

KIMBALL UNION ACADEMY STUDY COMMITTEE

The charge of this committee is to meet with representatives of Kimball Union Academy (KUA) administration to maintain an ongoing review of the relationship between the academy and the town, and to report its findings at annual town meeting. The committee held three meetings between November and January.

This year's committee focused on a dialogue between the town and the school concerning efforts to minimize the impact of COVID 19 on our community. Town Human Services Director Stephanie Schell and KUA's Director of Health Services Melissa Underhill joined the group.

Over the summer Kimball Union developed a health and safety program for operating in person. This program involves all KUA employees and students and their families. The program includes a social contract that guides behaviors such as hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing during the pandemic. The program also includes an extensive COVID 19 testing program, daily monitoring of students and employee health and daily disinfection of surfaces and filtration of the air in its buildings. Like many other educational institutions KUA adopted a school year model that was divided into only two segments (i.e. September to November and January to May). Understandably, Kimball Union has had to close all campus facilities to those that are not directly associated with the school.

The Academy received a Payroll Protection Program loan under the CARES Act. The loan proceeds have been instrumental in enabling KUA to maintain full employment and have limited the economic impact of the pandemic on KUA and the community. Town and School health officials have, as needed, been in constant contact.

In other news, Kimball Union has signed a new lease for the Meriden Post Office for a term of five years. The Academy has the option to terminate the lease with 365 days notice but no earlier than August 31st 2022. Kimball Union remains committed to working with the community to find a more suitable long term location for the village post office.

While slowed by the pandemic, Kimball Union has continued to make improvements to its campus to ensure that the school remains competitive. Capital projects over the summer of 2020 were focused on improving dormitory corridors, bathrooms and common areas.

The KUA Study Committee continues to pursue safety issues in and around the campus. In particular, the crossing of Main Street by the students is of the utmost concern. Suggestions of how to improve the safety of the crosswalks is an on-going priority.

Facts:

- *Kimball Union employs 144 people, 81 live in town (49 on campus, 32 off campus).
- *Currently, 19 local kids attend the private school, 11 of these students are from families unaffiliated with KUA.
- *It costs about \$22,000 per year to educate a Plainfield Elementary Student.
- *There are 28 students at PES from families of KUA faculty/staff.
- *The student tuition at Lebanon High School is \$16,818
- *The day student tuition at Kimball Union is \$42,400.
- *The boarding student tuition at Kimball Union is \$66,700.

The Meriden Fire Brigade, made up of KUA students, continues to provide assistance at many fire and accident calls during a school year.

Findings affirmed by your committee again this year:

Kimball Union remains committed to helping to educate those local students who are identified as likely to benefit from its education program, regardless of the student's ability to pay.

The only way for a local student's family to know whether Kimball Union is a viable option is to apply to the school. Many of the students attending the school receive significant financial aid.

Kimball Union has a direct interest in maintaining the high quality of the Plainfield Elementary school which educates the children of many staff members.

Plainfield Elementary students have traditionally performed very well at Kimball Union and Lebanon High School.

The town benefits financially from the many local students who choose Kimball Union over our publicly funded high school.

Recommendations: The committee continues to support existing and to advocate for new cooperative linkages between the Plainfield Elementary School and Kimball Union. It is your committee's view that these connections provide the best possible educational opportunities for local students and the best opportunities for saving tax money.

The Committee continues to feel that the Kimball Union Study Committee should be continued into the future. This committee provides a platform for discussing issues of common concern.

2020/21 Kimball Union Study Committee **Stephen Beaupre, John Yacavone, Andrew Keen, Robert Blake, Kate Whybrow, Robert Hewes, Stephanie Schell, Melissa Underhill, Stephen Halleran**