

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

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

January 16, 2020

SAU Boardroom

5:00 PM

**Minutes**

**Committee Members:**

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

**Present:** Jerry Wilson, Dick Dunning Linda Quintanilha (5:26 p.m.), Kristen Reilly, Janine Lesser, Dr. Ann Forrest, Larry Pimental, Shannon Dunning, Amy Janoch

**5:00 Approval of January 2, 2020 Minutes**

**Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of January 2, 2020. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

**5:05 Justification for Therapy Dog Support at PES (see attached)**

Larry Pimental, PES Principal, shared the challenges of meeting the needs of all students. Challenges exist at home and at school. He said that *Responsive Classroom* and *Zones of Regulation* are just a few of the tools that are used when considering and dealing with these challenges. He said that Shannon Dunning, PES Teacher, brought forward the idea of including a therapy dog into the PES environment.

Why do this? Therapy dogs have proven to reduce stress, teach empathy, improve attendance, approve academics with reading comprehension etc. It could improve student learning. Larry reported having surveyed principals throughout New Hampshire. Considerations to those allergic to dogs and to those that are afraid of dogs were made. They can be overcome. Staff were surveyed at PES. 100% of staff reported that they could think of a time when it would be helpful to students. Many thought it would be exciting and positive. Staff are in support of this.

Shannon is working with a foundation that breeds and raises therapy dogs. Dogs have to pass certain tests along the way to become a therapy dog.

How would this work? Would the dog be a resident dog? Shannon Dunning said that the dog will live at her house. She will be a handler. The dog would be with her and/or the principal. When the dog is in the building, a dog might work for two hours. They understand when they are working and when they are not. Only a trained handler will be with the dog. It would be a gradual process with a slow entry to assure that kids and the dog are safe. It would be a thoughtful process.

Linda Quintanilha asked if there are kids in other elementary schools that have greater needs. Larry guessed that other schools have needs. Dick Dunning said that other schools have the same opportunity to implement this. Larry said that there is a cost, but not to the district. In working with Healing Paws that would be offset by fundraising. Once the dog gets to the handler, the handler becomes responsible for medical and food.

A snapshot of what the day would look like was reviewed. Other PES staff would become certified. A schedule would be developed where the dog could be signed up for.

Dick Dunning said that having a dog in the classroom made the difference between night and day at South Meadow in the past.

In terms of liabilities, is Shannon personally liable? As long as Shannon maintains her certification she is covered under their insurance. Insurance should not be a road block. Drafts of permission slips etc. are in hand.

Dr. Forrest said that she likes the idea of approaching it as a pilot. Assessing the impact would be important. A piece would be qualitative.

What is the timeframe? Larry said that PES would like to begin the introductory process this spring.

Jerry Wilson asked the committee if they want to present this to the board as a pilot program.

Dr. Ann Forrest said that following what is outlined in our policy will be a first step. Larry Pimental said that the policy already allows principals to make a decision about an animal in school. Dick Dunning suggested sharing other school's policies on this topic to the Policy Committee for their review.

Jerry Wilson said that it might be worthwhile to do a presentation to the full board.

Larry Pimental said that there is a level of commitment on behalf of Shannon Dunning and the organization toward getting the dog.

## **5:20 Update on programming that has been implemented as a result of the curriculum renewal process**

Amy Janoch, HES, shared the engagement taking place using *Letterland*. She shared examples of student experiences that have allowed students to grab onto reading. Teachers have been to two trainings with one coming soon. New Kindergarten and first grade teachers went to a Letterland training recently as well. Dr. Forrest said that it was a K-2 program and the third-grade program has just come out.

Dick Dunning asked the downside of *Letterland*. It does not have as robust a phonemic awareness as the response. For students who struggle with reading, they need to manipulate the sounds in their heads.

*Reading Street* assists with the phonemic piece and comprehension and is being pulled in. One program will not meet the needs of all students at all levels. *Letterland* meets the needs of the most struggling readers. Coaching is the best way to help students put the elements together. Amy Janoch shared other ways that phonemic awareness is practiced during transition times. Dr. Forrest said that *Letterland* was seen as a fix for parts of *Reading Street*. Thought is put into supporting staff.

Jerry Wilson asked what the primary reading resource used is. Dr. Forrest said that *Reading Street* was brought in and after review, pieces were identified to address the weaker areas were needed.

Core maps are used alongside to make sure students are receiving what they need. Teachers having the flexibility to meet the needs of all students is key.

Discussion took place about multi-age classes and single standing classrooms in terms of level of ease in teaching.

*Keys to Literacy* – Classroom teachers are now *Keys to Literacy* Coaches at every level. An assessment of which strategies need additional support to deliver is needed. *Keys* now offers professional development online.

## **5:45 Student Achievement Data System**

LinkIt! Demonstration – Ann Forrest shared that the State used to have a data system and discontinued and moved to another system. ConVal switched over to Linkit. Dr. Forrest shared how the system worked and went through a run of comparing student performance data. Linkit is connected to our student information system, Powerschool, so it routinely updates. Various filters, when applied, allow growth levels to be visible. It is more user friendly than the State program formerly used. Other features included the option for custom reports. It is data warehousing that stores information. ConVal now has to send NWEA Reports as opposed to it transferring automatically with the State system.

## **6:15 Other**

None.

**Janine Lesser motioned to adjourn at 6:28 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok