

**Barnet School District and Peacham School District
Joint Board of Directors’ Special Meeting
Monday, May 9, 2016
Barnet School**

Members in Attendance:

Barnet: Board Chair Louis Bushey, Robert Farlice-Rubio, Sue Roberts, Jim Schenck, David Warden;
Principal Shawn Gonyaw

Peacham: Board Chair Adam Kane, Mark Clough, Cornelia Hasenfuss, Mike Heath, Jess Philippe

CCSU: Superintendent Mat Forest, Business Manager Pat Amsden, CCSU 21C Director Donna Gaston
Members of the public

5:37 PM The meeting was called to order by Peacham Board Chair Adam Kane.

Agenda Adjustment

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Mark Clough to modify agenda item #3 for the joint portion of the meeting to reflect that the discussion would not be an Act 46 discussion but more regarding what the two school districts could do now to share resources and create opportunities for students in both buildings. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

A motion was made by Mark Clough and seconded by Mike Heath to modify the Peacham School Board meeting agenda by moving item #8, Other Business, up between item #5 and item #6. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

A motion was made by Cornelia Hasenfuss and seconded by Mark Clough to modify the Peacham School Board meeting agenda by adding “Support Staff Contract Vote” under item #9, New Business. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

A motion was made by Jim Schenck and seconded by Sue Roberts to modify the Barnet School Board meeting agenda by adding “Support Staff Contract Discussion” under item #5, New Business. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

A motion was made by Jim Schenck and seconded by Sue Roberts to modify the Barnet School Board meeting agenda by adding “student issue” to Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Presentation

Donna Gaston, the CCSU 21C Director, gave a presentation on the ELO program and the preliminary sustainability plan for 2015-2023. Seventy-seven students have signed up for the summer program so far. The budget for all four schools is \$336,000 for next year; approximately 86% of that is for staffing. Partners such as Catamount Arts, Fairbanks Museum, and Montshire Museum provide some programming for a fee. Program fees will be doubled beginning this summer. The cost for the summer will be \$50 per week. Fourteen students will be attending the summer program on full scholarship. The per day cost for next fall will be \$4. The Peacham PTG has committed \$1,000 towards their program and the parent organizations at the other schools could be approached as well. Fundraising is being explored. It was suggested that perhaps Amazon Smile would be a good source for fundraising.

Barnet/Peacham Collaboration Discussion

The audience was asked for ideas regarding partnership opportunities between the two schools, on a

short term basis as there will be many more changes with Act 46.

- Have an opportunity to look at models of public school excellence on a broader scale.
- Magnet program for gifted and talented students.
- Look to adopt curricula from neighboring states that are excellent. CCSU has no set curricula yet (math, science). Look at regional solutions.
- Schools have pockets of excellence but none of the CCSU schools can compete with other schools with excellence.
- Hire excellent teachers and give them an excellent curricula.
- Have a vision for what an excellent school looks like.
- Adam Kane mentioned that minutes from the study committee meetings show ideas and visions on what the schools would look like in the future.
- Louis Bushey suggested looking at ways to work together, to gain some educational objectives while exploring Act 46 possibilities. What can we do now to meet the goals and objectives in preparation for Act 46? Can staff and resources be shared to reduce budgets? What can we accomplish between today and the implementation of Act 46?
- Adopt excellent curricula; it is free and should be done now to improve what is happening day to day in the classroom. Upper elementary has been dismantled. Discussion about what makes an excellent school has not occurred at Peacham.
- Adam Kane said this comment has been made at different meetings; this is something significant and difficult. The Board needs help to do this.
- Recruit great people and develop a great curricula. A great curricula can be found on line.
- Louis Bushey suggested contacting Jodie Elliot, the CCSU Curriculum Coordinator, as it is her role to develop curricula.
- Expedition/Outward Bound has good information on line. Training to get an enriched curricula is often costly. Some of the excellent curricula requires staff professional development.
- To focus on the benefits of individual education, how students in this environment thrive, look at what it is that each school could learn from the other. For example, Peacham does not have a great PE program now and apparently Barnet does. There are other ways that schools can take advantage of resources that are available. It is a benefit to the schools to remain true to the core values of each school.
- Most specials do not start when students get off the bus. Perhaps the specials teachers school day could change; get core classes in and still be available for after school programs.
- Louis Bushey mentioned the CCSU negotiated an SU-wide teacher contract and times have been taken out and replaced by an 8-hour day. The flexibility is there now to change a teacher's school day.
- Have academics/core classes part of the day and enrichment/specials part of the day.
- Jim Schenk said the Boards had discussed what could be collaborated on before Act 46. Some things, like outdoor education or the Winter Wellness program, could be collaborated on. Barnet students could use the Observatory. Maybe an Ag outreach program could be developed. What can we do today to start to build the relationship that does not have to be approved by the State? Louis Bushey also mentioned the discussions regarding better ways to utilize the buildings, maybe housing a middle school at one building. This could keep smaller cohorts together or increase class sizes for some of the Peacham students. There was a question whether contractual discussions had been taking place. Louis replied this has been discussed but also there have been discussions about the things that Peacham and Barnet should have been looking at years ago.
- Regarding larger classroom size, you need great teachers and great curriculum. Without that, larger classrooms are not effective. The culture of learning and culture of tolerance is different in each community. We like Peacham School because of the culture of learning and the culture of tolerance. Not sure larger class size, which is discussed very cavalierly, is the best vision for that.
- There is a lot to be said for a larger cohort and this would still be a relatively small cohort between the

two schools.

-The culture of tolerance and culture of learning, especially with a student that does not share a similar background, is important because such a student might stand out more in a larger class and that might be very stressful.

-Class sizes in Peacham have historically been the same and people value that.

-Sharing Winter Wellness would offer more choices and would be a step in the right direction. Barnet goes once a week for five weeks and offers skiing, skating, gymnastics, snowshoeing, sledding, swimming, and bowling, some on site and some off site. Peacham also has a great Winter Wellness program. This would be a good way to introduce students to a larger community and to other interests.

-There are so many needs that it is difficult to tap into that in the time available in a day. If we start small, maybe once a month for half a day, to build in opportunities for all students at Barnet and Peacham. Things like robotics or cooking, for half a day. This would require a lot of organizing but would cover a lot of students. Classes could be offered based on interest.

-Some Peacham parents have said they do not know the people in the Barnet community and do not know how interests compare. Some parents have connected with the Danville School through sports. Could have Peacham students play on a Barnet sports team to build a connection. Barnet has done this in the past for other students. It was mentioned that Danville sends information to Peacham about these opportunities. A parent had an opportunity to coach soccer for Barnet. At Danville, information is all very clear but coaching the Barnet soccer team was not very easy.

-What does Barnet do for families on the outskirts of town? Are there options if a family lives closer to another town for attending the closer school? For this family, sharing resources between the Peacham and Barnet school buildings would be a hardship, both for school attendance and for special events. Students in Barnet are provided bussing to school. Tuitioning to another school has not historically been done. There was discussion on whether this would be possible; there are at least two other families that would have the same hardship because of distance.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no further comment from the audience, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m. by Adam Kane. Louis Bushey encouraged people to contact him if there were any other questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Hinman, Meeting Recorder