



# The Pomfret School

CHALLENGING THE MIND ★ ENCOURAGING THE HEART

## **Board of Directors Monthly meeting - DRAFT Monday, November 17, 2014 PM, The Pomfret School**

**Present: Tom McKone, Greg Greene, Bob Coates, Jody Eaton, Rob Hansen, Richard Seaman  
– Director of Finance and Operations**

### **I. Call to Order 5:02 pm**

#### **II. Visitors:**

Sarah Woodhead, Barb Leonard, Jenny Hewitt, Elaine Leibly, Bridgewater Village School Board – Greg Jenne, Seth Shaw, and Justin Shipman

Richard Seaman reviewed TPS budget – 1<sup>st</sup> draft

The Pomfret School board and Bridgewater Village School board met to explore a first step toward a more comprehensive change concerning consolidation. The first step needs to address the immediate needs of Bridgewater and Pomfret, while maintaining the assets that will be valuable in the future for sustaining a quality education system for WCSU schools. Discussed were enrollment projections, staffing and programming, the financial impact, the governance structure, and implications for the future.

#### **III. Correspondence:**

A letter was received from the Woodstock Community Food Shelf thanking The Pomfret School Leadership Team for their \$36 donation to the Thanksgiving Project. Sarah Woodhead, our long-time fifth grade teacher, handed in and read to the board her resignation letter. She shared her thoughts on spending the past 28 years teaching in Pomfret, from Hewittville to The Pomfret School. She will resign at the end of this current school year. We are deeply appreciative of her dedication, values, support, and drive.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes: October 20, 2014**

Moved: Greg Greene

Seconded: Bob Coates

#### **V. Reports**

##### **Superintendent – Alice Worth – October 2014**

**Annual VT School Boards Association and Vermont Superintendents Association Annual Conference:** I attended the joint VSBA and VSA fall conference October 30 and 31 held at Lake Morey. The conference was excellent this year and provided information and opportunities for conversation on

challenging educational issues. Keynote speaker Dr. Bill Daggett, President of the international Center for Leadership in Education set the stage with a talk on *Leadership During Challenging Times*. Bill noted national and Vermont demographic changes that require us to do things differently including examining conditions such as school size and student teacher ratios. He clearly painted a picture of our changing world and what is needed by students in curriculum and technology access in order to fully acquire the skills, knowledge, dispositions and relationships they need to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a later workshop Bill focused on what superintendents and board members need to do at the organizational, instructional and teaching levels to transition schools from a 20<sup>th</sup> century system to one needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup>. I believe that much of what the leadership in WCSU is focusing on presently, including looking at the sustainability of our small schools; developing administrators as educational leaders; establishing a system and practice of teacher supervision; ensuring a cohesive K-12 literacy and mathematics program; and providing intervention and support for students in need, creates the conditions needed for students to succeed. Looking through Dr. Daggett's lens, one area where we need more dedicated focus and resources to be in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context is in the technology arena. Other content at the conference included a presentation by Nicole Mace from the VSBA who presented "The Challenge We Face" documenting statewide trends relative to costs per student, property tax rates and persistent inequities in student achievement that create challenges for boards and communities. The conference also had a number of opportunities to hear updates on collective bargaining and health care reform.

**Challenges to FY16 budget development:** At the conference I was reminded of the change to the excess spending threshold and its potential impact on this year's budget development process. Last spring the Senate and House agreed on a significant change to how the excess spending threshold is calculated beginning in FY16. The hope is that this change will suppress high spending in the state. The new formula, which has the threshold tied to FY14 spending and increased annually by inflation, as determined by the New England Economic Project price index is expected to result in a lower threshold. As we face increased costs and declining enrollment, the excess spending penalty will hit more districts, increasing tax rates in those towns.

**News in the WCSU office:** Amanda Smith has given notice as she wishes to return to Okemo Mountain Resort in order to be closer to home and her young children. Mandy has done a fantastic job, providing a positive first face to WCSU, bringing needed organizational skills to the work, managing a myriad of tasks with ease and serving a broad constituency. She has been efficient, calm and thoughtful and has been a tremendous addition to our team. She will be greatly missed.

Beginning November 11<sup>th</sup> we welcome Rayna Bishop to the team and know Rayna will serve WCSU and member schools as well as she has served Reading Elementary for the last seven years. Rayna is a highly skilled professional and a real team player. We are delighted to have her join us.

**Administrative Team:** I want to remind Board members of the three goals adopted by the Administrative Team this year and suggest that these become a regular topic of discussion at the local Board meetings. These are not new goals but rather build on the work we have been dedicated to for the last three years:

1. Implement the WCSU Supervision and Evaluation System to inform, analyze and support the growth of professional practice throughout the supervisory union.
2. Continue to gather, review and use data for decision-making.
3. Work more closely together on common initiatives and support our Boards to be focused on our core values of unity and cohesiveness around educational initiatives.

During Administrative walk-throughs, Principals are evaluating each teacher's progress on the goals they each established last spring as well as their general practice related to our Danielson Framework. They are also looking for common areas of need across the school that might result in more focused professional development at the building level. As discussed at our October meeting, each K-6 school has baseline data on student's proficiency in reading. You might ask your Principals about your student's achievement and needs. This data, along with the January data and other WCSU fall and winter common assessment data will be used again for targeting our use of Title I funds and other grants.

**Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction:** We recently convened a K-12 mathematics leadership group to plan continued attention to K-12 curriculum and instruction and to coordinate professional development. Julie Conrad will again be working with the 7-12 mathematics teachers and Luke with the K-6 teachers in what we plan as a coordinated effort. I am encouraging a 7-12 math department at WUHS/MS to ensure we maximize our ability to serve the diverse needs in that building. We have a talented group of teachers there who can benefit professionally from the collaboration and can better meet the needs of students.

#### **Student Support Services:**

Planning for Summer Soak 2015 has begun in earnest. An advisory group of parents, teachers, students and community based programs met under Sherry's leadership at the end of September to review the successes and needs from the 2014 program. One of the first decisions made was to identify program dates, which for 2015 will begin on June 29<sup>th</sup> and end on July 24<sup>th</sup>. The internal committee has worked to finalize a budget for the program and to identify all potential costs. Two grant requests were submitted and one commitment of \$10,000.00 with a potential of an additional \$10,000. Has been received from the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation. Many thanks to Sherry for writing the request for these funds.

The WCSU Health and Wellness group met on two occasions since the start of the year. This team includes school counselors, nurses, health teachers and others. The goal of the group is to develop a district wide Health and Wellness mission that will act as a guidepost for decisions regarding use of resources and programming and will serve as a springboard for action panning around the use of resources. The group reviewed the Assets Survey and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to identify key areas of need.

Special Educators completed a survey of needs last June, which they reviewed in October to identify action steps and professional development. Teachers wish to continue in their development of Common Core Individual Education Plans and diagnostic teaching.

## **Technology:**

As the budget preparations begin for 2015-16 the need for two essential processes has emerged. The first essential process is the maintenance of an SU wide inventory of technology. This technology inventory will allow us to have a clear understanding of the technology we have in our school buildings before we begin the process of buying new equipment. The inventory will help us identify equipment that needs to be replaced, and may allow us to achieve lower prices through volume purchasing. Additionally, an inventory will help fulfill our compliance requirements of the Federal legislation outlined in 2 CFR Chapter II, Part 200, et. al. Lastly, the technology inventory will help us ensure that our schools have the computers and devices necessary to participate in the SBAC testing this spring.

The second essential process is to collaboratively create a basic vision for how technology can be used in the school before budgeting for specific equipment. Instead of asking the question “What technology do we want?” we are reframing the question to become “What do we want our students and staff to be able to do with technology?” By thinking about the purposes we want to achieve, we free ourselves up to consider different types of equipment that may be more cost effective, efficient, or educationally rich. The technology marketplace is becoming increasingly fragmented, with users having different devices for different purposes. By focusing on what we want this technology to do we can better navigate this fragmented marketplace.

## **Principal – Tom McKone**

We had 100% parent participation in our parent/teacher conferences this month. Sarah Woodhead will be the initial representative for the New Generation Science Standards. Jenny Hewill will take over next year as the long-term representative. On Thursday, November 20, we will be having a lock down drill at school. Next month, Jenny Hewitt will be doing an overview for the board concerning the Literacy Initiative.

## **Teacher – Rob Hansen**

We had our delicious Harvest Luncheon last week. Thank you to Jenny Hewitt, Sarah Woodhead, and their classes for hosting and cooking. Thank you to K-2 for leading our sing-along! Our Friday morning assemblies will be back in action in January. Barb Leonard, Jen Mayo, and Jenn Gubbins are doing a fantastic job in the K-2 classrooms. The Horizons program is doing very well this year. Oona Tracy and Riley Shepard took a photo of a Super Nova remnant, the Veil Nebula. Rob Hansen will be presenting at Park for Every Classroom (PEC) soon. He will be talking about how to create Professional Development for teachers and park staff along the East Coast. Currently there are eight Park for Every Classroom (PEC) pilot teams in the Northeast. These parks developed case studies to reflect their experience in the program and provide insight for people interested in applying this strategic model to their own park. TPS Holiday concert will be on December 11.

**VI. Action/Discussion**

**Motion to regretfully accept Sarah Woodhead's resignation and thank her for her 28 years of service to our school and our community**

Moved: Greg Greene

Seconded: Bob Coates

**VII. Adjournment at 7:20 PM**

**VIII. Upcoming Meeting:**

Pomfret School Board Meeting: Monday, December 15, 2014, 6:00 PM @ The Pomfret School

WCSU Meeting: Monday, December 8, 2014, 6:00 PM @ WCSU Conference Room