

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

EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

5:30 PM

Location: SAU Finch Room

Minutes

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

Present: Rich Cahoon, Dick Dunning, Janine Lesser, Liz Swan, Kevin Pobst, Dr. Ann Forrest, Larry Pimental, Tim Conway, Colleen Roy, Kat Foecking

Rich Cahoon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

5:30 Approval of September 28, 2021 Minutes

Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of September 28, 2021. Liz Swan second. Janine Lesser abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.

5:35 Elementary and Middle School Schedules

Rich Cahoon referenced his submittal of a School Board Request for this information. It was seen as a good fit for the Equity Committee.

Over the last decade, much time and money has been put into the subject of math and it has not always paid off. A review of schedules and what else might have changed should take place. Items added into the school day causes time somewhere else to be taken out.

Ann Forrest shared a historical review of daily instructional time at both the elementary and middle schools for the years 2013/2014, 2015/2016, and 2021/2022.

In 2013/2014, math instruction was 45 minutes each day at the kindergarten grade and 75 minutes grades 1-4. In 2015/2016, the instructional day was increased by 30 minutes. Math instruction ranged from 60 minutes at kindergarten and 75 minutes grades 1-4. In addition, a shift in the amount of time for the instruction of science and social studies increased from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016.

Currently, the 2015/2016 times remain for math instruction.

It was noted that the instructional time for both science and social studies has decreased from 60 minutes in 2015/2016 to 30-50 minutes in the current 2021/2022 school year.

If time has not been taken away for the instruction of math, what is the cause for the decline in math assessment scores?

Ann Forrest said that the Education Committee has asked that data be brought back from other districts that are similar to ours to draw comparisons. Conversation around acceleration vs. remediation is being looked into. Other discussions include that of the multi-tiered levels of

support. The structure of the district has been asked to be looked at more closely. In the past, schools had a range of veteran to new teachers. Now, we have had some schools with mainly new teachers with little to no veteran teacher support. The idea of specializing a school with a focus has been brought up.

Discussion took place about the difficulty in getting all of the instruction in during a day.

Dick Dunning said that we should have enough data to determine where kids are breaking down. Going back to the basic fundamentals to be sure those are taught over everything else is valuable.

Discussion took place about the ability for teachers to specialize their instruction in one or two areas vs. three or four. Francestown Elementary School began work on a model that resulted in a teacher teaching math and science and another teaching reading and writing. It allowed teachers to dive deeper into the subject area.

Are we looking directly at the experiences of neighboring school districts? There is a point where it should be data driven rather than research based. This district is dead center demographically in the state but our test scores are not dead center in the state.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum and needs have been a demand of parents coming into this year. For some parents, it may mean that their children did not have social time with their friends. Was the interpretation for an increased need in social-emotional curriculum assessed correctly?

Colleen Roy said that it has taken time to integrate students back into school and for them to learn what it means to be a student. Some students come hungry, others have other needs. These needs take away from learning. We are trying to fill in the gaps.

Rich Cahoon asked if the other districts that are taking a different approach with social-emotional learning have been looked at.

Kevin Pobst shared his skepticism that formal SEL instruction was what parents were looking for when the survey was completed. Is formal SEL instruction the most effective response to the kinds of things schools are seeing? Colleen Roy said that it is needed because it is not happening in many homes.

Ann Forrest said that she has no doubt that parents responded with a concern that this should be addressed. She worried about the words "formal curriculum" for SEL. What it looks like in a classroom is opening the day together as a group and taking the time to connect with other individuals in the class. Part of it is the opportunity to start to build relationships as a group who will be together for an entire year.

Liz Swan spoke about experiences she has witnessed with students coping abilities since COVID. She asked if getting people excited about math is underway. She would hate to see the SEL time cut back. Approaching math from a different angle might be considered.

The structure of the district is not conducive to same grade teachers collaborating together. When teachers have a common planning time together collaboration is possible.

When you look at research on equity it is important not to look at the quick fixes. There are so many things that impact student learning. If we looked at instructional time in isolation and other districts had more time, the conclusion could be drawn that the addition of time was needed. This should be looked at in a comprehensive way to assure that any changes made will have an impact.

What would the decision tree look like? If it is the structure of the district, what do other districts look like?

Ann Forrest said that this is an area of concern for teachers and administrators; work is underway now. It is an ongoing investment in improving math instruction and learning.

Rich Cahoon said that fifth grade NWEA math assessments were 17% proficient. That is 80% of students who will have a lifetime of difficulty in math.

Next steps include gathering data from other districts with a similar profile to ConVal.

5:50 Equity Implications – Student Performance Data

Equity issues among students who are economically disadvantaged were asked. What is being done differently and are we sure we are doing the right thing?

As we think about looking at other districts, if there is something that would be worthwhile to look at, such as class size, it should be asked.

As an example, if we find that another district is doing something that ConVal is not, are we prepared to revisit that?

What are the expectations of the culture of the school for kids? Low expectations lead to low results. It is difficult to measure. On paper, ConVal may be similar to other districts but culturally very different.

Dick Dunning moved to adjourn. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok