

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union District Board Meeting**
Minutes of Meeting
October 22, 2018

Members Present: Belvidere: Angie Evans; Cambridge: B. Sander, J. Sander, Laura Miller, Bernard Barnes, Sue Prescott (arrived at 6:25 p.m.); Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Tina Lowe, Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford; Johnson: Katie Orost, Angela Lamell, Mark Neilsen, Bobbie Moulton; Waterville: Amanda Tilton-Martin

Members Absent: Cambridge: Mark Stebbins; Eden: David Whitcomb; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant; Johnson: Eve Gagne

Others Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Michele Aumand, Diane Reilly, Jen Stevens, Dylan Laflam, Janet Murray, Brian Schaffer, Jeremy Scannell, Sherry Lussier, Jade Hazard, Melinda Mascolino, Mary Anderson (arrived at 6:08 p.m.); David Manning (arrived at 6:38 p.m.)

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Acting Chair Neilsen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Gallagher asked that the agenda be changed so that the Central Office Reports were before the Central Office Presentation. Barnes made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Tilton-Martin. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes of the October 8, 2018 Board Meeting: Lamell made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion, seconded by B. Sander, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Report: Gallagher highlighted the goals of the District as wanting students to be able to achieve and hold 21st century high skilled, high knowledge, jobs that would support themselves and others, that they be informed citizens and active leaders, and that they become heads of families and lifelong learners. Gallagher stated what needed to be developed was a new social compact with community partners. The new social compact would include students who were the most invisible and most impacted. Gallagher stated there was a 6,000-hour learning gap between children who have privilege and those who do not and by 5th grade they were 3 ½ years behind their peers.

Gallagher informed the Board that it was Principal Appreciation Month and she wanted to share some highlights of the work that staff were doing to celebrate the whole child:

- Mary Anderson wanted to bring service learning to the school. She wanted to help students understand teamwork, respect for animals, respect for elders and service. To that end, students has been volunteering at North Country Animal League and assisting at the community luncheon in Cambridge. The curriculum had been supplemented with another component that enriched the lives of students and adults.

- Jan Epstein, was new to the communities of Belvidere and Waterville. These communities had a rich heritage that she wanted to become more familiar with. Epstein developed a leadership team to look at the culture and climate of the school and how they could increase their outreach to the communities.

- Melinda Mascolino was very involved in the Farm to School grant and the CLIF grant this year. Every student and their families would have ten new books a year. 65 pumpkins and a large supply of potatoes were harvested as part of the Farm to School program.

- Diane Reilly had worked very hard to develop a coaching system in her school for literacy. She had physically changed where she was in her building and was now surrounded by students. She was able to greet each student every day and could do outreach based on what she saw.

- David Manning was the person largely responsible for the District receiving the safety grants. The District received more than most. He recently met with the Secretary of Education and was tasked with

giving his opinion on laws that would go to the Legislature on school safety issues. Manning was also asked by the AOE to provide a segment for 'What If Wednesday'. It had more views than any of the other segments on the School Safety site. Gallagher noted when students felt safer they were better able to access learning.

- Sherry Lussier was instrumental in organizing the Tanzania trip. Now every fire department in Vermont was providing materials to be sent to Tanzania. The benefits of the trip were far reaching with students working as a team and making strong connections.
- Chris Damato brought a level of integrity to the staff every day. He was able to have the hard conversations and was always thinking about what was best for the students.
- Wendy Savery had been instrumental in bringing Schoology to the middle school and worked diligently with middle school English teachers to work with high school English teachers on proficiencies.
- Denise Maurice was instrumental in helping teachers access the grading system in PowerSchool. She was helping teachers become more proficient in how they assessed students.
- Brian Schaffer had been invited to have C-Span come to the high school with their education program to teach students about legislative processes and civic engagement. This was one of the only high schools in the state that was invited to do this. Gallagher expressed appreciation for Schaffer's work on implementing restorative practices at the high school.
- Dana Jewett was the man behind the scenes who had helped all of his colleagues enter data around supervision and evaluation for teachers in a way that was user friendly and not as burdensome.

Central Office Presentation

Act 173: Jennifer Stevens reported to the Board on Act 173, the new special education funding mechanism that would be going into place in 2021. The goal of Act 173 was to enhance the effectiveness, availability and equity of services provided to all students who required additional support, not only students who received special education services. The Act changed the funding model from a reimbursement model to a census-based model and allowed more flexibility in how funds could be used.

Stevens outlined two studies that were done at the direction of the Legislature on state funding of special education and how services were delivered. The District currently funded special education through a block grant of \$630,000 in FY19, a special education expenditure report that was reimbursed at 60% by the State, and extraordinary costs reimbursement for students with costs that exceeded \$60,000. Issues identified with these three funding models were that it was administratively costly for the state and for the District, it was misaligned with current policy priorities of MTSS, it discouraged cost containment and lacked transparency.

The District Management Report was data from eleven supervisory unions across Vermont that outlined how schools were providing services to students. Five opportunities for improving services and supports for students were identified: 1. Ensure that the elementary Tier 1 core instruction met the needs of most of the students; 2. Students who required additional help be provided instructional time outside of their core classroom time; 3. Ensure students who struggled receive instruction from highly skilled teachers; 4. Create or strengthen a system-wide approach to supporting positive student behaviors, and 5. Provide students having more intensive needs specialized instruction from skilled and trained experts. Stevens explained that a District-wide MTSS team had been organized and met monthly.

Stevens reported that the census-based funding model would begin in the FY21 school year. This model was simple and predictable and was aligned with the policy priorities of serving students who needed additional support in both general education and special education. While Act 173 was law, rules had not been developed yet. Implementation of the funding mechanism would take a few years. In FY21 the AOE would calculate the uniform base amount for each supervisory union. Next year every supervisory union would receive a grant equivalent to the census amount multiplied by long-term membership. Service plans would continue but only for federal requirements and extraordinary costs.

B. Sander was concerned that this funding change could be used as an excuse to dilute funding. Stevens stated that the positive aspect of the census block funding was that it allowed funds to support students who needed additional help, as well as special education services. She thought that if the District had more funds for younger students, the number of students with a large skill set gap would be lower. Miller asked about funding for interventionists. Hazard stated money for interventionists was Title 1 funds and was a separate funding stream.

Hazard and Scannell reported to the Board on building equitable practices to empower students. In order to build equitable practices across the District everyone needed a consistent understanding of what multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) was. Scannell stated that the elementary schools now had interdisciplinary teams and they were strategizing the Tier 1 interventions for students. The middle school already had interdisciplinary teams. Strategies and processes were determined in these teams. These teams allowed teachers to come out of their classrooms and allowed for teachers to come together to share what strategies had worked. The high school had two problem solving teams working on referrals. The teachers talked about common students that they shared, what the student's strengths were, what the teachers concerns were and then documenting how to meet the needs of the student at the Tier 1 level in the classroom. Follow-up meetings would take place to determine if the strategies were working.

Hunsberger noted this strategy addressed both the behavioral and academic areas and was an opportunity for an intersection with the multi-disciplinary teams and the social service supports. This meant that teachers weren't in a position of constantly dealing with the behavioral, social and emotional pieces by themselves. A new continuum of care could be implemented. Gallagher agreed and stated the schools needed that pipeline because schools alone couldn't accomplish everything.

Hazard stated they were looking at a District-wide approach. Two areas the team wanted to prioritize in this work was academic proficiency and safe and healthy schools, which included working on the social/emotional piece. To that end, the goal this year was to strengthen Tier 1 instruction. Professional development was being provided to teachers in Universal Design for Learning, which was a framework for supporting success for all students. The three goals of Universal Design for Learning were to provide flexibility in how students were engaged, to provide flexibility in the way information was represented, and to provide flexibility in the ways students respond or show action or expression. Additionally, all teachers in the SU were receiving professional development on restorative practices. This year teacher leaders were being trained in how to train their peers on restorative practices.

Murray reported to the Board that there was now a need in Pre-K for both classroom teachers and special educators to come together as a professional learning community. In June, the mission and vision were reviewed. Murray noted that much of the work they did in Pre-K involved supporting and strengthening families. There was also a training on Bridges Math. Last year the Pre-K program served 135 students. This year that number had increased to 161 students. The number primarily changed because the Hyde Park students were back in their building and Cambridge added a 3-year-old classroom. Partner programs at 16 locations had a total of 47 students. Murray and Hazard then provided data to the Board on test results, stating that there had been growth in many areas.

Board Negotiations Council Update: Prescott made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss an update on negotiations. Board members, Gallagher and Clark were asked to remain. B. Sander seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:04 p.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 7:18 p.m. Prescott reported that the Board had reached a tentative agreement with the unionized support staff. The goals of both groups had been to raise the minimum wage. The agreement was that the minimum wage for the current unionized support staff would be \$13.40 hour and there would be an hourly individual increase of \$0.85 cents per hour. The hiring grid had not yet been finalized but the minimum wage on the hiring grid would be \$13.20. That allowed for some difference between current and newly hired employees.

Finance/Bond/Budget and Curriculum Committee Updates: Neilsen informed the Board the Finance/Bond/Budget Committee had met last week to discuss work that needed to be done at the high school. Miller reported that the gym was built in the 60's and needed work. The Committee was looking at a bond for the renovations. Laflam explained that the only areas in the high school that hadn't been renovated yet was the cafeteria, gymnasium and auditorium. The undercarriage of the gymnasium was rotten and asphalt had been used as a coating for a vapor barrier. Removing the asphalt made a \$300,000 project turn into close to a \$1 million project. Four years ago the project was going to be paid for out of capital reserve, but was deferred. Each year that it was deferred the price tag increased. This proposed renovation included a new roof, new doors and windows, insulation, bleachers and lighting, and reconfigured storage. The stage floor needed renovation because of a continual leak in a roof drain. The kitchen line needed significant work and new lighting would be installed. Laflam stated that architects and engineers were working now on estimates for the project.

Clark reported that the current facilities use issue, as far as available salaries and wages to support after-hours usage of all facilities, was getting significant pressure. Some funds were being put back in the FY20 budget, however, the current year was experiencing pressure. Clark stated creative ways might be needed to find money for the current year. Clark noted the Committee had reviewed the current finance reports and everything was progressing as it should. The first run of the budget had been reviewed and the Committee would be meeting on November 5th to discuss only the budget. Prescott stated they were looking at bringing the bond to a vote at Town Meeting Day and asked for comments from Board members. Barry noted the Committee had discussed beginning the actual work this summer but had decided that starting the actual work next summer would be best.

Lamoille Campus Bond – Approval of Capital Reserve Funds for Design/Engineering: Laflam requested approval from the Board for an expenditure of capital improvement funds for the design/engineering of this project in an amount not to exceed \$30,000. J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business: Gallagher reported that the first full day of mental health first aid training would be on January 15. This would be offered one day a month through May, was available to 25 people per training, and was free of charge. Gallagher noted she had been invited to moderate for the candidates next Tuesday and she encouraged Board members to attend. Finally, Gallagher informed the Board that the State Board of Education had provisionally recommended that Cambridge join the Union so that it would be one unified union.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by B. Sander, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

