

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

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

November 21, 2019

SAU Boardroom

5:30 PM

MINUTES

Committee Members:

Richard Dunning, Linda Quintanilha, Kristen Reilly, Crista Salamy, Stephan Morrissey, Janine Lesser (new member), and Jerome Wilson (Chair)

Attendees: Kristen Reilly, Jerry Wilson, Janine Lesser, Rich Cahoon, Lance Flamino, Michelle Voto, Moira Milne, Ashley Jones

Jerry Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

5:30 Approval of October 24, 2019 Minutes

Janine Lesser moved to accept the minutes of the October 24th meeting. Kristen Reilly seconded. All in favor.

5:35 Exploring Educational Equity

Update from ConVal High School's Math Department

Michelle Voto and Lance Flamino reported on their work with Ann Forrest regarding math equity. (See attached update.)

Focus on Algebra, what all kids need to know to move forward in math. There was a grant approved this week for targeted intervention for algebra and math scheduled for afterschool support.

What courses do we need to offer before Algebra 1? They are looking at numbers of students in algebra-related courses and those who are struggling. We reached out to students with a D or below (about half).

Jerry Wilson asked what specifically is being done for struggling students: 20-week program to help, relearn, re-assess, with the potential of raising their grade (15 possible students will participate at TASC, working with educators).

Rich Cahoon asked about the targeted intervention. It has been optional in the past, but we have not always been able to get the kids who most need the intervention to seek the support. Now it will not be an option. Students can choose to participate in TASC or afterschool.

We need to fine-tune the intervention. TASC is just over 42 minutes long, but the afterschool program will run longer.

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How are we doing in not putting those most educated teachers in the highest class level? Lance Flamino feels that Guidance/Math Department do a good job of mixing up the strengths of the teachers with the weakness of the students.

Rich Cahoon asked about a 4-year mathematics class being a requirement.

Jen Kiley brings a PD training to the ATC, with geometry standards, "Construction Trades through Geometry". This is offered at ConVal, and an algebra 1 alignment with manufacturing (staff will be offered PD training over the summer). This will be offered the last week in June, with teachers' state-wide attending.

Rich Cahoon said we have enough math course, so it is possible that students could take one every year. He would like to see us get closer to that option. We will be able to offer more pathways for the students to be successful.

Dr. Forrest thanked Lance Flamino. As the new department head, he has been working hard to bring more opportunities to the students. Jerry Wilson asked about coordinating math between middle and high school. Mr. Flamino indicated that they realize this needs work.

The math department would like to have better scope of the entire program. The middle schools would have participated in this training, but the PD plan was changed at the last minute due to other circumstances.

Related to 2019-2020 School Board Goal

Related to SP Action Step 1.2.5 Action Step Align intervention strategies and support services with daily instruction.

SP Action Step 1.2.6 Develop and implement an extended school day and year on an as-needed basis for students

5:50 VLACS Recommendation

Follow-up item from the 2018-2019 School Year

Ashley Jones, Michelle Voto, and Ann Forrest presented recommendations regarding the taking of a VLACS course during the day for students choosing VLACS. The Sophomore year, as the freshman year is a critical building year. Ashley Jones shows data that only 3 freshman are taking VLACS, and only 1 during the day, and this is an exception to cover an open block/period.

Rich Cahoon noted that there is an excellent list of reasons to start in the sophomore year. This is also a good reason to fill a free block. Michelle Voto, CVHS Principal, indicated she is not aware of freshmen who have a free block. Every attempt is made to keep them in their seats learning.

It was suggested that just because a student has met his/her credit requirement, it does not mean they should not have free blocks.

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Freshmen have eight classes a year. Do we want to look at a 32 credit diploma (with distinction)? What about community service; that's a separate conversation. The group discussed limiting VLACS to one block a day. We want students to focus on face-to-face (in a classroom). A VLACS block is 80 minutes long, with often no face-to-face time with the instructor during the school day. VLACS interaction does not usually occur during the day; and there is little collaboration with other students.

It was indicated that the high school should do this, rather than giving the students options. If the right credits/requirements are not met, they will have to take those credits their senior year.

VLACS is a separate and distinct high school. Students must create their own account on VLACS, pick a class from the list, which only the parent/guardian can approve. Students are then assigned a teacher, who will reach out to both parent and student...no teachers involved. Even though it is in our facility, they are a separate entity.

We need to be clear of the expectations that we can offer for support.

Rich Cahoon asked about 18 year old students, can they move forward with VLACS without a parent/guardian approval? Yes.

Michelle Voto discussed those students who are taking VLACS during the school day must meet the ConVal's expectations.

If we suspect cheating, we report it to VLACS and they will be responsible for any decisions involved. Again, many VLACS teachers work/teach during the day.

Janine Lesser asked what happens if the student does not have internet access at home for VLACS correspondence. Most instances of enrolled students are taking their classes during the day. What if a student is having problems? Ashley Jones feels most of the teachers are very accommodating in communicating with the student.

Rich Cahoon suggested we look at conflict of interest for teachers who may be teaching a VLACS course. What if your VLACS teacher also teaches in your high school?

Dr. Forrest spoke of online courses and how they will play a larger role in secondary and post-secondary education.

The question was raised about how difficult navigating through their program might be? Ashley Jones is enrolled in a Graduate program now and feels that maneuvering through the screens to get the information they need is user friendly. Both Ashley Jones and Rachel Bowman will be able to assist the students to navigate the online course, should the students have difficulty; they also try to assist the student in the time management. However, the expectation is that they would go to their VLACS teacher for help and support.

Dr. Forrest realizes that in the past things have developed as needed. These recommendations will allow for clear, identified guidelines and structure for students who want to take a VLACS course.

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Most VLACS courses do align with our high school curriculum for credits. Counselors will work with students to ensure that the courses do align with the CVHS core credits.

It was noted that seniors should finish their VLACS course/s by April 1. Usual transcript grades transfer all other letter grades; however, VLACS does not have an A+ grade. Michele Voto will check with Guidance considering the weighted grade. VLACS grades also show the credit earned. Is the VLACS credit incorporated into the GPA? VLACS grades do not show up on the CVHS report card, but they do appear on high school transcripts.

We need to look at the grading policy at the high school, for both transfers and VLACS. Rich Cahoon asked if students in ATC will take a course for Running Start, which is a college course but not weighted like honors. Michelle Voto is aware of this, which she feels is unfair. If Running Start was weighted the same as AP, it would change everything. If loopholes exist, they will be exploited by those most capable of exploiting them.

Roughly 35 students attend VLACS daily. Last year there were 111 courses taken. The only way a student can fail, is if they stop the work. We show an 85% or above in competences to pass. Who pays for VLACS? It's considered a charter school.

NHAI recommend 2 VLACS classes for block schedule, and 4 classes for a traditional schedule. How will we incorporate these suggestions? In the handbook? Is this for this year or 2020? The School Board now approves handbooks. If we initiate this, we would have to approve the handbook revision. The Policy Committee can review the Alternative Credits policy to specifically mention VLACS and the changes proposed here.

6:20 9-12 Science Resources/Materials

Moira Milne who is head of the Science Department at CVHS spoke about the existing curriculum and plans for the future.

When the curriculum renewal cycle was set up, there was scheduled to be a K-8 renewal two years ago, but they worked it into the budget last year for supplies. This year will be the grades 9-12 budget. Moira Milne showed a hand-held data collection device, with a life spans of a number of years and used at the high school. Now there are new probes available that will interact with the chrome books and these have been budgeted. We are also looking to replace the outdated Chemistry textbooks. They are looking at ones with problem-solving content, which the kids will better utilize.

6:30 Other - Conflict of interest policy for teachers

- 1. We will bring this policy to the Policy Committee for further discussion.**
2. Recess (Kristen Reilly) Jerry Wilson asked what information is she seeking? Ms. Reilly is asking if there is a standardize temperature for outside recess, and if so, is it being implemented; who's going out and who's not. Where and when do we have a conversation on this? What are students doing if they're not going outside for recess? What are some of the activities that are made available to them?

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Rich Cahoon asked if Kristen Reilly, once she receives the data, will she be forming a proposal from the data? Kristen Reilly indicated she does not know.

Janine Lesser asked if we can ensure that all students are dressed appropriately? There is extra winter clothing that's available for students, should they need it (in most schools).

Ann Forrest indicated she can check with the middle schools as to why they did not go out for some identified dates. This issue has been clearly communicated to the elementary schools. Do students have the choice to stay in or go outside on foul weather days? It could become a supervisory issue.

3. Snack time at SMS: GBS has a designated time for their younger students but SMS does not. Are the SMS students allowed to eat their snack when they choose, if there is no designated time for snack. It was suggested that Dublin Consolidated School would have a designated snack time for grade 5, if they had a grade 5 in their building.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 5:30 PM in the SAU Boardroom

December 19: Grading Policy

Janine Lesser motioned to adjourn at 7:10pm and seconded by Kristen Reilly. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Hills

Amended on 1-10-20