

New Hampshire
State Board of Education
Londergan Hall, Room 100F
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
Minutes of the January 9, 2020 Meeting

AGENDA ITEM I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the State Board of Education was convened at 9:05 AM at the State Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH. Drew Cline presided as Chairman.

Members present: Drew Cline, Chairman, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Sally Griffin, Helen Honorow, Phil Nazzaro and Ann Lane. Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education, and Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Helen Honorow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Stacy Buckley, Superintendent, Newfound, and John Freeman, Superintendent, Pittsfield, attended the meeting to jointly represent all the districts of the Lakes Region and share some highlights of programs in extended learning opportunities (ELOs), technology integration, community engagement, social emotional learning, robotics, Running Start, Makerspaces, student leadership and competency-based learning happening at schools in the region, including Alton Central School, Prospect Mountain High School, SAU 53 in the Pembroke area, Moultonborough School District, Plymouth Regional High School, Franklin School District, Newfound Area School District, Newfound Regional High School, Winnisquam Regional School District, Kingswood Regional High School, Merrimack Valley School District, Tamworth School District, Madison School District, Freedom School District, and Pittsfield School District.

Scott Wade, a resident of Charlestown, NH and a member of the Charlestown School Withdrawal Advisory Committee expressed his concerns on the recent developments in the process of Charlestown withdrawing from the Fall Mountain Regional Cooperative School District. An updated withdrawal plan was presented at the Board's December 12, 2019 meeting. At the same time, a minority report group presented information and asked questions, leading the Board to request more information in the withdrawal plan for a second time. Since that meeting, the withdrawal committee has verified the information it supplied was accurate and that the financial information in the minority report was

inaccurate. Mr. Wade hopes that if the minority has an opportunity to speak at today's meeting, it is only to provide new information or updates to the minority report.

AGENDA ITEM IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/UPDATES

A. Job Corps Student Presentations

Marcia Burns, Business Community Liaison, for Job Corps in Manchester was joined by Career Transition Specialists Lisa Robitaille and Bill Bissonnette and three students: Manny Lopez, Michelin Cruz, and Brandi Martinez.

Manny Lopez provided an overview of his experience with Job Corps in programs in electrical apprenticeship, security, and advanced training. Job Corps opened opportunities for him after going through high school not feeling challenged or able to see an end game. Once Job Corps opened the doors for him, he started running and hasn't stopped yet.

Michelin Cruz is a medical assistant at Bedford Commons OB/GYN. She hopes to be a physician one day and plans to join the Air Force this year to help fund that goal. Her cousin edged her toward Job Corps when she was working at Taco Bell and she did the medical assistant program. Job Corps provided her not only educational resources, but helped her develop socially as well.

Brandi Martinez came to Job Corps from a homeless background. She was passed through the Arizona school district with Ds. In fifth grade, she lost interest in school, but also became interested in becoming a teacher. As she grew up, she lost that dream and eventually wound up in New Hampshire on the street. Because of Job Corps, she found her dream again. She is currently enrolled at Manchester Community College (MCC) in teacher preparation and has been selected and hopes to attend a new program at Southern New Hampshire University.

Chairman Cline asked how Job Corps differs from a community college. One of the Job Corps attendees explained that it's more akin to a high school GED program, but Job Corps offers a trade as well. Students that qualify can stay at the Job Corps school and also go to college. The students range in age from 16-24 (25 for those in college). Job Corps is intended for high school students who are struggling to the point that they are not going to make it. Job Corps would like to offer dual enrollment programs so the student could remain at their original high school while at the same time be enrolled in Job Corps. Job Corps is working on a dual enrollment program with Manchester.

Chairman Cline asked what happens to the tuition money paid to a public school, such as Manchester, when a student enrolls with Job Corps. Does it transfer to Job Corps? It was explained that the student would be unenrolled from Manchester.

New Hampshire Job Corps has started what they believe is a first-in-the-nation alumni association so that graduates can stay connected. Chairman Cline noted that it is a networking opportunity as well.

Kate Cassady asked if Job Corps gives presentations to school districts. Ms. Burns responded that they do as well as some rotary club presentations.

Helen Honorow offered to get Job Corps on a Rotary Club of Nashua West meeting agenda. Ms. Honorow asked if a student has not finished high school and is 18 or older, would he or she be eligible for Job Corps? Ms. Burns responded that they would be and explained the enrollment process and noted that it is income based. Ms. Burns also noted that Job Corps offers a lot more support, especially upfront, than a community college.

In addition to the job training, Job Corps works with students on their soft skills such as promptness, workplace comportment, etc.

Manny Lopez pointed out that the courses that Job Corps offers in a given state are partially driven by the need for professions in that state.

B. Withdrawal of Charlestown from the Fall Mountain Regional School District Cooperative Update

Albert St. Pierre, Chair, Fall Mountain RSA 195 Withdrawal Study Committee, provided the Board with an update. At a January 2, 2020 meeting, there was a 5-3 vote to accept the plan, the same voting margin as the past four months. Mr. St. Pierre then reviewed the changes that have been made to the plan, including those pertaining to the makeup of the school board, the allocation formula for the remaining four towns, Charlestown's honoring the existing collective bargaining agreement, disposition of property, etc. The committee believes their plan can be discussed, voted on, and brought back to the Board after the March town meetings.

Chairman Cline pointed out that the Board's attorney looked at the plan and had no concerns with it meeting statutory requirements.

In response to a question on the provision for high school students, the plan is to work with the school district and tuition their students to Fall Mountain for high school. They have also had discussions with other surrounding schools and they all have space. In response to a question about Fall Mountain voting against approving a tuition agreement, Mr. St. Pierre said that Fall Mountain has voted to continue the discussion and he believes it will take the next year or two to work on that. Chairman Cline noted that he had received a letter that stated that because of Charlestown's backlog of owed payments to the regional school district, they want Charlestown to stay in the district, but if they leave, Fall Mountain would be

reluctant to accept a tuition agreement. Mr. St. Pierre replied that the select board met with the legal counsel and it comes back to the difficult Fall Mountain tuition formula. There were two different student attendance numbers coming from two different state sources. Charlestown put the money owed in an escrow account because they were not getting answers. As of the day before the meeting, the Charlestown attorneys had come to terms with the school district and Charlestown will send a check for \$1.83 million the Monday following the meeting.

In response to a question, an unidentified speaker asserted that Fall Mountain has the room to take the high school students; their reluctance is a factor of negotiations over the withdrawal. Mr. St. Pierre stated that Fall Mountain was originally built to house 600 students and has been expanded over the years. Currently, there are about 500 students, of which 200 are Charlestown students.

Mary Henry, a member of the minority on the withdrawal committee and Vice Chair of the Fall Mountain School Board, offered to answer questions on the tuition, but Chairman Cline said the Board had no questions. Although he acknowledged that there has been a lot of back and forth on the numbers, the Chairman did then allow Ms. Henry to address the Board.

Ms. Henry stated that the previous mentioned letter came about for a few reasons: Charlestown has been behind on their taxes for the past three years, twice a year, and they did not respond to a December letter on why they were not paying their taxes. After Fall Mountain planned to take them to court, Ms. Henry confirmed that she had heard as of the night prior that Charlestown planned to pay their taxes on the Monday following the meeting. She noted that collecting taxes is much more straightforward than collecting tuition and the latter could take months to collect. The Fall Mountain Regional School District board did defeat a motion to enter into a tuition agreement should Charlestown withdraw, because they felt that there has been no communication from Charlestown in the past.

In addition, Ms. Henry has concerns about the withdrawal plan, including that it contains items around money allocation, insurance money, etc. that could make Fall Mountain insolvent. Ms. Henry knows that the withdrawal will happen eventually, but she wants a plan that the four towns remaining can also vote on. She feels the committee is not spending the time to produce a proper plan. It is throwing the district into chaos, with people worried about losing their jobs, etc. On disposition of assets, Fall Mountain believes they need a real appraisal. They also dispute Charlestown's notion of depreciation, which they do not believe exists for school districts.

Ms. Henry then asked the Board to reject the plan and let Fall Mountain work this out. There are options for Fall Mountain around consolidation between the high school and middle school, not that they want to go down that path. They would prefer Charlestown to stay, but they cannot enter a tuition agreement where there is a possibility that the other party would not pay. It is not political.

Gordon Graham, attorney for the Fall Mountain Cooperative School District stated that withdrawal is a difficult, complex, and an emotional process. RSA-195, the law on cooperative school districts, needs to be addressed because it is not very specific about withdrawals. He suggested that the Board consider the purpose of the statute: to increase educational opportunities through co-ops that are a natural socio-economic region, have an adequate minimum taxable valuation, and have enough pupils to permit the efficient use of facilities in the district. Is withdrawal in the best interests of all the students in Fall Mountain and Charlestown?

Attorney Graham also questioned the goals of the withdrawing district, which he characterized as being to keep everything the same, but no longer be a member of the Fall Mountain Regional School District. He believes the purpose is not to create a new district that does something different, but rather to address the apportionment formula.

Chairman Cline believed at this point that they had heard enough testimony. If you use the marriage analogy, the Chairman believes you have irreconcilable differences. He also stated that he believes that Charlestown does not want to just "keep things the same," as they have mentioned the ability to negotiate, consider other options, create different opportunities for their children, etc. Chairman Cline does have concerns about their funding, however. The tax base is not optimal.

Chairman Cline does not believe the statute was intended to trap members into the co-op. A withdrawal plan is needed; however, it is hard to have precise numbers prior to the withdrawal taking place due to the unknown makeup of the agreements that will be in place afterward. The Board's legal advice was that the plan does not have to be to that level of detail. He further noted that while the Board may not necessarily endorse all the merits of the plan it is the Board that determines if it meets the requirements of the law.

Cindy Chagnon questioned that given the economies of scale, would it not be less expensive for Charlestown to remain with Fall Mountain? She noted there is no way to guarantee cutbacks in programs and services for Charlestown students won't occur, but if someone wants out of the marriage, how can you force them to stay?

Chairman Cline did remind people that at the last meeting, Charlestown said they would be willing to pay more in taxes to be independent. Helen Honorow questioned whether the voters would have it presented to them that way. The Chairman pointed out that those comments were made on the record.

Chairman Cline commented that it feels like this Board is part of the withdrawal committee, as the withdrawal committee has presented a plan before the Board three times and three times the minority has disputed the facts of the plan. The majority report has been adjusted to answer the Board's questions and

although the minority thinks the numbers are wrong, the Board will never settle that because the two sides cannot agree on the numbers.

MOTION: Ann Lane made the following motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, that the State Board of Education accept the Fall Mountain Regional Cooperative School District's Withdrawal Committee Report.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

Chairman Cline encouraged both sides to be civil and factual about what goes to the voters. He also reiterated that the Board's approval of the report is not an endorsement of every merit contained within it. It is an approval that the report meets the legal requirements of the statute.

AGENDA ITEM V. COUNCIL for TEACHER EDUCATION (CTE)

A. One (1) Year Extension of All of Franklin Pierce University's Educator Preparation Program

Laura Stoneking, NHDOE, Administrator, Bureau of Educator Preparation and Higher Education began by introducing Dr. Cindy Gallagher, Director of Education, Franklin Pierce University, David Starrett, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Matthew Konieczka, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Dr. Gallagher began in her new role at Franklin Pierce this fall. Dr. Gallagher explained when she started there was quite a bit of restructuring and new faculty hired. The proposed one-year extension will allow the three new people overseeing the educational programs to better understand them as well familiarize themselves with processes and data.

Chairman Cline felt the informational material was self-explanatory. One Board member asked about the plans for integration into real-world experiences for the education students. It was explained that Franklin Pierce was well established in this area and students start in their sophomore year in district observations and practices. Students conduct 100 hours of field placement prior to student teaching with no less than five opportunities. Franklin Pierce also has a well-established afterschool program.

Cindy Chagnon asked about secondary education students. Are they involved in learning how to bring Shakespeare, for example, down to a high school level? Dr. Gallagher said that Franklin Pierce has methods classes in the education department, which is a shift that she has been introducing. They are working to bring the content area faculty on board.

Another Board member asked about the struggle to keep students in the education program if they do not succeed in it. Dr. Gallagher replied that undergraduate was solid, but Franklin Pierce is looking at its graduate programs.

Helen Honorow asked if any continuous improvement review will be taking place over the interim year. Dr. Gallagher responded that they will be doing a data analysis as part of the university's five-year cycle. In addition, she wants to familiarize the administration above on the education rules. There may also be one or two new faculty members to be hired. The continuous improvement for them will be to start bringing the required data programs together. She also noted that they are in the process of putting the data structures in place.

Ms. Honorow said that she feels confident that Franklin Pierce is going to use the year extension in a productive way.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Sally Griffin, that the State Board of Education grant a one-year extension of all seven of Franklin Pierce University's educator preparation programs from August 30, 2021 to August 30, 2022. Elementary education, K-8, K-6, for the BA and MEd conversion, English language arts for grades 5-12, for the BA and Masters conversion, English language arts for grades 5-8, for BA and Masters conversion, general special education for BA and Masters conversion, life sciences for grades 7-12, BA and Masters conversion, social studies for grades 5-12, BA and Masters conversion, social studies for grades 5-8, BA and Masters conversion.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

AGENDA ITEM VI. CHARTER SCHOOL REPORTS/UPDATES

A. New Charter Application for Northeast Woodlands Public Charter School

Jesse Badger, Chairman, Board of Trustees, planned to begin his presentation with a video condensed from a video celebrating 100 years of Waldorf Education, but technical problems prevented it playing. Waldorf is relatively new in New Hampshire, although it is growing in popularity across the world.

Mr. Badger then provided an overview of three topics: 1) a community ready to embrace Northeast Woodlands—there is already a successful Waldorf private school, but not everyone can afford it; 2) careful planning, including joining the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, gathering materials to adapt a curriculum to

their needs, and drafting an application with appendices that Mr. Badger believes are a roadmap to a successful school; and 3) a solid foundation based on a 100-year-old educational philosophy.

In response to a question, a member of the group noted that the school would cover 28 communities in the Mount Washington Valley area, with a population of around 35,000. The application lists a projected enrollment of 225 students. For the first few years, the distribution might be a little front heavy toward the lower grades, but they expect that to balance out over time.

Chairman Cline wanted to clarify that the grades 1-7 enrollment number in year one was 15 per grade, not 15 in total. He then noted that 130 students for the first year was a big number for a charter school. A Northeast Woodlands Public Charter School (NWPCS) group member responded that support has started out word of mouth, with people who cannot afford the private school saying they would enroll their child in the public Waldorf school. The NWPCS group started a poll 24 hours before the meeting and has over 120 people who have committed interest in sending at least one child. In addition, the community is very outdoorsy and nature-focused and the Waldorf style of education would really fit this community. Another member of the NWPCS group pointed out that Waldorf education is very well known in the valley because of the private school.

In response to a question, a member of the NWPCS group noted that Waldorf is an educational philosophy and the charter school is separate from the private school. In response to another question, they did state that in full disclosure all the members of the NWPCS group were in some way connected to the private school as they would not have learned about the Waldorf philosophy otherwise. They have had some assistance from Waldorf teachers in drafting their document, but they are their own school, constructed to provide a need in the valley. Chairman Cline pointed out that there is a prohibition in the charter school legislation against private schools morphing into charter schools and the NWPCS group responded that this was not the case here. There are some association in that some NWPCS group members' kids have attended the private school and one member of the NWPCS group is actually a teacher there. The NWPCS group has a small pool of talent from which to pull in its area, so they needed to pull in the best minds available locally to draft their curriculum.

Chairman Cline stated that to be compliant with the state law, the Board needed to have a full understanding of the NWPCS group's organization, organization chart, board members, and administration, as well as that of the private school, the White Mountain Waldorf School. That information is not fully accounted for in the application and the Board will need it. It has to be very clear that this is not functioning as a reorganization of White Mountain Waldorf School into a public school. There has to be a bright dividing line between the two organizations.

Helen Honorow expressed her concern about enrollment. The Robert Frost Montessori School is having trouble with enrollment and in addition Heartwood Public Charter School will be opening in Lancaster in 2021 and they are also doing a nature-based academic philosophy, albeit without being a Waldorf school. A member of the NWPCS group pointed out that their location search is centered around North Conway. Another member pointed out that North Conway is 56 miles from Lancaster, over a notch that would be treacherous to travel over in winter. They believe the distance is too far for the Lancaster school to be pulling students from the NWPCS group's area.

It was asked how many of the 28 communities that the NWPCS group hopes to draw students from will travel to North Conway to go to school? A NWPCS group member replied that the roads that lead into the Conway/North Conway area, where the biggest opportunities lie to find students, are less treacherous. In addition, New Hampshire is known for keeping the roads open. The 28 communities include Gorham, Bretton Woods, Freedom, Effingham, Sandwich, Ossipee, Wonalancet, Tamworth, and everything in between. The speaker also clarified that the NWPCS group understands that they cannot serve Maine students without a tuition agreement and first making sure that New Hampshire students get the first opportunity to attend the school.

Another NWPCS group member stated that the "belt" of towns from which the Northeast Woodlands Public Charter School would hope to draw its students was devised by pulling data on towns within a half-hour's driving distance of the hoped-for location of the school. They feel that that distance is typical for the residents of their valley in terms of getting to school, shopping, etc.

Another NWPCS group member returned to the original thrust of the question, which was around several schools pulling from the same population, and he stated that the NWPCS group believes that their school will affect enrollment at the existing charter school and probably the private school as well. They believe that is out of their control, however, and they have an excellent educational model that meets the needs of the community.

Kate Cassidy asked whether the NWPCS group had met with local superintendents, guidance counselors, and principals. A member of the NWPCS group responded that there had been discussions with members of the local education community and the feedback has been "we welcome Waldorf and your students." The NWPCS group understands the need for working relationships with those schools and they will try to do better with that. They have not had the "nitty gritty" conversations yet with the local education community.

In addition, the NWPCS group stressed that they are coming into this from a cooperative standpoint. It is not that they do not believe in a public school; it's that they believe in the Waldorf philosophy. They want to partner with the existing public schools to make the community stronger.

A Board member pointed out that special education coordination can be an issue for charter schools. A member of the NWPCS group said she met four times with the special services coordinator for SAU 9, and her response was positive and has had good relationships with charter schools in providing services. Another NWPCS group member said it comes down to relationships. The Board member noted that new charter school groups always say things will be great, but when they come back for their one-year or two-year review, it turns out to be a bigger issue than they thought it was going to be.

Phil Nazzaro noted that the NWPCS group at the outset talked about the economics, with the household income being below the average for New Hampshire. The planning for funding, however, mentions receiving funds from parents, fundraisers, etc. A NWPCS group member responded that in the application, they may have overstated the amount of fundraising they expect the parents to do. They want to come up with a few large-scale Circus-Smirkus-type fundraisers that provide something to the valley. They will not take the typical PTA-type bake sale fundraisers off the table, but they do not want the fundraising to fall on the backs of parents. They want to hire a grant writer as soon as possible as they have identified \$10.7 million in grant money they wish to pursue. An unidentified speaker noted that with tourism and second-home owners, the population triples [at certain times of year], so it is not unusual to be able to make \$65,000 from an event.

Ann Lane asked the Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut, to shed some light on what is expected in grades 1-8 in terms of computer science education in the 306 Ed rules and the charter law RSA194:B-3(f). Given that the Northeast Woodlands Public Charter School is not planning to have “screens” until seventh or eighth grade, the commissioner stated that he would have to go back and look at the specifics. In his experience with Waldorf students, having coached a Waldorf school ski team, he did not see any children who came through the Waldorf program not successfully transitioning. In terms of computer capacities, he cited people who say that learning good algebraic thinking is important to programming, so those critical thinking and logic skills are an important basis and foundation to transition to technology education.

The NWPCS group were asked about their thoughts on this technology issue. A NWPCS group member stated that they introduce tech educationally at a developmentally appropriate time. He cited that tech people like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs did not allow their children to have tech until a later, more developmentally appropriate age.

Commissioner Edelblut promised to check on what the law says exactly and the NWPCS group promised to comply with the standards specified in the law. They will work with the Board to meet state standards in a way that is acceptable within their curriculum.

It was noted that the Northeast Woodlands Public Charter School application, while well done, looks more like a private Waldorf school versus a public charter school that utilizes the philosophy. The application seemed to suggest that the school would not have to follow the state requirements. A NWPCS group member stated that becoming the first public Waldorf school in the state would take some work, as the state is not used to working with Waldorf schools and vice versa.

The NWPCS group was asked to explain their plan for student assessments. In the application, the NWPCS group used the Alliance for Public Waldorf Charter Schools as a resource. The NWPCS group is aware that there are state standards they need to look at closely. Upon approval, they would create curriculum and assessment teams to create models that meet both standards. Waldorf teachers are taught to do daily observations based on the lesson book and then the school will also do traditional assessments such as quizzes, tests, quarterly reports, state tests, etc. It was pointed out that once the application is approved, it is the Board's role to make sure the kids are getting an adequate education and the only way to do that is through the school's assessments.

Chairman Cline complimented the NWPCS group on their strong application, but noted that there were a few areas that needed some work. One concern is that he felt the Board will need a map to how the Waldorf approach will be aligned to the state standards. That alignment is tough to do once approved and the clock starts ticking to opening day. A little more detail in that respect might strengthen the application. A NWPCS group member pointed out that appendix J of the application shows where there is alignment with the NH Common Core. Another NWPCS group member asked if they could partner with the state to work on curriculum, assessment and standards issues and concerns to ensure alignment. Commissioner Edelblut responded positively to that suggestion and promised to have the department work with the NWPCS group.

Phil Nazzaro asked about projected revenues, which show one third coming from grants and contributions charged for service (*which are not guaranteed*) and two thirds from the state (*enrollment*). In his experience, the enrollment figure was aggressive for a first-year charter. He encouraged them to have a strong risk mitigation strategy or contingency strategy in the event enrollments are lower or they do not receive the grants they want. A member of the NWPCS group explained they came up with those numbers based on the interest expressed in enrollment already. They feel it is attainable.

Chairman Cline added that the Board has had multiple charter schools present their fundraising plan, and a missing key piece almost every time is having a board member or executive with business and fundraising experience. It is encouraging to see a businessperson and Chamber of Commerce member in the NWPCS group, but Chairman Cline would find it reassuring to have more

information on who the board will be or what resources will be tapped for fundraising. The Board of Education does not require this information, but it would be good to identify individuals with fundraising experience, as well as include a calendar for fundraising. The NWPCS group members noted that their entire last meeting was focused on fundraising.

A NWPCS group member noted that the school has devised a two-board system. The first board will deal with day-to-day school operations and the second will focus on fundraising and board of trustee issues. Chairman Cline noted that was fine, but the application was sometimes confusing when it referenced a board. The roles and structure need to be clarified.

Ann Lane asked for an update on the leadership search for the charter school. A NWPCS group member responded that it is hard to get anyone to commit until there is an actual school.

Helen Honorow asked about paragraph B1 on page 9 of the application, where it references the trustees. If trustees have no term limits, how would they be removed? Also, she was confused that NWEF board members are deemed trustees of the charter school by virtue of their status as a board member. A NWPCS group member stated they can vote on removing a problematic trustee. Part of the NWEF board members' goal will be to keep the charter school trustees true to the mission and vision over time.

Chairman Cline, referencing the same paragraph, noted that although trustees will have no term limits, there should be terms. A NWPCS group member stated that the by-laws for the Northeast Waldorf Foundation do specify the term length. Chairman Cline thought it would be helpful to include those by-laws.

Chairman Cline noted that the school board would be covered by the right-to-know law. He does not know what the law says about a board of trustees overseeing a school board.

The Board asked that the NWPCS group return next month and provide updates on:

- The areas not met on the Department's review.
- Alignment of curriculum to state standards
- Student assessment
- Clarifying the structure and roles of the two boards
- Documentation clearly showing the charter school and private school are separate entities. Chairman Cline asked for a list of everyone associated with each school, with an eye to making sure the two groups were totally separate.

The NWPCS group promised to send the Board the video presentation that they had been intending to show.

B. Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies Public Charter School First Year Program Audit Report

Chairman Cline began by noting that the Board had read the progress report. Denis Mailloux, Director, then provided a general overview. The school is in its first year and currently has 25 students, only two of whom are girls, so they want to attract more young women to the program.

The school runs two cohorts of 15 students each, alternating between CAD and mathematics. Students then alternate between humanities and science in the afternoon. The school feels the daily schedule is functioning well and the curriculum progress is proceeding according to expectations.

Spark Academy administered the PSAT 8/9 in October and Mr. Mailloux displayed a panel with data from that. The faculty has yet to meet to review the hot spots coming out of this data, but the data will provide some specific direction in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. On the other hand, they do not want to derive too much from one student test.

In terms of the progress Spark Academy is seeing so far, the students overall score higher with respect to math, but trail off in the language arts areas.

Curriculum implementation is going according to expectations. Manchester Community College (MCC) has been amazing in facilitating the process. Spark Academy is expanding its staff for the second semester by hiring a biology teacher.

In terms of finances, they have not yet submitted a finance report to the Department. The school began receiving public funds in September and will submit the finance report in the next week or two. In the meantime, their budget is posted on their website and accessible to everyone.

One other area to highlight is that a certified guidance counselor has been a solid addition to the program.

In response to a question about fundraising, Mr. Mailloux stated that they've been fortunate to be supported by a foundation to the point where they are accepting the state and federal monies. They obtained a robotics grant from the state for \$10,000. The school is also optimistic that they will receive a \$50,000 matching grant. They have also had contact from two high tech corporations who have verbally indicated they wish to support the program.

A Board member asked about the school's relationship with the foundation that is enhancing the school's financial condition. Mr. Mailloux replied that the

foundation has sponsored a number of charter schools. The understanding is that the money has been contributed and at some point, the monies will become viewed as loans, should the school continue to need them. Currently, they are not loans.

Another Board member asked for more information on the school's enrollment and what is being done to increase it. Mr. Mailloux stated that having been approved on April 15, the enrollment period was briefer than they would have preferred. Their enrollment of 25 was five less than they originally envisioned. In November, they conducted an open house for prospective students. At this point, they have 13 applications, three of which are from young women. In the current class, at least seven are from Manchester and the rest come from as far away as Windham, Nashua, and Raymond. In addition, they are doing monthly information nights. They believe that a target enrollment of 30-45 would be reasonable.

They are also balancing the number of students versus the space available. They hope at some point to construct a building on the campus of MCC. The current class space that they lease from MCC can accommodate up to 30 students. Increasing to 45 students would require additional space.

In response to a question about rolling admissions, Mr. Mailloux replied that especially with respect to the CAD program, transferring in during the course of the year is virtually impossible. They see themselves currently locked into accepting students into the ninth grade only.

A Board member asked about Spark Academy's intention to build on the MCC campus and whether MCC did not have extra room. Mr. Mailloux explained that first, for tech classes, Spark Academy is already at the maximum that MCC felt comfortable with. Second, the tutoring in the AI math program calls for a lot of intense one-on-one work, so limits the number of students per class. It also means the school does not alleviate overhead by increasing class size. In addition, as the students matriculate into the college courses in their third and fourth years, less classroom space is required.

In response to a question on community connections, Mr. Mailloux noted that Spark Academy has had connections with area businesses and the community church that does a lot of charitable work in central Manchester. They are also connected to the Boys and Girls Club of Manchester. They would like to eventually conduct more outreach, but it has been a good start.

C. Capital City Public Charter School First Year Program Audit Report Update

Barbara Higgins, Managing Director, began by providing an overview of her background and introducing Stephanie Alicea, Head of School, Amy Zumiez, a nationally certified behavior analyst who is helping the school with special ed

organization, Kasai Mumpini, board chair, Caroletta Alicea, vice chair, and Lilyanne Caron, treasurer.

Ms. Higgins went through a list of concerns given to her by DOE Investigator Richard Farrell.

- After a heat issue, the heat has been repaired and restored.
- There were concerns about the open campus, so the school has now instituted a closed campus.
- There was concern about safety with respect to windows, doors, and cameras. The school has subsequently contracted with One Source Security and now there are fire doors, a buzzer to get in, new keys, etc. The next step is to work on the fire code issues, including getting the mall staff to take care of plumbing and pipe issues that could affect the sprinkler system.
- The Capital City Public Charter School has restructured its student population, placing their 10th and 11th graders either back in their home schools or into other charter schools that might be more appropriate for them. Ms. Higgins noted that in conversations with local education agencies (LEAs) and an out-of-district representative, it was thought that Capital City was an alternative school for children with behavior problems, which it is not. The charter is specific that it is a service-learning academy.
- Teacher, Scott Palmer is now certified in English Language Arts and high school English and Justin Wolbert, the history teacher, has begun the certification process as well. Ms. Higgins noted that the 9th graders will be taking their geography class online with the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS).
- Ms. Higgins noted that the math teacher has left and that she is filling in, which has been a good opportunity for her to get a handle on student performance and interests. With 21 years in special education, she has a good handle on where kids need help.

In response to a question about how many students are left in the school, Ms. Higgins replied there were 31 left. Capital City has an aggressive plan to recruit middle school students.

Another area of concern are invoices and showing how money is being spent. The school has hired someone with experience in accounting, bookkeeping, etc. Ms. Higgins and Ms. Alicea have also restructured the bank accounts. Two staff members are also working with an outside accounting firm to organize receipts and paperwork to upload into QuickBooks for better fiscal management.

Chairman Cline asked for more detail on how the outdoor entrance to the parking lot now operates. Ms. Higgins explained that the outer doors are open, but to get beyond the vestibule, you need to be buzzed in. Eventually, students and staff will have photo ID badges. Chairman Cline asked what would happen if a

student wanted to sneak out the back door? Ms. Higgins said the student would have to get by the secretary who lets people in. The outer exterior doors need to be open during the day for safety. She also noted that the layout of the school makes it very difficult to hide.

Capital City Public Charter School had concerns over two students with high truancy levels and both of those families were put in contact with special education coordinators in their districts. One student had severe anxiety and trouble leaving the house. While he is being tested, Capital City put together online work for the student to do at home and is doing well with the coursework.

In terms of special education, Ms. Zumiez has reviewed every student with a special needs file. Ms. Higgins has spoken to and is working with school districts to have individual education plans implemented and in place.

In terms of fundraising, at a recent board retreat, there was a lot of focus on community connections, community service, and fundraising. One parent board member brings a wealth of knowledge to the inner workings of charter schools and fundraising.

Ms. Higgins then referred to a list of Board concerns provided by Jane Waterhouse, NHDOE Charter School Administrator and offered the following responses:

- The school's curriculum is now online.
- ThinkWave, a gradebook and school management system, is now online.
- A sample newsletter was provided. The PTO is planning to take over the newsletter.
- The school's board meeting minutes from January 4 were included. Ms. Higgins is looking for one or two educators to add to the board.
- Teacher evaluations from the year prior were provided. Ms. Higgins stated she is setting up a plan for teacher observations that will probably take place at the beginning of April.

In response to a question about the number of actual faculty, Ms. Higgins stated that there are two teachers, herself, Ms. Alicea and Ms. Zumiez on staff. Ms. Higgins clarified that she is a teacher and will provide special ed services when she can and teach middle school math for the time being. The history teacher also teaches some reading and oversees the Lego club. The other teacher on staff teaches structured English language arts. He will also be monitoring the 9th grade students taking math with VLACS.

Ms. Higgins will be supervising reading groups with the lower grades who will meet a few days a week with two parent volunteers that are certified as educational assistants.

In response to a question about whether Capital City needs to hire any more teachers, Ms. Higgins said not at the moment because of her certification and the partnership with VLACS.

Ms. Higgins noted that Capital City has accomplished a lot in terms of organizing, categorizing, and chronicling. They still have work ahead of them, but she feels confident that they are getting to where they need to be.

In response to a question, Ms. Higgins stated that the financial audits and reports are in process. Commissioner Edelblut noted that they are due February 11. It was asked that a signed copy of an engagement letter with an accounting firm be provided.

Ms. Higgins then addressed the implementation, fidelity, and effectiveness of the curriculum and the defined measures of competencies. Capital City uses a wide variety of curricula. The initial issue is to improve student performance in reading, so the school has implemented groups for children that need extra support. As the children start receiving special education services, Ms. Higgins expects that their basic skills will show a marked increase.

The recommendation was “develop individual goals and objectives for struggling students.” Ms. Higgins has written a thousand IEPs in her life, so this will become an ongoing part of the school’s process. Of the 31 remaining students, nine of them have IEPs. Ms. Higgins is working with the sending school districts to have scheduled IEP meetings, updates, etc. Capital City has a student with a 504 from Gilford and a meeting is being set up for her with her contact.

Ms. Higgins has written a school culture plan, pulling from the charter and encapsulating what service learning looks like. The school culture has five key components: investigation, preparation and planning, action, reflection, and demonstration. Ms. Higgins feels this will be more effectively implemented due to the changes they have made.

Ms. Higgins is in the process of implementing a Wednesday morning community service to connect students with local organizations that need help. In addition, they want to start a community garden.

A final piece that is in process is public access to curriculum, which has been sent to the school’s web person.

Helen Honorow asked about the difference in organizational structure and what exactly Stephanie Alicea’s and Ms. Higgins’s roles will be. Ms. Higgins stated that she is the managing director, managing Ms. Alicea. Ms. Higgins sees her role as nothing happens without her knowing about it and she is part of the conversation when making decisions. Ms. Alicea as head of school will have the duties of any school principal: very involved in administration and delegating of tasks to staff.

Ms. Higgins will oversee disciplinary issues. Ms. Alicea added that it was a one-woman show for a long time. Part of Ms. Alicea's role is to be the first point of contact for educators and potential students; allowing her to connect with students and also make connections in the community. Ms. Higgins added that with a small staff, they all assume multiple duties.

Ms. Honorow said she still was not sure of the difference between Head of School and Managing Director. Ms. Higgins said you could say Superintendent and Principal, although she feels like she and Ms. Alicea are co-managing.

Ms. Honorow then asked who was in charge of managing the fidelity to the mission of service learning and Ms. Higgins replied that all the staff have this responsibility. If you have to be reminded that you are working at a service learning school, maybe it is not the school for you. She explained that this is a conversation at all their weekly staff meetings.

Phil Nazzaro noted that when everyone is in charge, no one is in charge, and that lack of clarity can cause friction. The more they clarify responsibilities, the easier it will be. Ms. Higgins agreed. Now that they have plugged the holes, she feels that that hierarchy can be more clearly defined. Ms. Higgins feels that the head of school and the managing director will be equal in the hierarchy, albeit with different roles and responsibilities. They are accountable to one another, but they are not each other's boss. In answer to a question, she also clarified that they both answer to the board.

Kate Cassady questioned whether or not Capital City could be true to its mission and follow through with what has been promised to the Board on paper. Ms. Higgins stated that they have already made huge changes and the Board will have to have a little faith.

A Board member asked about community building and fundraising. Ms. Higgins stated that it will be a focus at their January 15, 2020 board meeting and explained that they have two parents with fundraising ideas. The school has done small fundraisers such as selling t-shirts; however, Ms. Higgins has a lot of connections with high caliber financial people, but has not had time yet to reach out to them. She is also reaching out to other charter school principals for guidance on how they started out.

In response to a question on grants for service learning, Ms. Higgins said she did not know if they exist, but will look into it and noted she has written two grants in the past.

Commissioner Edelblut asked whether Capital City had engaged an accountant to finish their audit for last year. It was explained that the newly hired staff member with bookkeeping and accounting experience is working on getting QuickBooks up and running accurately to then send over to the accounting firm.

Ms. Higgins stated that there is an engagement letter with the accounting firm and will email it to Ms. Waterhouse to share with the Board.

Commissioner Edelblut noted that at the November meeting, the Board was concerned about disrupting the education of students in the middle of the year, knowing that the school had accepted students who were outside of the scope of its charter. With respect to the families who were extended to the end of the quarter, the Board had outreach from those parents, who believe that the state has said that those students were not permitted to stay in the school. Having read the communication that was sent to the parents from Capital City, the commissioner interpreted it the same way as the parents; the state was not allowing those students to stay. That is not the action that the Board took in November and this should be made clear in communications to the parents. Ms. Higgins stated that that was not how the information was meant to be interpreted.

The correspondence to parents seemed to imply that the Board was discouraging students with IEPs from attending this school and encouraging them to find a home back in their districts. Ms. Higgins stated that while her wording may have been vague, she took it as the school did not have official approval for 10th and 11th grade and the school is failing miserably with these students. Chairman Cline clarified that Capital City does have approval from the Board for these 9th and 10th grade students to remain at the school.

Ms. Higgins reviewed some of the discussions she has had with her 9th and 10th grade parents, covering the requirements for service learning and whether the school was a good fit for their children. She emphasized that she did not tell students that they could not stay because they had an IEP. As a special ed teacher, she considers herself a champion of the underdog. Chairman Cline advised her to be careful with the vernacular, particularly with the word “placement,” as that has legal connotations. It has to be clear that the school is not discriminating against children because of disabilities. Ms. Higgins said she tried to be sensitive to that, but apparently she was not, and apologized.

It was reiterated that it is problematic for Capital City to have two people in leadership roles without distinctly defined responsibilities and that the Board would like to see a line of responsibility and accountability. Ms. Higgins said she will look at the charter with respect to the responsibilities of the head of school and will keep it in mind when working with the school's board.

Kate Cassady asked Chairman Mumpini for his thoughts. Mr. Mumpini responded that the commissioner and he felt it was prudent to bring a new person in which was why Ms. Higgins was hired. They have not decided yet what role Ms. Higgins will fill vis-a-vis Ms. Alicea's role. Currently, Ms. Higgins is focused on cleaning up some of the mess. In the near future, they will work on clearly defining the two roles and responsibilities. Ms. Cassady then asked Mr. Mumpini what his

goals were and he responded that it is to see the school grow, become stable, and provide the best education they can with the goals under which it was started.

Chairman Cline said that it looked like Ms. Higgins and the school had made significant progress in the past six weeks. Organizationally, there was a lot to be done and the Board's frustration was that they had raised red flags over months that organizationally things were not working and it is good to see that some catchup has been done. Chairman Cline's biggest concern currently is addressing the concerns in the letter the Department sent them on December 29 where they laid out their expectations. Ms. Higgins said she never received a letter and she submitted the material to the Department before December 29. Chairman Cline conceded that there was some overlap and there are still things to work on.

Chairman Cline then listed some areas that need immediate attention. First, he is concerned about the children who have IEPs and various special needs and making sure that they get the services they need immediately. Also, he feels the Board does not have an understanding of coursework the students have missed so far this school year. The Board is concerned that many students have fallen far behind because they were not receiving the services they need. Chairman Cline would like a progress update on these students. Ms. Higgins said steps are being taken and listed some individual cases where arrangements have been made.

Ms. Higgins conceded that many of the students were not being served and stated she cannot go back and fix what went wrong—it is done and we are here now. Chairman Cline stated that to some extent, there is an obligation to fix what went wrong in the sense of making sure those kids are brought up to speed the best they can. He loves that Ms. Higgins is a special educator and is addressing these issues, but going forward the Board needs more clarity. For example, how many children were not getting services? What is the plan for getting those children up to speed? Is there an assessment involved? The children are legally required to have had those services, so the Board wants to make sure there is a plan in place for catching up.

Ms. Higgins stated she fully expects to be back before the Board with updates.

Chairman Cline said he likes Ms. Higgins' attitude and appreciates her frankness. He also noted that the Chairman Mumpini has been super-responsive. Chairman Cline said it was great to see how much progress the school has made in a few weeks; however, the Board still has serious concerns.

Chairman Cline would like Capitol City to give an update at the March 12, 2020 meeting.

AGENDA ITEM VIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Amanda Phelps, NHDOE, Administrative Rules Coordinator, updated the Board on some legislative proposals.

A. INITIAL PROPOSAL ~ Robotics Education Fund (Ed 1307)

Chairman Cline reminded everyone that they are discussing the initial proposal to take the steps to make the Robotics Education Fund official without being an emergency status. Ms. Phelps reviewed some changes including approved costs, application deadline dates, application deadlines in the event of grant funds being left over, and clarifying that application approval does not constitute a grant award.

In response to a question on required uniforms, Ms. Phelps stated that you are required to have a tee shirt identifying your team to participate in competitions.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Kate Cassady, that the State Board of Education approve the initial proposal for Ed 1307, Robotics Education Fund.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

B. INITIAL PROPOSAL: to amend that section of the School Year rules (blizzard bag policy) Ed 306.18(a)(7)

Ms. Phelps stated that this proposal is to remove the requirement that districts have to have the policy approved by the commissioner. She noted there are many policies that districts have to have in place, but not all of them have to be signed by the commissioner.

It was asked whether the blizzard bag policy requires having a computer at home. Nate Greene, NHDOE, Administrator, Bureau of Educational Opportunities stated that if a child does not have a computer at home, they must be given appropriate instructional materials and noted this is the same for students with IEPs.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Kate Cassady, that the State Board of Education approve the amendment to Ed 306.18(a)(7) relative to the blizzard bag policy requirements for school districts.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

C. FINAL PROPOSAL: Confidentiality and Record Retention (Ed 1102.04(h) and Ed 1119.01)

Ms. Phelps noted that this proposal has come to the Board several times. Last time, it had added language in Ed 1119.01(d) suggested by Bonnie Dunham and SAC. A more appropriate place has been found to put that language, so it has been removed from the previous final proposal while Ms. Phelps works with Ms. Dunham on moving it. Her additional language in (a) is still there.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Kate Cassady, that the State Board of Education approve the final proposal for Ed 1102.04(h) and Ed 1119.01 relative to special education confidentiality and records retention.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

D. INTERIM RULE ~ Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Programs, (Ed 1000)

This is an item that was not on the agenda. Ms. Phelps explained that this is a straight adoption with no changes. It went to Joint Legislative Committee for Administrative Rules (JLCAR) who submitted comments on the original rule so Ms. Phelps explained there is a lot of work to be done. An initial proposal will be before the Board next month.

Lisa Hatz, State Director, NH Vocational Rehabilitation explained that one reason the Board did not have an initial proposal for today's meeting is there was confusion around what rulemaking authority the Board had over the entire program. The statute states that there are only three smaller programs that actually have rulemaking authority. That is now being hashed out between the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) and the Attorney General's office.

She also noted that at some point VR was moved to the Department of Education, but the rulemaking authority was not delegated to the Board of Education. It is, therefore, somewhat ambiguous.

It was also noted that some of the language from the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act needs to be added so there is alignment. There will be an initial proposal for the February meeting.

MOTION: Kate Cassady made the following motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, that the State Board of Education adopt the interim rule for vocational rehabilitation programs (Ed 1000).

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

AGENDA ITEM X. COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education, began his report to the Board by discussing personnel issues. He introduced some people in new positions (a few of whom were present): Becky Fredette, who has been promoted to lead the Student Support Bureau; Jim Kask, who is leading the data bureau; Ashley Frame, who has been promoted to be the administrator for the Title programs; Melissa White, who has been promoted to be administrator for academics and the assessments; Susan Blake is our new HR Administrator; Chris Bond is our new attorney; Elizabeth Fontaine was hired to oversee the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Programs; Jennifer and Sydney are our new interns working in the Bureau of Credentialing; Pauline Doucette was hired for a business and economic affairs role; and Cathy Adams was hired in Title 1.

In terms of retirements, Sue Lang will be retiring from HR.

Mary Ellen Hamilton is moving from the Front Desk to assisting in the Student Support Bureau.

Helen Honorow asked whether someone had been hired for Heather Gage's division director position. Commissioner Edelblut replied no, although the position has been posted and some resumes have come in. He is not in a hurry to fill that position because they have some competent administrators who have good ideas about how they want to structure their work. Once they have leaned into their work, they will backfill the division director position.

AGENDA ITEM IX. OPEN BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Chairman Cline congratulated Helen Honorow for her 12 years of service on the Board. Under state law, board members can only service three terms (i.e., 12 years); however, the Governor does not yet have a new board member lined up, so Helen will be with the Board a little while longer until he does. Commissioner Edelblut expressed his appreciation for Ms. Honorow's being on the Board and what he has learned from her.

Ms. Honorow stated that it is a privilege to serve the children of New Hampshire and with all the other board members.

Ms. Honorow was then presented with a token in recognition of her service.

AGENDA ITEM X. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

AGENDA ITEM XI. NONPUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: Helen Honorow made the following motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, that the State Board of Education move into nonpublic session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c).

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 2:55 PM by State Board of Education members Sally Griffin, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

MOTION: Helen Honorow made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, to leave nonpublic session and return to public session at 3:20 PM.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

MOTION: Phil Nazzaro made the following motion, seconded by Ann Lane, that the State Board of Education seal the minutes of the nonpublic session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote by State Board of Education members, Sally Griffin, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

AGENDA ITEM XII. TABLED ITEMS**A. FINAL PROPOSAL: Confidentiality and Record Retention (Ed 1102.04(h) and Ed 1119.01)**

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded Phil Nazzaro, that the State Board of Education remove this proposal from the table.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

AGENDA ITEM XIII. CONSENT AGENDA**A. Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2019**

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Kate Cassady, that the State Board of Education approve the minutes from December 12, 2019.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman, Ann Lane, and Phil Nazzaro abstaining.

B. Tuition Agreement—Fall Mountain Regional School District and Lempster School District

C. Proposed Amendment and Renewal of Authorized Regional Enrollment Agreement (AREA) for Pittsburg and Clarksville School Districts

D. Proposed Amendment and Renewal of Authorized Regional Enrollment Agreement (AREA) for Colebrook and Columbia School Districts

E. Proposed Amendment and Renewal of Authorized Regional Enrollment Agreement (AREA) for Gilford and Gilmanton School Districts

MOTION: Ann Lane made the following motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, that the State Board of Education approve B, C, D, and E of the consent agenda.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.

AGENDA ITEM XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Phil Nazzaro made the motion, seconded by Ann Lane, to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 PM.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Board with the Chairman abstaining.



Secretary