

PK-12 Study Committee Meeting

Thursday September 15, 2016

Royalton HS, 6:00 pm

Draft Minutes

Present: Bethel: Rachel Irish, Todd Sears, Lisa Floyd, Rodney Rainville

Chelsea: Deborah Ackerman, Joe Spinella

Rochester: Jeff Sherwin, Jess Arsenault, Frank Russell, Chris Mattrick, Andy West

Royalton: Jennifer Stratton, Jessica Carpenter, Bridget Barry, Geo Hoenigford

WRVSU: Mary Ellen Simmons, Curriculum Coordinator, Steve Dale, Consultant

Call to Order: Lisa Floyd called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes: Lisa asked if any discussion/comments about the minutes from the August 18th meeting. Jen Stratton noted that on page 3 under public meetings, Jess Carpenters name should be replaced with Jennifer Stratton. Joanne will correct. Chris Mattrick made motion to approve minutes, seconded by Jen. So voted.

Status of other study committees in WRVSU: Lisa noted that the letters to the other districts inviting them to join this committee were sent out. Steve noted that the Non-Operating Committee will meet next week. The PK-8 committee met on Monday and have a lot of work to do in order to decide if they can agree on becoming one district. He gave an overview of their meeting and noted that they are interested in what this committee is doing, especially the middle school grade configuration. Sharon and Stockbridge both transfer students at grade 7, while the other schools transfer at grade 6.

Updates from last meeting: Community informal meetings: Geo explained that he sent an email to Bruce that never made it out to the committee members. His proposal for community meetings is an hour and a half meetings, 7-8:30, and quick presentations from 4 people in the group to explain preliminary ideas for elementary, middle, high school and then one person to explain the overall view. The meetings will be kept positive throughout. The dates set are Bethel- September 26th, South Royalton- October 14th, Rochester-October 18th and Chelsea either October 3rd or 6th. Todd explained that Lisa sent a letter out explaining public communications including a webpage with all the information about the 706 study meetings. Mark Kline has set this up and made it very easy to maneuver. There is a Facebook site, Front Porch Forum, Twitter and Instagram. Rachel Irish will publish all info, and Lisa's letter will give more information about the sites, links and dates.

Status of Student Advisory Group: Andy convened the advisory group on Monday. All four high schools had 1 administrator, 1 teacher and 2 students. They met at the SU office to brainstorm with staff from Up for Learning, and one clear message was received by all the students-they want to keep the strong student/teacher relationships they have now. PLP's, student engagement, leadership, course options,

community/parent involvement, global learning and more athletics/extracurricular options were all concerns that came out of the day. Mary Ellen noted that this meeting focused on High School, and the group will focus on Middle School (one or two) at the next meeting. Dean noted that it was a very productive day. The strategic plan was reviewed and tied into the high school level as well. He also warned the committee that staff is nervous about what this means for them in the future and more information should be forwarded to the teachers.

Planning for Middle and High School: At the last meeting, tentative directions were set. Hopefully more specific information will be available by the October 16th meeting.

Dates for votes on proposal: Steve would like to discuss again, last meeting a tentative date was set for April 2017 to allow for the Rochester Annual School meeting. If the PK-8 committee voted on Town meeting day in March, and this committee votes in April, it will be very confusing for the communities. He advised that everyone give some thought on how to handle the vote, which needs to be Australian Ballot. Geo and Todd both noted that the vote should happen on the same date for the committees, but they do not feel it should be at the same meeting budgets are voted on. Geo would like to use the annual meeting as a chance to give the most up to date information. The Chairs of each committee will discuss.

Draft 2 of the Vision for Unified School: Steve created a draft document from the ideas/information put forth at the August 18th meeting. He noted that he added in advocating funding support for a centralized union school immediately. Discussion ensued regarding this statement. Many people felt it was going to cause people to vote this down since school buildings will be closed down at the same time. Too much for one vote. Steve will change the language in the report. Chris noted that he believes that it should be put out to the voters that a state of the art facility is a vision of the committee and would like to see the language left in the report in some fashion. Todd felt that language could be included as a possibility in the future. He also asked if it is a possibility to take funding outside the state, possibly asking Google or other companies. Short discussion. Steve asked to come back to this in late October, early November as the plan is better formulated. Lisa will take these preliminary ideas and turn them into a draft form. Frank will help. Joe noted that at Chelsea's last meeting, discussion centered on the middle school. Townspeople are concerned about losing both high school and middle school grades as well. Transportation, age of students travelling were concerns and possibly one central middle school will not pass as easily as two middle schools. His concern is that it may sway people to stay with a PK-8 configuration instead of the PK-12. Chris noted that he has heard some of the same thoughts Discussion ensued. All agreed that community members need to be engaged in these conversations. Lisa would like to see the data that Bruce was going to gather on the middle school numbers, etc which will help map the configurations. Mary Ellen noted that Best Practices for Middle Schools should be added as well. Lengthy discussion continued.

Review draft of Articles and decide where to put primary attention: Steve noted tonight's goal would be to determine what we need to discuss. The work on articles should be done over the next three months. Steve reviewed the articles as they were presented. **Article 1 and 2-Necessary and Advisable Districts-** will decide which districts are necessary and which are advisable. **Article 3-Grades to be operated** is evident in that this is the PK-12 study committee as grades to be operated. **Article 4-New school facilities-** What would be needed for construction? Are we anticipating constructing a new school building? Inventory of each school would also be needed. **Article 5-First year of operation-**will be

fleshed out further down the road. **Article 6-Surpluses, Debts and Special funds-** Donna and the business office will need to analyze the data and report to the committee. Special funds, unique components of schools will need to be taken into account as well (i.e. principal funds, student activity, student forest, etc). **Article 7-Existing school facilities and real property-** Ownership will pass to the municipalities. Any school closures would be written into this article. **Article 8-Allocation of Capital and Operating Expenses-**will be discussed later in the article work. **Article 9-Board Composition-** The board composition is based on census, not equalized pupils. **Article 10 Terms of office of School Directors, Article 11-Date of voter action, Article 12-Unified District Bd of Directors Transition Role and Article 13- Annual budget and public questions-** all will need discussion over the upcoming months.

Steve reminded the committee that the communities need to be engaged in this process. Discussion ensued about the local entities working with Principals to give voice to the community. This could be built into the articles if the committee chose to. A group such as a school site council could be created to work with the principals. Steve will email some samples of possibilities so the boards can review. Question asked what language would be needed if a school building was not going to be used as a school. What are the town/school district issues that will be potential challenges? Tim noted that the South Royalton School was deeded to the school district. It cannot be used for anything but a school. Joe noted that the town of Chelsea owns the land that the school is on, and Rochester students own the School Forest while the town owns the athletic fields. More work on these articles will be completed at each upcoming meeting.

Public Comment: Tim noted that the committee has to have the facts to share with communities to help people understand the process. Jess noted that child care should be offered for the informational meetings. PTO groups and/or administrators could help set this up.

Next Meeting: Whitcomb HS on September 29th at 6pm

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 7:55 made by Rachel, seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McDonnell