

Education Committee Minutes
Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 6:30 PM
Old Nokomis

Members Present: Ryan Parker, David Cameron, Mark Guzzi, Robin McNeil, Kathy Neil, Chad Stratton, Jennifer Watson

Members Absent: Etna Vacancy

Others Present: Mike Hammer, Angela Browns, Ellen Surprenant, Jane Stork, Laura Donahue, Amber Wiles Chamberlain, Maggie Blumenthal

- Public Comment
 - None
- The Education Committee received an excellent presentation on the District's Technology Integration in PK-4. This presentation was made by Amber Wiles Chamberlain.
 - Mrs. Wiles Chamberlain began with some overall statistics and foundation setting:
 - Study on IT job growth from 2013-18
 - Inside the tech industry, tech jobs increased 40%.
 - Outside of tech industry tech jobs jumped by 65%.
 - Younger students are “educational risk takers” meaning they will try new things with less hesitancy.
 - Technology is everywhere and these students are seeing it everywhere, using it everywhere. At the elementary age they are just consumers but we want to teach them to be creators.
 - A study in Florida found that coding lessons increased resourcefulness, and test scores in math, science, language arts.
 - The IT integration program focuses on digital citizenship-using technology safely, responsibly, respectfully.
 - Mrs. Wiles Chamberlain shared a video showing a program in which fourth graders practiced reading aloud for the 2nd graders and then they had an interactive dialog between the readers and the listeners.
 - Mrs. Wiles Chamberlain is looking to increase intra-district collaboration, as well as introduce technology applications/possibilities outside video game coding and playing, etc.
 - Administrators all felt that this program and Amber being the one who stepped into the position have been incredibly helpful and productive:
 - Jane explained that Amber is really helpful to the teachers in bringing technology into their classrooms.
 - Ellen: echo's this. Last year there was some PD time for technology but this year with Amber's position there is more focus on bringing technology applications within the curriculum.

- Laura: Agrees, also loves that Amber was not only already an elementary teacher but came from our district. A huge resource for the teachers because she understands the elementary curriculum and challenges elementary teachers face.
- The Education Committee also received an update on the Etna Dixmont School Garden & Farm to School Program, and an update on the partnership with FoodCorps.
- Presentation by Jane Stork, Maggie Blumenthal
 - Jane introduced Maggie.
 - Maggie studied Biology and Botany at Unity College
 - Presentation handed out.
 - Maggie is the garden coordinator at Etna Dixmont School.
 - Presentation/slides
 - Activity-Living necklace with EDS beans
 - Outreach throughout the district
 - Maggie has visited the chemistry teacher at the high school and is hoping to meet with people in the other elementary schools.
 - High schools had planted a lot of vegetables but EDS is saving flower seeds.
 - Maggie is also working to get local procurement of produce from within the boundaries of RSU 19.
 - EDS participates in the HOM program
 - November's focus is brassicas (things like broccoli, cabbage, kale, etc.)
 - Colleen Tibbets (cafeteria manager at EDS) and Stephanie Bridges (cafeteria manager at Somerset) are participating.
 - Both EDS and Somerset have established FTS teams and have participated in the nationally recognized Northeast Farm to School Institute
 - Jane and Stephanie are participating in a feedback system with Robin Kerber who is the Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition Farm and Sea to School Coordinator. This collaboration is bringing in an extra \$500.
 - They also want to participate in the local foods fund. David is still getting up to speed on the local produce fund and specifically highlighted the leadership that Stephanie, Colleen, and Jane are taking.

- Behavior issues are non-existent in the 3rd and 4th grade. Behavior issues amongst that cohort are just not on Jane's radar.
 - Also, in the lunchroom if a kid thinks they don't like something, they will try it and often eat it when it came from the garden.
 - The budget committee chair was notified that the budget this year will include a request to make the EDS position permanent as part of the district budget (currently funded through ESSR).
 - Ryan Parker provided an update on the district plan with FoodCorps, and highlighted some potential national recognition that the EDS program may be getting.
- Administrator & Teacher Evaluations
 - Mike, part of the new legislative packet that we've been given by the state includes the ability to wave teacher evaluations.
 - Met with the district steering committee (including admin., teachers., association).
 - They would like to back off on teacher evaluations in general.
 - This would not include first year or second year teachers, or any teachers that are struggling or need additional help.
 - Example, Laura has 10 new teachers and just managing those evaluations let alone every teacher.
 - Mike recommends we embrace the lightening up of evaluations.
 - Question: Does this put the district in a liability place for people who are on a plan. If they are already on an improvement plan that will continue?
 - Question: Could we continue this in future years?
 - No, state has only passed this exemption for a single year.
 - Last year there was a modified version of evaluation.
 - Is the paired down version too much for this year?
 - There are a lot of teachers that will still be evaluated because we have a lot of first and second year teachers in the district.
 - The Education Committee unanimously recommends the board adopt the superintendent's recommendation to relax the teacher and administrator evaluations process to focus on newer teachers, and any teachers that

specifically need special attention, including those that may already be on an improvement plan.

- Other
- Future Agenda Items
 - Assessing gifted and talented.
 - Mark Hansen's data assessment.
 - Alternative Education update.
- Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Parker, Committee Chairperson