

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

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room

Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ConValEvents>

Minutes

BOARD

Tom Burgess, Richard Dunning,
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,
Dan Harper, Katherine Heck,
Michael Hoyt, Thomas Kirlin,
Greg Kriebel, Janine Lesser,
Erin Pils-Martin, Liz Swan

Lucy Jackson, Student Rep.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Brian Cisneros, B.A.
Larry Pimental, PES
Adam Caragher, GBS
Heather McKillop, CVHS
Tim Conway, SMS

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Dick Dunning called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Points of Pride

Kimberly Saunders reported out that there were quite a few Halloween parades last week. In addition, it was reported that today was a great day with professional development for staff.

3. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Brian Cisneros certified that manifests totaling \$4,832,246.83 have been reviewed by him 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.

Jim Fredrickson moved to approve the Manifests as presented. Erin Pils-Martin seconded the motion. Unanimous.

4. Public Comment

Naomi Tucker, Peterborough, parent of fifth grader at South Meadow School said that sees the impact of the early start times of school. Ms. Tucker said that she wants to distinguish the impact of start time regardless of the outcome of the reconfiguration study. She cited improvements with longer sleep. Change can be hard. Once we adjust it can be a relief. Students have a hard time winding down after work and after school activities. She urged the board to prioritize the research and well-being of students in our community.

John Wood, Dublin, parent of two students at Dublin Consolidated School, said that he moved here because of the school. He shared concern that the school board is not providing citizens all of the relevant information to make an informed decision with regard to reconfiguration/consolidation. He urged the board to take their time to make sure that all of the details and analysis are shared.

Suzanne Toumanoff, Hancock, thanked the board for information gathering from each community. It is difficult to contact all community members to elicit a response. The next step is to use the information to develop recommendations and present to the public. Each community needs to be explained to about the options. They must understand the educational rationale. If schools were closed, what future use might be in place for the buildings. General questions on a survey are starting points, but not indicative of an opinion. Far more community engagement is necessary to address the fiscal challenges in public education. She urged taking the time to meet with communities several times in the next year.

Greg Kriebel, Peterborough resident, father of two ConVal graduates and having looked at starting school later, said that it is part of the current five-year plan and confirmed the benefits as shared tonight.

5. Reports

a. Student Representative – Lucy Jackson

Lucy Jackson reported that a blood drive recently took place at ConVal High School. The National Honor Society (NHS) planted yellow tulips. Next week, NHS will perform a week of service.

Elementary students came to the high school to watch a play. They were excited to be there.

Field trips planned were shared.

b. Policy Committee – Katherine Heck

Katherine Heck reported that the Policy Committee met and went through the Fall Updates on policies that have gone through change. They are being prioritized.

c. Selectmen's Advisory Committee – Katherine Heck

Selectmen's Advisory Committee met and discussed early budget discussions. In addition, a reconfiguration project update was shared.

d. Strategic Organization Committee – Alan Edelkind

Alan Edelkind thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and for taking the time to listen to the presentation on the activities that have taken place and the process.

The Strategic Organization Committee (SOC) will have three presenters this evening. Two other members make up the committee.

Alan shared the goals and the objectives in keeping the public informed.

Alan further said that ConVal is a very complex organization made up of nine towns covering over 250 square miles with one high school, two middle schools, and eight elementary schools. All towns host an elementary school with the exception of Sharon.

The School Board is made up of thirteen members from the nine towns. The board members are community members who pay taxes too.

Alan shared that tonight is a listening format. The School Board meeting is a public business meeting.

Presentation of activity results will take place at a future meeting(s).

A commitment to the ConVal Community has been made to be open and involve the community.

The project process and objectives were outlined.

Specified project goals and objectives were shared as follows:

Provide the most educationally rich, community friendly, fiscally responsible physical environment that reflects the values and desires of the ConVal community. Be open and transparent in all activities, engage the community, communicate, and develop a recommendation.

How did we get here? From 2014 and perhaps prior, the capital needs and discussion on education delivery and enrollment trends have been a focus.

Dan Harper, shared a step by step outline of how we got to where we are today. The process started in September of 2022. This idea has been a discussion for many years prior.

Requests for Information (RFI) to look at consultants to do the work of a reconfiguration/consolidation study were sought. Requests for Proposals (RFP's) were written and responses from vendors came in. The first public communication began in April of 2022. Vendors were interviewed and Prismatic Services was selected. The project began its first phase in June 2023.

Information was gathered. Meetings with the Selectmen's Advisory Committee took place and are ongoing. Individual town meetings to receive input from the community as to thoughts, concerns, and alternatives to the current physical structure took place.

Staff interviews and focus groups took place.

An online survey and online forum followed. A follow up online survey took place to receive input from community members as to thoughts and concerns.

The data analysis is ongoing. Interviews and focus groups continue to today.

Tom Burgess shared the recommendation phase plans:

Tom reported that Prismatic has been gathering data; they have interviewed all of the School Board members, interviewed district staff, visited the schools, completed six focus groups with students, completed nine focus groups with district staff, administered a student survey, administered a staff/parent/community survey, administered a parent survey, hosted nine town meetings, hosted an on-line forum.

Prismatic staff spent sixty days onsite evaluating all aspects of the school district.

The data review is almost complete. A proposal will follow. The board will receive the proposal and it will be reviewed. The proposal will be distributed to the ConVal school district at large. The board will vote on the proposal on December 14th. A warrant article, if needed, will be written for vote in March.

Tom Burgess noted a host of resources available and how to access this information.

Tom thanked everyone for participating. We are ConVal and are all stakeholders.

e. Delegate Assembly – Erin Pils-Martin

Erin Pils-Martin reported that in general, all of the choices that the Board voted were what happened at the Delegate Assembly with two deviations. They came with an amendment on the first and the amendment passed. Number 17 had minor wording changes that did not impact the intent.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes

1) October 17, 2023

b. Personnel

1) Nominations

2) 2023-2024 Co-Curricular Notifications

The Consent Agenda was accepted.

7. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

Kimberly Saunders introduced Rich Scheinblum, Monadnock Hospital Chief Financial Officer, who is here tonight to share an exciting partnership.

Kimberly shared that ConVal is partnering with the Monadnock Community Hospital and AmeriHealth.

Rich Scheinblum shared that he was approached by AmeriHealth about partnering on an evidence-based suicide prevention task force.

Numerous meetings were held. This is important because there have been three suicides and multiple attempts in the district.

The district has trained adults. This would dovetail with work already done and train kids. It is a peer to peer program that aims to reduce suicide. Program outcomes reduce the stigma with mental health and suicide prevention.

Hope Squads are in over 1,600 schools across America. The program partners to change the public conversation about suicide and mental health. There are 45,000 hope squad members.

Rich said that ConVal would be the first school district in New Hampshire should they partner.

Kimberly Saunders shared the first reaction of the district in that there has been, and continues to be, extensive training and work toward suicide prevention.

A presentation was shared.

Kimberly Saunders said that the goals of Hope Squad are to support antibullying and encourage mental wellness, reduce the stigma of mental health issues, and reduce substance abuse. Recent findings show that positive outcomes result from Hope Squad schools.

Rich Scheinblum said that the impacts of suicide are far reaching. There is hope that suicide can be prevented.

Hope Squad members work in teams and are selected by their peers. They are overseen by school staff and there is training.

Kimberly Saunders shared that the Hope Squad looks different at every school level.

Cost information for Hope Squad was shared. It is not a one and done process.

Rich Scheinblum said that there are fees to implement the program. Licensed Advisor Training is part of the package. Over five years, the estimated cost is \$22,660. AmeriHealth is willing to cover the cost of this program. Behavioral and mental health benefits are a priority for our community.

Kimberly said that this year is a planning year, nothing will be implemented. A plan may come forward in May.

Dick Dunning asked those present and board members to bring any questions forward.

a. Monthly Events Calendar

1) Set date of District Meeting – Part I

January 9th was proposed as the date for the Public Hearing for the budget hearing, with a snow date of January 16th. February 6th is the proposed date of Deliberative Session with the 7th as the snow date. Confirmed.

b. School Board Requests

Kimberly Saunders reported working on budget requests. No other outstanding requests.

c. November 1st Enrollment Update

November 1st enrollment data was referenced.

d. Student Achievement

Dr. Ann Forrest shared a presentation on Student Performance Data. Percentages of students who are proficient in reading and in math for the past three years were shared. Increases have been underway; the trend is up.

2023 NH Statewide Assessment System for Reading compared ConVal to the State results.

Not enough of our students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch scored proficient in reading.

Similar information for math was shared for grades 3 through 11.

When compared to the State, ConVal is 0-4 percentage points in difference.

NWEA Reading Data by grade was shared for grades 1 through 8.

Greg Kriebel asked what percentage of grade one students take the test.

Ann Forrest said that we are not at 100% but we are very close. We have some students who it would not be appropriate for.

Greg Kriebel asked if there was any insight for the trends.

Ann Forrest said that the impact of COVID, and where it hit for grades, has been looked at. This is a fall test so it is a measure of the previous year.

How granular does this data get? Data right down to the student can be looked at. By class, by school etc.

Patterns and trends are looked at. Programming is looked at.

Kimberly Saunders shared that the results are not where we want to be but it is better than where we were.

f. Legislative Session Begins

Legislative Session is in full swing. Many have the possibility of impacting public education.

Kimberly offered to prepare a spreadsheet of LSR's.

8. Old Business

a. FY'25 Proposed Budget

Kimberly Saunders shared anticipated revenue information.

Brian Cisneros said that revenues are difficult to predict until the State provides adequacy data.

When numbers come in, more will be shared.

Jim Fredrickson asked why \$500K is used as the unreserved fund balance. Kimberly shared that \$250K has been the placeholder.

Jim Fredrickson reported having met on Saturday at the School Board/Budget Work Session to review the proposed 24/25 budget. The first article on this will be coming out soon. Others will follow on topics about tax bills, the CVEA agreement on modification of contract, budget detail discussion, warrant articles, and reconfiguration/consolidation.

9. New Business

a. Policy – 1st Read

- JBAB: Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Procedure
- AC: Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment and District Anti-Discrimination Plan
- BDE: Committees and School Board Member Special-Duty Assignments

Katherine Heck referenced the above three policies brought forward for a first read. Any questions, please send them to her. These will then move forward for a second read.

b. Accept Gift/Donation (Board Vote Required)

- 1) South Meadow School AHT/Student Activity requests authorization to accept from the Monadnock Country Club/Tim Conway, the gift/donation of \$800.00 for the purpose of helping 8th grade students to attend the American Heritage Tour trip.

Janine Lesser moved to accept the donation as read with gratitude. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.

c. Food Service

Brian Cisneros reported on increased food costs. This year, he said that he plans to dive deeper to look at reimbursements, costs, and revenue.

Katherine Heck asked how the new education funding formula interacts. Brian said that he could send information to the full board.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Personnel**
- c. Student**
- d. Legal**

Katherine Heck moved to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II at 8:39 p.m. for matters of personnel. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Katherine Heck moved to exit Non-Public Session at 8:53 p.m. Erin Pils-Martin seconded. Unanimous.

Katherine Heck motioned to seal the minutes of Non-Public Session for a period of one year. Erin Pils-Martin seconded. Unanimous.

12. Adjourn

Katherine Heck motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. Seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok