

WAITSFIELD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 16, 2011, 6:00 P.M.

Waitsfield Elementary School

Board Members Present: Eve Frankel, Todd White, Scott Kingsbury, Helen Kellogg, and Rob Williams.

WWSU and WES Staff Present: Kaiya Korb, Lee Van Dine, Sheila Rivers, and Brigid Scheffert.

Members of the Public Present: Jennifer Stella, Helen Ward, and Kelvey Wilson.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Scott Kingsbury made a motion to approve the minutes of April 11, 2011. Eve Frankel seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion:

Audience and Written Communication: None submitted.

Science Curriculum Report: The presentation covered our own science curriculum, the broader context of the curriculum throughout the WWSU, and relationship to the state and national standards. Lee Van Dine spoke to the evolution of the science curriculum from teacher led curriculum to the current, more unified curriculum aligning with the standards. The current curriculum ensures that all SU students enter middle school with comparable skills and knowledge. Sheila spoke to the need for ongoing support in the implementation phase, and the communication needed to ensure that teachers are kept up to date. The web-based VCAT tool allows teachers to log in to see the most current curriculum content. The last few years have focused on assessment. Lee Van Dine has represented Waitsfield Elementary School in this process; Taylor Hubbard and Ali Hale are now serving on the WWSU curriculum committee. The standards focus both on the content and process/inquiry skill development. Lee took the group through an in-class experiment, which is one of the unit assessments. Lee spoke to the accountability and value of tracking results in VCAT, and also to the teaching time it consumes. Next steps include a group of staff making recommendations for further growth in science for WES; these steps will be added to the action plan.

Pest Management Report: Kaiya spoke to the existing policy, which is comprehensive and informs both internal practice and the habits of external contractors. There is a pest management team in place to help make decisions in the event of a pest problem. A summary of pest sightings for the year, along with the implementation of the 2010-2011 pest management plan, occurred.

Facility Work Update: Thanks given to Scott Kingsbury for his time and expertise on the insulation bidding process. The two areas of focus for this phase are the front hall and the stage. We have \$48,000 set aside in the building reserve fund and are expecting capital expenses of \$20,000 next year, leaving a balance of \$28,000. The expectation for the insulation project is for a total cost of \$10,000, \$4,500 for the front and \$5,500 for the stage. Kaiya recommends going ahead with both those projects. Helen Ward offered insight into the value and use of wool for insulation, as pests do not like it and there is an abundance of it in the Valley. Helen Kellogg made a motion to authorize Kaiya to proceed with this bidding process and the work to be done, to a cost not to exceed \$15,000. Todd White seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Kaiya also spoke to lighting retrofits and the opportunity for a free school lighting plan with New Light state funding. There is also a program called Re-Light, which offsets the cost of replacing existing lights. These plans can work well together. Kaiya is moving ahead with a New Light plan and will be in a position to submit for a re-light offering before the October 2011 deadline.

Kaiya finally spoke about the playground update and the desire to have a more appropriate preschool play area that could be integrated into the overall playground. With staff and community input, we have put together a bid proposal and used the bid process to select a contractor to develop a playground master plan. Broadleaf was awarded the contract and is working on a plan. The design plan will cost between \$2,000-3,000. Board members raised concerns about Broadleaf playgrounds that have not made code, and want to be sure that the plans are not aspirational and difficult to be achieved within the budget. Brigid spoke to the increased liability of school playgrounds and the importance of having an audit before breaking ground. Eve spoke to the challenge of executing a playground project and urged the board to keep the focus throughout. Kaiya reiterated that Broadleaf was hired to build a plan to budget and to code, and that their contract is contingent on meeting those two criteria.

June Board Retreat Planning: The Board retreat is scheduled for June 20th. Eve spoke to the importance of setting the Board's goals and communicating them broadly for the community. This will help clarify the role and the work of the Board for the broader community. Kaiya asked the Board to reflect on the key areas of work and come together with a list of priorities for the coming year. Brigid spoke to the policy and guidance available to us as Board members as we plan our retreat. She also noted the value of a multi year plan and goal setting, over a one-year plan.

Reports:

Financial Report: Kaiya provided a financial report and noted the following changes: interest on investments shifted in a positive direction, special education costs have gone up, and we expect a fund balance between \$50,000 – \$60,000.

Principal's Report: Kaiya reported on the business of this time of year including progress on a unified report card, school improvement groups that continue to meet, working against next year's schedule and class lists. Kaiya also noted that we would celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school at the concert on the 25th of May.

Kaiya reported on the progress against the school plan in four key areas: 1) improvements in literacy assessment, especially in grades 3-6. This is a valuable tool for tracking progress and transitioning students each year. We're also looking at technology as a resource for information (non-fiction) rather than updating textbooks. 2) In math, the transition to the new program was successful and all classrooms are on schedule, if not ahead of our pacing plan. We have also added support/tutoring for students who are struggling. 3) Under school climate, the school website has improved, curriculum presentations have begun at school board meetings, and curriculum is posted for public viewing. Still ahead is work needed on consistency around homework and shared expectations. There is a sense of progress, but Kaiya is seeking additional confirmation of a true shift. Under technology, Kaiya has stipulated a minimum amount of work between each classroom teacher and Kay to ensure balanced and consistent integration of technology. Kaiya also followed up on keyboarding skills and found that our students are prepared for Harwood expectations.

Superintendent's Report: Brigid has focused recently on the hiring of employees and the accountability around hiring procedures. Kaiya's two-year contract will require a motion to be approved, including a 1.5% increase for the first year. The salary for the second year is not set. In the future, the timing of the salary conversation will be moved up to the fall so that it can be incorporated into the budgeting process. Eve Frankel made a motion to ask board chair Rob Williams to authorize the contract for Kaiya Korb on behalf of the Waitsfield Elementary School Board. Todd White seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Brigid spoke to the time and energy given to support Waterbury/Duxbury after the death of a student and the death of a parent of three students. Brigid also covered the Moretown principal role gap and will support Harwood now that Dwayne Pearson has moved to the Moretown role. Bob McNamara is also supporting Harwood now. She assured all that the search committee is committed to finding a stellar candidate and will not settle for less. Also, at the state level, there is a significant requirement for data collection that will consume resources over the summer. Finally, Act 153 is back on the table to make us think about how we will consolidate or share services. Brigid is now on the board of trustees (of the 60 superintendents) statewide and representing our district and beyond.

WWSU Executive Committee Report: The focus of the meeting was on special education and included a presentation from Donarae. Eve suggested that Donarae come and present to the WES board on the process and data. The state average of students on IEPs is 15% and our district is 13.25%. The system is well developed at drawing all reimbursements available. Up until \$50K, the costs are reimbursed at \$.50 on the dollar. Over \$50K, the costs are reimbursed at \$.90 on the dollar. Eve also noted that Warren has the lowest number of IEPs. Looking further, it appears that they are providing more services within the regular education rather than through special education. As such, they

are not getting the state reimbursement for that work. Eve stressed the value of keeping our school community apprised of shared services changes. Brigid noted that with so little clarity at the state level of Act 153, there is no value in causing alarm. As soon as a clear path emerges, she will be quick with outreach and communication.

Executive Session

Scott Kingsbury made a motion to move into executive session to discuss personnel. Eve Frankel seconded and the group went into executive session at 8:22 pm.

The board invited Brigid and Kaiya to stay for the executive session.

The board came out of executive session at 8:32. Helen Kellogg made a motion to enable Rob Williams to sign the non-union contracts to include a 2% increase. Scott Kingsbury seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Todd White made a motion to offer Emily von Trapp the preschool position and Eve Frankel seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

The board meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m. and the following meeting is set for June 20th at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Kellogg,
Clerk and Recording Secretary