

Approved minutes. Approved on Feb. 15, 2024
Fiddlehead School Board meeting Jan. 18, 2024
Fiddlehead School and via Zoom

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Bill Doughty who noted that the meeting is being recorded.
2. Attendees:
 - a. Board members present: Jamie Dickson, Ben Kramer, Susan Doughty, Marie Reimensnyder, Roger Preston (via Zoom), Bill Doughty
 - b. Staff present: [Jacinda Cotton-Castro](#), ED; Jason Manjourides, principal
 - c. Public or other staff present: Mandy Medrano, Alison Curwin, Diane Baker. Joanne D’Arcangelo, consultant. Others were present via Zoom
3. Opening: What do we like about Jacinda’s work?
 - a. Still cares enough to lose sleep
 - b. Enthusiasm and sparkle
 - c. Makes each person feel important
 - d. 22 years of children+; not afraid of imperfection
 - e. At heart she is an educator; her ethics and morals are solid
 - f. Great job of passing the torch yet keeping the culture.
 - g. Her passion for Fiddlehead is great.
4. Special note: Fiddlehead center started 22 years ago; Fiddlehead School was approved in Feb. 2013.
5. Public comment:
 - a. Members of the staff were present to advocate for the addition of a grade 7/8 special education TA to assist at those grade levels.
 - b. Comments included:
 - i. Grade 8 has changed since Sept. in staffing and student needs
 - ii. Enrollment was increased from 20 to 22
 - iii. Outdoor Ed. position only PK-4
 - iv. A letter with concerns was sent 3 weeks after school

started

- v. 8 students with IEP, 6 with 504 plans
 - vi. Confident and capable teachers also need support.
 - vii. Great school for neurodivergent students, but requires support
 - viii. Experienced at another school that failed due to a similar story.
 - ix. Has applied for other jobs.
 - x. Gd $\frac{5}{6}$ has 9 IEPs, 6 are behavioral
 - xi. Not serving them well enough
 - xii. Other referrals are in process.
 - xiii. Executive Function minutes not being provided
 - xiv. Some behavioral minutes not met also
 - xv. 33 IEP meetings were needed
 - xvi. To keep staff and help kids, add support
 - xvii. Kids feel safe here
- c. Bill asked Jacinda to communicate the outcome of the vote the next morning.
- i. Jason suggests asking any online participants for comments.
 - ii. On dress code proposal:
 - 1. Love Fiddlehead; game changes for kids
 - 2. Curious about enforcement of breast coverage
 - a. Would like cleavage not covered by the policy.
 - 3. Costumes or portions
 - a. Concerned about the definition of costume.
 - i. Example: A wig
 - 4. Suggests looking at purpose of the policy
 - 5. Seems to hinge on definition of “a distraction”
 - a. Suggests that items used to distract will be confiscated until the end of the school day.
 - 6. Concerned that enforcement will impact school culture.

6. Approval of Minutes from Dec. 14, 2024

- a. **Ben moved and Jamie seconded approval. Motion carried 6**

to 0

7. Introduction of re-visioning with Joanne D’Arcangelo

- a.** Bill noted the age of the school as an organization and growing special education needs are two factors driving the need to re-vision.
- b.** Joanne summarized her experience and current outlook
 - i. A good time to re-vision and re-visit because older norms, systems, policies don’t align with new demands and intentions.
 - ii. More like a strategic framework; re-visioning; not full blown strategic planning but one or two years forward.
 - iii. Collaborative process with the community to determine where we want to go.
 - iv. Two asks:
 - 1. Consider adopting the purposes and results section of the proposal
 - 2. Select generative questions to use for us and the community.
 - a. She reviewed the questions and the key ideas behind them.
 - 3. Questions or Thoughts
 - a. Really excited. Can we do this with difficulties expressed tonight. How can we dream big if we can’t take care of what we have right now?
 - b. Can you assist with helping ideas about how to go forward?
 - i. Yes, I see these issues as part of the same process.
 - c. What can a Board member influence in this process?
 - i. Bill responded that re-visioning will help us build the next budget that is consistent with our mutual vision. Our situation has changed and so must our vision.

ii. Another benefit is collaboration and attentive listening.

4. Funding: A large part of our work with Joanne has been funded by a substantial anonymous gift.

5. Change may be more possible when things are in flux because we know we must change.

c. Roger moved and Ben seconded to adopt the purpose and results section of the proposal as presented. Motion passed 6 to 0.

d. The Board agreed informally to give their suggested questions to Bill for circulation and response by Monday, Jan. 22, 2024

e. The Board thanked Joanne for her positive presence.

8. Executive Director's report:

a. Submitted another grant for outdoor education. For kids at risk and we fit that description. Includes projects for 6-7-8

i. Key issue: complete curriculum in upper grades

b. Looking healthy on enrichment income. Expenses are down.

c. Feeling good, busy, looking forward to budget process

d. Will not add more students to upper grades next year.

e. Fiddlehead is in the top 10 of Maine schools for percentage of special education students.

f. Actual enrollment is 186. We lost 10 since the start of the year.

9. Principal's report:

a. Education Committee continues to work on comprehensive curriculum documents in all areas

b. So much already exists and the players have moved on. Ed. Comm. is mining these treasures to keep what's valuable.

c. Shades and blinds have been installed.

d. Looking forward to open houses for the first time.

e. Attendance: 33% of the school are chronically absent. Have identified who to work with and are doing that work.

i. Using Anytime/Anywhere learning is being discussed

ii. Chronic absenteeism is absent for any reason for more than 10% of the school years.

f. Our staff is excellent, even with recent hires.

