

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
May 11, 2020**

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

Board Members Absent: Cambridge: Bernard Barnes; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Charleen McFarlane, Michele Aumand, Janet Murray, Denise Maurice, Brian Schaffer, Jeremy Scannell, Jennifer Hulse, Diane Reilly, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Mary Anderson, Brian Pena, Wendy Savery, Erik Remmers

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Gallagher requested that the approval of a Hyde Park special educator be removed from the agenda. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the May 4, 2020, SPECIAL meeting; April 13, 2020, Curriculum Committee Meeting; May 1, 2020, Finance & Capital Committee Meeting: Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve all of the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion to approve the Board Orders. Prescott seconded the motion and the motion passed, with Bezio abstaining from the vote.

Personnel:

Approve ECS Special Educator Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Danielle LeVine under a Lamoille North contract at a salary of \$45,670. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Orost, to approve the recommendation. Mascolino explained that one special educator had left to teach at another district next year and another special educator had decided to stay home with her children. This left Eden with no special educators. Eden had an above average percentage of students on IEP's. There were six new referrals for special education evaluations this year, with the total caseload being over thirty students. This number did not include Pre-K students. Eden would be filling the second position with a special educator transferring from another school within the same district. The motion then passed unanimously, with Cambridge members abstaining.

Approve Recommended LUHS Courses: Nielsen reported that the Curriculum Committee had met several times to review the suggested course listing. They were now moving the information to the Board for approval. Orost made a motion, seconded by Miller, to approve the recommended course listing. Schaffer reported they hoped to be able to provide these courses in the fall and they were currently involved in the course selection process. The motion passed unanimously.

Eden Town Property Use Agreement: Clark reported this was the second year of the Eden property use agreement. After the merger, Eden wanted to formalize the agreement as the District and Eden use each other's property. Clark requested that the Board authorize execution of the agreement. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Orost to approve the request. Whitcomb asked if there were any changes from last year and Clark reported there were none. The motion passed, with Cambridge members abstaining.

Approve Acceptance of Federal Funds & Subgrant Agreements and Assign Agent(s) for Financial Matters: Clark stated this was an annual subgrant agreement that included both the LNSU and LNMUUSD elementary and secondary schools. The LNSU acted as the grant recipient and then sent funding out to individual schools. Moulton made a motion to approve the subgrant agreement and authorize the execution of the agreement, seconded by Whitcomb. The motion passed unanimously.

Harassment Investigation: Gallagher stated she had forwarded a report concerning a harassment investigation to all Board members. All names had been redacted. The parent asked that most of this conversation be held in public session. It was clear within the report that all procedural measures were followed and the District was in compliance. The fact that the school followed the rules was not the issue in this case. However, it was clear there was a problem, as both the student and the parent felt that the student has been racially harassed since 7th grade. When Gallagher asked the parent why she hadn't approached the Superintendent sooner, the parent said the matter had been handled at the building level and the parent was unaware there was another place to go to address the issue. Gallagher stated she would be looking at safety plans within the schools, would review the climate being fostered, and provide training and education.

The District had partners in this effort. The Restorative Center would be providing bias training and the Racial Equity Alliance (REAL) would assist in embedding professional development training for staff and students. Students from Lamoille South were part of the Alliance and were interested in reaching out to Lamoille North students. Gallagher wanted that communication and partnership to be made possible. Not only did Gallagher want to provide training for staff and students, but she also wanted to provide the Board with training. Gallagher expressed her appreciation to Kate Donnally from REAL who had been very helpful in offering assistance. It was clear that the District needed help, because some of the comments in the report were not acceptable.

Bullying, harassment and hazing investigations were done at the building level and they were done well. However, given what Gallagher was seeing, she would now ask that every harassment investigation involving race come directly to her following the building's investigation. Bezio asked how quickly the District could address some of the recommendations in the report. Gallagher stated they were already addressing some by partnering with the Restorative Center and REAL, and receiving professional development training. There was also online training with SafeSchools. Additionally, Wendy Savery was working very hard to look at how to push the notion of equity in all matters.

Central Office: Gallagher highlighted recent announcements from the Governor and the Secretary of Education. Playground structures were still off limits. As far as graduations, Gallagher stated they could safely assume that the number of people able to gather would increase between now and graduation. On May 8th, the District was told to abide by the 'ten person or less in a group' requirement. The elementary school principals would be developing a graduation plan that would be consistent across all schools. The high school was looking at options that were palatable. When Gallagher asked the Secretary of Education if drive-throughs were acceptable, she was informed that if individuals got out of their vehicles, they should be asked to leave. It was unclear how to supervise students, families and extended families at a graduation and to control the environment.

The guidance on summer camps stated that as of May 8th summer camps could take place. Gallagher was concerned about camps opening because they were seeing a growth of a new COVID-19 inflammatory condition in children that mimicked Kawasaki Syndrome. The State was looking at how to tutor the neediest students. Gallagher stated that if more of those potentially fatal childhood COVID illnesses occurred, summer camps would not take place. Gallagher also wondered about preschool in the fall. The AOE had asked Districts to prepare for remote learning in the fall. Gallagher stated that by opening up various industries, it was likely there would be a spike in cases. Until a vaccine was available, things would not go back to normal. It appeared that colleges were already moving to remote learning in the fall. Gallagher stated the guidance was that if a summer program took place, the District would need to be

prepared for an immediate shutdown. If there was one confirmed case in the summer or fall, that school would be shut down. Gallagher noted that she had asked the Secretary of Education if he would allow fewer than 175 days this year so that teachers could have the time to plan for contingencies and if not, could school start later. This question would hopefully be answered at the next phone conference.

Gallagher commended Brian Pena for his vigilance in ensuring that every family and teacher had access to technology. Pena had also been able to bring greater broadband to Belvidere. Gallagher then reported that Rich Westman had stated that, as it currently stood, money from the federal government could not be used to cover state budget gaps. They were working very hard to change that but until that happened the District would need to be careful with their budgeting and finances.

Clark reported the forecast was still dire and the District was still being asked to look for savings and to be as frugal as possible. Clark also commended Brian Pena, stating he and his team had assisted in getting all of the administrative staff up and running.

B. Sander stated there seemed to be a lot of magical thinking. The idea that the virus had peaked was unrealistic. The numbers were still going up at a fantastic rate. He urged that the District be exceedingly careful about holding graduation ceremonies. The finances were an issue as well with plummeting tax revenues.

Principal/Director Reports:

Eden: Mascolino reported they had hired a fourth grade teacher, they had a full time literacy interventionist position they were interviewing for and a half-time interventionist position that they wouldn't be replacing in order to help with the budget. Three teachers hadn't signed their contract yet. She reported she would most likely RIF a paraeducator to assist with the budget.

Johnson: Manning reported they were looking into graduation plans. He noted there was some staff fatigue and teachers were feeling the strain of doing the work without being able to connect with students in person. There was also a slip in the amount of work being turned in by students. However, this tended to happen during this time of year. The student counselor was going above and beyond to personally connect with students. Manning met with the leaders of the Town of Johnson to discuss opening the playground. The decision was to leave the school and town playgrounds closed. Manning was currently interviewing for a school nurse. He was working with Janet Murray and Jen Hulse to fill a special education position. Manning reported the Spanish teacher had resigned but he would be holding off on posting that position in an effort to provide budget savings.

Hyde Park: Reilly reported they had fifty participants at their staff meeting. She felt that the teachers were settled in, working together, and engaging each other and the students. They were accessing free online professional development, with technology skills being an area they were focusing on. Reilly expressed her appreciation to Brian Pena and his team for supporting her staff. Each week the Community Connection team created a video for the students. The teachers enjoyed reaching out to the students in this way. Currently they needed to hire a music teacher and a special educator. Caseloads were extremely high for the three special educators. Reilly RIF'ed two full-time paraeducators in order to support hiring a special educator to provide case management and deliver services.

Cambridge: Anderson informed the Board she had been busy hiring. Two first grade teachers, a fifth grade teacher, a school counselor, a math/literacy interventionist and a kindergarten teacher have been hired. They had been very lucky to find very qualified individuals.

Middle School: Maurice reported they were in the process of brainstorming about what the virtual end of the year would look like. She was confident it would be special and something the students would remember. Today was the first of seven Mondays that Healthy Lamoille Valley, in partnership with

Lamoille County Mental Health, met with parents to offer support. There were breakout rooms for middle school and high school parents and the discussion involved some of the frustrations people were experiencing with remote learning. They had received well-qualified applicants for a science position and a Dean of Students position.

High School: Schaffer stated that they had paused on hiring due to the pandemic. They had changed the position of assistant principal to now be a Dean of Students, a change that should provide some savings. They also had an administrative assistant vacancy. The band teacher would be leaving and Schaffer talked about the significant impact this teacher had made in the District. There were vacancies in French, science, and chemistry. Discussions about a graduation ceremony included putting the ceremony off until it was possible to meet in a larger group setting or possibly a curbside diploma pickup. Schaffer then reported that local businesses provided discounts and gift cards to teachers and employees for Teacher Appreciation Week.

GMTCC: Remmers stated he was trying to fill a business instructor position. They were also in the process of hiring a math specialist, a position that would be funded through the Perkins Grant. The State would be looking at growth in math using a common assessment for all CTE centers starting next year. Remmers then discussed the number of conditional acceptances for next year. There were currently 161 full time conditional acceptances versus the current 124. In all but one program the numbers had gone up. They were currently receiving applications for the program that went down slightly. The projected full time enrollment was 170. He noted that those numbers did not include the Foundations Program.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.