

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
December 14, 2020**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Bernard Barnes, Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Bill Sander, Sue Prescott, Mark Stebbins, Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Tina Lowe, Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford; Johnson: Katie Orost, Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Johnson: Bobbie Moulton, Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Charleen McFarlane, Michele Aumand, Denise Maurice, Brian Schaffer, Flo Kelley, Tommy O'Connor, Wendy Savery, Erik Remmers, Janet Murray, Melinda Mascolino, David Manning, Jan Epstein, Mary Anderson, Diane Reilly, Jeremy Scannell, Jennifer Hulse, Bethann Pirie, Dylan Laflam, Brian Pena

Others Present: Denise Webster, Betzi Goodman, Carol Towle, Darcey Fletcher, Diane McMullen, Lisa Vinick, Nichole Lefavre, Shannon St. Cyr, Terri-Lynn Ayers, Deb Tague, Elizabeth Lamphere, Isabelle Chayer, Meghann Oquendo, Yvonne Jones, Chelsea Circe, Danielle Shoda, Deb Tague, Donna Cullivan, Ellen Koier, Erin Carr, Erin Stokes, Gabrielle Fecher, Greg Stokes, Ila Arnold, Jacinta Raboin, Jenna Sweet, Laurie Toof, Nancy Randall, Renee McWilliams, Robin Bryce, Susan Ronci, Sheri Boutin, Sarah King, Robin Bryce, Sarah King, , Jenna Sweet, Gabriella Fecher, Hannah Tibbits, Heidi Kneeland, Greg Stockes, Alex Gover, Renee McWilliams

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: The meeting began at 6:01 p.m. with Whitcomb nominating Mark Stebbins to run the meeting. Miller seconded the motion. Gallagher asked that the Personnel Matter be removed from the agenda and also requested that the Side Letter of Agreement item be moved up the agenda after Routine Business. Whitcomb made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Bezio. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the November 23, 2020, meeting; November 9, 2020, Curriculum Committee Meeting; and November 23, 2020, Joint FCC/Technology Committee Meeting: Barnes made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Side Letter of Agreement with the Association: McFarlane stated that in an effort to support staff and knowing that the Family's First Coronavirus Act paid leave was set to expire on December 31st, the BNC was recommending entering into a side agreement with the Association that would allow the staff to use their sick leave for quarantine. If employees needed to quarantine due to out of state travel or multi-family gatherings or other Executive Orders, they could use up to five days maximum of their accrued leave for the period January 1st through June 30th for the purpose of quarantining. Another way an employee could use sick leave for quarantining was if they were required to quarantine by the Vermont Department of Health or CDC or local agency. One other element to the side letter of agreement was that employees who had to quarantine must have the COVID test on day 7 of their quarantine. McFarlane stated the BNC recommended the side agreement be approved. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Fagnant, to approve the side letter of agreement. Miller asked what would happen if the employee quarantined for more than five days. McFarlane explained it maxed out at five days from January 1st through June 30th. However, if ordered by the Vermont Department of Health to quarantine, staff could use the accrued sick time they had available. The District would strive to offer the option of remote teaching to those employees. The motion passed unanimously.

Bid for Next Generation Anti-Virus: Pena informed the Board that four bid responses had been received. The vendors were Comodo, Checkpoint, Sophos and CrowdStrike. The bids were evaluated by the internal IT Committee, NSS Labs, and SE Labs, the last two being independent testers of anti-virus programs. The IT Committee was impressed with Sophos because of the ease of use, the graphical interface, the design and layout, and the seemingly easy method of setting up protection measures. Sophos offered a substantially reduced price. The IT Committee recommended Sophos as the EPP and EDR provider with a contract term of 60 months. The contract would be \$132,349 for five years. Clark explained that the costs for Hyde Park

Elementary would need to be funded through the regular LNMUUSD capital account. Many of the individual sites' capital accounts would need to be used by the end of FY22. Stebbins asked if the allocation being used to bill schools was based on student enrollment numbers. Clark stated the only staff numbers used was listed in the LNSU line item. Barnes made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve hiring Sophos as the EPP and EDR provider at a cost of \$132,349. The motion passed unanimously.

E-Rate Networking Switch Purchase: Pena explained that the District participated in the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) E-Rate Program bid process to procure seven network switches to support Phase 1 of the District-wide Wireless Access Point upgrade. The current wireless access points would be expiring in May 2022. The District received three responses. One company responding with an incorrect product. CMS provided the low bid of \$26,530. Six switches would support the Lamoille Union campus and one switch would support Hyde Park Elementary. The LUSD Technology Capital Reserve Fund currently had \$24,797 available. The funding allocation request was to use \$22,740 from the LUSD Technology Capital Reserve and \$3,790 from the Hyde Park Elementary School IT operational account. The E-Rate reimbursement was 70%. Therefore, \$18,571 would be reimbursed. Administration recommended that the Board move to accept the bid of \$26,530 from CMS based on pricing. An additional \$265 was requested for shipping costs, bringing the total cost to \$26,795. Stebbins noted that the Technology Committee was satisfied with the recommendation. J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Orost, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Internal Control Checklist for State Auditor: Clark stated this annual form outlined the internal controls. Clark stated that at the Board meeting on December 28th she would request that the Board authorize the Board Chair to sign the form. Clark asked that people review the checklist prior to that meeting.

Comparability Policy-First Reading: Clark explained that this policy stated that in a supervisory union where some schools were served by Title 1 funds and some were not, that all schools would have comparable services.

Central Office/Director Updates: Gallagher reported that Mark Nielsen, one of the members of the Johnson Racial Diversity Committee, had met with Kristine Lott, Mayor of Winooski, to talk about the Refugee Resettlement Program. Neilson was trying to bring funds to the schools, which would give students opportunities in education that would help with economic development. That would also help to encourage students to stay in Lamoille. The hope was to attract diverse cultures and Nielsen believed that by preparing for that we would have more students coming and staying. The population in Vermont had been declining and Nielsen was looking for ways for it to grow. Nielsen and Lott would be meeting with Senator Leahy and Governor Scott.

Bethann Pirie stated she and Jen Hulse continued to meet weekly to develop a foundation for their work on equity and racial justice. There was going to be a shared reading and almost all members had received a copy of the book. They had started to map out timelines for work the District would be doing with Miles Smith. Smith would be attending a staff meeting at each of the buildings in late January and early February. Savery, Hulse and Pirie had recently met with a group from the high school and they had begun to map out professional development days in March. Pirie and Hulse also participate with REAL Schools.

Wendy Savery updated the Board on what the District was doing in regards to health and wellness and supporting employees, both through professional development and the EAP. In August the District invited Katina Idol from Lamoille County Mental Health (LCMH) to offer a presentation on stress. Idol discussed the COVID brain and the importance of building resilience. Savery stated employees were being provided phone numbers and email information if they needed more of a one-to-one support. LCMH has stated educators were a priority for them. There was another presentation in August with a focus on how best to deal with stress, from anticipating trauma in their students, understanding where behavior might be coming from, and how COVID impacted it. The February in-service would have a speaker addressing stress mitigation and resiliency. The District was furthering health and wellness from a school climate point of view with the March in-service being focused on racial justice, diversity, equity and tolerance. That would be a K-12 initiative.

Charleen McFarlane reported they had encouraged all administrators to schedule an EAP orientation with staff. The EAP provided free and confidential services to all staff and McFarlane provided information on what was available. There was guidance and webinars on COVID available to the staff through the EAP as well as the District's website. Staff now had access to MyHealthyVT, United Way and North Central Recovery Center.

Clark reported the Finance and Capital Committee was making good progress. There were modest increases except for those items they had no control over, such as health benefits and Hyde Park Water increasing their costs by about \$25,000. Clark hoped to have some estimated per pupil numbers available by the next Committee meeting. There would be a 9-cent increase at the state level. The first presentation of the budget would be held on December 28th. Clark informed the Board that the Annual Meeting would be virtual and postcards announcing that would be sent out shortly.

Tommy O'Connor stated that the second trimester numbers for the virtual academy for Grade K-6 had just been posted. Currently there were 120 students enrolled between the five elementary schools. Janet Murray stated her concern about trauma and the trauma work that was happening. Murray stated she had observed a significant increase in trauma in students aged 3 through 5 over the last three to five years. She was witnessing it at an alarming increase right now. Murray commended the Pre-K team who was doing an amazing job with these children and their families. The team had been doing a lot of reading on their own time with programs they were being trained on. The team was also reading about racial justice and trauma. Murray noted that while there were many good things happening in the early education classrooms, there were a number of things happening that were concerning and sad.

Gallagher reported that there was a rise in the numbers of COVID cases. The good news was that the anticipated Thanksgiving surge had not been realized in Lamoille County. In the last two weeks there had been 41 cases in Lamoille County and that included Stowe and Morrisville. The schools had done a fabulous job and Gallagher acknowledged the work of the teachers, administrators, nurses and support staff in following protocols. There was no school-based transmission and they were containing cases very well. While the Department of Health was recommending putting the person testing positive into quarantine, the District asked the entire household bubble to quarantine. This served the District well and Gallagher felt they were keeping teams safe. In fact, she believed that schools were the safest places to be.

Gallagher then addressed the fact that after Thanksgiving there were some classes that could not be held in person because staff had needed to quarantine. This time the District asked teachers whether there was a reason they wouldn't be able to come back to school on January 4th and how long they anticipated needing to be out of school. Schools were compelled to ask the question because they were held to operational standards. Gallagher acknowledged that schools needed to be staffed and also that people needed to see their loved ones. There are things put in place that acknowledge both of those situations. Gallagher was proud and grateful to say that the teachers and staff of Lamoille North would never wait to call in at the last minute. To further support teachers and staff, Gallagher and four Board members were willing to volunteer to substitute teach. The administration would do whatever was needed to support the entire school community.

Gallagher expressed appreciation to the support staff. The custodial staff dropped everything to clean a classroom if necessary. The kitchen staff had moved from preparing lunches in such a way that people who were in quarantine still had access to, and the technology teams were always available to make things work. She noted this was not the time to be polarizing. People were working at the District and at the school because they loved people and they loved education. Gallagher thanked the teachers and staff for being the most ethical and professional people around. Stebbins agreed that the flexibility and devotion of the staff across the District was incredible.

Principal/Director Updates:

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein stated the overall angst seemed to have decreased as the months had gone by and the staff had become familiar with routines and protocols. Most of the students had returned four days a week. In reviewing the report cards, it showed that the teaching staff had done a great job and had made more progress than they thought they had. This month they were keeping things light and positive.

Cambridge: Anderson reported that students and staff were doing well. Day to day things could be stressful because it was often unknown whether they could cover classrooms, lunches or recess. The school was able to stay open because of the people who were working behind the scenes at all hours of the day. She applauded and thanked staff for being so committed to doing whatever was necessary. They were loyal and hardworking people. Anderson stated there were only down to 21 two-day students. They would love to have them all back as four-day students. Anderson then noted that the dental van was operating again and providing service to students.

Eden: Mascolino reported school seemed to be going on as a regular school these days, with the focus being on instruction. Most of the students were now attending school four days a week. The floating sub was now working in the kitchen, which was so helpful to the kitchen staff. However, now they needed to advertise for a floating sub. There were a number of families who had just stopped sending their students to school. Mascolino had been on the phone with the families, convincing them that the students were safe at school. She had explained to them there had been no cases at the school. Most of the folks were now deciding to send their students back. Staff was being forthcoming about their holiday plans and telling her ahead of time whether they would need to quarantine. Mascolino appreciated everyone's honesty and felt very lucky to work with the staff at Eden.

Hyde Park: Reilly stated that students were happy and grateful to be back in school. They were feeling connected to their learning. There were still thirty hybrid students and the support staff had a huge role in working with the students online. The teachers had noted that learning was progressing more quickly when they had most of the students in the classroom.

Johnson: Manning stated that the difference between school in September and then in December was striking. Working with a hybrid model in September had been tough and now it felt like normal school. Students had masks on and didn't sit next to each other, but the culture in the building felt like a normal school day. Teaching and learning was taking place. There was a classroom currently working with ECHO in Burlington and it was great to see that they could continue to learn and partner with outside organizations.

Middle School: Maurice stated the year had grown progressively more normal. This month's report highlighted Team Infinity and how they used student choice to keep students engaged while they were remote. The Bake for Good Program was also highlighted in her written report. Ms. Stokes was working on livestreaming winter sports.

High School: Schaffer informed the Board he couldn't remember a time when things were safer and more fun. The daily connection at check-in made an incredible difference at the school. The school was seeing either at par or exceeding attendance percentages for students, teachers and staff. While there were still some students that the intervention team was working with, there was a general awareness that was emerging as far as how to be safe and considerate of one another. They don't see the day-to-day issues they had been seeing pre-pandemic. The third quarter course listings were shared with the Board, with Schaffer highlighting the courses that had never been offered before. New teams were emerging and there was a general attitude that everyone was in this together.

GMTCC: Remmers reported that Elias Gillen who had worked on a video about Jenna's Promise was selected as the 2020 Presidential Scholar for the Arts. Remmers then informed the Board that the Tech Center had recently joined the Vermont Business for Social Responsibility. This was a group of businesses across the state that put social responsibility and equity first in their mission. Remmers stated this was a great opportunity because there were a lot of local businesses that the Tech Center could connect with.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Audette made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m.