

October 2020 Session Notes

Updates Pertinent to Our Work

- Rob Maxwell is no longer part of the newspaper staff. He informed Brian of this. We must seek a new liaison to cover this project.
- The website is being well received. All of our session notes are posted there.

Reimagining Education – An Example of What is Possible through Consolidation

Review of the second iteration of the draft created by the guidance counselors included the following. It does not include staff costing estimates – this work will be done by Karen and Debra in the upcoming weeks and will be provided to RHR Smith for inclusion in their business model financial analysis.

What excites you about the proposed model?

- It allows our work and the education it made possible to be a model for other districts.
- The flexible schedule – more like college with some at-home sources. It also allows students to start their days later, which aligns with brain development research on when their highest performance is most likely to occur.
- The array of CTE offerings – the variety increases significantly. It also targets the skills needed in the north country in which job candidates are lacking. And it creates the potential for “a school within a school” – emphasizing arts or STEM focus, for instance.
- The personalized learning.
- Proficiency based learning – this consolidation might allow us to finally accomplish it.
- The streamlining of online learning.
- All students will be exposed to dual enrollment – not just Canaan.
- The 5-11 jump of CTE.

What questions or concerns does the example raise for you? What concerns do you anticipate it will raise for community members?

- Specializing courses for children at too early an age may pigeonhole them, cutting short their exploration and options.
- We need to be clear that CTE is also a career/college pathway – the example may not emphasize this adequately.

How can we maximize the introduction of this to community as an example of what is possible?

- Start by sharing it with the boards in October/early November. Include it in the board packets – cover it in all board meetings and again at the combined school board meeting.
- Next, post it on our website. Emphasize the ways in which it accomplishes what community has been saying they want.
- In all instances, tie it to our mission statement.
- Start to track website visits and the amount of time spent on various portions of it to determine whether the community is reading this.
- Create a summary of the document using the bolded statements within it – make it easy for community to grasp.
- Conduct student, teacher and PTA focus groups to gather input on the example.

Note: Presently, the Canaan board is only comfortable with one of the two models outlined on the website. They remain open to further learning and discussion but are currently of the mind that middle school and high school should remain separate for social emotional development and education reasons.

Business Plan Approach and Timeline Update

- A contract was finalized with RHR Smith – four of their staff are working on our project. They have been granted read-only access to the electronic financial files for each district.
- Preliminary facilities requirements and cost estimated determined pro bono by Danny Hebert will be included in the analysis. Karen, Debra, Frank, Brian, Mike and Sally will spearhead this effort and report to us in November.
- By mid-November, they will have preliminary estimates for us – by early December, they will have a finished product. Assuming conditions permit it, we will meet in person in December to review the proposal and in January, finalize a recommendation for board and community consideration.

Formulating Articles of Agreement

- Legal representation is required for Vermont and New Hampshire. The hiring of two lawyers who will work together is the path forward. While their work may not begin immediately, the following steps will be taken to ensure the work progresses efficiently and in keeping with the pace of the rest of the project:
 - Jim O’Shaunessy (New Hampshire) and Paul Guliani (Vermont) will provide cost estimates and contract terms to Debra and Karen. If adequate funds exist, contracting will occur. If not, funds will be secured to complete this step.
 - NEK’s legal options must be an active consideration in what is considered and crafted, agreement-wise.
 - The work will primarily focus on crafting articles of agreement with specific education laws in mind. It will include guiding the voting process and ensuring necessary legal filings are completed.
 - There is work to be done prior to their full engagement. For instance, determining whether the interstate district is middle and high schools or all grades.
 - Next steps include clarifying work steps to be done – creating a work plan utilizing Sandra’s earlier efforts as a launch point; determining a budget; ensuring adequate funds; executing contracts.

Public Comment

- Verify that Stewartstown classroom configuration can handle the kids while meeting covid space requirements.

Note: Debra and Karen will update the Compact to reflect current committee composition. They will also update our contact list and the website to reflect this.