

**DRAFT FOR REVIEW 1/10/13**  
**Sullivan School District Special Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 8, 2013**  
**7:00 PM at the Sullivan Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

School district moderator pro tem C. Christopher Pratt introduced the officers pro tempore of the Sullivan School District; school board members pro tem Stephanie Jacques Kleine, Paul Bolduc, Dana Briggs, Jennifer Labadie (absent), Malinda Scherpa (absent); district clerk pro tem Mary Hull (absent), district moderator pro tem Chris Pratt. J. Labadie is attending the Monadnock School Board meeting this evening. JJ Prior will record meeting minutes in M. Hull's absence.

C. Pratt announced the formal school district election will take place March 12. Residents interested in running for school district office may file with M. Hull. The filing fee is \$1.

C. Pratt stated that there were representatives from other school districts present to answer questions.

**MOTION:** Motion to allow non-voters to speak upon recognition by the moderator. MOVED and SECONDED. Discussion: None. Voice vote. Motion PASSES.

**Article 1:** To see if the District will vote pursuant to RSA 194-C:2 to create a planning committee to study whether the Sullivan School District should withdraw from School Administrative Unit 93.

**MOTION:** MOVED and SECONDED. Discussion: None. Voice vote. Motion PASSES.

**Article 2:** To take any other action that may lawfully come before the meeting.

Stephanie Jacques Kleine thanked the voters and those who have been involved in the withdrawal process. She read a statement that summarized information about the new school district.

S. Jacques Kleine introduced members of the Harrisville and Nelson School boards, as well as school representatives and officials from School Administrative Unit 29.

Roger Sweet asked for information about the schools' after-school programs. Frannie Ashworth, director of Harrisville-Wells Memorial School after-school program, described the program's offerings. Kris Kleine asked what transportation would be provided. F. Ashworth shared transportation could be provided at the program's end that would bring Sullivan students to town center. Kelly French, Nelson School Board, spoke about Nelson's after-school program. Parents have been please with time allowed for homework. Nelson has no before-school care because there has been no demand, but the school board would be willing to start one if it is desired.

Elysia Bingham asked about transportation to the schools. S. Jacques Kleine said new quotes for bus transportation were received today from First Student. The costs are lower than anticipated by the Sullivan school study committee. If Nelson were chosen, it may be able to merge bus routes with Sullivan for further reduced costs.

Erin Macie asked about preschool special education services. S. Jacques Kleine said preschool will be handled in a similar manner to what is currently practiced by Harrisville and Nelson. Parents will be able to choose a preschool, and the school district will arrange for the special services to be provided. Ken Dassau, Surry School District superintendent and education consultant to Sullivan, wished to clarify these arrangements would be for pre-kindergarten students eligible for special education services according to an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Bruce Merrill asked about the building security of the elementary schools being discussed. K. French said that like many other districts, Nelson has met with SAU and police department officials since the 14 December 2012 tragedy in Newtown, Conn. and conducted building safety walkthroughs. Most recommendations were already

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in place. Some new recommendations are on order or in planning to implement. Emily Hartshorne, principal of Harrisville-Wells Memorial School said her school personnel are meeting frequently with SAU officials to discuss safety and security. Sheila Vara, principal of Nelson School, spoke about a phone alert system in place to quickly notify parents of news or information in an emergency.

Ann Sweet asked about the music programs at each schools. E. Hartshorne said the Wells Memorial School holds a “whole-school sing” and afternoon instrumental instruction. The school also participates in the New Hampshire Dance Institute (NHDI), a yearlong program. S. Vara said the band program is included in the Nelson School budget. The school is also in its third year of a strings program in collaboration with the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music. The school works with Children’s Stage Adventures to put on dramatic performances, and also participates in a NHDI program in some years.

Toni Ellsworth asked how Sullivan students are going to be welcomed into their new school. S. Vara said welcoming newcomers is a natural function of the Nelson School community. The school practices the Responsive Classroom approach and eat lunch at round tables with combined grades. Staff members sit with K-6 students daily. It feels like a family. K. French added that Nelson students are excited by the prospect of welcoming new friends. E. Hartshorne said Wells Memorial School also practices Responsive Classroom. The school will begin working on the process of welcoming Sullivan students as soon as a decision is made. Merging the community and efforts of parent-teacher groups would be important.

A question was posed about the academic transition. E. Hartshorne of Wells Memorial School would like to meet with teachers and leaders at Gilsum School. Looking at students’ needs will be important. The transition will be for families as well. Doing as much this year to address upcoming needs and interests will be crucial. S. Vara of Nelson said respect for all involved in the transition will be important. She wants to look at the whole child’s needs. Like parent-teacher conferences, we should want to serve each other well. There may be some sadness in leaving one school amid the excitement for the new.

E. Macie asked about Spanish language instruction, which is not currently offered at Gilsum Elementary School. S. Vara said Nelson is in its second year in a Spanish program after switching from French. The teacher will back up where needed, but will aim to inspire students. E. Hartshorne said Wells Memorial School has experience with students moving into the district. Differentiated instruction is important, and teachers focus on specific students needs.

Bill Paju asked how students are received and welcomed as individuals. E. Hartshorne said like most schools, a procedure is in place to transition new students to Wells Memorial School. Students are screened for academic needs. The social climate of the school will be built to help incoming students understand. S. Vara said of Nelson School much of the process is built into the social curriculum of Responsive Classroom. The teaching and practicing of social practices pay back in successes throughout the year. Jessica Walker, a Nelson School Board member and parent, described her son’s positive team building experience in a Nelson School program at Camp Takodah. The program was about trust and supporting each other.

Marlo Paju asked how many students would be moving into the school from Sullivan. S. Jacques Kleine said the number could be between 25 and 40, depending on how many choose to stay at Gilsum School. M. Paju expressed concern this number could double the receiving school enrollment, and that will be a real adjustment. S. Vara said she trusts her school staff in Nelson and is not frightened by the number of students. Talking through the process will help. The school will become a family, one day at a time. E. Hartshorne said she could echo many things regarding Wells Memorial School. Carefully structuring the opportunity for social successes in the first six weeks of school is crucial.

Matt Smith asked about increases in school personnel with the influx of Sullivan students. K. French said Nelson plans to add a full time teacher, increasing a half-time special education teacher to full-time, and adding paraprofessional tutor hours. The number of students will determine the changes. Harrisville School Board member Earl Horn said the grade 3/4 class could be upwards of 20 with Sullivan students. Wells prefers smaller class sizes. The school would look at adding a teaching position depending on enrollment numbers, increasing a 60 percent special education position to full time, or adding additional classroom aides.

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Mary Monroe asked what could be done for families of younger Sullivan students at Gilsum School whose families wish to remain there. S. Jacques Kleine said the withdrawal plan does not provide for current students in grade 3 and below to continue at Gilsum. E. Macie asked about the grade 5 and 6 students. S. Jacques Kleine said the tuition arrangement has not been set with Monadnock, but for those students continuing in Gilsum the Sullivan district will be charged a higher rate than Nelson or Harrisville. SAU 29 Superintendent Bill Gurney said any students transferring from MRHS to Keene High School should notify KHS as soon as possible to ensure the transfer of coursework goes smoothly.

Jeff Rondeau asked about the current school enrollments and the student-teacher ratios. E. Hartshorne said the Harrisville class sizes vary greatly by age. There are “bubble” years. S. Vara said this is true with most small schools like Nelson as well. M. Paju asked if classes combined would near 20 students, how many paraprofessional aides would there be. S. Vara said Kindergarten in Nelson might stand alone, and grades 1/2 would likely have a tutor. E. Hartshorne said specific needs for support at Wells Memorial would be considered once the final numbers were available.

M. Monroe asked about bus travel and pickup time. Many kids would be on early buses. S. Jacques Kleine said the bus routes haven’t yet been determined.

Bruce Merrill asked about the process moving forward for Sullivan School District. S. Jacques Kleine explained the need for volunteers for the SAU withdrawal study committee. The first meeting of that committee will be tomorrow at 8:00 p.m., after the school board meeting.

B. Paju asked how the school decision would be made. Will the surveys decide the school? S. Jacques Kleine said the Sullivan School Board will read the surveys carefully and vote on a school based on that input tomorrow night as its 6:30 meeting. The public is encouraged to attend.

**MOTION:** Motion to adjourn. MOVED and SECONDED. Voice vote. Discussion: None. Motion PASSES.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John J. Prior  
Recording secretary