

Grades 7/8 Committee Meeting  
September 8, 2008  
Peacham Elementary School

Present: Martha Tucker, Superintendent; Wendy Olcott, Principal; Jo Anne Post, Jean Dedam, School Board; Paula Guion, Neal Gombas, Matthew Langham

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.
2. The committee reviewed notes from conversations with six other small schools offering grades 7/8: East Haven, Glover, Newark, Sutton, Walden and Washington Village School. Some common themes emerged—
  - ▶ There are various grade configurations, some using 7/8 and others 6/7/8.
  - ▶ Most have built connections with bigger middle/high schools to access programs they are unable to offer, such as sports teams, family and consumer science, tech ed foreign language and advanced level classes.
  - ▶ Most offer a combination of traditional curriculum using textbooks and project-based, integrated learning.
  - ▶ Most reported that their students do well transitioning into larger high schools.
3. Martha outlined some of the basic points about which there is already consensus regarding a possible program in Peacham:
  - ▶ Core academic areas need to be rigorous and guided by Vermont standards.
  - ▶ Suggest we consider adopting the National Middle School Association model (as used by Walden) with an emphasis on teacher teaming, interdisciplinary units and cross-grade groupings.
  - ▶ There should be a combination of traditional and alternative teaching tools (i.e., textbooks as well as technology and hands-on learning).
  - ▶ Needs of high achieving students (e.g., accelerated math) to be addressed by differentiated instruction.
  - ▶ The school would offer PE, music and art by increasing the time of existing specials staff.
  - ▶ FCS, tech ed, foreign language and team sports could be accessed at Danville School. There could be coordination of allied arts programs across the SU.
  - ▶ Social/emotional needs to be addressed by fostering a sense of community and a sense of belonging; access to larger peer groups through sports, music and performance opportunities at Danville and other schools.

Still to be determined: after-school enrichment activities, technology, service learning/community service, cross-grade groupings. Additional research is

needed in financial analysis, demographic data and availability of St. Johnsbury Academy for tech ed opportunities.

4. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m. Next meeting September 22, 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Anne Post