

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
September 12, 2022**

Board Members Present: **Belvidere:** Stephanie Sweet (remote); **Cambridge:** Jan Sander, Bill Sander (remote); Sue Prescott (remote), Mark Stebbins, Tommy O'Connor, Denise Webster; **Eden:** Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb (remote); **Hyde Park:** Patty Hayford, Chasity Fagnant, Lisa Barry; **Johnson:** Angela Lamell, Mark Nielsen, Katie Orost, Allen Audette; **Waterville:** Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: **Hyde Park:** Tina Lowe; **Johnson:** Bobbie Moulton

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Michele Aumand, Betzi Goodman, Denise Maurice, Brian Pena, Dylan Laflam, Erik Remmers, Jan Epstein, Jeremy Scannell, Melinda Mascolino, Bethann Pirie, David Manning, Mary Anderson, Jennifer Hulse, Rachel Crawford, Valerie Sullivan

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment: Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. There were two changes to the agenda: the removal of the continuous improvement plan and the meal change policy amendments. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNMMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of July 27, 2022, LNSU/LNMMUUSD Special Meeting; August 8, 2022, Meeting/Retreat; August 24, 2022 Special Meeting; minutes of Personnel Committee Meetings on August 17 and 19, 2022; J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the minutes with the following corrections: the minutes of July 27, 2022 should be changed to reflect that Bill Sander, Denise Webster, and Mark Stebbins were present. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Fagnant made a motion to approve all Board orders. Barry made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the Board orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Matters:

Approve LUMS Assistant Principal Hire: Rachel Crawford stated the recommendation was to hire Krystal Granzow for the LUMS Assistant Principal position. The recommended salary was \$70,000, pro-rated. Granzow was in possession of a principal's license. Maurice stated Granzow had run a summer school in Texas. In that position she hired personnel, helped with curriculum, and dealt with student matters. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to approve the recommendation to hire Krystal Granzow. The motion passed unanimously.

Special Education Presentation: Jennifer Hulse started by showing the Board a video of the overview of the history of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As part of the presentation, Hulse stated that in 1975, Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA, PL94-142). In 1990, the name EHA was changed to IDEA. The six principles of EHA in 1975 were integration, mainstreaming, inclusion, full inclusion and least restrictive environment.

Hulse stated that students eligible for special education services were general education students who, because of a disability, were eligible for special education services. Vermont's definition of special education services was specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education.

Hulse explained how a student might become eligible for special education services. A parent or teacher would make a referral. The team would meet with the teacher, the parent, and other teachers who had knowledge

of the student. They would discuss what disability the student might have. There were fourteen disability categories. The student had to demonstrate adverse effect – how the disability adversely affected the child’s ability to gain skills. The third item reviewed was need – did this child need something above and beyond what the District offered in the general education curriculum. The student had to meet all three to be eligible for special education. However, if the child had a disability and didn’t meet the other two items they could be referred to a 504 plan.

An initial evaluation had to be completed within 60 days of receipt of parental consent. Within 60 days, the team needed to do the evaluation, perform testing, and write the report. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) would need to be written within 30 days after the initial evaluation. Children were re-evaluated every three years unless they were found ineligible in a previous triennial evaluation. An IEP laid out the special education instruction, supports, services and accommodations a student needed to thrive in school. Students were part of PreK-12 public education and were reviewed annually.

The cornerstone of the IDEA was the entitlement of each eligible child with a disability to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasized special education and related services designed to meet the child’s unique needs and that prepared the child for further education, employment, and individual living. Therefore, an IEP needed to take into account a child’s present levels of academic and function performance, and the impact of that child’s disability on his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) within IDEA stated that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who were not disabled. When a parent chose to home school or send their child to a private school, and that child was eligible for special education services, what they were in essence saying was they were not interested in FAPE. The District still had the responsibility of evaluating that child every three years.

Hulse provided the following information on the number of students served by the LNSU. Numbers less than 10 could not be reported. Hulse highlighted the disability areas that were dominant: there were 79 students across the District with developmental delay (3-5 years old). There were 51 students across the District identified as being emotionally disturbed. There were 113 students across the District with specific learning disabilities. 214 boys throughout the District were eligible between the ages of Pre-K through 12 and 123 girls were eligible. Mascolino stated there were 170 pre-K students in total in the District. Hulse noted that across Vermont they were seeing a spike in eligibility for the youngest learners.

Hulse then spoke of some rule changes in the state, one of which resulted in a change in funding. Previously, the method of reimbursement was that the District provided the funds to support special education. The AOE reimbursed the District 60% of the dollars spent, with 90% of the cost beyond \$50,000 reimbursed for a student in special education. Now the method of payment from the State was a block grant model. The District would receive a set amount of money based on all pupils in the District to use to support the students who were eligible. The LNSU would receive \$3.4 million this year. This was determined by the average of the previous three years of special education costs. FY 23 was the first year of the block grant. The AOE would now reimburse 90% of the cost beyond \$60,000 for a student in special education. This model allowed flexibility on how to spend those dollars and ensured that the most highly qualified individuals served students.

Hulse noted there was a dire need for special education providers and speech pathologists in districts across Vermont. Hulse also provided the Board with a Code of Ethics outlining confidentiality requirements that each Board member needed to sign.

Approve FY’23 VACTED Consortium Agreement: Erik Remmers explained that this agreement allowed the tech centers to pool Perkins Funds into one single entity. This year Orange Southwest Supervisory Union would hold the funds. These funds paid for teacher training and CTE student organizations such as Skills USA.

The request was to move \$12,000 in Perkins Funds to the Orange Southwest Supervisory Union to be pooled with the other tech centers. Barry made a motion, seconded by Fagnant, to approve the agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Procedures: Gallagher explained that the Title I policy had passed at the last Board meeting. It was a requirement of the Agency of Education and the policy modeled the VSBA policy. Title 1 was a federally funded program that provided financial assistance to states and school districts with the needs of students they considered to be at risk. It stressed the family/school communication and asked for family input in the form of surveys and participation. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve the policy and procedures. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher stated the beginning of school had started well. The students seemed to be happy to be back and had moved very quickly into their routines. Gallagher thanked the six Board members who had received waivers to be able to substitute teach. This helped tremendously with staff shortages. The State was looking at ways to deal with staff shortages throughout the State. They were looking at retention incentives, working conditions, and how to make school districts competitive.

Gallagher provided a summary of the Board retreat and Leadership retreat goals and noted they were similar. The goals of the Board focused on: safety/security, including physical and emotional wellbeing of all people in the school community; consistent and equitable opportunities in curriculum and more extracurricular opportunities; more communication to parents about grading practices and curricular opportunities; and increasing positive parental and caregiver involvement. The Leadership goals were for equitable systems; equity, multi-layered student supports to help teachers across the system and to help them develop universal assessments; investments for competitive wages for teachers; and safe and inclusive environment for all stakeholders.

There were three openings for student Board representatives. The secondary administrators would be looking to see if there were volunteers. If there were a large number of students interested they would do a rotational system. Elementary principals would be asked to structure a system in which elementary students would be included by sharing their thoughts and concerns.

Laflam informed the Board they had been shorthanded this summer but were able to get all of the buildings taken care of right before school started. The department was currently short four people. After an 18-month search they finally had a staff person at Johnson. The Eden project was doing well. However, they were starting to run into supply side issues, particularly doors and windows.

Pena stated that 80% of the wireless access point project had been completed and they were already seeing huge benefits from the improvements. They were now looking at making improvements at GMTCC. The audio/visual system in the conference room needed to be updated. It had been installed in 2007 and had a number of glitches. Laflam and Pena had met with stakeholders about what they would like to do with the conference room. They then met with a representative from Audio Visual Environments who explained the modernization that was required. The project went out to bid and on September 1st there was a bid opening. ESSER funds could be used for the project. While they would keep a lot of the equipment, the main brain of the system would be upgraded. Pena would bring the project to the next Board meeting and ask for the Board's approval.

Principal/Director Updates:

GMTCC: Remmers stated that Governor Scott and Dan French toured the Tech Center. French highlighted GMTCC to the Governor, showing how this Tech Center was at the top of the state in terms of the graduation rates, in terms of proficiency levels with math and English and at the top of the state in attainment of industry

credentials. The Electrical program lost a teacher and then quickly gained a great teacher. This new person came into the system five days before the start of school and was doing a great job. GMTCC had a strong start of school. The students were ready to go and invested in the learning process.

High School: Pirie informed the Board that LUHS had kicked off some systems work that involved support systems for students and opening up communication between teachers and school counselors, teachers and parents, and teachers and students. This summer they worked together in teams and came back to one of the best in-service weeks she had experienced. One workshop involved Deputy Prevost, Vermont Liquor Control officers, the school-based clinician, and Healthy Lamoille Valley. They provided training on substance use and provided information on what to look for and how to respond. That information was very helpful. There was a workshop on inclusion in the classroom. The opening of school exceeded her expectations. It was so positive. There was a club fair and there were so many opportunities for students to join a variety of clubs. There was something for everyone.

This year they started a new procedure in which Pirie would provide a Student Concern Form to all staff. It was a way for anyone to share concerns, whether it be academic, behavioral, social/emotional, engagement, with the team that comes together every Friday morning to help support students. It was working so well. They were getting ahead of situations and were able to wrap around students and provide support so much earlier in the school year. Cell phones were no longer allowed in academic blocks. While it seemed this would be difficult for students, it seemed at this point that the students were appreciative.

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein stated they had a great in-service with Mark Scott from the Restorative Center who discussed brain science. Epstein said they had a calm and joyful start to the school year. All teachers had something really positive to say at a recent staff meeting. There were a lot of new students at the school and enrollment numbers were increasing. The students would be going to an ice dancing performance.

Cambridge: Anderson stated Cambridge was fortunate that the school year had started so well. They had a welcome back barbeque. The students were happy to be back. They liked the structure and being around their friends. The students would also be attending the ice dancing performance. The school would be promoting unity within the school with several activities planned.

Johnson: Manning provided an example of how a teacher was able to work with a student who hadn't wanted to come into the school. This had been an ongoing problem for years for the student. The teacher had gone out to the parking lot to speak with the student and within five minutes they were both back in the school. It was wonderful to see how much the student trusted and felt safe with the teacher. Manning stated that as a parent of a student at the middle school he was impressed with the communication he received. He was happy that his child felt safe at school.

Eden: Goodman stated they had the Taiko Drummers at the school to start off the new school year. Flexibility was required with the building renovations. Walking through the classrooms, there were fun, engaging activities going on. The afterschool program started today and there would be programming available on the half-days that school ended early. On the 28th, STEM activities would take place. The second session there would be therapeutic arts one day a week thanks to Maria Davies, and on December 9th they hoped to go to Spruce Peak. Offering the afterschool program on the half-days provided families with an alternative option for the half-days which could be challenging.

Middle School: Maurice stated that Maria Davies was helping the middle school with an Arts Program that spanned the middle school through the high school. A River Arts aerosol artist would be meeting once a week with students. Davies would also help with setting up speakers from the Vermont Holocaust Memorial. Maurice felt very fortunate to be working with Davies on that.

It had been a positive start to the school year. There was a two-week honeymoon. Last year there wasn't one at all. The focus this year was building the relationships between teachers and students at the beginning of the year. Maurice thought they rushed it last year. This year they took the time to make sure students felt connected to the classroom, the teachers, and each student. As part of that process, they created a second leadership group that pulled some of the adults that had been leaders in other areas. There was now a climate culture committee that was working on gathering student views. This provided representation across all four teams and would build student leadership. One committee reviewed academics and the other committee reviewed the culture of the school. Today the staff had finished putting together the first round of skills groups from this quarter. This was in relation to moving forward with the multi-layered systems of supports.

Other Business/Adjourn: There was no additional business. Hunsberger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m.