

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

**DANVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JOINT MEETING WITH CABOT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, January 20, 2016
Danville School Library**

Attendees:

Cabot School Board: Board Chair Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Lisa Olsen

Cabot School: Principal David Schilling

WCSU: Superintendent Nancy Thomas

Danville School Board: Board Chair Sandy Hauserman, Peter McAlenney, Walter Smith, David Towle, Diane Chadderdon (at 7:30)

Danville School: Principal Kerin Hoffman, Dean of Students Patrick Pennock, Student Representative Matthew Hauserman

CCSU: Superintendent Mathew Forest; Consultant Peter Clarke

Members of the public, staff from Danville and Cabot schools, Taylor Reed from the Caledonian Record

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:09 p.m. by Danville Chair Sandy Hauserman and by Cabot Chair Chris Tormey. Introductions were made.
2. Peter Clarke, the consultant doing the merger study, gave an overview of his background and qualifications and background on Act 46. The intent is to increase opportunities and increase efficiencies and not isolate any school district. While discussions are taking place with Cabot, Twinfield should also be considered as the Agency of Education may not approve a plan that does not include them. Superintendent Forest said CCSU is open to discussions with both Cabot and Twinfield. Any plan will need to make good financial sense and be beneficial to students. The structure that makes most sense for CCSU is the side by side. There needs to be two or more parties on each side. A plan must be in place by July 2017 and operational by 2019 to take advantage of tax incentives. There is another merger study going on for the other part of the side by side.

Questions to focus on:

- What are the challenges facing each school district?
- What are the opportunities at each school district?

Challenges

-A unified Board will not care about all the students within the district.

-Buildings and grounds. Who is responsible for Danville facilities and who is responsible for Cabot's facilities; is it a combined responsibility with all tax payers involved? Mr. Clarke said in a merger there is no longer a Danville and a Cabot municipality, the new school has one board, one set of buildings and grounds. There is no way to put something off on one school or have a different tax rate for each town. The new Board has to take on everything.

-Cost of special education services. Special education is unpredictable. Perhaps CCSU could create something in-house rather than sending students to outside facilities and might be able to pull in students from other districts as well.

-Danville needs to attract new students to the high school and would be soliciting students from other towns that would pay tuition for those students. This would increase capacity and income, build programs and create opportunities for students, and offer some relief to Danville tax

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

payers. Act 46 is looking at cutting rather than increasing and this cuts into the existing programs or those being explored. Cabot should be looking at ways to increase their enrollment as well so if a merger takes place, both schools have a solid student base. If both schools are not on the same level, it could make one or the other less attractive. Cabot is not looking at increasing enrollment as it takes away from someone next door. They are looking at what Danville has that Cabot students might like to be involved with and what Cabot has that Danville students would like to be involved with. There is a lack of diversity with teachers and classes. Cabot is looking for movement more than increased student count.

-Cabot only has one math program that is not necessarily appropriate for all students. The resources needed to make changes to the program are not available without cutting into other programs.

-Competition for students. Schools will always be in competition with each other for students. Danville is not in competition with public schools but with the private schools in the area. Danville is trying to develop a marketing tool to help with this; Cabot would also benefit from this.

-Movement between schools could result in classes with no students. Sharing students will not help. More tuition money needs to be pulled in to drive up enrollment and provide funds to enrich programs. Simply sharing what schools have now will not accomplish this. We need to make something great that the community can be proud of. One way of movement might be the combination of smaller classes so that other classes can be taught in another school. Staff could be brought together in a way so the resulting mix has more classes, larger numbers of students, and input from other people could increase the excitement for students. The starting point should be how this combining could be done and then decide how things actually move around.

Challenges Summarized:

- Capacity/Competing for Students/Enrollment
- Cultural Interests
- Special Education
- Facilities (buildings and grounds)
 - current issues and future needs
- Sustainability/Affordability
- Poverty
- Professional Development
- Program Equity
- Co-curricular Programs

Three items need to be discussed before the schools can move forward – sustainability/affordability, cultural interests, and educational opportunities. Will this process provide answers before moving into the next study phase? Mr. Clarke said this process should point out avenues to explore in the next phase (706 study). The 706 process requires a study committee and it becomes “property” of the Agency of Ed and not local Boards at this point. The proposal from this phase goes to the voters for approval. What is going to be presented to the voters should be in place by November.

Opportunities

Discussion of the opportunities was tabled until the next meeting.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2016 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Danville School. Topics of discussion will be opportunities that currently exist, the essential questions, and options.

3. Adjournment

A motion was made by David Towle and seconded by Jackie Folsom to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Hinman, Meeting Recorder