

WVSS SBIT Minutes
October 16,2006
4:30 PM

Members in attendance: Ginny Brown, Tia Dudda, Marika Heughins, Kathy Dreher, Sue Jones, John McNally, Sam Agnello

Members absent: Jim Taylor, Claudia Albert

Visitors Present: Jeannie D'Onoto, Hannah Stewart, Elizabeth Ruela

4:36 the meeting was called to order

Kathy thanked Sam for his time and the welcoming tone he set for both parents and teachers to participate in both the September Regular SBIT meeting and the October Special Meeting during discussions regarding the proposed principal assignments.

The June 12 2006 minutes were approved with one grammatical error fixed.

The September 18 2006 minutes were approved with typo changes.

The October 5 2006 Special Meeting minutes were approved.

SBIT Reports:

SBIT reports are online, this includes unapproved as well as approved minutes. Tia Dudda will report on DMS and WBSS, Marika Heughins will report on MMS and PMS, Sue Jones will report on SHS

BOE Report:

Sam asked our preference in hearing actions on all schools or just WVSS. Kathy stated that we would like to hear news based on budget information and perhaps a summary of major information.

Terri Jordan, principal at WBSS asked for a set of 24 palm pilots for one class, as SEF has granted the funds for another class. The students will be using the palm pilots for organizational purposes, word and excel documents and presentations. The teachers will sign the palm pilots out for use by all the fourth grade classes. They will have key boards and software.

Regarding SHS, NEASC report on school improvement was 57 pages. The board received a 7 page summary from Dr. Murphy. Thirty-nine recommendations were made, Dr. Murphy will be reviewing all of them.

Boiler replacement at WBSS is underway.

New fire alarms at PMS have been installed.

Irrigation system for the athletic fields at the High School has been completed.

SBIT Goals

Kathy spoke about the bylaws of the BOE. She pointed out the role of the SBIT as outlined in the bylaws.

Sam: One roles of the SBIT used to be that the SBIT would make recommendations concerning the budget regarding specific school needs. However, this role has been diminished. He stated the BOE will be reviewing these bylaws and will also perform a self-evaluation that will include input from SBIT's in the near future. He also stated that there has been a subcommittee set up within the BOE that will hold some special meetings for parents to listen to proposals and voice concerns and opinions regarding the budget while the BOE is working on the budget prior to the budget being presented to the public.

Regarding our Proposed SBIT Goals, Kathy called for us to add to our SBIT goals: review delineation of responsibilities between BOE and SBITs & make recommendations to the board as an SBIT.

Change #3 (add staff and community)

Sue Jones made a motion to approve the goals. John McNally seconded the motion.

The approved SBIT goals for 2006-07 are as follows:

- 1) Continue to review the Parent Compact
- 2) Increase two-way communication with parents
 - a) Provide information about SBIT activities through a monthly SBIT newsletter distributed to parents with the school newsletter once a month
 - b) Provide opportunities for parent feedback through surveys
- 3) Make budget information available to parents, staff and community
- 4) Assess Celebrating Children Programs
- 5) Review and revise new WVSS Handbook
- 6) Review Board of Education bylaws regarding the delineation of responsibilities between the Board of Education and School Based Improvement teams and make recommendations to the BOE from the WVSS SBIT.

Old Business:

Re-cap of summer SBIT "retreat"

West Vine SBIT Retreat

Date: August 23th, 2006, 4:30-6:30 PM

Location: Jim Taylor's Home

Attendees: Jim Taylor, Kathy Dreher, Sue Jones, Ginny Brown, Ed Haberek, John McNally, Claudia Albert, Marika Heughins

The objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for all members to get to know each other in a more relaxed setting and to set expectations for the upcoming school year

Discussion topics included:

- Status of West Vine Handbook
 - Status of back to school night, math night & reading night & the expectations of parents
 - Establishing an objective to increase voter turnout and measuring our productivity thru the number of new voters who have registered thru one of the West vine events.
 - Impact of various civic (PAC) groups & West Vine affiliated groups (PTO & SBIT) re: annual budget process
 - Developing a Survey to be distributed mid-year
- Meeting ended with a snack & more positive discussion & team building.

Discussion of voter registration tables at upcoming events:

John McNally would be willing to try to get volunteers to man the tables at school functions. We discussed having manned versus non-manned tables. Marika pointed out that it would be more effective if there was a person available to answer questions. Putting the table out during parent-teacher conferences was discussed. John said he would organize this.

Reading Nights and Writing Nights:

The district is now planning a reading night. There is concern that there may be too many similar events. The attendance may be compromised if there are too many events. How do we get people to go to the event at the high school? (district event) Sue explained her experience at the recent district math night. She felt it was very well presented, yet the parent turnout was disappointing. Marika and Kathy stated that it may be a childcare issue. Kathy stated that getting the Honor Society to provide childcare and getting a storyteller might help. Marika stated that marketing of the event is important. Ginny pointed out that it was effective when the children wrote invitations to their family asking them to attend.

It was discussed and decided that the role of our SBIT should be to support the district efforts to inform parents about the curriculum. This includes math, reading and writing nights. We do not wish to inundate parents with too many curriculum nights, so we will do everything in our effort to support the district curriculum nights and back off on having these nights at WVSS.

Our next reading night could be Stop Drop and Read in conjunction with the book fair, since we have already made plans with our PTO. Money from our PTO has been budgeted for the upcoming reading night and we could use it to buy books for use at the district reading night.

2006-2007 calendar of events:

For inclusion in the student handbook, the parents can now see when we are planning assemblies or programs. This information is on our school website.

How to Plan an Event:

A hand out outlining the steps involved in planning an event, including contacting the press was given to SBIT members by Ginny. This document was given to teachers to be included in their staff handbook.

New Business:

Budget:

Staffing proposal has not been done yet. It is based solely on numbers of students. We should begin to brainstorm ideas for consideration.

Marika Heughins and Tia Dudda brought a list of concerns from the teachers at WVSS. These concerns included:

Diminished role of paraprofessionals in the classroom is concerning teachers. They are feeling:

- There is no support for students who are performing either above or below expectations.
- Teaching to the “middle” is occurring.
- There is no support for students who are new to Stonington, or who miss extended time in the classroom due to illness or family vacation.
- The effectiveness of small group instruction is being compromised without a trained paraprofessional to assist the rest of the class during reading and writing workshop.
- The math program is designed to revisit concepts throughout the year. Each time we begin a new unit, it is assumed that the students have been exposed to various concepts. These concepts include math facts, 100 chart manipulation etc. Paraprofessionals used to assist with students who were new to Stonington or students who needed remedial assistance. Without this assistance, some students are struggling to become proficient.

Although the teachers are adapting to the lack of paraprofessional support, there is concern that the growth in student achievement that we have seen in the past few years will soon be compromised.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm