

Salem/East Lyme Cooperative Study Group
May 12, 2010
Meeting Notes
9:00 a.m. East Lyme Public Schools, Central Office

In attendance:

From Salem: Steve Buck; Kim Garadee; Donna Leake, Pam Munro; Linda Robson (left at 10:32 a.m.)

From East Lyme: Mary Broderick (left at 10:45 a.m.); Nancy Burdick; Tim Hagen (left at 10:20 a.m.); James Lombardo; Don Meltabarger; Jeff Provost; Wayne Sweeney

Mary Broderick called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and proposed the agenda, as follows:

1. Selection of Co-Chairs for the Study Group
2. Recommendations from Administration Sub-group on Special Education Tuition
3. Next Steps

The committee agreed to the proposed agenda.

1. Selection of Co-Chairs.

Tim Hagen and Pam Munro were selected by the Study Group as Co-Chairs for the Study Group.

2. Recommendations from the Administration Sub-Group on Special Education Tuition.

Dr. Lombardo led a discussion of current thinking by Administration on Special Education Tuition. The philosophical position is that there should be one single tuition charge per Salem student attending East Lyme High School. This philosophy is in recognition that Special Education services have evolved considerably over the past 15 years, and it is impossible to separate the services since they are now so integrated into the entire educational system and process. There are two exceptions which will be cause for additional charges on a per student basis. The first exception is for students requiring "exceptional" Special Education Services, such as extended day services or partial day out-placement programs. The additional costs for such programs would be billed as excess cost over the per pupil tuition charge. The second exception is where there is special equipment required for a student in which the cost exceeds a threshold of \$1500. For example, Salem would pay for an individual computer with special software if the total price exceeded \$1500. If the total cost was less than \$1500, East Lyme would pay for the equipment.

The Study Group discussed the proposal in depth and several points were raised.

- The philosophical concept that all children are educated with equality in response to their individual needs is essential. Continuation of philosophy requires both school districts to be aligned and consistent at pre-school and grade levels K through 8 with identification and actions for addressing special needs. It will be important that both districts are moving in the same direction at all levels and that the dialogue and coordination is continuous.
- There are considerable opportunities for providing improved and more cost efficient services for children with Special Education needs through the development of in-house programs, such as ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) Therapy. Both districts are working together to prepare for such opportunities.
- The Alternative Education Program may become a component this concept, and Salem is part of the re-engineering initiative that has begun.
- Further discussion and thinking is required for how to handle tuition charges for a child that is part-time at the high school and part-time in out-placement program.
- A “white paper” is needed to help define the elements that have led to the philosophy of “one tuition rate.” A graphical depiction of the philosophy and its implementation could be useful in explaining the new system.

The Study Group concurred with the recommendation of the Administration Sub-Group on the philosophical basis for the proposal and recommended that it be shared with both Boards at the next Joint Cooperative Meeting.

Dr. Lombardo presented at a high level two approaches for calculating the tuition for a Salem student attending East Lyme High School. The first method uses the total education cost from ED001 with transportation and non-high school costs backed out. The second method starts with the high school costs and adds districtwide allocations accordingly. The Study Group discussed the two approaches and emphasized a commitment to “fairness” in which costs are shared equitably. The committee did not reach a conclusion on a method for tuition calculation.

3. Next Steps

The next steps were proposed, as follows:

- Present the philosophical basis for the new tuition calculation to the Joint Cooperative Meeting on May 17th.

- The Administration Sub-group will prepare a “white paper” which explains past practices and the rationale for the new approach.
- Continue further refinement of Tuition calculations.
- Schedule the next Study Group meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.