

**Education Committee Minutes**  
**November 1, 2016**  
**Nokomis Library**

**Members Present:** Ken Sands, Samantha Brown, Paul Carter, Susie Hopkins, Robin McNeil, Don Mendell, Winn Price, Chad Stratton

**Others Present:** Mike Hammer, Don Roux, Ellen Surprenant, Kathie Cloonan, Lori Merrow, Mary Nadeau, Jeff Giallombardo

**I. Public Comment – None**

**II. Alternative Education Update - Jeff Giallombardo**

Mr. Giallombardo gave an update on his program including the basic nature of the number of students, curriculum, benefits, challenges, and some background data. He has around 30 students in the program with a wait list; some students attend part time and some full time. The average number is 12 at a time. The curriculum is provided through online and project based. Ed Mentum and Plato are the platforms for online content, the projects are student/teacher designed and focus on Aquaponics. Aquaponics is the balance of plant to fish/plant growth and digestion process whereby the plants grow using the fertilization from the fish. The program is presently growing basil and selling the finished product to Bud's Shop N Save. The program has raised around \$20,000.00 that was used to improve the program. The foundations of the program center around the physical, emotional, and financial well being of students and the balance of these three areas in the students' lives.

Ms. Nadeau, Mr. Mendell, Mrs. McNeil, Mrs. Surprenant, and Mr. Roux all spoke highly in favor of the program, including the importance of having Mr. Giallombardo as the teacher. There have been some reductions in staffing over the course of the last couple of years and it should be a program that the Board considers expanding.

Mr. Stratton mentioned that the Building Committee is considering where the alternative education program (Nokomis Alternative Education Academy) will reside in the future due to the building project. Mr. Giallombardo recommended discussing this with the students. Future needs also include a washer, dryer, and shower facilities for the students, as well as a kitchen.

**III. Kindergarten Jump Start - Kathie Cloonan**

Kathie Cloonan gave an update on the Kindergarten Jumpstart Program. Data was presented on the number of students at each location (Newport, Corrina, Hartland, Etna/Dixmont, and St. Albans (attended with Hartland) and the point gain and

percentage gain after 24 days of instruction. It was noted that some students did not attend from St. Albans due to the program being at Harland.

Mr. Stratton indicated the enjoyment his child experienced through attending the program. There were no children denied access and some students from different towns may have attended programs in a building other than the one they attend for regular school. The program cost for the summer of 2016 was a total of \$47,000. To fund the program, it costs \$1,500.00 for the training and materials for each teacher. If we can continue the program through grant funding (Title 1) that would be great, but it may take local funding as well. Ideally, the program would include training for other Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers and to have a program for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. The Board would also like data on how students, who participate in KJS, progress over time.

**IV. Brainstorming Ideas to Bring Students Back Into Our Schools**

Data was presented on the number of students that attend other schools, are home schooled, or receive superintendents' agreements. There are 294 students that attend out-of-district. We may not get all these students back; however, we need to make a sustained effort to bring small numbers back over time. Ideas that were discussed include:

- Celebrating our positives - teachers, (their accomplishments), students, (their accomplishments), and our programming. Mr. Hammer will work with the Rolling Thunder to see if we can get a column in the paper each week articulating the great things going on in our schools.
- Improve Web presence
- Review mission and vision
- Re-brand the district as student centered
- Continuing the conversation and finding other ways

**V. Other - None**

**VI. Items for Next Agenda**

Stories of success (December meeting)  
Review (1) Mission and Vision and (2) Role of Education Committee

**VII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Hammer  
Superintendent of Schools