

FINAL MINUTES
SAU 39 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 20, 2009
Souhegan High School Annex, Room A222

Chairman Dan Foley called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Dan Foley, Chris Janson, and Mary Lou Mullens

Amherst School Board: Dwight Brew, Nancy Head (arrived at 6:21 p.m.) and Peter Maresco

Mont Vernon School Board: Trevor Girard and Bruce Schmidt

Administrative Team: Nicole Heimarck, Dr. Mary Jennings, Betty Shankel, and Renea Sparks

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

Dr. Jennings told board members in the *Amherst Citizen* on August 25, 2009, it was a special edition featuring back to school information.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Jennings said she would be speaking about the year of Transitional Leadership – Interim Principal at the Mont Vernon Village School; she was an Assistant Principal at Clark/Wilkins. Also there is an Interim Principal and Dean of Students at Souhegan High School.

Dr. Jennings said there were very few new hires for aids and teachers this year in all three districts.

Dr. Jennings told board members renovations would be complete on August 31, 2009, for Clark and Wilkins.

The gym floor has been partially replaced and refinished at the high school.

Dr. Jennings said there is one less bus and the bus routes have been posted on the SAU website along with the local newspapers.

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Dr. Jennings said the bus routes are different in all three districts.

Dr. Jennings said they are moving forward with continuing their use of data for improvement. They will continue to place students in flexible groups. Dr. Jennings said fifty staff members were trained in Differentiated Instruction at a recent summer workshop. Dr. Jennings said twenty-five of the participants would become trainers to train other staff members throughout the next two school years.

Steve Coughlan asked if the districts were proportionally represented in regards to trainers. Dr. Jennings said yes, the districts are proportionately represented and they based it on building level participation.

Nicole said fifty-seven teachers signed up for the Differentiated Instruction workshop and all of them wanted to become trainers. Nicole said the contract is for twenty-five to become trainers.

Dr. Jennings said they will be reviewing the K-12 Math Curriculum this year.

Dr. Jennings said she was involved in a Web Discussion with the Governor, Commission of Education, etcetera and received the latest information with regards to the H1N1 virus.

Dr. Jennings said they will work hard to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

Dr. Jennings said they would not close school unless there is a critical number of staff/students infected.

Dr. Jennings reminded board members they are invited to the faculty get together on August 31, 2009. It begins with coffee and bagels from 7:45 – 8:30 and from 8:30-10:00 a faculty meeting.

Dan Foley asked if parents will receive information about the H1N1 Virus as it related to when it is safe to let their children go back to school.

Dr. Jennings said they must educate the parents on keeping their children home until their child's flu like symptoms are gone for at least twenty-four hours without the use of medication.

Dan Foley invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

III. PUBLIC TIME

Dwight Brew pulled the A. Minutes 1. June 25, 2009 from the Consent Agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Chris Janson to accept Consent Agenda Items B. Treasurer's Report 1. June 2009, 2. July 2009 and C. Manifest 1. June 2009, 2. July 2009. Bruce Schmidt seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (9-0-0)

A motion was made by Dwight Brew to approve Consent Agenda Item A. Minutes 1. June 25, 2009, as amended. Nancy Head seconded the motion. Six board members voted in favor of the motion, with three abstentions, Trevor Girard, Mary Lou Mullens, and Bruce Schmidt. The motion passed. (6-0-3)

- A. District Payroll Schedule Adjustment FY10 – Board members received a Memo in their board packets, which was addressed to Souhegan High School Staff from Betty Shankel dated July 29, 2009 regarding the 2009-2010 Payroll Schedule.

V. PRESENTATIONS

The memo explained that the 09-10 payroll schedule was determined last Spring and it was based on a number of factors including the Labor Day holiday (which is late this year), the first day of school for the students (which is a

week later than last year) and their bi-weekly Thursday payroll schedule. Although SHS starts their retreat on August 24th the first payroll date following the first day of school is September 10th and was the date they had selected.

The memo stated Betty believed there was a perception by the staff at Souhegan that we use the same pay schedule each year (being paid in August regardless of the first day of school).

Betty said they determine each year's pay schedule and they do not base it on the prior years schedule. Each fiscal year is mutually exclusive of the other and begins on July 1 and ends June 30th. The Thursday schedule is then set accordingly.

The memo stated that by paying school-year staff on September 10th (as their first pay date of the 09-10 school year) it may be an undue hardship for some who were not aware of this pay date until recently. We are willing to change the 09-10 payroll schedule to have the first pay for school-year staff be August 27, 2009 with the understanding the first pay date for school-year staff is not guaranteed to be in August each year.

Betty explained in her memo they attempt to convey all important information to employees in a timely manner. In this case we addressed the 09-10 payroll schedule in both the May and June newsletters, posted the schedule on the website in May and had numerous conversations with PPC representatives regarding the payroll schedule. It appears that we need suggestions from Souhegan as to what vehicle we should be using to best reach and communicate effectively with all employees.

Board members also received a copy of the revised payroll schedule for the 2009-2010 school year.

Steve Coughlan said he will bring this issue up at the next

PPC meeting.

Dwight Brew asked if this payroll schedule applied to all three districts and Betty said yes.

Betty said it is not her favorite way to do things, pay the school-year staff prior to the last day of school however, they have agreed to do so this year in order to accommodate the staff at Souhegan High School.

Betty said they plan on communicating with the staff this upcoming year on a continual basis in order to make the staff aware of the payroll schedule for the 2010-2011 school year so the pay schedule is not an issue again.

- A. Recommendation: Later Start Proposal - Mary Lou Mullens told board members they received another copy of the Alternative Start Time Study Group Update in their board packets, just as they had received it at their last board meeting.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

Mary Lou reminded board members that over a year ago, Souhegan Board members were made aware of an ever increasing body of research clearly documenting the differences in adolescent circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. Because of these documented differences in adolescents, a trend has started in the educational community to move teen school start times later. The Alternate Start Time Study Group was formed with the charge of studying the advantages and disadvantages of such a change.

The most favored change and the one that was most looked at, was one in which the high school and middle school switched start times with the elementary schools. However, there were some concerns with this switch. Some of the concerns included the younger children at bus stops in the dark, older children home later than younger siblings who require care, preparation time for teachers, and disruption to staff's personal activities and family life. They were

also running into obstacles with sports, clubs, and activities at the middle school/high school level.

For the above reasons, the committee evaluated the option of pushing all school start times up by one half hour. They believe this change would give us the benefit of a later start time for adolescents, without most of the drawbacks and disruptions that a switch in start times would cause.

Mary Lou said there have been discussions with each of the boards regarding the committee's findings to date.

Mary Lou said the committee is recommending they push start times for all schools up by a half hour.

Mary Lou presented the proposed calendar going forward to solicit feedback from board members.

Dwight Brew said he didn't think moving the start times up by a half hour was going to cost the district's anything.

Nancy Head asked how widely this has been tried. Mary Lou said she was not sure how widely this has been done however, she does know in Massachusetts ten districts have implemented later start times and in Minneapolis there is over 50,000 students utilizing later start times.

Peter Maresco said he does not see how a half hour change in the start time will make a big impact on the middle school and high school students.

Mary Lou pointed to the handout board members received in their board packets entitled *Schools Waking Up to Teens' Unique Sleep Needs*.

Peter said he read the article but believes a half hour will not make a difference; it will just push the children's schedules out by a half hour.

Mary Lou said in the Minneapolis study they have found

less depression amongst students, less dropouts, however, they have found it difficult to measure whether students grades have improved with the time change difference.

Steve Coughlan said he wished they were going with the original proposal, flipping the start time with the elementary students by one hour. Steve said he thinks they are letting the athletics drive the schedule, and is disappointed. Steve said the athletes should not be driving our important educational issues.

Mary Lou said athletics is one of the issues, however, it is not the only issue. Mary Lou said in Minneapolis they found kids were missing more time from school after they made the hour change due to athletics.

Based on board member input, the proposed calendar was changed to be as follows:

- 1) Proposal shared with SAU Board – August 20, 2009.
- 2) If supported by the SAU board, the following would occur:
 - a.) Publication of the proposal and upcoming public hearings in the newspapers, *Connections*, through school websites, at Open Houses, etc. (Sept & Oct.)
 - b.) Preparation of a FAQ handout that would be available at registration & Open Houses
 - c.) Public Forums scheduled for Oct. 1 and Oct. 20
 - d.) Study Group reconvenes sometime between Oct. 20 and Oct. 29 to determine our final recommendation
 - e.) Preliminary discussions with unions and PPC
- 3) Ask for another vote of support to move forward at October 29, 2009, SAU Board Meeting.
- 4) If passed, impact bargaining would be completed with unions and PPC.

- 5) Any approved change would take place in the fall of 2010.

A motion was made by Chris Janson to continue with the process as outlined and amended by Mary Lou Mullens. Trevor Girard seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (9-0-0)

Dr. Jennings said they would start to publicize the public forums scheduled for October 1, 2009, and October 20, 2009 for the Alternate Start Time.

Dr. Jennings said they would like the members of the Late Start Committee at the public forums as well as members from each of the boards available to serve as listeners and offer their support as needed.

- B. NH Teacher Retirement Legislation – Board members received a handout in their board packets regarding the Proposed Article 28-a Lawsuit Against the State.**

Dr. Jennings provided board members with a handout in their board packets highlighting the total impact by district, which was an unanticipated expense that was imposed by the legislature. The total impact to SAU 39 is \$101,126.

Dr. Jennings told board members they are currently sending in their payments in protest.

Dr. Jennings said if the SAU 39 wants to join the lawsuit a contribution must be made. A handout was provided which detailed the contribution amount of \$353.09.

Steve Coughlan questioned the amount of the contribution stating he thought this was just for the SAU 39 portion of the lawsuit, not including Amherst, Mont Vernon or Souhegan. Steve said he recalls getting a letter indicating a different amount and it would have been for Souhegan.

Dr. Jennings said they could check into the amount.

Dr. Jennings asked for input from the board.

Trevor Girard said he thought the lawsuit was worth pursuing and believes we will prevail.

Steve Coughlan said he attended the Selectmen's meeting and they voted unanimously to join the lawsuit.

Steve said he was a little leary about suing himself.

Dr. Jennings said the Legislature reduced their NH retirement commitment at the 11th hour and also did it with CAD Aid (which was cut by 25% and will continue to cut it by 5% every year)

Bruce Schmidt asked if this was the final cost to join the lawsuit. Dr. Jennings and Betty Shankel agreed most likely this is the initial cost to join the lawsuit.

Dan Foley said he thinks if they vote not to join the lawsuit, it wouldn't send a very good message to the staff and teachers.

A motion was made by Mary Lou Mullens to join the NH Municipal Association lawsuit with a contribution amount of \$353.09 for the SAU 39. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (9-0-0)

Bruce Schmidt asked if the administration could check to see if this contribution amount represents whether or not it is going to the Supreme Court.

A. SAU Agenda Goals FY10 – Board members met to discuss their SAU Goals for FY10.

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bruce Schmidt was appointed as Mont Vernon's representative to the SAU Lease committee.

VIII. OTHER

Action Items:

Nancy Head - How many districts have switched to later start times? - Mary Lou Mullens

Peter Maresco - Why must students join marching band in order to participate in band? – Dan Foley

Bruce Schmidt - What are the NH Retirement litigation amount requests for each district and how were they determined? – Mary Jennings

Dwight Brew - Revision dates to calendars – Mary Jennings

Convene Brick School Lease Committee – Dan Foley & Betty Shankel

Convene Policy Committee – Pam Coughlin

Set up Public Forum formats – Alternative Start Time Study Committee & Mary Jennings

A motion was made by Steve Coughlan to adjourn the meeting. Bruce Schmidt seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. (9-0-0) The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

IX. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN