

TO THE GREENLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREENLAND, NH

The Greenland School Board met for its annual retreat on July 19, 2007 at the Green House in New Castle, New Hampshire.

CALL TO ORDER School Board Chairperson Ann Mayer called the meeting to order at 8:22 p.m.

BUDGET Mr. Katkin reported on budgetary issues which included a preliminary year end report on the 2006-07 budget. He indicated that there was nearly \$250,000 in unreserved balance which when given back to the town would have an approximately .50 cent per thousand impact on the 08-09 budget. He went on to note that the lower school enrollment will have an impact on the per pupil cost figure and that there could be some savings in special education costs at Portsmouth High School. In looking ahead he was not certain that we would continue to receive the \$133,000 as a receiver town which would also have a .33 cent per thousand on the tax rate. He further noted that Portsmouth High School enrollment of Greenland students in flattening out but high school tuition could go up as much as 6% which would mean a .28 cent per thousand impact on the tax rate.

SAU 50 BUILDING
REPAIRS Mr. Katkin reported on repairs to the SAU 50 administrative building including exterior painting and roofing. He noted that Greenland teacher and experienced painter Rick Bzdafka had submitted the lowest bid and had been awarded the contract. He noted that colors had been chosen by members of the Greenland School Board and that painting would start soon. He went on to indicate that a portion of the roof would be reshingled and that they would be using 50 year rated shingles. Additionally, Mr. Katkin and Dr. Cushing discussed their attempts to find office space for Heather Driscoll in the SAU building and ideas about renovating a back hallway. They also intend to contract for some interior painting and arrange removal of carpet in the downstairs bathroom. Mr. Katkin asked for and received permission from the board to remove two pine trees in the back of the building and it was also suggested that Langs Landscaping be contacted for their advice and opinions regarding all plantings around the SAU building.

EARLY
RETIREMENT
INCENTIVES Dr. Cushing and Mr. Katkin opened discussion on possible early retirement options and incentives that could be offered through the Greenland School District. Mr. Katkin explained the notion of medi-gap, the situation that provides a costly period of purchasing health insurance between a 60 year old retirement and the availability of Medicare at 65. Mr. Katkin explained that a health care subsidy through New Hampshire Retirement would be ending in the next year and that some provision for health insurance subsidy is likely and important component of an early retirement incentive plan. Dr. Cushing reviewed a list of previous ideas and suggestions that had been generated by Greenland staff members when he had polled them on this issue. Much discussion focused on how to make such plans financially advantageous to the district given the savings when a senior staff member retires and the cost of the incentive plan verses the savings/cost of hiring competent new and less experienced replacements. It was agreed that Mr. Katkin would run some numbers to compare potential costs for various scenarios.

ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING

Mr. Smith shared with the School Board handouts depicting the 2007-08 enrollment by class, the projected enrollments and a staffing from 2006 through 2010 and average class size based upon those projected enrollments. He then directed their attention to his report in which he outlined a difficult situation with regard to the 2007-08 enrollments in grades 1 and 2 given the increase in grade 1 and slight decrease in grade 2. The difficulty he discussed is that in the last month the numbers had shifted such that the two grades were almost even in enrollment yet grade 2 would have 3 sections and grade 1 only two. The School Board and administration discussed the history, developments and implications of the shifting enrollments. It was decided that if there were no significant changes to those numbers that the staffing would remain status quo given the expectations of parents and staff members. The board then turned their attention to the longer range implications of enrollment and staffing over the next two to three years and the School Board took the information under advisement acknowledging the unforeseeable fluctuations from year to year.

EXIT SURVEY

Having read through the comments and summary analysis of the grade 5 and 8 Exit Surveys, the School Board and administration engaged in discussion regarding those results. Though slightly disappointed with the percentage of surveys returned, all felt that the concept and content of the survey was very useful and that had been conveyed both through survey comments and in verbal feedback some had received. All agreed it was encouraging to see the overall positive response to our schools performance and some discussion ensued regarding the few concerns or suggestions that emerged such as better and more consistent communication from teachers to parents.

ACCREDITATION

Mr. Smith distributed several handouts that provided an overview of the accreditation process and then reflected on those and the self study guide which had been provided to the board members in their premeeting packets. Mr. Smith described the time frame and process and noted that the NEASC Commissioner for Elementary Accreditation, David Flynn would be meeting with our staff on Monday, September 17th and that School Board members are invited to attend. Mr. Smith described the role and composition of the Accreditation Steering Committee and some of the resources that would be needed to accommodate the visiting team. Discussion then ensued regarding the advantages, purpose and value of participating in the accreditation process and there was some reflection on the disappointing experience with the last 10-year reaccreditation and the visiting team's performance and report. Mr. Haslam raised a question regarding the amount of time and energy that goes into this self study and Mr. Smith replied that the type of reflection involving all staff and the year long time frame would hopefully make it both valuable and manageable.

DATA, REFLECTION AND THE "BIG PICTURE"

Mr. Smith took this opportunity to remind the School Board of all the important data, planning, reflection and initiatives that our school can and will use in the upcoming year to help improve the educational process. He reflected on the important work of the Professional Learning Communities in aligning our curriculum and familiarizing teachers with the current standards, the upcoming accreditation process, the My Voice surveys

which will be expanded to grades 3-5 and the staff in the coming year, Exit Surveys, the school wide wellness theme and work of the Wellness Committee, the use of Performance Tracker to analyze standardized assessments, No Child Left Behind and Follow the Child initiatives, extended and differentiated learning which will be enhanced through our new position, the rewriting of the staff development plan and more. He noted that all these important activities and initiatives should either positively impact teaching and learning or provide feedback and insight, which would point out our strengths and weaknesses. He acknowledged the difficulty of managing all of these activities and information without overwhelming teachers who must devote themselves to the primary task of day to day instruction. Questions and discussions ensued regarding the various initiatives and Mr. Smith indicated that he would certainly keep the board updated through monthly meetings, correspondence and reports.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Haslam, seconded by Mrs. Rockefeller the School Board adjourned their retreat at 11:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter D. Smith

Secretary