Cabot School Sustainability Committee

Minutes of January 29, 2025 Meeting Cabot School Library

In attendance: Rebeccca Nally, Amy Richardson, Jennifer Blake, Eric Nelis, Stef Burtt, Johanna Thibault, Theresa Lay-Sleeper, Melissa Pratt, Ellen Cairns and Chris Tormey

Meeting began at 4:40 PM

1. **Draft Minutes** of the committee's December 4th meeting were reviewed and approved.

2. **Tonight's meeting agenda** was reviewed. Ellen Cairns suggested that we add discussion about Governor Scott's plan for revamping education funding and governance. The revised agenda (including that addition) was unanimously approved.

3. **Discussion:**
    a. Planning for schoolwide PBL presentation in May
    Rationale for rescheduling of the presentation from January to May was reviewed: elementary grades as well as middle/high school can be involved, allows for better planning by teachers

    b. Updates on communication about PBL to the community
        1. Jennifer devoted an entire school newsletter to PBL over the Christmas break, and has since included pieces on specific class projects to the weekly newsletters (which regularly get over 200 views)
        2. Amy is working with two of her art students on developing a brochure giving an overview of PBL
        3. Jennifer is planning a Parents' Night in late March in the CSPAC to provide parents with an overview of the offerings of Cabot High School. By early March she will have more complete documentation of the current PBL projects and the skills being developed in each

4. Jennifer is planning to offer specific Fridays for students from Walden and other "HS Choice" towns to shadow Cabot HS students to get a sense of the climate/course offerings here.

c. Cabot School Updates: enrollment, proposed FY 2025 budget and its tax impact:
    1. The school's prek-12 "Average Daily Membership"taken from students enrolled in September is the same as last year (162). However, because the "weighting" allotted to this year's cohort of students for factors like preK vs High School has changed slightly, the number (known as the "Long-term Weighted Average Daily Membership, or LTWADM) used to calculate "Education Spending per pupil" is down slightly, from 317 to 312. Since the fall count several more students have enrolled at Cabot, including two tuition-paying high school students.
    2. The proposed Cabot School budget for the 2025-26 school year of 4.5 million dollars is $20,000 larger than this year's budget.
    3. The Homestead tax rate needed to support the proposed budget will be $1.35, which is a 6% decrease from last year's rate following the Town's reappraisal.

d. Next steps for this committee:
    1. General discussion about getting the word out about PBL at Cabot in general and about school events showcasing it in particular. Members agreed on the following steps:
    -Draft an announcement in mid-March for the Parents' Night in late March once Jennifer has assembled more detail about this semester's projects
    - Develop brief paper brochure on Cabot HS/PBL for Jennifer to share with neighboring school's counselors and interested families
    - Develop a short video from classroom visits on what doing PBL looks like at Cabot(Chris: mid March)
    - Reach out to neighboring newspapers to see if they'd be interested in sending out a reporter to check out PBL at Cabot and write an article about it. (Potential papers: Hardwick Gazette, News and Citizen, Caledonia Record, Times-Argus

and North Star monthly). These articles could also serve to advertise “Parent Night” in late March and the PBL Open House in May. (Nail down outreach for this at next meeting.)

E. Discussion of Governor Scott’s school restructuring plan.
Broad discussion of the rough outlines of the plan. Points made:
- Fewer school districts could translate to cost savings
- Details at this point are just coming out- hard to assess impact on Cabot at this point
-Plan definitely points to consolidating smaller high schools- its impact on small elementary schools is less clear
-Interest in strengthening Cabot School as much as possible,to be demonstrate its value to state officials who may decide under the plan which schools will be closed.

4. **Next meeting will be Wednesday, March 12** at 4:30.

5. **Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM**

Notes by Chris Tormey