard Brown said he thought the slides prepared by the administration were excellent and the administration jumped in when needed.

Bruce Schmidt suggested at the District Meeting next year the board and administration present what benefits were gained over the past year based on the various positions increase in time.

- C. Preparation for Wellness Curriculum Presentation – There will be a presentation on the Wellness Curriculum at the May board meeting.

Meredith said she understands many people have expressed their disinterest in the current Physical Education curriculum. Meredith said the administration plans on justifying or altering the current curriculum based on an upcoming review.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to adjourn the meeting. Bruce Schmidt seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT