

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of the Superintendent of Schools
106 Hancock Road, Peterborough, NH 03458-1197

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

November 18, 2015
SAU Offices
5:00 PM

Minutes

Committee Members:

Crista Salamy – Chair, Linda Quintanilha, Fiona Tibbetts, Rich Cahoon, Gary Backstrom

Present: Crista Salamy, Fiona Tibbetts, Rich Cahoon (5:30 p.m.)

Others: Kimberly Saunders, Myron Steere, Jerome Wilson, Richard Dunning, Pierce Rigrod,
Parents

Crista Salamy called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Approval of October 28, 2015 Minutes

Crista Salamy moved to accept the minutes of October 28, 2015.

2. Kristen Reilly presentation/discussion

Kristen Reilly was present to share a presentation emphasizing the importance of allowing more free play during the school day. Ms. Reilly recognized the amazing programming that is taking place in ConVal schools.

Kate Taylor shared the history of the formation of Parents for Inspiring Education (PIE). She shared information she had related to her son about the need for more recess time. A morning and afternoon break is what is being sought for kids. Improving the lives of children is the goal.

Jess Nelson shared her experience as well with her daughter. She withdrew her daughter to attend private school where there is more freedom to move and learn in the community.

Penelope Bielagus shared her concerns for her son stating that he does not feel like he is cared for at school. Students sit for long periods of time without time for movement. She shared some of the research that she has read related to the importance of recess and free play.

Kristen Reilly shared statistics on childhood obesity, depression, anxiety, drug use, and suicide.

Ms. Reilly spoke about the need for unstructured play as important. Sixty minutes of free, unstructured play is the recommendation. Recess time and free play time comparisons to other countries were shared.

PIE's proposal is to invite school board members and school administrators to attend an entire seven hour school day "as a child". They also propose a 30 minute morning and afternoon play

time and additional recess per classroom. PIE is willing to work to help restructure the school schedules and volunteer to supervise recess time.

Cathy Raphael shared her experience and said that she believes that changing to private school has benefited her child as a result of their practices.

Kimberly Saunders said that there is a finite amount of time during the school day. Everything presented is on par. Many of the other countries compared to attend school more days per year.

Parents present offered options to minimally impact the day to allow additional free time. Elementary schools in the ConVal District offer different recess and break times which was a frustration to some in terms of equity.

Crista Salamy asked for a breakdown of lunch and recess times for each of our elementary schools.

Dick Dunning said that he understood the challenges and the discussion. He cautioned not to compare private and public schools; they are apples and oranges. He agreed that what is being discussed should be looked at. Mr. Dunning also encouraged looking at the demands on teachers and administrators. He suggested giving the administration the flexibility of looking at this.

Kimberly Saunders asked if equity across the board is being asked or recess and/or unstructured time. She asked for specificity.

A morning and afternoon recess is being asked for 60 minutes total or some combination of more than 20 minutes each.

Dick Dunning agreed that schools have a responsibility and said that parents have a responsibility as well. Parents need to provide opportunity for their kids as well.

Other parents present shared their hopes for their children.

Rich Cahoon spoke about what is perceived as a really long school day. It was previously too short. When we added time to the day it is now appropriate. He is not in favor of shaving instructional time off.

Frank Meehan reported that the ConVal School District has the largest population of private and home school students. It begs the question "why"?

Crista Salamy shared that she hears a large population tonight of PES parents; is this a PES problem or an elementary problem?

Pierce Rigrod shared that part of the issue is that our district is spread and students have a long day. He understands that free play is important and empathized with what has been shared.

Kristen Reilly said that our school days are vastly different than when we grew up. She questioned if we want to prepare kids for life or to be career or college ready. Ms. Reilly asked to come back in December and hash out the details. To be determined.

Parents exited the meeting.

Crista Salamy asked the Education Committee for a sense.

Rich Cahoon liked hearing from large groups of people. He said that if the school day is altered it takes away from his child's day after school.

Crista restated her interest in learning if this is a PES issue or an elementary issue.

Kimberly Saunders said that if we are talking about dropping kids off earlier, we can do that providing supervision is available.

Dick Dunning suggested looking at scheduling. Building in recess time should be looked at.

Kimberly Saunders confirmed that the principals are not told how to schedule their schools. They are told how many minutes in specific areas are unnegotiable.

Rich Cahoon confirmed that lunch time is an issue not only at PES. He further spoke about kids being held on buses and in parent vehicles until the buses release kids.

Discussion took place about parent responsibilities and changes in the world.

If there is a simple solution it should be addressed.

Kimberly Saunders shared her hesitation that the board would involve themselves in setting schedules. She agreed to pull schedules and meet with principals to look at this. The principals would need to solve it if it is a problem.

Dick Dunning agreed, if it is a PES problem it should be addressed with the principal. If it is district wide it needs the attention of administration. Principals should not be dictated their schedule. He urged discussion outside of this committee.

Rich Cahoon shared his concern with PIE's demand; he does not want them designing the schedule. He further said that PIE should be met with when the information being sought is gathered.

Jerry Wilson said that it appears to be more of a PES problem. Free time and unstructured time should be looked at in all schools and modifications considered.

Concern with dictating a specific schedule was not seen as favorable by most.

Crista Salamy will draft a letter to PIE and copy the Education Committee on the plan.

Elementary School Principals will be met with first. Kimberly will discuss potential solutions with them at each of the schools and why it will look different.

Dick Dunning did not want to make it an issue if it is not an issue. If it is at a specific school, it should be addressed.

3. Assessment

Kim Kamieniecki spoke about the testing schedule and the inability to compare results. She cited having to wait from spring to spring to compare results or fall to fall for SBAC or NWEA tests. She asked that NWEA testing be done both in the fall and in the spring.

Dick Dunning offered a compromise. Ms. Kamieniecki said that she did not feel that it would provide her the data she needs on her children.

The window for testing was touched on. Balance is needed for both the teacher and the parent.

MAPS testing took away language testing; why? Kimberly Saunders said that people were not using it to inform instruction.

Fiona Tibbetts moved to adjourn at 7:16 p.m. Second. Unanimous.

Next meeting: December 16th

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok