

Mount Ascutney Board
Draft Minutes
June 8, 2020

Present: Elizabeth Burrows Amy McMullen, Bill Yates, Beth Carter, Nancy Pedrick, Jenifer Aldrich, Angie Ladeau, Dave Baker, Tiffany Riley, Katie Ahern, Amanda Yates Amy, Bill Yates, Amanda Yates,

Not Present: Kris Garnjost

Guests: Annalise Ennis, Jessica Brodie

Meeting called to order at 6:34 PM

Additions/Corrections: Add statement of racism in Vermont and curriculum wise and discussion of Dan French letter, brief discussion on analysis by VSBA and resolution from Board or SU Board

Public Participation: Annalise Ennis speaks on behalf of ABS community as emotional/behaviorist thinking about strengthening communities of Windsor and Albert Bridge and trying to normalize pandemic on top of racial divide that needs to be addressed. Doing CPS training with Melnick, what is happening is the exact definition of trauma and things unpredictable with no physical contact with students, around technology, and using social media is not giving us the same rewards as personally. This is creating a spike in the mental health world as lingering in the world and households of unemployed, experience trauma, families lacking skills, having problems with remote learning. Need to change the train of thought and some may not want to return to school, stressful situations at home, some done well remotely as in classroom stress and anxiety. Time for us to come back and use investment put in us and change the way the school year will look. We need to take care of each other, concentrate on adult emotional/social abilities, as have the ability to make out of box changes. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned discussing ideas: what going on now, managing next year, and use what have in the right way. Planning to address some during the course of the meeting. Beth Carter mentioned all working for a solution, is there a specific task or making sure everything is taken into consideration. Annalise Ennis feels she has not seen change in what is being discussed. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned the board can create policy but not get involved in inside school matters. Amy McMullen asked if something not seeing in planning for next year talk with administration and express your concerns and ideas.

Celebratory comments from Board Members: Congratulations to all graduates. High school graduation was epic, very nice and opposite of what like normally. Celebrated each individual. Nancy Pedrick mentioned was lovely what did for ABS 6th graders.

Discussion Items:

Racism as relates to Curricula:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she sent the letter from Dan Franch with the board. He is supporting the ethnic studies bill passed last year. Important that hold the Agency of Education accountable. How does the board feel about putting out a statement? Beth Carter feels is commitment to continue dialogue and evaluation of how to educate at all levels. Elizabeth Burrows feels there are things the board can do besides put out a statement. How approach this as not calling selves racist but supporting learning communities actively. Elementary school libraries should have picture books with people of different color, gender identities, etc. They should reflect the world and not just the community. Provide and encourage bias training in community families and make known will be taught to all students and diversity is part of their lives. This is not about carrying blame but understanding context and bigotry. Bill Yates feels should get training out to science teachers for students to understand the lack of genetic background for racism. We are one human race and no scientific fact that people of ethnic backgrounds are different races. Including this in science discussion will teach students and adults that racism is a level of ignorance. There needs to be commitment and not just talk. Amanda Yates mentioned a lot of schools have taken on this work and is an ongoing process. Elizabeth Burrows worked on bill for explicit training for everyone and all those in contact with students should have the same training using the same language, understanding what talking about, and teachers have language can use when talking to parents. Dave Baker three administrators are involved in equity projects and teams in three of the buildings and coming back with recommendation. Folks will push back and politicize this.

Student Board Member:

Elizabeth Burrows thought a motion was passed about the process. Tiffany Riley mentioned the deadline on the proposal needs to change and will put out an amendment that date changed due to the pandemic.

Portrait of Graduate:

Dave Baker mentioned moving through strategic process. Will be meeting with board chairs and administrators to do current state analysis and look where we are as an SU now, social/emotional, academic, etc. On June 24 doing a review of strategic framework around visioning, curriculum, social/emotional. Wednesday is the first day of professional development with the staff, will roll out portrait with competencies, and lead staff through activities. Structures for next year will change as, could be, remote, hybrid, or in person design.

Exploratory Team:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned meeting tomorrow. Jan Willey will mediate the meetings starting in late June or July.

Budget Discussion:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned this is regarding tuition savings to consider in budget for next year. Money is not coming and as discussed with Ed Connors this will offset any unspent

money. Dave Baker asked about the education fund. Elizabeth Burrows thinks the current projection is about \$190 million. We need to take into account that students come first. Dave Baker mentioned there will be limitations and constraints next year. Recommendation was increase of mental health and trauma treatment funding by 3,000% and moving out of the education budget all together. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she wrote to the Vermont School Boards Association on what they will do with it now and how support findings. VSBA supports findings and legislature to establish an implementation plan for all students. This is a resolution for our board to support recommendations. This was a straightforward explanation and could bring about a lot of positive change for students.

COVID 19 and Legislative Update:

Dave Baker mentioned for year end, summer schooled, extended school year services that most schools are not doing in person. Katie Ahern mentioned she received clarification from the Agency of Education that up to districts if do in person or not. We could provide services at day care or day camps if have all protection available No guidance on the opening of the school year. Dave Baker mentioned putting a team together with staff from buildings and grounds, food service, nurses, and administrative team about reopening as pay attention to buildings and come back to boards on what is doable and what not. We have restrictive guidelines from the CDC. Elizabeth Burrows warned to think carefully about the food program next year around drop off, cost, participation, and environmental issues as there is not a plan if someone got sick. Dave Baker mentioned there is a contingency plan in place and need is health, virus, and how people feel about the back up plan. The emotion of the pandemic runs deeper than the biology of it.

Annalise Ennis asked as younger classrooms were outside for forest Friday, has anything been discussed about kids learning in an outside environment. Dave Baker mentioned this has come up at administrative team meetings. . Some of the southeast superintendents talked about that and lends to project based activities. There are guidelines around keeping kids in small clusters and not wandering the building. Jessica Brodie mentioned that she works for state park and recreation and summer camps would be a good example of what will and will not work. Annalise Ennis suggested looking at Ascutney Outdoors for classes that could take place on some of their trails.

Looking Back at School Year:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned hoping to get picture of the whole year and not focus on COVID 19 and negative perspective. Tiffany Riley asked if the board wanted her and Jenifer to do an end of year report. Elizabeth Burrows asked if there were any problems that arose, existed or magnified by pandemic? Jenifer Aldrich mentioned there were and fracture lines more prominent during stress. Tiffany Riley mentioned she and Jenifer could put recommendations in report. There is an equity literacy team in Windsor and Hartland and heightened during the pandemic and was access to resources and school did a good job for WIFI, food, and social/emotional. Sometimes challenging to connect with kids and a major concern. Dave Baker mentioned he was meeting weekly with every principal and when this took over let go of

meetings. Elizabeth Burrows asked with zooming if feels made more frequent contact with each other and respective staff and was this an improvement? Tiffany Riley feels days got a lot longer for teachers and administrators. Quality was able to meet weekly with grade levels. Elizabeth Burrows asked if school reopened and end of the pandemic, do you think could replicate in school week or was bond due to special circumstances. Tiffany Riley feels hard to replicate as teachers work hard and will figure out how to make work. Dave Baker mentioned learned that got good at hangout and zoom and can get together quicker. Katie Ahern mentioned parent involvement is much more and all kids and families on and have great meetings.

Proposal:

Bill Yates mentioned this came about after the last SU meeting budget woes and few ideas for administration to consider. Is there some possibility of level of savings by mixing student populations and staff of the two schools. Both schools still have openings. Albert Bridge is look for a grade 2 and multi age classroom and Windsor Kindergarten and Grade 1 staff. Bill Yates asked board members if they feel it is possible to do something like this and make it understood with staff, administration, and public that due to COVID 19. We do not want to override the work of the exploratory committee. Beth Carter feels should do something sooner than later and figure out what could work. Dave Baker feels doing something temporarily would have to voluntarily. Difficult to force on them at this late date. Beth Carter feels is difficult as not sure how the year will start.. Nancy Pedrick hearing in the community that people not wanting to put their kids in the school so far away. Feels would not be temporary but permanent. Amanda Yates asked would this be open to families from another school and what driving decision, positions open. Dave Baker mentioned could have flexibility with K-6 teachers as they have the same license. Elizabeth Burrows feels have not taken into account the trauma of the students and need to get creative but students need to be high priority. Annalise Ennis feels it is a bad idea of having students go between two schools with social/emotional, IEP, parents volunteering, and set up for problems.

Tiffany Riley asked was proposal in fear of crisis. Bill Yates mentioned that was the real basis and started a discussion. Can anything be done to not significantly impact students. If something could be done to not negatively impact, and this late date, put into consideration and do not think any ideas are particularly good. Tiffany Riley asked if it would be worthwhile sending something out to families and getting their sense of what they want. Elizabeth Burrows feels at the moment do not know what it would look like. Jessica Brodie mentioned, from a parent perspective, and student in Kindergarten at ABS, the thought of him switching schools is frightening. Feels this should be a long term plan. Amanda Yates mentioned when talked about merging was expanding opportunities and course of time what sets schools apart and what a certain aspect of their school and a draw for families and not equity conversation. Bill Yates mentioned with young ones thinking all possibilities of different programs. Dave Baker mentioned when talked about this had requests for movement in upper grades and tough moving 5 and 6 year olds but about creating a variety of experiences and equity of opportunity for all kids. Going into a potentially tough financial year.

Consent Agenda:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 11. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yates; motion passed.

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to approve the Principal Reports: Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Beth Carter; motion passed.

Elizabeth Burrows asked the board if wanted a retreat in July and going back to in-person meeting. Dave Baker suggested waiting one more month. Bill Yates asked what would we want to accomplish and is there an actual need for a retreat? This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Agenda: July 13

Statement and Commitment Addressing anti Racism

Opening of School

Student Participation Guidelines

Portrait of Graduate

Exploratory Team

End of Year Principal Report

Reopening Task Force

Amy McMullen mentioned to the board that Records Retention allows for ballots to be destroyed after 90 days and as the Town of Windsor has all ballots does the board have a place they wish to put them. Elizabeth Burrows asked historically do we have a need for them? Amy McMullen mentioned have been destroyed in previous years. The ballots will be destroyed.

Executive Session:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to move to executive session for the purpose of Title 1, Section 313. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Beth Carter; motion passed. Entered into executive session at 8:33 PM.

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to exit executive session at 9:30 PM. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yates; motion passed.

Adjournment:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Beth Carter moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary