

Meeting of the  
Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
December 02, 2024

Board members Present: Johnson: Monica Stearns, Kyle Hill, Mark Nielsen, Katie Audette; Waterville: Bart Bezio; Cambridge: Nancy Guyette, Jan Sander, Denise Webster, Mark Stebbins; Hyde Park: Tina Lowe, Phillip Kiely, Lisa Jones; Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet

Board members Absent: Hyde Park: Patti Hayford; Allen Audette; Cambridge: Susan Prescott, Amy Listenik; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb

Administrators Present: Cole Hayes, Deborah Clark, Bethann Pirie, Rene Thibault, Catherine Gallagher, Blake Nemeth, Paula Beattie, Dylan Laflam, Jan Epstein, David Manning, Diane Rielly, Betzi Goodman, Michele Aumand, Kim Hunt, Carrie Bullard, Jennifer Hulse, Erik Remmers

Others Present: Community Members, Eden teachers and support staff

Minute Taker: Savannah Droney

Meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm by Nielsen

**Approval of Agenda:** The Climate surveys will be moved to after public comment. Sanders made the motion to approve the agenda with the change, seconded by Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:** Gallagher stated there was a letter sent by a group of concerned Eden Central School parents and she is going to respond to it. There is a response letter from a board member, Jeff Hunsberger, and it was read to the group by Sweet (please see attached letter). The parent group was invited to tonight's meeting, but did not attend.

Paula shared the results of the climate survey. The survey is still open until this Friday 12/6/2024, so this is only a quick overview. The results are 80% of the teacher and support staff is satisfied. The survey shows overall staff feels supported by teams and valued by the community. Results did not include Eden Central School (ECS). ECS declined to do the survey because of their concern with community retaliation. Gallagher wants to stand in support of Eden teachers and staff. Two teachers left last year and during exit interviews they said they didn't feel safe from the community. The Eden team is also not feeling safe and that is why they didn't participate. Board Chair Nielsen spoke in support of the Eden principal and staff. Gallagher respects Eden's desire to not engage and instead do what they were hired to do, support the students.

**LNSU/LNMMUUSD Routine Business:**

**Consent Agenda Items – minutes from the LNSU/LNMMUUSD Board Meeting, Curriculum Committee and Social-Emotional Wellness & Safety Committee meetings on November 11, 2024; minutes from the Finance & Capital Committee meeting on November 4, 2024:** Kiely made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Stebbins. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** Bezio reviewed the board orders and recommends the board approve the orders. Jones made the motion to approve the board orders, seconded by Sweet. The motion passed unanimously.

**Legislative Updates – Possible Discussion:** Bezio shared there is a lot of noise in the legislature right now; they are waiting on the December 1<sup>st</sup> tax letter. Everyone was anticipating an increase in property

taxes, but it is not as bad as last year. The first week of the Legislative session will be fully devoted to education. The Community on the Future of Public Education will come out with a report this month.

**Central Office Repairs Bid – Discussion & Possible Action:** Laflam received one bid for the Central office repairs. This could be because there is a short timeline. The bid came from Vermont Construction at \$217,100. This amount will be paid out of reserve funds. Stebbins made the motion to approve awarding Vermont Construction the Central office repairs bid. Kiely seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Policy Review:**

**Substitute Teachers, B-1, Second Reading & Possible Adoption:** Gallagher discussed the changes. The per-diem pay is removed from policy.

**Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace, B-3, Second Reading & Possible Adoption:** Gallagher stated the change of wording is to alcohol and drug recovery and substance use.

**Education Records, C-1, Second Reading & Possible Adoption:** exact same policy.

Gallagher ask the board to approve the policies. Kiely made motion to approve, Sweet seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Status of the Climate Surveys:** Gallagher stated the survey has participation from central office, the community, and teachers. This is for internal reflection. They are not asking for 360 evaluations. Beattie stated she has had an opportunity to join the ECS staff at their staff meetings. The amount of support they show each other and to Betzi is incredible. She hopes the outside influence doesn't impact them. She read the Central Office results which is 99% satisfied. They feel supported, they feel appreciated, and a strong sense of belonging. Their concern is not having Central Office staff in one location. The survey closes Friday, 12/6/2024.

**Agreement to Join the Winooski Valley Statewide School Collaborate – Discussion & Possible Action**  
Gallagher states we belong to the Winooski Valley Statewide School Collaborate. Gallagher read the agreement which states that LNSU will accept no more than 10 students and will send no more than 40 students per year. Gallagher asks that the board approve Nielsen to sign the Winooski Valley Statewide School Collaborate agreement. Sweet made the motion, Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Other Business/Adjourn:** Webster made the motion to adjourn at 5:30 pm.

Good evening Board Members and Neighbors,

I and my family are currently out of town for the Thanksgiving Holiday and have extended it with a college tour.

I do want to address and express my appreciation for the communication of concerns from some of our ECS parents over the course of the past year.

As I am always open to and appreciate hearing about the experiences and concerns of our community of students and parents, please note that I am equally appreciative of the work and focus of attention of our superintendent and the ECS Principal and staff.

Some time ago, I met with several parents to hear their concerns. My feedback to them was to proceed via standard processes as the concerns were focused on several individual staff members, their decision making and communications. The Board of directors is not in the chain of command - so to speak. The principal oversees day to day building operations and decision-making.

The more recent concerns expressed by some parents is, in my estimation, is a communication and facilities issue as opposed to an HR issue. My understanding is that Dylan Laflam has become appropriately involved.

I support our Superintendent and HR Directors level of involvement and follow through regarding these challenges brought forth. I appreciate greatly the efforts of the ECS Principal and staff in persevering as these challenges seem to be escalating and are greatly affecting the ECS faculty and staff morale. This is not acceptable. We have a great staff at ECS and we need to support them so that they can be their very best at serving our students, which is really the reason we are all here. We need to remember that.

It's clear to me that an air of grace and appreciation by all involved parties will help us all move through this successfully.

Sincerely and with thanks, Jeff Hunsberger