

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

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 4, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room

Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A09YBL8bYgo>

Minutes

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Tom Burgess,
Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind,
Jim Fredrickson, Katherine Heck,
Greg Kriebel, Janine Lesser,
Kevin Pobst, Liz Swan,
Tim Theberge, Stephen Ullman

Abby Kamieniecki, Student Rep.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Lori Schmidt, B.A.
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.
Carrie James, H.R.
Stephanie Syre-Hager, AES
Larry Pimental, PES
Heather McKillop, CVHS
Kat Foecking, GBS
Tim Conway, SMS

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Tim Theberge called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II (If Required)

None.

3. Points of Pride

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes

1) December 21, 2022

b. Personnel

None.

The Consent Agenda was adopted.

6. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Reopening Update

Dr. Kimberly Saunders spoke about the CDC recommendation to quarantine for 5 days rather than 10. The NHDHSS has not changed and remains at ten days.

Rich Cahoon moved that if NHDHSS changes their guidance that it would instantly take affect at ConVal.

Katherine Heck second.

Liz Swan said that constituents have reached out to her about the quarantine periods and that students miss near a month of school. She asked how students and families can be supported.

Kimberly Saunders said that they can contact her. Students should be receiving tutoring. We are following DHSS guidance to the letter.

Families often don't realize that they are self-isolating.

Students cannot be zoomed in from classrooms. We do not have the staff to run multiple classrooms when a student is out. Last year, staff stepped up and simultaneously zoomed classrooms and taught live. It was not the most effective and was double duty for the teachers.

Dick Dunning asked if a high school student is out and finals are coming soon that there are tutors available to assist. Kimberly confirmed that is true.

Unanimous.

b. Monthly Events Calendar

Kimberly Saunders reported that the Strategic Planning Survey will go out this month. There will be no other Strategic Planning committee meetings.

Kimberly reported that 76 COVID tests in the last two days have been administered with 19 positive cases resulting.

c. January 1st Enrollment Update

Kimberly Saunders reported that 2,059 students are enrolled.

Stephen Ullman noted that there are several classrooms in the district with low enrollment. He looks forward to looking at the configuration of the district.

Kindergarten numbers were discussed. The NESDEC Demographic Report is forthcoming.

Kimberly said that the last two years resulted in larger than anticipated kindergarten enrollment numbers. The next two years will be interesting. NESDEC projections over the past decade, when used, were spot on. A steady decline in enrollment was projected.

7. Reports

a. Teacher Representative – Cheryl Jessie

None.

b. Student Representative – Abby Kamieniecki

Abby Kamieniecki reported that Student Council is planning a pennies war that will be donated. Student Council is planning a Valentine's celebration. Finals week is the 19th and 20th. Girl's JV Basketball lost this evening.

c. Policy Committee – Katherine Heck

Katherine Heck reported that the committee met this evening. Policy LC was reviewed with suggestions for handling certain aspects of the policy as it relates to parent involvement.

JCA will go to legal for review as a result of updates.

8. Old Business

a. Legislative Update

Tim Theberge reported that he sent concerns with changes to EFA's and local voucher option to the State. Hundreds of bills and legislation may impact education.

The Senate and House meet to go over retained bills that were held over. Hearings will start next week.

b. School Board Requests

Kimberly shared information as a result of School Board Requests.

Rich Cahoon referenced the information related to "Preschool for All: Measuring Success" He spoke about what the measurement might be to determine and define what a successful program is. Are the outcomes expected worth the financial input? This is a discussion about what outcomes would justify the investment. The outcomes would be the growth target column, which is blank.

Kimberly Saunders referenced information about the total number of Kindergarten Behavior Referrals by School Year. We have been able to provide anecdotal evidence in presentations. The year that ConVal started thinking about preschool as an administration, and as a board as a priority, was the year that we had students come in with minimal letter recognition and not knowing their colors. A look at how the situation could be looked at was the consideration.

Rich noted several things about the behavioral information provided.

Dr. Ann Forrest shared that a request on how we define if the preschool program is successful is determined.

Ann said that the definition of program success for preschool is determined through increased access to preschool, implementation of high-quality preschool programming, and increased kindergarten readiness.

Measuring success will involve collecting multiple data points related to each category of success.

Tim Theberge said that with the Potential Tools/Indicators, the growth target for student enrollment is blank. That can be determined by calculating the maximum enrollment.

Rich Cahoon said that he would start with what the problem is that we are trying to solve.

As an example, how many students in 2017 were not kindergarten ready? In the past, we said that we could not measure kindergarten readiness but now we are saying that we are going to measure it.

As an example, is 25 students that otherwise would not be kindergarten ready worth the investment, or 100 students?

Ann Forrest said that an outcome related to access, an outcome related to program quality (using preschool standards and student progress toward meeting them), and outcomes as they enter kindergarten would be indicators.

Rich Cahoon said that he would define outcomes differently. He wants to promise the voters something for their money.

Kimberly Saunders said that she would look to say that of the students who have attended our preschool program, a minimum of 85% of those students would be kindergarten ready after participating in the program as an example.

Kevin Pobst shared some frustration in that he would have thought that when the board was asked to expand the program that data that supported what is being asked would have been presented.

Kimberly said that we have data on the students. Part of what is being provided is data on those students. Is there additional data that is wanted?

Katherine Heck said that she was under the impression that the data being provided would compare students who attended our preschool program with those who did not. She would like to define what measures that will identify what kindergarten ready means for this district.

Kimberly said that her understanding was that this would be a discussion and data needed would be identified.

Rich Cahoon said that he was after this discussion. For example, "Kindergartener Screener" is an indicator. It matters because if we used to have 50 students who were not kindergarten ready and now we have 40 we might not spend the money.

Stephen Ullman referenced information on Baseline AIMS web Data where students who recognized initial sounds and letter names. He said that he would have expected that some of the students tested in 2020 and 2021 who came out of our preschool programs would have some advantage with initial sounds and letter names.

Ann Forrest said that what was put together is how a comprehensive evaluation of a successful preschool program would be looked at. What is clear now is that a focus specifically on the outcome data and developing clear statements around what outcomes will be apparent as a result of the preschool program.

Jim Fredrickson asked if there is a metric on the effectiveness of students who spend one year or two in the program.

Kimberly Saunders said that the 2020 data represents the beginning of the school year. Students went home in March.

The 2021 data is reflective of the impact that it would have on students.

Alan Edelkind said that he was looking for information about what we are mandated to do and what we are not. Based on budgeting restraints, what do we have to do and what do we not? What do we really want to do?

Katherine Heck asked for data on how our educational outcomes with special education students are doing with improving and meeting goals.

Kevin Pobst asked if the purpose of the conversation is to say what kind of data is needed, he would say that the last six rows is what he wants to see.

Rich Cahoon said that he would be after a percentage of students in 2016 who were not ready for kindergarten. What is the percentage now? We would not seek the program not knowing that information.

Kimberly Saunders asked the board to understand that the administration has been directed to march forward with preschool under the direction of the full board. This board has every opportunity to decide to roll that back. Administration did not decide to just try preschool and use taxpayer money. If the board direction is changing, the board needs to let administration know.

Rich Cahoon said that he made the original motion years ago to move forward with preschool. What is new to him is that a kindergarten classroom teacher can teach colors and letters and how to sit in a classroom. This proposed staffing model has not been communicated more than in the last year.

Kimberly said that we know that we have grant opportunities to put positions under question into. It would allow time to look at outputs and inputs. It would lower the cost in the budget.

Kimberly Saunders discussed the different preschool options, staffing, and financial implications. 1.58% or 1.76% increases in the budget are the potential impact.

Kevin Pobst shared his frustration that the inquiry for data has been characterized as being anti-preschool program. He is not anti-preschool program. He wanted to see data on the impact of the program. He said that he would think that this data would exist as the basis for the request for the program.

Tim Theberge said that for the time he has been on the board there has always been a goal and step to increase the preschool program.

Dick Dunning said that we asked administration to bring a budget that would not exceed a specific point. They did that. He said that he needs to be convinced that this should move forward. If the data reflects that it should go forward. Preschool makes a major difference in some students lives. This program has been run for several years and he would like to see the evidence that it makes a difference. Meanwhile, the budget came in at a 2% increase. This will make a difference in students' lives.

Liz Swan said that we have to do our best to help people understand what problems we are trying to solve. She said that she looks at enrollment. She said that she understands that there is limited access to program in the area. She said that a separate warrant article was mentioned. Is that a possibility?

Tim Theberge said that this board voted 7-6 to include it in the budget. The only way to change this would be for a member who voted in favor to reverse their vote.

Rich Cahoon noted that he was on the prevailing side of that vote. He said that it is about services for students who do not require them. Grant money spent on this would not be spent somewhere else. Defining the success of services is important. What did things look like in 2016? What problem are we trying to solve? Does it justify the investment?

Kimberly Saunders said that she will make an administrative recommendation to adopt the second option that was presented which is not to fill the social worker, grant half speech and half COTA and decrease the investment in preschool to \$566,274.00, which would increase the budget 1.76%. The reasons for her recommendation are not just financial. This provides the opportunity to look at these positions and determine the impact on students.

Jim Fredrickson moved to replace the program voted on with the funded program for \$566,274.00.

Tim Theberge said that a motion to reconsider would be needed first.

Jim Fredrickson moved to reconsider. Rich Cahoon second.

The motion is to reconsider the discussion.

Kimberly said that the Social Worker aspect of the job would continue to fall to the present social workers.

Tom Burgess said that he voted in favor but would like to explore the consequences of a reconsideration. If the motion to reconsider passes, we go back to the original vote on three options and consider now five options. Tim Theberge said that upon a revote of this topic, it could end up as zero. If you are satisfied with the previous decision of the board you can vote no to the reconsideration. Or, we could withdraw the motion and continue discussion. Jim said that he does not want to risk going to nothing for preschool. The question is whether to reconsider or not.

All in favor of reconsidering Preschool Option 1: Majority.

Jim Fredrickson moved to approve the second alternative to the full funding option. It is Option 2.

Tim Theberge said that it removes the social worker, half the cost of the COTA. \$566,274.00 is the impact overall or a 1.76% increase in the budget.

Kimberly said that half of speech path and COTA would be in the grant.

Dick Dunning second.

Katherine Heck said that based on the results of last year's election she requested that this is a separate warrant article. She shared what took place last year with a program that voters knew little about. She is not against the program but making sure that the board listens to voters to share information to inform the voter.

Katherine Heck moved to amend the motion that if the option is chosen that it be a separate warrant article.

Kevin Pobst said that before he supports one dollar, he wants to see the data.

Tom Burgess spoke about baseline gains with letter recognition. What caused the results that he defined as abysmal?

Stephen Ullman asked if eight classrooms would still exist. When talking about moving positions into grant money, does it exist? What percentage in the operating budget does this proposal represent? He said that he is convinced that getting to students as early as possible is essential.

It is eight classrooms, this would be specific to IDEA Grant dollars, and 1.76% is the budget increase impact.

Rich Cahoon said that if we vote on this plan, we would be adopting something that needs consideration.

Rich said that he would like to consider the rest of the discussion, including Katherine's proposal.

Tim said that the budget will be presented to the public.

Katherine Heck said that we can amend the budget up until the end of the public hearing.

Kevin Pobst asked why Jim Fredrickson would have to amend his motion; Katherine moved to amend it.

Rich said that the initial purpose of the discussion is about what measurements define a successful program. He wants to know how many additional students are being served that would not have otherwise been served.

Tim Theberge spoke about Katherine's motion to amend to make a separate warrant article and Kevin Pobst second. This would move the \$576,274.00 to a warrant article to expand the preschool program.

Jim Fredrickson asked if we vote on this amendment and we vote yes, what is being agreed to.

The first round is to determine to accept Katherine's amendment. Order on the warrant needs determination if it passes.

Liz said that she likes this idea because it is a large amount of money. It is empowering for people to be able to choose.

Rich Cahoon said that full-day kindergarten was not a separate warrant article. He said that he is not sure if he wants to put anything on the ballot and in the budget.

Rich said that he wants to know how many students are impacted. He wants to know the numbers.

Dick Dunning moved to table this until the information is present.

Katherine Heck said that she is willing to table her motion until information is present.

Rich Cahoon said that the reason the number is important is because the indicator to move forward would be defined per student. Rich said that he would be happy to table the discussion.

Kevin Pobst said that he would like information on any two of the last six rows.

Kimberly said that we have the data and it is accurate. She said that she understands that the information was just received. She said that the information asked for was given provided there were three work days to produce it.

Kevin said that he wants to see if the measure of kindergarten readiness is different than from now for kids in the program.

Tim Theberge asked the board how they would like to move forward.

Katherine Heck said that the largest figure should be brought to the Budget Hearing. It can be reduced but not increased.

Jim Fredrickson withdrew his motion.

Dick Dunning withdrew his second.

Kimberly said that time to decide is needed. A decision on what will be brought to the budget hearing, time for administration to prepare prior to the 6:00 meeting is needed.

The motion was to open debate by way of reconsideration. The money is still in the budget.

Rich Cahoon said that we started with how we are paying for this and got off track. The focus was about the program and what problem it solves and not the dollar amount.

Kimberly Saunders asked to poll the board about whether the \$700K+ is still in budget. Confirmed.

Rich Cahoon said that by next Tuesday, we could share information that identifies success that will drive the program. Katherine Heck asked that the data points be provided at least 24 hours before the meeting. Any reductions made can be made at the public hearing but not at any time after. The figure can be decreased at Deliberative Session as well. It can be done during the public hearing or at Deliberative Session. This topic will be discussed at Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. on January 11th.

Kimberly Saunders asked for what specific data is being requested. She shared expansion information and data not available as a result of COVID.

Rich Cahoon said that when we approve board minutes, the agenda could be added to up until the beginning of the meeting. The actual agenda could be adopted by the body.

What data points are required on preschool? AIMSWEB, PNOA for participants in preschool to determine rate of change in assessment.

Kindergarten readiness - what did it look like in 2016 - baseline data for 2016 is needed.

Students with special education services (students with an IEP) and how they are meeting their goals or exceeding their goals during the program.

c. Revised Budget Discussion

Liz Swan asked about line 610 - general supplies. What is the reason for the increase? \$18K in preschool supplies, program supplies.

Line 738 - tech replacement is Chromebook replacement and lifecycle replacement.

Line 220 and 231 - why lower. Benefits were allocated differently in prior years. Benefits were calculated specifically on salary and fine tune the benefits.

Line 422 - decrease in snow plowing is based on a rolling three-year average.

Line 323 - pupil services is special education needs.

Line 330 - purchased/professional services is contracted services like custodial, services for itinerant staff.

d. Policy 2nd Read/Adoption (Board Vote Required)

- JRA: Student Records, Privacy, Family, Student Rights

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt Policy JRA as presented. Stephen Ullman second. Unanimous.

9. New Business

a. Policy 1st Read

- DGA – Authorized Signatures

Tim Theberge referenced this policy for a first read.

b. Default Budget Calculation

A correction around transportation was noted.

ESSER monies impact the default. It is revenue in and appropriations out.

Katherine Heck asked if specific cuts to specific lines will be known before Deliberative Session. Confirmed.

c. Revenue Forecast

Line on district assessment increase up 6.11% is an estimate of the appropriations of budget less anticipated revenue forecasted and the difference is charged to the taxpayer. It is going up \$2.4 million dollars.

Katherine Heck spoke about prior reductions in budgets. A massive spike in the tax rate will be apparent if money cannot be given back. It is unlikely that this kind of money can be given back. When people ask the impact on their tax bill, it is compounded. It is a big swing. It is a political fallout for board decisions.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Lori Schmidt certified that manifests listed totaling \$1,039,933.04 have been reviewed by her and found to be proper charges against the Contoocook Valley School District for goods and/or services received and have been properly processed prior to their submittal to the School Board.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the manifests as presented. Stephen Ullman second. Unanimous.

12. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II (If Required)

a. Negotiations

b. Legal

c. Personnel

Janine Lesser moved to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for personnel at 9:36 p.m.

Liz Swan second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Janine Lesser moved to exit non-public session at 10:28 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

**Dick Dunning moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for a period of 10 years.
Greg Kriebel second. Unanimous.**

Janine Lesser motioned to adjourn at 10:29 p.m. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok