

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
October 26, 2020**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Bernard Barnes, Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Bill Sander, Sue Prescott, Mark Stebbins, Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Lisa Barry, Tina Lowe, Patty Hayford; Johnson: Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell, Katie Orost, Allen Audette, Jr., Bobbie Moulton; Waterville: Bart Bezio

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

Others: Eric Hutchins, Galen Reese, Yvonne Jones, Betzi Goodman, Denise Webster,

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Orost made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the October 12, 2020 meeting; Minutes of October 12, 2020, Technology Committee Meeting: Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students Policy – 3rd Reading: Gallagher noted she had recently made several changes to the policy. One change was to include students in the adult education program in the policy. The second change was to remove the timeline in which teachers could contact students, because it should be based on the schedule set forth by the teachers. The third change was to remove the wording that stated that personal information couldn't be shared. It had become clear that teachers and students often shared personal information about things such as their hobbies. Following conversations with Board members and others, that wording seemed to be too restrictive. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Orost, to adopt the policy. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office/Director Updates: Gallagher stated that wellness surveys had been distributed to staff. The responses had been received and the results would be disseminated to the building principals. Principals would be meeting with staff to support the needs they had stated were most important to them. Not all schools had the same needs. Some would like more COVID counseling, some would like more communication that wasn't related to COVID. Some wanted to problem solve with colleagues and others wanted to problem solve on their own with resources. Information would be provided to the Board when the results were finalized.

Teacher and family surveys were distributed to review how people felt things were going, as the District was within the thirty to forty-five day reopening timeline. Gallagher was grateful they had not moved faster in bringing more students back because the new guidance was much more restrictive. The District was not going to be able to accommodate everyone who wanted four days of in-person instruction. The prior guidance stated that three feet plus/minus where possible and feasible for Pre-K through Grade 6, and six feet, if feasible and possible, for Grades 7-12. The new guidance took away the flexibility. Now they are requiring three feet minimum, even if there was a barrier, Pre-K through Grade 6, and six feet minimum for Grades 7-12. The new guidance would be effective November 16th. The survey to families would close in two days. The District would continue to honor four-day requests if it was possible under these new restrictive guidelines. The guidance was now very clear

and it was helpful to everyone in the administration to have that clarity. There was no sports guidance available yet.

The previous guidance stated that any school closing would be made in collaboration with the Department of Health. The new guidance stated the Department of Health would provide guidance but if there was any impact on the District's ability to operate, i.e., staff shortage, the District could make decisions based on what they had in hand. Numbers were going in the wrong direction. Gallagher stated that people had approached her in public and stated that COVID was like the flu. She stated it was not like the flu. The flu didn't kill as many people as COVID has. It was incredibly contagious. Gallagher stated that Union Elementary had to go fully remote. They started in very contained pods with one case. That eventually turned to nine cases and it jumped pods and grades. They weren't sure how that had happened. Gallagher was grateful that LNNUUSD hadn't had to make multiple schedule changes. She stated that with the new guidance, each elementary school, the middle school, and high school would need to be reviewed to ensure distancing was being followed and adjustments were made as needed.

Gallagher requested that Board members review the new guidance so they could respond to residents who had questions. Bill Sander stated the procedures made sense. He believed if there was any error it should be on the side of caution. He applauded Gallagher for her efforts. Gallagher expressed her appreciation, but noted that decisions were now easier to make because the guidance was finally spelled out. Flo Kelly stated she supported Gallagher 100%. Kelly said it was really important that they had been cautious. She was also proud that the organizations worked together to think of things that would support the districts. Another change was the travel question change, which was now mandated. Kelly stated it was really important to pull together as a community and to keep responding to what was going on. We were in a pandemic and the District had done very well. It was important to keep things status quo.

Gallagher stated an issue that was still front and center was racial justice. There was a lot of racism in the communities. The Board had discussed equity, respect, inclusion, and safety, but it was important to specifically talk about racial justice and what the District schools could do about that. There had been some Board training and recently a parent group had formed around this issue. That group was growing and was very interested in helping the District move forward. There was a situation that Gallagher had discussed with the Board last year. While that was the only situation that had risen to this level, she was seeing a lot of bias and racism in the community. It was important to talk about it a little bit more. Additionally, teachers and staff needed to be supported in their conversations with their students. They needed to understand the vocabulary to use and be supported in those conversations when it was known there were some people who were going to be very uncomfortable with them.

There were now two Equity Co-Directors: Jen Hulse and Bethann Pirie. They were going to work together to identify what it meant to be an equity co-director and to encompass racial justice and other forms of social injustices. They had asked that there be teams from each school that could carry out the work. Gallagher reported the names of the individuals at each school who would work on this. The first step would be to identify what the work was. The Board had already adopted an equity policy, but it was broad. Now the group was working on a mission statement for the District, outlining what was important, including how to have difficult conversations, supporting students of color, racial justice and other things. Mark Nielsen would be attending a racial justice committee at the high school. This needed to be a system-wide discussion and not one that only occurred at the high school.

Gallagher wanted to have a deeper conversation about this at the next Board meeting on November 9th. One of the parents in the parent group had suggested having speakers. Not only would speakers come to the school, but Gallagher would also like the speakers to come to the Board. She knew the Board wanted the best for all of the students and she wanted to bring up some of the issues that hadn't been discussed in a meaningful way prior to now.

Clark reported on the recent IT event, stating that since the last meeting IT had installed temporary print solutions and had submitted several files to the forensic group for review. The good news was that it appeared there was no data breach and no data exfiltration. A new, temporary, next generation anti-viral program and an end point detection and response program (EDR) had been installed on all systems. IT had been instructing all personnel on use of their Google drive so they could back up their documents on a separate cloud-based server. The District was now working on an RFP for a permanent anti-viral and EDR. The RFP would be finished this week, would go to the IT Committee for review and then out to vendors. Quotes should be back in time for the November 9th meeting. Clark stated that IT was now working on a permanent print solution with Symquest. The staff was continuing to work on rebuilding the internal server systems. Additional functions would be moved to cloud-based services.

Budgeting would begin next week and would look different because they had limited access to the accounting software. Clark would be contacting the Finance Committee soon to determine a meeting date. A finance report would be provided to the Board at the November 23rd meeting.

Principal/Director Updates:

Eden: Mascolino reported that things were moving forward. People were starting to become fatigued with all the challenges. While they had been getting outside, having to be inside more often was tough. Staff had been out with colds and they were stretched a little thin with only one substitute. A floating substitute had just been hired for three days a week, which was going to be helpful. From the family survey they had 21 requests to go from two days to four days a week and one to go from remote to two days and one from remote to four days. Looking at those numbers, Mascolino was sure they wouldn't be able to meet all of the requests because of space in classrooms but she thought they could increase some student attendance on Thursdays and Fridays.

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein reported she could echo much of what Mascolino had said. Epstein would be meeting with Laflam to look at some space issues. She had rooms with some extra adults in them and part of the guidance was that adults required more space than children. Preliminary data showed there were two or three families who would like to switch their schedule. They had been down three paraeducators and had just finished hiring individuals to fill those three positions. They were now finished with assessments and things were looking good. They did not see as much regression as they had initially thought they might.

Johnson: Manning stated he was humbled by the support he had received over the last three weeks. It meant a lot to him. He was working remotely part-time over the past two weeks and hoped to expand his hours in the near future. Johnson had a very strong team at school and staff has done a great job in his absence. Mr. Lukens class had done a writing workshop with an author. Miss Newberg's 4th grade class did an engineering project learning about how COVID could spread. They then designed tools they could use to open doors that they kept at their desks. Because the substitutes from last year did not want to work this year, they had just hired a floating sub. Manning provided an example of the caring culture of the LUHS student community, in which several juniors and seniors stayed with a freshman as he waited to be picked up after school so that he wasn't alone.

Hyde Park: Reilly expressed appreciation for the information principals were receiving and the foresight in planning. Reilly stated they had just hired their last food service person. In the meantime, Karyl Kent had been coming to the school every day since the beginning of the school year. Just the fact that everyone was pitching in had been great. A disc golf course was now up and running. Reilly noted that the students who were hybrid were now doing passion projects on their days at home. Reviewing the family surveys, Hyde Park would try to get as many students in as they could. She had taken in as many students from the upper grades as they could. There was more availability in grades K-2. Currently there were 22 remote students, with two requesting to come back to school.

Cambridge: Anderson reported they could use a substitute, but were making the best of it by pulling staff from other jobs. Cambridge was seeing more staff members having to stay home with COVID-like symptoms. Anderson thought that was going to be the greatest hurdle during this time and assumed there would be times in the future where they would be maxed out and not have enough people to

cover classrooms. In the meantime, they were doing their best. Faculty would do anything to make it work. Anderson stated they all appreciated Gallagher's leadership. Anderson noted there were a number of families who wanted their students to come for 4 days a week. A staff member had proposed adding another 6th grade classroom to accommodate numbers there and Anderson would be talking with the Cambridge Board about this.

Middle School: Maurice agreed with Manning that the Lamoille Union community was amazing. Maurice had a great team, with both the office and the teachers pulling together. She couldn't ask for anything more. They were pushing forward with their assessments to see where students were so they could make plans for the remainder of the year. They had been creating lesson plans that could easily adapt to having to potentially go remote and looking at different ways to format their classrooms to have as many students in 4-day learning as possible. It was tough but their motto was improvise, adapt, and overcome.

High School: Schaffer provided an update on team sports. Schaffer introduced Bethann Pirie, the Dean of Students. He said she had been doing great work moving from a teaching position at Hyde Park Elementary School to her new position. Pirie stated she was very grateful for the ongoing support, the timely communication, and everything that had been coming from the Superintendent and Central Office. She noted how easy her transition had been and it was clear this was a very supportive community.

Throughout the first quarter she had been part of many teams that had been meeting weekly, reflecting on what they had learned from students and their first quarter experiences. She had been working with the school counselors, the intervention team, and Bethany Turnbaugh who had introduced her to the Restorative Justice Center. The teams were making small adjustments in order to support both in-person and remote students as they moved forward into the second quarter.

GMTCC: Remmers thanked Jan and Bill Sander who on behalf of the Vermont Automobile Enthusiasts presented the Golden Wrench Award to one of their students. The award came with a good deal of tools and a plaque that would be mounted in the main lobby. GMTCC was plugging along and students were getting hands-on experiences with the skills they had come to GMTCC for.

Memorandum of Understanding with Association: Prescott informed the Board they had signed a contract with the Teachers Association and the Memorandum of Understanding was for this current period of time in which the working and teaching responsibilities were quite different. The BNC was bringing this forward with the approval of the Superintendent and the administrators at all of the schools. Orost made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding for the current contract year ending on June 30th, 2021. B. Sander seconded the motion. The motion then passed unanimously.

Personnel Matter: McFarlane requested that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter and invited Gallagher, Maurice and McFarlane to attend. Miller made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Hunsberger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the Board went into Executive Session at 6:46 p.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:58 p.m.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Barnes, to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.