

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
May 10, 2021**

**Board Members Present:** Cambridge: Sue Prescott, Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Denise Webster, Mark Stebbins; Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Tina Lowe, Lisa Barry, Patty Hayford; Johnson: Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell, Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

**Board Members Absent:** Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Bill Sander; Johnson: Bobbie Moulton

**Administrators Present:** Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Charleen McFarlane, Wendy Savery, Tommy O'Connor, David Manning, Denise Maurice, Diane Reilly, Jan Epstein, Melinda Mascolino, Mary Anderson, Bethann Pirie, Erik Remmers

**Others Present:** Erin Carr, Eric Hutchins, Nicole Chauvin, Ila Campbell, Lily Walsh

**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. McFarlane requested that the agenda be amended to include approving a Hyde Park Elementary School Second Grade Teacher. Whitcomb made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Hayford. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

**LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items**

**Minutes of the April 26, 2021, meeting, Finance & Capital Committee Meeting, Technology Committee Meeting, Social/Racial Justice Committee Meeting; April 16, 2021, Personnel Committee Meeting.** J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** Miller made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the Board Orders as reported on the agenda.

**Hyde Park Elementary School Second Grade Teacher:** McFarlane informed the Board that the recommendation was to hire Kelsey Baraw at a salary of \$41,000 as the second grade teacher at Hyde Park Elementary School (HPES). Orost made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. McFarlane reported that Baraw was from Hyde Park and had gone to HPES. Reilly stated that Baraw had worked in the afterschool program since high school and had been an assistant director there. Reilly said that Baraw's advisor from NVU told her that Baraw was one of the best student teachers he had ever had. The motion passed unanimously. Cambridge Board members abstained from the vote.

**Students' Interest in the News – Student Presentation:** Ila Campbell reported on a survey several students did asking students if they were interested in the news and how they got their news. Results showed that students were interested in the news but they had trouble engaging with it. The results of the survey were posted on the bulletin board and a report was done on it. Gallagher asked how students would like to engage with the news at school. Campbell suggested bringing up topics that students were interested in during class and having classroom discussions. Lily Walsh stated the top five issues that students were interested in were women's rights, environmental awareness, racial justice, LGBTQ and gun rights. Working those topics into morning circle or morning announcement would be a good strategy.

Gallagher asked if they had suggestions on how to engage more students. Walsh suggested working the discussions into the curriculum and educating students on the topics they were interested in. Campbell stated the Board was the first group they were sharing the survey information with. Gallagher reported that she saw from her visit to a classroom that there was no such thing as student apathy. Students were very interested in relevant events. Pirie stated it had been amazing to watch the project unfold. She had

seen so many students stop to read the bulletin board that these students had created. Pirie thought the staff would be interested in hearing some of the results. Gallagher suggested that anything the students were interested in working on was available to them. She suggested continuing to work with Hutchins, Pirie, and their peers to ensure their voice was heard. She was very thankful that the students were comfortable presenting to people they didn't know.

Hutchins stated that project-based learning was a new way for him to teach. He recognized that every time he got out of the way and let student voice take the lead, good things happened. Hutchins reminded the Board that these were 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who had advocated to speak with the principal and to come to a School Board meeting to speak to the public. Hutchins stated that students cared about a lot of things. It was the school's role to determine how to meet the students where they were. Hutchins stated it was a call to action.

J. Sander thanked both of the students for coming to the Board. She stated that it was a wonderful project and hoped they felt free to come back to the Board. J. Sander noted that sometimes a Board member felt isolated from the actual school and the students. Nielsen offered the suggestion to Walsh and Campbell that they not lose their voice and to not be afraid.

**Review Bids for HPES Professional Development (Grant Funded):** Clark informed the Board that they had gone out to bid for professional development services in the area of social and emotional learning. The bid went out to four vendors and they had received two responses. One response was from The Origins Program from Developmental Design and the other from Responsive Classroom. The Origins Program would cost between \$15,000-\$22,500 for two groups of students. The range was from 20 to 30 people. The Responsive Classroom would cost \$21,000 for up to 30 participants. Reilly recommended the Origins Program through Developmental Designs for the solid school-wide framework for elementary and middle level students. Reilly noted that The Origins Program had a program that was similar to the Responsive Classroom, but it was at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, where the developmentally age appropriate difference occurred, meeting the needs of young adolescents and adults who worked with them. The grades 5 and 6 advisory program was exemplary and it would provide consistent language and approaches for all staff and students in the building, Pre-K through Grade 6. Clark stated the recommendation was to move forward with The Origins Program through Developmental Designs at a cost of between \$15,000 and \$22,500. Webster made a motion, seconded by Fagnant, to approve the motion. Miller supported the recommendation, having worked with the training in the past. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge Board members abstaining from the vote.

**Personnel Matter:** Gallagher reported this item was a follow-up to a personnel matter that was discussed in Executive Session two meetings ago. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Orost, to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. McFarlane and all Board members were invited to participate. The Board went into Executive Session at 6:21 p.m. The Board then came out of Executive Session at 6:31 p.m.

**Appoint Interim LUHS Principal:** Gallagher stated that Brian Schaffer had resigned his position as the High School principal. Gallagher noted that Bethann Pirie had been holding down two positions for the last several months: Dean of Students and Acting Principal. Gallagher asked the Board for a motion to appoint Bethann Pirie as Interim Principal for 2021-2022 school year. Gallagher noted that Pirie was from Hyde Park, had taught at Hyde Park, was familiar with the communities and she was student-centered. Stebbins made the motion, seconded by Orost, to approve appointing Pirie as the interim High School Principal. Webster asked if they would be hiring another Dean of Students. Gallagher replied that they would hire an interim Dean of Students and Pirie would participate in that process. The motion then passed unanimously.

**Central Office Updates:** Gallagher was excited to report that the schools would be holding fairly normal graduation ceremonies. The High School would hold prom and would be holding an outdoor graduation ceremony. The elementary schools would be determining individually the type of graduations they would

like to have. Vaccinations would be approved for students ages 12 through 15. Gallagher anticipated that they would begin the fall school year with five-day in-person instruction. Protocols would be in place and masks might be optional but there was no school guidance about that yet. At this point it looked as though there would not be a student academy next fall. There was some concern that mutations could occur but how that might impact the District was unclear at this point. Cases were declining and it felt good for the first time in a year. Gallagher noted that COVID had impacted families and staff significantly. Individuals were seeking acute help now. It was important to be mindful of that. The Recovery Team was strategically looking at how to support the schools.

The District was planning a robust summer program. The application for summer programming would be going out later this week. Assuming they had drivers available, transportation would be provided. Gallagher believed that summer programming would be forever changed and all of these components would continue. Gallagher thanked Savery for spearheading the recovery piece and said she thought the District was well poised. Many teachers in the state were wondering if this was the right career for them because things had been so difficult. Gallagher wasn't sure if those people who weren't on the job every day could have a full understanding of what it was like. Of the eight individuals in the superintendent group that Gallagher was part of, there were only two left. This had nothing to do with the schools but more to do with how difficult the year had been.

Clark informed the Board they were wrapping up the year with a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) bid. Clark was looking for the TAN for the MUUSD to be approved at the next meeting. The District needed to renew their transportation contract and that contract would go out to bid this week. They were busy with the ESSER grants and with those funds they had an opportunity to make some significant investments.

Gallagher reported to the Board on the Eden Principal search. They initially had nine applicants. Following a review the candidate pool was now down to three. Following the interviews this week there would be a meet and greet with the staff, the Board and the community. McFarlane stated Gallagher would bring the recommendation to the Board on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Principal/Director Updates:**

**Belvidere/Waterville:** Epstein reported they had a week of celebration with teacher appreciation week, the lunch workers being recognized, and Nurses' Day. The SBAC's were wrapping up. Mrs. Vargo's students in the fourth through sixth grade participated in a writing challenge organized by Attorney General Donovan. A couple of the students were published as a result. Because of the Farm to School Grant and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool Program, they were creating a tasting program. Seeds were being started and would be planted near the teepee, with a harvest this summer and fall. Students participated in an Earth Day clean up. Epstein was excited to be able to have a graduation ceremony.

**Cambridge:** Anderson stated they had a wonderful celebration for the entire staff, which was very much appreciated by the staff. Anderson was currently extremely busy with hiring. She was about to fill an interventionist position, a kindergarten position and was just starting to interview candidates for a third grade position. She appreciated her staff for interviewing alongside her. Teachers were now working on year-end plans. Graduation would take place outside on June 10<sup>th</sup>, with a rain date on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Eden:** Mascolino stated they were still involved in a kindergarten teacher search. Four individuals had applied, two then pulled out, and following an interview with one person it was determined they were not viable. She was concerned how small the teacher pool was right now. They were involved in SBAC testing and had initially experienced some technology glitches. They had been holding Thursday morning community meetings. These were quick meetings but it was nice for the students to be able to see each other.

**Hyde Park:** Reilly stated that the school had been involved in a weeklong teacher appreciation ceremony. Teachers had tie-dyed t-shirts and all wore them to school. This celebratory atmosphere was

great for the students and it was nice to feel united. There were still some hires to work on. Reilly noted that several new students were moving into the building. Testing was wrapping up. Graduation would take place on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Reilly stated that some of them were involved in the 5K Challenge. It had been great and Reilly thanked the District for supporting staff in their wellness endeavors.

**Johnson:** Manning informed the Board that graduation would be on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The hope was to use Legion Field so a larger number of guests could attend the ceremony. Manning was starting to interview candidates a first grade teacher and a physical education teacher. He had received single-digit applications. This was by far the least amount of people who had applied for positions and it was nerve-racking when only three or four people applied. It seemed to be much worse with the pandemic. Manning explained that quite a few teachers had extensions until May 30<sup>th</sup>, which meant there could be more openings. There continued to be good learning activities happening at the school and students were engaged in meaningful work.

**Middle School:** Maurice informed the Board they were planning year-end activities as well as a number of outdoor adventures. One student was putting in a new garden near the bread oven. This project came about as a result of a discussion on how composting worked. A higher percentage of students were coming back for four days. All the teams were engaged in getting students outside and hands-on in topics that interested them. Maurice explained that Danielle Peveril, a math teacher, had students submit a video to the Vermont Jump Start Coalition, a group that aimed to increase financial literacy in Vermont youth. The school was deep into personnel hiring. They had been very fortunate to hire a math teacher and there were several very good social studies applicants.

**High School:** Pirie thanked the Board for their support and a big thank you to everyone at Lamoille Union. Everyone had been very supportive. The Advanced Placement exams were administered last week and went really well. The Vermont Science Assessment was administered last week to the fully remote students and testing for other students was starting today. A few details on the summer program had been sent out today to families. Pirie and Maurice were working together on planning. The next step would be registration packets. Prom would take place at Boyden Farms on the patio. Pirie stated that teachers and the school lunch personnel were celebrated last week. The teachers and the school nutrition professionals had gone above and beyond over the year. Pirie's appreciation for their work and their commitment to the community remained constant.

Pirie then informed the Board that she had attended a webinar hosted by Reclaiming Futures in which Bethany Turnbaugh presented alongside Mark Scott, the Youth Programs Director at Lamoille Restorative Center. The webinar focused on student mental health and community wellness. LUHS was a pilot school for this integrative approach. It was great to share the experiences with the program, the work with restorative practices, and the school/community partnerships.

**GMTCC:** Remmers told the Board that GMTCC's completion ceremony would be held on June 10<sup>th</sup> in the LUHS auditorium and would not fully be held in person. Teachers would be there and the full ceremony would be broadcast live and recorded so that people could watch later. Remmers hoped to be hiring a math teacher. They had been trying to do this over the past year with a Perkins Grant. He thanked the community for the wonderful support the Creative Media Program received regarding the VANS competition. He hoped to know where they stood with the competition in the next few days.

**Other Business:** There was no other business.

**Adjourn:** J. Sander made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m.