

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34

**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**

**THURSDAY, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**PRESENT**

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Chair Chris Janson, Howard Brown, Peter Maresco, Steve Coughlan, Fran Harrow, Mary Lou Mullens, and Pim Grondstra

Administrative Team: Peter Warburton, Jon Ingram, Betty Shankel, Renea Sparks, Nicole Heimarck, Gigi Klipa, Rob Scully, and Kathy White

Community Council : Casey Foulks

Minute Taker: Beth Penney

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Janson called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Principal's Report

Inclusion Task Force – Carey Smallwood and Ken Boisselle

Mr. Boisselle presented the timeline of the work, including an UNH assessment of the school and feedback from the staff. The committee is recommending looking at changes to the infrastructure of inclusion, professional development opportunities, new processes for curriculum design, reflection and improvement. The hope is to give all students the sense of belonging, allow for participation and to better handle difficult social interactions. He reviewed the mission statement for the task force. He introduced the task force's report and key recommendations for enhancing inclusion at SHS. Ms. Smallwood thanked Mr. Coughlan for being on the task force. The task force divided up their recommendations in a similar way to the UNH feedback. The recommendations focus on the vision statement and keeping students in the classroom. The recommendations include changing language, assuming competence by always starting with the least dangerous assumption, teachers using structured planning processes, like universal design, having lesson plans accessible to learning specialists before the lessons are taught, having common planning time for teachers and learning specialists, supporting shared resources and templates between teachers by using Sharepoint, and by reminding staff of good work happening in the building at staff meetings.

Mr. Maresco asked if there would be any cost impacts if the recommendations were implemented. Mr. Boisselle and Ms. Smallwood discussed how these recommendations would not increase costs but would just change the way the existing staff operates. The

35 recommendations are intended to provide more consistency within the school, help with  
36 common planning time for learning specialists and teachers, and help the students stay in  
37 the classroom as much as possible. Mr. Maresco also asked how we knew that inclusion  
38 was the most effective way of teaching all students and if there were any metrics other  
39 than standardized test scores that can be used to prove that inclusion works. The  
40 committee discussed how inclusion is a civil rights issue, federally required, and that  
41 inclusion is part of the philosophy of the school. They also discussed how that, although  
42 research is split on the issue, there are some studies that show that all students benefit  
43 from having special education students in the classroom and that special education  
44 students make more progress when not segregated from their peers because they feel  
45 connected and included. While no specific metrics were identified, it was stated that  
46 using DI and Universal design is good for all students and better meets the needs of all  
47 types of learners. Students who do not feel valued in school lose motivation. Inclusion  
48 means considering all readiness levels and is not just about the students with a 504 or  
49 IEP. Universal design considers all learners in the classroom and the styles of learners in  
50 the classroom. When the potential benefit to all students was questioned, it was stated  
51 that, due to time constraints, the discussion would need to be postponed to a later date.

52 The board thanked the Inclusion Task Force for their hard work.

53 The Cross-Country running Coach introduced the Boys Cross country team and assistant  
54 coaches to the board. The team had an outstanding year. Over 8% of SHS participates in  
55 cross-country and there are 30 boys on the team. The team presented to the board the  
56 Class I State Title (for the first time in the school's history). The team won the state meet  
57 including all divisions and competed at New England's finishing 3<sup>rd</sup>. The team was  
58 presented with a Team of the Year plaque and was one of two Division II schools on the  
59 plaque in the last 20 years. The coach discussed the season and stated that some of SHS's  
60 best students are cross-country runners.

61 Mr. Ingram stated that the team went to Acadia this summer for running and bonding.  
62 The coach was recognized in the state as Coach of the Year, also.

63 The team captains discussed the very successful season and the great ability of the team.

64 The board congratulated the team and the coach for all of their success.

65 Karen Chininis announced that SHS is being honored by the college board for placement  
66 on the AP District Honor Role. This has occurred because of the increasing access to AP  
67 classes and the high percentage on students who have scores with 3 or above. SHS is one  
68 of 8 schools in NH to receive this honor. In the last 3 years, students taking AP courses  
69 has gone from 134 to 167 students. The school administered over 300 AP exams last  
70 year and 35 students have been recognized by receiving the AP scholar awards. This is  
71 the direct work of teachers and councilors to help students to take a course load with  
72 rigor. AP classes are open to any and all students.

73 The board discussed that this award will be include in the profile sent to colleges and that

74 each school, the town hall, and the library will have a poster showing the award.

75 Mr. Ingram thanked Karen for all her hard work for helping to organize all the AP exams  
76 and auditing all of the AP courses.

77 Ms. White stated that SHS applied and was accepted, with 17 other schools, into the 1<sup>st</sup>  
78 NH Cohort Quality Performance Assessment, which is a performance assessment. SHS  
79 started the work on common assessments 3 years ago. This work blends nicely with the  
80 Common Core standards and is very exciting.

81 Mr. Ingram stated that Jeanie Sturges has presented nationally on this topic. Indicators of  
82 success have been discussed a lot. Mr. Ingram found a report from 1999 and a note from  
83 2004 on the same conversation. He is going to start with coordinators to discuss using a  
84 score card looking at indicators including student performance, financial management,  
85 staff retention and many more. He will bring to the board a template and report out on an  
86 annual basis to revisit the same indicators to help measure growth and success. Mr.  
87 Ingram will discuss this with the full staff also before bringing the template back to the  
88 board in the early spring. He stated that Sally Veronca has met with a company that  
89 surveys graduates and the school is looking at that, but there is a cost. The administration  
90 needs to consider the idea and will come back to the board.

#### 91 Community Council Report

92 Casey Foulks stated that Community Council (CC) has been busy working on the  
93 council's major fundraiser, the semi formal dance. CC fundraises for money for student  
94 groups and is a non-profit, so all of the money goes back to the students. The dance did  
95 not get the attendance it did last year. Only 200-250 students came and CC has work to  
96 do to break even. The dance was a great opportunity to collect data and be more efficient  
97 next year. There is a proposal coming forward Monday, discussing off campus privileges  
98 during classes.

99 Mr. Brown asked that the CC minutes from each meeting be sent to the school board.

100 Ms. Mullens stated that she has asked for that to happen and will ask again. A lot of work  
101 went into the semi formal and everything was great. Attendance at dances this year  
102 seems to be lower.

#### 103 Committee Report

104 No Reports.

#### 105 2012 Fall Forum

106 Mr. Ingram stated that 23 staff members went in RI for the annual of Coalition of  
107 Essential Schools meeting. They discussed best practices and trends. 11 SHS staff

108 presented. The Coalition is taking on a new face and there are many new people,  
109 including a strong elementary presence and more suburban and rural districts are joining.  
110 Mr. Ingram put SHS in to host the Fall Forum next year and he should know by January/  
111 February.

112 Ms. Janson stated that she, Mr. Warburton, and Mr. Coughlan presented and it went well.  
113 There were several good discussions including some interesting ideas about hiring for  
114 Coalition schools, which the board can discuss later.

115 **PUBLIC TIME**

116 Frank Brown who has lived in Amherst for 28 years and had 4 children attend SHS spoke  
117 to the board. He is concerned about the budget. His taxes have gone up 30% in the last 2  
118 years. SHS is out of line for the cost per student compared to top 6-8 schools in the state.  
119 He is willing to pay a premium, but wants to see the product (test scores). He asked why  
120 should a citizen pay the difference and are there reasons why the premium is there?

121 **CONSENT AGENDA**

122 Mr. Coughlan asked to pull the minutes.

123 **Mr. Brown made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the Treasurer's**  
124 **Report for October 2012, Unanticipated Revenue: GenYouth Foundation and a**  
125 **Retirement request. Ms. Harrow seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

126 Mr. Coughlan asked to add his name to the attendance in the November 1<sup>st</sup> minutes.

127 **Ms. Harrow made a motion to accept the minutes for November 1, 2012 as**  
128 **amended. Mr. Brown second the motion and the vote was unanimous, Ms. Mullens**  
129 **abstained.**

130 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

131 FY12 Auditor's Report – Vachon, Clukay & Co.

132 Ms. Shankel stated that the auditor did not show up to work today because his wife is  
133 having a baby today. The company gave the option to have someone else come. There  
134 were no recommendations from the auditor; he is happy with all systems and accounting.

135 The board decided they did not need the auditor to come since they already had the report  
136 and no recommendations were made.

137 Mr. Coughlan thanked the business office for their hard work.

138 FY14Budget

139 Budget changes

140 Mr. Ingram presented Budget Draft 2 to the board. The draft 2 shows a reduction to the  
141 operating budget further to -3.19%. The bottom line is reduced by -2.8%. He discussed  
142 the reductions in staffing to 8.7 total positions, which includes 4.2 teaching positions and  
143 rest in support staff. There was also a reduction of \$40,000 in goods and services and  
144 \$80,000 in out of district costs. The administration had a thorough discussion, but stayed  
145 focused on student learning to make these reductions. There will be no program  
146 eliminations this year, but some maybe streamlined.

147 Mr. Maresco asked about Math teachers for next year because of the switch in the math  
148 program.

149 Mr. Ingram stated that the school has the teachers to continue to cover the switch in  
150 programs.

151 The board and Ms. White discussed all of the technology positions are their  
152 responsibilities, including Sr. Project mentoring, Advising and some people are CFG  
153 coaches, as follows:

154 Network Administrator manages the one domain and all of the servers, does network  
155 planning, installation and maintenance.

156 Technology Support Staff set up computers, work with students and staff, run the  
157 school's website, set up and support testing, including AP exams, offer support 24 hrs/ 7  
158 days a week, and support the Computer Labs.

159 The Librarian manages the library, is in classrooms giving instruction, helps with  
160 curriculum planning, runs the summer reading program, gives technology workshops for  
161 students and teachers, and is helping move the school in the e-reader direction.

162 Library Assistants run the library and lab, manage the book and textbook collection, help  
163 with research and help students and teachers.

164 Audio/visual staff manages technology and assists teachers, helps and steps in with  
165 managing the theater, which is used widely by outside groups.

166 The Theater manager manages the theater and works with students for set building,  
167 lighting, and sound design.

168 Ms. White stated that there is also one student helper to keep the library open daily till  
169 5pm.

170 David Chen discussed enrollment and faculty decreases from historical data. He liked  
171 seeing the step of reducing 2 more FTE from draft 1 of the budget. He has looked further

172 out at the enrollment forecast and the downward trend and wonders how the school going  
173 to get there if enrollment in 2019 is half of the highest enrollment in 2005. The cost per  
174 student has gone up 48% since 2005. Bedford's cost has gone down in the last 2 years  
175 and Milford, Hollis, and Merrimack have had increases of about 20% cost per student.

176 Mr. Warburton stated that this is a beginning for the school. Enrollments will dip below  
177 600 at some point and the school has a lot of work to do in the future. There will be a  
178 non-public with the board tonight to discuss this. There are no easy solutions. We cannot  
179 cut 20-30 positions in the first year and it will take time. Programing is important to us.

180 The board, the administration, and the Advisory Finance committee had a lengthy  
181 discussion about teaching staff, programming, and the teacher to student ratio. They  
182 discussed showing the community how what the school achieves and the programs  
183 offered to students are not included in the numbers provided by the state. Also, the costs  
184 of an older building are not included in the calculations of cost per student. They  
185 discussed the increase in staff for the many AP classes offered and for the Math and  
186 Literacy coaches to help teachers improve instruction and improve test scores. Other  
187 schools have similar offerings of courses with less staff. The need to be creative on how  
188 staff is used was discussed, but also that if people want to see more programs than more  
189 staff is needed. They discussed how having a variety of programs meets the needs of all  
190 students and helps to keep the school's drop out rate at zero. They discussed that every  
191 grade level has to have math, science, History, English, and language and that the school  
192 has to support a certain amount of classes to maintain what students need. They discussed  
193 looking at what other schools do and having a strategy for what the board is going to do  
194 with the decreasing enrollments.

195 Mr. Warbruton stated that to get to an 8.7 cut we need to move from the defensive and to  
196 be supportive of the school and work together. The administration started talking last  
197 March about cuts and the school will be looking at similar cuts in the next few years.  
198 The SAU board is looking at strategic planning and the conversation is a large one.

199 Ms. Janson reminded the board that this is not the end of this budget, this is draft 2 and  
200 there is more meeting time that is needed, this is where we are on December 6<sup>th</sup>. There is  
201 still a lot of work to be done.

202 Dan Foley stated that no one on the committee expects cuts in programs. He stated that  
203 he commends the administration for the hard work they have done so far, especially since  
204 there are big drivers that are out of the district's control. The committee is very  
205 interested in staffing and this issue is the elephant in the room. They need to work on  
206 comparative analysis outside of the budget cycle for future years. He thanked the  
207 administration for the historical information and the information the committee asked for.

## 208 Revenue

209 Ms. Shankel reminded the board that the budget, the expenditures, is what is voted on and

210 not the revenue. The projected revenue is included in the packet and Ms. Shankel  
211 discussed the projection and that the numbers will be updated after the next quarterly  
212 report. There is an increase in catastrophic aide and decreases in other federal aide  
213 because of the fiscal cliff of the stimulus. She discussed grants and the sizable reductions  
214 because of changes that are happening in the grants. The revenue projection shows a tax  
215 reduction of 2 cents for Amherst and 42 cents in Mont Vernon. A different revenue sheet  
216 will be included for a default budget because the revenue determines how the budget is  
217 paid for. Revenues are not voted on, this is just a notification to voters as to a projection  
218 of what will happen for the taxpayers.

219 Sub-committee reports

220 Mr. Coughlan and Mr. Chen - Regular Ed Committee, which discussed no line items and  
221 discussed the high level drivers. They discussed classes and when do you stop offering  
222 classes; what is the minimum threshold. They discussed measuring outcomes and that  
223 the Dean of Faculties are going to work on that.

224 Ms. Harrow and Ms. Nunley – Special Education Committee, which reviewed the  
225 numbers of identified students, learning specialists, and number of positions; SHS meets  
226 the needs of the students. There are educators assigned to each team 9-10 and 1-1.5 para  
227 educators. The high intensive programs have 2 educators for each program and more  
228 para educators to meet the needs of those students who have higher needs. 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade  
229 educators travel to different classrooms, but the numbers per grade are similar to 9<sup>th</sup> and  
230 10<sup>th</sup>. The number of students who have needs drives the number of staff. The committee  
231 discussed the team of people needed to help determine the need of a student and how  
232 those needs would be met. Why the numbers change from year to year was discussed.  
233 For the FY14 draft 2 budget the reduction is 1 learning specialist and 1 para educator.

234 Ms. Nunley stated that the committee had a good discussion. SHS has high staffing in  
235 special education looking at national averages. The average school in the US, has 7  
236 teachers per 1000 and SHS is 20 per 1000. For para-educator the national average is 6.5  
237 per 1000 and SHS has 18 per 1000. This is something we need to look at. How we  
238 support special education is subjective. Ms. Nunley wants to look closer at the number  
239 and averages for just high schools, since the national averages include all grade levels in  
240 many districts.

241 Ms. Harrow stated that SHS is in line with the average for number of special education  
242 students and the percentage of the budget for special education when comparing high  
243 schools to high schools. She discussed why a high school's special education budget  
244 might be greater than lower level schools. The needs of the students increase and number  
245 of students identified also increases.

246 Mr. Brown and Ms. Livingston – Technology Committee which discussed, keeping a flat  
247 budget and maximize existing assets. They discussed reinstituting the technology  
248 committee to look forward and discuss a three-year plan because of changes in  
249 technology. They discussed online textbooks and how to minimize staff by offering  
250 different types of courses. Technology is built into the entire school and every aspect of

251 the school. Inclusion of iPads and electronic books was discussed.

252 Ms. Janson and Mr. Foley – Administration Committee, which focused on salary and  
253 staffing. They discussed Deans of Faculty and concluded that they were supportive of  
254 keeping this number of Deans for 1 more year because reviewing the staff is their  
255 priority. There is a need to look seriously at cutting a dean for the following budget. This  
256 part of the budget would be down if not for NH retirement costs. They also discussed  
257 student services and what kind of support is needed for the 800 student population. What  
258 the school has now is a critical team, especially for at risk students. Schools are the social  
259 services for teenagers to help the students to move forward to work or further schooling.

260 Mr. Grondstra and Mr. Stearns – Buildings and Grounds Committee discussed the budget  
261 which goes up 5.5% and all work is captured under the Gale report recommendations and  
262 staying ahead of issues of a 20 year old building. All of the items are required to keep the  
263 20-year-old facility running. A lot has been accomplished off the Gale Report; the last  
264 big chunk is the outdoor athletic plan.

265 Ms. Shankel stated that there is an increase in Buildings and Grounds because we do not  
266 foresee that the paving will be done so we need to seal cracks and needed to budget  
267 money for the HVAC systems and the roof that are in critical failure in case the bond  
268 does not pass.

269 Mr. Maresco and Mr. Silvia –Athletic Committee discussed that the budget is driven by  
270 the number of sports. The school will maintain all 41 sports that it currently has. A big  
271 driver is fuel cost. Mr. Miller was going to reduce the travel cost a little because of post-  
272 season travel cost built in. The overall budget will be unchanged. They looked at the  
273 budget for every sport and every team that goes into the larger budget and are confident  
274 that the numbers are accurate. They did discuss the fee structure and if the money being  
275 spent was the most efficient way to spend the money, is the program philosophically  
276 meeting the needs of the school.

277 Mr. Brown asked that Mr. Maresco pass on the individual sports budgets to other  
278 members on the board so they can help people from the community who have questions  
279 better understand.

280 Ms. Mullens and Ms. Hayes – Food services and transportation Committee discussed  
281 USDA regulation changes, which are making the food cost more. They discussed FICA  
282 because food service workers are not eligible for 403b. Food services is going green for  
283 cleaning supplies because of regulations. There are software costs for the new vending  
284 machine. The new regulations could put food services in the red because serving sizes are  
285 not filling kids and kids will bring lunches and go off campus. The board needs to look  
286 in the future at not being part of the federal program to better meet the needs of the  
287 students. They discussed busing and days that are different from the other schools and  
288 increasing fuel costs.

289 Ms. Shankel thanked Pam Bollard for all her hard work in scheduling the committee  
290 meetings.



291 Warrant Articles

292 Ms. Janson reminded the board that there will be a new article for the new agreement  
293 with PPC but that is not ready yet. Tonight the board is looking at the article with HVAC,  
294 roof, locking system, and paving.

295 The board discussed removing the paving and locking system from the article to reduce  
296 the cost to \$110,000, since the HVAC and the roof are in critical need. They discussed  
297 the need for the board to get out to the town's people and help them to understand the  
298 need of these two items.

299 Ms. Shankel stated that she is happy with the consensus from the board. She passed out  
300 estimates for the bond and interest payments for two options a 10 yr and 7yr bond. The  
301 rates are projected are lower this year based on the bonds they floated last year; 2.5% for  
302 7yr and 2.6% for 10yr. The 1<sup>st</sup> interest payment will impact FY14 costing about \$30,000  
303 for both types of bonds. She discussed the \$90,000 greater in interest for the 10 year  
304 bond because of the 3 extra years to pay it out.

305 The board discussed which bond would be better. They discussed getting feedback from  
306 the community.

307 Ms. Shankel stated that she would do a tax rate impact when the board chooses which  
308 term limit.

309 **DISCUSSION**

310 Policy

311 EEAA –Video Surveillance on School Property

312 Mr. Brown stated that this was the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and that he wanted to add at bottom of  
313 policy should ther reference EHB-R, which is the time line policy.

314 **Mr. Grondstra made a motion to adopt the policy as written. Mr. Brown seconded**  
315 **the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

316 Ms. Janson asked about the staff conduct and field trips policy.

317 Mr. Warbruton stated that the board would look at those at the next meeting.

318 **INFORMATIONAL**

319 NHSBA information

320 Mr. Warburton stated that a number of people have been asking about what happens in  
321 Non-public. He stated that it is important that the board follow the procedure. He passed  
322 out to the board the regulations and examples of other districts minutes.

323 **Mr. Coughlan made a motion to recess at 8:58pm and Ms. Harrow seconded the**

324 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**