

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**

**Agenda**

**Committee Members:**

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

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

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

Request from PES

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

Board request

**5:45 Student Achievement Data System**

LinkIt! Demonstration

**6:15 Other**

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 5:30 PM in the SAU Boardroom

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

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

January 2, 2020  
SAU Boardroom  
5:30 PM

**Minutes**

**Committee Members:**

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

**Present:** Jerry Wilson, Dick Dunning, Kristen Reilly, Dr. Ann Forrest, Kim Chandler, Michelle Voto, Janine Lesser

**Jerry Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.**

**5:30 Approval of November 21, 2019 Minutes**

**Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of November 21, 2019. Janine Lesser second.**

Ann Forrest offered amendments on page two to change "Jen Kiley brings a national program..." to read "Jen Kiley brings professional development training..." In addition, under the VLACS agenda item, the sentence that reads "Ashley Jones and Rachel Bowman..." should read "Ashley Jones, Michelle Voto, and Ann Forrest..." The word "indicted" should read "indicated". On page three, "VLACS is 80 minutes..." should read "A VLACS block is 80 minutes long often with no face-to-face time with the instructor during the school day". On page four, "It was noted that seniors must finish...." should read "It was noted that seniors should finish...." Omit "An A+ would translate as an A". The last sentence of that paragraph should read "VLACS grades do not show up on the CVHS report card but they do on the high school transcript.

**Dick Dunning moved to accept as amended. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

**5:35 Follow-up on VLACS Recommendations**

Proposed revisions to ConVal High School's Handbook

Dr. Forrest referenced information included in the packet titled "Proposed VLACS Revisions to Current Handbook:" It was noted that the bullet that reads "Requests for exceptions...." is new. Once approved, this information will be added to the Program of Studies. Additionally, a bullet outlining the requirements of being enrolled in three courses..." was noted for sports participation. Progress must be evident for those courses that occur during the season that an athlete participates. Discussion took place about the frequency a student would need to check in to show adequate progress in order to remain eligible to participate in a sport.

Dick Dunning suggested language that defines the frequency of check-ins. Ann Forrest suggested mid-quarter language by providing evidence with follow-up check-ins to support eligibility. "Additional evidence will be required if there are concerns" will be added as well. These changes will go into effect immediately.

The recommendation from the committee is to go with the recommendations discussed tonight.

## **5:50 Grading Policy and Procedures**

Review Policy IKA – Grading System

Review and discuss the *Grading System* section of ConVal High School's Student Handbook, as well as the section on *Transfer Credits*

The policy simply states that the grading system will be approved by the Board. The information that appears in the student handbook was shared.

Discussion about the grades for Running Start and Dual Enrollment being weighted took place. Those present said that it made sense.

Kim Chandler spoke about the history of "123" classes. Consistency and thoughtful consideration for all courses was discussed. Eliminating the "123" label is recommended. These courses are receiving a lesser weight when looking at GPA.

Ann Forrest said that if this is implemented, it would take place in the new academic year, not mid-year.

Looking at how this impacts current students was suggested. Implementing this for incoming freshmen was also suggested.

Transfer of Credits – The handbook currently states that "Credit will be awarded and added to the ConVal transcript for all transfer credits based on the actual course letter grade which was awarded by the sending school". The proposed language is "Transfer credits will be awarded and added to students' ConVal transcript. The weighting of grades for all transfer credits will be based on the *letter* grade awarded by the sending school."

Dick Dunning said that this is a fair way to do this.

It is important to clarify in the handbook and communicate it.

Jerry Wilson summarized that this proposal will go to the board for their approval of the revisions to the CVHS Handbook. This will come back to the first February Education Committee meeting.

## **6:20 Share information requested about recess at the elementary and middle Schools**

How the decision to have indoor recess is made

Indoor recess options for students

Jerry Wilson shared with the committee that Kristen Reilly requested information about recess at the last committee meeting.

Ann Forrest said that indoor recess is determined by the "real feel" temperature of 10 degrees.

Students did not go out for recess due to rain on the specific dates that Kristen requested. Options for students during an indoor recess differ by staffing. Usually the gym is open where physical activities can take place. Additionally, board games are offered and other appropriate activities.

Kristen Reilly asked if the real feel temperature could be moved to 0 degrees from 10 degrees. Kristen said that she hears that a lot of screen time is offered during this time. She asks that this not be an option. She hears that recess is still sometimes taken away as a consequence as well.

Jerry Wilson said that they understand her concerns. He said that as a board member, our role needs to be considered; they are policy development and fiduciary. It is the administrator's role to develop practice and procedure for implementing the policy. He feels that what Kristen is asking is beyond the role of the board. It is more appropriate for the Policy Committee. Practices and Procedures come as policies are set. Policy IMAH is one policy where recess is mentioned. If a change is recommended it should go through policy.

Dick Dunning said that if we was a building principal and a board member was going to dictate when we are going outside and when snack time will take place, he would render his resignation. He said that he has to consider safety first. Teachers want students to be actively involved in something positive. How you use that time in a positive constructive way should be up to staff. If students participated in an activity on a device that the district controlled, he would have less of a problem.

Janine Lesser said that if she were a building principal, she would find information helpful. She agreed that administrators should not be dictated to by the board. People know the benefits but sometimes day to day life takes precedent.

**6:30 Other**

**Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok



CONVAL School District  
Justification for Therapy Dog Support at PES

**Present State:** Currently PES has approximately 270 students in grades Pre-K through 4, with students residing primarily in Peterborough/Sharon, however some students are bused in from other towns within the district because it was determined that PES is the best fit based on the specific needs of the student, and services PES provides. Approximately one-third of PES students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. This percentage is among the highest of the District's, ranking second. This is significant, especially considering assessment data gathered at the national, state, and local level reveal significant differences between the performance of students from low-income households and the performance of students from middle- to high-income households. Like all schools, the needs of PES students vary greatly, including social and emotional needs. Schools everywhere are using a variety of tools to help meet students' needs in order to provide a safe, inclusive, and positive learning environment. Currently in our district, we have employed a variety of strategies and curricula to provide social and emotional support including Responsive Classroom and the Zones of Regulation, as well as offering training in CPI, LSCI, and ongoing work with Eric Mann. Still despite on-going training, the use of researched based SEL curricula, and dedicated teachers and staff, PES has students who need more. In 2017-2018, there were over 2,600 documented behavior referrals, including 618 that were considered "Major" offenses. In school year 2018-19, there was a reduction in overall behavioral referrals to 1,724, but incidents considered "majors" increased to 728. National discourse and data, along with conversations with current staff and families, confirm that more and more students are affected by trauma, ACES, and other stressors that are affecting their education (and others' education).

**Recommended Addition/Change:** Peterborough Elementary School would like to employ the use of a therapy dog as part of our school's academic and social emotional learning environment.

**How does this request meet the needs and priorities of the District?** The district has dedicated time and resources in creating supportive and caring school environments because it understands that if students do not have the capacity to deal with stress, learning will not fully occur. Students need to be ready to learn, in order to learn. This recommendation supports that belief, and our research shows that employing a therapy dog is an effective method.

**How does this forward the Vision, our goal of One Vision, One Direction, and align to the Strategic Plan?**

- **2.1.2 The School District will train staff to provide interventions that address behavior concerns;**
- **2.1.3 The School District will implement the use of instructional strategies that positively impact all learners;**
- **4.8. The School District will provide support for physical, social, and academic needs of students, staff, and community.**

Implementing the use of a therapy dog has shown to have a positive impact on a school culture and environment, and has helped reduce behavioral issues in schools. In conversations with nearly a dozen school personnel (principals, teachers, school counselors), from within the state of New Hampshire and beyond, all have stated an improved school culture, and improvement in behavioral issues. In fact, not a single school has reported a negative incident or experience.

In a survey provided to PES staff, when asked what their initial reaction to having a certified therapy dog visit the school, 97.2% responded that it was exciting or positive. Nearly 92% could envision a time when the dog could be helpful to *them*, and 100% could think of a time when it would be helpful to students. When asked if they would welcome a therapy dog in school, 100% said yes (72.2% said every day, 27.8% occasionally).

The use of therapy dogs in a school setting can contribute to improvement in academic and social-emotional goals. For instance:

- Dogs can contribute to the improvement of reading and comprehension skills of students having difficulties.
- Dogs can assist with students who have anger management issues, bullying behavior and other anti-social conduct.
- Dogs can assist with students who are victims of bullying and related behaviors.
- Dogs can assist students who are socially disconnected from the mainstream student body.
- Dogs can help in the reduction of stress and anxiety among children in social settings.
- Integrating therapy dogs into the emergency preparedness and response plans of a school.

**How does this request promote greater equity and a more inclusive learning environment for all students?** All students will have access to the therapy dog.

**How do school data, district data, research, and appropriate state and national guidelines support this request?** “Research has demonstrated therapy dogs can make a measurable difference in terms of gaining various skills. These skills can include academic enhancements to emotional and relational development. Students can benefit cognitively as a relationship with a therapy dog can enhance memory, problem solving, and play skills. Schools are finding that the presence of a therapy dog can decrease anxiety and enable students to work through issues such as anger management and other psycho/social problems. The introduction of a non-threatening therapy dog can serve as a catalytic vehicle for forming adaptive and satisfactory social interactions. Guided activities and group discussions help teach students how to handle interpersonal conflicts and develop constructive responses”.  
(<https://counselor1stop.org/wiki/therapy-dogs/>)

“Among the well-documented effects of human-animal interaction in humans of different ages, with and without special medical, or mental health conditions are benefits for: social attention, social behavior, interpersonal interactions, and mood; stress-related parameters such as cortisol, heart rate, and blood pressure; self-reported fear and anxiety; and mental and physical health, especially cardiovascular diseases” (Beetz, Uvnäs-Moberg, Julius, & Kotrscha, 2012)

**Estimated Financial Impact:** Zero

**References:**

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