

NEWFOUND AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Newfound Regional High School Library Media Center

Monday, July 12, 2010 at 6:30 pm

FINAL MINUTES

School Board Present: Leslie Dion (Chair, Bristol), Laura Simula (Bridgewater), Sue Cheney (Alexandria), Jon Johnson (Danbury)

School Board Excused: Mary Campbell (Vice Chair, Hebron), Bruce Davol (New Hampton)

School Board Absent: Tom Gillis (Groton)

Staff Present: Marie Ross (Superintendent), Paul Hoiriis (Clerk and NMMS Teacher)

Video Operator: Bruce Wheeler (NRHS Teacher)

Public Present: Ann Johnson (Danbury), Lou Lieto (Groton), Marilyn Lieto (Groton)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. The Chair entertained a motion to go into non-public for the purposes of discussing personnel issues per RSA 91-A:3 IIa and IIc. Jon Johnson so moved, Sue Cheney seconded, and the motion was *approved on a roll call vote 4-0-0-3 (Groton, Hebron, and New Hampton absent)*.

At 6:52p.m., the Chair entertained a motion to come out of non-public session.

The flag was saluted by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Superintendent Marie Ross indicated that the notices of postings have been placed at the town offices, the schools, the SAU, and on the website at www.sau4.org.

School Board Meeting Minutes

- **June 14, 2010** – Mary Campbell e-mailed the Clerk additional information regarding the non-public session. The Chair handed her corrections in writing to the Clerk which he added while the Board met during the non-public session. Sue Cheney corrected “move” to “moved” on page 3, line 16. Ms. Cheney and Dr. Ross corrected the word “Project” to read “Projected” on lines 1, 2, and 47 on page 6. The Chair entertained a motion to approve the June 14th School Board minutes as amended. Ms. Cheney so moved, Laura Simula seconded, and the motion was *approved 3-0-1-3 (Danbury abstained, Groton, Hebron, and New Hampton absent)*.
- **June 28, 2010** – The Chair introduced the June 28th School Board minutes for comment. Ms. Cheney changed the word “achieving” to “achieved” in the last line of the Public Comments section. The Chair entertained a motion to approve the June 28th School Board minutes as amended. Ms. Simula so moved, Jon Johnson seconded, and the motion was *approved 3-0-1-3 (Alexandria abstained, Groton, Hebron, and New Hampton absent)*.

Announcements, Correspondence and Reports

Dr. Ross stated that she has received written correspondence from Tom Gillis officially resigning from his position on the School Board. She added that Lou Lieto of Groton has expressed interest in filling the vacancy. Dr. Ross said that the position will be posted and an appointment is expected to be made in two weeks at the upcoming Planning & Dialogue meeting. The Chair entertained a motion to accept Tom Gillis’ resignation from the School Board. Ms. Cheney so moved, Ms. Simula seconded, and the motion was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

Dr. Ross referred to the Business Administrator’s report which stated that all six of our schools received approval without conditions from the Department of Education. She explained that this meant that our buildings are not subject to conditional safety or other fixes. She expressed gratitude to Mr. Rossner for his proactive work in updating our buildings to meet the DOE standards.

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1 Dr. Ross also mentioned to the Board a correspondence she received from Sue Higgins from Healthfirst
2 Dental Program who wishes to enlist support from our District and our PTOs in bringing a free dental
3 clinic to our region to be held on October 22nd and 23rd at Dr. Doanes medical office. Ms. Dion said this
4 is a great idea knowing how expensive dental care can be for those without insurance. Ms. Simula agreed
5 and added that this also helps with the expense and inconvenience of traveling to Concord or Plymouth to
6 see a dentist. Dr. Ross acknowledged that the Board was favorable to this idea.
7

8 The Chair acknowledged the receipt of the letter from Deirdre Conway, NATA Negotiations Chair, dated
9 June 26th, requesting that negotiations open for the teacher's contract for the 2011-2012 school year. Ms.
10 Dion also noted that she answered that letter on July 2nd asking Ms. Conway to contact the SAU Office to
11 set up the first meeting. Ms. Dion added that she, Ms. Cheney, Mr. Johnson, Dr. Ross, Eric Chase, Dan
12 Rossner, and Gordon Graham, Esq., will be on the Negotiation Team for the Board. She closed by saying
13 that she looked forward to the conversations between the two teams.
14

15 Strategic Plan Reports

- 16 • **Core (Assessment, Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development)**

- 17 • **Graduation Update**

18 Dr. Ross addressed the topic brought up by Ms. Simula at the last Board meeting regarding
19 some members of the public questioning why the high school received the EDies Award
20 despite being designated a School In Need of Improvement. Dr. Ross pointed out that under
21 No Child Left Behind a school becomes a School In Need of Improvement if just one of its
22 subgroups do not make adequate yearly progress. She said that happened with our special
23 education subgroup. She added that because of this system, 80% of schools are designated as
24 needing improvement. Dr. Ross added that two of our elementary schools did achieve annual
25 yearly progress. She clarified that the criteria used by the EDies Committee was based on
26 the high schools work in achieving progress in areas such as extended learning opportunities
27 and its work on developing the competencies for each course. She added that the Committee
28 was so impressed by the depth of conversation surrounding the competencies from the
29 administration, through the teachers, and even amongst the students who were versed in the
30 terminology of formative and summative assessment. She added that the high school has
31 developed such a climate and culture as to impress this Committee as well as a delegation of
32 Pakistani educators that have just completed their second annual visit to the high school. She
33 added that the work on the competencies was initiated by the teachers and not through a top
34 down mandate.
35

36 Dr. Ross then addressed the next piece of annual yearly progress which is graduation rate.
37 She noted that under the new New Hampshire law, education is compulsory until age 18.
38 However, a few students left while they were 16 before the law went into effect. She said
39 that they have recaptured these students and became involved in getting them back on track.
40 She noted that one student has since graduated from Mount Prospect, two students have
41 graduated from Jolivar, six graduated from the Kearsarge night adult program, six have
42 attained a GED, and then students have not yet completed the requirements, but have met
43 with our administration and guidance departments to work out a plan. Dr. Ross added that
44 two of these students are less than a credit away from completion based on some project work
45 due. She noted that there are alternative programs we work with such as charter schools and
46 Virtual Learning Academy. She closed by saying that we do not give up on the students and
47 that she even has graduation ceremonies in her office for those students that complete their
48 education via one of these later alternative methods.
49

50 The Chair commented that she thinks that it is important for the public to know the stories
51 and follow-up on these students beyond just the numbers and statistics.

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2 • **Infrastructure (Facilities, Finance, Policy, Technology)**

3 • **06.29.2010 Policy Committee Draft Minutes**

4 The Chair noted the inclusion in the Board packet of the Policy Committee minutes from
5 June 29th. The Chair asked the Superintendent to review the truancy policy based on the new
6 New Hampshire law passed on this subject. Dr. Ross gave a brief synopsis of the new State
7 law changes which prompted our new policy JED Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy.
8 She stated that under the new law and policy, the principal now has discretion to
9 approve/excuse absences rather than the parents. She explained that this used to be the law
10 and is now the law again. She said that our policy outlines what is considered an excused
11 absence. She said that this new law gives us more teeth in fighting truancy, but also provides
12 flexibility by allowing the principal discretion. Ms. Cheney added that the Policy Committee
13 looked at the law closely and adapted our policy to be consistent with the law and to be fair.
14 Mr. Johnson echoed her sentiments. Dr. Ross also noted that many of the students mentioned
15 earlier who did not graduate in the traditional manner were students with high amounts of
16 absences, tardies, and dismissals, and that she hopes that this stronger policy will help those
17 types of students. She noted that the policy has been included in the new school handbooks
18 with a footnote that the School Board must still approve the policy.
19

20 Dr. Ross also mentioned that new bullying legislation has also been passed by the State that
21 will require superintendents to attend some workshops and then for staff to be trained with a
22 new policy forthcoming in this area as we learn more.
23

24 • **Football Field Update**

25 Ms. Dion said that work is progressing on the football field, that it is not complete, and
26 reminded us that we have to stay off the field for one year after completion. She mentioned
27 that Ms. Simula and Mr. Rossner have been working with the Football Field Oversight
28 Committee and the Friends of Newfound Football in deciding whether the field should be
29 named and that we are about 18 months out from having to make that decision.
30

31 • **Communications (Parents, Personnel, Public, Pupils)**

32 Dr. Ross commented on the Pakistani Educator Leaders Institute visit stating that it was
33 phenomenal. She explained that 40 Pakistani delegates are visiting Plymouth State University for
34 a few weeks and that we hosted them again this year for a vegetarian brunch and tour of our high
35 school. She stated that the experience was positive for our community and for them. She added
36 that the Pakistani delegation was impressed on how child-centered our District is. She said that
37 some our community have been generous in giving books and materials to the Pakistanis and
38 would hope that the Board would approve any surplus materials we have in the future to be given.
39 She added that some of the delegates mentioned that they would like for their students and our
40 students to possibly correspond by letter. Dr. Ross asked Paul Hoiriis (Social Studies) if that
41 would interest him. He said it would and added that perhaps they could also Skype with the
42 Pakistani students.
43

44 Dr. Ross also reminded the Board and public about our IT switchover and our new web address
45 as www.sau4.org. She added that all of the servers are now housed at the SAU instead of at the
46 individual schools. She reminded everyone that we now use Googleapps for e-mail and that our
47 new wide area network is provided by G-4 and is at less cost than our previous network provider.
48
49
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Public Comments on Agenda Items, limited to 15 minutes

Not to exceed five minutes per individual (School Board Policy BDDH)

The Chair invited comments from the public. Lou Lieto of Groton introduced himself stating that he has submitted a letter of application for the School Board member opening left by Tom Gillis' vacancy. He invited the Board to ask him questions. He also commented that he would love to see the Pakistani delegation visit when school is in session so that more students could be exposed to this cultural experience. Dr. Ross agreed and said that this is just how their visit has worked out with Plymouth State. Dr. Ross added that Mr. Lieto has served on a school board in New York State and on our District's Budget Committee. Ms. Cheney added that as a the School Board delegate to the Budget Committee she has found Mr. Lieto to be intelligent, participatory, and has added quite a bit to the process.

Ann Johnson of Danbury said that she would appreciate the address to send materials to the Pakistani schools. Dr. Ross said that she will contact the delegation who is still visiting at PSU to get more details.

Dr. Ross also mentioned that some of our students did have the opportunity to interact with the delegates during their visit and that the delegates were particularly impressed with Mr. Wheeler's students' woodworking instruments. Dr. Ross and Mr. Wheeler invited the Board to see these instruments after tonight's meeting.

Discussion Items

a. Policies for first reading:

- JED Attendance, Absenteeism, Truancy

The Chair invited any more discussion. None was offered.

b. Handbooks

- Program Specialist
- Support Staff
- NRHS Student/Parent
- Athletic
- Coaches
- NMMS Student/Parent
- Elementary Schools Student/Parent

The Chair invited discussion on these items. Dr. Ross said that Ms. Campbell has informed her that the Policy Committee is not prepared to discuss the Handbooks for Athletics, Coaches, and the Elementary Schools and that they are removed from the discussion and action item sections from tonight's agenda.

c. Personnel

- Resignation – Dr. Ross referred to the letter of resignation from Newfound Memorial Middle School Assistant Principal Wendy Despres as she has accepted a full-time Associate Dean position at Pinkerton Academy. Ms. Dion added that the letter was well-written and well-received. Ms. Simula agreed adding that it was clear that her time at Newfound prepared her for such a move.

- Nominations

Dr. Ross stated that she is nominating a Tech Support Specialist candidate tonight to fill the vacancy left by the woman who held the position for only a couple of days before realizing it was not a fit for her. The candidate's name is Michael Shemeley.

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1 Dr. Ross also stated that she is nominating a candidate for the high school Social Studies position.
2 His name is Don Wills and comes to Newfound with 13 years of experience, the last eight in
3 Texas, and before that in Kentucky. She said that Mr. Wills is very child-centered and
4 understands our tight budget in that he has offered to start on Step 8, rather than Step 13 on the
5 salary scale. Dr. Ross added that they are grooming another candidate who will be student
6 teaching in the fall, then will fill a maternity leave in the spring as a substitute, and hopefully be
7 considered for a position the following year when the high school Social Studies Chair retires and
8 that this will make up for the salary expense as this candidate would be at the entry level of the
9 salary scale. Ms. Dion added that she is hesitant to accept a teacher starting at a lower step than
10 they deserve as this is hard to make it right in the future and that she would start him at the proper
11 step. Ms. Simula added that his offer to start at a lower step demonstrates his dedication to
12 education.

13
14 Dr. Ross outlined that plan for replacing Ms. Despres at the middle school. She said that they
15 will be restructuring Trish Lewis' guidance position and providing her a stipend to continue to
16 take on some of the assistant principal responsibilities as she has done in the past. Dr. Ross added
17 that they will advertise for a part-time Guidance position to make up for Ms. Lewis' time spent in
18 performing Assistant Principal duties. She concluded by saying that with this new restructure,
19 there will be a savings over the current model.

20
21 • Leave of Absence Request

22 Dr. Ross explained that Guidance Counselor Abby Nelson of Danbury Elementary School would
23 like to return from her maternity leave on a part-time basis for the next school year. She would
24 like to return to work for only two days per week. Dr. Ross said that she could fill the position
25 for one year through someone else in the District needing internship experience as they complete
26 their Guidance Counselor certification, thus not incurring the cost of a new employee.

27
28 Lastly, Dr. Ross said that Mr. Chase has advertised for an anticipated opening for Eighth Grade
29 Literacy as the current staff member has had some medical issues and may move close to her
30 family. She said that Mr. Chase felt it was important to start talking with candidates now before
31 it is too late.

32
33 **Public Comments on Agenda Items, limited to 15 minutes**

34 Not to exceed five minutes per individual (School Board Policy BDDH)

35 The Chair invited comments from the public regarding the discussion items on tonight's agenda. Mr.
36 Lieto commented that he thought that agreeing to allow the social studies candidate to start at a lower step
37 would need approval from the local bargaining unit. Dr. Ross said that the current contract states that the
38 Superintendent sets the steps, but added that she wants to be fair.

39
40 **Action Items**

41 a. Policies for first reading:

- 42 • JED Attendance, Absenteeism, Truancy

43 Sue Cheney moved to accept JED Attendance, Absenteeism, Truancy as a policy for first reading.

44 Laura Simula seconded, and the motion was *approved 4-0-0-3 (Groton, Hebron, and New*
45 *Hampton absent)*.

46
47 b. Handbooks

- 48 • Program Specialist

- 49 • Support Staff

- 50 • NRHS Student/Parent

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- NMMS Student/Parent

Sue Cheney moved to approve the Program Specialist, Support Staff, NRHS Student/Parent, and the NMMS Student/Parent Handbooks. Laura Simula seconded, and the motion was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

c. Personnel

- Resignation

Laura Simula moved to accept, with regret, Wendy Despres' resignation. Jon Johnson seconded, and this motion was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

- Nomination

Sue Cheney moved to elect Don Wills, as recommended by the Superintendent, for the position of High School Social Studies starting on Step 13 of the salary scale. Laura Simula seconded this motion and it was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

Sue Cheney moved to elect Michael Shemeley, as recommended by the Superintendent, for the position of Technical Support Specialist. Laura Simula seconded the motion and it was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

- Leave of Absence Request

Sue Cheney moved to approve the restructuring of the Nurse/Guidance position at Danbury Elementary School to accommodate Ms. Nelson's request to return to work on a part-time basis for this coming school year only. Laura Simula seconded the motion and it was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

d. Manifests

Sue Cheney moved to approve the manifests for June 2010. Ms. Simula seconded the motion and it was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

The Chair explained that Dr. Ross would like to do a grant update at the July 26th Planning & Dialogue Session and that the August 27th Planning & Dialogue Session topic is to be determined with possible topics being special education and alternative programs. The Chair reminded the Board that she will be absent from the August 9th School Board meeting on an Outward Bound trip. She added that she will e-mail the Vice Chair and coordinate with her to run the meeting.

Dr. Ross added that at Bristol Elementary and at Danbury Elementary we have a Title I program that provides for a double session of kindergarten for students that need a boost based on assessments done in the fall. She clarified that this is not full-day kindergarten, but a remediation program for students demonstrating the need based on assessment.

At 7:58 p.m., Ms. Cheney moved to adjourn. Ms. Simula seconded the motion and it was *approved 4-0-0-3*.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Hoiriis
Clerk

July 19	Policy Committee Meeting	SAU	5:30pm
July 29	Title 1 Parent Involvement Barbecue	DES	12:30pm
August 4	Focused Monitoring Leadership Training		