

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Equity Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

5:30 p.m.

Physical Location: None

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82853439767?pwd=eVpud3JyUXVVK0J3WERHeTQ0NVdEUT09>

Meeting ID: 828 5343 9767

Password: 474043

Phone: +1 312 626 6799 US

Meeting ID: 828 5343 9767

Minutes

Committee Members:

- Rich Cahoon
- Richard Dunning
- Janine Lesser
- Linda Quintanilha
- Tim Theberge

Present: Kevin Pobst, Dick Dunning, Janine Lesser, Tim Theberge, Rich Cahoon, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Dr. Ann Forrest

1. Call Meeting to Order

Dr. Kimberly Saunders called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. Introductions/Welcome

a) Group Question: Why is this committee of interest to you?

Janine Lesser said that it is evident that our country is facing a big opportunity/income gap. Education is the equalizer in this country. Absent equity, we will not be able to close or minimize the gap.

Dick Dunning said that there is a piece within the district itself where there are inequities from one building to another. It is about the opportunities available to students at different levels. At the high school, assuring that the opportunity for students to participate in upper level courses is provided.

Tim Theberge said that an element of opportunity comes in this discussion allowing a look at our current structure. Looking at available programming at Peterborough Elementary School and comparing to smaller schools would be interesting to review. He would like to see foreign language introduced at an earlier grade. Equity within our district and equity when looking at other districts should be looked at.

Rich Cahoon said that it has been persistent that ConVal High School has been running a prep school within its walls. Admission to that was not based on aptitude necessarily. It has been a concern of his. He shared his concern with the disparities between the two middle schools. They may be financially similar but there are still many differences. In terms of the elementary schools, Rich said that historically, in this district, our largest schools with largest class sizes were where our poorest students attended.

Kevin Pobst said that there are three things at the core of public education; efficacy, humanity, and equity. He said that he had a deep passion for each of these three things. He said that he is interested in learning more about what this committee is doing.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting – April 28, 2020

Janine Lesser moved to approve the minutes of April 28, 2020. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

4. Past data / historical review

a) Why is this topic important to our district?

Kimberly Saunders reported that the board asked her and Dr. Forrest to be clear about a mission and vision. They set the goal to be a district of excellence within a period of years. This would be important for each student. Kimberly said that the recommendation came forward to conduct an equity audit. Our vision focuses on creating learning conditions that ensure success for all students – learning conditions that overcome the presence of factors too frequently correlated with lower levels of achievement. In the ConVal School District, these factors include socio-economic and disability status. For this vision to become a reality, we, as a district, need to consider, recognize, and ultimately redress any factor established through policy, procedure, practice, belief, and/or assumption that contributes to a pattern of inequity.

Ann Forrest added that it is important to look at what is in place.

b) Data, what data do we have and how did we get it?

The Equity Audit book looked at research and indicators of equity. Data on teacher's level of degree, years of experience, and areas of certification was organized. Programmatic indicators include class size data, course data (Title, Number of Sessions, Required/Elective, Credits Earned, Co-Taught, Regular/Running Start/Honors/Advanced Placement), student assignment; is the class makeup disaggregated by IEP status, Section 504 status, Free/Reduced Lunch Status, and Discipline/Behavior Data was considered. Disaggregated Achievement included State Test data, NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress Data, AIMSweb Data, and Dropout Data.

Kimberly Saunders said that grades are not a great place to begin this conversation. Grades are not created equally. Is there a better way to grade? It is a long-term conversation that comes on the end of an equity conversation and not at the beginning. Recognition that inequitable conditions exist is important.

Rich Cahoon spoke about valedictorian selection and class rankings.

Dick Dunning said that it is about looking at opportunities for kids around curriculum, from grade level to grade level, from one school to another. When looking at a classroom teacher's role, having 14 or 7 students in front of a teacher is a huge difference. The amount of individual work that a teacher can do with smaller class sizes makes a difference. Opportunities for students to enrich their own school experience is integral. Having opportunities for students at the middle school is about a student feeling like "they are somebody" is critical.

Tim Theberge asked if there is data that we need that we don't have. Kimberly said that certification area is not a degree area. It would be beneficial to have degree area on staff. Research indicates that it matters if you have a degree in education or a degree in mathematics when teaching math.

Discussion took place about whether or not it lines up; are our most effective teachers those with specific degrees etc. Beginner teachers are often teaching introductory classes and more experienced teachers are teaching advanced students. The goal is to have teachers teach all levels and less about experience.

Kevin Pobst spoke about using attendance data and using remote learning to bridge gaps in learning.

Ann Forrest said that it is a challenge to pull multiple data points and have meaningful conversations. Kimberly Saunders added that people need to feel safe in asking probing questions. Too much data puts up walls.

What is the board's role in this? If you look at achievement gaps on State tests, ConVal has a larger gap for socio-economic challenged students than many other districts.

Kimberly Saunders said that having a board level committee raises the issue as an issue that goes across buildings and across the district. We are going to look at it in a systematic way across policy, practice, and implementation. We will be able to access board level decisions to support the work in a broader way. An equity officer to manage the data and better understand what we need to do to help students, help families, and better manage the framework, under different conditions, would be helpful.

c) Three-year review of equity smart goals

A Review of Equity SMART Goals from 2016 to the Present was provided. Dr. Forrest said that Phase I was the biggest district-wide look which naturally led into Phase II. The biggest actions that came forward were looking at teacher's levels of degree and years of experience. It drove Phase II. There were also a lot of questions about discipline and suspension. Who is being suspended and for what reasons was interesting.

Rich Cahoon hypothesized that a student in Grade 10 who is in a classroom with 40 students who have been guilty of behaviors that could have resulted in suspension. The behavioral standards may not be the same in all classrooms. It becomes an equity issue.

Ann Forrest spoke about who is being suspended; girls or boys, IEP's or not, etc. There is a trend upward for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. It has an impact on future success.

Rich Cahoon said that the goal isn't a perfectly proportion of suspensions. The notion that boys are suspended more is not shocking to him. What is the measure for discipline?

Dick Dunning said that a clear way of collecting discipline data on a daily basis is hard. Student transition periods were the times when discipline issues rose. It was predictable.

Work to support culture and climate, work to support student behavior in place has an impact.

Kimberly spoke about the importance of completing Algebra as the gateway to higher math. Every child now takes Algebra, without a semester off, until they get through Algebra.

Ann Forrest said that a focus on offering an intervention to students through TASC time or extended day for those struggling got interrupted.

Discussion took place on the weighting of classes. Conversation took place about the difficulty of changing the weighting of classes as a result of limitations in PowerSchool.

Kevin Pobst asked why we still have ranking. There is a way to work around it. Ann Forrest said that just the mention that the district is considering a change causes a firestorm.

Rich Cahoon said that schools that do not rank have students graduate with a portfolio. Kevin Pobst added that schools that don't rank have to work hard to make themselves known in order to be compared to.

5. Evaluation of the meeting

Did everyone have the opportunity to share what they are thinking, feeling, and what they are open to and uncomfortable with?

Tim Theberge said that this committee is great but, it is difficult to break down into what is actionable.

Dick Dunning said that he finds the dialogue helpful.

Rich Cahoon said that it was a good meeting. The awareness of K-12 culture is less familiar to him than other industries.

6. Adjourn

Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok