

MINUTES
SAU BOARD MEETING
December 19, 2006
Souhegan High School Annex, Room A222

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Chairperson John Schwope called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Janet Gaynor (arrived 6:16 p.m.), Jeanne Ludt, Dana Redmond, Phyllis Thomas and John Walsh

Amherst School Board: Dwight Brew, Deborah Cort, and Pam Dudoff, Nancy Head and Jim O'Mara

Mont Vernon School Board: Jayson Darula, John Schwope, and Howard Brown

Administrative Team: Rene Head, Dr. Mary Jennings, Elizabeth Shankel, and Kathy Skoglund.

Finance Advisory Committee: Dan Foley

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON FY08 BUDGET

- A. Presentation – A handout was provided detailing the SAU 39 Summary – Draft FY08 Budget and dated December 19, 2006.

The total budget for FY07 was \$1,628,306 and the proposed budget for FY08 is \$1,780,944. This represents an increase of \$152,638 or a 9.37% increase.

Based on an Unreserved Fund Balance of \$108,979 on FY06 numbers, the proposed FY08 Budget represents an overall increase of 7.64%.

John Schwope asked how much was budgeted for the Language Arts Coordinator position. Betty said \$85,960 was budgeted for the position.

The proposed FY08 budget represents an increase of 2.7% over last years approved budget.

The Other Expenses line was increased by \$13,793 to reflect more realistic numbers. Computer Support was

increased by \$5,000, Water \$1,500, Legal Expenses by \$1,000, Postage \$1,500 and Equipment by \$600. This represents approximately \$10,000 of this increase.

Jim O'Mara said he likes to see YTD actuals whenever we do a budget.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the Budget Advisory Committee was in support of this budget.

Dan Foley, Chairman of the Budget Advisory Committee said the committee has discussed the budget but they do not have clear feedback from all the members yet, but there are no problems with the budget so far.

Jeanne Ludt said it is disconcerting that Amherst is going to have a 1.4% increase and here it is almost a 10% increase, and every year there is a reason for the increase.

Pam Dudoff said when comparing different size budgets it can be very misleading if you are looking at percentages. Pam said, in this case, you are not comparing apples to apples when looking at percentages.

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara and seconded by John Walsh to close the Public Hearing at 6:31 p.m. and open the SAU 39 Board Meeting at 6:32 p.m. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Deborah Cort requested the Minutes of November 30, 2006, be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Deborah Cort to approve Consent Agenda Items B. Treasurer's Report – November 2006, C. Manifest – November 2006. Members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by John Walsh and seconded by Nancy Head to approve the Minutes of November 30, 2006, as amended. Members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed with five abstentions, Jim O'Mara, Howard Brown, Phyllis Thomas, Nancy Head and Janet Gaynor.

John Schwope invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC TIME

A. Response to Intervention (RTI) – Kathy Skoglund did a presentation for board members on Understanding Response to Intervention.

PRESENTATIONS

Kathy prefaced her presentation by stating Nicole Heimarck would be presenting this information to the board if she were not on maternity leave. Kathy emphasized Response to Intervention is not a Special Education program.

Kathy explained Response to Intervention is a multi-faceted initiative, which enables early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk.

RTI is an alternative to the discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities.

Kathy explained response refers to increased learning and the rate at which learning occurs.

Kathy presented an RTI Overview Model for the SAU. Kathy said RTI represents a major shift in the way we intervene with students in the classroom.

Kathy provided a slide in her presentation that showed what was driving RTI. (PL 108-446 Sec 614 IDEA 04.)

- (B) ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY – In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local education agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedure.

The Essential Components of RTI were presented.

- Solid, state-of-the art instruction in the regular classroom-high quality materials and practices.
- Focused-explicit instruction that is based on the skill(s) deficit-highly structured in class and intervention setting.
- Curriculum-based assessments of all students, at least 3 times/year (data drives instructional groups)

and intervention needs).

- Curriculum-based monitoring of progress that is more frequent for students receiving interventions, often weekly.

John Schwope asked if more assessments are needed. Kathy said no, we have a lot of assessments already they just need to gather the data, analyze the data and use it.

- System for delivery of small group interventions (2 weeks to 10 weeks)
- Instructional interventions scheduled in addition to regular instruction time.

Kathy explained this needs to happen within the regular school day.

- Staff other than the classroom teacher delivers interventions.

Classroom teachers are not the only staff utilized, other resources are brought into the classroom.

- Use of assessment data acquired through progress monitoring to inform instruction: specific area of need (individual and classroom based), sorting into flexible groups, and response to interventions.

John Walsh asked if at this point in the process they were pulling students out of the regular classroom, Kathy said no, not at this level.

- Grade level or department group to analyze data from various sources and make instructional decisions
- Three (or more) “tiers” of intervention that increase in intensity.
- System to assess the fidelity of instruction in both the classroom and intervention site.
- Horizontal and vertical communication mechanisms for educational assessment and planning. Kathy explained this is teachers talking to other teachers, getting out of the regular classroom setting.

The Three Tier Model was explained as follows:

- Public health model (triage)
- Universal supports for all students in Tier I
- Students shown by progress monitoring to need support get short-term, focused instruction in Tier II.
- Students with more persistent needs for support get Tier III, which is high intensity for a longer time.

Kathy explained 80% of the students fall into Tier I, 15% of students fall into Tier II, and 5% fall into Tier III.

Deborah Cort asked if teachers know RTI is coming. Kathy said some of the teachers know RTI is coming, teachers are aware.

Pam Dudoff asked how much of RTI is an Elementary program, Middle School program and beyond.

Kathy said it is a K-12 program, however, it looks different at the different grade levels but it's a systematic approach.

Jeanne Ludt asked if this model has worked in the past.

Kathy said this model was used as a research tool in other parts of the county and the research data shows this to be an effectual model. Kathy said a good deal of national research has been done.

Tier I along with Effective Teaching in Tier I was presented.

Tier II and Tier II Outcomes were presented.

Tier III and Tier III Outcomes were presented.

John Walsh asked how much involvement the classroom teacher has in the process.

Kathy said teacher involvement drives the child to move from Tier to Tier.

Pam Dudoff suggested when presenting RTI and Tier III, the administration should say teachers could have some gifted and talented students as well as "Special Ed" students.

Kathy agreed saying they would bring in gifted/talented

specialists as well as literacy coordinators. Kathy said a lot of flexible grouping would take place to accomplish teaching the different levels of learners.

IDEA Eligibility was explained.

Kathy explained the benefit to Early Intervention.

- Research and experience with RTI strongest in reading at early ages.
- Impact for students entering the system in K-3.
- Benefits throughout the system, leading to lower dropout rates.
- Key idea is intervention without disability classification.

Kathy explained the Response to Intervention Model

- Consistent with better instructional models and best practices in early literacy.
- Encourages collaboration and an integrated system for education.
- Draws on the professional expertise already available.
- Avoids many pitfalls of traditional assessment models – better validity-intervention precedes eligibility. Kathy said rather than the other way around, which we've been doing.

Kathy presented the Benefits of RTI:

- Emphasis on evidence based instruction and classroom-based intervention.
- Emphasis on early identification and intervention.
- Children not required to fail before interventions implemented.
- Use of progress monitoring based on objective student performance data to inform instruction.
- Multi-tiered model enables services to be delivered based on severity of student. (Including the high-end readers.)
- Potential to reduce both the stigma associated with special education and referrals to special education/special education costs.

- Majority of students with disabilities do not benefit from separate systems.
- One system- not one setting
 - Access to general curriculum/inclusion
 - Small group instruction without disability
- Flexible interventions require flexible staff
 - Special educators free to provide interventions.
- Regular educators expanding their reach to allow students access to the general curriculum.

Kathy said RTI requires Collaborative planning and teaching amongst:

- Regular classroom teachers
- Special educators
- Para-educators
- Title I staff members
- Speech and language personnel
- Reading specialists
- Literacy Coordinator/Coaches
- Volunteers

Steve Coughlan said this will involve new roles for many and asked how teachers were reacting.

Kathy said the Literacy Coordinators already teach and have a full workload so it is a matter of how can we use people more effectively. Kathy said it would involve a generic look at the model with careful regard to logistics and how they currently use personnel without substantially shifting the teacher's current workload.

Jeanne Ludt asked if this was a federally mandated program. Kathy Skoglund said it was not federally mandated. Kathy said they would use funds available in Professional Development. Kathy said it is already costing them not to do RTI.

Kathy provided a last look at the benefits of RTI:

- Valid eligibility determinations, based on need not on numbers.
- Improved instructional practices at the universal, core, or Tier I level, leading to increased general

achievement.

- Enhances access to the general curriculum.
- Data used to inform instruction, to make decisions.
- Immediate access to intervention when it is most effective.
- Flexible intervention model.

Deborah Cort said with RTI we are taking resources we have in people so they are a little more efficient at what they are doing.

Deborah asked if we have buy in from the teachers with regard to implementing RTI. Kathy said yes, they do. Kathy said teachers have come and said the current process is not working what can we do differently.

Howard Brown asked if any districts are currently far into the RTI process.

Kathy said Bedford, NH has high praise for RTI.

Kathy said other districts currently engaged with RTI include Londonderry, Newmarket, Milford, Merrimack Souhegan and Amherst.

Kathy presented the Supports Necessary for RTI:

- SAU Literacy/Language Arts Coordinator
- Literacy Coaches
- Regular and Special Education Collaboration
- Professional Development
- Common Planning Time
- District Wide Assessments
- Data Gathering and Analysis
- K-12 Curriculum Alignment
- Increased Instructional Time
- Other

John Walsh asked if the RTI process would require the school boards to implement this approach or if it was something already decided on.

Dr. Jennings said the boards be involved in Strategic Planning and this would be one way to achieve the goal however, the boards get to vote on the goal.

Pam Dudoff said one year ago they talked about supporting and challenging every student and this is one way of achieving that goal.

- A. Adoption of SAU 39 FY08 Budget – Deborah Cort moved to adopt the SAU 39 FY08 Budget totaling \$1,780,944 which was seconded by Phyllis Thomas. **ACTION ITEMS**

Discussion followed.

Nancy Head asked why there was an 8.5% increase in salary for the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development as well as the addition of another large position in the budget – the position of English Language Arts Coordinator.

Dr. Jennings explained she determined the position of Director of Curriculum and Professional Development was not being paid at a competitive wage when compared to other people involved in the same type of role.

Thirteen members of the board voted in favor of the motion and two members were opposed, Jim O'Mara and John Walsh.

Jim O'Mara asked to clarify his no vote on the proposed FY08 Budget. Jim said he still believes all of the proposed salary increases should have been consolidated under one line item. Jim said the Superintendent could then have the authority to allocate those funds according to individual employee value.

- A. Strategic Planning – Dr. Jennings provided a handout entitled SAU 39 Strategic Planning Time-Line December 2006. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Dr. Jennings said the Consultant for the Strategic Planning Committee is Dr. William Allen from Future Management Systems.

Dr. Jennings said the strategic planning team will meet for three two-hour workshops to design a mission statement

and five-year district goals.

The dates for the meeting are Tuesday, February 6, 2007, Monday, February 12, 2007, and Tuesday, March 6, 2007. The time for the meetings is 4-6:00 p.m. with the location to be determined.

The members will consist of the SAU Chair, John Schwope, and SAU Supt. Mary Jennings. It will also consist of a Board representative from each district and a Community representative from each town. All recommendations should be given to the SAU Chair. The Administrations recommendations will include a parent representative from each district, teacher representative from each district, two support staff representatives, one elementary administrator, and one secondary administrator. All Administration recommendations should be given to the SAU Chair.

The Draft of the Strategic Plan will be approved at the SAU Board Meeting on February 22, 2007.

Action Teams will meet for two, two-hour workshops to design action plans for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 fitting each goal. Community and faculty representatives will be recruited to join these action teams. Administrators will lead the teams. The action team is scheduled to meet Monday, April 9, 2007 from 4-6 p.m. with the location to be determined.

Please notify John Schwope of your recommendations for members on the Strategic Planning Committee as soon as possible so people can be appointed during the first week of January.

B. Coordination of District Policy Development –
At the last SAU Board meeting Pam Dudoff spoke about the Policy Review process.

Pam said since the last SAU meeting, the Amherst and Mont Vernon boards have approved utilizing the policy review service for their districts. It will be on Souhegan's next agenda to approve.

Pam suggested each district appoint an individual to the SAU Board Policy Committee.

Pam said the policy review process should take approximately 6-8 weeks.

Jeanne Ludt and John Walsh asked for clarification on the role of the SAU Board Policy Committee.

Dr. Jennings explained the SAU Board Policy Committee would have a role once the policy review service had completed their review work.

John Schwope suggested they utilize the Share Point service developed by Bruce Chakrin. He said Share Point allows you to collaborate on document creation remotely. John agreed to ask Bruce Chakrin if the SAU Board could have access to this software.

ADJOURN

John Walsh moved to adjourn the meeting, Nancy Head seconded and the Board voted unanimously of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.