

**February 6, 2020  
Session Notes**

**Updates Pertinent to Our Work**

- The Governor of Vermont and the Commissioner of Education are confirmed for a visit on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The group agrees that extending an invitation to the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education is wise, as is opening the session to Steering Committee members. It will be during the day – specific time to be determined. The PowerPoint presentation created for use at the district annual meetings will be introduced at the February 24<sup>th</sup> session.
- Bruce and Karen were interviewed by Sasha Tracy, a grant reviewer from the Tillotson Fund. She is a school board member in a different district and understood the need for off-cycle fund access if the grant is awarded. She also initiated a call to Carole and during it, expressed her enthusiasm for the exploration.
- The increasing number of students who are enrolling in classes and programs that take them to other districts is exciting and rewarding. Capturing their stories will be an important part of the communications plan – why they find it worth doing, what they are gaining from it, etc.
- Pittsburg and Colebrook settled the teachers’ contract and it addresses dual enrollment – another incremental step in the process we are cultivating.

**Examining Our Starting Point Assumptions and Identifying Next Steps – Facilities Needs and Cost Projections**

- Since Black River Design presented their findings at the last meeting, much discussion has ensued about their “soft financial estimates” and how the various districts prioritize building upkeep (capital expenditures/budgeting) and student learning costs. The prevailing perspective is that Canaan emphasizes student learning and tends to make that the top priority while making building upgrades and related maintenance a lower priority. Colebrook, Pittsburg and Stewartstown place greater emphasis on their infrastructure. Reaching agreement on a philosophy and shared quality standards is important to the collaboration.
- From the beginning, the following principles have guided the group –
  - Students first
  - Funding, second – an important consideration, but not more important than ALL students in the region
  - No new roofs, because existing building capacity is sufficient to meet anticipated need if properly maintained and utilized.

The group’s first preference is to continue to honor these principles going forward. There is also a need for Canaan as a district/community to own the investment needed to bring its buildings up to the standards of the other districts. All are clear that comparable quality does not mean identical in features and structure.

- Acknowledging that Canaan voters are considering a one-million-dollar bond to begin addressing a needed roof repair and ADA accessible issues, along with a few other needed improvements (see handout for cost estimates and best-guess priorities created by Karen), the group’s next steps are:
  1. To form a sub-group (David/ Pittsburg (point person); Sally/Colebrook; Laurent/Canaan; Phil/Stewartstown; Mike/Clarksville) to create quality standards

for use going forward for facilities- related matters. Initially, this can help guide Canaan in needed investments and build credibility across communities for what can be expected now and in the future.

2. Begin to educate the Canaan voters about cost projections beyond the one-million-dollar bond and why their ownership of this is important to a positive starting point for a formal collaboration. (Dan/Karen)
3. Seek input from Colebrook school board members and key others about the scenario of adding on in Colebrook – this is to ensure a back-up plan scenario in case Canaan voters are not in favor of needed upgrades. (Brian)

The Steering Committee's first preference to have the high school/CTE in Canaan, with the proviso that the above-outlined issues can be favorably resolved.

- The State of New Hampshire reintroduced building aid to the state budget. This could be a future funding source.

### **Keeping the Wider Community Informed of the Work -Annual Meeting Presentation**

- Agreement was reached that as Chair, Kyle will present at each annual meeting. In order to adequately prepare all board chairs for questions that can be reasonably anticipated at the meetings, a "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) document with talking points will be created, along with a standardized presentation to support Kyle's role. (Dan/Brian/Kyle). The presentation and FAQ documents will be circulated to all Steering Committee members for review and suggested edits by February 15<sup>th</sup>. All input should be shared with Dan, Brian and Kyle by February 21<sup>st</sup> so that it can be introduced at the governor's visit on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Curriculum Future Projects Overview**

- The curriculum sub-group is gathering information from teachers in the various subject matters. See handout – an example of what is being gathered (Math Staff is the title of the handout). All committee members are asked to review the document and provide input about the questions posed to teachers. Are they the "right" questions? What is missing? Input should be sent to Bruce by February 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **Sub-Group Session Notes February 25, 2020**

### **Attendees**

Kyle, Mike, Sharon (partial), Dan, Brian, Chris, Phil and Carole, facilitator

- The session was convened to address recent decisions by Canaan to utilize a CT River Interstate Committee report for its own use without consulting committee members, along with other, related decisions (sharing the report with Canaan board members without notice or approval by the committee when the committee had not had an opportunity to review and discuss it; putting forth a bond to pay for construction outlined in the report without notice; sharing the report with the press without notifying committee members after explicitly committing to do so; delegitimizing the report publicly and thereby affecting public perceptions of the collaboration's efforts).

The above-outlined events are not in dispute. Canaan representative Dan was unapologetic for these decisions.

- o The following protocols that were agreed-upon by attendees will be reviewed with committee members at the March meeting and the intent is to adopt them during the session:
  - The role of the committee facilitator extends beyond establishing agendas, facilitating meetings and generating session notes. She is to be consulted on decisions related to information release, use of committee resources and all matters involving committee strategies.
  - The chair is the sole point of information dissemination. All information requests, including interviews, will be handled by the chair and matters of this nature should be referred to him. No information will be disseminated beyond the committee without the chair's knowledge and agreement.
  - The superintendents are in a supporting capacity – making no decisions. They will provide information, make introductions and generally ensure the committee has the information it needs to make informed decisions. When asked, they will provide recommendations.
- The visit by the education commissioners and Vermont governor went well. They were provided an overview of the committee's work that was based upon what will be shared at each community's annual meeting.
  - o Vermont will not be able to provide financial support for building-related projects for the foreseeable future.
  - o New Hampshire is eager to receive a summary overview of building-related projects within the next two weeks. The probability of support is much higher in New Hampshire than Vermont.
- Each participant reports that no new programs/major building projects/ staff increases are included in the 20-21 draft school budgets.

Kyle will attend the upcoming annual meeting in each community and provide a brief verbal update about the committee's work and related timeline. Board chairs will work collaboratively with Kyle in each session to ensure questions that can be answered, are. The script of his talking points were reviewed by all. Any additional edits are due to Kyle by Thursday, the 27<sup>th</sup>, at which point he will format the document and make copies to hand out if various situations warrant it.