

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 25, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Physical Location: None

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87981558965?pwd=cmxhMHh1cDlMWit4NC93a3pHZkYdZ09>

Passcode: kcW8mU

Telephone: 1 301 715 8592

ID: 879 8155 8965

Passcode: 006950

Minutes

Present: John Robertson, Jeff Brown, Diane Callahan, Bob Marshall, George Willard, Kate Fuller, Kristie LaPlante, Carole Monroe, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Stephen Ullman, Alan Edelkind, Janine Lesser

1. Call to Order

John Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Approve Minutes of January 28, 2021

Jeff Brown moved to approve the minutes of January 28, 2021. Bob Marshall second. Unanimous.

3. House Bill 20

Dr. Kimberly Saunders reported that HB20 was retained in committee and not sent to committee. Retaining means it can be come back anytime. Sent to committee allows further exploration. There is another SB130, which is almost identical, except it does not have the guard rails HB 20 did.

Kimberly Saunders spoke about the relationships, parents are the first and most important educator. Neither bill accomplishes "parent choice". Public schools first need to be strengthened before parent choice is an option. The State of NH does not meet its obligation through adequacy or special education. Adequacy remains inadequate.

Both of these are vouchers, giving adequacy to parents in the amount of \$3,700 to attend any type of private school, in or out of the state, and any type of Charter School, as well as provide those dollars to parents that homeschool.

NH is consistently in the top 5 states for public education. A lot of it is a result of the commitment local communities have to their schools. They are willing to pay for them. When we talk about programs, they are in places that are in the bottom 10% of schools in America. The bottom 10% are not the role models we want to look to.

When students are removed, costs are not necessarily removed.

They take public dollars and do not hold places accountable for those dollars. The amount of accountability that is required for dollars and assessment total 170 hours of

reporting. Neither of these bills require schools who take these public tax dollars to be accountable.

These bills use public dollars to segregate schools. They shift the demographics that are present in public schools.

If choice is the goal, institutions, whether private or charter, should have to accept the same types of guidelines.

4. Senate Legislation

Assuring a level playing field is important. If not, we are really talking about privatization of the educational system. Privatizing can lead to significant issues.

Both of these bills, will cost taxpayers more money. If we lose 100 students from ConVal, we would lose \$370,000 in adequacy. If those 100 students were evenly distributed, it is 7 students per grade level. Kimberly Saunders said that she might not be able to cut a single staff member. Most of the budget is about human resources and staffing. She can't cut \$370,000 in supplies and materials.

John Robertson asked about homeschooling. Kimberly said that a family only needs to send a letter one time to notify the district that they plan to homeschool a student. There is no requirement, should you move, to notify the Superintendent in the district you move, that you are homeschooling. There is no testing required.

There are people in our area that do a fantastic job homeschooling their children. There are others, that when we get the child back into our schools, cannot read at the third-grade level.

How many children in the ConVal District are homeschooled? Approximately 82 students.

Stephen Ullman said that elections have consequences. He spoke about a wealthy individual who had seven children. He sees the prime mover being the State Commissioner of Education.

Kimberly Saunders said that the Governor did not homeschool his children, he had them privately instructed.

The Governor has been aggressive about getting kids back into school. ConVal has been in school. Kimberly said that she found that 70% of those schools not in school were charter schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that she believed if a solid bi-partisan commission was put together with a background in education, they could put together a solid choice system in NH.

John Robertson asked the best way to move forward. He said that it is time to step out to the plate and say what is wrong and what is not.

HB 20 was retained, SB130 has a public hearing at 9:30 on March 2nd.

Janine Lesser said that you can sign up to speak, register approval or disapproval, and/or offer written testimony on the legislative site.

Tim Theberge spoke about other bills and pieces of legislation that, in combination, would change public education in New Hampshire.

Other examples were cited.

Specific values would be permitted, if not required, to be taught i.e. white supremacy as an ideology.

John Robertson asked if, regardless of where one goes to school, that schools should report testing scores to the State.

Kimberly Saunders said that if you are a private school, that is one of the draws, you don't have to do certain things. But, if you are accepting tax dollars, you should be held to the same standards of reporting among others.

5. ConVal Proposed Budget

John Robertson asked how the proposed ConVal budget should be promoted. In the past, this committee has taken it back to their Select Boards to seek support from them in the nine towns and come out as a committee with a position.

Janine Lesser said that it is powerful when the Select Boards have a position on the budget.

Will teachers be vaccinated soon? Kimberly Saunders said that there has been a big push to have teachers in category 1B. We have been able to make sure that teachers who are in risk categories have the opportunity for vaccination. Kimberly shared survey results providing figures for those that have received a first dose, second dose, and those who plan to vaccinate when it is their turn.

6. Report on ConVal – How are we doing?

Kimberly Saunders provided an update by sharing that CVHS has two cohorts; blue and gold. They are in school four days a week with Friday as a flex day. Those remote, remote in while school is live-streamed.

K-8 is in school with the option to learn remotely all of the time; teachers live-stream their classes. Friday is a flex day.

In addition, there is a remote only school for K-8.

There is one more remote planned period. Three of the times ConVal had to act with regard to COVID is the result of staff exposure leaving not enough staff to educate.

Will the school year be extended? No, no other than the possibility of snow days. There is no reason to extend the school year outside of snow days. Everyone is receiving instruction either in person or remotely. We are seeing learning loss. For a lot of people, this was a crisis, but for our children, this was catastrophic.

Kimberly Saunders shared a news blog for anyone looking for information. Kimberly said that she wants to make sure that people know that the communication surveys exist. It allows people to sign up for receiving news information.

Janine Lesser suggested that towns link it on their websites.

Whenever information is added, it pushes out to all of the social media sites; Facebook, Twitter etc.

7. Other

Kristie LaPlante asked that when Governor Sununu made the push to get everyone back in school, does that have an impact on remote learning for next year?

Kimberly Saunders said that ConVal was already in school, it was written for those that hadn't yet returned. Simultaneous to that, regulations allowed for schools to offer remote education. We know that we are likely going to have to offer some type of remote education in the fall. Some students and families are fragile enough that they will require it. Others favor remote education over in-person learning and have found success.

A K-8 Competency Based Remote School is proposed.

Tim Theberge invited anyone interested to participate in the Strategic Plan; invites coming soon.

Stephen Ullman motioned to adjourn at 8:09 pm. Second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok