

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
June 12, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Mark Stebbins, Susan Prescott (by phone), Denise Webster, Jan Sander, Christy Liddy; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; David Whitcomb (by phone); Hyde Park: Tina Lowe, Chasity Fagnant, Patty Hayford; Johnson: Angela Lamell, Allen Audette, Katie Orost, Monica Stearns; Waterville: Bart Bezio (by phone)

**Board Members Absent:** Cambridge: Tommy O'Connor; Hyde Park: Lisa Barry; Johnson: Mark Nielsen

**Administrators Present:** Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Michele Aumand, Brian Pena, Denise Maurice, Betzi Goodman, Erik Remmers, Valerie Sullivan, Rene Thibault, David Manning, Blake Nemeth, Dylan Laflam; BethAnn Pirie, Maria Davies

**Student Representatives:** Ellie Neckers, Julia-Rose Daley, Jessica Orost

**Others:** Lindsey Halman, Executive Director of UP for Learning, Katie Ingraham, Program Director for UP for Learning, Brian Duda, Healthy Lamoille Valley Youth Coordinator.

**Minute Taker:** Sue Trainor

**Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment:** Orost called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Stearns, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**Minutes of May 8, 2023, meeting and May 15, 2023, Special Meeting; May 10, 2023, Finance & Capital Committee Meeting; May 16, 2023, Personnel Committee Meeting; April 10, 2023,**

**Curriculum Committee Meeting:** Sweet made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to approve all minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** Fagnant made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve all Board orders. The motion passed unanimously.

**Staff/Student Climate Survey Data Presentation by Up for Learning:** Maria Davies, BethAnn Pirie, Ellie Neckers, Julia-Rose Daley, Lindsey Halman, Executive Director of UP for Learning, Katie Ingraham, Program Director for UP for Learning, and Brian Duda, Healthy Lamoille Valley Youth Coordinator made a presentation, explaining what the organization Up for Learning was and how they had worked as a team with the LNSU Equity Design Team. They came together so staff and youth could co-create a shared space for Lamoille North Supervisory Union's vision for diversity, equity and inclusion practices and policies in order to build a more positive school culture and climate, and to improve learning opportunities for all students.

The team constructed a survey for staff and students to complete. The LNSU Climate Survey was released to staff and students of the middle and high school on January 17th and January 30th to students at GMTCC. Results were reviewed with faculty, staff and students in February. The survey results being reported on at this meeting were from the middle and high school:

Student responses: 51% of youth felt they could show up at school as they were. 60% of students felt their teachers believed in them. 53% of youth were engaged in classes and wanted to learn (86% neutral and agreed). 57% of youth thought the teachers treated students with respect. 57% of students had a trusted adult. 26% of the students identified as LGBTQIA+. 56.2% of the students knew who to report to when they were unsafe or disrespected.

Moving on to staff responses: 75% of the staff felt they were a member of the school community. 83.4% of staff were treated with respect by other staff. 81% of the staff said they were comfortable showing up as who they were at school. Pirie noted that in all of the questions there was a large neutral group.

Areas of growth needed as reported in the student survey: 60% of the students believed that other students had been bullied or harassed based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religion. 64% of the students believed other students did not behave the way teachers expected. 51% of the students believed students did not treat teachers with respect. 60% of the students were neutral or disagreed that they felt they are part of the school community.

Areas of growth needed as reported in the staff survey: Only 14% of the staff agreed that students respected each other's differences. 81% of the staff felt students had been bullied or harassed in school. 63.1% of the staff did not feel that students treated staff with respect. Fewer than 50% of the staff had not been harassed. 75% of the staff thought that students had been bullied or harassed online. 67.4% of the staff reported that students were not behaving as staff expected them to.

The data areas were prioritized and a root cause analysis was done. The team noted that in surveys and analysis done in other schools the student perspective often differed greatly from what the staff said. What they found interesting in this district was that the students were almost perfectly aligned with the staff.

They gave an example of reviewing one of the specific areas in order to determine the root cause: why students weren't behaving the way staff expected they should. Looking at the student and staff responses they determined the following: a lack of clarity and consistency of expectations across teachers/parents/students regarding behavior; perceptions about the protocol/procedure for discipline and assumptions about "justice" or discipline resulting in lack of trust or faith in this area of school practice; and the collective trauma of Covid-19 and the mental health effects. The next step of the equity design team was to address the other top concern of bullying and harassment.

The equity team asked for comments about the data presented. A parent noted that she had three children who had already graduated and the students had experienced bullying and it appeared nothing had changed over the years.

Pirie noted that many of the staff felt affirmed by the fact that the student perspective was aligned with theirs and inspired toward change.

Gallagher stated that she was reassured that faculty, staff and students felt the same things. Gallagher noted that she came from a generation where educators would often say something wasn't happening. She asked how many of the staff and students responded. The response was that every student and staff member had the opportunity to take the survey. Approximately 96 staff responded and 200 students out of 900 students from the middle and high school responded. The team looked forward to being able to review the data in future years. The survey was only one mechanism of gathering information. The survey was conducted online and was anonymous.

Pirie stated she had wished for more responses, but she was happy that they had a staff and student body that wanted to make change. As an administrator, she didn't want only 50% of students thinking they knew who to go to. She wanted 100% and she thought that could be more easily implemented. Davies noted that the team wasn't sure if the students and staff really understood what bullying and harassment actually looked like. Discussions were taking place about how to make parents and staff aware of what that was.

Hunsberger stated he believed they had to start somewhere and this was a great place to start. The data was a point in time and that needed to be kept in context. As Board members and parents, the desire was for this environment to be supportive and tolerant of religion, sex, race, etc. That couldn't be taught to every single person in town but a community environment could be created on the campuses that was open to communication and education. Hunsberger suggested inviting parents in because a lot of what came into the schools was coming from parents or was being role modeled in the community, either

positively, negatively or not at all. By getting information from the students and finding out what their experiences were, the district could tailor the work to address that. He applauded the group and Lamoille North for providing the leadership and it was already making a difference. Staff and faculty were participating and honestly telling their experiences.

A parent stated there wasn't a lot of trust in the community about the follow through on the policies related to bullying. She asked how the District could build up that trust with families and students. The response from the team was that everyone they spoke with as part of this survey said they'd like to be involved more. That was a unique and important way to move forward. Daley and Neckers then explained why they had chosen to participate in this work with the team and serve as advocates for other students.

#### **Personnel – New Hires:**

**Approve WES Interventionist Hire:** Gallagher made a recommendation to hire Julie Brink as the Interventionist at Waterville Elementary School. Lamell made a motion, seconded by Sweet, to approve the hire. Brink had a Master's Degree and had taught English language learners in Mexico, China, and Vermont. Gallagher explained this was a new one-year position, funded with ESSER funds. The motion passed, with Cambridge board members abstaining.

**Approve JES STEAM Teacher Hire:** Manning asked that the Board approve the hire of Philippe Floyd for the position of STEAM teacher. Floyd was currently serving as the technology education teacher at Tuttle Middle School in South Burlington. Fagnant made a motion, seconded by Webster, to approve the hire at a salary of \$49,555. The motion passed, with Cambridge board members abstaining.

**Approve HPES Teacher Hire:** Gallagher made a recommendation to approve the hire of Lizzie Brown as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school teacher at Hyde Park Elementary School. Fagnant made a motion, seconded by Sweet, to approve the recommendation. Brown had a degree in special education and elementary education and had just graduated from UVM. Her salary would be \$43,955. The motion passed, with Cambridge board members abstaining.

**Approve ECS Teacher Hire:** Goodman requested the Board approve the hire of Misty McCartney to join Eden Central School as part of the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade team. She had experience as a classroom teacher. She studied at UMass Amherst, Vermont Law School, and the Community College of Vermont. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Sweet, to approve the hire. The motion passed, with Cambridge board members abstaining.

**Review & Award FY '24 Tax Anticipation Borrowing:** Clark reported that they had gone out to bid for the FY24 tax anticipation note and received three responses.

- Community Bank, N.A. was offering a lending rate of 3.25% with an earning rate of 3.70%, with a line of credit at 4.25%. There were earnings of 3.7% on any amounts in excess of the loan amount. The interest on the operating account would move from .5% interest to a variable rate with a floor of 1.25%.
- Union Bank was offering a lending rate of 3.8% with an earning rate of 4.25%, with a line of credit at 4.95%. There was an earning of 4.25% on any amounts in excess of the loan amount. They were offering an incentive if the District moved the general operating account from the current bank over to Union Bank they would offer 4% interest on the sweep account.
- Community National Bank was offering lending at 3.75%, with an earning rate of 4.05%. The line of credit would be 5.29%. Interest on amounts in excess of the loan amount was 4.05%.

Community Bank, NA said they would not limit the investment, however, that was at 3.7%. The 4% interest being offered at Union Bank was a good offer. Clark explained that moving it to Union Bank meant that funds wouldn't need to be moved around as much because they could be swept from one

account to another. The District had a longstanding relationship with Community Bank, N.A. They had been with Union Bank before and had a good relationship before with them. Clark recommended to the Board that they approve the bid from Union Bank. 4% interest was an amazing opportunity. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Sander, to award the FY24 Tax Anticipation Note and offset investment borrowing to Union Bank. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approve Signers on the LNMUUSD/LNSU Accounts:** The information on signers to the LNMUUSD account needed to be updated to Chasity Fagnant, with Georgeana Little serving as backup. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Webster, to approve the change, adding Fagnant as a signer on the account. The motion passed unanimously, with Fagnant abstaining.

Hunsberger then made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to update the signer information on the LNSU account to add Fagnant as a backup signer on the account. The motion passed unanimously, with Fagnant abstaining.

**Partnership with Lamoille Health Partners:** Gallagher then discussed with the Board the fact that Lamoille Health Partners (LHP) had teamed with Johnson Elementary School and helped to create a dental, wellness, and mental health clinic at the school. LHP recently approached the District to discuss providing this same service at the Belvidere school as well. This would require a community conversation as it involved the school. LHP had suggested either an option for having a school-based clinic or a community-based clinic.

A school-based clinic, especially with the pre-K there, might be the best choice for this option if the Belvidere community agreed. Sweet stated that it should be a school-based clinic, with it conceivably morphing into a community clinic because many local physicians were retiring. The whole area was medically underserved. Gallagher suggested that it could start as a school-based clinic, eventually used by families, and then community-based. No one on the Board opposed the suggestion. Gallagher stated it wouldn't cost anything. It would be part of the school building with a separate egress. Hunsberger agreed with the idea and stated that it would be helpful to families as they wouldn't have to drive into town for their family member to receive services.

**Required Policy F5, Fire and Emergency Preparedness Drills – First Reading:** Gallagher reported these two policies needed to be approved by August 1. Age appropriate and developmentally appropriate drills would be held twice a year for all students.

**Required Policy F6, Access Control and Visitor Management – First Reading:** This policy required that all sign-in sheets be saved permanently. All doors needed to be locked during school hours which was being done already.

A special meeting would be called to have a second reading and a vote to adopt these two policies.

**Central Office Updates:** Hyde Park's graduation was being held this evening. All other graduations were being held tomorrow evening. Gallagher noted she was encouraging building leaders to consult with each other next year in order for individuals to attend several graduations. There had been a wonderful high school graduation. There was also a pre-tech banquet that was getting more and more sophisticated in the projects demonstrated. Gallagher then noted that there would be an opioid forum next week.

Thibault expressed appreciation to those who had contacted him after reviewing the newsletter he created. It was great to be able to put stories together about the District and he encouraged Board members to share the newsletter on social media. He congratulated Gallagher for being named to the Executive Governing Board of the National Superintendents Association. It was an opportunity to highlight the great team at LNMUUSD.

Gallagher then informed the Board that Ben Cullivan who started at Hyde Park Elementary School and was the valedictorian at the high school four years ago had just graduated valedictorian from Dartmouth College with a 4.0 and received 15 citations, or letters of honor based on going above what would be considered an A. He tied for the most citations ever received in the history of the college.

Laflam stated he would email the progress and concepts to the bond item over the summer.

**Principal/Director Updates:** Manning stated he had a chance to attend the State Division II track meet and was very impressed with how well represented the Lamoille Union High School boys and girls teams were. This was very impressive considering students were training for these events in a parking lot.

**Other Business/Adjourn:** The Board adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.