

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
March 22, 2021**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Bill Sander, Denise Webster, Mark Stebbins, Sue Prescott (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Patty Hayford, Tina Lowe, Lisa Barry; Johnson: Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell, Bobbie Moulton, Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Michele Aumand, Charleen McFarlane, Denise Maurice, Tommy O'Connor, Erik Remmers, David Manning, Diane Reilly, Jeremy Scannell, Brian Pena, Bethann Pirie, Jennifer Hulse, Melinda Mascolino, Wendy Savery, Mary Anderson

Others Present: Miles Smith, Erik Hutchins, Heather Hobart, Darcey Fletcher, Jon Brown

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Nielsen, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. McFarlane requested that the agenda be amended to include the following item: Approval of the Hire of the GMTCC Culinary Arts Instructor. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

LNSU/LNEMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the March 8, 2021, meeting: J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller requested approval of the Board Orders that were placed on the agenda. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Presentation: Miles Smith, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Coach: Smith, who was working with the District as an equity coach, was introduced to the Board by Gallagher. Smith stated his focus with this presentation would be on the foundations of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Smith explained that combining equity, diversity and inclusion created a situation where all perspectives could come together in a positive, transparent way within a group or setting. Diversity involved the practices or qualities of including and involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, different gender and sexual orientations, and religious affiliations. Inclusion was the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities, and members of other minority groups.

Smith then discussed equity, noting that it was important to understand the difference between equity versus equality. Equality would mean providing all the same resources and opportunities to students, teachers and administrators. Equity was fairness in teaching students, teachers and administrators according to their perspective needs. Equity made equality possible. Smith offered that rather than follow the Golden Rule, people could follow the Platinum Rule: treat others how they wanted to be treated. Thinking about how others wanted to be treated allowed a person to look at a different perspective than the perspective a person might already have.

Speakers in a video that Smith provided stated that all students had the ability to succeed and the only reason students were not succeeding was because they were not close enough to the opportunities that would allow them to succeed. Education was not built for everyone. Oftentimes, adults and the system around them were blaming the students for their failures. The work that needed to be done was to look at the system around the student that was producing the outcomes. There were many students who needed more support to get through the educational system because they had a variety of things to cope with.

Educational equity was when every child had an opportunity to succeed in education regardless of race, zip code, color or ethnicity. It was important to meet the child where they were, to ask the student what they needed, and to give more to those who needed more when they needed it. Belonging and equity were connected.

Smith explained that diversity and inclusion was defined as a collection of human beings and the identities that coexist in the classroom, while inclusion meant how everyone interacted with each other and whether the situation was welcoming and reflected a sense of belonging. Equity meant that every child had an opportunity to succeed. He noted that in order for each child to succeed different strategies might need to be used. Smith noted that Generation Z were individuals who were able to use their voice. How did teachers acknowledge them and allow them to be who they were.

Smith then discussed responses to the privilege quiz he had provided the Board members prior to the meeting. The quiz provided an insight into the number of privileges available to some individuals. A video was then shown that highlighted the fact that privilege was something a person didn't have to work for. It was automatically given to the person. This work required that people understand the variety of privileges individuals had or didn't have. The work of the District involved making things equitable so that all students could succeed in school.

Gallagher expressed her appreciation to Smith for working with the Board and for the work he was doing with each of the schools.

Define Committee Meeting Schedule: The Board agreed that the Racial Justice and Curriculum Committee would meet prior to the first Board meeting of the month and the Finance and Technology Committee would meet prior to the second Board meeting of the month.

GMTCC Culinary Arts Instructor Hire: McFarlane informed the Board that the recommendation was to hire Sean Morrison as the Tech Center Culinary Arts Instructor beginning next year at a salary of \$54,365. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. Hayford inquired as to how many people had applied. Remmers stated there had been thirteen applicants. Five people were interviewed and two finalists were brought in for demonstrations with the students. Remmers noted that Morrison had received training at NECI and came with glowing recommendations from Michaels on the Hill. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Administrator Contract Renewal: Gallagher reported that she was recommending Erik Remmers for a three-year renewal of his contract. Gallagher reported the Tech Center had never had a director like Remmers. Remmers had developed relationships with sending schools that should have been in place before. The public relations and the virtual tour that had been developed for the Tech Center had taken it to a different level. The quality of candidates applying for positions was due to the growing reputation of the Center. Remmers had a great relationship with his staff and his door was always open. Gallagher noted that Remmers had teamed with Fearless Futures and inspired all in his work on equity, diversity and inclusion. He understood that students needed to feel they belonged. Students loved the Tech Center because they felt accepted. Remmers had Gallagher's highest recommendation. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve a three-year contract for Remmers. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Non-Represented Hourly Staff Increase for FY22: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to offer the hourly non-represented staff the same increase that the union members had received of \$1.00 per hour beginning July 1. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Ratify Teacher Master Agreement: Prescott asked for a motion to ratify the two-year Teacher Master Agreement for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the ratification. Prescott explained the settlement was reached after three meetings. The wage

settlement in the first year was that the base of the salary schedule would increase by \$250 to \$41,000. The value of each step would increase by \$45 to \$1,215. Steps 25 and 26 would be removed and teachers would advance one step. In the second year of the agreement the base would remain at \$41,000. The value of each step would increase by \$129 to \$1,344 per step. Steps 23 and 24 would be removed and teachers would advance one step. There were two language changes agreed to. The first was that teachers in the B15 column could advance two columns to the Master column after earning a Masters Degree. Otherwise only one column move was permitted per year. The second language change was removing outdated language related to health benefits. The motion passed unanimously.

Recess: The Board recessed from 7:15 p.m. to 7:19 p.m. so that Cambridge Board members could vote on the Teacher Master Agreement.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher noted there was an open Board seat for a Hyde Park representative. The notice had been posted. The School Board would make a decision in consultation with the Hyde Park Selectboard. Gallagher stated that Fagnant would like to rejoin the Board.

The in-service that was held at the elementary and secondary level was on equity and diversity. The Vermont Superintendents Association also held a conference on equity. There were some difficult conversations held in the breakout rooms but Gallagher stated that was a good thing. Some of the big themes were access and belonging having to go together. Conversations were only a step if action was not involved. Awareness and action needed to go together. A takeaway for Gallagher was the fact that it was dangerous to have individual breakout rooms and conversations without a skilled facilitator present. It took time and skilled facilitation to have these conversations.

Gallagher informed the Board of a notice going out on what was considered to be an outbreak in the District. An outbreak in public health terms included three or more individuals. There were two outbreaks in the District and they were already resolved. Gallagher noted Lamoille County was experiencing a rise in cases through community transmission. Flo Kelley and Gallagher were being criticized because they were asking siblings of close contacts to quarantine. Districts that didn't have that protocol in place had had to move to remote learning. The Department of Health approved of the District's approach and Gallagher stated the District's protocols were sound.

Gallagher then reported they had received guidance for the District's recovery plan. They were waiting to meet with state representatives to go over the metrics needed to put the plan in place. There was a great deal of money available and the money would be spent in three areas: academic recovery, social and emotional wellness, and student engagement. All three areas were being given the same weight.

Gallagher informed the Board that Brian Schaffer was out on FMLA leave and Bethann Pirie was now the Acting Principal.

Finally, Gallagher noted that GMTCC had hosted a vaccine clinic. Walgreens had come in and vaccinated all education staff that chose to come in for that purpose. Gallagher thanked the Board, the administrators, and staff for their support during this time.

Michele Aumand reported the District was participating in a statewide SU 5K. The participants would be working with a licensed fitness coach to do a ten-week challenge, which would take place from April 12th through June 19th. The training would be virtual and eighty people had already signed up.

Brian Pena reported that they were continuing with the District-wide wireless access point project. Phase 1 had been completed and they were now in Phase 2. It had been difficult to find vendors who were available and to find companies that were right-sized to do the project. They had submitted everything they could for the 70% reimbursement through the e-rate program. Pena reported they had been recalling and replacing some of the computers that had been provided to families due to some security issues.

Principal/Director Updates:

Cambridge: Anderson stated they were just getting back to school after having to go remote. They had been very successful with their remote learning. Staff had been able to participate in the in-service session with Miles Smith. One of the conversations in a breakout session had led to a longer conversation about the school's placement process. One teacher mentioned that conversations between teachers during the placement process could create some bias. As a result, they would begin sharing only academic observations.

Eden: Mascolino stated she had done her first contact tracing over the weekend. Everything went smoothly. The amount of siblings in the building had impacted the population that could be at school. Teachers were able to teach remotely for some of the students and also had in-person teaching for those in attendance. Mascolino said they had two professional development trainings that had been very good. One was with Miles Smith and the other was a responsive classroom training.

Hyde Park: Reilly reported they had a great professional development training with Miles Smith. Equity was a theme in many venues this week and she felt Lamoille North was at the cutting edge and the front line of this work. The school was setting academic goals and also setting up activities for the spring to keep the students engaged. Reilly was also excited about the wellness program and noted that she had signed up for the 5K.

Johnson: Manning stated they were closing in on almost all of the students being at school four days a week. The staff participated in the training with Miles Smith. The staff did a data inventory for an AOE process. He reported that it was clear that students had learned this year and that had been a big concern for him. However, there were more gaps than there would have been compared to a normal year. There were two vacant positions: a second grade teacher and a part-time literacy interventionist. Manning reported that he had signed up for the 5K.

Middle School: Maurice reported that the road shows to the elementary school would all be virtual and would begin this week. Board members were invited to attend. Sixth graders would be able to ask questions, to learn about the school, and relieve some of the stress they could be feeling about going to middle school. During the professional development days, one of the things they were investigating was the 100% respect campaign. This was a way to pull together different aspects they had been practicing at the middle school, such as work in restorative practices, anti-bias work, work with Miles Smith, Lancer Pride expectations and student voice.

High School: Pirie reported that the Quarter 4 schedule had been built and students had submitted their course requests. The SAT would be administered to almost 40 juniors and groups would be split between locations to ensure physical distancing. For the high school's professional development, they had welcomed Emily Nielsen and over the course of the two-day training educators were asked to consider the ways in which schools had historically perpetuated racial inequity. Pirie was looking forward to morning announcements when they would be welcoming Representatives Kesha Ram and Kate Donnally into the virtual morning meeting as the school continued to celebrate Women's History Month at the high school. Members of the racial justice chat group had spent a great deal of time organizing very thoughtful presentations and discussion prompts both in March and in February for Black History Month.

GMTCC: Remmers reported they were approaching 180 applicants for next year. He noted that they had about 40 Pre-Tech student applications and only 22 spots. Teachers were having individual interviews and meeting with students and parents over Zoom to see whether a program was the right fit for the student. There was now one applicant for the automotive position. Remmers stated they had recently amended their GEER grant. GMTCC had been awarded \$315,000 and the funds would be used to do an infrastructure overhaul of tech systems in the building so that they would have strong systems now and into the future.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.