

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

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 4, 2020

5:30 PM

Physical Location: None

Topic: Education Committee
Time: Jun 4, 2020 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Virtual Meeting
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Minutes

Committee Members:

Richard Dunning, Niki McGettigan (Chair), Linda Quintanilha, Stephen Ullman and Jerome Wilson

Committee Present: Niki McGettigan, Linda Quintanilha, Stephen Ullman, Jerry Wilson, Dick Dunning

Others Present: Kevin Pobst, Katherine Heck, Dr. Ann Forrest, Kat Foecking, Cindy Bradshaw, Janine Lesser, Alan Edelkind, Lauren Mann, Sheree Hodgson

5:30 Approval of May 21, 2020 Minutes

Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of May 21, 2020. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

5:35 Quick Review of Relevant Educational Terms and Acronyms

Niki McGettigan covered terms and acronyms often used when discussing multiage.

5:45 Presentation on Multiage Pilot at Francestown Elementary School (FES)

Kat Foecking shared a presentation on the work done in the 2019-2020 school year on Multiage Education at Francestown Elementary School. Ms. Foecking highlighted the terms used in the presentation including multiage education, Homeroom, Responsive Classroom, Morning

Meeting, Closing Circle, Learning Progressions, Flexible Grouping, and Specials and she defined each.

Dr. Ann Forrest distinguished between multiage (an intentional pedagogical and educationally driven decision) and multi-grade (combining of classrooms for other reasons). Flexible Groups was further defined; kids would not be in static groups, they would be placed in groups intentionally. They are in groups for shorter amounts of time. It is not the grouping some committee members might recall from their youth.

Kat Foecking said that this model came out of staff asking how students could better be served.

Students were grouped in one of two multiage groups. Students were assessed against competencies. Successes included the ability for teachers to have dedicated time for collaboration and planning. Extensive peer learning opportunities were possible. Teachers focused on competencies and student learning. Students and teachers were able to connect at multiple points during the day. Increased use of special educators in general education classrooms was possible. This allowed non-identified students to benefit from special educators' strengths i.e. reading as an example.

Linda Quintanilha said that Francestown was isolating true inclusion. All kids in their own neighborhood school, student needs all got met in the natural setting and special educators helped all kids in regular Ed settings and it clearly benefited all kids, not just kids with I.E.P's. It meant staff had to figure things out and be flexible, but in the end it was best for everyone. Linda said that she loves that special education teachers are in place to help all students.

Kat said that challenges existed. Imperfection was expected knowing it would not be perfect. A lot of time was spent working on and shifting the schedule. Flexibility was a must. Specialists were integral; their class sizes doubled. Paraprofessionals went in with specialists as a result. Collaboration was strong ,but it was difficult for them to feel connected with their district colleagues. Francestown was the only school doing this; it was being built as it moved forward.

Linda Quintanilha shared her appreciation for the extensive work that FES did to allow each student to receive the education and services that they needed.

Linda Quintanilha exited the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Kevin Pobst asked if all staff are all in for year two. Kat said that staff are all in.

Considerations include the experience with the youngest students. Registration numbers were shared.

Two kinds of homerooms were developed. One included five-year-old students and the other included ages 6-9. As the five-year old students became comfortable, they could move in with the older students.

Next year, the building configuration is being changed. Subject Wings i.e. Math/Science, ELA/Social Studies is the example. This allowed for an increased opportunity for flexible grouping, reduction of potential stigma, and vertical curriculum mapping.

Academics will be grouped by the students' level of proficiency in each subject; math, reading, and writing. Science, Social Studies, and Specials will be grouped based on age spans i.e. 5/6-years old, and 7, 8, and 9-year-old students.

Special Educators lead small group instruction and are in classrooms to support students receiving Tier II and Tier III supports.

In terms of school counseling, small groups were able to pull together at the same time that academics were being delivered and integrate the two. It was creative.

Paraprofessionals, again, played a crucial role that helped make classes run very smoothly. They supported students across the school with executive functioning and supported recess.

Jerry Wilson asked if the program put together can be replicated in other buildings. Kat said that it could; it takes a very special group of educators. It cannot be forced. The reason this worked is a result of the educators developing the system. Other educators have visited and taken pieces of what they saw back to their schools and made it their own.

Ann Forrest said that she is thrilled with the model. She shared a challenge with the use of new curriculum implementation. When considering the return to school, it is a good time to make some shifts.

Alan Edelkind asked how this would correlate to traditional grades. The response was that the goal is that we are teaching kids in groups where we are not labeling them by grade. If a typically developing seven-year-old moved out of Frankestown, they would be able to integrate into their new school easily. By getting rid of the grade level label we are not boxing kids in. An eight-year-old student at FES is an eight-year-old student and not a third-grade student. If the student moved to another school, they would enter third grade and it would be the responsibility of the teacher to differentiate their instruction.

Dick Dunning noted the joint planning time and the numbers of students as positives. He added that it is fantastic that special educators can work with all students.

Stephen Ullman asked how competencies of elementary school students measured. He shared information from a report that showed no statistical significant differences in standardized test results.

Kevin Pobst asked how these students compared with others in standardized tests. Kat Foecking said that Frankestown students outperform other students in standardized tests in two subjects.

6:20 Other

- Update on Edith Bird Bass Essay Contest

Niki McGettigan reported that three winners have been identified. It was noted that the guidelines are not as clear as they could be. Niki said that she would like to re-write the guidelines over the next several weeks while it is fresh in our minds. A rubric was suggested for scoring. Organizing the file for next year is the goal.

- Review the focus for the June 18, 2020 agenda.

Dr. Ann Forrest spoke about piloting and how it became out of sync. A review of programs should come forward to this committee. In addition, weighted grades should also come forward.

6:30 Adjourn

Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 6:42 p.m. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok