

# MINUTES



**Addison Central School District  
ACSD Board  
Special Meeting  
Monday, November 6, 2023, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT**

## *ACSD District Vision and Mission*

### **OUR VISION**

*Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.*

### **OUR MISSION**

*Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.*

## **In-Person Attendance**

Barbara Wilson; Brian Bauer; Courtney Krahn; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; Ellie Romp; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Joanna Doria; Lindsey Hescocock; Mary Heather Noble; Nicole Carter; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tricia Allen

## **Remote Attendance**

Jason Chance

## **Not In Attendance**

Eddie Fallis; Heather Crowley; Matthew Corrente; Tim Williams

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum      Barb Wilson

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Barb Wilson noted that she had hoped to add the approval of minutes from the prior Board meeting, but that she wasn't able to get the materials posted in time. Approval of those minutes will be included in the November 27 Board meeting, since the November 13, 2023 Board meeting will be devoted to interviews.

1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff      Barb Wilson 5 min

ACSD administration & staff present: Nicole Carter, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Equity and Student Services; Courtney Krahn, Director of Teaching and Learning; Emily Blistein, Director of Communications; Will Hatch, Director of Technology.

B. Public Comment - Agenda Items 10 min

Mary Slosar of Weybridge provided a comment regarding the Board's Strategic Plan. She has observed the meetings of the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan committee -- it has been a pleasure to watch the committee work. She offered the following thoughts: Goal 2 regarding Access -- it is striking to her that the strategies only focus on resource allocation, not on student need. Goal 3 regarding Success -- these are ambitious targets, so she is surprised that they are not being met with more ambitious strategies. These strategies don't seem like they will get us to the goals. She suggests adding development of teaching evidence practices and early identification and intervention in math and literature. She thanked the Board for its work.

C. Approve ACSD Bills James Malcom 5 min

James Malcolm presented a summary of the ACSD bills, which were read on October 30, 2023:

General Fund: \$754, 425.39 (~\$278,000 of this is for transportation; \$267,000 is for BreadLoaf Architects for the MUHS kitchen project.)

Payroll: \$934,334.41

Mary Heather Noble asked if the Board is expecting additional bills for the MUHS kitchen project. Jason Chance responded that there are still payments due for the project, so there will be additional bills.

Motion to approve payment of the ACSD bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

D. Action: Faculty/Staff Appointments/Resignations

Nicole Carter reported that this is to fill an existing vacancy.

Motion to appoint Kristin Lang as Paraprofessional, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, per the ESP Master Agreement.

Move: Mary Heather Noble Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

1. Appoint Kristin Lang as a Paraprofessional, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, per the ESP Tim Williams 5 min Master Agreement

2. Staffing Update

Nicole Carter reported that the District will be posting a position for a new elementary school teacher.

Steve Orzech asked if this was a new position. Nicole responded that it is -- the District has identified available funding in the Mary Hogan budget to add a teacher to help relieve the urgent needs there.

Joanna Doria requested clarification to get a full picture on the number of positions created at Mary Hogan. She referenced three prior position assignments to Mary Hogan -- what is the total number?

Nicole Carter clarified that two centralized Student Services staff have been temporarily stationed at Mary Hogan School to address the urgent need, but that these are not permanent assignments. Marissa Hennings, Behavior Specialist for rural schools was temporarily reassigned to Mary Hogan, and Mike Dudek, ESSER-funded Student Response Coordinator was also temporarily relocated to Mary Hogan. These assignments are reassess monthly. The other 2-3 recent appointments at Mary Hogan were to help fill 5 preexisting vacancies. The position announced this evening is the only new position for Mary Hogan.

Tricia Allen asked if the new position is a temporary addition, or whether it will be continued

into the next year. Nicole answered that It is provisional for FY24, and will need to be considered for the FY25 budget.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked how many sections of Kindergarten will exist at Mary Hogan. Nicole responded that it would create 5 sections for 72 students -- the largest cohort since 2001.

#### E. Ad Hoc Strategic Committee Readout/Recommendations

Barb Wilson 60 min

Jason Chance presented a slide show presentation of the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Committee's work to incorporate Board member feedback, and refine the Board's goals with tangible targets, examine and edit the strategies in support of the Board's approved goals, and identify other suggested structural edits to the draft strategic plan. The presentation is included in meeting materials.

#### Highlights:

-- The Committee added targets to all 3 goals to more clearly define the Board's desired outcome for the district.

-- The Committee also revised and added strategies under each of the Board goals, in service of the stated goals/targets.

-- Other suggested edits: The Committee recommends the addition of summarized findings from the Advisory Committee Report & Hanover Equity Survey to provide context for the Board's goals (e.g., help to define the problems addressed by the plan). Links to the Advisory Committee Report and Hanover Equity Survey can also be included in appendices. The Committee also recommends moving the existing

Action Steps to a separate section, to make clear that these elements are the work of the Action Team and not directives from the Board -- the Action Steps are among the suggested options that the Implementation Team may consider as it works to figure out how to get the District to the Board's stated goals and targets.

Summary/Highlights of Board Comments:

- Targets for Goal #1 Belonging: 100% of students and families feeling safe and welcome in the District -- is this too aspirational? Should it just state "all students and families"?
- Should targets have this level of specificity w/r/t the percentages targeted for increases (e.g., graduation rates, students feeling welcome/safe) and decreases (e.g., incidents of identity-based harassment)?
- The Strategic Plan must provide a definition of historically marginalized student populations to be clear and consistent. The Committee was aligning this definition with the State's definition, and includes both disabled students and students living in poverty.
- The document should provide clarity regarding the Board's role and the Implementation team's role in moving the strategic plan forward. The Board will be approving the Goals, Targets, and Strategies -- while the Implementation team will be identifying action steps (some of which may have been identified by the Action Team) to create an implementation plan to move the District toward the Board's vision.
- The Committee recommends addition of a strategy to develop policies and procedures to prevent incidents of identity-based harassment (existing policies only focus on responding to incidents, rather than preventing them).
- Board members recognize the complexity of "student need" -- the strategic plan needs to capture the full range, including academic, SEL, behavioral, peers, etc.
- Working to hire diverse staff must be coupled with support and mentorship to ensure retention.
- Where does the Board's support for, and expectation of professional development fit into the Strategic Plan? Should it be part of Goal #2 Access or Goal #3 Success (as part of curriculum)?
- The graduation target for Goal #3 seems too narrow, and does not recognize or honor students who elect to obtain a GED (which is not recognized by the State of VT as graduating). How does the Board include these students in its definition of success? Perhaps the Board should consider redefining the target to include readiness for productive contributions beyond high school, much like special education language addresses student transitions beyond secondary school.

-- Restructuring the Action Steps into a different section should be done with care, so that the reader is not confused. It should be clear that these are not Board directives, but that they are actions that the community has identified and requested to achieve their understanding of the Board's goals.

-- The Strategic Plan should also be evaluated for overall readability; consider how it presents to individuals for whom English is their second language.

There was also additional discussion about when the Strategic Plan should be implemented -whether the Board should wait for its new leadership or allow the Administration to begin its work on implementation immediately upon Board approval. There were a variety of opinions on this issue. Ellen Whelan-Wuest advocated for waiting until the new Superintendent is in place; Mary Heather Noble and Suzanne Buck noted how long the Board has taken with this task and advocated for moving forward with the work of implementing the plan.

TO DO:

The Ad Hoc Committee will meet again to incorporate comments from this evening, and present draft revisions at the November 27th board meeting, to support Board action on the Strategic Plan in early December.

F. Superintendent Search Barb Wilson 10 min

Barb Wilson reported a few schedule changes for the week of superintendent interviews. Dinner will begin at 5:30, and the formal interviews will begin at 6:30 p.m. All sessions will be held in 208 of the PAHCC.

Stakeholder groups are in the process of being formed. They are currently collecting parent and student volunteers, and have identified 4 community leaders who have availability to participate. She is waiting to hear back from the Parent Child Center.

G. Public Comment - Any Topic 10 min

Mary Slosar of Weybridge provided some follow-up comments in the wake of the Board's discussion on the Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Committee's report:

- With respect to the graduation rate target, please keep in mind that it is a federal right for students on IEPs to stay in school longer than the standard 4-year high school duration.

- With respect to whether to keep the 100% target for Goal 1 access -- it might be better to just say "all students" and gauge improvement.

- With respect to hiring and retaining diverse staff -- she is concerned with the focus just on race, and would like to see the Board consider diverse identities of all kinds, including LGBTQ+, disability, neurodiverse staff, etc.

- With respect to family engagement -- she does not believe that this board understands what family engagement actually means. It is not just inviting parents and families into schools, but it should be power sharing with the community, much the way special education decision making includes families.

H. Executive Session: Personnel and Board Member Performance 1 VSA 313(a) (3)  
15 min

Entered Executive Session at 8:42 p.m.

Exited Executive Session and re-entered Open Session at 9:14 p.m.

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel and Board member performance, per 1 VSA Section 313 (a) 3.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

I. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Heather  
Noble, ACSD  
Board Clerk  
Motion to  
adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 0m

\*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.