

1 Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)
2 Strategic Planning and Education Committee
3 Monday, April 18, 2016, 6 PM
4 RGB members attending: Jim Boutin, Jackie Kelly, Ed Letourneau, John MacDonald, Heidi
5 Pickering and Ken Swierad
6 CDC attendees: Michael Lawler, Meg Honsinger, Marie Pierre Huguet and Stephanie
7 Mulligan
8 Recorder: Sandra Redding
9

10 Jim Boutin called the meeting to order at 6PM and requested nominations for chairperson.
11 Ed Letourneau was nominated and unanimously elected as chair. Letourneau accepted
12 and directed the meeting to Lawler for updates. The superintendent reported that the
13 program signups are almost complete for the coming year. Some programs are seeing an
14 increase in numbers and others are lagging behind. Due to the current numbers, Lawler
15 opened a discussion concerning the following programs: building trades, design/
16 fabrication and sustainable foods. He shared that while the first two mentioned show a
17 significant increase, sustainable foods has a steady decline. There does not seem to be
18 much interest in agriculture at this time. We have been fortunate to fund Ag thru an
19 innovation grant. We have gained a great deal thru this, but sometimes, planned
20 programs do not always work out as expected. Lawler suggested we downsize the
21 program for the coming year, going to perhaps afterschool or summer activities until more
22 interest is established. We need to follow the energy and continue our outdoor plans,
23 (hoop house and gardens, interaction w/culinary) with the public and the Middle School.
24 Perhaps, a local florist or gardener might be interested in assisting a part time program.
25 Maybe forestry and culinary could establish a stronger connection to continue the
26 progress of the hoop house and the Community Share Program. There is no jeopardy
27 attached to any of these changes in plans. Supt. Lawler suggested that we should hold off
28 on hiring a new Ag instructor as the present instructor is not returning next year. Upon
29 advertising the position, we have only received a few applicants.
30

31 Lawler suggested due to the increase in student interest in building trades, that a second
32 instructor be added to accommodate as many students as possible, an instructor that
33 would fit the current and future needs of the program. Lawler would like the program to
34 continue working with Habitat for Humanity at their North Branch location and develop an
35 instructional class in-house for year one and introductory students. The present program
36 instructor, Brian Coon has been involved with the discussion of how to best serve our
37 students and their needs. We cannot continue the program as before, buying a lot,
38 building a house over two years, then, trying to sell that property. Also, large pre-fab type
39 buildings may not be housed inside the building trades area due to code difficulties.
40 Suggestions for the future include the Tiny Homes style of building, adding the fabrication
41 of cabinetry work, doors, flooring and finish wood working.
42

43 The committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the full board that a second building
44 trades instructor be added to accommodate the anticipated number of students. Also, it
45 was unanimously agreed to recommend to the full board that due to the low enrollment for
46 the sustainable foods program, that we do not hire an instructor for this program for the
47 coming year.
48

49 A discussion ensued concerning the highly anticipated inclusion of Burr and Burton
50 Academy to house a program and instructor for a technical program at their facility.
51 Unfortunately, at this time, due to state and local financial regulations, our hoped for
52 classes may not happen this year. Lawler and Boutin will be involved in researching
53 answers to this dilemma and will report their findings to this committee at the next
54 meeting. This will also be discussed at the full board meeting this evening.
55

56 Supt. Lawler mentioned that he had reached out to the Hoosick Falls Superintendent, Ken

1 **Facin, and planned to organize a meeting with him in the near future. Lawler also had**
2 **some thoughts on home schooled students and how we might encourage them to access**
3 **technical and career education as they might need and is their right. John MacDonald has**
4 **some contacts with these students and families and will research how we may assist**
5 **them.**

6
7 **Lawler informed the committee and brought forth a wonderful video made by students in**
8 **Tim Foley's video class. This video won first place in a national competition just recently.**
9 **We offer our congratulations to this talented instructor and students.**

10
11 **Ed Letourneau mentioned that there are a lot of teachers retiring at MAU and some may**
12 **not be replaced. He wondered if we might form a collaboration of some kind to work with**
13 **MAU and students to cover the needs of the students. The situation with embedded**
14 **credits would have to be looked at.**

15
16 **The committee agreed to meet May 16, 2016 at 6 PM before the next full board meeting.**
17 **Meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.**