

**RHINEBECK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT EDUCATION PLAN (CDEP)
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 27, 2015
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Present

Victor Britton
Edwin Davenport
Jackie Dedrick
Diane Linenbroker
Clare Dwyer
Nancy Erlanger

Steve Jensen
John Kemnitzer
Brett King
Marvin Kreps
Erin O'Brien
Joseph Phelan

Cynthia Ping
Megan Rodier
Laura Schulkind
Kelly Toussaint
Susan Van Vlack
Liz Yearwood

Absent

Bobbie Bie

Dr. Lloyd Jaeger opened the meeting by reviewing with the CDEP (Comprehensive District Education Plan) Team the accomplishments of the team up to the present and then articulated the next steps in the process. It was suggested that the team take a deeper look at the Mission, Vision, Core Values (MVCV) document. The Committee broke up into groups by building and District/Community to discuss the considerations of stakeholders in order to share with the whole group the results of school level meetings conducted earlier in October. Each school as well as the District/community group reported out the feedback that they had received from their respective stakeholders.

At the elementary level, the following topics were raised:

- Addressing some of the increased anxiety of students/parents;
 - Addressing anxiety through very specific communications with families such as clarifying the shifts in the Common Core and clarifying the meaning of early intervention
 - Moving age requirement to enter Kindergarten
 - Communicate to parents specific strategies to help students at each grade level
- Alternate learning opportunities for diverse learners;
- The District should consider increased security measures to assist with making people feel less anxious;
- The group posed the question: Do our student assessments measure our expected outcomes for students?

At the middle level, the faculty reviewed the draft MVCV document, identified school strengths and challenges, and generated a list of issues that need to be addressed. They reviewed student achievement data and the Student Support Services department shared current trends related to student social and emotional development. The middle school faculty identified the importance of focusing on increasing student achievement and attending to the social emotional needs of students. The middle school faculty reflected upon the following question, In light of the MVCV, what needs to be done to achieve our preferred future and what resources will we need? Some of the patterns observed in discussion were:

- It is important to attend to culture building and the middle school philosophy;
- Consider how sharing faculty and staff relates to maintenance of a middle school philosophy;
- Consider how flexible scheduling of the academic day might assist with meeting the needs of diverse learners;
- Consider ways to focus upon career readiness as well as college readiness for those students who may not choose college attendance post high school;
- Examine the root causes of students not completing high school;

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- Articulate more clearly grade level curricular benchmarks K-12;
- Look for strategies to partner with the community and families in order to create additional supports for outside school challenges.

At the high school level, the staff reviewed the MVCV and then broke into six groups to discuss and look at possible action steps and what the MVCV might mean for the high school program. Some of the feedback was:

- What does the phrase “21st century” mean in light of the fact that we are already fifteen years into the 21st century?;
- Recognition of student uniqueness;
- Consider programming that is student centered to better meet the needs of diverse learners;
- Clarify what is meant by making learning “visible”;
- Consider strategies to form additional community partnerships (connections with parents; how can parents support students in meeting academic objectives, improving attendance, positive publicity for curriculum initiatives and other school accomplishments);
- There is a need for more vertical planning K-12;
- Focus on all students not just the high performing students;
- Address technology issues;
- Provide additional professional development on technology and consider how to utilize teacher expertise to deliver professional development;
- Consider strategies to provide clarity regarding consequences (academic and disciplinary) and to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Consider using problem based learning strategies to challenge diverse learners;
- Consider issues related to class size and the effects on student learning.

The Community Group agreed with much of what the schools had brought up such as language related to students and how to support them academically and socially/emotionally.

The Parent Group reported that feedback revolved around more project based/hands on learning, innovative teaching methods, and inquiry based learning. The suggestions are to consider how to make the academic program more authentic and personal.

As a follow-up activity Dr. Jaeger asked the CDEP team to break into groups again and discuss patterns brought up by the various groups previously by answering the following questions with “Yes”, “No”, “Yeah...but”, or “Maybe”.

- Do we believe the next best thing for Rhinebeck is not the default future but a possible future?
- Are we operating from a position of excellence but it’s still a journey?

The faculty consensus at the high school was a “Yeah, but....” with the question being how do we address with programs?

At the middle school, the faculty have a “Yes” relating to the MVCV, but in terms of the journey, it was a “Yeah...but”. The general feeling is that there is not enough community engagement and a better partnership is needed as well as ongoing professional development for teachers.

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The elementary school responded with a “Yeah...but”. There is good buy-in but an actionable road map is needed. How do we operationalize the MVCV document to get to the preferred future?

For the parent group, in terms of the MVCV it was a “Yeah...but”. Based on what had been discussed at today’s meeting and the reporting out from faculty discussions, it seems the MVCV needs additional tweaking to bring it more into alignment. As to the second question, it was divided between a “Yes” and a “Yeah...but” due to the need for clarity and assessing the commitment to change necessary and implied in a journey to even greater excellence.

Dr. Jaeger re-visited the agenda for today. Concerning the MVCV feedback, he recommends a small group re-tweak the MVCV by the December 3rd meeting with the input gathered today. In order for the CDEP process to work, we must have closure on the MVCV. In relation to the strengths and challenges, he encouraged the group to borrow from our strengths to work on our challenges. In relation to recommendations for engagement, Dr. Jaeger encouraged K-12 opportunities for discourse, engage parents as stakeholders in a deeper, more meaningful way and suggested that stakeholder circle be expanded for further feedback.

Dr. Jaeger observed that the current dilemma is not having an answer on how to do all this work. In a supportive environment, we will find it together. It was suggested that while the process is facilitative in nature the development of a roadmap requires all stakeholders to remain committed and collaborative.

Dr. Jaeger asked the group to look over the “From Vision to Action” sheets in the power point presentation (attached) and discuss in groups how to make it actionable within the next 6 months.

- How valuable as an exercise is entertaining the questions in the “What is Actionable” column?
- Are there additional questions related to the MVCV document that should be considered?
- Would using these two pages be valuable to engage stakeholders in the broader educational community?

The team discussed various suggestions/ideas as follows:

- Complex questions be scaled down;
- Greater focus on the mastery of the skills and knowledge at each grade level to earn a high school diploma and beyond;
- How best to create opportunities for engagement K-12 and create shared accountability for outcomes;
- Consider how best to include parents and the community in sharing responsibility for learner outcomes and achieving the vision. It was recommended that parents be given a list of skills they can practice with their children;
- Rephrase questions to make them resonate with each faculty;
- It was observed that many of the questions require 6-12 or K-12 collaboration;
- it was suggested that if these implied goals are really important and all stakeholders genuinely care about achieving them for all students then they need to be baked into the ongoing K-12 program;
- Finally, it was concluded that the questions would be a good framework to bring to the larger group to encourage further engagement with the process.

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The team continued discussion on convening groups of stakeholders to continue discussing how to turn the MVCV draft document into actionable goals and it was suggested that stakeholders should consider the existing gaps between the current reality of the District and the desired state of a preferred future as articulated in the MVCV document.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Jaeger summarized and synthesized the CDEP process as follows:

The schools, Board and community/parent participants provided specific feedback and input into the CDEP process in anticipation of this meeting. Given the CDEP team deliberations during this meeting, there now exists a commensurate set of summary points that can be shared with all stakeholders in advance of the next CDEP team meeting in December. The five synthesis and summary points appear below:

1. While the essential elements and direction of the draft MVCV document received largely positive feedback, a variety of refinements in language and clarity were offered and recommended. The CDEP committee will incorporate these in a revised and final document. It was agreed that the MVCV sub-committee will reconvene to incorporate the feedback received from the stakeholder groups. It is anticipated that these draft recommendations will be available for consideration at the next CDEP meeting in December.
2. CDEP action plans that will be informed by the MVCV document will address strategies and goals for achieving BOTH academic AND social-emotional results for students. It is the consensus of the CDEP team that the District should maintain a dual intensity on these domains of student achievement in the three schools and the larger educational community.
3. CDEP action plans that will be informed by the MVCV document will address strategies and goals for supporting BOTH college AND career readiness preparation for students seeking to pursue life goals in either direction.
4. CDEP action plans must be developed with specific consideration and input from a variety of cross-grade level and interdepartmental K-12 staff groupings, and not limited to, but in addition to school-based deliberations, planning and goal setting. It is the consensus of the CDEP team that the District must maintain an inclusive school level and K-12 vertical focus.
5. Each school, and the District as a whole, should expand opportunities for parent and community stakeholder involvement in both understanding the MVCV document and making recommendations regarding CDEP action planning. It is the consensus of the CDEP team that all stakeholders must be fully committed and involved in the goal attainment strategies as they relate to the MVCV.

The group discussed the next opportunity to meet again. The meeting was adjourned.