

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
ACSD Board
Board Meeting
Monday, April 22, 2024, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

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; Ellie Romp; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Joanna Doria; Laura Harthan; Matthew Corrente; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tim Williams; Tricia Allen

Remote Attendance

Mary Heather Noble

Not In Attendance

Ellen Whelan-Wuest

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

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

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff 5 min

ASCD Staff present: Tim Williams, Interim Superintendent; Matt Corrente, Director of Finance & Operations; Courtney Krahn, Director of Teaching & Learning

Also present: Mark Koenig, ANWSD Board and VSBA rep for Addison County

2. Motion to adopt agenda Barb Wilson 3 min

Motion to adopt agenda for April 22, 2024 meeting.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

B. Public Comment on Agenda Items 10 min

No public comment.

C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of April 8, 2024 Board Meeting 2 min

Motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2024.

Move: Jamie McCallum Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

D. Approve ACSD Bills

3 min

James Malcolm presented the ACSD Bills as follows:

General Fund: \$300,430.79

Payroll: \$957,177.65

Motion to approve and pay the ACSD Bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

E. Board Education

Barb Wilson 45 min

1. Presentation: Vermont Governance Rules for School Boards

Mark Koenig, VSBA Governance Committee

Mark Koenig, Board member for ANWSD and Addison County VSBA rep provided a presentation on the VT Agency of Education's new Governance Rules for School Boards, which provide standards for board governance and their oversight/management of District facilities and finances. He explained how standards were developed, and that the intent is to make boards work better.

Mark explained that Boards should understand that they will not be able to implement the new rules all at once, but should use self-assessment to prioritize the standards that they most need to work toward. He explained how the ANSWD Board has prioritized its work toward the new rules -- their self assessment showed they are in good shape w/r/t/ the financial standards, but need work on the public engagement rules. This is one of their priorities, recognizing that it is a difficult thing to achieve. You will never make everyone happy and it is a challenge to find the right balance of effort to improve participation.

Some of the standards:

- Community engagement: Board issues an inclusive process to invite & incorporate community input to vision and goals for the school system.
- Board sets measurable goals and regularly reviews progress toward goals.
- Annual monitoring of student achievement and wellness
- Annual evaluation of Superintendent performance based on the agreed-upon goals

Mark provided some additional information about how ANSWD is working toward the new rules. He recommends having the board do a self-evaluation on the new standards and prioritize what we think is missing. Choose 1-2 things to focus on at a time.

Board questions:

Barb Wilson asked about bringing new board members into the process. Jason Chance asked about evaluating communication & outreach. Mark shared that their experience has shown providing small, digestible pieces of information via multiple pathways (e.g., FPF, social media, etc.) has been the most effective.

James Malcolm noted that the priorities should really be focused on student outcomes. Mary Heather Noble asked whether the new rules required boards to submit reports or any

deliverables about their progress. Mark replied that they do not -- the rules do not have any teeth, they are intended more for best practices & guidance for what the state expects.

Mark finished with some additional information on exceptions regarding board governance. Barb Wilson mentioned that she would send a link to Board members to allow everyone to do a self-evaluation to begin the process of prioritizing ACSD's work toward the new standards.

F. Report of Student Representatives

Eddie Fallis 5 min
Sophia Lawton

No student rep update.

G. Report of Superintendent

1. NEASC Accreditation Update

Courtney Krahn 20 min

Courtney Krahn provided a presentation to the Board about the joint New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) and IB accreditation process. This is the first of its kind in the country. She explained that NEASC provides broad guidance for best practices in a learning community, and that IB further articulates and offers a framework/structure for how to reach the standards.

She further explained the categories for the standards:

- Learning Culture
- Student Learning (academics)
- Professional Practices (ethics and continuing ed)
- Learning Support (student services)
- Learning Resources (safety and functionality of facilities and other resources)

The Pros of seeking accreditation: institutional accountability, external validation, objective feedback, the process respects different approaches to education, and also engages different community perspectives.

Courtney provided a history of accreditation with both NEASC and IB. Currently, MUHS is the only NEASC accredited school, so ACSD is seeking accreditation for all of its other schools. And it is also time for ACSD's 5-year IB review, hence the joint process. The joint process has created a "Collaborative Learning Protocol" -- which essentially contains the joint standards.

ACSD has already begun its self-reflection part of the process, by having all ACSD principals come together to reflect on how the District is meeting or not meeting those joint standards. They have generated a report, and have also provided addendums to further articulate on how they believe each of their individual schools is doing to meet the joint standards. Courtney will make this report available to Board members. The general assessment given by the principal team is that ACSD is developing or making strides but not yet meeting most standards.

What's next: Some NEASC/IB reps are coming to ACSD to visit schools and meet with the Board's Executive Committee in May. ACSD will then have a full NEASC/IB Peer Evaluation visit in October 2025 to complete the process. This will yield specific areas for improvement, which will also be aligned with the Strategic Plan's goals around literacy and math proficiencies. Emphasis is on finding evidence of impact.

Board Questions:

Joanna Doria asked some questions about learning culture and the Board's role in setting policy to support that work. Courtney confirmed that the Board's strategic plan goals and policies directly impact what is prioritized in classrooms.

Steve Orzech asked about IB, noting that it appears NEASC's willingness to partner with IB confirms that it is a good system for meeting their requirements. This counteracts opinions within the community about IB being a waste of money, doesn't it? Courtney confirmed this observation, noting that it would be much more effort for the District to develop its own coordinated curriculum to meet NEASC standards for horizontal & vertical alignment across the District.

Jason Chance asked about the review cycles -- NEASC is 10 years, IB is 5 years. Is the idea to conduct reviews every 5 years? That would align with the Board Strategic Planning cycle. All agreed.

Joanna Doria expressed hope that the joint process will streamline accreditation for the administration, and wants to be sensitive to all the duplicative work that would otherwise be done.

2. Appointments/Resignations

5 min

Suzanne Buck made a motion to accept the appointments, resignations, and retirements as presented in the agenda. Jamie McCallum seconded.

Board questions: Brian Bauer asked if any of the appointments were new positions. Tim Williams reported that Mike Dudek's position is a newly continued position in response to Mary Hogan staff request and need for additional support to address student behavior issues at Mary Hogan. He clarified that the position itself is not exclusive to Mary Hogan -- Mike can be redirected to any of the schools that have the greatest need.

Jamie McCallum and Steve Orzech questioned why the custodial appointment was designated as a non-union position. Dr. Williams was uncertain and said he would check -- this may have been a mistake.

Steve Orzech asked if Mike Dudek's position had been posted. Dr. Williams stated that it hadn't, because Mike's current work in that role has demonstrated effectiveness and justified his continued work at the urgent request of Mary Hogan teachers.

Joanna Doria asked whether exit interviews were being conducted. Dr. Williams confirmed that HR is doing it. Not all exiting employees wish to do them. She asked if the Board might hear a report about the exit interviews in an executive session. Dr. Williams stated that it would be possible, and suggested the Board consider its role -- is reviewing individual exit interviews something the Board should be managing? Steve Orzech clarified that perhaps it would be possible for the administration to provide a summary of exit interview findings at least once per year, perhaps during the hiring season.

Suzanne Buck made a motion to amend her original motion to remove item J, the custodial staff appointment from the list of approved appointments, in light of the question regarding the position's union affiliation. Jason Chance seconded. Barb Wilson called the vote. All members voted 'aye,' with the exception of Laura Harthan's abstention. The original motion was modified.

Barb Wilson then called the vote on the original motion -- to approve the appointments, resignations, and retirements as listed, except for Lauren Symon's custodial position in Item J. All members voted 'aye,' with the exception of Laura Harthan and Steve Orzech's abstentions.

- a. Appoint Jennifer Billings, Math Teacher, 1.0 FTE, Step 16, effective 7/1/2024
- b. Appoint Michael Dudek, Administrator on Assignment, 1.0 FTE, Non Union, effective 7/1/2024
- c. Appoint Sean Hagen, Custodian, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, effective 4/23/2024
- d. Appoint Steven Hill, Special Educator, 1.0 FTE, Step 3, effective 7/1/2024
- e. Appoint Josie Jordan, Classroom Teacher, 1.0 FTE, Step 20, effective 7/1/2024
- f. Appoint Rob McCuen, Special Educator, 1.0 FTE, Step 8, effective 7/1/2024
- g. Appoint Kristopher Perkins, Special Educator, 1.0 FTE, Step 7, effective 7/1/2024
- h. Appoint Julie Pettis, Special Education Director, 1.0 FTE, Non-union position, effective 7/1/2024
- i. Appoint Heather Raabe, Special Educator, 1.0 FTE, Step 23, effective 7/1/2024
- j. Appoint Lauren Symon, Custodian, .40 FTE, Non Union, effective 4/23/2024
- k. Accept Resignation of Julianne Hayyat, School Counselor .80 FTE, effective 6/30/2024
- l. Accept Resignation of Andy Maille, Custodian, 1.0 FTE, effective 4/3/2024
- m. Accept Resignation of Heather Raabe, Principal, 1.0 FTE effective 6/30/2024
- n. Accept Resignation of Laura Nugent, Special Education Director, 1.0 FTE, effective 6/30/2024
- o. Accept Resignation of Pamela Salant, Classroom Teacher, 1.0 FTE, effective 6/30/2024
- p. Accept Resignation of Darcey Wijsenbeek, School Counselor, 1.0 FTE, 6/30/2024
- q. Accept Retirement of Cindy Atkins, DP Curriculum Coordinator, .44 FTE, effective 6/30/2024

3. Non-renewal of Contract.

Tim Williams presented one position for which the administration was not recommending a contract renewal: Lynn Suddaby as special educator.

Steve Orzech asked if the person had ever requested a Board hearing. Dr. Williams reported that they had not petitioned for a hearing, so the Board is free to proceed.

Note: Laura Harthan and Brian Bauer abstained from voting.

Motion to approve the administration's recommendation to not renew Lynn Suddaby's contract for special education teacher.

Move: Jason Chance Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

H. Report of the Chair

Barb Wilson 15 min

1. Retreat Planning Update

Barb Wilson provided an update on the Board retreat: It will be held on June 1st, probably 9:30 a.m. to about 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. She is still looking at venues, considering local churches and other locations, depending on cost. The retreat will focus heavily on the Strategic Plan implementation, and the Board will identify its role/to-do list to support that work (e.g., policy development and equity-based budgeting). Barb would like the retreat to also have Board education on these two topics.

Steve Orzech and Mary Heather Noble both advocated for using ACSD space for the retreat to keep costs down. Jason Chance advocated for ongoing board education & guidance on equity-based budgeting, rather than just a one-time presentation.

2. Board Governance - Legislative Efforts/Involvement Discussion

Barb Wilson reminded the Board of all the current legislative activity around education funding, and mentioned Dr. Baker's suggestion about perhaps having a Board committee to keep an eye on this work and the implications for ACSD. She also noted that the VSBA has been asking for Board involvement across the state in its responses to proposed legislation. Tomorrow is the hearing for Governor Scott's nominated Secretary of Education. There are times when it would be more powerful for the full Board to make a statement, and Barb is soliciting ideas for how this might be accomplished.

Brian Bauer suggested forwarding Angelo Lynn's editorial to legislative reps.

Steve Orzech cautioned against taking a Board action that isn't conducted in a Board meeting setting. He also emphasized the benefits of Board members staying in close contact with elected reps, this is a good way to stay apprised of the work in Montpelier and also make certain reps know Board member concerns.

Jamie McCallum asked whether having a legislative committee might be the best way to proceed. Barb Wilson also suggested having current Board Committee chairs serving that role. Mary Heather Noble expressed reservations about the benefit of creating another committee, when there is already capable leadership in the Board Chair and Superintendent roles to monitor this activity and call the full Board to action when necessary. It seems redundant to add another committee layer and could impede swift responses. The full Board is on notice to pay attention to this activity and consider the implications for ACSD. James Malcolm expressed his agreement.

Brian Bauer pushed back, noting the importance of hearing both sides: Dr. Baker requested a committee. Barb Wilson and Tim Williams clarified that Dr. Baker did not request a committee, but merely suggested one way the Board could stay on top of this legislative activity. Steve Orzech suggesting seeing if there is appetite among Board members to do this work. Mary Heather reminded the Board about following the proper process for creating Board committees -- that the full Board creates them and creates a clear charge.

I. Report of the Board

10 min

1. Communications & Engagement

Tricia Allen

Tricia Allen reported as the new chair. The Committee will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, but is also meeting on April 30th to discuss Board opportunities to show appreciation for educators during Teacher Appreciation week in early May. Remaining meetings will focus on regular Board communications and the ongoing work of improving community engagement.

2. Negotiations

Steve Orzech

Steve Orzech reported that the Committee has reached tentative agreements with both

Associations, and is optimistic about finalizing contracts without having to go to arbitration. He provided a few highlights, but could not go into details as the agreements have not yet been ratified.

3. Facilities

Jason Chance

Jason Chance reported that the Facilities Committee will be meeting on the third Wednesday of every month, and will be focusing on facility planning through an equity lens.

4. Finance

James Malcolm

James Malcolm reported that the Committee will be meeting on the first Monday of every month, but more often in the budget season. They have worked a bit on the budget calendar, which begins in the summer. The focus will be on examining how the District can make cuts to become more lean.

5. Policy

Jamie McCallum

Jamie McCallum reported that the Committee is still setting its regular meeting schedule -- either the first Wednesday or second Tuesday of every month. They have been working on 3 policies, including the new wellness policy and A21, public participational board meetings. Dr. Baker joined them at the last meeting -- there is keen interest in pursuing policy governance and writing "ends" policies that define outcomes.

6. SEPAC

Joanna Doria
Suzanne Buck

Joanna Doria reported the SEPAC's activities -- March included the Neurodiversity Celebration and the neurodiversity family event at the Marquis Theater in lieu of a board meeting. April's meeting included a full agenda. Upcoming work includes participating in the review of candidate's to replace Laura Nugent's Special Education Director position, compiling an annual report of the SEPAC's work, and hopes to provide a full presentation to the full Board before the end of the 2024 academic year.

7. Middlebury Community Television

Barb Wilson

Barb Wilson reported that MCTV is focused on the Ilsley library renovation and is also investigating how to make up for lost funds with the diminishing money from Cable TV. They are considering having Board members take responsibility for fundraising quotas. Obviously this would not be possible for the ACSD rep.

8. Parks and Recreation

Mary Heather Noble

Mary Heather Noble reported that the Parks & Rec group met last week. It has been a while, in light of significant restructuring to the Parks & Rec oversight within the Town of Middlebury. The Parks & Rec board used to provide some financial oversight, but now Parks & Rec reports to Public Works and the former board serves more like an advisory committee. Scott Bourne, the new Superintendent of Parks & Rec fought to maintain the committee to ensure continued input from all the stakeholder groups into Parks & Rec decisions. The Committee will be meeting ~6 times a year. Currently the Parks & Rec department is in good financial standing and has upcoming plans to improve the Pool and Pool Building. Ongoing work includes investigating how to make services accessible to, and supported by all users, especially community members outside Middlebury.

9. Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center

Steve Orzech
Tricia Allen

Tricia Allen reported that several PAHCC students have been recognized at the State level for their excellent work in PACHH programming, including the Board's student rep Sophia Lawton. These awards validate the quality of PAHCC's programs.

Steve Orzech also reported that the PAHCC Board is currently working with MacPherson & Jacobson's Judy Sclair Stein to establish the Superintendent Review process, and is very pleased with what the process includes. He hopes to see a similar process for the ACSD superintendent review.

10. Addison County VSBA Regional Representative

Suzanne Buck

Suzanne Buck reported that she and the other VSBA rep Mark Koenig recently sent an email to all Board members with an update to recent VSBA work. VSBA has spent hours on the State's current legislative activity around education funding and the confirmation process for the Secretary of Education. Suzanne reminded Board members that there is a way to influence the legislature and that is through the resolution process. She provided the example that ANWSD initiated, to examine all the unfunded mandates that have come out of the Agency of Education. It is power for other Boards to add their names to resolutions. There is a link in the email to all current resolutions. One important resolution concerns ceasing the use of public money to fund non-public schools.

Barb Wilson asked Suzanne to help keep the ACSD Board posted on what it could/should be doing to help.

J. Public Comment on any Topic

10 min

Leonard Barrett of Bridport made a public comment. He and his wife Linda have been heavily involved in the ACSD schools. They are both alumni, raised their children in the District, and have both served in public roles. They care deeply about the schools. When he served on the Board before unification, people were told that ACSD would be coming together as one learning community, and that school consolidation was coming. Now 8-9 years later, no action has been taken on this issue. He does not believe this community will support a big bond to repair and keep all schools open. His personal opinion is that ACSD should have one elementary school, but he understands if the solution will require more than one. But not the current configuration. He and Linda have counted votes on school budgets for years and they are very worried about the possibility of ACSD budgets not passing in the future if action isn't taken. He implored the Board to not let that happen -- he does not want to see budgets fail in the future.

Leonard also noted that he would like to personally pay for and install a separate flag pole at Mary Hogan to have the American flag fly by itself. This is very important to him.

Leonard also reported that 2 parents have called him about being put on a wait list for PreK at their public school. He doesn't understand why this is happening. These students should be admitted so they don't go off to a private school.

Finally Leonard suggested that it is time for ACSD to take a look at installing a turf field. So many games are cancelled or postponed in the spring due to the fragility of the grass field.

Mary Slosar of Weybridge noted the discussion around community engagement during Mark Koenig's presentation. She emphasized the need for the Board to consider whether it wants to inform the public or actually engage in a two-way conversation, and that this should be reflected in the public comment policy. She also stated that the administration does not have a policy regarding public engagement so the public's only option is to try and engage with the Board.

K. Executive Session - Title 1 V.S.A Section 313(a)(3)

Barb Wilson

Entered Executive Session at 8:55 p.m.

Exited Executive Session and re-entered Open Session at 9:31 p.m.

Suzanne Buck made a motion to authorize Board Chair Barb Wilson to continue moving forward with the Superintendent transition. Jason Chance seconded. Barb Wilson called the vote and it passed unanimously.

Jason Chance made a motion to appoint Lauren Symon to Custodian, 0.44 FTE non-union, as indicated in Item J of the agenda. James Malcolm seconded. Tim Williams explained that the reason the position is indicated as non-union is because it is part-time and not required to be a union position. It was not a typo, as suspected when the Board was originally taking action on the appointments. Barb Wilson called the vote and it passes unanimously, with the exception of Laura Harthan's abstention.

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a specific personnel matter per 1 VSA Secion 313 (a) 3.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jason Chance Status: Passed

L. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 13m

*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.