

TAX and SPENDERS PLAY ACCREDITATION CARD

The Monadnock School Board members, Administrators, and Teachers, now are hiding behind the accreditation myth to get more money from taxpayers. By using scare tactics like “your child won’t get into college if the school is not accredited by NEASC (New England Association of Schools & Colleges). It’s just a flat out lie by the tax and spenders.

Last April I visited Bellows Falls Union High School during school vacation because I thought BFUHS was on probation from NEASC. What I found out was BFUHS got rid of NEASC in the early 90’s, and has never looked back. The principal, Chris Hodgdon, and Assistant Principal, Ryan Parkman, indicated the NEASC cost was too high, and saw no value in continuing the relationship. I also spoke with Jon Ratti, who retired last June 30th as Director of Guidance, after 35 years in education. He said the school board was concerned that not making AYP and not being accredited would negatively impact students applying for college. Mr. Ratti spoke with admissions officers at Dartmouth College, Middlebury, St. Michaels, and the University of Vermont. All schools assured Mr. Ratti that they were not aware of schools not making AYP and the same was true for accreditation. No where in the application process to these colleges do they ask if the applicant’s school is accredited.

A school could get 15,000 applications, bottom line; the college evaluates the applicant or student, not the high school. It’s interesting to note that the highest SAT score ever recorded in Vermont, was a BFUHS student with no school accreditation. Accreditation is a big money maker for NEASC and for the price charged will give your school district a good or bad report to help get more money from taxpayers. Just pay the annual fee. You will get a report full of school talk no one really understands. Common sense must enter the accreditation myth, and the good folks at BFUHS asked me the questions;

Q. Does your district financially support the schools?

A. Of course: the local tax burden of 2007/08 was \$14,000,000.

Q. Do you receive monies from the State of New Hampshire?

A. Of course: 43% of our expenditures.

Q. Do you receive Federal money?

A. Of course: for Fed Food Service, Special Education, and grants including \$10 million MRPEOC grant that was mismanaged and wasted by both SAU 38, Antioch College, Keene State and other partners.

Q. Is your school district approved and accredited by your state department of education?

A. Of course. It is no easy task to become a co-operative school system in N.H.

Q. So why does your school district need NEASC???

A. It doesn't.

When there were eight separate school districts, NEASC was important to the small districts to help guide them with their small student populations and limited resources. In 1912 Vermont had 1400 one room school houses and NEASC was 27 years old. (Started in 1885). Those schools needed guidance, but then came larger school districts. Because of this growth the SAU (School Administration Units) were born and NEASC's real value diminished, as it should have, with very expensive SAU management teams taking over.

The NEASC report is full of half truths, misinformation, and gold tinted wish lists from the School Board, Administration, Teachers, and every kind of committee you can think of. You have Teachers suing the District, District suing the Teachers, with the report from NEASC becoming a big bitch session between the factions, with one thing in mind! Get what we want by scaring the hell out of the voters, especially those parents with young children and students nearing college age. The scare tactics include huge new facility expenditures, bloated Teacher contracts, and benefits including Pension Plans that voters can no longer afford in any school district. When is a benefit not a benefit to the district anymore?

If NEASC is dictating everything necessary to run our school district, why should the district pay the SAU 38 management team \$1,259,861 for high level management in the proposed budget? Where is the logic? Common sense would dictate NEASC or the SAU management team has to go. Being hostage to a Bedford, MA. Accreditation Company for the largest employer in the school district is ludicrous. Make no mistake; the SAU management team, the School Board and other factors (No Child Left Behind) are all to blame for the NEASC "probation". But, where was NEASC over the last ten years? They are just as much to blame for the Curt Cardine Administrations lack of progress, and NEASC has to take a big share of the problems mentioned in these self serving reports.

So what to do? Start by telling the voters the truth about NEASC, without the shameful scare tactics. It just erodes the voters' trust for the School Board and Administration even further than it is. It is now time for "common sense" about the school district's problems.

To Be Continued...

Richard E. Bauries
124 Sawyers Crossing Rd
Swanzey, NH 03446