

## Curriculum and Philosophy Committee

5/30/06 minutes

- 1) Present- Greg Kahn, Lucy Cushman, Sally Oxnard, Kim Casey, Townley Chisholm, Kris Magnusson, Dr. Hanson, Peter Stackhouse, Karen Pelletier, Leslie Haslam, Kathy Newcomb, Tom O'Malley. Visitors: Luke Picket, John Hazekamp
- 2) Dropout prevention programs in the Exeter High School etc-
  - a) goal is to keep kids IN school. Discussed why students drop out and what we are doing to keep them in class. – usually they feel a lack of connection in school. Data shows 48 students left in the last calendar year. '04-'05 was a bad year for students leaving school.
  - b) Programs which help- new computer program called Plato which enables students to make up credits. Many students are only needing to take one class.
  - c) State standards due by 2009 for new policies on dropout prevention
- 3) Alternative routes to take
  - a) Alternative ed- this is a one room school house type of program. Data from three years- '03-'04, '04-'05, '05-'06 show 95 students, 60% male, 88% success rate. Students are there often for social reasons- drug use, emotional issues, lack of support at home. They succeed in Alt Ed due to the close relationships they have with the faculty. Alt ed is expensive and will be looking for more funding.
  - b) GBEX- Peter Stackhouse and Lucy Cushman are trustees. Students have small learning environments, individual learning plans which are project based, lots of parent involvement. 100 kids next year, 4.5 staff, adding 11<sup>th</sup> grade. 30 % special ed kids. Substance abuse issues persist. We are looking for more community volunteer mentors. An excellent young staff is key to the program.
  - c) Adult Ed- regional program, not just Exeter. This should be a last resort. 10% of the students in the adult diploma program are HS students. Some do SST by day, adult ed at night. Sp ed students struggle at Adult ed due to their reading issues. SO we are trying to educate the referrers. Only 66% of HS seniors pass the GED exam. Those without good reading and math may not pass!! At the adult diploma program, students who come and do the work will get the credits. This year there is a wave of 16 and 17 yo girls in Adult ed, with lots if family issues etc, who may not belong there.

4) Important questions which help students be successful- Does each student have an adult he/she feels safe with?? Does each student have some thing he/she is good at??

5) NWEA scores followup discussion. Mr. Stackhouse was asked by the committee to look again at the NWEA scores from, CMS in terms of goal areas and whether students made their goals. Committee members had thought from the NWEA website that this was easy data to obtain. In fact it took many hours of Mr. Stackhouse times, which we greatly appreciate. He presented us with much data. To analyze it, he divided the students by RIT scores, into the low range (to 210), the medium range (211 to 230), and the high range (231 and up). On the Bell shaped curve of scores that strikes the eye as thirds. He then looked at goals in terms of units of RIT score growth, and what % of students in each range made their predicted growth. For grade 6, 7, 8, 9, he has gorgeous graphs for fall '04 to Spring '05 and for 9/04 to 9/05, or 12/05 for language, math, and reading.

The first impression received by the committee is that the lower and mid range groups came closer to their goals than the upper group did. The next is that we did VERY well in term of percentile among school using the NWEA in terms of our students meeting their goals in MOST areas. Areas of weakness were 6 and 8 math, 8 reading, 7 to 8 math, and 7 to 8 reading.

Mr. O'Malley indicated that the NWEA were designed to evaluate the growth of each student, to diagnose the instructional needs of each student, to examine trends over time to evaluate program effectiveness, and to guide staff development activities. We are delighted that we have this data to help our decision making as a board. The committee expressed concerns that the math curriculum especially does NOT appear at this point to be enabling our top third of the students to meet their goals on the NWEA. We will look forward to more data at the end of this testing season.

6) Discussion of the High School World History course offerings. Mr. Stackhouse did not think they were changing, but some students may take the AP exam from the World History 100 course.

Respectfully submitted

Sally Oxnard MD