

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library

January 17, 2007

(Approved 2/28/07)

PRESENT:

Ms Cindy Barrett, Secretary

Dr. Forrest Buzan

Ms Berta Erickson

Dr. Paul Funch

Ms Karen Lofgren

Mr. Chuck McKinney, Chair

Mr. Frank O'Connell, Vice-Chair

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent

Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance

Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development

Ms Joan Endicott, Director of Pupil Services

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: Lowell Sun; J. Kulesz, Groton Herald; B. Raucci, K. Figueroa, S. Daugherty, C. Seammell, D. Rasmussen, J. Sheffield, J. Evans, L. Penney, K. Gartland, L. Rounsaville, M. Rekos

CALL TO ORDER:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by the chair, C. McKinney.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes. Dr. Genovese distributed an additional announcement about Women and Girls in Sports Night.

J. Endicott announced the SpedPAC book project is going well and Boutwell, Swallow Union and Florence Roche have received books. Ross Greene gave a presentation on collaborative problem solving to about 300 people last week and she stated he has some great ideas. Attorney Jane Ellis will be discussing basic rights in terms of SPED IEP planning on February 6th.

Dr. Rubel announced January 23rd will be a curriculum half day.

Spotlight - GDEF Grants

Kerri Figueroa stated GDEF is grateful for the Committee's support as well as the support of the communities. They are looking to the administration and school committee to prepare a thoughtful budget that covers the essentials for a top-notch educational experience for the students. She stated the taxpayers should support that process and said GDEF is not here to relieve taxpayer responsibility for funding the schools nor do they substitute nor replace lost tax dollars. They are here to help enhance and enrich the educational experience by providing funding for dynamic classroom and curriculum projects as well as professional development opportunities that fall outside the normal operating budget yet positively impact students, staff and ultimately, the communities.

GDEF just finished their seventh grant cycle in the fall and funded ninety-one grants totaling just under \$135,000. The grants impacted students at every school and across all disciplines and grade levels. A cd, giving a concrete example of the scope of opportunities made possible by GDEF funding, was given to members. She stated the quality of the applications they receive continually renew the foundation's mission.

They are excited to see replication of successful grants throughout the other schools in the district.

In order for GDEF to continue to make a difference, K. Figueroa said they are looking for new board members, namely in the areas of fundraising, marketing and communications, and for sub-committee members and volunteers with a variety of skill sets. Their annual giving campaign, their main form of income, is underway and they are accepting donations that will support their spring grant cycle.

Fine Arts Curriculum Director Sue Daugherty presented her speech that she gave at their annual kick-off event in November. This also gave concrete examples of the opportunities made possible through the district.

Dr. Genovese thanked them for the informative packets they provided.

MINUTES

Postponed due to members not receiving their packets in time to review.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

C. Barrett stated she received an email from Barnstable Representative Turner. MASC supported a bill in legislature and they need individuals to contact their state representatives and senators and ask them to co-sponsor the bill which would correct an oversight in existing law that does not account for regional schools. When going to the voters for approval of a capital expenditure, regional school committees are forced to include their request in the operating budget. This bill will allow regional school committees to ask towns for a separate, one time capital expenditure, thereby keeping a one time expenditure out of a permanent Proposition 2 ½ override request. Representative Hargraves has signed on as a co-sponsor. The deadline for co-sponsoring the bill is 10:00 a.m. on January 22nd. C. McKinney said Senator Resor has also signed on.

J. Evans stated she and a number of parents are interested in hearing Dr. Rubel's presentation on the standards-based math. She stated they are finding a lot of statistical data that says this is not working and many states, including California and Utah, have said the Connected Math Program is an unacceptable form to use. Many Massachusetts towns, including Westford, Andover and Stoneham, have backed away. She stated there are no long term studies showing the success of the standards-based math program of either TERC or CMP being used in the middle school. Parents had a meeting earlier today with Dr. Rubel and Dr. Genovese and there was a meeting at the middle school last Monday. She said the parents have decided they want to dig into this further. She said she does not want this swept under a rug. She stated it is awkward to say this prior to hearing the presentation but it is an issue in the community.

D. Rasmussen stated one of his children has gone through the math system as it stands. His daughter, who is in middle school, has been looking forward to pre-algebra next year and he saw on the Groton email list that there will be no pre-algebra next year. He stated this might be a good way to teach things but his immediate concern is that his daughter will not be getting into a class she was looking forward to because she needs to be challenged. He is also concerned that it is the kids that get caught in the middle when they go from one way of doing things to another way.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

Standards Based Math K - 8

Dr. Rubel provided a timeline of changes influencing mathematics education over the past 10 to 20 years. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics developed a set of mathematical standards for K-12 education in 1989 and since that time, they have guided several best math practices across the nation. When the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act was passed in 1993, they incorporated some of the best thinking that came out of early standards based thinking, directing all states to create standards at the state level for all disciplines and to develop assessment measures that would assure that students in every district were attaining those standards.

MCAS began in 1998 and all students are held accountable. Students in grades 3 - 8 and grade 10 currently take math assessments. The math frameworks were the first standards developed in Massachusetts (1995) and further defined in 2003. MCAS was developed to measure the extent in which students were achieving the standards articulated in each state frameworks. In 2001, they started looking at whether students were making adequate yearly progress and in 2004, they began looking at subgroups. The federal law is for all students to be proficient in math and ELA by 2014.

Dr. Rubel stated that in the aggregate, they are a high performing district although they have bumps along the road. They had been less consistent at grades 3 and 4 and more inconsistent at the middle school. The math coordinators spend a lot of time looking at the strengths and weaknesses and trying to determine the reason for the weak areas.

Dr. Rubel stated a group of elementary teachers began an initiative in 1999 using Investigations in Data, Number and Space (also referred to as TERC) which is a standards-based math program written in response to the standards developed nationally. She stated this was not a district initiative. When she came to the district in 2001, she felt there was a need to create a set of curriculum documents with a consistent format. This document was published in 2003 and is in alignment with the current state Framework.

In 2003, they began evaluating what was happening in classrooms. They ascertained the amount of time being spent on math instruction and looked at which strands students did well in and those they were doing poorly in. They began to examine what was actually being taught and what was not and they found the Investigations units chosen by teachers were not being consistently taught across the grade spans. In 2004, they began some coherent planning across the grade spans so they were not shifting back and forth from one program to another. Dr. Rubel stated they did not give up the more traditional Adamson Wesley program and it is still being used to some extent in grades 3 and 4. They are continuing to phase in units of Investigations at grades 3 and 4 and the core program in K-2 is Investigations. The decision was made in 2004 that all elementary classrooms would spend 60 minutes on math instruction during the day with an additional 10 minutes of math embedded in calendar activities, lunch counts etc.

In 2004-2005, they began examining what was taking place at the middle school, recognizing the data was showing students were doing less well each year. Dr. Rubel reviewed the lengthy process for textbook adoption that includes research, checking for alignment with Frameworks and insuring the materials are free of bias. At the end of 2005, the committee made a recommendation for CMP2. Dr. Rubel stated they had a plan for a three year implementation, not just because of cost, but also for training and insuring they had a seamless instructional experience for students. They are in year 2 and they are holding off implementing further Investigations units in grades 3-5 and are doing some training at the end of the year.

F. Buzan sees NCLB as being associated with the current administration in Washington, DC. Dr. Rubel agreed and said the initial ed reform law was in 1993.

Laurie Penney, K-4 Math Coordinator, stated they are expected to teach to specific state standards and the success is tested at every grade level 3 through 8, and in grade 10 as well. The result of this evolution has been called standard-based math curricula and while all math curriculum is standards-based in that they have to teach to the standards, that was not really the case when it first came out. What they call standards-based curricula is a philosophy unto itself. Standards-based curricula require students not only to learn by rote but to demonstrate mathematical literacy (identify and understand where mathematics fits in the world around them, be able to reason and use math in a variety of context). The programs focus on actively engaging the students.

F. Buzan asked if the standards also require how teachers teach. L. Penney said no but the standards-based curricula has a specific teaching philosophy.

L. Penney said there are four basic elements of standards-based curricula - more opportunity to reach a range of learners, emphasis on mathematical discourse, problem based lessons and a clear connection between mathematical ideas. Some things that make good mathematics teaching include developing computation fluency (accuracy, efficiency and flexibility), developing conceptual understanding behind every mathematical idea, promoting a higher level of thinking and opening doors to a higher level of math and science classes. L. Penney stated introducing new Investigations units has been put on hold because they are coming out with a revision this winter. They will start purchasing the new units and training on them this year.

F. Buzan asked Ms Penney to explain the difference between TERC and Investigations. Ms Penney said TERC (Technical Education Research Center) is the name of the group that originally developed the program and the program title is Investigations in Number, Data and Space. C. Barrett asked how many units are in Investigations and how many have been instituted in the district. L. Penney said each unit has a specific strand and sometimes there is more than one unit per strand. K-2 is using five units and this takes a whole year. Grade 3 is using 2 units, grades 4 and 5 are using 3 units. There are eight units in the program.

A sample of grade 2 fraction work was shown and L. Penney showed how they can take one problem and reach a range of learners. F. Buzan asked if they are not just using more of their math time coloring and L. Penney said it is more about coloring; it helps keep a visual picture. She distributed a parent letter that talks about all the fraction activities that take place in a classroom and how parents can help their child at home.

With all the revisions that are going on, B. Erickson asked what is happening to the child in the classroom and what is taking up the gap. Dr. Rubel said revisions are constantly taking place with all publications and are not specific to the programs the district has. L. Penney said many of the revisions are not around the good mathematics in the program and they are carefully choosing what units to put in where. B. Erickson said it is time for the educators to take a stand against the publishers who are doing this. L. Penney said they are excited about the revision because it is answering questions teachers have had. Dr. Rubel said the educational publishing world is influenced by states that do state adoptions as this is where they make their money. She said they would not likely listen to one district.

F. Buzan asked if there is a direct tie between the textbooks and the program. Dr. Rubel said when she talks about a textbook adoption protocol, it is really a textbook/program adoption protocol. He asked if they look at the lifetime versus costs of the materials. Dr. Rubel said they are more cost effective and are not sent home as often as a regular textbook. L. Penney said the students have workbooks which are consumables. The handbooks, which they do not have right now, are softbound and are not necessarily used on a daily basis. He asked what parents are suppose to follow in order to understand how to help their children. L. Penney said there should be a note to the teacher if a child is really struggling. The handbook will give clear illustrations and examples of what kinds of mathematics they are hoping to see in a child's work.

C. McKinney said the comment about the United States falling behind other countries really touched home with him and asked if it because other countries have changed their philosophy to an Investigations-like philosophy that has led to an advancement. Dr. Rubel said this is much of what is driving the new programs. Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is comparing students in other countries (i.e.: Japan and the Netherlands) and where they are mathematically. Those students study fewer concepts in much greater depth and have a greater conceptual understanding and are excelling in math and science. K. Gartland said a conceptual understanding is extremely important.

K. Gartland, grade 5-8 TOA, said in the past, Groton Dunstable has been primarily using a more traditionally based program called the Prentice Hall Program in middle school courses 1, 2 and 3 and the textbooks focused on a way of learning that has been more rote. Students have been found to be more successful in the short term in relation to being able to share their short term understanding of the mathematics involved but their ability to translate that information to other context and retain that information over the long term has fallen short. In middle school mathematics education in particular, she stated there was a focus on repetition in

many textbook programs from grade level to grade level and there was more a breadth of understanding of the material rather than a depth of understanding. This was a great part of the reason for a shift, nationally and at Groton Dunstable, away from a program that focused on constant repetition from grade level to grade level.

K. Gartland said CMP provides rigorous content. There are four important strands they believe middle school students should learn, one being that students have algebraic reasoning. Rational numbers, proportional reasoning, statistical reasoning and geometric measurement are equally important aspects. She stated this is very well aligned with the state Frameworks. A video showing what a CMP classroom looks like was shown. The implementation plans were also shown.

F. O'Connell asked the risks associated with being in a transition period and how it is determined whether or not they are getting the results they want. Dr. Rubel said they wanted to phase it in slowly to minimize the risks. Regardless of the program, they need to insure they are covering what they are suppose to be covering because they are holding children accountable for that and in the same way, they need to hold teachers accountable. When they were proposing to adopt CMP, the Committee was advised of the initial financial costs to provide adequate professional development to insure teachers had training on every unit. She stated this has made a tremendous difference and noted schools that have abandoned the program or not implemented it very well did not receive instructional support.

C. McKinney said the transition from the 8th grade to the high school is a critical one. He views the high school as having a high performing math department and having a child in the middle school, he is not personally comfortable with the transitions available to students in assessing their capabilities and preparing the greatest number of kids to explode into the high school program because it requires kids to be full speed in terms of their algebraic concepts and knowledge. He stated he has not felt the middle school has provided this acceleration. Leslie Rounsaville, 9-12 Math Curriculum Coordinator, said the math content has always been there; how they present it and their expectations of the students, will support and enhance the district.

K. Gartland said the CMP was chosen because of the rigorous algebra it requires students to engage in which was not the case in previous math programs. Their plan is to offer a rigorous algebra course at the 8th grade level next year and the criteria will involve students taking, at the 7th grade level, all the assessments that they take, MCAS scores, a standardized test and teacher recommendations around a student's ability to work independently and in groups. The remaining 8th grade students will engage in algebra-kinds of activities. She and Ms Rounsaville believe this will better prepare students for the algebra courses they will take when they get to the high school.

L. Rounsaville stated anyone having questions about sequencing can attend the high school Open House on March 8th. She noted they have a group of students who never studied algebra in 8th grade but many of them are in AP calculus and about half the senior class is studying calculus.

B. Erickson said she is worried about the student who has problems with the written word and when it comes to MCAS, can not fully explain the concept. She asked if they provide for this kind of student. If the student has an IEP, L. Rounsaville said this is addressed in a lot of areas and all the high school teachers emphasize the Open Response questions and strategies. When students are engaged in a program that is very problem based, K. Gartland said being able to work in groups and talk about the mathematics really helps to emphasize what they are seeing on the paper. Teachers are learning to help students enter the problem.

K. Lofgren asked if Open Response in math is equivalent to showing your work. L. Penney said Open Response questions are generally multi-step problems. They always ask you to show or explain your work with pictures, numbers or words.

F. Buzan said the slide showing the implementation plan shows them implementing CMP2 over a series of years and adding more units. He asked what they are replacing and if they are co-teaching CMP2 with something else. K. Gartland said they discussed the standards and the topics they must teach by the end of

seventh grade with each grade level teacher. They looked at the CMP units they would be using this year that would meet those standards and the remainder of the standards are being taught through the Prentice Hall Program. They have made sure that every standard the students are being asked to know by the end of seventh grade is being touched upon by one piece of the curriculum or the other. L. Penney said the Adamson Wesley is used in the third, fourth and fifth grades. He asked if the Prentice Hall curriculum has a textbook to help parents. K. Gartland said it has the traditional algorithms and ways of presenting the materials but there is very little application of the content in the textbook. She said it is important to understand that the CMP has a carefully thought out sequence about the way kids understand mathematics.

For parents like himself who have spent weeks trying to understand the math programs, F. Buzan said he sees webpage after webpage of people saying "run away" and there seems to be a major controversy between math educators and mathematicians. He asked why they should not be concerned about this.

K. Gartland said the way they learned math and then applied it to the real world context worked for them. Today's world is different about the way they understand kids learn and the ways they are held accountable for what they know. If they continue to teach the way they learned, they are not asking the students to conceptually understand mathematics in the way they nationally need to do. She believes the mathematicians are the former group and noted they were really good in math. Dr. Rubel said they are responsible for all the children and she believes they can raise the bar for all the children and the mathematics program needs to be more rigorous from the earliest years. F. Buzan asked if they are raising the bar for all students or just for those who would not have understood it. L. Penney said "everyone". K. Gartland said at night, the kids engage in application problems where there is direct application of the material they learned in school, there are connection problems where they further apply the mathematics and high level extension questions. It is possible to modify the questions so stronger students have different questions.

K. Gartland agreed there is a lot of information on the web about the difficulties a number of districts have had using Investigations and CMP but there is also a lot of information about districts who are using this successfully and she would like to share that in the future.

The statement was made by Ms Gartland that the MCAS scores in the middle school showed a weakness in higher level thinking. C. Barrett asked if they have overcome that gap when they get to 10th grade MCAS. K. Gartland said the previous scores had shown that they have a weakness in being able to answer questions that encourage higher level thinking and that was the reason for the shift to this particular program.

Their higher level thinking is stronger by tenth grade and some of that is because of their brain development about what it takes to understand more abstract mathematics. L. Rounsaville said they are showing a trend and she and Ms Gartland are monitoring the data, particularly in grades 7 and 8 and into grade 10.

During the middle school SIP presentation in June, C. Barrett said they talked about the grade 6 through 8 timeline. While she understands the implementation of the actual units being complete in 2007-2008, she said in the original timeline, there was still differentiated instruction and support materials, assessments and benchmarks that go beyond 2008 and looking at last June's timeline, she does not think it is complete until 2009-2010. She strongly feels it is a five year implementation, not a three year implementation. K. Gartland said the three years refers to the units being purchased and implemented.

C. Barrett asked in what school year they will have enough students who have had enough Investigations or CMP2 so they can do the assessments and say they have seen the results that can be attributed to these programs. If they consider full implementation being next year, K. Gartland said they should have some very good data by the time the students graduate from high school. C. McKinney clarified they are referring to this year's sixth graders. L. Penney said they will not have gone K-5 with Investigations and noted this year's third class is the first to have gone K-2 with full Investigations.

B. Erickson is afraid by that time they will probably be starting something new and they will be back where they started.

Dr. Funch thanked the presenters. He feels good that they have a district that looks at things, changes things and tries to improve things. He said it is an experiment and every experiment is not guaranteed success. He thinks the teachers and their enthusiasm will make this work and they will know early on whether or not the kids are "getting it". He has confidence in the teachers and their understanding of what the kids need to learn. He stated they are trying to educate all the kids and many more failed under the old fashioned math than he feels will succeed under this math. He stated teachers are rising to the strong challenge of differentiated teaching and take the time to help kids learn in the different ways they are capable of learning and this provides better opportunities. He acknowledged there is a lot of emotion behind this and said kids are flexible and can adapt. He said building verbal skills along with math skills is critical and it is good to get students thinking conceptually. He is willing to support this program and while other states had some problems with it, he said there are many reasons why things fail and it may have been due to lack of training, enthusiasm of the schools and parents or class sizes. He feels it is a fully educationally based curriculum that can better address the needs of all the kids and with the oversight it is getting, he stated failure will not be failure, it will be "this is not working as well as something else". He stated support contributes to the education of the kids.

K. Lofgren asked the process in place to evaluate whether they are achieving their goals. Dr. Rubel said they will look at data around student achievement in MCAS and their own unit tests and they want to insure that teachers are assessing in a common way. The Curriculum Leaders engage in in-service time during the course of the year so any gaps can be filled. She stated they would also like feedback from parents and students. An option would be to involve an external evaluator but she would not suggest this happen until the program has been implemented over a number of years.

F. Buzan said it appears this should be viewed as the program they will have for the next five to ten years and any adjustments they make would be incremental over that time. He said if parents are not comfortable with this, they need to find a way to work with it to help their children work within this as they are committed to this and there is not a two or four year evaluation point where they decide it did not work. Dr. Rubel said the adoption process is very careful and thoughtful and the monetary output was presented to the school committee. Because of their math scores being what they were and the importance of that content area, she stated this was a major initiative with a lot of money attached to it.

K. Gartland agreed with Mr. Buzan's statement that how parents work with their children to help this program be successful is very important. She stated they are very committed to making this program work and whatever they can do together to make the program work is what will make it work. She stated they are with the parents when it comes to providing them with things they need at home, and in the classroom, to be successful.

C. Barrett suggested an article explaining the units be put in the school newsletters. Dr. Rubel agreed and said an elementary teacher would like to provide a course/workshop for parents through the continuing ed program.

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Budget and Finance - F. O'Connell reported they met on January 9th and Mr. Sheehan gave them a report on the utility savings due to the warm weather. There will be a joint budget meeting at the high school on January 25th at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Genovese is scheduled to present the budget to the public on February 1st but this date may be reconsidered.

Policy - K. Lofgren reported they met and school committee members have received three policies, along with feedback forms, to review. The forms are to be e-mailed/mailed to her and they will be brought to their meeting on February 27th.

Report of the Chair - C. McKinney reported he needs to appoint a school committee member to the Principal Search Committee and asked interested members to contact him as soon as possible. He would like to announce this appointment at their January 31st meeting.

Report of the Director of Finance - T. Sheehan reported they are working very hard on the FY08 budget and they are concentrating on the expense side since there has been no word from the State House or Governor's office on what the revenues will be. He stated the revenues need to be locked in before they can begin discussing what the assessments to the towns will be. He stated they are preparing what the operating assessments would look like if the overall budget comes in at 3%, 6% and 9%. He noted the Athletic Director, in conjunction with the Business Office, is working on a long range plan to significantly reduce the user fees.

T. Sheehan reported the Department of Revenue has certified the FY06 E&D at \$1,254,594. This is up significantly from last year (\$767,000) and he noted the bonds for the middle school were not issued in FY06 and this accounts for a large part of the increase.

With respect to the FY07 budget, T. Sheehan stated utilities is a big driver of the budget and the budget has significant increases for utilities over last year. Even with these increases, he stated they are not out of the woods. He reviewed electricity usage and costs to date and noted that even though usage is down, costs are up due to rate increases and if this continues, they will barely come in on budget for the schools that use Groton Electric. Swallow Union uses National Grid and costs are up 17% and if this projects for the rest of the year, they will be over budget. There is significant potential savings in natural gas as usage is down 27.3% and costs are down 33%. Oil usage is up 2% and costs are up 12%. If the current trends continue with electricity, gas and oil, they have a potential savings of around \$111,000 in utility costs unless they get a one or two week cold snap. He stated they will be over budget in electricity but it is possible they could have a cushion in natural gas and fuel oil.

As part of the budget process, Dr. Genovese said the committee will need to vote to transfer money out of E&D to put toward lowering the debt assessment as this money was intended for the middle school bonding in FY06.

A second quarterly report will be presented at the February 13th Budget and Finance Committee meeting and to the school committee on February 28th.

Report of the Superintendent -

Principal Search Process Update - Dr. Genovese reported the first meeting of the High School Principal Search Committee is scheduled for January 25th. Each of the constituencies has been involved in selecting the number of representatives for the committee. The faculty met today to identify the skills and attributes they would like to see in a new principal and they are going through a voting process to select their representatives. The Administrative Council went through the same process. He stated the correspondence to the Boards of Selectmen, asking for community representatives, went out a bit late. A Connect-Ed call went out to eighth through twelfth grade parents tonight and the parents will be meeting in the Black Box Theater tomorrow night.

Budget Guidelines - Members had received a document in their packets that lists the criteria governing the FY08 budget priorities.

Superintendent Mid-year Self Assessment Profile - Dr. Genovese distributed a copy of his self assessment status report and reviewed his goals.

1. Raise the level of achievement for all students - While this is incorporated into his goals, this has been, and will continue to be, a high priority for principals, administrators and the school committee. Progress in realizing this goal requires the cooperation of everyone. This goal is in progress and will require ongoing attention and more work.

2. Support the collective efforts of the School Committee - Dr. Genovese enjoys working with the chair in terms of items on the agenda and initiatives of the committee. He is also very involved with the sub-committees. This goal is on target.

3. Improve the performance of the Administrative Team - A review of an administrator evaluation rubric was conducted and feedback was gathered. Lyle Kirtman has met with the Administrative Council twice and they have looked at the various administrative preferences and styles of council members. This goal is in progress and on target.

4. Promote the use of technology to enhance the teaching and learning - While he has been successful in meeting regularly with the technology cabinet (technology coordinator, network administrator, information management specialist and instruction specialist), Dr. Genovese said he has not been successful in attending the technology committee meetings on a regular basis. He has stayed abreast of their progress by reviewing their meeting minutes. This goal remains a work in progress.

5. Provide mentorship to the Interim Director of Business and Finance - Dr. Genovese said he does not have to work very hard at this because Mr. Sheehan is self-motivated. Ongoing conversations focus on strategies to improve efficiency and accountability. Mr. Sheehan has taken advantage of professional development opportunities and Dr. Genovese said Mr. Sheehan is a pleasure to work with. This goal is in progress and on target.

6. Improve the safety and security of staff and students - The Central Office hosted a safety meeting that included fire and police chiefs from both towns, the resource officer, principals and other support staff. The meeting outlined a process in updating safety plans and protocols. He will be meeting with Resource Officer Connell to review the plans. Dr. Genovese attended the STARS Toolkit Rollout Program at the request of both police chiefs and he will be attending the School Safety Planning Workshop on January 29th. During the budget process, additional security measures may be recommended for implementation. This initiative is on target and will remain in progress throughout the year and in future years.

7. Expand communication efforts and accessibility - He stated this is an enjoyable goal as it provides new opportunities to meet and greet and talk with people. He enjoys co-hosting the tv show Around Town where district administrators are featured. This goal is ongoing and on target.

Dr. Genovese stated there are many initiatives that he supports and participates in as part of the daily operation of the district. He asked members to share any comments with a phone call or by completing a feedback form.

Dr. Funch asked about the evaluation process. C. McKinney stated the process was developed at the beginning of Dr. Genovese's contract and it stipulates the superintendent's goals need to be added to the evaluation instrument which includes a timeline. Members received a copy of the evaluation process and the timeline earlier this year. C. Barrett said the document was handed out at the November 1st meeting and a seventh goal was added at the November 15th meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Genovese stated two action items were accidentally omitted from the agenda.

VOTE: Acceptance of Donation from Florence Roche PTA

Dr. Genovese stated the Florence Roche PTA would like to donate a check to the district, in the amount of \$2300, for the sole purpose of buying some computer equipment.

C. Barrett asked if Mr. Babin will make the decision about what technology improvements will be made. Dr. Genovese said this will be done in cooperation with the principal and the technology people.

C. BARRETT MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT A CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2300, FROM THE FLORENCE ROCHE/BOUTWELL PTA, AND THAT IT BE SPECIFICALLY USED FOR TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE FLORENCE ROCHE SCHOOL. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

Dr. Funch said he is confused as to why the PTA is donating money to purchase computers. He asked if the intent is for it to be something additional for the school and said they may need to fix the technology budget. Dr. Genovese said it is not unusual for a PTA organization to make a donation to provide supplemental support to a school. He sees it as filling a specific need. The money is deposited and charged to a gift account that is maintained for the district and the principal will write a purchase order against the gift account to spend the money. C. Barrett said doing it this way insures the correct technology will be purchased. Dr. Funch is surprised this does not come with "as discussed with the principal for this purpose" C. Barrett said the motion protects the use and Dr. Genovese trusts the principal and PTA have had discussions.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

VOTE: School Physician

Dr. Genovese stated the school physician moved out of state at the end of December and J. Endicott has been working on a plan to provide temporary coverage and will continue to look to providing physician services for the end of the year. J. Endicott reminded members that Dr. Staub's parting recommendation was to have a combination of a nurse practitioner that provided consult to the nurses along with a physician for standing orders and assistance with protocols and procedures for any medical issues. The nurse practitioner completes the physicals and the doctor signs off as well. With Dr. Macomber leaving, the void is not having a physician who can sign standing orders. Nurse Coordinator Betty Irelan and Nurse Practitioner Amy Stevens have met with Dr. Stacey Anne Kopp who is a certified school physician and has a private practice in Groton. J. Endicott said they are negotiating with Nashoba Healthcare Group. Dr. Kopp is interested in providing the service until Dr. Dickerson comes on board with the group in early February. She stated they have a contract through June 30th.

C. BARRETT MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVE NASHOBA VALLEY HEALTHCARE GROUP AS THE PROVIDER FOR THE SCHOOL PHYSICIAN SERVICES FROM NOW THROUGH JUNE 30, 2007. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

C. Barrett asked the budget impacts of this motion and Dr. Genovese said he does not anticipate any changes from what was appropriated in the budget for these services. J. Endicott said this is her expectation as well. The district has a contract specifying an amount.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

With respect to the review of the superintendent, J. Kulesz asked if input from the Administrative Council has happened in the new process and what has gone on now. C. McKinney said that does not happen during this time period. Slight modifications have been made to the process in the last couple of years such as in the area of principle accountabilities and the manner in which data is collected. The school committee gets together in the spring to write an evaluation instrument, presents it to the superintendent and then to the public.

J. Hammond asked if it is correct that next year will be the first year the seventh graders will not be able to take pre-algebra and Dr. Rubel said not necessarily, that decision has not been etched in stone. He understands the separation based on mathematic ability (taking algebra as opposed to a normal math course) is going to be delayed and Dr. Rubel said it would happen at the same time it always has. He stated they pulled their daughter out of the high school because they felt the block scheduling in mathematics led to gaps in mathematical learning and made it difficult to build the course of rigor required to perform advanced

mathematics in college. With respect to the decision about pre-algebra, he stated he is concerned with his son's attitude toward math since he is "bored stiff". If there is not a pre-algebra course for students who "do get it", he is concerned their attitude toward schooling will be affected. He stated they are responsible for the kids who achieve above the standard as well. He wonders how stopping pre-algebra and more advanced math courses early on gets them where they want to be with engaging students with higher level thinking.

M. Rekos stated her eighth grade daughter is currently taking algebra and her up and coming sixth grader is more mathematically inclined than language based. She stated the CMP program has been in existence since 1998 and there is no reason for her daughter to be the "experiment". She asked if the committee was presented with the long term effects of this through high school prior to it being phased into the middle school program. Dr. Rubel said it does not include a presentation for a vote. She said they have presented to the school committee, via the School Council, what they were looking at. Dr. Genovese said it seems there may not have been an opportunity where that questioned was asked.

M. Rekos was hoping to hear some result numbers and does not feel they need to wait until their children are succeeding or failing to find out if the program works or not. She stated districts in PA, NJ and Washington that invested money and the training are also pulling away from the program. She asked if any of the teachers or administrators in MA districts have been asked why they pulled away from the program. She was told no at the parent forum. She would hope there would be a multitude of examples of not only where it worked but where it did not work and why. She said her daughter is a guinea pig in this and those parents involved right now will supplement with tutors and working with their children. The parents will be told their children are doing fine on their assessments and it will be because of the parents that stand up and not the program, which she said another parent has called very fragile. She is very concerned that a lot of the negatives were not looked at before this was adopted.

J. Evans said Singapore is the top performing country and they use Singapore math. Japan is also top performing and uses Singapore math as well. A handful of European countries are using a standards-based math program but they are not the top performing schools. She is asking why they cannot support the traditional math in some classrooms and the CMP in others.

As the parent who made the statement that the system is fragile, F. Buzan said differentiated teaching seems to be a common theme and is always mentioned as the challenge. While it may not be a popular view, he stated he does not think it is the challenge, it is the problem. He does not know why they think they have to put all the children in the same classroom and figure out how to teach them individually. He stated it does not make sense.

ADJOURNMENT

**F. BUZAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 10:50 P.M. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachment