

**A.R.E.A. Board for Grades 7 and 8, and Grades 9 through 12**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, May 4, 2009 – 7:00 PM**  
**Large Group Instruction Area**  
**Keene High School, 43 Arch Street**  
**Keene, NH**

**School Boards Present:**

<u>Chesterfield</u>	Judy Idelkope Deborah Clemente
<u>Harrisville</u>	Jack Calhoun Pamela Thayer
<u>Keene</u>	Kathleen O'Donnell Neil Donegan Carol Brown Carl Panza Amy Speas
<u>Marlborough</u>	Michael Briggs Lisa Mitchell Julie Farhm
<u>Marlow</u>	Stephanie Tickner (arrived 7:12 p.m.)
<u>Nelson</u>	Kelly French (arrived 7:15 p.m.) Betsey Street (arrived 7:20 p.m.)
<u>Stoddard</u>	Alfrieda Englund Marcia Kayser
<u>Westmoreland</u>	Michael Acerno Justine Fletcher

**Administration Present:**

Wayne Woolridge, Co-Supt., SAU 29  
William Gurney, Co-Supt., SAU 29  
Brenda Finn, Asst. to the Superintendents  
John Harper, Business Admin., SAU 29  
Doug White, Stoddard Supt., SAU 24  
Alan Chmiel, Keene High School Principal

**Others Present:**

Sarah Palermo, *Keene Sentinel* Reporter

**1. Introductions**

Wayne Woolridge called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Introductions were made by members of the 7 boards in attendance as well as the administrators present.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Woolridge entertained a motion to approve the minutes of 10/28/08.

**MOTION: Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/28/08. Ms. Carol Brown seconded the motion. By a unanimous voice vote the minutes were approved.**

## 3. Keene Middle School Status – *Mr. John Harper, Business Administrator*

- 38 million dollar bond approved in March by Keene School District voters to build new middle school on Maple Avenue property
- Frank Marinace (also architect for Marlborough School project) has been hired and signed contract April 1
- Ground breaking planned for spring 2010
- School to open fall 2011
- This summer new alarm system (approx. cost \$350k) to be installed in existing school as part of required life-safety upgrades
- Current middle school building will be sold once vacated

Mr. Woolridge asked for questions of Mr. Harper, there being none continued with next agenda item.

## 4. Keene High School - *Mr. Alan Chmiel, KHS Principal*

a. Virtual High School – Program began three years ago this semester as a pilot program. Students work independently taking online courses. Most students work at home, others use computers in the school library (computers provided through a grant).

The program has grown each year. There is a registration hierarchy which determines the course offerings. Keene High School has a trained coordinator and trained teacher resulting in KHS receiving first choice of class offerings.

Keene High School is allotted 51 slots per year (25 per semester plus 1 additional). Additional slot is provided for free in exchange for KHS administration/staff sharing benefits of the program with other schools (cost of additional slot would be \$850).

The completion rate and average grade for KHS is 88% (above the US standard). The courses students are enrolled in are college prep/honors level courses. Students are taking courses with instructors from across the country and the globe. For example, nuclear physics course taught by

professor from Los Alamos, New Mexico and a French course taught by ambassador from France are among the offerings.

Keene High School is a comprehensive high school however, Virtual High School classes offer students the opportunity to participate in courses that would not otherwise be available at KHS.

Discussion ensued with board members asking questions of Mr. Chmiel relative to the VHS program.

- b. Advisory – Three years ago New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) changed their accreditation criteria to include standards that are more student learning based. As a result, KHS implemented several changes that have since been commended by the NEASC in their recent review of the school.

Two years ago, KHS implemented an Advisory program with 35 staff members volunteering to serve as advisors to groups of 8-12 students. Mr. Chmiel has a group as well. Advisors meet with the students every month.

The students and the advisors have developed positive relationships. In instances when the advisor/advisee relationship was not a good match adjustments to groups were made. Advisory groups are composed of students from all social groups in the school. Students have bonded with each other and are supportive of their fellow advisees.

Discussion ensued over the challenges and positive outcomes of the program.

- c. School Improvement Plan – Keene High School made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a whole school, although did not make AYP for Special Education and socio-economically disadvantaged subgroups. In the past three years have not been able to achieve AYP two years in a row for all areas.

Two years ago KHS started a reading achievement program for ninth graders. Staff met with middle school guidance counselors to identify incoming freshmen in need of remedial help.

Two years ago established Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with core areas meeting to discuss curriculum and identify important material using NECAP as a base.

2009-2010 school year reading and writing labs will be instituted

and staffed by four English teachers. Will also implement “skinnies” – math and English courses taught in 45-minute segments. Hired new math teacher out of Title II to work with students with difficulty in math.

Discussion ensued over block scheduling and “skinnies”.

**5. A.R.E.A. Agreement – Mr. John Harper, Business Administrator**

Mr. Woolridge gave a brief overview on the status of the AREA agreement discussion for new board members. Discussion and review of the agreement has been ongoing since January 2005.

Mr. Harper referred to his memo dated April 16, 2009 previously distributed to board members. In the memo Mr. Harper refers to the October 28, 2008 AREA board meeting where he presented a three-year review of the AREA tuition rate calculation as well as information addressing concerns from town board members regarding why Keene may have a surplus in its tuition revenue budget in a given year.

The general consensus following the review is that the tuition calculation in place is fair. Mr. Harper stated that Stoddard has been looking at auditing the tuition process with the State of NH and SAU 24. Mr. Harper has provided all information asked of him and reports that the auditor has not been able to tie all of the numbers together from all sources.

Within Mr. Harper’s memo is the following motion which should be brought to each town board (provided they are in agreement). Keene has already passed the AREA agreement as is.

PROPOSED MOTION: Following such discussion, it was moved [by     ] and seconded [by     ]:

That the Board recommends that there be no changes to the 1986 Keene High School and Keene Middle School AREA agreements and that administration be directed to schedule another review of the ongoing agreements in 2026 or such earlier time as may be required by law.

If each district board passes the motion the Department of Education will be notified that the AREA agreement has been reviewed as required by law and each member district has agreed that there is no need to amend the agreement, and that it continues in full force and effect.

Discussion ensued with questions of Mr. Harper relative to the AREA agreement.

Mr. Harper stated that if all boards agree then there will be no further action necessary by the AREA board. If one or more district chooses not to accept the agreement as is, then the process of review will continue on as it has since 2005.

There being no further questions or discussion items, Mr. Woolridge entertained a motion to adjourn.

**6. Adjournment**

**Mr. Jack Calhoun made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Neil Donegan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

**APPROVED: 10/19/09**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Dieter  
Stenographer*