

CABOT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 1, 2012

Present: Board members: Chris Tormey, Paul Stecker, Sharon O'Connor, Jackie Folsom. Absent Ry Hoffman. Administration: Nancy Thomas, Superintendent; Karen Stewart, Principal; Pat Johnson Knoerl, Curriculum Director.

Call to order: The regular meeting of the Cabot School Board meeting was called to order at 6:05 on 10/1/2012 in Cabot School Library by Chris Tormey, Chair

Consent Agenda

The minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

Reports

Superintendent Report: Nancy discussed the application proficiency based learning, and critical thinking then turned the discussion over to Brian Boyes, Cabot Music Teacher. Discussed was the Rowland Foundation Conference that several teachers and 3 students attended. The discussion was centered on the positive track Cabot School is on with the transformation towards a more proficiency based system. Critical thinking, and curiosity is becoming the norm, it was explained that the school is not talking about throwing out the curriculum. A senior project at a Texas school was used as a model where students were required to gain expertise, and model that by giving back to the community as well as a presentation. Holding the kids to higher rigor and excellence as the presentation included a 20 page thesis as well as the project they worked on. Those same students also had to answer questions from staff members and experts in their field, showing that the rigor was there and the expectations got higher. Cabot School is on track with implementing this with digital portfolios being created to demonstrate the proficiency. Nancy shared the Vermont framework for quality education created by the Vermont Superintendent's Association and approved by the State Board of Education. Business community members and other education organizations participated in the creation of the framework. A comment was made that in 2005 Cabot School won business round table excellence of education. The question was posed: how are we helping the kids get to where they need to be academically, and to be civically and globally responsible. The use of classroom coaching, educators teaching college writing, moving to a less traditional structuring for the class are all pieces of the project-based learning curriculum. Increasing the pathways and choices for learning since these practices of proficiency, project based assessment and blended learning are being sought after by colleges. We are able to do this with our collaboration with Barre Tech and the SEED program. We also have school choice with 9 students from a variety of schools choosing to come to Cabot. The June term for FY12 was definitely a model of anytime, anywhere learning with the mathematics, movement and community engagement that were applied to the Scottish Dancing over several states. It was one of many opportunities that June term gave the students to succeed in real world application of those skills.

Principal Report: A short presentation from 2 students in the Humanities class demonstrated the knowledge they gained while studying the French Revolution. The presentation was shown as a snapshot for one way a couple of students chose to demonstrate the knowledge they acquired researching the French Revolution. The schedule revision was discussed in regards to the Foreign language classes, advisory period and "x" block time. The direct instruction time for Foreign Language was increased to every day, while the advisory time will now be done once a week in a large block of time. The "x" block portion of the day is either for individual studies or for call backs to a teacher.

Principal Report

Please see attached

Nancy reminded the Board that whenever an organization engages in major changes, there is a predictable "implementation dip" when people engaged in the process feel frustrated and discouraged. The Board tried to identify several themes. It was noted that public surveys were only responded to by about 30%. There was discussion about staff morale, it should be used as a strength, what can you fix and not fix, but be able to work through. It was noted that the morale was low in May. Communication was noted as an issue for both staff and parents. There are now many more supports in place; Principals round table, PBIS intervention, professional development committee, as there is a need to pull the whole campus together, more unified. Factors for low morale appear to be money, facilities in disrepair, small teams needing to become one cohesive team. However, Staff feeling in May like they are not being recognized for work. More of a voice would help with morale and Karen reports that many things in place already this year to help with that. There was discussion of regular check in for teachers to know how they are feeling what's working for them. Reminder the surveys were done in May, and this is may not be how the staff is feeling now.

Foreign Language Schedule was reworked to include daily class time with time shaved off every class to accommodate for more direct instruction. The X block slot is being used for personal projects, online courses or call backs to a teacher.

Executive Session: none

Future Agenda Items: Green Mtn Star indicators, Common Core standards and the Smarter Balanced assessments, Visioning for the future, Facility Issues

The Board adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Future Meetings:

- Cabot Facility Committee Meeting: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 in the school library
- Cabot School Board: Monday, October 15, 2012 in the school library
- Washington Northeast Supervisory Union Board: Thursday, October 18, 2012, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Cabot School