

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2019, at 6 p.m.
Location: Folsom Education & Community Center

DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance:

- Board members: Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, Bob Chutter
- Staff: Susan McKelvie, Tom Nolan, Samantha Cantell
- Audience: Amy McGettrick, Gwen Hobbs, Meg Wickenden, Kari Banas

Call to Order:

1. M. Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.
2. Citizens and/or Staff to be Heard:
 - Audience members elected to wait until the Principal's Report to voice their ideas
3. Consent Agenda (Action):
 - B. Chutter made a motion to approve the minutes from 3/7/2019. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.
 - M. Henderson signed the Principal Contract for Susan McKelvie for FY20
4. Principal's Report:
 - S. McKelvie thanked the community for passing the FY20 School Budget.
 - S. McKelvie reviewed the highlights of her report. She informed the audience that the Data-to-Action Team, who is leading the initiative to craft next year's schedule, plans to present a draft of the schedule to the Staff on April 16th and solicit their feedback. They also intend to solicit feedback from the community in a separate meeting following April Break. The Team plans to incorporate that feedback, and present the schedule to the School Board on May 2nd. S. McKelvie explained that the presentation will cover the outline of the schedule, but that there will be lots of interaction and opportunities to give feedback before the schedule is fleshed-out by end of the year.
 - G. Hobbs asked what the goal of this initiative is, and how the change will affect Art and Music instruction. S. McKelvie referred to the requirements listed in the presentation she gave to the community on Jan. 17th. She explained that the #1 requirement is to comply with the law. There is no plan to cut or compromise on the quality of Folsom's Arts programs, but they will look different. S. McKelvie explained that the Team must think outside the box in order to make room for the things we must do and the things we want to do.
 - G. Hobbs asked whether Arts instruction is a requirement. S. McKelvie explained that the Education Quality Standards (EQS) require instruction in artistic expression, but that the State does not prescribe a time requirement for them. She wants to continue the current level of engagement with the Arts, but find ways to embed them, adjust the day, and make accommodations between Arts instruction and core academics.
 - K. Banas asked if the Music and Art teachers should be involved in the Data-to-Action Team. S. McKelvie said that those teachers, along with all staff members, can be a part of the process at any time by speaking with the Team members.

- S. McKelvie explained that the Middle School and Elementary School schedules are different. For 5th-8th graders, we want to offer Foreign Language, Coding Languages, and Band/Chorus as electives, so that Folsom students have opportunities similar to those at other middle schools. S. McKelvie wants to maintain quality for all of our programs.
- G. Hobbs asked if all minutes devoted to core academics are currently being used effectively. She suggested that if core academic time is used wisely, there may be more time available for Arts instruction. S. McKelvie said that improvements can always be made, but would put those efforts under the heading of "Making Core Academic Time More Productive".
- S. McKelvie said that the Data-to-Action Team is developing a "working model", but that Staff will continually adjust and fine-tune it. She acknowledged that the minute requirements for Math and ELA may seem frustratingly large, but that those requirements come down to us from the State and we cannot ignore them. She also suggested that these changes will prompt some excellent conversations among teachers. S. McKelvie pointed out that all of our teachers want the best outcomes for our students.
- A. McGettrick noted that we're lucky to have such talented Art & Music teachers, and that our students clearly respond to their instruction. G. Hobbs recalled the tremendous turn-out for the K-4 Play, and would hate to lose that. K. Banas commended our Art teacher's ability to engage our students, even those not previously interested in art.
- A. McGettrick welcomes the creative collaboration that can occur between teachers, but also advocates for maintaining pure Arts time.
- S. McKelvie acknowledged that time is needed to develop collaborative content. She is working with the SU Curriculum Coordinator, Megan Grube, to plan this collaboration time. She emphasized that the resulting curriculum must be intentional, well-crafted, and meet the Teaching Standards for both core academics and the Arts. S. McKelvie confirmed that grant money is already available for curriculum-building during the summer.
- K. Banas said that she still wasn't clear on *why* the change to our schedule is needed. S. McKelvie explained that the number of minutes that Folsom currently dedicates to literacy and math fall short of the best practices identified by the SU Leadership. She also mentioned that Health class and intervention block time must be added next year. S. McKelvie also stated that some core academics teachers don't feel that they have sufficient time to teach their content and help their students achieve proficiency.
- G. Hobbs asked if we can push back against the SU requirements. S. McKelvie said that she would do so if she thought the SU was asking for an unreasonable number of minutes for core academics. In this case however, S. McKelvie believes the SU's requirements are reasonable. She also hears feedback from the Elementary Teachers that the day is too fractured to successfully deliver their content.
- T. Maxham pointed out that a 7.5hr school day isn't much time to achieve all that we want, and that teachers are expected to meet the Standards. He's concerned that our core academic teachers don't feel they have enough time to help their students achieve proficiency, especially for those students who are falling behind.
- B. Chutter stated that he wants our curriculum to be excellent, but also realistic and sustainable. He wished the Data-to-Action team luck, and asks the community to be willing to take this risk, because change is needed.

- M. Henderson acknowledged that change is scary, and understands why parents are feeling nervous about this change. However, she reiterated that we must meet the requirements of the law, and that our Administrators have the right to experiment with the curriculum in order to best serve the needs of all students. She asked the community to view the change as an experiment, and recognize that the schedule can evolve and adjust over time. Finally, she stated that she has absolute faith in our amazing staff and Principal, and is confident that given the time needed to develop new content, they will produce something wonderful.

5. Continuous Improvement Plan Presentation (Action):

- S. McKelvie presented Folsom's Continuous Improvement Plan for FY20. The presentation included provisions for Proficiency-Based learning, Safe & Healthy schools, and High-Quality Staffing. It also included the latest SBAC data (FY18).
- A. McGettrick asked whether there are models for mental health provisions in other schools. S. McKelvie said that the CIUUSD (Grand Isle/North Hero/Isle La Motte) are planning to hire their own Clinician (school psychiatrist). S. McKelvie does not believe South Hero needs a full-time Clinician, but is researching the possibility of hiring a local Pediatric Psychiatrist to hold office-hours at Folsom and treat those Folsom students who require services on-site. K. Banas suggested reaching out to Robert Althoff, and S. McKelvie said she intended to do so.
- A. McGettrick asked whether the recently-hired SU Instructional Coach is available for all staff, or just literacy teachers. S. McKelvie confirmed that the Instructional Coach is available for all staff. She is shared by the GISU, but will be at Folsom for ~3 weeks.
- G. Hobbs asked why the FY18 SBAC data had so many redactions. S. McKelvie explained that in order to maintain student privacy, data cannot be made public for classes with ≤ 10 students.
- B. Chutter asked if the School Board could be given access to the Continuous Improvement Plan in advance next year, to give the Board time to digest the information before being required to vote on it. S. McKelvie agreed.
- B. Chutter made a motion to approve Folsom's Continuous Improvement Plan for FY20 and put it forward to the State for approval. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

6. Approval of Bills for Payment (Action):

- In the absence of both B. Vaughan and the Bills packet, it was agreed to postpone the paying of bills until the first meeting in April (4/4)

7. Language of the Reserve Fund from Attorneys (Discussion):

- Superintendent Michael Clark formally requested that the GISU's Lawyers review the wording of Articles 6 & 7 in South Hero's Town Meeting Day ballot. M. Henderson summarized their response.
- It is the Lawyers' opinion that Articles 6 & 7 created a valid and lawful FY19 reserve fund for capital improvements. Article 6 essentially created an empty box. Article 7 identified specific funds and stipulated that they can only be applied to capital improvements. The Lawyers believe that Article 7 alone would have been sufficient to accomplish the goal of creating a reserve fund, but that Article 6 did no harm.
- The Lawyers recommended clearer language for a future Article, placing unencumbered funds from FY20 in a specifically named Capital Improvement Fund.

- The Lawyers also clarified that money deposited into these funds (regardless of how they are named) must be spent within 5 years of deposit. Failure to do so will result in financial penalties.
- B. Chutter felt that no further action is required until next Town Meeting Day. The School Board may choose to rename the fund at that time to clearly designate its purpose.
- B. Chutter suggested gathering information now for how any FY19 reserve funds will be spent. His concern is that the aging infrastructure of the building will not last much longer, and the board would be wise to have a concrete plan in place for its upkeep and/or replacement.
- S. McKelvie stated that Folsom’s Operational manager, Steve Berard, has ideas on what repairs are needed and how they may be done. She and S. Berard have contacted VSBIT (Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust), who will conduct an energy efficiency audit of the building over the summer. S. McKelvie would like to consider replacing the ancient heating system with something more efficient. After the heating system, she believes the roof will be the next priority.
- M. Henderson will draft a summary of the Lawyers’ findings regarding the reserve fund, and post it on Front Porch Forum and in the Islander.

8. Other:

- None

9. Setting the Next Agenda (Discussion):

- April 4th:
 - Update on the FY18 Audit
 - Discussion of alternative transportation options
 - Designate a Board Member to lead efforts to identify capital improvement opportunities
- April 18th:
 - Staff feedback regarding proposed changes to the schedule (as part of the Principal’s Report)
 - Behavior Data presentation from Silas Saxer

10. Adjourn:

- B. Chutter moved the board adjourn. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.
- The board adjourned at 7:53 p.m.
