

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
May 24, 2021**

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

Board Members Absent: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Tina Lowe; Johnson: Bobbie Moulton, Mark Nielsen

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, Bethann Pirie, Erik Remmers, Dylan Laflam, Brian Pena

Others Present: Betzi Goodman, Cynthia Tighe, Galen Reese

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Gallagher reported that Mark Nielsen was not able to attend the meeting. Whitcomb nominated Katie Orost to be Chair of the meeting. Orost then called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. McFarlane requested that the agenda be amended to include the hiring of a Kindergarten teacher at Eden Elementary School and a Social Studies teacher at the Middle School. 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 10, 2021, meeting; May 13, 2021, Personnel Committee Meeting: B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion, seconded by B. Sander, to accept the May 14th Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Eden Elementary School Kindergarten Teacher Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Kathi Sanville as the Eden Elementary School Kindergarten teacher at a salary of \$41,000. Prescott made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge Board members abstaining from the vote.

Middle School Social Studies Teacher Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire David Baird as the Middle School Social Studies teacher at a salary of \$42,215. Prescott made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the recommendation. Maurice stated Baird had been teaching at Crossett Brook Middle School in a one-year position. He had also been an outdoor educator in Alaska. The motion passed unanimously.

Eden Central School Principal Recommendation: McFarlane outlined the process that had been involved in looking for a principal for Eden Central School. The process began in April and had been as inclusive and transparent as possible. Eden staff were invited and encouraged to participate. The screening team included administrators, Board members, and a parent. They interviewed three candidates, held site visits that were orchestrated by the staff, and held a virtual community meet-and-greet. Gallagher stated her appreciation to the six Board members who had participated actively in the interview process and had attended the meet-and-greet to ask questions.

Gallagher stated her recommendation was to hire Elizabeth (Betzi) Goodman to a one-year Interim Principal position. During discussions with McFarlane, Gallagher and Goodman, it had been agreed that a one-year position might be better at this point. If needed, they could go out for a full search next year. They were following the process that had been used at the High School with Bethann Pirie. Goodman was

a 20-year veteran of Eden Elementary School. She knew the community, had the Administration's endorsement, and was the Union Co-President. She was in a unique position to understand the community, Board and teacher perspective. Goodman also recognized there were some potential challenges moving from a teacher/leader experience to an administrator position at the same school. However, everyone was very confident that she was the right choice. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve Elizabeth Goodman as the one-year Interim Principal at Eden Central School. It was understood that Goodman would be able to return to her position at the school if for some reason things didn't work out. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge Board members abstaining from the vote. Goodman thanked the Board members for their vote of confidence.

Review and Award Bids for 2022 Tax Anticipation Note: Clark informed the Board that Community Bank, NA had the largest spread between the lending costs and the earning rate in the associated investment account. Clark recommended going with Community Bank, NA for the FY22 tax anticipation note from the Lamoille North School District. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by B. Sander, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Waterville Elementary School, Driveway and Parking Lot Resurfacing: Laflam informed the Board that this project had been deferred from last year. Due to the delay in work being done, the project had gone from a resurfacing project to a replacement project. Administration was recommending the approval of ST Paving's bid of \$135,000 to be paid for out of the capital reserve funds. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve the recommendation. Laflam explained that the existing blacktop would be ground up, put down as the sub base, and then new blacktop put on top. The driveway, bus loop, both parking lots and the access road around the back of the school would be replaced. Miller asked when the work would take place. Laflam stated that because of the summer programs they had asked the contractor to do the work during the first two weeks of August. Laflam stated that \$26,000 would come from Waterville's capital reserve and the remainder would come from the LNMUUSD reserve. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge Board members abstaining.

Belvidere Central School, Heat Plant Replacement: Laflam explained to the Board that this project had also been deferred from last year. Belvidere was the last school of the 1990 construction era to not have their heat plant replaced. Eden and Waterville replaced their heat plants five to six years ago. The Administration was recommending the Board accept the bid of \$62,237.84 from Thivierge Heating and AC, LLC. This would also be a capital reserve expenditure. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to accept the bid from Thivierge Heating and AC. Lamell asked where the company was located. Laflam stated they were from Barre. He noted they were a very small company but very dependable. They had worked in every one of the District schools so far. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge members abstaining.

Lamoille Union/GMTCC Biomass Boiler Refractory Replacement: Laflam informed the Board this item was part of the woodchip plant. This replacement was typically done every ten years but they had extended the timeline on this. Following last year's inspection they were red-tagged, which meant the refractory needed to be replaced this year. There was only one bid from Messersmith Manufacturing, the company that originally built the boiler. The Administration recommended that the Board approve the bid of \$67,000 from Messersmith Manufacturing. Funds to pay for the expenditure would come from capital reserve. Whitcomb made a motion to approve the recommendation, seconded by Stebbins. Following a question from B. Sander, Laflam explained that the refractory was the masonry inside the boiler. It was a wear and tear item and was considered general maintenance. Laflam also noted the biomass boiler saved the school roughly \$300,000 in fuel oil. The motion passed unanimously.

GMTCC, Heat Pump Mini-split Installation T-28/T-30: Laflam stated that the last two classrooms at the end of the Tech Center were now year-round offices. The temperature in those rooms could get quite high because of the south facing windows. This was another project they had looked at last year but ultimately tabled. The Administration recommended a bid of \$16,924.79 from Thivierge Heating and AC, LLC. The expenditure would come out of capital reserves but they hoped it would ultimately be

reimbursed through the ESSER grant. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. Lamell asked why there were so few bid responses. Laflam explained companies didn't have enough crew to do the work. Additionally, work being done at the school was too small for most of the commercial outlets. The motion passed unanimously.

GMTCC RFP's for IT Equipment: Pena informed the Board that two RFP's had been sent out for GMTCC. One was for IT classroom technology and the other was for infrastructure improvements. As far as the classroom technology, the bid was for touch panels and laptops. Based on the results of the bid, Administration recommended the bid of \$80,518.50 from Second Gear based on item availability, pricing, models bid, and successful order fulfillment history. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

The second bid was for GMTCC IT infrastructure improvements. They were looking for wireless access points and network switch improvements. The Administration recommended approval of the bid of \$22,164.82 from Whalley Computer Associates for wireless access points. The Administration also recommended the approval of the bid of \$117,981.08 from Tech Group for network switches based on item availability, pricing, and the models bid. Prescott made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher provided an update on the graduations taking place throughout the District from June 8th through June 12th. Gallagher then informed the Board of a message from both Mark Nielsen and Gallagher. They always appreciated having students speak to the Board and it could be intimidating to speak to the Board. Nielsen wanted to remind everyone of the need to be respectful and good listeners when students came to speak to the Board. If the Board expected students to model behavior after adults then they needed to be courteous to students.

Gallagher then reported that the program of studies from the High School had come out and it was wonderful. A very rigorous schedule had been proposed, resulting in students not having empty blocks. Study halls would be very structured. Advanced placement courses would be taught in different areas. Courses on the Holocaust and gender would be taught. There were a lot of options for students, providing a flexible pathway for their education.

Gallagher stated the summer program at Lamoille North would be daily and rigorous, running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday during July. This would include a mix of academics, on-site mental health clinicians, nutrition would be provided for students, and fun, so as to re-engage students and provide a nurturing environment along with academics. Gallagher noted that other districts were not doing as well and she thanked everyone for making this happen.

Wendy Savery spoke to the Board about the Recovery Plan, the required educational plan that they would be submitting to the AOE. The core goal of the plan was to address the gaps that may have occurred due to the pandemic and to increase access, opportunity and outcomes. The first task was to create a recovery team. Savery expressed appreciation to the members of the team who had met weekly since March to do the best they could while looking at a great deal of data. The task was to come up with a plan in these areas: social emotional functioning, mental health and wellbeing, student engagement and truancy, as well as academic achievement and success.

The first step was completing a needs assessment. Savery had been working all year collecting data from all of the schools. Savery stated that the administrators, faculty and staff had been phenomenal in making sure that they had data to work with. Observational data, attendance data, report cards, community forum surveys, talking with students, youth risk behavior surveys, and staff data all led to the creation of a massive data inventory which could also be used for other grants and had provided a solid recovery plan.

Savery stated the data correlated with what was being seen across the state and across the country. In the social emotional realm, the results showed an increase in anxiety and depression including suicidal

ideation. Older students struggled the most, in part due to the disruption of their learning and the high stakes as they were closer to graduation. Not being around peers had created a lot of stress. There had been an increase in 504 plans due to requests for evaluation or documented disabilities. There had been an increase in poor nutrition, lack of sleep, and reduced physical activity. Savery stated they could not underestimate the impact that the recovery had had on educators and local systems as well. Many people were feeling the effects now that they were coming out of the pandemic. This couldn't be underestimated.

Savery said that it was also important to honor the fact that some students did remarkably well. Some students appreciated the hybrid learning model and remote learning. The District wanted to make sure to meet those students' needs by continuing to be creative with flexible pathways. Students learned in different ways and it was important to continue to honor that fact.

As far as student engagement, they saw decreased motivation, a high rate of absenteeism, and a disconnection with school. Those students most at risk, who relied on structure, safety and support, lost a great deal because of COVID. Bringing that structure back would be helpful for struggling students. One of the big patterns most concerning was the families that the school had lost track of. Teachers and the attendance coordinator simply could not find some of the families.

Academically, math suffered the most. Literacy suffered less than they thought. The ability to focus and work completion wasn't anywhere near where they should have been, in part because of the lack of structure.

The following were actions the District would take as part of the Recovery Plan in the social emotional realm:

- The District planned to increase partnerships with mental health agencies and related services;
- Partner with community agencies including pediatricians;
- Provide more of a social emotional component in the summer program;
- Leverage ESSER funds to hire people such as school-based clinicians, social workers, community liaisons and outreach personnel;
- Continue to prioritize training in responding to a mental health crisis. Lamoille North was well ahead of the curve but would continue; and
- Develop and incorporate a social emotional curriculum that would involve all staff.

In the student engagement area, the District wanted to continue recovery efforts, not done from a punitive approach but instead leveraging community partnerships and collaborative local systems. She couldn't stress the importance of that. Everyone needed to work together. They had a very strong renewed commitment to working in partnership with outside agencies. Most importantly, they would be improving and providing a robust referral and wraparound process. Where needed, they would individualize plans for students in terms of reengagement.

In terms of the academic achievement, they had learned the importance of a strong data collection system. They would be looking for further tools to streamline that process and make accessing the data more efficient and timely. Data needed to be reviewed consistently, so they would be streamlining the process. The District wanted to utilize key personnel like multi-tiered system of support personnel, diversity coordinators, diversity inclusion, outreach coordinators, and strengthening the universal teaching approaches. What the District wanted was to have students in the classroom as much as possible with their peers and not outside of the classroom because the student was trying to address other needs.

Pena reported to the Board that the IT Department had worked with Maurice and her team to identify next year's purchase for one to one devices. The Middle School would continue to use iPads. Following surveys, discussions, surveys, and meetings, the determination at the High School was to go with Chromebooks.

Clark noted there was a great deal of work going on and it meant a lot of new hands coming in to help. They were wrapping up the \$507,000 ESSER I funds that helped to support the District last year. Available to the District now was \$2,262,000 in ESSER II funds and \$5,000,000 in ESSER III funds. A process was developed that was data driven and provided them with a way to determine how that money would be spent. Clark thanked the Board and the District's team because she believed the District was very well prepared to succeed over the next three years.

Laflam reported that he would be removing twenty white pines above the fire pond over the next month. Most of them were dead or dying. Property owners would be paying for the removal.

Principal/Director Updates:

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein informed the Board that it was a very busy time of year. The K-3 team was wrapping up assessments. Epstein noted that her teachers did a lot on the data collection that Savery had required. Epstein stated that data revealed that the students had learned a good deal over this year and she noted it was a testament to the hard work of the teachers. The art teacher had had some great programs. As an example, grades 4-6 had just experienced a virtual tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Epstein invited Board members to drive to Waterville to see the garden area next to the teepee. Afterschool students had started some seedlings and they were looking forward to having a nice tasting garden to tend this summer. Students were very excited about participating. Thanks to the ESSER grant money the school had been able to increase the school counselor position to full time. The person who had been the counselor would now become a school-based clinician. They had just hired someone who would be coming from Queens, New York to fill the school counselor position. The Grade 4-6 teacher would be moving into an interventionist position and Epstein would be looking to hire someone to take her position.

Eden: Mascolino congratulated Goodman in her new position. Eden was very lucky to be able to have Goodman move into that role and Mascolino thought it would be a wonderful fit. Mascolino stated they were hiring Jerri Hurlburt, the administrative assistant at the Middle School. There were end of the year activities planned, including outdoor activities with different stations and an outdoor picnic lunch. Specialists were also putting together a COVID-centered year of learning yearbook. Thirty-eight students had signed up for summer camp. With ESSER funds being available, Eden had requested a math literacy coach and it had been approved. The School Improvement Grant money allowed them to hire a home school coordinator to work with the Pre-K and Kindergarten families and this position would focus on attendance.

Hyde Park: Reilly stated that everyone was working hard and working together. Over 100 students had signed up for the summer program, which was half of the students that were eligible. Reilly talked about Erin Carr, a teacher who had received grant money to create a unit on stream ecology, which included fly-fishing and researching macroinvertebrates. Sixth graders had gone fly-fishing and explored different parts of the Lamoille River. This course allowed for learning in multiple learning domains. Math, science and literacy were all part of the unit and the students learned so much. This unit would be taught during the summer camp and Reilly anticipated continuing it each year.

Johnson: Manning reported Johnson Elementary would be offering an additional several weeks of summer camp. They would be doing an academic recovery camp that O'Connor and Savery were providing support for and then an additional three weeks of JES Connections which would start the Monday after school ended. JES had applied for a lot of strategies as part of the Recovery Plan. Some had been approved. They were hoping to buy additional literacy materials and additional training for staff. He hoped to be able to have an interventionist and school counselor to work with families. JES had a math interventionist position open. Despite the position being posted for over a week he had received no resumes. Manning noted that the teachers had been responsible for collecting the data that Savery had used. Manning expressed appreciation to the staff, teachers and paraeducators who computed all the

data in order to provide a great set of information. Manning also wanted to acknowledge the District's administrators who had been very helpful to him on a daily basis. It was a great team and very responsive.

Middle School: Maurice informed the Board that she was working on hiring. Maurice had been working with Pirie on the Middle and High School schedules so that they would mesh. They were looking to continue to provide flexible pathways from the Middle School up through the High School. Maurice noted they had added an intervention block, with time being carved out to address skills that were weaker than they should be. Next year there would be a longer specific block for advisory, during which time lessons around social emotional learning would take place. The Lancer Pride celebration would take place on June 10th, with various activities to celebrate the end of the school year. Maurice thanked Facilities for helping Team Nova put in a garden.

High School: Pirie stated that course offerings had been sent out to students and she was very excited to report that there were more course offerings than ever before. Pirie was encouraging students and parents to review the material and select courses that interested students and met their needs. Regarding attendance and engagement, it was clear that outreach really mattered and she hoped to meet with the 8th graders coming into the high school. Pirie had met with Emily Nielsen from the Restorative Center and they had spent Saturday together reviewing the needs of the students based on the data collected. She was looking forward to moving forward with personalized outreach that met the needs of the families and students. Pirie then spoke about Chris Whitlock, a science teacher, who had held a successful field trip to Brewster River to plant trees with his science pods. It was a very rich experience for the students. Pirie also applauded Bob Fredette, the Lancer baseball coach, for building such a rich community around baseball.

GMTCC: Remmers stated the Tech Center was also engaged in the Recovery Plan process. They would be developing a plan separate from the high school and instead designed toward each of the sending schools. Remmers then reported that the creative media team did not get into the top five of the VANS competition. Remmers was very proud of the work done by that team. The product was really good and it was an amazing learning process.

Other Business: Gallagher stated she wanted to honor Jeff Hunsberger, a Board member, who had been named Employee of the Year at the Lamoille Family Center. Gallagher said it spoke to the rich experience of the Board members and what each person brought to the Board. Hunsberger was always looking at issues through a lens of helping family and students.

Adjourn: B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.