

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2009

Committee members present: W. Sander, P. Ingvaldstad, D. Osborn, D. Baker, J. Eisenhardt, D. Whitcomb, S. Bernath, J. Prescott. Others: D. Taylor, C. Hindes, B. Schaffer.

The meeting started at 5:34.

It was agreed that W. Sander would continue to chair the committee.

D. Taylor distributed NECAP information from the LNSU board meeting for those who hadn't been there, and discussed it. By 2014, schools are supposed to be 100% proficient. Many people have thought the system was flawed because of those goals. D. Taylor asked S. Bernath and J. Prescott what it was like to take the NECAP. S. Bernath said it was long and drawn out, and many kids got tired of it and stopped trying their hardest before it was over. She and J. Prescott said NECAPs included material from classes not all students would have taken, such as earth science, physics, or advanced math classes. D. Taylor said some schools try to have a comprehensive science class in 8th or 9th grade that covers basics of all areas of science. D. Taylor said NECAP performance in high school depends on a combination of factors, including motivation. It is hard for some students to understand why it is important to take those tests. D. Taylor asked S. Bernath and J. Prescott how the SAT compared to the NECAP. S. Bernath said she'll try harder on the SAT because it affects her personally. (*B. Schaffer arrived at 5:45.*) W. Sander asked, how helpful were the SAT practice classes here? S. Bernath said they were helpful. J. Prescott said maybe there should have been more. B. Schaffer said there is a class in development on how to deal with the rigors of college. (*D. Whitcomb arrived at 5:47.*) D. Osborn asked S. Bernath and J. Prescott if there are any options that might motivate them more to do well on the NECAP, for instance if the NECAP counted as a grade on the report card, or were mentioned in college applications. S. Bernath said if results counted for her, she would take it more seriously. W. Sander asked, what if the consequences for the school were better explained? S. Bernath said that would make her take it more seriously, too. B. Schaffer said this year he will give a presentation to students that is focused more on results. He and his staff have gone over the NECAP in professional development, and have realigned the curriculum. He will talk with students about possible solutions.

W. Sander said the goal of 100% proficiency assumes we have time to work with the same group of students, but what if new students arrive from other countries, etc.? B. Schaffer said this is a test to assess students' minimum competencies. Right now, LUHS requires 24 Carnegie units for graduation. They are working on adding a parallel process, the GEM, where students would need to show proficiency in some other way, such as through a score of proficient or higher on the NECAP, or minimum SAT scores. A school in Rhode Island uses online portfolios.

D. Taylor said a high school completion bill is being considered in the VT House. It would set a goal of 0 dropouts by 2020, and would require evaluation of 6th graders to ensure students are not below grade level and are getting enough credits, as well as putting in place targeted interventions. W. Sander said we have done pioneering work here. C. Hindes agreed. He said this is the first year we have discussed NECAP outcomes SU-wide. Results show where we need to make some adjustments in curriculum and instruction, in math particularly.

D. Baker asked, are there any signs from Montpelier that they might start looking at elementary schools? D. Taylor said there will be requirements for schools that didn't meet AYP. They have to show they have a system of curriculum and assessment. If we look at NECAP results, we see that students do better overall at the elementary level. MS and HS students don't do as well, particularly in math. In math, students' skills start to decline in 5th and 6th grade. We will look at curriculum based on this. D. Osborn said she guesses that at the secondary level, NECAP data becomes school-wide data, but results are looked at more individually at the elementary level. She suspects tracking particular students doesn't happen as much in MS and HS as in elementary school. D. Taylor said the test is designed for program feedback, but in elementary schools there have been attempts to conduct classroom assessments. Elementary school is structured differently, and elementary schools have implemented a more comprehensive set of assessments. B. Schaffer and C. Hindes are examining how we respond when students are not achieving at grade level.

B. Schaffer said relevance is important to performance on assessments. He recently met with C. Hindes and his administrative team, and they listed all the MS and HS alternative programs and discussed what is missing. Current programs include Discovery (starts in MS but can continue into HS), Access (an alternative placement program), Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Ed Options (an online program for students who are posing behavioral difficulties or need credit recovery), Learning Together and Jump Start (available to students at risk or pregnant, ASAP (not many have gone through it – it involves class and work at Stowe), ABE, Job Corps, personal learning plans (students design their own curriculum), the pre-tech program, and summer school (used primarily for credit recovery, but now also including a transitional component for students who need extra support transitioning.) What is missing is preparation for the rigors of HS. C. Hindes said to address this for next fall, LUMS is offering (for 8th graders who are not taking HS classes) a 6-week prep course in HS requirements – note taking, how to address assignments, etc. B. Schaffer said there is ongoing conversation about improving transitions. They are starting to notice a gender gap in achievement, with females outperforming and more behavioral referrals for males. There is a segment of males who need a hook. D. Osborn asked about increasing the percentage of students who have an alternative, if all the current alternatives are for the same small segment of the population. B. Schaffer said the majority of alternative programs are available for freshmen on up.

W. Sander asked, do we have any idea how many students get in trouble because they didn't get the basic skills in the elementary grades? C. Hindes said if students aren't up to grade level by the end of 2nd grade, they're likely to have trouble. B. Schaffer said there's a pattern, and it generally happens before HS. There are many variables affecting whether it happens at the MS or elementary level. He agrees with C. Hindes about looking where skill attainment happens in the early grades. If we are seeing difficulties there, it is an indicator to administrators and boards that we need to pay attention to programs. D. Osborn said the group she feels strongly about is the group that are meeting standards in elementary school and then not after that. She thinks that's the group to focus on. B. Schaffer said that's what he is attempting to do with the GEM – tie in relevance. D. Taylor said we can learn from the elementary model of continuous monitoring of progress. LNSU schools are moving toward that more. C. Hindes said in MS, grades more often reflect engagement than what kids know. P. Ingvaldstad asked, how do we get relevance tied to the GEM? W. Sander suggested continuing with that discussion at the next meeting. He told B. Schaffer he would also like more info on the current dropout track this year.

The meeting ended at 6:18.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths