

MINUTES
SAU 39 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 25, 2009
Souhegan High School Annex, Room A222

Chairman Dan Foley called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Pam Coughlin, Dan Foley, Chris Janson, and Jeanne Ludt
Amherst School Board: Peg Bennett (left at 7:57 p.m.), Dwight Brew, Rob Graybill, Nancy Head (arrived at 6:22 p.m.) and Peter Maresco

Mont Vernon School Board: Kim Roberge

Administrative Team: Bruce Chakrin, Porter Dodge, Nicole Heimark, Dr. Mary Jennings, Betty Shankel (arrived at 6:48 p.m.), Peggy Silva, and Renea Sparks (arrived at 6:13 p.m.)

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

Dr. Jennings told board members they held the First Annual SAU Brick School Golf Tournament that afternoon. Dr. Jennings said a fun time was had by all.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Jennings said a three-day workshop was being held this week – Understanding by Design, 35 teachers were attending the workshop.

Dan Foley invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

III. PUBLIC TIME

A motion was made by Dwight Brew to accept Consent Agenda Items A. Minutes 1. May 25, 2009, B. Treasurer's Report 1. May 2009, and C. Manifest 1. May 2009. Steve Coughlan seconded the motion. Eleven board members voted in favor of the motion,

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

FINAL Minutes of June 25, 2009 SAU 39 Board Meeting

**with one abstention, Pam Coughlin. The motion passed.
(11-0-1)**

A. Goals – 2009 Summary/2010 Draft Goals – Board members received a handout in their board packets entitled SAU 39 Strategic Plan Years 1-3, School Goals Summary. Goals for 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and Draft Goals for 2009-2010 were detailed for Clark/Wilkins School, Mont Vernon Village School, Amherst Middle School and Souhegan High School.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Jennings explained in 2007-2008, Clark/Wilkins, Amherst Middle School and Souhegan High School all had faculty centered goals while Mont Vernon Village School had a student-centered goal.

In 2008-2009, all schools had student-centered goals.

Dr. Jennings presented the draft 2009-2010 goals for each of the schools. Again, all the schools goals are student-centered.

B. Faculty Use of Data - Dr. Jennings told board members they have come a long way with their use of data, she said she is very pleased with where they are going, the schools are going in the right direction.

Board members reviewed Table 5 – School Percentile ranks for fall to spring percentage of students meeting or exceeding their RIT point growth target in reading.

Peter Maresco asked how the actual scores of the district compared to the other scores in the state.

Dr. Jennings told board members they could compare themselves to the rest of New England and agreed to get this data for the board.

Dan questioned the administration of the NWEA Assessment.

Dr. Jennings said the administration has decided to give the NWEA Assessment once next year, in the Spring. The district has the license to give the exam and can give it individually if need be.

Dr. Jennings said she hopes students take the assessment seriously, teachers are emphasizing they use the data.

Porter Dodge said the 8th grade teachers held conferences with their students to let them know what they're goals were for the year. The teachers that did this with their students did the best on the exam.

Jeanne Ludt said she thought the NWEA exam was given on a regular basis throughout the year. She said she would like to see us utilize the exam earlier in the year, if it is administered only once, it could be too late for any intervention. Jeanne said it is a great tool because it identifies students' strengths and weaknesses.

C. Demonstration – K-12 Use of Angel Software –

Dan Foley said the Souhegan Communications Committee met and one of the subjects they talked about was with all the technology in place, is it used effectively.

Bruce Chakrin told board members Angel is a Course Management Software, it is an application, not a website. Bruce said you could access it from anywhere.

Bruce Chakrin provided board members with a demonstration of the Angel Software.

Nancy Head asked what the usage is by the students. Bruce said he heard from one of the teachers how she spent hours working on her site and the kids didn't even use it however, he does hear many kids use it, and that it gets used a lot.

Dan Foley asked if teachers receive training.

Bruce Chakrin said they offer training regularly and on request.

Kim Roberge asked what percentage of the teachers are using Angel.

Bruce said at the Middle School, 90% of the teachers are using it, Clark/Wilkins 25% of the teachers are using it and at the Village School 50% of the teachers are doing something with it.

Kim said from a parental standpoint, she did not know of Angel.

Bruce said Souhegan High School has separate sights however, at the Middle School many of the teachers are getting together.

Currently, if you want to access your child's student account, you need to go through their account. Bruce said they are working on a parent portal right now to correct this issue.

- A. Inter-District Committee findings/recommendations **VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 – Board members received a copy of the SAU #39
 Inter District Study Committee Report.

The committee members included: Peg Bennett – Amherst, Rob Graybill – Amherst, Bruce Schmidt – Mont Vernon, Pam Coughlin – Souhegan, Chris Janson – Souhegan, and Mary Jennings.

Dr. Jennings said this committee was formed as part of the superintendent's 2008-2009 goal-setting. In an attempt to show school board members the similarities, differences and highlights of each school, four meetings were scheduled throughout the year.

Dr. Jennings said she is more than willing to do this again next year.

Dr. Jennings explained each meeting included a discussion with the principal about the general programming of the school with a visit to a classroom to highlight some particular feature of the school.

The schools the committee visited included:

- Souhegan – Interdisciplinary humanities classroom
- AMS – Integrated computer lab and literacy flex block period
- Mont Vernon – Spanish Classroom – committee members were very impressed with the Spanish Class at the Village School.
- Clark/Wilkins – Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms

At the end of the four visits, the members of the team discussed their impressions of the four visits. Along with their recommendation to duplicate this experience next

year for another group of SAU#39 Board members, the committee members also wanted to discuss some of their issues at the SAU Board Meeting tonight as well as at future board meetings.

The issues included:

- Alignment issues between Clark/Wilkins and MVVS, especially concerning the offering of Spanish as a “special.”
- The mythology of each school versus the reality, especially in the case of Souhegan.

Dan said this would be a great discussion for a future board meeting. Dan said he would be interested in hearing more about this at another meeting.

Dan suggested if board members are interested in discussing any of these issues at a future meeting, to send an e-mail or talk to him after the board meeting.

- Tensions in all schools between heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping.
- Transition times between schools, particularly the cultural difference between AMS and Souhegan.

Jeanne Ludt said many parents have said they are not happy with the education they are receiving at the Middle School, and the difference in culture going from the 8th grade at Amherst Middle School to 9th grade at Souhegan.

Two possible topics on future agendas include – unhappy with Middle School and unhappy with Transition from Middle School to High School.

Pam Coughlin asked if the children feel they are ready to move on to the High School, this would be an important question to ask the students.

- Best practices for piloting new programs for all schools to embrace.

The committee recommended we spend more time at the SAU Board meeting discussing common issues.

Peg Bennett said she found the school visits very interesting and it was so nice to see such enthusiasm from the principals.

Chris Janson said she thinks everyone from all the boards should sit on this committee, she learned a lot from the school visits and presentations.

Dr. Jennings said she would put out an invitation to board members in August to see who was interested in sitting on the Inter-District Study Committee.

- B. Later Start Time Proposal – Board members received the Report to the Souhegan School Board dated April 16, 2009 regarding the Alternate Start Time Study Group in their board packets. Jeanne told board members this is the information that had gone out to many of the local newspapers.

Board members also received a letter from Soule, Leslie, Kidder, Sayward & Loughman, Attorneys at Law, which addressed the issue of Amherst and Mont Vernon School Districts/Scheduled Change.

Dr. Jennings told board members what they would need to do if they ultimately decide to change the start time for all schools is to impact bargain with all the districts.

Jeanne Ludt explained the Study Group was made up of representatives from Souhegan, Amherst and Mont Vernon School Boards, and an administrative liaison and they have been meeting for almost a year. Information was gathered

with regards to the impact of early start times on high school student performance and behavior. Jeanne said because the evidence was so strongly in favor of a later start time for high school students, the Study Group decided to move forward.

Short surveys were administered over a six-month period to the various stakeholders. They have recently completed their analysis of the data gathered from the surveys given to students in grades 7-12, parents, and faculty/staff at all of our schools both in Amherst and Mont Vernon. The surveys revealed that 87% of our teenage students are not getting the recommended 9-10 hours of sleep per night. For the most part all of the groups surveyed were supportive of exploring the possibility of altering the start time to help address the need for teenagers to get adequate sleep time.

Additional focus groups were assembled to address specific obstacles. The Study Group met with school administrators, Souhegan students who had done research on the subject, athletic directors, and teacher/staff representatives to get their feedback on various proposals. They also contacted some of the other school systems around the country that have altered their start times.

The Study Group is currently leaning toward moving all the school start times later by 30 minutes. Souhegan and AMS would begin at 8:00 a.m. the Amherst Elementary schools would begin at 9:00 and Mont Vernon would begin at 9:10 a.m. The end time has yet to be determined but will probably be close to what we're experiencing now with the additional time added on to each day to make up for snow days.

Two key questions have been raised recently:

- 1) Would a half an hour of additional sleep be worth all the changes that would be required? *The school*

principals all felt it would be worth changing the teacher representatives had a more mixed reaction.

- 2) Should we consider riding the momentum of the current 20 minute later end to the day and consider implementing the 30 minute change in September of 2009 rather than waiting until 2010 as originally planned? *Most felt that we should wait until 2010 to implement any proposed changes.*

Jeanne said the Study Group continues to maintain the deadline of September 2009 as the date for making a final recommendation.

Between now and September 2009, the Study Group will present their proposal to the other school boards via the SAU board and to parents. Teacher/Staff representatives all agreed to go back to their constituents to share what they learned and get a sense of the faculty and staff's reaction to the proposal to move the start time of every school later by 30 minutes.

According to union representatives, any change to the start time constitutes a change in the working conditions and would have to be negotiated within the individual collective bargaining units.

Jeanne told board members if a change in start time is recommended in September of 2009 and is approved, it would not go into effect until September 2010.

Kim Roberge said the concern she has heard from parents in Mont Vernon is if the start time is moved up by 30 minutes and they are reducing the buses by one will the elementary kids be getting off the buses when it is dark outside since the day will be extended as well.

It was agreed feedback would be solicited from parents through SAU sponsored Public Hearings. It is important to understand each boards/schools perspective.

Dr. Jennings said they would put together a proposed schedule for Public Hearings. Dr. Jennings told board members she would provide some dates to the board in August.

On the August Agenda, it was agreed the SAU Board would appoint a Mont Vernon Board Member to sit on the Later Start Committee.

Jeanne Ludt agreed to e-mail Kim Roberge with the committee's updates so Kim can keep the Mont Vernon Board updated.

Dan Foley suggested at their August Board meeting, the Study Group have a plan, which shows what happens at the culmination of each event.

Board members received the late Start Survey Results Using Data to Impact Student Achievement dated June 2009 in their board packets.

Graphed results were also provided showing responses for each survey question. Results were given for Amherst Middle School, Clark/Wilkins, Mont Vernon Village School and Souhegan High School.

- C. Policies - 1st Reading – Dr. Jennings told board members this is the first reading for the policies in their board packets. Dr. Jennings said the policies would be posted on the Angel Website should board members want to comment on a specific policy.

Dr. Jennings said the policies would be discussed at each of the board meetings in August/September.

Betty Shankel explained to board members a policy was approved DJBR however; it is not a policy but a procedure.

Betty Shankel agreed to work with the Policy Committee on a proposal for a purchasing policy.

1. DJ – Purchasing – Dr. Jennings suggested the districts go back to a very simple purchasing policy.
2. DJD – Cooperative Purchasing
3. DJE – Bidding Requirements – In the sixth paragraph, they would change the amount of \$5,000 to between \$5,000 to \$25,000

Dwight said he doesn't know what the policy is for bidding on projects and suggested this should be clear in the procedure.

4. IHBA – Student Evaluations Specific Learning Disability – strike the word Amherst in the first sentence.

Nancy Head invited all SAU Board members to march in the 4th of July parade.

VII. OTHER

Peter Maresco asked why high school students need to participate in the marching band in order to take band. Peter said his daughter wanted to continue taking band but did not want to participate in the marching band and said this is not possible.

Dan Foley said he would try to get an answer for Peter.

A motion was made by Pam Coughlin to adjourn the meeting. Steve Coughlan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

VIII. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN