

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Executive Committee
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 4:00 pm - 5:15 pm
49 Charles Avenue
Middlebury VT
05753**

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 Attendance

Barbara Wilson; Mary Heather Noble; Suzanne Buck; Tim Williams

A. Call To Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 3:57 p.m.

1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

B. Public Comment- Agenda Items

No public comment.

C. Approve minutes of 3/18/2024 and 3/21/2024

Motion to approve the minutes of 3/18/24 and 3/21/24.

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

D. Committee Discussion:

1. Public Comment period(s) per A21

Barb Wilson brought up the issue of public comment periods during Board meetings, in response to Ellen Whelan-Wuest's comment at the last Board meeting and follow-up email. Barb originally thought that the format of having 2 public comment periods (1 at the beginning of the meeting for topics on the agenda, and 1 at the end of the meeting for all other matters) was specifically required by Policy A21. She has since listened to the Board meeting when that policy was adopted and learned that it was not required to separate the two. Her thought is to bring the matter before the full Board and see whether the Board prefers to keep public comment separated or return it all to the beginning of the meeting.

Suzanne Buck did not support making the change, in part because it seemed like changing a

policy without the policy committee conducting a review. Barb noted that it would not be a policy change -- just a vote on how the policy was being implemented. Mary Heather wondered why this was an urgent matter that required the Board's action -- it feels a bit like a reaction to a citizen who was disappointed about not being on the agenda and having that complaint amplified through a Board member. She expressed concern about the Executive Committee & Board operating this way -- it is not good governance. She expressed support for maintaining the current agenda format, in that it prioritizes public comment on matters before the Board, allows the Board to tend to its work, and still provides an opportunity for public comment on all other matters. She emphasized that Board meetings are not public meetings, and that time might be better spent on creating regular, meaningful public engagement opportunities.

Tim Williams offered his perspective, noting that the current system complies with the policy and actually prevents people with special interests from derailing the work of the Board at board meetings. He provided an anecdote from his own experience back in Pennsylvania, with people who were intent on using public comment period to protest COVID-era mask policies, whether or not the matter was on the agenda before the board.

The group discussed at length. Barb thought it would be fine to let the Board decide. Mary Heather and Suzanne did not feel the matter required board action.

2. Finalize agenda for April 8th Board Meeting

The Committee reviewed the draft agenda and discussed whether the Board should hold an in-person Board meeting in light of the anticipated traffic issues surrounding the upcoming solar eclipse on April 8th.

Barb Wilson noted that Steve Orzech has requested an Executive Session to update the Board on contract negotiations. Tim Williams also mentioned need to discuss some personnel matters in Executive Session. Barb suggested having a virtual meeting on April 8th to focus specifically on Executive Session, and postponing other agenda items for the following meeting, April 22nd.

There was some discussion about April 22nd falling within the Spring Break week. Suzanne Buck noted that board meetings have always continued during school breaks, unless they fall on a specific holiday. The group agreed to hold a virtual meeting on April 8th and an in-person meeting on April 22nd.

The agenda for April 8th will include approval of minutes, approval of ACSD bills, public comment, and then enter Executive Session to discuss Negotiations and Personnel matters.

3. Committee assignment adjustment request

Barb Wilson notified the committee that two Board members have requested to switch committees, due to scheduling conflicts. Joanna Doria has requested to switch from the Facilities Committee to the Policy Committee, and Ellen Whelan-Wuest has requested to switch from Policy Committee to Facilities Committee. Barb brought it up to the Executive Committee for discussion.

Suzanne Buck did not support the request, noting that the Committee Chair in charge of scheduling the meetings must accommodate all members. Mary Heather Noble agreed, and expressed some discomfort at the request -- it seems like a way to circumvent the committee

assignments that were made. Suzanne mentioned that some other board members also did not get their first choices, and noted that she had been taken off the Communications & Engagement Committee without being notified. Mary Heather accepted responsibility for this -- she had asked Barb to offer spots on the C&E Committee to 2 Board members with only 1 committee assignment. Since both responded affirmatively, Suzanne had to be removed from the C&E Committee to comply with the 5-person policy limit. Suzanne requested to serve as a Board liaison to the Strategic Plan Implementation team in light of this shift.

Mary Heather suggested having Barb check in with both the Facilities and Policy committee chairs to instruct them to find a time to work for all existing members and start there. If scheduling problems persist, they can revisit. Barb agreed to do so.

4. Board voicemail message mailbox monitoring

Mary Heather Noble explained that a few years ago she had a dedicated Board Voicemail number set up for the Board so that Board members' private phone numbers would no longer be shared on the Board webpage. She has been checking the voicemail weekly and has been reporting it in the Communication & Engagement Committee meetings, but thinks it would be more appropriate to have the matter as a standing agenda item for Executive Committee meetings (since this committee meets more frequently, and includes members most likely needing to respond to messages).

Mary Heather will email members of the Executive Committee about the instructions for checking the Board voicemail, and will copy Darcie Arensmeyer as well. Barb Wilson will include this as a regular agenda item.

E. Other

Barb Wilson brought up a matter mentioned in Tim Williams's weekly board update: that the Strategic Planning Implementation Team would be working with Dr. Baker over the next several weeks to prepare a presentation to the Board, and that in May the Board will be invited to contribute its own work to the implementation work plan. Barb thought it would be a good idea to have a presentation to the Board on the State's new governance standards, and invite board members to do a self-evaluation Google Form to help the Executive Committee identify which governance topics the Board believes it should focus on in the upcoming year.

Suzanne Buck wondered whether the VSBA should do the presentation to the Board, to be able to provide all the state/legislative context. Other members of the committee agreed. Mary Heather Noble asked if the VSBA had a Board self-evaluation template that could be used. Barb said they did, we would just need to convert it to a Google Form. Suzanne also noted that because this Board is so young/inexperienced, there should be a refresh training on Board Roles and Responsibilities. Barb said that the June 1st Board Retreat could include that, as well as the other governance priorities that emerge from the self-eval. There will also need to be ample time allocated for Dr. Baker and the Strategic Planning Implementation Team to present its plans for the year. Suzanne and Mary Heather both advocated for having the Board Retreat facilitated by an outside party -- maybe Debbie from VSBA. Since it will be a Saturday retreat, plans will also need to be made for food.

Mary Heather Noble brought up the question of Anti-Racist Training for the Board. She recently attended a similar training at Middlebury College and wanted to follow-up on Barb's prior request for this. The committee discussed and decided it might be best to aim for a regular board meeting in June or August, to include Dr. Baker.

Suzanne Buck also mentioned again her desire to serve as a Board liaison to the Strategic Planning Implementation Team. Mary Heather asked about the best way to accomplish it. Tim Williams suggested checking in with the Implementation Team to see what they want. He feels it is in everyone's best interest to have this structure. Barb mentioned that her impression was that Dr. Baker wanted 1-2 Board members on the team to keep the Board informed and to help make sure the team serves the Board's intended goals.

F. Public Comment- Any Topic

No public comment.

G. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Heather Noble
Board Clerk/Secretary

Motion to adjourn.

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

*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.