

PROVINCETOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Meeting of December 7, 2004 Meeting held in Annex Building

Present: Terese Nelson (Chair), Peter Grosso (Vice-Chair), Burt Wolfman (Secretary), Molly Perdue and Debra Trovato.

Others Present: Elizabeth Freeman (Student Representative) and Sheila Colburn (Recording Secretary).

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

A report was given to the Committee by Mr. Andrew Effrat and Ms. Janice Lachowetz of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Consulting Team. An overview was given as follows: the Administrative structure was discussed with regard to cost efficiency and effectiveness; with the students being first and foremost in consideration. The team was very complimentary as to the renovations of the two buildings. A review of Provincetown Administrative Structure was given out to the Committee to follow along for discussion.

The main points brought forth in the review are as follows:

- Maintain strong site-based management by the elementary and secondary school principals.
- Continue with full time principals for both schools. Continue with the dual position of Elementary School Principal/Special Education Administrator.
- Review and clarify responsibility for examining and writing state and federal grants.
- Recommends that the position of Superintendent of schools be reduced to three days per week with flexibility for out of district meetings as required.
- Clear expectations of the role and responsibilities of the School Superintendent and the School Committee should be defined and protocols established.
- Teamwork, mutual lines of communications to promote goals, objectives and visions. Workshops a must.
- Move Central Office staff from the Annex to VMES which has available space. This would cut costs on building utilization, overhead and operations.
- Combine classes, review appropriate models of instruction as recommended by the school principal and superintendent. Team teaching and interdisciplinary studies are examples of effective instruction in conjunction with professional development.
- Investigate virtual classroom and distance learning opportunities.
- Review overall special education program costs and student enrollment.
- Project teacher/staff retirements.
- Review the current policy for Early Childhood Program and admission. Strengthen and promote such program.
- Explore all areas of school/community/business partnerships in order to gain insight and support for the two community schools. Promote and showcase staff/student talents at every opportunity, and open the schools to community functions.
- Provide service orientation for all staff in order to maintain positive relationships with the public.
- Consider regionalization discussions/proposals for grades 7-12 with the Town of Truro.
- Discuss next phase of the UMass study.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their comprehensive report and giving the Committee many things to think about. It was stressed that the Committee's goal is to improve the Provincetown School District.

Molly Perdue agreed that change is difficult and often times necessary. She asked about designated professional days for staff and how to arrange such days. It was suggested that Saturdays are a possibility and have worked well. It gives the staff an entire day to work on their agenda. Grants can be written for stipends for staff members who attend, lunch can be supplied. It can be advantageous to have PreK-12 staff.

It was stated that our small size is an enormous virtue. Downsizing must be done wisely for the good of the entire system. Peter Grosso raised the question of how the flexibility for the Superintendent should be arranged. It was suggested to absorb as much in the three days as possible but be flexible as far as changing days for meetings. Occasionally an extra

day may be needed. The administrative downsizing will have minimal effect on classroom and students. The school principals are more accountable and more hands-on with students.

Debra Trovato asked about combining a three day superintendent position with another position to make it a full time possibility. The problem of accountability was discussed and whether or not a candidate would want two different jobs. Burt Wolfman brought up the accountability of the principals: how does the Committee access? What is the evaluation process? He was informed that the superintendent evaluates the principals, provides leadership as the principals work on goals in close contact with them. The School Committee evaluates the superintendent. The cooperative plan should relate to priorities.

Burt Wolfman also asked about how to set wheels in motion for change. A plan to drive staff that is not too ambitious was suggested with small steps to build on. Do not impose upon people until it is necessary for the principal/superintendent to take charge.

The Chair asked what the next step should be. Digest what has been discussed and decide what to challenge immediately and what is to follow. Example: work toward moving the administrative offices.

Peter Grosso questions when are the numbers too small. The answer was to have an education plan to continue to best plan for students. Children are not numbers-they are humans with specific needs.

Opening up the schools for programs such as adult education, makes the community feel like the buildings are also there for them and helps to fund school programs for students.

It was also suggested that the Committee access why and where the district is losing students. Make efforts to attract possible students. Everything will not come together overnight and the staff needs to build off each others strengths to strengthen the district.

Elizabeth Freeman felt the suggestions were good to sustain the district. She would feel very sad if the school closed.

Different scheduling for different types of classes would be interesting to her. She suggested the Committee talk to students in different grade levels to hear what they have to say about classes they take and scheduling.

CLOSING STATEMENTS:

The Chair introduced others present at the meeting.

Some statements made by those present:

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

It starts with people in buildings who will implement changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23PM.

These minutes were approved by a vote of the Provincetown School Committee at their meeting on _____, 20_____.

Respectfully Submitted,

School Committee Signature

Title

Sheila M. Colburn, Recording Secretary

Minutes accepted as printed January 11, 2005