

Meeting of the
Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District SPECIAL Board
Minutes of Meeting
January 7, 2025

Board members Present: Johnson: Mark Nielsen, Monica Stearns (by phone), Kyle Hill (by phone); Cambridge: Jan Sander, Denise Webster, Amy Listenik, Susan Prescott; Hyde Park: Tina Lowe, Patti Hayford; Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Eden: David Whitcomb (by phone); Waterville: Bart Bezio
Board members Absent: Hyde Park: Phillip Kiely, Lisa Jones; Cambridge: Nancy Guyette, Mark Stebbins; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger
Administrators Present: Rene Thibault, Catherine Gallagher, David Manning
Others Present: Joseph Rosa, Jeanne Engel, Vanessa Tourangeau, Ally M, Kara Rose, Lauren Larken, Kristen MacDowell, Kaitlin Rosa Moher, Katie Foss, Hope Elliot, Carri Ferrari, Christine Rosa
Minute Taker: Savannah Droney

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Nielsen

Approval of Agenda: Sanders made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Bezio. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Lauren Larken submitted a letter that she wrote in support of Kara. She is in support of Lia and Kai transferring to Hyde Park Elementary. Vanessa Tourangeau was shocked to hear Kara's request was denied and spoke in support of Kara.

In-District Transfer Appeal – Discussion & Possible Action, Possible Executive Session Other

Business/Adjourn: Kara Rose is appealing the denial of an in-district transfer for her daughter, Lia Romero Rosa, and son, Kai Roero Rosa, from Johnson Elementary School (JES) to Hyde Park Elementary School (HPES) for the health and wellbeing of the family. Her children are subject to safety of all children.

Kara spoke and stated that her children are the subject of an unsafe and unhealthy environment at JES and she is advocating for immediate transfer to HPES for her daughter and son. She is also here to advocate for the safety of all children. It is concerning that there has been a lack of response from educational leaders regarding the safety of students at JES. The responses she has received focus on policies and discourage her from filing an appeal or complaint. She feels it is important for all concerns from the community be heard. Kara stated the enrollment is declining at JES. Kara shared quotes from people who have removed students from JES. Kara has emailed letters from different families to David Manning, the superintendent and the board chair, Mark Nielsen. Nielsen will review these documents. Kara is requesting immediate action to avoid further harm to students and minimize legal exposure, which includes immediate transfer for her daughter and son, documentation of measures taken, provide written confirmation of interim measures being taken to protect students who remain in an unsafe classroom, review district policies, initiate an immediate review of how the district enforces its harassment and safety policies ensuring compliance with legal requirements. Should these actions not be taken promptly, Kara will be contacting the Vermont Human Rights Commission, the Office for Civil Rights, the US Department of Education, and working with community members to contact local news groups.

David Manning spoke and stated he is sorry Kara is feeling this way about her students', her children's, experience at JES. He did want to point out that he and Kara have met twice this year, and exchanged many emails, which he sent her copies of earlier this week, and at no point has Kara expressed problems at school with her son. He feels it is important to note that they have never discussed that, have not looked into that, and have not had a chance to explore that because it's never been brought up. He also stated that until Kara was denied her request to transfer to Hyde Park, between the meeting they had on 10/29/24 and the point where she got denied the request, she had not expressed any problems where any specific kid had been mean to Lia. They had only discussed kids who had been mean to other kids that Lia was witnessing or hearing about and was causing her distress. I think it's important to make sure that we're talking about the same things; that I have a fairly long list of records of our communications, and that's what we've been talking about.

Gallagher stated that the first interaction that she had with Kara was the week before Christmas break. It was through an email and a couple of phone calls. Gallagher said she described the policy to her and stated that she did not have the authority to overturn or approve an appeal based on the latest amendment of our in-district policy. She invited Kara to come in and have a meeting to talk about her concerns, which is documented. She is sorry to hear all this new information and would like to be given the chance to investigate this because that is our legal mandate; to investigate once we hear about it.

Hayford asked how and why does Kara think her children would be better off in Hyde Park vs another school in the district? Kara has spoken to the principal at HPES and feels she is passionate about supporting youth, their academics and their safety. Kara has spoken to parents and students, and they are happy.

Hayford made the motion to go into executive session at 7:26 pm, Sweet seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:26 pm. Bezio made the motion to deny Kara's request and encouraged her, since she is a resident of Eden, to consider Eden Central School as an alternative. The student services coordinator will be asked for an independent review of Kara's allegations of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment. Hayford seconded the motion. Cambridge abstained, as the rest of those able to vote voted unanimously.

Hayford made the motion to adjourn at 8:28 pm, Lowe seconded. Unanimous vote.