

MINUTES
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY AUGUST 19, 2010 6:00 P.M.
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE HIGH SCHOOL INFO CENTER

PRESENT

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Christine Janson, Mary Lou Mullens, Jeanne Ludt (arrived 6:11 P.M.), Howard Brown

Administration: Superintendent Dr. Mary Jennings, Principal Jon Ingram, Dean of Faculty Colleen Meaney, Dean of Students Bob Thompson, and Central Office Administrators: Betty Shankel, Nancy Maguire, and Renea Sparks.

Members of the Public: Joseph Esposito

Minutes Recorder: Christine Janson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:08 P.M.

II. PUBLIC TIME

No members of the public wished to speak.

III CONSENT AGENDA

Mary Jennings added the resignation of Garon Smail to the Consent Agenda.

Christine Janson asked that the minutes of the July 17, 2010 meeting be pulled from the Consent Agenda. Steve Coughlan suggested that the discussion of the July 17 minutes be postponed until the September 2 meeting when the regular minute taker will be present.

A motion was made by Mary Lou Mullens and seconded by Howard Brown to accept the Consent Agenda. The remainder of the Consent Agenda was adopted by unanimous vote (5-0-0).

Betty Shankel had each Board member sign the Department of Education 25 and MS-25 reports.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. FY10 Goals – Souhegan High School

Mary Jennings welcomed new Principal, Jon Ingram, who, along with Colleen Meaney, presented results of Souhegan High's 2009-2010 goals.

Jon Ingram began the presentation by stating the goal: "85% of students will demonstrate growth in at least two of Souhegan's Academic Learner Expectations (ALE)." All departments used the Effective Communicator ALE and adopted a second of their choice.

Jon Ingram stated that overall, 79% of the students showed growth in the Effective Communicator ALE (all students in all subject areas). He then presented data by all departments for the Effective Communicator ALE as well as the detailed rubric used. Preliminary results on the other ALEs used by different departments were also presented.

Jon Ingram stated that there is a need to revamp the process of reflecting on the data for this goal.

In response to a question by Howard Brown asking about the advantage of using one ALE over another, Colleen Meany stated that ALE's are part of 21st Century educational skills. Jon Ingram stated that we need to measure all ALEs and report out on them. He also stated that Souhegan has a 'data team' working with the faculty to understand the results.

Mary Lou Mullens asked if it makes sense to tie certain ALEs to certain subjects. Colleen Meany responded that it is a consideration and that some schools do that. She also stated that Souhegan High will be piloting a new ALE – Kinesthetic Learner.

Jon Ingram stated that the school recognizes the need for accountability and the need to show growth. He then stated that the Effective Communicator ALE that was chosen for the goal embodies the literacy initiative.

Jeanne Ludt asked if all ALEs have rubrics for measurements. Colleen Meany stated that they do and were developed about five years ago.

In response to a question from Steve Coughlan about whether the data is positive or negative, Colleen Meany stated that the data collection needs to be refined. She believes that on a scale of one to ten, Souhegan is at a five. Each department used their own criteria for measuring growth. For example, World Language used a uniform final exam.

Jon Ingram stated that common assessments can help in obtaining accurate data.

In response to a question from Mary Lou Mullens about common assessments for Honors, Colleen Meany stated that there is not 100% consistency. There was a group looking at consistency in Honors this summer. Changes could include rolling dates for inclusion in the Honors programs as well as a push for more commonality.

Mary Jennings stated that NEWA and DIBELS show individual growth. She asked if Souhegan look at individuals or just cohorts. Colleen Meany stated that this year, only achievement by department was looked at. Next step will be to link individual student growth.

Jon Ingram stated that we need to store and be able to track data for each student so we can show growth grades 9-12.

Jeannie Ludt echoed the thoughts of Mary Lou Mullens on consistency of projects, including some that the Board has participate in such as Mike Facques' democracy/community service project.

Jeanne Ludt then asked how we use the data to identify the need for teacher improvement.

Jon Ingram presented a two year goal review process that includes a SHS data team reviewing results and guiding necessary changes to the goal and/or data collection process. The two year

goal and data collection process will be presented to the Souhegan School Board at the October meeting.

In response to a question by Steve Coughlan, Jon Ingram stated that the school will have the same goal next year which will include a focus on literacy and look at others.

In response to a question from Howard Brown about whether or not two years was enough time, Jon Ingram stated that this follows the five year SAU plan for literacy.

Mary Jennings reminded the Board that the five year goal includes that 90% of all students will read at grade level.

Colleen Meaney stated that our 2009 NECAP results for grade 11 show 78% proficient or above in reading. This closely matches our 79% growth using our ALE-based goal. She also stated that we use NEWA in grades 9 and 10.

Jon Ingram stated that we need an electronic portfolio.

Mary Jennings reminded the Board that our other schools are now using differentiated instruction and seeing progress. AMS students showed the highest scores in reading in the state. Souhegan High will be able affected by this progress in the coming years.

Steve Coughlan told the administrators that their challenge is to communicate this to the community at large. In response, Jon Ingram stated that we should revisit for people who Souhegan is.

Mary Lou Mullens asked if the details of the ALEs are on reports cards. Colleen Meaney said they are not but that can be considered.

B. Revisions to Career Growth

Colleen Meaney discussed the changes to the Career Growth process. She reminded those present that Career Growth is a way for teachers to strengthen their own learning and this process is cutting edge. The revisions made were based on how teachers grow and improve their practice.

Colleen Meaney stated that the Career Growth program has three phases that typically last a total of three years (but can be more). The revisions made include that the question a teacher is researching must be tied to Souhegan's' guiding documents. Also new is the installation of a Coaches Panel which gives feedback during Phase 1, questioning and planning. Colleen Meaney stated that staff voted on these changes and there is widespread support.

Mary Lou Mullens stated that these Career Growth projects all need a 'wow' factor since they are so long term and tied to pay increases.

Colleen Meaney stated that our Career Growth process is well received by the Coalition of Essential Schools and will be presented at this year's fall forum.

C. At Risk Retention Program Report

Bob Thompson presented results of Souhegan's 2009-2010 Dropout Prevention Program. He stated that of the 225 students who started as seniors in the fall of 2009, zero dropped out. Our dropout rate will show 1 (1% of school population) but that was a student who we had carried over from the previous senior class who decided to pursue a GED.

Bob Thompson presented specifics of the Dropout Prevention Program that included identifying the top ten seniors most likely to drop out and the interventions put in place to prevent them from doing so. These interventions included meetings with parents and other supports, an aggressive approach to truancy, the creation of alternative consequences to minimize the amount of time spent outside of the classroom, the creation of an 'intervention matrix' and ongoing communication with all stakeholders. The students were given ongoing opportunities including community service, tutorial support, credit recovery options, and outside services.

The results show that five of the top 10 students likely to dropout graduated with their class in June. Three more of those ten will complete graduation requirements by September 1, 2010. Bob Thompson was in the process of getting an update from the final two students.

Bob Thompson stated that the school will continue to build off the success of the past year and develop a top ten list of juniors as well as seniors.

Howard Brown commended Bob Thompson for an unbelievable effort. In response, Bob Thompson stated that it was a group effort.

Jeanne Ludt stated that this program was fantastic work and she appreciated the passion put into it by staff. She said that this program reminds us of the importance of taking attendance. Mary Lou Mullens reiterated that comment.

Steve Coughlan asked if ten was a magic number. Bob Thompson said that teachers come to him with kids who also need the support given to the top ten and the school is meeting their needs as well.

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Professional Nominations

Mary Jennings recommended the hiring of Keely Gott as a .3 Learning Specialist and Anthony Doucet as a full time Social Studies teacher, replacing Garon Smail.

Mary Jennings asked the Souhegan administrators if we are done hiring. In response, Colleen Meaney said that we have one more hire to come.

A motion was made by Howard Brown to accept the nominations of Keely Gott and Anthony Doucet as presented by Mary Jennings. The motion was seconded by Mary Lou Mullens.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the last hire is going to need the Board's approval before beginning work. Mary Jennings stated that a letter of intent to hire will be sent out and the employee will be said as a substitute until Board approval.

In response to a question by Mary Lou Mullens, Mary Jennings stated that the salary of this hire is set.

The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

IV. DISCUSSION/INTERVIEWS

A. Policy KED – Revised Grievance Procedure for Alleged Discrimination – 1st Reading

Renea Spark stated that our policy needed to be revised to be in line with Title II and the ADA under which people have a right to a grievance procedure and the chance for an impartial hearing. Our current policy also lacks a Grievance Complaint Form which the revision includes. This policy applies to students, parents, and employees. She stated that we have sent this revised policy to the Office of Civil Rights which gave us feedback. Our attorney has also reviewed the revised policy.

Mary Jennings stated that there is no action required at the 8/19/20 meeting but the policy needs to be adopted by 9/30/10.

In response to a question by Mary Lou Mullens, Mary Jennings stated there is an increase in the number of parents requesting 504 plans as a means of complaint. There is no agency at the state level to settle disputes. These go straight to the Federal government.

(Steve Coughlan added that the Board needs to appoint a citizen to the SAU Budget Committee by the next meeting on September 2.)

At 7:40 P.M., Steve Coughlan called a short break and the meeting resumed at 7:45 P.M.

B. Candidate Interviews

The Board interviewed four candidates for the open Amherst position on the Souhegan Cooperative School Board. The candidate elected will hold the office until the March 2011 elections.

Interviewed were citizens Joseph Esposito, Pam Coughlin, Regina Wesson, and Frances Harrow (on vacation an interviewed via conference call). Each candidate was given time to make a statement and answer questions from the Board which centered around time commitment, as well as their thoughts on what to change and keep at Souhegan High.

The Board discussed the candidates. Howard Brown stated that the Board had four good candidates. Mary Lou Mullens added that each had something unique to offer the Board, and that Fran Harrow stands out in terms of experiences and continuous commitment to the town and school district. Jeanne Ludt added that Fran Harrow is very familiar with Amherst and has lots of experience. Howard Brown stated that Fran Harrow's background and experience with other districts is a big plus and Joe Esposito's ability to bring a new perspective has a lot of value. Steve Coughlan stated that Pam Coughlan was his choice because she was an elected member of the Board who had to resign when she moved from Mont Vernon to Amherst.

Jeanne Ludt noted that Fran Harrow is retired and has a lot of time to offer. It was noted that the Board should give Cynthia Dokmo the names of Joe Esposito and Regina Wesson as possible members of the budget committee.

Mary Lou Mullens made a motion to appoint Fran Harrow to the open Amherst seat on the Souhegan Cooperative School Board. Motion was seconded by Jeanne Ludt.

Steve Coughlan noted that the Board appreciates all four candidates coming forward and encouraged them to stay involved.

The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

IV. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

Mary Lou Mullens noted that there is an open seat for a Mont Vernon representative to Community Council which meets Mondays 2:15 – 3:00 P.M. and one Monday evening per month from 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. Howard Brown stated that he will ask around for a volunteer. Mary Lou Mullens also noted that there is an open seat for an Amherst resident but that there are already some volunteers.

Motion was made by Mary Lou Mullens and seconded by Howard Brown to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.