

Education Committee Minutes

Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 6:30 PM

Virtual/In person Meeting

Members Present: Ken Sands, Mark Guzzi, Robin McNeil, Ryan Parker, Chad Stratton, Leland Youngberg, Jenny Watson

Members Excused: Kathy Neill

Members Absent:

Others Present: Lori Merrow, Ken Kealiher, Maxine Pare, Mike Hammer, Ellen Surprenant, Rachel Nyce, Angela Brown, Jane Stork, Mary Nadeau, Shane Cloutier, Abby Jordan, Dean Neal

I. Public Comment - None

II. Outdoor Learning Opportunities - Our schools are taking advantage of many outdoor learning opportunities. Some have added outdoor classrooms, trails, gardens, and use traditional areas such as playgrounds, playing fields and the new track.

We have other larger areas such as Mullens Woods, Nokomis Pond and the Project Adventure/Outdoor Education Ropes course. Mullens Woods is a 117 acre tract of land in Newport that the Nature Conservatory of the Pine Tree State deeded to the District in 2007. The property has many species of trees and we intend to create trails for cross country skiing, hiking, and educational projects.

We have another round of CRF funds which hopefully can support an amphitheater, a pavilion and more gardens. The funds come with the same restrictions to be unbudgeted, Covid-19 related and spent by December 30th 2020. Teachers have also worked on connecting students to the out-of-doors through the curriculum, writing about, moving within, and attending to the natural environment around them. We have a tremendous amount of activity going on outside and we want to keep that going as long as we can.

- III. Performing Arts during Covid-19** - Mr. Hammer presented an update on music activities at Seabasticook Elementary School provided by Will Stecher. Ellen, Dean, Shane, and Abby all provided updates on what is happening at their buildings. Evelyn had previously sent to the Board a report from EDS. All performing arts teachers are doing their best under Covid conditions to bring their content to students. It takes more time, effort and creativity to provide this content area to students. The CDC/DHHS/DOE have very strict restrictions on singing, wind instruments and physical distancing that make it hard to practice and prepare for performances. They will continue to do what they can do until we get further guidance.
- IV. Other** - Board members asked about how our students were doing academically during the first few weeks of school and how things are going generally. We are struggling with some remote students. Some are doing really well, some we are not hearing from. We have done some assessment and will continue to analyze the areas that need improvement. There are some truancy letters going out and progress reports will reflect the lack of engagement. Some students legitimately have technology issues and some are just choosing not to show up. Teachers teaching in person and remote students at the same time remains a challenge. We are still working on our hybrid model along with all the other daily operations that they attend to.
- V. Future Agenda Items** - Report from Tri-County Tech, Lori and Mike will report out on some of the professional development and essential standards students and teachers are working on as well as assessment data that is available.
- VI.** The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Hammer, Superintendent