

**COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL OF VERMONT
STATE EDUCATION BOARD
MINUTES
Wednesday, November 2, 2005**

Members Present: Dwight Davis, Richard Fraser, Blanche Kelley, Dave Luce, Don Messier, Dave Mulholland & Albert Pearce

Members Absent: Wilma Paronto

CHSVT Administration Present: Bob Lucenti, Director - Stephan LaTulippe, Principal - Maureen McIntyre, Business Manager

Caledonia Work Camp Staff and Residents Present:

Tom Woods, Special Education Instructor, Cara Berryman, Correctional Instructor, Bob Arnell, Assistant Superintendent, Jim Donnon, Superintendent, Residents Hector H., Germaine M., Mark W. & Matt F.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. Caledonia Work Camp Presentation of Education Programs:

Introductions were made. Instructors, Tom Woods and Cara Berryman invited four students to attend this meeting so they could share their experience of attending CHSVT.

Hector began by stating that he has been at the Work Camp for the past six months. Three months ago, he made a decision that he wanted to work toward obtaining his high school diploma. When he enrolled in the CHSVT, he had five credits earned toward his HSD. He now needs only one and a half credits to reach his goal. The Work Camp has helped him so much. Tom works with him in reading and Cara in writing. He expressed how wonderful it is to work with these two instructors. He will be released from the Camp on Sunday, 11/6/05 and will be going to live in Massachusetts. Tom checked out the availability of alternative education programs, in MA, to allow Hector to enroll and have the opportunity to complete his high school education when he relocates to MA. MA only allows for GED's, and the only other option was the Adult Diploma Program but nothing was available for six months. Therefore, Tom and Hector decided they would continue working together via a correspondence class. This will allow Hector to earn his one and a half credits and obtain his diploma through CHSVT.

One of the Board members stated that they hoped this was a rule and not an exception. CHSVT administration said that 90 percent of the time, students can continue their education, when released, at one of our community sites.

Germaine arrived at the Work Camp 90 days ago. He was very reluctant to go to school when he first arrived because he thought it was like all the other schools that he had attended. He did have his GED. He soon found that Tom and Cara were different than teachers he had in the past; they are very supportive. He started attending classes regularly and is now only three and a half credits from a high school diploma. He has a new found love for astronomy and history. He knows he is better prepared for when he returns to society – thanks to CHSVT. He's applying to colleges from the Work Camp. His goal is find employment in Computer Technology.

Mark continued by stating he feels the same as Germaine about going to school here at the Camp. It has made a drastic change in his life. Cara and Tom really work to help each student. He was terrible with math, but feels his math skills are so much better since attending CHSVT. Mark said this school is so alternative that it's the absolute best! Without CHSVT, he would never be thinking about college. He realizes that he has more potential than he ever thought. He needs just two credits to receive his high school diploma. He enrolled in the

Web Design class here. A few weeks ago when he was reading the newspaper, he saw a job ad for a web-designer. This was a good paying job, and they wanted someone familiar with the same software that was used in his class. He feels that, when he is released, he has the potential to get a good job. He said the skills they learn here at the Work Camp school are the same as colleges teach. He plans on taking some Community College of Vermont courses. He now realizes that he can learn.

This school has positive reinforcement. Mark thanked everyone at the meeting for their advocacy for CHSVT.

Matt was the fourth student to share his experience with the Board. He started by recognizing how different CHSVT and public schools are. Public schools have up to 30 students in a class, but here you have five. He attended public high schools over six years, but failed. He took the PSAT, while attending public schools, and was accepted to Vermont Academy. He opted to stay with the public schools because he was afraid of having to be serious and actually do school work. When he was a freshman, he was an A student. He started a downward trend and started to get C's, D's and F's. When he arrived at the Work Camp, he opted to come to school. He is so glad he did, as he feels a great sense of accomplishment. Cara has helped him concentrate on reading, as he has ADD. He receives homework assignments to take back to the Unit with him. He likes how the students work together to help each other in an area that they exceed in. Tom and Cara are always here to help. Matt has three children and is so grateful that he'll have a high school diploma so his kids will not be able to say, "Dad, you don't have your HSD, so I don't have to get mine."

Each of these four students thanked the Board for being their greatest advocates. Germaine wanted to add that Mary Etter, an adjunct faculty member and former CHSVT Correctional Instructor, is also a wonderful teacher and has been a great help to all of them.

Dave Mulholland asked the students to share a certain moment, while attending CHSVT, which really helped them along day by day.

Matt said he took a carpentry math course here and learned metric, which is very important in today's world. For example, being able to read blue-prints in metric and inches.

Mark learned that he can work at his own pace and has the opportunity to push himself, unlike public schools where you either pass or fail.

Germaine said he learned how to create a web site – then was able to create his very own web site. This hands-on learning showed him that he can really learn and now knows he can do it!

Hector said the moment he enrolled in CHSVT. It just continued to get better and better.

Blanche Kelley asked what other programs are available to them. Some of the other programs are Woodworking – Building Tables, Web Sites, Computer Programs, Program Software and Solar System Field Trips.

The Caledonia Work Camp Student Presentation concluded. The Board thanked the students for doing such a wonderful job.

2. Review of November Minutes & Acceptance of December Agenda:

Dwight Davis made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of October 5, 2005 and the Agenda for the November meeting. Don Messier seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was called and it passed unanimously.

3. NEACS School Approval Update:

Bob Lucenti gave a brief history of pursuing accreditation through the New England Association of Schools &

Colleges.

In 1987, the education entitlement responsibility was removed from the school districts for incarcerated youth. At that time, Corrections Education worked to change our status from a program to an approved school. This meant that we now needed to hire certified teachers, award credits, etc. In 1997, the legislature approved us as an Independent School under Title 28. At the same time, we were opening our street campuses.

Since our re-approval application in June of 2003, the Department of Education has been questioning what type of school we are, which has delayed our approval process. This is why discussion began around school approval through the New England Association of Schools & Colleges.

Bill Bennett, Director of NEASC, and Sam Robinson, Assistant Director of NEASC, attended our October statewide faculty meeting. They gave a history of the NEASC. They distributed two handouts, Preparing for Accreditation and Standards for Accreditation & Indicators. They discussed the steps that we need to take to prepare for the accreditation process. They said their Board had voted unanimously to work with CHSVT in this process. Discussion and questions followed. Dwight Davis was also in attendance at this meeting. He stated that attending this meeting was a very rewarding day. He commented on witnessing a room full of educators that are so caring and dedicated to CHSVT and the student's they serve.

At the faculty meeting, a motion was made to pursue accreditation through NEASC. When this motion was called, the CHSVT faculty voted in favor of the motion. 46 voted for and one opposed.

Stephan LaTulippe will be attending the Self-Study Conference that NEASC is hosting in Massachusetts on January 18, 2006. Two of CHSVT Instructors will be attending with Stephan. This conference will be most helpful prior to the start of the approval process with NEASC.

Bob Lucenti thinks this will be most flattering to be the first school prison system to go through this process.

The NEASC will work outside the box, unlike the VT approval process which has become so political, it has created much confusion. Dave Mulholland mentioned a foundation that may be able to provide funds or manpower to help with this process. The NEASC does appreciate these types of associations.

Our school has already defined our best practices – grad plans, credits, etc.

4. Special Education in the Community/AG's Report:

The Department of Education's largest concern with providing special education services at our community sites is the cost. They believe it will cost anywhere from \$5,000,000. to \$9,000,000. The CHSVT does not agree with this. A result of this is a document that Bob completed, "For Study Purposes Only." This document lists five options and each option's concern and cost. Option 3 is what the Executive Branch would like to go with.

A joint report (DOC/DOE) needs to be written by December 15, 2006. This report needs to address the special education services that will be provided, the cost and the reporting requirements. There is a huge conflict between the two department's costs. The other serious conflict is the type of school CHSVT is.

Bill Reedy, Legal Council for DOE, has been asked by the Attorney General office to write new legislation around the type of school CHSVT is. At an upcoming State Education Board meeting, we will share the new legislation language. We will need to define ourselves with the legislature. We will need to give testimony. Bob thinks it's a good opportunity to get involved with the Legislature again. We will need to organize our faculty, Boards and students to testify during the upcoming session. It was also suggested that we may want to invite certain legislative committees, for example the Education Committee, to visit our school sites and our students. Another suggestion was to get input from Police Departments, Corrections Street Site Probation Officers, Caseworkers, etc.

Bob shared that our Commissioner is extremely supportive of the work our community instructors are doing at the street sties.

Dwight suggested we invite Bill Reedy to one of our Board meetings. This will allow the Board to share their thoughts to help Mr. Reedy with the writing of the legislation.

Bob has the Attorney General/Gold report. However he isn't sure if he can share this with the Board.

5. Board Member Policy & Directive with Agency of Human Services:

An email from Robin Strader, Agency of Human Services, to the Agency Commissioners, was shared with the Board. This email is in regards to Appointments to Boards & Commissions. This is the new process regarding Board appointments within the Agency of Human Services. The Governor had asked they institute a new practice. When a vacancy occurs on a Board or Commission, the Board Chair or staff person should forward several names for the Governor's consideration. However, those names should be first sent to the Commissioner then forwarded to the Agency of Human Services Secretary's Office for review of the names. From the Secretary's office, the list will be forwarded with recommendations for Marty Searight to take to the Governor.

Dwight Davis made a motion to nominate the two names that were already submitted by this Board. Dave Mulholland seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The motion was called and it passed unanimously.**

6. New Business:

Richard Fraser said that the Local Advisory Board for the St. Johnsbury area is questioning their existence. Bob suggested that the local boards review our standards and the state standards. Each board should review their By-Laws too. Richard will take that recommendation back to his Board.

Blanche Kelley told the Board that at the Vermont Retired Teacher's meeting on October 18, 2005, a motion was made to donate \$1,000 to the CHSVT Beryle Gardner Fund. This decision was made because this group was so impressed with two CHSVT students who attended the VT Retired Teacher's Association meeting in September with Principal, Stephan LaTulippe. Stephan and the two students were luncheon speakers at their September meeting. The Retired Teacher's Association felt this was a well deserved donation. A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE VT RETIRED TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATION. We will send a thank you letter to the VT Retired Teacher's Association.

Blanche shared two articles with the Board. One is regarding a complaint filed with the Human Rights Commission in 2002. An inmate's lawyer said he suffers from mental retardation and illness and believes his client is being discriminated against by the DOC by not accommodating his disabilities to complete early release programs. The lower court judge ordered the DOC to comply, and the department appealed. Now this case is with the Vermont Supreme Court.

The second article is about advocates are working to restore benefits for released inmates prior to release. Offenders sometimes leave prison with only a few dollars in their pockets and may have to wait weeks or months to be re-enrolled in federal programs. This makes it difficult to rejoin society and increases the chance that they re-offend. The Agency of Human Services says the reorganization has already paved the way for a more comprehensive approach for preparing inmates for release, instead of ensuring that prisoners' benefits are suspended rather than terminated during prison terms.

Dave Mulholland wrote two resolutions. The first one is the recognition of the exceptional dedication of participants of today's meeting for informing education, administration, the Board, etc. of the CHSVT value.

The second is to resolve that the State Education Board will continue its effort to match its local support for the outstanding achievement of the current CHSVT system.

Richard Fraser made a motion to accept the first resolution and Dwight Davis seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The motion was called and it passed unanimously.**

Don Messier made a motion to accept the second resolution and Richard Fraser second the motion. Discussion followed. Dave Luce stated that he feels the second resolution is inappropriate. He also feels that the use of resolutions is over used and may detract from their true purpose. Dave Mulholland withdrew the second resolution. **Because the resolution was withdrawn, the motion was not called.**

Stephan LaTulippe announced that we have a new Instructor at the Bennington Campus, Eric Marchese.

Dwight Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Richard Fraser seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.

The next State Education Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2005. It will be held at the Old Stagecoach Inn in Waterbury.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen McIntyre

RESOLUTION

Whereas the Community High School of Vermont State Board of Education had the privilege of meeting and listening to successful Community High School of Vermont students at the Caledonia Work Camp explain the impact of the local program on personal growth; and

Whereas said student, faculty and staff attested to the role of high individual attention, strong teacher commitment, and appropriate supervision in the high school education program; and

Whereas an obvious outcome of said local program has been to ignite student desire to learn, to create peer community support and to germinate hope; and

Whereas, student, faculty and staff of the Caledonia based Community High School of Vermont have demonstrated high regard for delivering, receiving and utilizing excellent high school education, on a par with other secondary schools;

Be it resolved that the State Board of Education for the Community High School of Vermont recognizes the exceptional dedication of all participants to make the educational program a vehicle for informing public education, administration and government leaders about the values of individual students, the local program and the Community High School of Vermont system.