

Peacham School Board Retreat

6/24/24

Meeting Minutes

1. School Board & Superintendent Check-in

What should the superintendent know about us?

- Open and real communication
- Small, community based school
- Supportive community
- Excellent principal, keep autonomy and support
- Come visit
- Grounded in the values of what's best for all kids
- Fiscally responsible
- Board wholeism: kids come first, budget 2nd
- MS & HS choice
- SU is a resource
- want support for values
- Young families move here for the school

What do we want to know about the superintendent?

- Personally philosophy
- Management for staff, principals, budget
- How will you share work with the ast SI?
- Balance common framework vs individual school needs

How do we want to communication with the superintendent?

- Appreciated regular updates on legislative work /system (as time allows)
- Expertise on what board should do
- Collaborative tone
- Support Sam, don't get in the weeds

What are superintendent's expectations for the board?

- SU to support schools
- Reach out early and often
- Don't assume SI knows
- He plans to provide a weekly update
- Plans to visit schools every week

2. Where is Peacham School right now? (SWOT analysis)

Strengths:

- High quality staff
- Support board and community
- Individualized support/interventions
- Values shared by everyone!!
- Communication
- Values
- Fiscal awareness
- Outstanding principal, teachers, support staff including support from central office
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Weaknesses:

- Independent schools aren't perfect
- Not enough people come to meetings
- Recruit more students
- Understanding our board supports all peacham students, not just K-6
- Transportation (2 votes)
- Risk of losing strong leadership (1 vote)
- Lack of consistent science curriculum/ resources/ health
- Housing for staff
- More connection to other schools
- Mental health needs increasing (1 vote)
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Opportunities:

- Peer observation, sharing curricular expertise with SU
- Full implementation of experiential learning grounded in UDL
- Always facing the opportunities/challenges positively
- New opportunities for learning in all aspects of curriculum
- New strategies for mental health are evolving
- VSBA resolution to advocate for small schools (4 votes)

Threats:

- Consolidation (5 votes)
- Public education vs independent schools
- Forced initiatives that do not match our needs (state and SU level)
- Lack of mental health resources for kids and behavioral supports/staff reduction
- Educator turnover
- Great people spread too thin
- Losing town support because of outside pressure
- Continuing challenges in mental health of children and teachers

- Cost drivers (2 votes)
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3. Work plan next steps

Group #1: Consolidation Resolution (Mark and Matt)

Activities:

- Create a resolution regarding the importance of small rural schools
- What makes it important?
- Impact of school closure?
 - Rurality
 - Increased busing times
 - Coalescence of community
 - Economic impact
- Advantages of small school outcomes for kids

Timeline:

- August board meeting - Flesh out resolution draft
- September board meeting - Review final resolution
- October board meeting - Submit/present resolution to VSBA/legislative ad hoc group

Group #2 Transportation (Alex and Sam)

Objectives:

- Make a decision about provisioning transportation in AM/PM and field trips

Next steps:

- Research legal questions around requirements
- Board discussion around transportation
- Community input
- Make decision
- Take steps to implement

Timeline: August board meeting

Group #3 Community (Andra and Diana)

Objective:

- Maintain community support and engagement while looking for opportunities for further engagement:
 - Support school community initiatives that are already happening (meals, food drive, etc.)
 - Figure out communication strategies to share needs/triumphs with community

Ideas:

- Talk about budget early in the process (August?)
- Include something from the board in the existing newsletter?
- Document and celebrate success
- Friday coffee hour?

Timeline: September board meeting, discuss what we can do to advance this work? What? Who? Why?

4. Reflections on the day

- Open space great
- Helpful to have a clear work plan
- Outside facilitation was great
- Board help with communication
- Feeling of togetherness on big issues
- Strengthen of shared values
- Leaving with a plan