

Dresden Education Exploratory Committee
Minutes of May 08, 2023

Present - Leah Bickford (Chair), Lisa Hewitt (Vice Chair), Cindy Moeller, Reid Anderson, Erica & Josh Atkinson, Scott Silverman (Ad hoc), and Shari Lilly (recording secretary).

1.) *Leah* called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. noting that we do have a quorum present.

2.) *Approval of Minutes from April 24* - Reid noted that under Old Business the #1 & #2 should be NOT join another district; #3 is fine. Josh made a motion to approve with the correction; Lisa second. So voted.

3.) *Public Comments* - No public in attendance.

4.) *Old Business* -

4.1 Reid has updated the questionnaire and options.

4.2 Education Research Team Updates

Team Reports

Erica planned to reach out to Richmond, but with the schedule at the school, she has not had a chance to do that as yet.

5.0) *New Business*

Leah told the group that Erin Bean would no longer be a member of the committee, but does want to continue to be involved with providing information; especially pertaining to Wiscasset.

Leah also said she would like to stick to one hour for our meetings.

5.1) *Reid's Update*

Reid thanked everyone for helping on the questionnaire. He had 13 questions that people chose and with the addition of other questions, it brought the total to 39. This is considerably better than the more than 100 we began with. He has provided a printout of the totals from the selection.

MTFS - Erica said that some kids need additional help. Lisa suggested including #57 & #58 to help broaden the scope. She feels the superintendent or principal should be able to answer those. Erica questioned if we have 57 of them, do we think people would lose focus. Reid said, also not supplying all the raw data may be the way to go, but people can look at the raw data if they want to know more about it. Lisa said we could do a summary. Reid said that would be a good way to balance this. Lisa added that she does feel if we are going to do a summary, we could do the 57 questions. However, it was decided to go with the 40 questions. Lisa said if there is something else we need to address, we can always go back to them.

Cindy - RSU2 - She doesn't feel she will be following this list of questions, but may need to come back to find out what questions she should ask. Members feel she should still ask those questions even if we thought they may have already been asked at the previous meeting she had with them.

Reid asked if he was supposed to do a specific format, but everyone feels what he has provided is good. Lisa then made a motion to approve the thirty-nine (39) questions with one additional to make it forty (40) and move forward with the survey. Cindy seconded and the motion was passed by all. Leah suggested having the questionnaire returned by July as most Superintendents didn't want to do them in May or June. It was decided to set a survey return date for July 15. Reid will have it ready for our next meeting.

Erica - Richmond or Wiscasset - Erica said she is holding off on Richmond at this time. Plus, she is very busy with the school testing and other events going on now. Erin is no longer on the committee, but Reid & Erica can check on points of contact for Wiscasset. Cindy has offered to contact people in Richmond. Scott, as our ad-hoc member, will meet with Wiscasset.

Tuition-based - Josh & Scott - Josh has nothing at this time. Reid said, in large part, that is primarily numbers and impacts such as the amount for tuition and the implications of tuition-based. Josh said, also population and the number of students to tuition out. Leah has gotten information on the EDU279 for each school which may help with this. It also presents what the choice will be. Plus, she said you can find out the information from other towns. Cindy asked if they have to have proof of where they live in order to tuition elsewhere. It was stated that the town has to know who they are paying for.

Lisa & Leah - Leah provided a report from their meeting with RSU1 Superintendent, Patrick Manuel. Leah

explained they have a new school built in 2021 and have 625 students. It is a state-of-the-art school which was very impressive. Woolwich Central School is a part of RSU1. Their school is at capacity right now. Cindy asked, so if we went with RSU1, we would still need our elementary school? The reply was a yes, we would need to keep it for our students, but be under the RSU1. Leah & Lisa went on to say the RSU1 has seven (7) school board members representing each town. Also, they have three at-large members. They have a very updated security including a lock-down set up (all doors are locked except one to enter the building). They also have a Resource Officer.

Students are offered a AP Advancement Diploma.

Wednesdays are a late start day for the staff to have their professional development time. Leah asked Erica if RSU2 has done that. Erica replied they have the early-release as that coincides with the other schools in the district.

Some students participate at Chewonki, which the Superintendent is impressed with as they teach students skills such as starting a fire, washing dishes, or other chores. Instructors stay with a student for one year. When asked when they have that program, it was said one week in the summer. Cindy added that the program is a choice. She also mentioned the literacy program they have at RSU1.

Lisa said the tech school allows students from other schools to attend at no charge. They are able to count those students, which then puts their totals up for the State. Cindy asked, if they get paid by the state, do they also deduct the amount from Richmond (other school) budgets? It is believed that they don't do that.

Leah said RSU1 doesn't seem to have a significant turnover of teachers. Lisa added that many of the students come back to teach there.

Scott asked, if Woolwich is at capacity, we can't send our kids there? Lisa said, not at their school, but, as Cindy mentioned, we would have DES. However, we could negotiate on our school and perhaps add other grades.

Cindy - RSU2 - ESSA Maine.doc. RSU1 has great standings on the dashboard. She has tried to become known at RSU2 meetings in order to gather information on the budget and other aspects of interest. Cindy presented printouts of the data she has gathered giving significant totals and other town data including - how many students, absentee rates, spending, and graduation rates.

Questioned as to why Monmouth is spending considerably less than Dresden. Reid said their numbers are different and they have gone from 240 - 387. The increase in the number of students changes the variable. Erica said it's no longer Monmouth Elementary, but is now Monmouth Memorial and she isn't sure the data numbers are listed correctly due to the changes there. Josh asked what is the 'shared expense'. Cindy explained she just gathered the data and the numbers. Reid then explained how the numbers are figured through population and the number of students. Erica asked if this includes the teachers salaries? Cindy said that it does. Erica added that some teachers are at the top of the pay scale due to their tenure. Other schools are hiring new teachers. Cindy said that she wants to have someone who can break it down so people can look at it and know what it all means. She said at the last RSU2 meeting in Richmond they were looking at Hall-Dale's issues for cutting items, Monmouth talking about budget, etc. She added the following dates that there will be further meetings as well as the one for the vote on the budget. They are May 15, 16, 17, and the 25th at Hall-Dale which will be the vote. Cindy then read from paperwork that was provided, highlighting the extra-curricular activities. Erica mentioned a number of activities being planned for the students at DES - a dance this Friday - a trip to Maine Maritime - possibly a ride on the WW&F or an ice cream social. This is all great information that members would like to see get out to the public.

Leah provided a printout of the DE279 for Dresden State Calculations. This shows the numbers for each school. Erica pointed out that two towns have built new schools.

Our next meetings will be on Monday, May 22 & June 12 at 6 p.m. in Bridge Academy Library.

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Lilly