

Pre-K - 8 School Withdrawal Study Committee Notes  
5/22/24

**Present:** Diana Petrie (Chair), Jo Cargill, Stan Hutchings, Jean Kobeski, Chas Street, Steve Varone, Carolyn Vose (Selectboard Liaison)

**Absent:** Tom Ronning

The meeting commenced at 6:34.

Committee members reported on the topics they chose to research last week.

**Meeting with the Superintendent:** Chas and Diana met with Dr. Christopher Spence, Superintendent, and Fall Mountain School Board Chair, Alyssa Bascom at Central Office. Dr. Spence discussed his 100 Day Plan (Find at [www.sau60.org](http://www.sau60.org)), which includes revamping the curriculum by 2025, creating a Gifted and Talented Program in each attendance area, and reinstating AHT and NEHT trips.

Dr. Spence's question to the group was, "What can we do to bring the towns together?"

According to the Articles of Agreement, the SAU owns all buildings within the district. If, in the event of a town's withdrawal from the SAU and buildings change possession, the town will need to bring school buildings up to code. Stan recommended doing an inventory of the buildings in Walpole.

**Personnel and Programs:** A chart was presented comparing the cost/student for the state, the FM district, and Keene.

		HS
State	\$20,900	\$19,917
FM	\$24,264	\$21,134
Keene	\$20,751	\$16,693

Diana and Jean met with Justin Cassarino primarily to discuss personnel and programs. Justin provided us with current staffing and enrollment figures, including Special Education. We discussed class size, staff turnover and recruitment, curriculum, professional development, SEL (Social Emotional Learning), community involvement, and maintenance.

The next step will be to contact the Chesterfield principal to discuss their district. Since Chesterfield's demographics are similar to Walpole's, Steve felt it would be better to go there rather than Westmoreland for that reason.

**Transportation:** We looked at Walpole's share of the Fall Mountain transportation budget then compared it to Chesterfield's budget, which includes outside contractor and high school costs.

Committee members were given handouts showing the Westmoreland and Chesterfield budgets and employee health insurance costs. They also received a handout of reference links.

Jo pointed out that schools withdrawing from a school district must include grades Pre-K -12, not just 8; therefore we should include the high school in our study. Carolyn Vose explained that to include the high school at this time would be “a big ask”. It would be included in stage 2 of this process if voters choose to pursue withdrawal.

**Action Items for Next Meeting:**

1. Diana, Jean, and Steve will meet with the Chesterfield principal.
2. Steve will try to find and talk to Marty Mahoney.
3. Jo will explore RSA 125-25: Withdrawal from a cooperative.
4. Chas will contact past “influencers” (St. Pierre, Shaw, Jacobs) about culture.
5. Carolyn Vose will talk to the selectboard about including HS in this study and charter school as a choice upon withdrawal.
6. Stan will inventory buildings to list resources. He also wants to explore RSAs related to education/withdrawal
7. Invite Cheryl Mayberry to a future meeting to explain the Winchester School District’s withdrawal process. Carolyn will email an invitation.
8. Everyone was asked to think about and start listing pros and cons of the information they have researched.