

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
September 27, 2021**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet (Zoom); Cambridge: Jan Sander, Bill Sander (by phone), Sue Prescott (on Zoom), Mark Stebbins, Denise Webster; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb (by phone); Hyde Park: Lisa Barry (on Zoom), Tina Lowe, Patty Hayford (on Zoom); Johnson: Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton, Angela Lamell (on Zoom), Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Cambridge: Laura Miller; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Johnson: Mark Nielsen,

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Michele Aumand, Wendy Savery, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Denise Maurice, Diane Reilly, Melinda Mascolino, Brian Pena, Jeremy Scannell (on Zoom),

Others Present: Eric Hutchins (on Zoom), Marianna Donnally

Student Representative: Jake Moulton

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda and Announcements: Orost, acting as Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. Gallagher requested that the LUHS Literacy Interventionist Hire and the Update on Proposed ESSER-Funded Eden Central School Project be tabled to the next meeting. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There were no announcements.

Public Comment: Marianna Donnally, a parent and co-chair of Partners in Education, addressed the Board, stating that she knew this year was very challenging for school staff. She knew that everyone was exhausted and giving everything they could possibly give. She wanted everyone to know that they were supported. Donnally stated that she was amazed with what the school in Hyde Park provided to the children and their families. She wanted to find some way to give back to the school. Donnally knew that the Board had received feedback from some frustrated members of the community. However, she wanted the Board to know that the feedback she was receiving was what an amazing job everyone at the District was doing and how hard everyone was working to provide the best possible services for the community. She thanked the Board and the school staff and wanted to be sure they knew that they had a great deal of support and appreciation within the community.

LNSU/LNEMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the September 13, 2021, Meeting; Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes for July 14, 2021, August 11, 2021 and September 22, 2021: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance & Capital Committee meeting minutes for September 20, 2021: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: With Miller absent, the Board Orders item was postponed.

New Policy C15, Homeless Students – 2nd Reading: Gallagher stated this was the first time that a homeless student policy was required. Gallagher appreciated this because it removed the arbitrariness of making decisions about who might fall under the definition of homeless. The biggest pieces of the policy were that a student would be admitted into the school district in which the student was actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Additionally, transportation would be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent or in the case of an unaccompanied student the District's liaison for homeless students. Jen Hulse was the homeless liaison and was well versed in this process. She requested that the paperwork reflect the Superintendent or designee was able to make the decision. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the policy. The motion passed unanimously.

October VSBA Regional Meeting – Reminder: Orrost reminded the Board of this upcoming meeting. Gallagher stated that Mark Nielsen would be able to continue to serve on the VSBA Board as his schedule had changed. Prescott stated she had sent in a written nomination for Nielsen to be the representative.

Appoint Authorized Representatives for both LNSU and LNMUUSD for the VEHI/VSBIT Annual Meeting: The Board was being asked to make a decision on whether Nielsen could choose to either attend in person or vote to ask VEHI to be the proxy for both LNSU and LNMUUSD. This was done every year. Moulton made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to allow Nielsen to make the choice. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher reported on an article in News and Citizen that had caused a great deal of frustration to her and her staff. She understood that things could be misconstrued, but she noted that the reporter had interviewed no one in Central Office. The reporter took Board minutes to craft an article.

The minutes stated: “Gallagher then spoke about masking, stating that people could have their own opinions, but what they were seeing at the schools was that masks were protecting students. However, masking was not occurring outside of school and the variant was ripping through families.”

The article stated: “Gallagher accused area families of not masking properly and causing the delta variant to rip through the community, implying that a small group of people were affecting the overall health of the larger school community.”

Gallagher called the reporter and asked for a redaction and had not heard back. She had no idea why this was taken out of context. The administration was constantly championing and thanking the communities for their support. Two administrators noted their concern about saying anything because they feared it would be misconstrued.

They had finished reviewing applications today for membership on the Community Advisory Group. Individuals from every town, as well as some people from the District’s community partners, had been selected. The first meeting would be held on Monday.

Contact tracing guidelines had changed for the Grades 7-12 level only if it could be proven that there was a greater than 80% vaccination rate. Because the schools couldn’t go into the registries and the Department of Health rightfully wouldn’t disclose the information, the District was asking families to attest to vaccination and have asked for evidence of that. Once the 80% vaccination rate was met, contact tracing would not be necessary at the middle/high school. There would be a global message that would go out saying there was a positive case and if people were symptomatic they would be encouraged to test at three to five days and quarantine themselves. Otherwise there would be no quarantine. Webster asked if teachers and staff would need to be vaccinated. Gallagher stated they were waiting for OSHA to make a statement about that because Vermont was covered under OSHA. Some districts may have mandated that vaccine; however, that was not something this District was looking at until OSHA made a statement. Gallagher noted the District currently had a greater than 92% vaccination rate. There were always medical exemptions to vaccines and if someone chose not to receive the vaccine there was always testing that could be done.

Principal/Director Updates:

Eden Central School: Goodman informed the Board that Focus in Education had visited the school. They performed with puppets for K-Grade 4 and then provided a workshop for Grades 5 and 6. The presentation focused on strategies to cope with stress and recognizing stressors and anxiety that students may have. Students were continuing to earn feathers toward a PBIS celebration. Literacy and math assessments were taking place.

Hyde Park: Reilly stated the students were back in the building. Surveillance tests were done last week and there were no positive cases. Reilly stated that every fall the students had gone to Stowe to watch the International Ice Dance rehearsals. This year the school had planned to go but decided not to. The Stowe group decided to stream the whole show for the students and met with them online. It was exciting and she appreciated the Stowe group doing that for the students. The school was trying to get the children out for field trips in small groups. The school staff was doing a lot of work around MTSS and specifically universal first instruction. Coaches were back full-time providing professional development and working with seven new or fairly new teachers. These teachers were spending all afternoon on Monday working on literacy and math professional development. That was a big step for the school.

Johnson: Manning noted that a teacher had told him that last week was the first time since March of 2020 that they had had five consecutive school days. It was clear it had been a long time dealing with the pandemic. They recently had a group that went on a field trip to the Robtoy Farm and other field trips were being planned. All COVID protocols were in place during these trips. There hadn't been any positive COVID cases for at least a week. Two weeks ago there were 108 students who weren't allowed at school and they were now down to four students. Manning stated it was great to see students and teachers back at school and learning in the classroom. Overall things were much better than two weeks ago.

Middle School: Maurice informed the Board that staff had had their first book group discussion of Joe Brummer's book: Building a Trauma-Informed Restorative School. As part of the discussion, they were going through activities outlined in the book and the feedback was very positive. Teams were digging in and getting back to a more normal school day than they'd had in the last year and a half.

In response to a question asking how the school would know that the 80% vaccination rate had been reached, Gallagher stated that Flo Kelley and building principals would continue communicating with families and continue to ask the question. Sometimes during contact tracing families would let the schools know their children were vaccinated. This was a very sensitive topic and Kelley would navigate that messaging well.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion to adjourn at 6:33 p.m.