

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

## EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

5:00 PM

Physical Location: SAU Boardroom

Virtual Location:

Topic: Equity Committee Meeting  
Time: Apr 27, 2021 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting  
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### Minutes

**Equity Committee Members:** Rich Cahoon (Chair), Richard Dunning, Janine Lesser, Liz Swan, and Kevin Pobst

**Committee Members Present:** Rich Cahoon, Richard Dunning, Janine Lesser, Liz Swan, Kevin Pobst

**Others Present:** Dr. Ann Forrest, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Kat Foecking, Lexy Heatley, Anne O'Bryant, Tim Conway, Jerry Wilson

#### 5:30 Approval of [March 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of March 23, 2021. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

#### 5:35 Review the focus areas identified at the March 23, 2021 meeting.

- Scheduling and its effect on limiting access to higher level courses and other opportunities

Dr. Ann Forrest reported that Heather McKillop, CVHS Principal, is planning to attend the next Equity Committee meeting and she will share input on scheduling.

- Programmatic differences that still exist between the two middle schools  
Dr. Ann Forrest shared the history of work that has been done in the area of equity.

- District guidance/counseling program and how it functions to inform and widen opportunities not limit: How are we introducing the program of studies and selecting courses? What is the role of teacher recommendations? How are we supporting the transition from 8th to 9th grade?

Dr. Ann Forrest reported that the school counseling program at the high school has brought forward that they will pursue becoming a RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program) school. A thorough review of current programming is required. It will be valuable to have this group present on how they are evaluating their program.

A school counseling group has been working on drafting an equity statement that they would like to bring forward for this committee to review.

Ann Forrest suggested combining the next Education Committee with the next Equity Committee. Looking at class size and our class size policy will be reviewed with recommendations coming forward for the high school.

Rich Cahoon said that he encouraged bringing equity initiatives to both committees earlier rather than later. This committee has a history of focusing on a new big initiative and then the committee reverses. Better to look at it early on rather than put a year's work in. There are many things that this committee could do to improve equity issues.

Thoughts on combining the meeting next month? Confirmed.

Ann Forrest confirmed that she will meet to finalize the Education Committee meeting agenda and combining both next month.

## **5:45 Review the equity work that has been done at the middle school level over the last few years**

Work began in November 2017. Middle school staff were pulled together. The process to be consistent and where there is room for flexibility was the focus.

The definition of "Educational Equity" was discussed during these meetings. Groups were formed crossing both schools. Areas of challenge were noted. The history of model school models was researched and shared. It was a foundation day. Themes came out of the day that informed the all-day March professional development day. In March, staff got together in subject groups. They were asked to identify similarities and differences. Later in the day, people were divided and assigned one of the themes that arose out of the November day that needed further inquiry. It was intentional to assure that the groups were balanced with membership from both schools. Groups focused on various areas.

In 2018/2019, groups met periodically throughout the year. At the end of the year, facilitators of the groups presented findings and recommendations to the Education Committee.

Recommendations on the need for administrators to address specific differences that were identified evolved.

In 2019/2020, the focus was moving forward on those recommendations. Administrators did a thorough evaluation of the two school budgets to make sure that both schools were equitably funded and addressing discrepancies.

Opportunities to review a draft statement on what the ConVal middle school model would be as well as the purpose and focus of advisory were provided. In March and April, staff were able to look at work to date and provide feedback. Revisions took place and were reviewed. Competencies were discussed and building a shared understanding on what competency based education is was focused.

In 2020, administrators brought forward the differences in instructional minutes in core subject areas and aligned them across the two middle schools. The next phase was to

further align the “specials” time. Rotating schedules were addressed. Later, an update on the work related to middle school recommendations was provided. The recommendation to take time to research the rotating schedule was decided before making a recommendation. This did not happen as a result of COVID. Entering this year, the two middle schools had the exact same schedule. This year was focused on the reopening plan. The middle school continued work on advisory review among other work.

This leaves administration on the aligning of specials programming and recommendations on advisory and competencies, schedules (supporting time for advisories, PLC’s and intervention) and completing an analysis on school budgets.

Middle school principals were present for questions.

Rich Cahoon said that there is a perception that there is a real imbalance in budgets between the two schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that we look at costs by the number of students. The amount that is dedicated for specific activities based on the number of students is equitable.

Kevin Pobst asked what the remaining differences are between the schools that are significant. In addition, what is SMS or GBS doing that is intended to reduce inequity that may not be something that the other school may need to do to address an equity.

Ann Forrest said that the main difference is around specials. It is around staffing. The two schools have different size populations. GBS is able to do something different than SMS as a result of staffing. Ann cited the example of world language at GBS where staff is available grades 5-8 while at SMS it is available to grade 7 and 8 students.

Anne O’Bryant said that she has to look at specials rotation. If she has one hundred more students, she has to look at who can be best served.

Kevin Pobst asked why administration would not address it to match at both schools.

Rich Cahoon said that because we can cut at the middle schools and cannot cut at the elementary schools, we tend to cut there. Middle schools run leaner.

Dick Dunning said that if you don’t have the staff, you have to minimize opportunities for kids.

Kevin Pobst asked rather than taking a teacher out of Francestown Elementary School who is teaching 9 kids and placing them at SMS would be a hypothetical example. Confirmed.

Kimberly Saunders said that what can be done in a given year with a certain amount of money is the practice. Using trust monies to minimize increases to the budget has been the practice as a result to move our program forward.

Dick Dunning said that the other solution is not to offer it to fifth and sixth graders. Do you keep the full-time teacher or not offer the class?

Dr. Forrest said that when designing curriculum for fifth graders and seventh graders it compounds.

Rich Cahoon noted the imbalance in school populations as a result of Greenfield students originally scheduled to attend GBS and not SMS. The schools otherwise would be balanced in numbers. Rich said that the perspective is that GBS cares about culture and SMS cares about academics.

Liz Swan asked if in the past, there has been consideration for the two middle schools to serve different grades i.e. one school serves grades 5 and 6 and the other 7 and 8. How would that change equity? Would there be resources that could serve each of those age groups?

Dr. Kimberly Saunders said that it could mean a child from Temple was on a bus for lengthy times. Multiple transitions don't necessarily work for some students well, especially for those with less support at home.

Have inequities been observed in the schools that need to be addressed? Dick Dunning said that looking at band and chorus might be looked at for equity purposes. Looking at it and not significantly impacting the schedule is the struggle.

Ann Forrest said that conversations around electives and children who chose them and looking to see if there are barriers in place that keep some children apart from a particular elective. Anne O'Bryant said that if she has 100 more students, industrial arts classes are impacted for safety reasons. The goal would be to have two IAT teachers to cover grades 5-8 to keep class sizes at safety levels of 15.

Rich Cahoon said that because of the certain number of planning blocks that need to be filled with specials drives the need to increase staffing at one school.

Dick Dunning said that two planning blocks every day makes it difficult to schedule. A successful middle school model needs this time to meet in PLC's and discuss students.

Kevin Pobst asked if something is being offered in one school that is not necessary to address an equity issue.

Dick Dunning said that it is about making it equitable for both schools and it is going to look different.

Kat Foecking said that she looks forward to looking to determine if there are inequities when we are not in a pandemic.

Kevin Pobst said that if we gave SMS more staffing, they would have a program that looked more like GBS.

Ann Forrest said that we stepped back and asked ourselves what we could do with the staff that we have. The importance of choice is important for middle school. Whether or not it would be possible for grades 5 and 6 to have exposure to specials and in grades 7 and 8 take a deep dive in was looked at. The impact of specials and staffing was considered and then it came to a standstill. It requires more time for review.

Kat Foecking said that we are situated in a great place. We will have four new administrators coming on to work as a team together. Anne O'Bryant will be missed. We will come to an end of the pandemic and be able to hit the reset button to look at what we want the middle school experience to be.

Dick Dunning said that the single greatest accomplishment between the two middle schools was when they came together and looked at themselves as one rather than separate entities. He said that he hopes that it continues to help make change come about.

Rich Cahoon asked if there are differences with core subjects. Ann Forrest said that there were differences in the instructional time allotted across the two schools. It led to differences about curriculum and what teachers could get accomplished. The time now matches in core subjects which supports us when teachers work together. It is an ongoing focus.

Kimberly Saunders said that she would want to focus on certification and subject area. We have K-8 certified staff and subject area certifications. It depends on who you end up with math in terms of your math experience. Subject area minors and majors have an impact on how well a teacher has the ability to instruct.

Kevin Pobst asked if we could look at sub data with respect to achievement between the schools in ELA and Math. Kimberly Saunders said that we don't generally present data like that anymore. She asked the committee if looking at that data to that degree at this juncture is needed.

Rich Cahoon shared his concern with disaggregating the data to the point that it is no longer anonymous for the students.

**6:15 Other**

Ann Forrest said that she is looking for this group to finalize goals.

Rich Cahoon said that the high school schedule might be next to review as a result of tonight's sharing of the work that has been done to date.

**Janine Lesser motioned to adjourn at 6:17 p.m. Liz Swan second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok