

**District Elementary Enrollment Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2005
Humiston Building, Meredith
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

Present: Phil McCormack, Richard Hanson, Juli Hird, Peter Miller, Jeanne Chute, John Hansen, Steve Kelley, Betsy Paine.

Public Present: John Martin

Meeting called to order at 4:06.

Public input: None

Last meeting's minutes – no changes.

Dr. McCormack spoke to Attorney Barbara Loughman who has worked with several districts with issues around cooperative district agreements. She is able to meet with the committee. He also spoke to Roberta Tenney at the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) who is willing to come speak to the committee also. Ms. Tenney is in charge of charter school initiatives for the state. Dates for the presentation were discussed. There was discussion about where the meetings should be and if 90 minutes was enough time.

Dr. McCormack will schedule a meeting with Attorney Barbara Loughman on Wednesday, May 25, 2005 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Sandwich Central School.

Dr. McCormack will schedule a meeting with Roberta Tenney of the NHDOE on Wednesday, June 8, 2005 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Humiston Building in Meredith.

Ms. Paine reported that she took the last meeting minutes and gave a copy to the Town of Sandwich's select board, of which two members are new. The Board's consensus was that an informational town meeting should be called to discuss and clarify the issues surrounding the Sandwich school, its declining enrollment and its relationship to the Inter-Lakes School District. Ms. Paine also reported that many parents in town are upset with the decision of the District Elementary Enrollment Committee relative to having a K/1 in Sandwich next school year. She noted that she has received feedback that she should have held firmer to preserving the current school structure. In addition, she noted that many people don't realize that the Sandwich issue is ongoing – it was not solved with the creation of the K/1 class. Town of Sandwich selectmen thought it was time for town's people to get together and talk about this. The meeting will be on Thursday, June 9, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at Sandwich Central School.

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Mr. Martin noted that in addition to parents of incoming K-1 students, parents of future students have also voiced concerns. Some have stated that they moved to Sandwich specifically because of the quality of the school and they are concerned that this quality not be diminished.

The committee brainstormed questions for Attorney Loughman:

- ?? Distinguish mechanisms between NH RSAs 195:16-a and 195:26.
- ?? If the funding formula for the Inter-Lakes School District has not been reviewed every five years pursuant to the statute, does the formula need to be reviewed regardless of the direction of this committee?
- ?? What mechanisms exist within the statutes that we may not even know about that address these issues?
- ?? Discuss known failed attempts to amend cooperative agreements or withdraw from cooperative.
- ?? Discuss known issues of funding formula revisions.
- ?? Discussion of 195:27 regarding the liability of the Town of Sandwich to withdraw only grades k-6.
- ?? How would the cost of the Sandwich school building be calculated i.e. RSA 195:28?
- ?? Would an amendment to the cooperative agreement impact representation on the school board?
- ?? Difference between an open enrollment school and a public charter school.
- ?? Transportation responsibilities within the District that operates a District run charter school.
- ?? Is there a mechanism so that a District can charge different tuition rates at its elementary schools?

First proposed as a question for the attorney, the committee felt that the notion of differentiated policy within the District; i.e. can the District have different policy for different schools, should first be discussed with the Board.

There was discussion about Ashland's structure with its K-8 school being under the umbrella of SAU 2, yet Ashland's 9-12 students go to a high school in SAU 48. The committee worked to get a handle on how school districts can split their students between two SAUs.

Ms. Hird commented about the nostalgia for a town to have its own schools omits recalling that students from the old Quimby School in Sandwich were the ones who precipitated that school's closing. They believed that they were unable to get the quality of education in that small school that was available to students of larger high schools.

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Questions for Roberta Tenney:

- ?? Discuss the options available.
- ?? Discuss funding possibilities.
- ?? Advantages and disadvantages of a charter school.
- ?? What is the status of charter schools currently in existence?

Public input: Mr. Martin said it's interesting to see where the committee is going. Mr. Martin echoed Ms. Paine's earlier comments regarding community concerns with the March Inter-Lakes School District meeting. He said that many Sandwich residents felt sold out after that meeting upon seeing extra-curricular activities added back to the budget but not teaching positions in Sandwich. This raised a number of eyebrows in Sandwich and may have led partially to the meeting that will occur on June 9th in Sandwich.

Mr. Hanson spoke that he believed that there was a process that relied heavily on the DEEC, which resulted in a recommendation to the Board of combining two grades into one multi-age class.

Ms. Hird recalled past District meetings where teaching positions in Sandwich were cut, yet band uniforms were added.

Mr. Miller noted that the staffing change at SCS went from the DEEC recommendation to the Board to the voters. Sandwich residents were present at the DEEC meetings and there was opportunity for discussion and input from all. Now there may be some afterthoughts; and the restoration of the programs at the high school level benefits students from all three towns.

Mr. Martin noted that during the DEEC discussions leading up to the District meeting, one option was essentially removed from consideration and that was to maintain the "status quo". The position that Sandwich cut was a sacrificial lamb to appease those who wanted to realize dollar savings from Sandwich. That savings was a pittance when compared to the overall budget of the District. Mr. Martin commented that while the District is comprised of three towns and the needs of each town need to be respected, Sandwich is paying its own way and then some. Mr. Martin expressed the hope that that issue will be revisited and brought back to the Board.

Plus/Delta: Ms. Paine was glad to be able to make the nexus between the Town and the DEEC. She is looking forward to hearing what the citizens want.

Ms. Chute hoped that the meeting in Sandwich would have a broader representation than only parents of current or incoming students.

Dr. Kelley thinks the Sandwich Town Meeting is a positive thing for the town. It's important to get together, talk and share a vision.

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Mr. Miller is reminded again with how uncomfortable he is with us verses them thinking, and hopes that things are not moving in that direction.

Ms. Hird echoed Mr. Miller and is looking forward to the upcoming meetings with other experts. She also looks forward to doing something new.

Mr. Hansen appreciated the progress of this meeting, establishing dates and questions for advice from others. He also noted, in response to Mr. Martin's earlier comments, that to some extent the process by which Sandwich is now creating a K/1 class was political, not educational. However, Hansen also noted that he could only support the multi-age class concept if he believed that the educational quality would equal or exceed that of single grades. He believes this will be the case with the K/1 class at SCS.

Dr. McCormack likes the way the DEEC is approaching this issue. He appreciates committee members remaining open and thoughtful.

Ms. Chute asked about the census status of next year's K/1. Mr. Hansen said he had a high confidence level that there would be at least 16 kindergarten and first grade students. He knows of five additional students who could materialize, though none of them currently live in Sandwich.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Future meetings:

?? DEEC Meeting: Wednesday, May 25 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at Sandwich Central School

?? DEEC Meeting: Wednesday, June 8 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Humiston Building in Meredith

?? Town of Sandwich Town Meeting: Thursday, June 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Sandwich Central School

Respectfully submitted,

John Hansen