

Minutes—SGC Meeting

January 11, 2013

Members Present: Meg Rosa, Kristie Staunch-White, Sarah Marshall, Nick Yaffe and Kerry Crosby

New Business

1. Katherine Appy, Chair, School Committee, and Chair, Amherst Regional Planning Board, attended the first part of our meeting to talk to us about the possible regionalization of elementary schools in Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury.
 - The meeting began with a summary of how our districts are currently structured: Amherst and Pelham share administration and are a part of Union 26. Leverett and Shutesbury have separate elementary superintendents and central offices and of Union 28. As superintendent of Amherst and Pelham elementary schools, and of the regional middle and high schools, Maria Geryk reports to three different districts.
 - Two of the major reasons for regionalization are to coordinate curriculum among the different elementary schools and middle school and to eliminate some of the inefficiency of the current system. The Superintendent has to spend a lot of time in operations because of the current structure.
 - The Town of Amherst formed a committee to explore regionalizing elementary schools; other towns did the same thing; each town has its own regionalization committee.
 - Last June, the committees formed a board which allowed them to apply for grants to explore regionalization further. Regionalization has been considered many times before but this is the first time the schools have been able to hire consultants to explore this issue more comprehensively.
 - February 2—the consultants will present their findings for all four towns; February 13-- Amherst town will hold a public forum as will each town on other dates.
 - Two different models for regionalization are being explored: K-6 model—the elementary schools would be regionalized and Maria would be superintendent of both regions; K-12 model—all schools are regionalized K-12.
 - Benefits---would cut transportation costs; would cut administrative costs; operational work for superintendent would be cut.
 - Effect on teachers—goal would be to keep teachers in the schools they would want to be in; salaries in other towns would likely come up to Amherst’s pay scales.
 - A Few years ago the state was going to force regionalization so the idea now is to be preemptive so towns can control the process.

- Meg Rosa asked if there would be administrative cuts. Answer: Probably not.
- She also asked if redistricting would result from this. Answer: Not in the current plan
- Will eventually come up for a vote to the town.
- One of the goals of the committee is to communicate to the community about what the plan is.
- Amherst Media will broadcast the Feb. 2nd meeting.

2. Safety and Security

- People still coming in through the back door—knocking and getting in even though it is locked.
- Discussed moving dumpsters to allow for parking and better safety for students being dropped off in the parking lot in the a.m. who now need to enter the building through the front door rather than the back door where students used to enter.
- Sign- out at Parent Pick up is still being worked out
- Hall duty—plan is to have two staff members in the front of the school 8:15-8:35 a.m.
- Once office staff lets someone in, they should be monitoring if the person comes to the office. Nick will remind office staff of this policy.
- Looking at the possibility of the elementary staff having someone sitting at a kiosk in the hallway.
- We discussed reiterating to parents that they shouldn't open or hold doors open for one another—common courtesy must take a backseat to safety.
- Amherst police and safety drills happening

3. We will continue our discussion of rubrics for family and community engagement—PGO has also been asked to submit a report by February 8th. We decided that we should coordinate efforts. Kristie will put out an email to both SGC and PGO members to find a time to finish the rubrics and come up with shared vision—4 to 6 representatives. Kristie will create a doodle poll targeting 4:30-6 p.m.

Future Agenda Item: Communication of Difficult Issues to Families; Late Start Communications